



## *Lenten Perseverance*

*By Adam Cook*

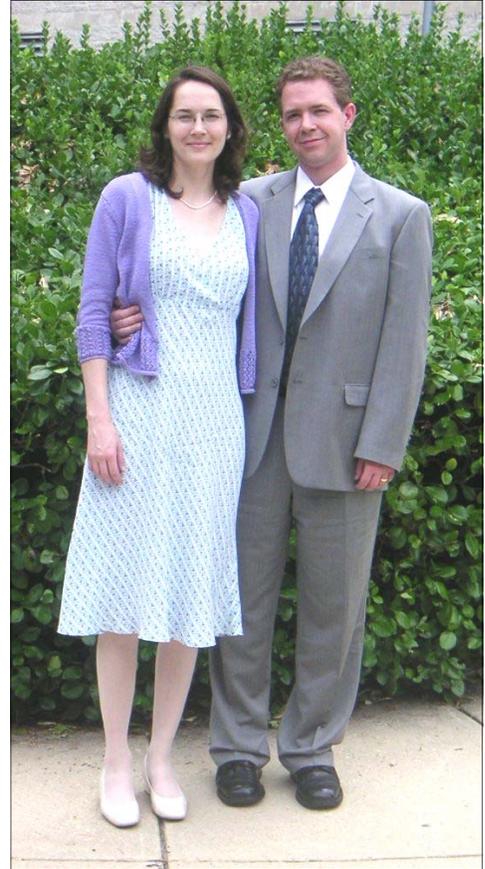
I wish that I could say that I look forward to Lent. I have read descriptions of Lent as a “spiritual journey” and “time of renewal.” But as much as I want these things I still find it difficult to be enthusiastic. All too often, Lent looms in my mind like a cold Alaskan winter: something to just get through.

A few years ago, I noticed that the entire book of Isaiah is read aloud in the course of Lenten services. The readings are done during 6<sup>th</sup> hour prayer services. The last reading before Palm Sunday is the last chapter of Isaiah. I began to look at the message of Isaiah as a kind of guide for finding spiritual meaning during The Fast.

Isaiah repeats the same message again and again: a call for Israel to repent its sins. He asks the Israelites to examine themselves, to pick up the Word of God that they have forsaken, and to realign themselves to God’s plan of salvation. It’s a pretty straightforward Lenten message.

Isaiah also asks for perseverance. The greatest crisis of Isaiah’s time was exile. Because the nation and its king were considered the source of God’s Law and salvation, an entire people were thrown into despair when they were exiled from Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The Psalmist mourns “How shall we sing

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**Anna & Adam Cook**

## *Unity, Community and Salvation*

*By Laura and Tom Frizelle*

Ten years ago we were living in Frankfurt, Germany. Tom was Assistant Pastor of a predominately American Lutheran congregation in Frankfurt and leading services and catechizing Lutheran military folks on a monthly basis in northern Italy and Belgium. We had a tremendous experience in Europe together, with lots of traveling and fun, soaking up the beautiful architecture and landscapes, the history, culture and cuisine. It was our first year of married life together, and a very long honeymoon of sorts. That year, after the festivities of Christmas, we started to look to the future and got serious about filling out

the paperwork for a Call back to the United States—some place where Tom could serve as an ordained pastor of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It was an exciting time for us and our faith was being stretched in a very good way. We remember walking to the mailbox together and praying before we dropped a large envelope in the mailbox containing all the necessary paperwork. Tom’s hand was on one corner of the envelope and Laura’s on the other. We were officially committing our future into God’s hands, truly not knowing where we might end up. Tom’s supervising pastor kept saying in jest,

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## Community Cooks: Featuring Joe Streff

By Maye Johnson

In the summer of 1979, a sense of wanderlust took Joe to Alaska where he spent the season working in the fishing industry and experiencing the adventures of this Great State. Before returning to Wisconsin to finish up his senior year of high school, Joe intended to visit a friend at the Big House (now the St. James House) in Eagle River, but ran out of time and never connected with him. Destiny would delay Joe's trip down Monastery Drive until 1997



Lt. Col. Joseph Streff

when, compelled by an assignment for his sociology class at University of Alaska, he entered the Narthex of St. John's and began a new journey with the Orthodox faith. A year later, on Lazarus Saturday, Joe, his wife Lynn, their four (they now have five) children, were baptized and chrismated into the Orthodox Church. Joe is a soldier of 20 years, a pilot, and a lieutenant colonel in the Alaska Army National Guard. He recently deployed to Iraq and served in the Multi-National Corps Headquarters as the aviation planner, coordinating the integration of hundreds of aircraft into the mission there. In Baghdad, on the tenth anniversary of his chrismation, Joe attended Divine Liturgy with the Georgian Army in an unlikely and unusual place, a palace which once belonged to Saddam Hussein. In June of 2007, Joe returned to his family in Alaska, where he has a newfound appreciation for cold weather and a warm home. Joe is optimistic about the future, and looks forward to the great opportunities on the horizon for his family and himself. Joe loves to cook and contributed several tasty recipes to *Welcome Home*. Here is a great one to try during Lent.

### **Shrimp Sautéed with Peppers and Garlic**

1 c. yellow onions, chopped  
1/8 to 1/4 lb. butter or margarine  
Dash of garlic powder  
1 c. sweet yellow peppers, chopped  
Dash of white pepper  
Dash of paprika  
1 c. sweet green peppers, chopped  
Dash of black pepper  
Dash of ground oregano  
1 c. sweet red peppers, chopped  
Dash of red pepper  
Dash of ground thyme  
1 lb. shrimp, peeled, deveined  
Dash of salt  
1/2 to 1 T. soy sauce (opt)  
1 T. garlic, minced  
Dash of onion powder  
1 1/2 c. uncooked rice (5 c. cooked rice)

In a large skillet, melt butter. Sauté onions and peppers until onion becomes transparent. Add shrimp, spices and garlic. Sauté until shrimp are pink in color. Add soy sauce, if desired. Cook rice in boiling water to yield 5 cups. Serve shrimp over rice. Yield: 4-6 servings.

***In Community*** is published by: Mary Alice Cook, Barbara Dunaway, Rebekah Johnson and Maye Johnson

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## Outpost of the Kingdom

By Mary Alice Cook

*"Who are these people and what are they doing?"* ---Eudora Welty

The Feast of the Presentation (sometimes called "Meeting") of the Lord in the Temple is one of those special days we ex-Protestants never heard of. It follows Theophany in the yearly cycle and is celebrated on February 2.

A couple of years ago, Dn. Dan Gray gave an edifying homily on this day. Joseph and Mary, he pointed out, were obedient Jews, and when they made the ritual sacrifice that signified the dedication of their Son to the Lord, they were fulfilling the Law that they had followed all their lives. But the story has an amazing twist – their son Jesus, God in the flesh, the summation of all the teaching of the Law and the Prophets, is brought this day into His *own* temple.

I always think of the Presentation of the Lord whenever we say the prayers of naming for a newborn baby. The naming prayer on the eighth day after a baby's birth is based on an older Jewish rite. First, Fr. Marc thanks God for keeping the mother safe through childbearing (this is the "churching" of the mother, which was traditionally done on the fortieth day after childbirth, but now is often done along with the prayer of naming). Then he prays for the baby, "that he may flee from the vanity of the world and from every snare of the enemy." In the orderly Orthodox manner, Fr. Marc looks forward to the child's baptism and prays that he will "be united in due time to Your holy church."

Then comes the part that we all love. Children squeeze through the crowd to get a better view as Fr. Marc takes the baby from his mother's arms, carries him to the icon of the Mother of God and lifts him before her eyes. "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace..." he repeats the familiar words, "And rejoice also, O righteous elder, for you received in your arms the Redeemer of our souls..."

This scene -- Fr. Marc, in gold vestments, repeating ancient prayers as he takes the infant from his parents' arms -- is what I imagine when I think of Mary and Joseph bringing their baby son into the Temple for "presentation" to God. One might even call the prayers of naming an "icon" which reveals to us one aspect of the reality of Jesus' incarnation and earthly life.

As winter turns into spring, we here in the St. John's community have much to celebrate (the Feasts of the Presentation and of the Annunciation) and much to look forward to (Lent, Holy Week and Pascha). As always, we enjoy sharing our stories with you. *Happy Feast Days!*

# Welcome Home Troops!



Sgt. Joe Polson



Sgt. Bryce Temple and Sgt. Alex Temple

## *If Ever I go to War*

By Sgt. Alex Temple

If ever I go to war, Mom,  
Please don't be afraid,  
There are some things that I must do,  
To keep the promise I have made.  
I'm sure there'll be some heartache,  
And I know you'll cry some tears,  
But your son is a Marine now, Mom.  
There's nothing you should fear.

If ever I go to war, Dad,  
I know that you'll be strong,  
'Cause you taught me truth and integrity,  
You taught me right from wrong.  
You kept me firmly on the ground,  
Yet still showed me how to fly.  
Your son is a Marine now, Dad,  
I love you, Semper Fi!

If ever I go to war, Wife,  
There's something I want to say,  
You've always been by my side,  
Now it's time that I repay.  
You are my love and my sanctuary,  
Through all of life's dark clouds,  
Your man is a Marine now, Baby,  
I promise to make you proud.

If ever I go to war, my Brothers and Sisters,  
We'll never be apart,  
Though we may not be together,  
I'll hold you in my heart.  
Remember all the times we had,  
Don't let our memories cease,  
Your brother is a Marine now, Little Ones,  
And I'll die to bring you Peace.

If ever I go to war, my Friends,  
Pray for the soul of this soldier,  
We fight for life and freedom,  
And carry America on our shoulders.  
We wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor,  
And die on foreign shores.  
Giving our life to God,  
Our country, and our corps.

And when I go to Heaven,  
I'll see those Pearly gates,  
And gladly decline entrance,  
Then stand my post and wait.  
"I'm sorry God, I can't come in,  
I'm sort of in a bind.  
You see your child is a Marine now, Sir.  
And we leave no one behind!"



Spc. George Kendall



Sgt. Amal Agalawatta & a local boy.

For the last few years, St. John's has prayed for members of the parish who serve our country in the U.S. armed forces. These six men were deployed to the Middle East and all returned safely, either back to Alaska or to other assignments:

Sgt. Amal Agalawatta—U.S. Army—Iraq  
Spec. George Kendall—Alaska Army National Guard—Kuwait  
Sgt. Joe Polson—U.S. Army—Iraq  
Lt. Col. Joseph Streff—Alaska Army National Guard—Iraq  
Sgt. Alex Temple—U.S. Marine Corps—Iraq  
Sgt. Bryce Temple—U.S. Marine Corps—Iraq (two tours)

We continue to remember these men in prayer, along with others of our parish who are currently serving in the military:

Lt. Col. Scott Fedak—U.S. Air Force  
Seaman Erin Gray—U.S. Coast Guard  
MK3 Jordan Gray—U.S. Coast Guard  
Cadet Michael Johnson—U.S. Air Force Academy  
Petty Officer 2nd Class (E5) Rebecca Zink—U.S. Navy

We thank our soldiers for their service to this country and we thank God for His mercy to them and to their families.

# Unity, Community and Salvation

By Laura and Tom Frizelle

(Continued from page 1)

“How about Zap, North Dakota?” and we laughed and spent many days and nights in prayer wondering where we might end up.

A month or two after dropping the envelope in the mail, we got a phone call in the middle of the night from a Lutheran missionary pastor in Alaska. He asked Tom if he would be open to receiving a Call to serve Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Chugiak, Alaska. Tom calmly and coolly indicated he would be open to such a Call, and after he hung up the phone we were both in total shock! Laura was so giddy she started jumping on the bed! (Laura had lived in Valdez for two summers working fish.) When we finally calmed down we remembered that it was far from a “done deal.” But a few months later, Tom did in fact receive the Call to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, and before moving from Frankfurt, Germany to Chugiak, Alaska, he was ordained at the same altar at which Martin Luther was ordained in 1507. It was incredible! We were full of emotion about the future and walking by faith.

Our journey to Alaska was long and spanned a substantial cultural divide: Europe to Alaska. When we met the congregation in Chugiak, we realized it was not going to be easy. We trusted that God had brought us to Chugiak for a reason—but it was a mystery to us (and probably to many people at Our Redeemer): Why did God bring us together? It did not seem like a match “made in heaven” and there was much division and constant strife over doctrine, worship, and even, fundamentally, what the church is.

We were both seriously challenged during the 8 years we were at Our Redeemer. At times our hearts grew hard, but would then be crushed by God's wounding and healing Love. Our gracious Lord gave to us three beautiful and amazing boys during these years who have caused our capacity to love

**The unity and the fullness that the Orthodox Church is uniquely blessed with, is something that we had been starving for.**

to grow so much. It was always a joy to share the message of God's love in Christ week in and week out with the little children, the youth and adults at Our Redeemer—to share it *no matter what*—yet church politics only intensified and often, sadly, we saw members of Our Redeemer and other LCMS clergy become enemies of one another. Repeatedly, we fell short of loving them as Christ would have us do, and to our great shame, bitterness and lack of joy began to plague us. Many other Lutherans, friends and colleagues we know from



Frizelle Family

across the nation were in the same boat and none could see any end to the divisions, only the constant refrain of some Protestants: *split*. Desperately we began to fear that our children would witness division after division embitter and eventually debilitate their father and our family and that they might eventually reject the Christian faith altogether because of it. Something was missing. Something was very wrong. We longed intensely for God-protected unity, intimacy and trust within the Church...true Communion with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Interestingly, we had both had several significant points of contact with Orthodoxy even before coming to Alaska (Tom has even been to Mt. Athos), but we never seriously considered becoming Orthodox until we met you—the dear members of St. John Orthodox Cathedral. We were first introduced to you and your ministry through the Preschool and the Eagle River Institute. We are forever indebted especially to Father Marc, Father John, Khouria Betsy, Diana Truelson, Colleen Polson, and Kim Medders, but the list goes on.

During Bishop JOSEPH's visit for the Feast of the Nativity, 2006, we were blessed to meet with him and Father Marc privately. Fr. Marc and Bishop JOSEPH listened with so much genuine care and compassion as we explained our situation that, honestly, we cannot remember ever having received so much pastoral care from any other fathers in the Faith. Then Bishop JOSEPH said to us, in his unique and powerful accent: “Have you thought about...you know, like, ...your

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Salvation?” Those words, but more, *the way* Bishop JOSEPH said those words, will forever be in our minds and hearts. He cut straight through all our worries and fears and nailed us. We began to realize we had to let go and drop our lives into God's hands and trust—just like we did back in Germany in front of that mailbox.

A few days after meeting with Bishop JOSEPH, we attended our first Divine Liturgy—on Christmas morning. In Bishop JOSEPH's homily that morning, he said to all the members of St. John: “YOU HAVE EVERYTHING!” That is so true. The unity and the fullness that the Orthodox Church is uniquely blessed with is something that we had been starving for. This unity, community, and salvation is something that God clearly desires for everyone. Many times during our last year in the LCMS we read these verses: Jesus prayed, “Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You, may they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one; I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.”

(St. John 17: 21-23)

Our last Sunday at Our Redeemer was June 17, 2007, and our family was enrolled as catechumens on the following Sunday. Someone at St. John's—half teasingly, half seriously—asked Laura if she was sure she wanted to become Orthodox and warned her that it's hard. At the time it made her laugh—because we thought we knew what hard



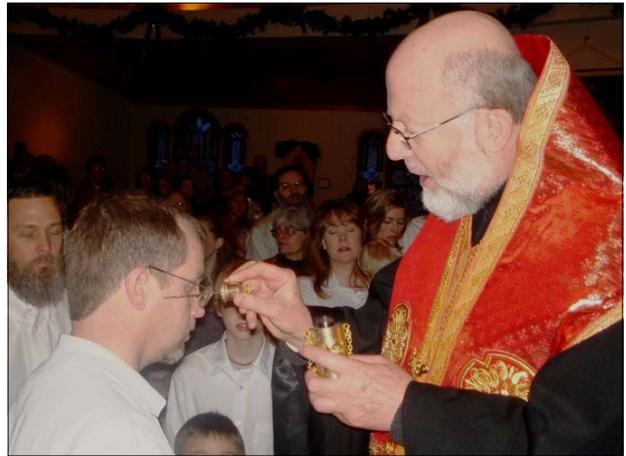
**Fr. Marc and the Frizelle family**

was from our years in the LCMS. But now we know what was meant—the work to take the plank out of our own eyes will be harder than complaining about the speck in others' eyes. We pray that with God's help and the support of the Body of Christ, we will heal, live in repentance, run and not grow faint, “laying aside all malice, all deceit, all hypocrisy, all envy and all evil speaking, and as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, because indeed we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Peter 2:1-3)

His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH, our Father in Christ whom we have come to love and revere, chrismated us on Christmas Eve. A few days before, while meeting with the catechumens, Bishop JOSEPH said that chrismation is like a spiritual wedding. What an amazing gift to be completely united to the Church and to our loved ones at St. John's just in time for the Nativity of Christ! We look forward to living, learning, changing, growing, and serving with you in love.

Ten years ago we had no idea that God would bring us to Alaska so that we would find the precious pearl of Orthodox Christianity embedded in the beautiful, loving community of St. John. We wish we could remember the prayer we said in Germany that day as we dropped the envelope in the mail, but we are positive that God has answered it beyond our wildest expectations. His ways are not our ways, that is for sure! Certainly we do not deserve such great mercy and we sincerely pray that we will faithfully follow our Lord Jesus, with you and all the Saints, and together become the holy, wholly united people He created us to be.

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*



**Ted Wells**, who was chrismated by His Grace Bishop JOSEPH on Christmas Eve, was diagnosed in February with a brain tumor, after experiencing stroke-like symptoms for a couple of weeks. Doctors in Anchorage were not able to provide treatment, so he traveled to Loyola Hospital in Chicago. His sister Laura went with him, and Shelly remained at home to work and be with the children. Laura reports that, as of March 1, they have learned that the tumor is serious, but treatable. Ted will receive pinpoint radiation treatments, and will also be taking chemo pills, which are less nauseating and more easily tolerated by the body than standard chemo treatment. The doctors are still doing tests in hopes of determining other treatment that can be provided. They believe that Ted will be back at work within about three months, and that he will be able to handle the mental challenges of his job. He may require speech therapy, and he will need to simplify his life to minimize stress. He will also need to return to Loyola every year for follow up tests. Ted and Laura attended liturgy on March 2 at All Saints Orthodox Church in Chicago and were welcomed by Fr. Patrick Reardon and the people there. Fr. Patrick anointed and prayed for Ted, and Laura says that going to church gave him a big emotional lift. We will continue to pray for Ted, Shelly, their children, and other family members, and look forward to the day he will be back home at St. John's.

## **Lenten Perseverance**

**By Adam Cook**

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the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Just as Isaiah warned them of God's judgment, he reassures them of God's presence even outside the Holy City. He promises that Jerusalem will be rebuilt, if only its people persevere. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

I started to see why Isaiah is at the center of Lent. There is a Great Feast waiting, if the faithful can persevere. I'm reminded of a story from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist and prisoner in Josef Stalin's concentration camps in the 1950's. He described the Lenten journey of a cellmate in The Gulag Archipelago. The prisoners in the camps were placed in barracks; each had a bunk and not much else. One prisoner, whom Solzhenitsyn remembers fondly, calculated the start of Lent and determined that he would fast. There were no services or priests in the barracks, of course, and the only ration of food was a small portion of bread. The prisoners worked at hard labor for sixteen hours a day.

Solzhenitsyn recalls that this prisoner would take his ration of bread and hide a piece of the crust in his mattress. He did this every day for forty-nine days, until he calculated that Pascha had arrived. It was a work day, like any other day. But that night he took his daily ration and the crusts he had saved and he ate them, celebrating Christ's resurrection. It was, he later told Solzhenitsyn, "the finest Pascha feast you could imagine." His journey of perseverance in the midst of oppressive gloom was Isaiah on a small scale. I was humbled that anyone could take comfort in Lent amid such suffering.

I find that Isaiah comes to the message of Lent with full force in his description of the 'suffering servant' in chapter 53. The unnamed servant suffers for the sake of Israel. "It was the will of the Lord to bruise him," says the Prophet. By this suffering "many will be made to be accounted righteous."

The Israelites suffer in patience for their Messiah, and he in turn suffers patiently for them.

We Orthodox understand the servant to be none other than Jesus Christ. From this relationship between Israel and Christ will come redemption. To those who doubt their capacity to endure, Isaiah offers words of encouragement: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Isaiah asks that we use our time during Lent to set our face toward Jerusalem. There we will follow our Lord – the suffering servant – into the city to be tried and crucified.

Isaiah was eventually himself martyred. Maybe that makes his message of suffering for the sake of joy all the more poignant. With examples of perseverance such as these, I can enter Lent with patience and anticipation.

*Adam Cook was born in Anchorage and, with his family, was chrismated at St. John's in 1992. He lived in the community for two years before going away to college and seminary. He earned a Master's of Divinity degree at St. Vladimir's in 2003. Anna Sluz was also a student at St. Vladimir's, where she studied music. Adam and Anna were married by Bp. JOSEPH at St. John's in 2003. They lived in Washington, D.C. for three years until Adam graduated from law school at Catholic University of America, where he took several classes in canon law, with the hope that such knowledge would in the future be of service to the Church. Adam and Anna live in Anchorage; he is an associate at a law firm there and she works in the College of Education at University of Alaska Anchorage. When their friends in D.C. questioned why they would want to live in Alaska, Adam reminded them that he was born and raised here and it was natural for him to want to return. Anna grew up in Iowa and, although she misses her family in the Midwest, she is happy to be living here. They look forward to the future and are thankful to be back at St. John's among family and friends. This article was adapted from a homily given by Adam while he was a student at St. Vladimir's.*

**"John: The Spiritual Gospel"**

**Fr. Michael Dahulich**

**"Son, Behold Your Mother:  
Mary in the Early Church"**

**Kh. Federica Mathewes-Green**

Sponsored by: Saint John Orthodox Cathedral  
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## **A Poem for Epiphany: The Baptism of Jesus**

**By Fr. Marc Dunaway**



*Down dusty roads the sinners come,  
hoping to feel clean again.  
From the dry hills and desert wastes of their  
daily life,  
they descend the green, grassy banks,  
to the cool, tumbling waters of the Jordan,  
where stands a prophet of God,  
a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord."  
Tears well up in their eyes and refresh their thirsty souls.  
Eagerly they descend into the water,  
dissolving their sins into the currents that swirl into the distance.*

*Today the Man from the manger appears.  
He has no sins, no thirst.  
Yet all stop to watch as He steps into the shallows.  
The prophet shrinks back.  
The voice in the wilderness says, "No, this is not for You."  
But the Lord wades in.  
The muddy waters splash around Him, churning with sins.  
Again the voice says, "No."  
But the Lord says, "Yes, let it be so."  
Then, with the prophet's hand upon His head,  
the Man disappears beneath the rushing waters,  
and the world holds its breath.*

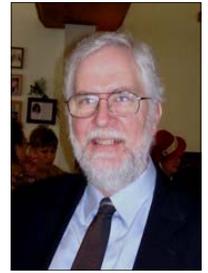
*A hundred faces upon the shore ask in wonder,  
"Why? Why is this Man here?"  
Angels announced His birth,  
but He did not come to hear the angels sing.  
Wise men bowed before Him as a king,  
but He did not come to be enthroned.  
Instead, He came to grip the withered hand,  
to touch the sores of lepers,  
to run His healing fingers across the eyes of the blind.*

*He came to travel the sweltering roads of Judea,  
to have His feet washed by the tears of a harlot.  
He came to sail the storms of Galilee,  
to calm the fears of His disciples.  
He came to walk among the tombs of the Gadarenes,  
to free a madman from His pain.  
He came to be rejected, despised.  
He came to be arrested, beaten, nailed onto a Cross,  
lifted up to die.  
He came to be buried beneath the earth.  
He came to take upon Himself the sorrow,  
sin and suffering of the world.  
And so He came to John to be baptized in the Jordan.*

*The Man of Sorrows rises from the waters.  
The heavens open and the Spirit of God hovers like a dove.  
A Voice from heaven booms, "This is My Son Whom I love."  
And as He wades ashore,  
the waters of the Jordan drip from Him like rain,  
mingling among the currents that swirl into the distance,  
whispering the promise of Redemption,  
"Eternal Spring has come."*

## **Forgiveness: Gateway to Great Lent**

**By John Morrison**



**John Morrison**

As I begin this article, I am discovering how difficult it is to write about "forgiveness" on a personal level. If I describe an occasion on which I received forgiveness, it means I have to admit I did something that needed forgiveness – and my pride squirms uncomfortably. On the other hand, if I describe an occasion in which I forgave someone else, my pride is much happier, pleased that others will see what a fine, noble person I am.

I remember an occasion in our church community on which I behaved badly and needed to ask for and accept forgiveness. The self-excuses started almost immediately: I wasn't myself that day; I was tired/stressed/provoked, etc.; I'm not really a cad, I just acted like one at that moment. At those times I imagine explaining this to Christ himself. I picture Him quietly raising an eyebrow, as if to say, "John, this is ME you're talking to. Would you care to try that again?"

Out in "the world," the preferred way of dealing with uncomfortable guilt is by avoiding the other person completely, but when we live in a community, that is not so easy. Not impossible, just more difficult. Avoidance is a short-term (non)solution that leaves a long-term spiritual canker that will continue to fester until it is acknowledged, confessed, and forgiveness asked and received.

Our annual Forgiveness Sunday ritual is important for taking care of the issues I've left unresolved. Anyone who has been through it, who has participated honestly and sincerely, is familiar with the conflict of emotions that accompany it – reluctance (at times dread!) at the prospect, mixed with memories of the emotional and spiritual cleansing and liberation that follow.

But asking for and receiving forgiveness should not be a once a year event. Imagine learning that you have a life threatening infection and your doctor tells you, "We can get you into the hospital and start treatment tomorrow, or you can drop by our annual health fair next May, whichever you prefer."

Living in community makes forgiveness not only a personal issue of my own salvation, but an issue of the health of the whole community. To continue the analogy, refusal to seek and receive forgiveness is more like TB than cancer – it can easily infect others. During the times I have felt burdened by unconfessed and unforgiven sin, I'm not as alive and responsive to God and to others as I could be. The health of the community is directly related to the number of unforgiven hurts we continue to carry around.

Meanwhile, the counsel of our culture assures me that all this "guilt-tripping" is unnecessary, even unhealthy. But it is only by remembering my need to ask for, as well as grant forgiveness, that I can hope to avoid falling into the perdition of pride. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

*John Morrison first came to Alaska with the U.S. Army in 1987. He was chrismated into the Orthodox Church here at St. John's in 1991. He and Lesa were married at St. John's in 2002. John enjoys living in community because it gives him the opportunity to receive and offer encouragement to other pilgrims in the only pilgrimage that really matters – our journey of faith.*

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## ***The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple*** ***By Mary Ann Northey***

February 2 brings us another of our twelve great feasts: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also called The Meeting of our Lord. This feast is known as Candlemas in the Western Tradition. This feast concludes our Christmas celebration. The Biblical account of this feast is found in Luke 2:22-38, and tells us that Mary and Joseph brought their 40 day old first born son into the Temple to be dedicated to God, according to Jewish custom. They also brought two turtle doves as a sacrifice, as is commonly done by poor parents. If you will look at this icon, you will see the Theotokos handing Christ to the “just and devout” Simeon, said to be one of the translators of the Septuagint. While they were translating Isaiah 7:14, it was prophesied that Simeon would not die until he had witnessed its fulfillment. When Simeon received the infant Christ into his arms, he recognized Him as the Savior he had been waiting for; and he exclaims “Lord, now let 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.” Behind the Theotokos stands an old woman. She is the prophetess, Anna, who served always in the Temple, in worship and prayer. She holds a banner which states “This Child has Created Heaven and Earth.” Anna also points toward Christ. You see Joseph behind Anna holding the doves. The buildings behind the figures indicate the Temple, and the covered altar is shown behind the Theotokos and Simeon.



My mother died in the early morning hours of February 1, eleven years ago. We buried her a few days after this feast day. When I am able to go home and visit her gravesite, I sing Simeon’s song, which we sing during Vespers on every Saturday night. This day was her “Meeting of our Lord,” as well.