

# THE MESSENGER

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
BANGOR, MAINE

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**CIRCUMCISION of our LORD and SAVIOR  
JESUS CHRIST - JANUARY 1st**

## THE POWER IN YOUR NAME

The power of a name and its value has long been immortalized in prose, poetry, and religious ceremony. Everyone recognizes himself or herself by name. The question is: how does a name influence a person's character?

Today the Orthodox Church celebrates the Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh as was the custom of the Jews. But more importantly was the nameless baby for eight days acquiring a name which is the same custom with the Church today. When we chose names for our new born, why do we choose particular names? What's the story behind the name and what purpose does the name project for the baby? When my parents called me Dickson, I don't think they had any idea what the name meant and neither can they relate the impact it has had in my life. Let's take a look at some of the most prominent names in the Bible and their meanings.....

Genesis 17:5, 15; "No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations." God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.

'In the time of the ancient fathers, to speak concerning illustrious persons, there were born two twin brothers; Jacob (holder of the heel/supplanter) and Esau (red and hairy) the one so immediately after the other, that the first took hold of the heel of the second. So great a difference existed in their lives and manners, so great a dissimilarity in their actions, so great a difference in their parents' love for them respectively, that the very contrast between them produced even a mutual hostile antipathy.' (St. Augustine-City of God) Supplanter is defined in the dictionary as: take the place of; displace or set aside, take the place of by unfair methods or by treacherous means remove from its position; get rid of; oust. Another verse describing the actions and character of Jacob is: "*And he said, is not he rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he has taken away my blessing. And he said, have you not reserved a blessing for me?*" (Gen 27:36)

Genesis 35:10; God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. (God prevails-Genesis 32:28)

**God specifically changes the names here as he forms a covenant and creates purpose for their lives.**

## Continued from 1<sup>st</sup> page

Genesis 29:31-35; when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

1 Samuel 1:20; so in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

**In the second category, children are named after the situations of their birth.**

Isaiah 8:3-4 "Then I made love to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. (quick to plunder/spoil). For before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria."

Hosea 1:3-9; "So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel.' Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to Israel that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them.'"

After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

**In the third category God chooses names to reveal his intentions to the children of Israel.**

Common biblical names like Moses (drawn from), Joshua (salvation) Gideon (a destroyer) all got their names before hand, Moses would draw the children of Israel from Egypt, Joshua would lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land and Gideon would destroy the Midianites with only 300 soldiers.

With the new dispensation came to this beautiful list from the foundation of the Church to the present list of names derived from Christ the founder of the Church: Christos, Christian, Emmanuel and Jesus. The Mother of God; Maria, Mary, Panayiotis, Panagia..... The angels: Michael Gabriel and Raphael. The Holy Apostles, the Great Hierarchs and ecumenical teachers, the martyrs, the wonderworkers and the great women saints: Barbara, Catherine, Kyrakii, Photini and Irene and great monastics.

Why the meaning of names is accorded so much value in Africa? It is because for an African, a name does not only represent a person's identity but a name is also regarded as a promise, a vocation and a list of expectations. Giving a child a meaningful name in Africa requires accepting that the child has a personal dignity right from the moment of conception that needs to be respected and protected. The practices associated with naming show that naming represents an opportunity for parents to positively influence the life of their children and in the process influence their own lives. Under normal circumstances and in my tribe, the firstborn child takes the name of the grandparents as the first name and the parents name as the last name, with Christianity though coming into many African tribes, the Christian names becomes the first name but everyone keeps their ancestral names. Some children are also named after certain circumstances. If a couple gives birth and the child dies, if they give birth to another child, he will be called; 'Kariuki' or one who resurrects for a male and 'Njoki' or one who returns for a girl. Others are named under circumstances surrounding their birth, with the Kamba, *Mutuku* will be one born at night, *Kioko* one born in the morning and *Wambua* one born when it's raining.

Jesus was named today, the savior of the world; we know the purpose of his name, what is in your name? Is there purpose and meaning in your name and the named of your children?

Dear Beloved,

May the steadfast love of the Lord which never ceases and his mercies which are endless be renewed in your life everyday. My prayer for you is that the Lord will give you strength and bless you with peace. I commend you to Christ for he has obtained a more excellent ministry, becoming our mediator of a better covenant which is established upon better promises.

Dear beloved, I am aware of your struggles and tribulations, but we have the assurance from the creator of all, no matter how dark and hopeless the night might be, dawn will definitely come in the morning. Pray ceaselessly, give thanks to God everyday and hold on to your faith in Christ Jesus.

New Year signals new beginnings. For many of us, this means embracing new goals or revisiting old ones. If you're like me, you can often find yourself creating a "spiritual" checklist, hoping that this next year will be a year of your spiritual fulfillment and accomplishment. As you plan for the coming year, let God be the center of your plans, he fulfills your desires in his own time. It is good to know that it is not by power neither by might but by the Spirit of the Lord that your plans will come to pass.

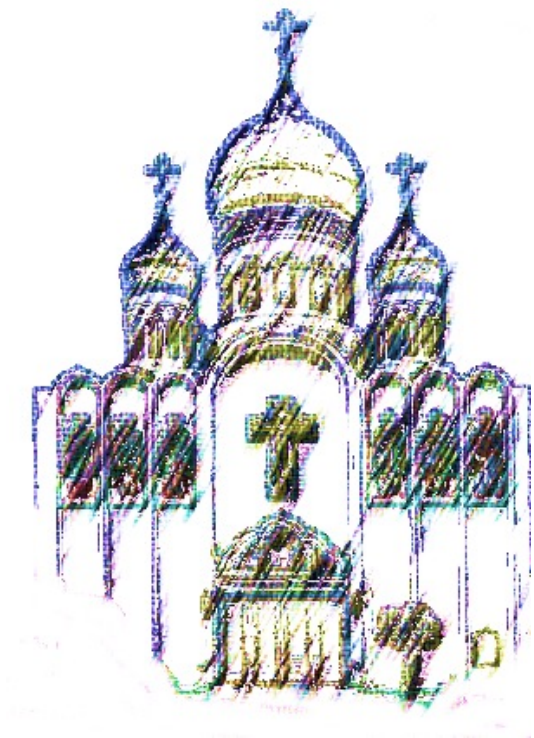
As a Church, we are coming from a period of great trial; the last quarter of the year made us loose our confidence, our commitment and our zeal. On the contrary, I have seen the desire in each of us to rise again and move on, a desire to heal our wounded souls and hold on to the faith. I'm also proud of the fact that we have come out of this stronger than we were before.

Let us therefore renew our steadfast love towards each other, strengthen each other and pray for each other. Let us renew our stewardship to God and His Church and let us move forward focusing on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the welfare of St. George in 2014 through stewardship, free will contributions, chanting, serving in the alter, singing in the choir and serving in the Parish council. Above all, it gives me much joy to see everyone in Church every Sunday. I hope and pray that all of us will renew our commitment and participate more in the life of the Church in 2015.

Thank you all for your warm welcome, pray for me as I pray for you. God bless you all.

Your Co-worker in Christ  
Fr. Makarios Nganga



Dear Fellow Members of the St. George Family,

December was a wonderful month at Saint George. The Parish welcomed Father Makarios to our family for the winter months and hopefully longer. I welcome the 2015 parish council members and thank them for their prior service as well. I also express my gratitude to all of you who serve as stewards of Saint George both near and far. Kevin Cox will be sending you the 2015 stewardship letter shortly please help him by pledging whatever you can. In 2014 the stewards of Saint George provided 58% of the church's operating budget.

When I was a young altar boy in Lowell, I remember asking Father Philip Gialopsos; why do we have to pray so much? Luckily he answered me as a teacher, because my question was one of curiosity and was not meant as disrespectful. Father Philip told me that "prayer was the golden link uniting us on earth with the spiritual world of Heaven. Praying must be sincere and humble, if so, you will receive the strength of God the Father." We all should remember to pray daily for guidance and not necessarily for answers. *Lord, teach us to pray-* (Luke 11:1)

Please feel free to contact me at any time to offer your wisdom or guidance. Should any of you ever have any questions about the operations of the Parish please do not hesitate to inquire. All information belongs to you, the parishioners of Saint George and the Parish Council strives to maintain a culture of respect peace, love and order though transparency.

Yours in the love of Our Lord,

Lee P. Speronis  
President, Parish Council 2015



### **Underwriting *The Messenger***

We invite parishioners to help subsidize our newsletter. You can support publication of ***The Messenger*** in the following ways:

Sponsor the Monthly Dedication Page @\$75.00 per month.

Become a Messenger Patron @ \$50.00 for the year.

### **2014 Church Financial Report**

<b>2014</b>	Revenues	\$ 96,033.32
	Expenses	95,003.90
	Net	1,029.42
	Budget	94,350.00
<b>2014</b>	Pledges	88 Family Units
	Pledged Amount	\$ 54,695.00
	Received	52,600.00
	Budget	51,000.00

### **ST. GEORGE PARISH COUNCIL 2014**

- Lee Speronis, President.....942-7822**
- George Lealos, Vice-President.....989-2166**
- Kathy Fitzpatrick, Secretary.....942-7532**
- Ambrose Smitherman, Treasurer.....866-7717**
- George Brontas..... 989-4987**
- Kevin Cox.....667-6257**
- Christopher Limberis..... 942-9243**
- Jack Montgomery.....945-6022**
- Donna Walter.....576-0765**
- Tim Kulikowski.....(607)-237-4399**

## Services for the month of February:

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 9am Orthos 10am Liturgy	2	3	4	5	6	7 6pm Great Vespers
8 9am Orthos 10am Liturgy	9	10	11	12	13	14 6pm Great Vespers
15 9am Orthos 10am Liturgy Baptism after Liturgy	16	17	18	19	20	21 6pm Great Vespers
22 9am Orthos 10am Liturgy Forgiveness Vespers following Liturgy	23 Beginning of Lent	24	25 5:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	26	27 6pm Paraklesis	28 10am Liturgy Saturday of the Souls  6pm Great Vespers

**Please keep these people in your prayers:**

Chris Limberis, Nicholas George, Maria & Gene Muller, Chip Fitzpatrick, Barry Levine, Christian Meyer, Sophia Wirta, Brian Page, Kyvele St. Peter, Eleni Nawfel, Kosta Shanos, Jason Nicholas Anovich, Theodosia Kelley, Mary Limberis, Marianna DeJesus, Eleni Angel's cousin Alexis, and her brother-in-law Methodios, Stefania, Kay Gaddis, Nancy Lowd, Yelena Aleksyeva, Augie's father August, Quantan Fabiano, Electra Giatrelis, Helen Speronis, Alyce Speronis, Aristeia Halkedis, Gene Lachner, Lourdes Wellington, Richard Spencer, Lisa Henderson, Ussi, Adam & Lisa Metropoulos, Artemis Bennett, Christina Pizarro

## PRE LENT

*A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see - far, far away - the destination. It is the joy of Easter; it is the entrance into glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter that makes Lent's sadness bright and our Lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!" -Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

### What is the Triodion?

The Triodion Period is the period of time in our Orthodox Liturgical year that encompasses 3 segments of time, that of the Pre-Lenten cycle, of Great Lent itself and of Holy Week. (The word "Triodion" literally means "3 odes" referring to a series of hymns that are sung, but also applying to the 3 segments of time and the associated observances in each of these time segments.) A book, called "The Triodion," is used in the church services. There are special hymns and readings assigned to the service. This book is used throughout the Pre-Lenten period, through all of Lent, and through Holy Week, up to Holy Saturday night. There is a special service known as "The Saturday of Souls" (Memorial Saturdays) that are observed in which we commemorate and remember our departed relatives. Two of these services are held during the Pre-Lenten Period, and one more is celebrated on the First Saturday of Lent.

### Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)

This Sunday emphasizes **humility** as a key attitude for repentance. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, which means a change of mind. To repent we must not boast of our spiritual feats, but humble ourselves like the Publican who longs for a change of mind. We are called to learn this secret of the inward poverty of the Publican rather than the self-righteousness of the Pharisee who is convinced of his perfectness and not open to change because of his pride. There is no prescribed fasting for this week.

“Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting point of our journey to Pascha. And to repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means ‘change of mind’: to repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship to God and to others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a ‘change of mind’: he is self dissatisfied, ‘poor in spirit’, and where there is this saving self dissatisfaction there is room for God to act. Unless we learn the secret of the Publican’s inward poverty, we do not share in the Lenten springtime. (Metropolitan Kallistos)

### Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

This Sunday teaches us about our need to return from exile. This parable shows us **the mercy of the Father** who with open arms receives his son, whose behavior he does not return, but is joyous of his return home. Metropolitan Kallistos, in his introduction to the Lenten Triodion, emphasizes that repentance is not only sorrow for our sins, but positive action: “The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance in its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is return from exile to our true home; It is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the Father’s house. But repentance implies action: ‘I will rise up and go...’ (Verse 18). To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to take a decision and to act upon it.”

## **Judgment (Meat fare) Sunday (Matt 25:31-46)**

It is *love* again that constitutes the theme of "*Meat-Fare Sunday*." The Gospel lesson for the day is Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable answers: *love*-- not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous "poor," but concrete and personal love for the human person, any human person, that God makes me encounter in my life.... *Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

This Sunday emphasizes the Last Judgment. We are reminded of our individual responsibility for love. We are encouraged not to eat meat this week, but we can eat eggs, cheese and other dairy products.

## **Forgiveness (Cheese Fare) Sunday (Matt 6:14-21)**

This Sunday emphasizes forgiveness and how we must forgive others if God is to forgive us so we can break the chains of sinful tendency which we inherit from the Adam and Eve. This is the last day of preparation as the traditional Lenten fast begins on the following day where no meat, dairy or eggs are to be eaten according to the church tradition.

After the dismissal at Vespers, the priest stands beside the Analogion, or before the Ambon, and the faithful come up one by one and venerate the icon, after which each makes a prostration before the priest, saying, "Forgive me, a sinner." The priest also makes a prostration before each, saying, "God forgives. Forgive me." The person responds, "God forgives," and receives a blessing from the priest. Meanwhile the choir sings quietly the Irmoi of the Paschal Canon, or else the Paschal Stichera. After receiving the priest's blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of each other.

### **RULES OF FAST DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF THE TRIODION**

1. No fasting during the week after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.
2. Wednesday and Friday during the week after the Sunday of the Prodigal Son are fast days.
3. The weekdays after the Sunday of the Last Judgment all foods are eaten except meat.
4. On Clean Monday, the day after the Forgiveness Sunday, begins the fast of Great Lent

*Abstinence, fasting, keeping vigil, renouncing worldly things, etc., are the means, my child, by which we attain purity of heart. The primary property that characterizes purity of heart is love.*

- Elder Ephraim

## GENERAL RULES OF THE LENTEN FAST

The Lenten Fast rules that we observe today were established within the monasteries of the Orthodox Church during the sixth through eleventh centuries. These rules are intended for all Orthodox Christians, not just monks and nuns.

The first week of Lent is especially strict. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, a total fast is kept. In practice, very few people are able to do this. Some find it necessary to eat a little each day after sunset. Many Faithful do fast completely on Monday and then eat only uncooked food (bread, fruit and nuts) on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, the fast is kept until after the Presanctified Liturgy.

From the second through the sixth weeks of Lent, the general rules for fasting are practiced. Meat, animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, and lard), fish (meaning fish with backbones), olive oil and wine (all alcoholic drinks) are not consumed during the weekdays of Great Lent. Octopus and shell-fish are allowed, as is vegetable oil. On weekends, olive oil and wine are permitted.

According to what was done in the monasteries, one meal a day is eaten on weekdays and two meals on weekends of Great Lent. No restriction is placed on the amount of food during the meal, though moderation is always encouraged in all areas of one's life at all times.

Fish, oil and wine are allowed on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and on Palm Sunday (one week before Easter). On other feast days, such as the First and Second Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist (February 24), the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (March 9), the Fore feast of the Annunciation (March 24) and the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (March 26), wine and oil are permitted.





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