



**Sherbrooke Church** A proposal to leave MCBC and re-start the church in another form will be debated Friday February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Your prayers are coveted.

**MCC-BC** Fundraising Banquets for MCC-BC have begun and the next ones are scheduled for Thursday February 21<sup>st</sup> at North Langley Mennonite Church, Thursday February 28<sup>th</sup> at Emmanuel Mennonite Church (Abbotsford), and Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> at Peace Mennonite Church (Richmond). Get your tickets at [www.mccbc.ca](http://www.mccbc.ca) or call the office at 604-850-6639.

**PhotoVoice Project** Refugee women have now been given a voice in their displacement and re-integration to Canadian society by a photo project on display at UBC and now at Knox United Church (5600 Balaclava, Vancouver) featuring one of the daughters of our sponsored family, the AlZazas. The photos capture the emotions, and memories of Muslim and Christian women from various backgrounds. Tuesday February 26 and 27, March 1, 6 and 8 from 1:30 - 8:30 - see poster in the hall for viewing details.

**Hemorrhaging Faith** In 2012, when the Hemorrhaging Faith study reported that only four in ten young adult respondents raised in evangelical churches still attend services weekly, a Saskatchewan MB church took the study's recommendations to heart. The result? "We have seen about 80 percent or more of our young people stay in the church," says Greg Wiens, Waldheim MB Church pastor from 2009–18. Read the article in the MB Herald at <https://mbherald.com/>

## Call to Worship

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,  
will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple  
in the fear of you.

Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness

—Psalm 5:7–8

Moderator—Veronica Dyck (604-290-1627); Worship—J. Evan Kreider (604-228-1217);  
Congregational Care—Lois Funk (604-992-8213); Recording Secretary—Andre Pekovich (604-879-0007);  
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Finance — Doug Medley (604-328-2980); Congregational Co-ordinator — Janice Kreider (604-228-1217)

## Texts about Fasting

### Isaiah 58:3-9

[c. 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE]

“Why do we **fast**, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your **fast day**,  
and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Look, you **fast** only to quarrel and to fight  
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such **fasting** as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is such the **fast** that I choose,  
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> Is not this the **fast** that I choose:

**to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?**

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator<sup>[a]</sup> shall go before you,  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

### Joel 2:12-16 (a corporate fast)

[Internal references to events range from 9<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

Yet even now, says the LORD,

**return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;**

<sup>13</sup> **rend your hearts and not your clothing.**

Return to the LORD, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,  
and relents from punishing.

<sup>14</sup> Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering

for the LORD, your God?

<sup>15</sup> Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
**sanctify a fast;**

call a solemn assembly;

<sup>16</sup> gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;

assemble the aged;

gather the children,

even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,  
and the bride her canopy.

### 1 Kings 21:25-29 (even Ahab fasted, finally)

[c. late 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

<sup>25</sup> (Indeed, there was no one like Ahab, who sold himself  
to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD, urged on by  
his wife Jezebel. <sup>26</sup> He acted most abominably in going  
after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD  
drove out before the Israelites.)

<sup>27</sup> When Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and  
put sackcloth over his bare flesh; he **fasted**, lay in the

sackcloth, and went about dejectedly. <sup>28</sup> Then the word of  
the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: <sup>29</sup> “Have you seen  
how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he  
has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the  
disaster in his days; but in his son’s days I will bring the  
disaster on his house.”

### 1 Samuel 7:3-6 (a corporate fast)

[c. 630-540 BCE]

<sup>3</sup> Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are  
returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away  
the foreign gods and the Astartes from among you.  
Direct your heart to the LORD, and serve him only, and  
he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”

<sup>4</sup> So Israel put away the Baals and the Astartes, and they  
served the LORD only.

<sup>5</sup> Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I  
will pray to the LORD for you.” <sup>6</sup> So they gathered at  
Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the  
LORD. They **fasted** that day, and said, “We have sinned  
against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the people of  
Israel at Mizpah.

2 Samuel 1:11-12 (fasting while mourning)  
[c. 630-540 BCE]

<sup>11</sup> Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them; and all the men who were with him did the same. <sup>12</sup> They **mourned and wept, and fasted** until evening for Saul and for his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

2 Samuel 12:15-20 (fasting in the hope of obtaining a specified result from God)  
[c. 630-540 BCE]

<sup>15</sup> Then Nathan went to his house. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became very ill. <sup>16</sup> David therefore **pleaded with God for the child;** David **fasted**, and went in and lay all night on the ground. <sup>17</sup> The elders of his house stood beside him, urging him to rise from the ground; but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. <sup>18</sup> On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "While the child was still alive, we spoke to him, and he did not

listen to us; how then can we tell him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." <sup>19</sup> But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, he perceived that the child was dead; and David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." <sup>20</sup> Then David rose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes. He went into the house of the LORD, and worshiped; he then went to his own house; and when he asked, they set food before him and he ate.

Exodus 34:27-28 (preparatory/working fast)  
[c. 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

<sup>27</sup> The LORD said to Moses: Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. <sup>28</sup> He was there with the LORD

**forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water.** And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Ezra 8:21-23 (corporate fasting and praying for safety)  
[c. 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

<sup>21</sup> Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might deny ourselves<sup>[s]</sup> before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our possessions. <sup>22</sup> For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and cavalry to protect us against the

enemy on our way, since we had told the king that the hand of our God is gracious to all who seek him, but his power and his wrath are against all who forsake him. <sup>23</sup> So we **fasted and petitioned** our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

Nehemiah 1:1-4 (fasting while mourning and praying)  
[c. 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capital, <sup>2</sup> one of my brothers, Hanani, came with certain men from Judah; and I asked them about the Jews that survived, those who had escaped the captivity, and about Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> They replied, "The survivors there in the

province who escaped captivity are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire." <sup>4</sup> When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, **fasting and praying** before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 9:1-3 (corporate fasting and repenting)  
[c. 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with **fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads.** <sup>2</sup> Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their

ancestors. <sup>3</sup> They stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth part of the day, and for another fourth they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God.

Jonah 3:4-10 (corporate fasting and praying for deliverance)  
[date of tale is unknown]

<sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a **fast**, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>6</sup>When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup>Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: **No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall**

**they drink water.** <sup>8</sup>Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. <sup>9</sup>Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish."

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Esther 4:15-17 (corporate fast for specified request)  
[c. 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE]

<sup>15</sup>Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, <sup>16</sup>"Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and **hold a fast on my behalf**, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I

will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." <sup>17</sup>Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Daniel 9:1-4  
[2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE]

<sup>9</sup>In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans — <sup>2</sup>in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah, must be fulfilled for the devastation of Jerusalem, namely,

seventy years.

<sup>3</sup>Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer **by prayer and supplication with fasting** and sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, . . .

Mark 9:23-29 (fasting and praying in order to be a healer)  
[c. 66-70 CE]

<sup>23</sup>Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." <sup>24</sup>Immediately the father of the child cried out, <sup>[h]</sup>"I believe; help my unbelief!" <sup>25</sup>When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" <sup>26</sup>After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it

came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." <sup>27</sup>But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand.

<sup>28</sup>When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>29</sup>He said to them, "This kind can come out only **through prayer**" [some sources add: "**and fasting.**"]

Matthew 4:1-4 (the classic period of fasting)  
[c. 80-90 CE]

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After **fasting forty days and forty nights**, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to

become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Matthew 6:16-18 (fast in secret)  
[c. 80-90 CE]

<sup>16</sup>"And whenever you **fast**, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you **fast**, put oil on

your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 9:14-15 (Jesus said his disciples would fast after he was gone)

[c. 80-90 CE]

<sup>14</sup> Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees **fast** often,<sup>[k]</sup> but your disciples do not **fast**?” <sup>15</sup> And Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with

them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will **fast**.

Acts 13:1-3 (fasting and praying when dedicating someone)

[c. 80-90 CE]

13 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler,<sup>[a]</sup> and Saul. <sup>2</sup> While they were

worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> Then after **fasting and praying** they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:21-23 (fasting and praying when dedicating someone)

[c. 80-90 CE]

<sup>21</sup> After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. <sup>22</sup> There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, “It is through many

persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.” <sup>23</sup> And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, **with prayer and fasting** they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

Luke 2:36-38 (an unusually devout life of contemplation)

[c. 80-100 CE]

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna<sup>[i]</sup> the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with

**fasting and prayer** night and day. <sup>38</sup> At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child<sup>[k]</sup> to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 18:11-14 (how not to fast)

[c. 80-100 CE]

<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

<sup>12</sup> I **fast twice a week**; I give a tenth of all my income.’

<sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even

look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

### Archdiocese of Vancouver’s Guidelines on Fasting and Abstinence

The Church prescribes fasting (only one full meal and two smaller meals which together are not greater than a full meal) and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics aged 18-59 are bound to fast; those 14 and older to abstinence [no meat on Fridays]. Those who are ill are freed from these obligations. Everyone, even those above the age of 59,

are encouraged to fast and abstain. Parents and educators are reminded of their duty to introduce children gradually to the understanding and practice of penance. S.29 of Canada's liturgical calendar, the Ordo, specifies that Fridays are special days of abstinence. This includes Fridays of Lent, although Catholics can substitute special acts of charity or piety on these days.

### Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Guidelines on Fasting and Abstinence

**FASTING:** “The Orthodox Church, regarding the human person as a unity of soul and body, has always insisted that the body must be trained and disciplined as well as the soul: “Fasting and self-control are the first virtue, the mother, root, source, and foundation of all

good.”

There are four main periods of fasting during the year: (1) The Great Fast (**Lent**), beginning seven weeks before Easter; (2) The **Fast of the Apostles**, starting on the Monday eight days after Pentecost, and ending on June

28 (July 11), the **eve of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul** and varying in length between one and six weeks; (3) The **Dormition Fast**, lasting two weeks, from August 1(14) to 14(28); (4) The **Christmas Fast [Advent]**, lasting 40 days, from November 15(28) to December 24 (January 6).

In addition to these four chief periods, **all Wednesdays and Fridays are Fast Days** (except between Christmas and Theophany, during Easter Week, and during the week after Pentecost). The Exaltation of the Cross, the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, and the eve of Theophany are also fasts.

The rules of fasting in the Orthodox Church are of a rigor which will astonish and appall many western Christians. On most days during Great Lent and Holy Week, for example, not only is meat forbidden, but also fish and all animal products (lard, eggs, butter, milk, cheese), together with wine and oil. In practice, however, many Orthodox — particularly in the western world — find that under the conditions of modern life it is no longer practical to follow the traditional rules exactly, which were devised with a very different outward

### Greek Orthodox Guidelines on Fasting During Lent

Lent is the annual period of Christian observance that precedes [Easter](#). The dates of Lent are defined by the date of Easter, which is a moveable feast, meaning that it falls on a different date each year. Lent starts on [Ash Wednesday](#) and its observance (although not its liturgical period, as Sundays are not fast days and are therefore not counted – see below) lasts for 40 days, mirroring the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before starting his ministry. It can also be seen to mirror the 40 hours that Jesus spent in the tomb prior to his resurrection.

Lent is a penitential period, involving the dual disciplines of abstinence and fasting. During Lent many Christians commit to fasting or giving up certain foods, habits or luxuries - for example meat, cakes and sweets, alcohol, smoking - for its duration (the money saved is often then donated to charity). This is done both as a form of penitence and as a spiritual tool to tame the body and ‘sharpen the spirit’ for prayer, reflection and contemplation in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

Lent lasts for 40 days and the first day is always Ash Wednesday (the day after [Shrove Tuesday](#)). Nevertheless, there is often confusion as to when Lent ends! This is partly due to the fact that there are in fact always 46 days between Ash Wednesday and [Easter Sunday](#), and partly due to confusion between the period of the Lenten fast and the liturgical 'season' or period of

situation in mind; and so certain dispensations are granted. Yet, even so, Great Lent — especially the first week and Holy Week itself — is still, for devout Orthodox, a period of genuine austerity and serious physical hardship. When all relaxations and dispensations are taken into account, it remains true that Orthodox Christians in the twentieth century — laity as well as monks — fast with a severity for which there is no parallel in western Christendom, except perhaps in the strictest Religious Orders.” [Bishop KALLISTOS (Timothy Ware), *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 300-301.]

In cases of uncertainty, each should seek the advice of his/her spiritual father. The following statement is extremely important to consider when we speak of fasting and fasting rules in the Church: “At all times it is essential to bear in mind that ‘you are not under the law but under the grace’ [Rom. 6:14], and that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life’ [2 Cor. 3:6]. The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism; ‘for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’ [Rom. 14:1].”

Lent.

The Lenten Fast (which is the period that most people consider to be 'Lent') starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on [Holy Saturday](#) (not to be confused with [Easter Saturday](#), the Saturday *after* Easter). This is a period of 46 days. However, the six Sundays within the period are not fast days (Sundays are always feast days in the Christian calendar) and therefore not counted in the 40 days of Lent.

The liturgical period of Lent also begins on Ash Wednesday, however it ends on the evening of [Holy Thursday \(Maundy Thursday\)](#). In addition, [Palm Sunday](#) (or alternatively the day before Palm Sunday) is sometimes considered to be the last day of Lent. This is incorrect and based on a misunderstanding about the liturgical periods of Lent and [Holy Week](#). They are not exclusive of each other, and Lent in fact continues into Holy Week (see above), meaning that the liturgical season of Lent ends on Holy Thursday.

Purple is the color most associated with Lent - during this period purple church vestments (altar cloths and the priests' liturgical garments) are used. The purple is symbolic in two ways: it is the traditional color of mourning (recalling Jesus' death) and also symbolic of royalty (celebrating Christ's coming as King).

In Eastern Orthodox Christianity Lent is called ‘Great Lent’ and is the most important fasting period of the year, in preparation for the most important celebration of

the year, [Pascha](#) (Orthodox Easter Sunday). As in Western Christianity, the period of Lent differs in its dates from year to year, with the dates defined by the date of Pascha, which is a moveable feast. Great Lent

begins on Clean Monday (the beginning of the 7th week before Pascha) and runs for 40 days (including Sundays) until [Lazarus Saturday](#) (the day before Palm Sunday). Fasting continues until the morning of Pascha.

### Greek Orthodox Guidelines for Fasting During Lent

The Church's traditional teaching on fasting is not widely known or followed in our day. For those Christians who seek to keep a more disciplined fast, the following information may be helpful.

Though the rules may appear quite strict to those who have not seen them before, they were developed with all of the faithful, not only monks, in mind. (Monks do not eat meat, so rules regarding the eating of meat cannot have been written with them in mind. Similarly rules regarding marital abstinence apply only to the laity and married clergy.) Though few laymen are able to keep the rule in its fullness, it seems best to present it mostly without judgement of what level is "appropriate" for the laity, since this is a matter best worked out in each Christian's own setting, under the guidance of his spiritual fathers.

**Non-fasting Periods.** For the Christian, all foods are clean. When no fast is prescribed, no food is forbidden.

#### Weekly Fast

Unless a fast-free period has been declared, Orthodox Christians are to keep a strict fast every Wednesday and Friday. The following foods are avoided: Meat, including poultry, and any meat products such as lard and meat broth (Fish meaning fish with backbones; shellfish are permitted). Eggs and dairy products (milk, butter, cheese, etc.) Olive oil. A literal interpretation of the rule forbids only olive oil. Especially where olive oil is not a major part of the diet, the rule is sometimes taken to include all vegetable oils, as well as oil products such as margarine. Wine and other alcoholic drink. In the Slavic tradition, beer is often permitted on fast days.

#### How Much?

Sad to say, it is easy to keep the letter of the fasting rule and still practice gluttony. When fasting, we should eat simply and modestly. Monastics eat only one full meal a day on strict fast days, two meals on "Wine and oil" days (see below). Laymen are not usually encouraged to limit meals in this way: consult your priest.

#### Exceptions

The Church has always exempted small children, the sick, the very old, and pregnant and nursing mothers from strict fasting . . . Exceptions to the fast based on

medical necessity (as with diabetes) are always allowed.

**Communion Fast** So that the Body and Blood of our Lord may be the first thing to pass our lips on the day of communion, we abstain from all food and drink from the time that we retire (or midnight, whichever comes first) the night before. Married couples should abstain from sexual relations the night before communion.

. . . .

#### The Lenten Fast

Great Lent is the longest and strictest fasting season of the year.

**Week before Lent** ("Cheesefare Week"): Meat and other animal products are prohibited, but eggs and dairy products are permitted, even on Wednesday and Friday.

**First Week of Lent:** Only two full meals are eaten during the first five days, on Wednesday and Friday after the Presanctified Liturgy. Nothing is eaten from Monday morning until Wednesday evening, the longest time without food in the Church year. (Few laymen keep these rules in their fullness). For the Wednesday and Friday meals, as for all weekdays in Lent, meat and animal products, fish, dairy products, wine and oil are avoided. On Saturday of the first week, the usual rule for Lenten Saturdays begins (see below).

Weekdays in the **Second through Sixth Weeks:** The strict fasting rule is kept every day: avoidance of meat, meat products, fish, eggs, dairy, wine and oil.

Saturdays and Sundays in the Second through Sixth Weeks: Wine and oil are permitted; otherwise the strict fasting rule is kept.

**Holy Week:** . . . The Fast of Great and Holy Friday is the strictest fast day of the year: even those who have not kept a strict Lenten fast are strongly urged not to eat on this day. . . .

On Annunciation and Palm Sunday, fish is also permitted.

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Those who attempt to keep the Church's traditional fast will find that, though the temptations to pride and legalism are real, the spiritual benefits are great. A return to more diligent fasting could play a large part in the spiritual renewal of our Orthodox churches.