St. James Orthodox Church
The Evangelion
Issue 42 · October 2026

From the Priest:

What Does Autumn Mean To You?

Fall is a terrific time here in Georgia. After brutalizing heat, it seems a breath from heaven when temperatures drop and the colors change. Plus, we have the additional blessing of usually having great weather often into December.

While Spring is often called the season of renewal, I truly believe that this occurs in Autumn, Spring being the fruit of that renewal. The earth takes a pause, gets quieter, goes underground, and rests a while. In the church we do sort of the same thing. Our liturgical year begins, and we move slowly into the time of the greatest event in human history, the incarnation of the Lord of Glory. We too rest as we enter the Nativity fast and the beauties of anticipating this event. We celebrate Life itself coming to renew life in all of us. Our commitment to the Lord and His body, the church, finds new strength and appreciation of all that He has done for us.

In our local church, we too have been experiencing renewal. Many people continue to discover Orthodoxy, here and worldwide, and this brings tremendous responsibility upon all of us to incorporate these wonderful seekers into the communal life of our ecclesia, our "called out" group of Orthodox Christians. Already we have experienced upheaval in our physical plant and are continuing in this regard. But even more we must calm the equally important upheaval in the expansion of our people and make sure that they too are fully integrated into the life here at St. James, a place we all realize is very special indeed. Today's visitors are tomorrow's staunch church members!

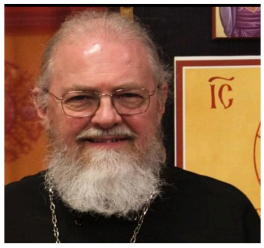
Along these lines we will see changes in other aspects of church life, not the least of which you hold in your hand (or are reading online) right now—the Evangelion is back to monthly, and more parish-centric! This is something many have been asking for, and your comments and suggestions are always welcome as we want to make this newsletter your newsletter, full of parish information as well as spiritually uplifting articles—hopefully penned by many of you! Don't be shy—you are members of the Lord's body, and as such you should not be hesitant about contributing your own unique thoughts and experiences.

May the Lord bless it and bless all members of St. James!

– Fr. Steven

WHO TO CONTACT AT SAINT JAMES

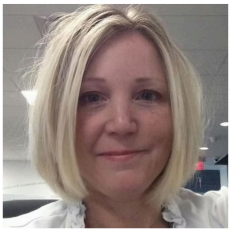
Whether you are new to Saint James or have been part of our family for years, we want you to know exactly where to turn with a question, a need, or an idea.


Fr. Steven Ritter

Priest
Fr. Steven Ritter
Reach out to Father with questions about the Orthodox faith, to begin the path to becoming a catechumen, to schedule Confession, and to request a memorial or a Liturgy.
priest@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Andy Roussey

Treasurer
Andy Roussey
Andy can answer questions about the parish's finances. If you or someone you know is in need and would like to request support.
treasurer@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Christine Reindl

Parish Council Pres.
Christine Reindl
Parish council business, information about our building projects, and to request church maintenance. She also welcomes your suggestions, comments, and concerns.
parishcouncil@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Beth Green

Parish Council Secretary
Beth Green
Beth sends out parish-wide announcements, church business, and events!

secretary@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Tara Freeman

Tara Freeman, womensgroup@
Tara leads the St. James chapter of the Antiochian Women's Group. To learn about our charities, events, committees, and activities, and to find out how to volunteer or offer your support.
womensgroup@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Kaytee Newton


Leah Baumgardner

Kaytee Newton and Leah Baumgardner
Our Sunday School directors are happy to tell you about Sunday School and about events and activities for the children of St. James. Check out the St. James Kids tab online!

sundayschool@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org


Jessica Green

Jessica Green, digitalmedia@
TO ADD NAMES to the PRAYER LIST questions, comments, or suggestions about our digital media, including the website, livestream, and social media. She also welcomes contributions to "The Evangelion."
digitalmedia@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org

On the Upcoming Fasting Season



Fasting is *not* a punishment, and it does not earn us salvation. It is a tool the Church gives us to loosen our hold on worldly things and to turn our hearts toward God and His Kingdom. For that reason, fasting is always joined to prayer, almsgiving, and confession, and it is done faithfully and quietly, without judging others or holding ourselves up as an example.

Whether you are fasting for the very first time or have fasted all your life, you are welcome on this path. If you are new, begin where you are and keep what you can, with the guidance of the priest.

Even if you have fasted for many years, the fast still has more to teach us. It is not a test to pass; but a path we walk.

"Like the needle of a compass, prayer orients our lives toward God; almsgiving turns our gaze to our neighbor. Fasting, on the other hand, directs our attention to ourselves."

–L. Joseph Letendre, When You Fast

The Meaning of the Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast is one of the Church's four major fasting seasons. Beginning forty days before Christmas, it prepares our souls and bodies to welcome Christ at His Nativity. It is a joyful fast, kept in anticipation of the feast, and it grows stricter as the feast draws near. It is also a call to stillness in a busy season: we choose what truly matters for our families so that the coming of our Lord is not drowned out by seasonal noise.

"This ascetical fast rather than weakening us makes us light, concentrated, sober, joyful, pure."

— Fr. Alexander Schmemann, The Great Lent

The Rules of the Fast

According to the guidelines of the Patriarchate of Antioch: Every day of the fast, we abstain from meat, meat products, dairy products, and eggs. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, fish, wine, and olive oil is no longer restricted at any time.

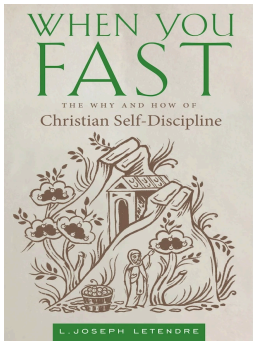
Wednesdays and Fridays are strict fast days. We also abstain from fish, and wine Shellfish is permitted.

From December 13 through 24, the fast is stricter: no fish is permitted, wine is allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays. We also eat smaller portions, and we do not eat between meals.

A Word of Care

All fasting in the parish is done under the guidance of the priest, who may adjust the fast according to a person's circumstances. If you are pregnant, nursing a newborn, seriously ill, or unsure how to begin, please speak with Fr. Steven. The goal is love and growth, not burden. **Do not fast without prayer.**

Further Reading



When You Fast: The Why and How of Christian Self-Discipline, by L. Joseph Letendre (Ancient Faith Publishing) — store.ancientfaith.com/when-you-fast-the-why-and-how-of-christian-self-discipline



Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed

Contact **Lorez Roussey** to join a Coffee Hour Team.
lorez@rousseyunit.com

Coming Up

SUN, OCT 18
2nd Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest
During Coffee Hour
$5 per pumpkin

SUN, OCT 25
St. James Name Day Picnic
After Divine Liturgy
Longwood Park,
Dogwood Pavilion

SAT, NOV 14 · 12:00 PM
Antiochian Women's Fall Luncheon
Bring your favorite fall-themed dish

WED, NOV 25 · 4:00 PM
Akathist of Thanksgiving

Your Prayers are Requested:

REMEMBER, O LORD: The Catechumens: Aidan, Paisius, Helen, Nicholas, Charissa, Ida, James, Seraphim, Theophan, John, Maria, Paul, Judith, Jacob, Silouan, Genevieve, Kevin, Elizabeth, Matthew, Emilia, David, John, Paisius, Michael, Michael, Herman, Chryse, James, Tamara, Bridget, Alexander, Peter, Julia, Emmelia, Nina, Silouan, Ciara, John, Nicholas, Arsenios, Abigail, Justin, Dunstan, Paisius, Agathon; Ralph, Norma, Jeanette, Bobbie, Alexander

Also Pray for: Miles, Scott, Mary, Nina, Mary, Carlos, Patricia, Bishop Nicholas, Hollie, Mitzi, Ted, Walker, Brooklyn, Elijah. Liam, Winter, Codie, Brian. George, Olga, Donna, Theodore, Elizabeth, Nectarios, Photini, Subdeacon Michael, Anna, Kayleigh, Doris, Carlos, Nixon, Nayerly, Subdeacon Micheal, Anna, Jeannette, Nectarios, Photini, Elizabeth, Theodore, Priest Gregory, Jerome, and Calilou. Newly-departed Sam, Dennis, Wendy and Julia.

PLEASE REMEMBER ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES ✠

send prayer requests to
digitalmedia@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org

EVERY THURSDAY

St. Maria of Paris

Ladies' Prayer Group

10:30 AM

Every week through Nov 19
No meeting Nov 26.

Join our Ladies Prayer Group

Contact
Khouria Christine
khouriachristine@gmail.com

"Christ is in our midst!"

Lebanese Lentil & Swiss Chard Soup (Adas bi Hamod)

Fasting-Friendly (no oil)



Ingredients

- 1¼ cups whole brown or green lentils, rinsed
- 6 cups water, plus more as needed
- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced (2 for the soup, 4 for the finish)
- 1 medium potato, peeled and cut into ½" cubes
- 5 cups Swiss chard or spinach, stems chopped and leaves shredded
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- Juice of 2 lemons, plus more to taste
- Salt and black pepper
- Chopped fresh cilantro and lemon wedges, to serve

Directions

1. Bring the lentils and water to a boil, then simmer for 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, sweat the onion in 3 Tbsp. water over medium heat for 7–8 minutes, until soft. Add 2 cloves of the garlic, adding water as needed.

3. Add the onion mixture, potato, coriander, and cumin to the lentils. Simmer 12–15 minutes, until the potato and lentils are tender.

4. Stir in the chard stems and simmer for 3 minutes. Add the leaves and cook minutes, until wilted. (2-3 min)

5. Mash the remaining 4 cloves of garlic with a pinch of salt and stir into the soup along with the lemon juice. Season well. It should taste distinctly sour.

6. Serve hot with cilantro and lemon wedges.

Serves 4.

St. James Orthodox Church

3579 McEver Road,
Gainesville, GA 30504

St. James Orthodox Church belongs to the
Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America

For information about/contributions to "The Evangelion"
Contact: Jessica Green
digitalmedia@saintjamesorthodoxchurch.org