



GREAT LENT & FORGIVENESS SUNDAY



On Sunday February 22nd, we will be serving 'Forgiveness Sunday Vespers' shortly after Divine Liturgy. When we wake up the next morning, we find ourselves in the first week of Great Lent!

I am often asked about fasting rules. What to eat...what not to eat. While Fasting is an important aspect of Great Lent, it is more a means to an end. Great Lent isn't about changing our diets...it's about changing our Hearts.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to live our lives in a *State of Repentance*. Each of us fall short in our own way from what God has called us to. God made us in *His own Image*...but we often distort this image and refashion ourselves into *our own images*.

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Donations: E-Transfer to:
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Weekly Services:

Every Saturday:
530pm Great Vespers

Every Sunday:
930am Matins
10am Divine Liturgy
12pm Potluck Lunch
1pm Catechism Classes

Feast Days:
Please Check our Calendar

7221 - 198B Street
Langley, BC V2Y 1R9



GREAT LENT & FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

Continued...

I was deeply touched recently when visiting a Monastery...

All day, the monks showed me nothing but love, kindness, and hospitality. We then served Daily Vespers together.

After Vespers, one monk came up to me, bowed, and asked me to forgive him. I bowed back down and asked him to forgive me. We then gave each other a big hug. The next monk then came up and did the exact same thing. Then the monks bowed, hugged, and asked forgiveness of each other.

I was moved almost to tears seeing that in this Monastery they have a miniature version of 'Forgiveness Sunday' 365 days a year...

Can you imagine if every night before bed, a husband and wife bowed down, asked for each other's forgiveness, and gave each other a big hug!? How about with our children and between siblings? How about in a Parish Community?

The fact is, we all fall short whether we know it or not.

'We are commanded to: 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'... and 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Do we really Love God with all of our hearts? Do we really love our neighbors as ourselves? Or do we sometimes (or often) put ourselves first?

Some people have said to me over the years that they "don't need to stay for Forgiveness Sunday Vespers...that they are kind, they aren't angry, and that they haven't offended anyone..."

Every time we put ourselves first, we sin against God, our spouses, our children, our family, friends, and community. Going back to the monks in the Monastery, they could see this...this is why they constantly ask forgiveness, because this is something all of us are guilty of.

Yes, Great Lent is the time when we prepare ourselves for Holy Pascha with Prayer, Fasting, additional Church Services, almsgiving, and good works.

All of this is of no benefit to us though, unless it comes with true repentance, with a *change of heart*.



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Continued...

If we listen closely to the Hymnography and Prayers in the Church Services at Great Lent, we hear a constant theme of Repentance. This culminates in the Prayer of St. Ephraim which we pray together (with Prostrations) at most of our Lenten Services:

“O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

*Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to **see my own transgressions**, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.”*

Through fasting and prayer, we redirect ourselves to see our own selves for who we really are. We ask God to show us our own sins. If we are aware of our own sins, then it is much harder for us to judge our brothers & sisters. Knowledge of our own sins leads us to contrition (feeling bad about offending our Loving God, and our neighbors), to Repentance / Holy Confession (asking forgiveness of sins), to receiving God's forgiveness, and to uniting ourselves to Christ.

Fasting isn't about diet...it's about putting our body's passions under control, uniting ourselves to God's Will...thus weakening our body's will...so that our Psyche (Soul) can truly pray, and truly unite itself with Christ and God's Will.

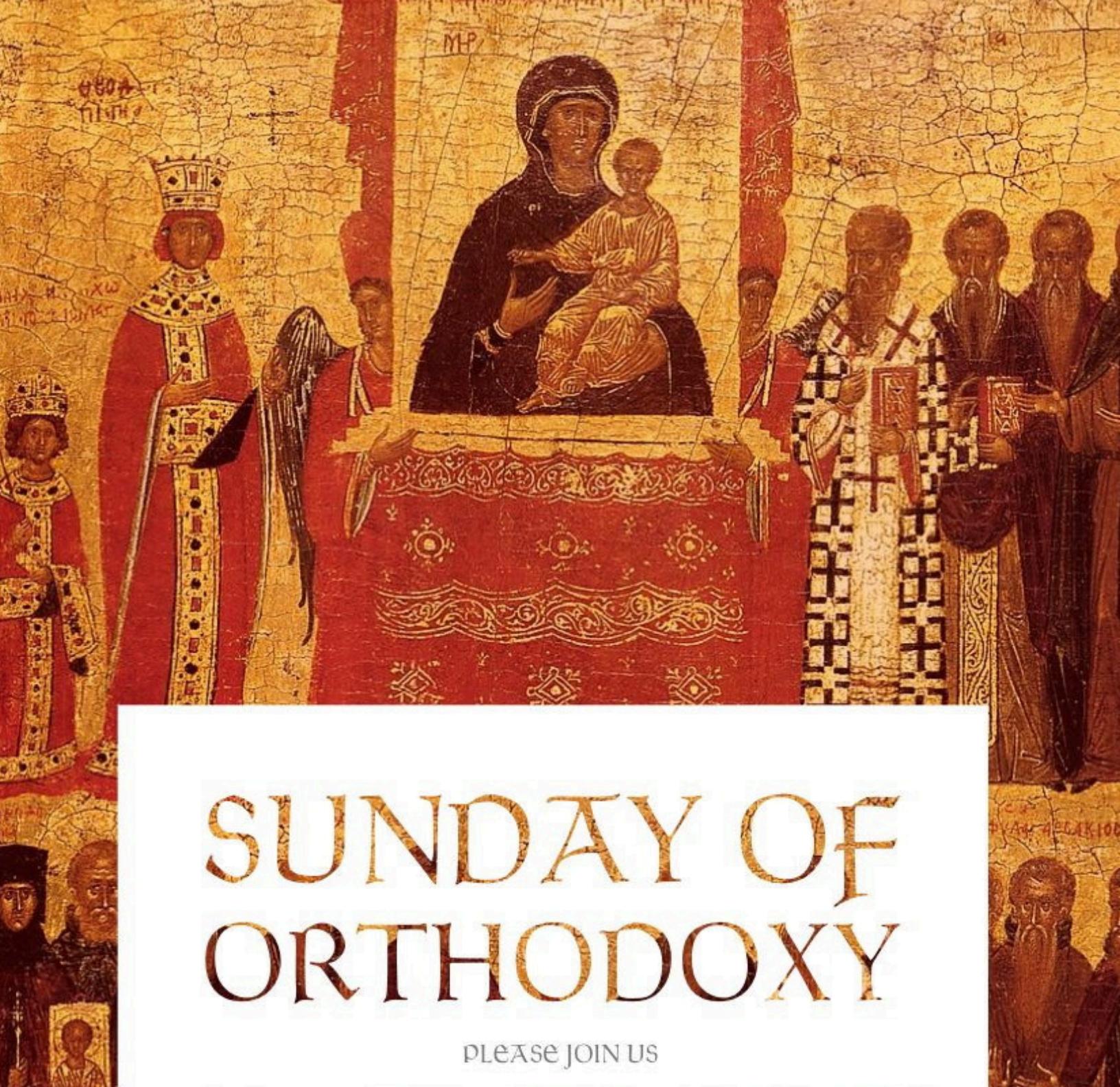
Sometimes fasting is really hard! Asking God's help and trusting in His Grace (especially when our self will prevents us from Fasting), helps us to grow in our trust in God.

Let us begin Great Lent together in a state of repentance. Asking God's forgiveness at Holy Confession, and asking our brothers and sisters to forgive us...and for us to truly forgive them.

As we go through Great Lent together, let's remember the words in the prayer of St. Ephraim, especially “grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother.”

As hard as all of this Fasting, Prayer, and Repentance is...the end result is much Joy! Uniting ourselves to our Risen Lord...Forgiveness...Love...Peace...and Holy Pascha where we will shout “CHRIST IS RISEN!”

Fr. Gregory



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

PLEASE JOIN US

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS

Sunday, March 1 at 6pm

HOSTED BY

St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church
7837 Canada Way Burnaby, BC

Sunday School CORNER

"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a LIGHT to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

Luke 2:29-32



ANNUAL CANDLE ROLLING

Another Sunday School tradition the children look forward to!
We do this on the Sunday closest to the "Meeting of Our Lord in the temple."

don't Miss it! Sunday, February 1 @ 9:30

Youth Happenings

GRADES 7-12



**Post-liturgy Youth Connection
every Sunday**

IN YOUTH ROOM UNLESS OTHERWISE DETERMINED

UPCOMING

SATURDAY

PanOrthodox Youth Night
FEBRUARY 21 5:30-7:30
ST. HERMAN'S FELLOWSHIP HALL



SAVE THE DATE

3RD ANNUAL
**YOUNG ADULTS
RETREAT
(18-35 YEAR OLDS)**

1-3

May
2026

Entheos
Conference &
Retreat Centre
(30 mins west of
Calgary)

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

2026 Draft Calendar of Services

Our 2026 Draft Calendar of Church Services is available using the following Link:

[https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?
src=calendar%40saintherman.net&ctz=America%2FVancouver](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=calendar%40saintherman.net&ctz=America%2FVancouver)

The Monthly Calendar that we send out will still serve as the Final / Actual Schedule of services, but the attached Calendar is available for you to use, for if you would like to plan your schedule in advance to attend some of our Additional Feast Day services!





Notes from the Choir...

This month, my newsletter article will be my Choir Director's Report for our upcoming AGM.

It has been a joy and privilege to be the Lead Director of St. Herman's Choir for the past 8 months. As many of you know, this is not my first time at this job. I was the first Choir Director of St. Herman's in our early days, from 1987 to 2008, when I retired (or so I assumed at the time).

It's been a somewhat tumultuous and yet very productive year for St. Herman's choir. Although 6 singers left the choir midway through 2025, 9 new singers have joined our ranks! We now have 22 singers, which is fantastic! Having so many new singers has been a wonderful opportunity to start over, with some of us learning the music and the order of services for the first time while the rest of us get to re-learn what we may have forgotten.

In November, we had an excellent Choir Workshop, led by Presvytera (that's a title for a priest's wife, similar to Matushka) Jaime Rene, who is a St. Herman's choir alumnus and also one of our former choir directors. She reviewed some essential skills such as how to breathe while singing, proper vowel formation and pronunciation, watching the conductor, etc. The choir is working at putting her reminders into practice.

Much of the choir director's work occurs "behind the scenes" with the preparation of music for the services. In the past year, with much indispensable assistance from my sister, Maria, (who does so much work for me, she calls herself my secretary), I have revised the Divine Liturgy, Vespers, and Matins binders, and also put together more of each service binders to serve our increased number of singers. I have also compiled sets of service binders for Transfiguration, Feast of the Entrance, Christmas, and Theophany Vigils, as well as service books for Baptisms, weddings, Blessing of Water, and Holy Unction.

Another part of my job is finding appropriate music. I have searched online to find musical settings to suit our needs, such as for occasions when we might only have a couple of singers. When specific music hasn't been readily available, I "set" it myself, which usually means setting a text to a specific tone or melody, but occasionally means composing new melodies, loosely based on existing music, such as I did for the 8 tones of the Matins Prokeimena: Let every breath praise the Lord! I greatly appreciate the enthusiasm of the choir when I introduce a piece of music they have never seen before, right before we actually need to sing it. There has been so much new music to learn that there has not been sufficient time to practice it all.



Notes from the Choir...

My gratitude to all of the choir singers is boundless. They are talented, hardworking, flexible, encouraging, and supportive, and very gracious when I make a mistake or get discombobulated. A huge thank you to the sopranos: Mat. Barbara, Maria H., Maria C., Melanie, Alexandra, and Priti; to the altos: Olga, Tara, Julia, Anna Maria, and Nina; to the tenors: Dave, Gelu, Jack, and Ron; and to the basses: James, Alex, Dan, Liam, Ronin, and Jordan. And thank you to our bonus bass, Sid, an ad hoc choir member, who has given me and our bass section some excellent advice. An even bigger thank you to the assistant choir director, Olga Goncharov. Olga is becoming a talented conductor and has an excellent ear; she keeps track of areas in which the choir needs to do some work.

2026 is already off to a great start, musically. The choir did a great job at the Theophany Vigil, even with a large volume of completely new music. Looking ahead to more events in 2026: we plan to have another Choir Workshop, this one led by Reader Gregory Gascoigne, also a former St. Herman's singer and choir director. The date for this is yet to be determined.

In March, some of us will be functioning as "the English choir" at the upcoming Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers, which will be hosted by Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church. We will be learning some new music for the season of Great Lent and will also be singing more Vigil services for major feasts. Although we may not be able to manage this year, one day, I plan to have 2 functional choirs so that we can sing antiphonally when that is called for, which will mean having a choir on each side of the church. For those of you who don't know, antiphonal means "back and forth", kind of a call and response format. Having 2 choirs will, of course, require having at least 2 conductors. To that end, I aim to start training at least 2 more singers to conduct. One of these good people is James, and the other one I cannot name because they are currently blissfully ignorant that I will be approaching them regarding this!

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Notes from the Choir Continued...

Speaking of James, I would like to thank him and Nina for taking over the supervision of the Bell Ringing. And thanks to all the people, choir and nonchoir, who have stepped up and learned to ring the bells. A special thanks to Kristy Duran, who bravely rang the bells after a very brief tutorial about 2 minutes before she had to actually ring them for a service!

While I'm thanking people, I need to include SubDeacon Herman Campbell, who also happens to be my nephew. Although he attends and serves at Holy Nativity Antiochian Church, he has been an enormous asset to me in getting ready for various services, because he is a self-taught "rubrics nerd", and has been functioning as my de facto Liturgical Consultant.

And a thank you to all of the parish for your support for the choir. Your kind words and compliments, and especially your prayers have sustained us this past year.

My final thank you, is, of course, to Fr. Gregory and Fr. Dn. Theodore, who are so enjoyable to work with; they consistently support and encourage me, and graciously overlook my mistakes.

Finally, a reminder: whether or not you are officially in the choir, it is your job to sing at Church!

Andrea Rajan, Lead Choir Director



St. Herman's men's night

THURS. FEB. 5TH

6:30 PM

5191 203rd St. Langley

**(in the clubhouse, next
to the playground of
Longlea Estates)**

call or text Sean for more details

778-875-4111

**please park in visitor parking
only or across the street

Please bring a snack and your choice of drink.

February 2026

Father Gregory's day
off is Tuesday
Emergency phone calls ONLY

✚ **Strict Fast** (No meat, fish, wine, oil, dairy, eggs)

✚ **Fish, oil and wine** (No meat, dairy and eggs)

✚ **Wine & Oil** (No meat, fish, dairy, and eggs)

✚ **Dairy Allowed** (Dairy, eggs, fish, oil and wine)

Great Vespers start at 5:30pm
Sunday Matins start at 9:30am
Divine Liturgy starts at 10am

Children's Sunday School 9:30am Sundays (in Church Hall)

Youth Connection - after liturgy during lunch in the youth room/library

Fr. Gregory Wright 604-788-7546 frgregory@saintherman.net

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Matins & Liturgy 6pm Great Vespers with Litya	2 8 AM Liturgy - Meeting of Our Lord	3	4	5	6	7 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions
8 Matins & Liturgy	9	10	11	12	13	14 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions
15 Matins & Liturgy AGM	16	17	18	19	20	21 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions Youth Event!
22 Matins & Liturgy	23 Great Lent Starts	24	25	26	27	28 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions
1pm - Forgiveness Sunday Vespers	6 PM - Great Canon	6 PM - Pre Sanctified	6 PM - Great Canon	6 PM - Pre Sanctified	6 PM - Great Canon	6 PM - Pre Sanctified

- Fr. Edward will be serving Feb. 1/2
- Great Lent starts Feb. 23