

## GENERAL & SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

**Regarding the Temple:** In our tradition, the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy. Prior to divine services, or during coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety!

**Sick/Emergency Calls/Institutional Visitations:** are answered as requests are received. All visitations are by request. Call to schedule an appointment.

**Confessions:** Are heard one half-hour before every service at Holy Assumption, and once a month at Ss. Peter & Paul. Special arrangements by necessity, and thereby, appointment only.

**Sacraments of Illumination:** In the case of infants, Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist are administered on ordinary Sundays of the church year, preferably in the context of Divine Liturgy. At least one sponsor must be of the Orthodox Faith and in good sacramental standing. The newly baptized must have one name that is Biblical or Christian in its origin.

**What is Church Membership?** By regulation, active membership in the church consists not merely in the payment of a set sum, or by fulfilling a *minimum* sacramental obligation, but rather in participation in the life of the church (commensurate with your physical ability). This includes entering into the spirit of the faith through regular and frequent attendance, participation in the divine mysteries, sustained financial support (at a percentage that reflects your ability), and adherence to the parish, diocesan, and national church statutes.

**Receiving Communion:** while all are welcome to pray with us, we politely offer a reminder that the Orthodox Church maintains a closed communion. All are welcome to Antidoron bread following the Divine Liturgy, but only prepared Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist. Orthodox Christians do not commune in non-Orthodox churches, and the non-Orthodox are not communed in an Orthodox Church. Thank you!

**Lapsed Members:** You are always welcome home, and we need you! Generally speaking, sincere Confession, Communion, and regular attendance are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Elijah for specific details.

**New Members/Adult Chrismation:** new members are always welcome. In the case of interested adults seeking Chrismation, a period of catechesis prescribed by the pastor is necessary before the administration of Holy Mysteries. An Orthodox sponsor is required.

**Weddings:** A minimum six-month notice is requested. Either Bride or Bride-groom must be an Orthodox Christian, and a parishioner in good standing. Dispensations may be required for inter-faith marriages (the marriage of an Orthodox & any non-Orthodox person). Banns of matrimony published 3 weeks before ceremony. No Weddings performed during fasting seasons!!!

**Burial in Church Cemetery:** Burial in consecrated ground is reserved for the Orthodox and their spouses/children. Charity burials, or odd circumstances are at the rector's discretion. It is strongly encouraged to hold viewings and visitation of the reposed in the church.

**Our Stewardship of the Church:** "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from Thee and belongs to Thee. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

**Prayer When Lighting A Candle:** "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

# HOLY ASSUMPTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

629 Sunshine Avenue • Central City, Pa. 15926

## SS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tipple Road • Goodtown, Pa. 15530



*Very Rev. Archpriest Elijah J. Bremer, Rector*  
412 Short Cut Road • Alum Bank, Pa 15521  
814-977-7397 • otets.ilya@yahoo.com

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost,  
29 September 2024**

*"For many are called, but few are chosen"*  
**(Matthew 22: 14)**

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE 29 SEPTEMBER – 6 OCTOBER 2024

<b>Sunday 29 September Tone 5</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost Sunday After Exultation of Cross</b> Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4 Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14	<b>8:40 am</b> , Hours of Prayer (PH) <b>9:00 am</b> , Divine Liturgy* (PH) * Panakhyda, + <b>Steve Slifco</b> , req. by Joann Harris
<b>Sunday 6 October Tone 6</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost Conception of St. John the Baptist</b> Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4: 6-15 Gospel 1: Luke 5: 1-11 Gospel 2: Luke 1: 5-25	<b>8:40 am</b> , Hours of Prayer (CC) <b>9:00 am</b> , Divine Liturgy* (CC) * Coffee Social to follow

**~Important Considerations ~**

All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.

EXCITING NEWS FOR THIS FALL & UPCOMING NATIVITY SEASON

Fr. Elijah is very pleased to announce a variety of activities and blessings in the upcoming months:

- ✦ *First, we are overjoyed to welcome Robert Hiller to the Catechumenate, and his fiancée, Amy, as an enthusiastic inquirer. We are blessed to have both Rob & Amy, and look forward to setting a schedule for his reception into the church!*
- ✦ *Next, we will have our annual St. Nicholas Day Slava and Social on 22 December. As an added treat, Windber-based accordionist Ed Zabloutney will enhance our social celebration with traditional western, and some Slavic Christmas music. St. Nicholas might just make an appearance! Please, plan to attend. Family, friends, and well-wishers are invited. Any proceeds will go toward our annual charity adoption project. We will, once more, adopt a family in need for Christmas!*
- ✦ *Finally (this is still in the planning stages), in conjunction with the Communications & Media students at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is scheduled to appear on a WJAC-TV Christmas special (set to air on 25 December 2024). As part of the experience, Fr. Michael Senyo and volunteer singers from our brother parish of Ss. Cyril & Methodius in Jeannette will help augment our own group, and perform Orthodox Christmas Carols and music for the Nativity Season. Fr. Elijah is working closely with Dr. Rick Bukowski to make this event a huge success and to help us increase the profile of our church in the local community. We will (most likely) have to decorate the church early to accommodate the filming schedule.*

If you haven't been keyed in to the operations and workings of our church, you might want to revisit us. There are wonderful things happening, and we need participants, not observers! Glory to God for all of the good things He is making happen through us!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**2025 Liturgical Calendars:** as of 9/28, the list of calendar sponsors is Whitehorse Excavating, Siding Surgeons, an Anonymous Donor, the Hiller, Hrinko, Kaniuk, McClellan, & Swirchak Families. Thank you, and Many Years! All information will be confirmed with the publisher (St. Innocent Press) at the end of this month, and the final result will be printed on the basis of paid sponsorships, not just pledged.

**Altar & Volunteer Society Meeting:** will be this Thursday, 10/3 at 6:30 pm. All are welcome!

**Archdiocesan Assembly:** will be held on 2 November at the Cathedral Parish of St. Alexander Nevsky in Allison Park. Each parish should send at least one voting delegate. Additional observers are welcome. Please speak with Fr. Elijah if you can attend and represent our parish. Lunch is provided.

**Community Trick-Or-Treat Night:** is scheduled for Saturday, 26 October from 6 to 8 pm. We will again distribute treat bags. All donations of can be placed in the church hall between now and 20 October. We will pack treat bags on Sunday, 20 October immediately following Divine Liturgy. Volunteers for packing bags and for distributing treats are needed, and, as always, much appreciated. Thank you!

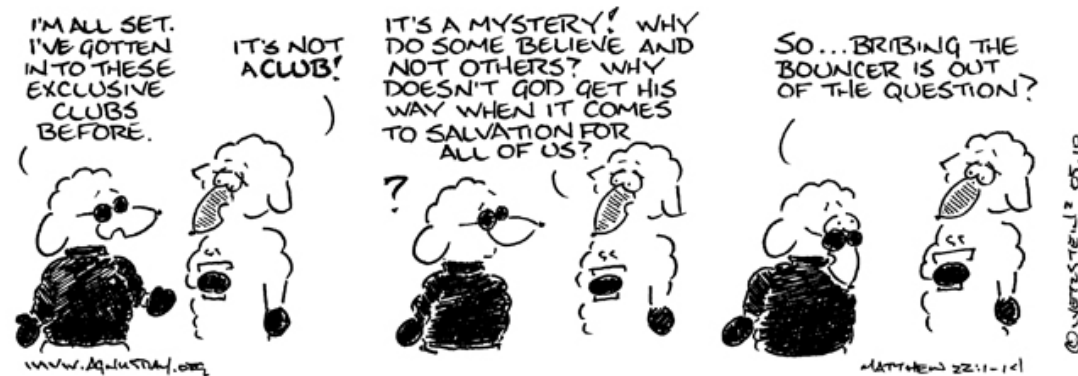
**Shade/Central City Food Pantry:** will hold a purse & prize bingo and basket raffle on Sunday, 20 October at Queen of Angels Social Hall. A flyer with additional information is posted in the church. Seating is limited to 200, and tickets are \$30 per person. Speak with Sharon Swirchak, or call 814.754.5584.

**Duquesne University Tamboritzans at North Star High School:** on 12 October, the Duquesne University Tamboritzans will perform a benefit concert at North Star High School. All proceeds benefit All Saints Church Mission Trip. Sharon Swirchak and the Altar/Volunteer Society are reserving tickets for any of our parishioners who wish to attend. If interested, please speak with Sharon.

**Pro-Life Event:** Bishop Carroll Catholic High School will host the 2024 Pro-Life Prayer Breakfast on October 19 at 9:00 am. The event is sponsored by the Cambria-Somerset Citizens Concerned for Life. All sympathetic parties are invited to attend. The keynote speaker is Kristan Hawkins, president of Student for Life America. Suggested donation is \$15. Contact Ann Pole at 814.472.8584, or Steve Dillon at 814.241.2772.

**Upcoming Veterans Event:** if you are a veteran of any branch of the armed forces, you are invited to Admiral Peary AVTS on Thursday, 7 November at 8 am, or 12 pm for a free meal (breakfast in the morning, lunch in the afternoon). The address is 948 Benjamin Franklin Highway, Ebensburg, Pa. 15931. Culinary Arts students will prepare the meal, and Cosmetology students will also offer a free haircut or non-chemical treatment. You may call 814.472.6490, extension 335 to reserve a spot. Our own aspiring chef, Nathanael, will be part of the afternoon crew.

**Advance Notice:** Daylight Saving Time: ends on 3 November 2024. Remember to "fall back" one hour before bed on 11/3.



**MANY ARE CALLED, FEW ARE CHOSEN**

*by: excerpted from Fr. Anthony Hughes*



Today's parable needs a little explanation. Placed in its context the message is much more meaningful. The parable has three parts. In the first, a king sends servants to invite guests to his son's marriage feast, but they make light of it, refuse to come and kill the messengers. The angry king sends his troops to wipe them out and burn their city. In the second part, the king sends more servants out to invite others to the feast, everyone they find, the good and the bad. The third part deals with the discovery of a guest at the banquet that does not have on a wedding garment. He is cast out of the assembly into a place of darkness and gnashing teeth.

A major theme of the Lord's life was his criticism of the religious structures and authorities of his time. When Jesus curses the fig tree because it bears no fruit it is taken as a symbol of the spiritual deadness of the Temple cult. The invited guests who snubbed their noses at the king and were punished represent those who turned Judaism into a religion of law and ritual forgetting the spirit that

animated it. The extreme reaction of the king represents God's judgment on the religious authorities that remembered the law, but who had forgotten the "weightier" things, mercy, justice and compassion.

The servants who were murdered in the parable are the prophets. The second group of servants who were sent out is the Apostles and Disciples of Christ. Those who accepted the invitation included the poor, the sick, and sinners of all kinds, the depressed, the outcasts of society, the Gentiles, the good and the bad. The man who was not properly dressed was a wolf in sheep's clothing. He represents the one who slips into the assembly with evil intent. The early church was embroiled in an argument between the Judaizers who wanted to impose Judaic laws on the Church and the followers of St. Paul who opposed them. Thankfully, St. Paul won the day then, but the temptation to return to that stultifying form of legal dogmatism remained a problem and still does to this day. I daresay that Jesus would have much the same to say to us as he did to the rulers of the Temple cult.

There is a popular slogan among evangelicals these days, "What Would Jesus Do?" That is a good question, but a dangerous one. I tell you right now that Jesus would not do what we think he would do. We do not typically make the decisions he would make. Unless we are ready to be numbered among sinners and crucified we'd best not ask that question. Jesus loved to associate with outcasts and sinners. He loved them so much his enemies said that he was one of them. They called Jesus a sinner and demon-possessed. Even his family thought him crazy. He angered religious authorities, breaking ritual laws and custom, so much that he was considered irreligious. We must be careful if we say we want to follow Jesus. "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you," he told his followers.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann taught that Jesus represents the end of religion. He did not come to found a new one. Jesus came to bring life not to construct still another Temple cult. "There will come a time when those who worship God will not worship in Jerusalem or on this mountain, but in spirit and truth." The Church is not a club for the elite, for the righteous few. We have a name for that sort of thing and that is "cult". The Church is not a cult it is a hospital for souls. "The Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath."

There is not one among us that does not need to change. Not one. In one way or the other every life is in need of correction. If you remove all sinners from the church you will have no one left. "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." In this light the "wedding garment" becomes a garment of love as opposed to a "garment of law". The guest who did not don his wedding garment was one who would be happy to cast the first, second, third and last stone. Therefore, he does not belong at the banquet or in the kingdom of heaven. Heaven has need of only one king.

*Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up"*

*- James, 5: 14-15*

	Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Valeria Fr. Jim	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Sasha Fr. Ray	Abp. Michael Mat. Suzanne Mat. Joanne	Fr. Michael Mat. Laryssa	
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Bernadette	Janet	Katie
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna	Damian
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter	Ashley
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy	Mike
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick	Agnes
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara	Michelle M.
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Jaida	Scott	Jon
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan	Julie
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie	Ruth
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis	Jeremiah
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter	Lawrence
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry	Matthew Julie
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis	Gordon
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne	Shirley-Ruth
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven	Jim
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette	Darren
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine	Joseph
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain	Michael
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew	Tim
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave	Ashley
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise	Rachelle
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike	Jean
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary	Maria
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith	Roxanne
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann	Christine
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene	Kim
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie	Betty
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim	Antoinette
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie	Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.	Donna
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda	Gloria
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady	Betty
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl	Gail
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige	Michelle B.
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda	Gladys
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry	Ansley
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Rob	Matthew
Michelle N.					

***Do you have prayer intentions? Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!***



## WARNINGS AT THE WEDDING FEAST

by: Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick



The Gospel passage this morning is one that we do not hear every year in our lectionary. In this passage from Matthew, the Lord tells the parable of a king who gives a marriage feast for his son. He sends out his servants to call those who have been invited, but the guests refuse to come. They all have more important things to do, and some of them even kill the servants.

In this version of the parable, the king in his anger destroys the city of those who refuse to come. And then he tells his servants to go out into the streets and find new people to attend the feast. This parable parallels the story told in Luke 14, where we hear about the specific excuses of those who will not come—one has just gotten married, another has bought some land, another has bought some cattle, etc. (Luke 14:16-24).

This portion of the parable as heard in the first century served as a warning to the Jewish people—God’s original “wedding guests.” They were the chosen people. But when He sent His Son Jesus to gather them into the wedding banquet which is the Church, they would not receive Him and instead killed Him. And then God permitted the Romans to come and destroy even the great Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70. It remains destroyed to this day.

And those who are gathered in from the streets to be part of the wedding banquet represent the Gentiles, who are now called into the Church to feast with Christ. We should not leave that interpretation there, however. This is not just about Jews and Gentiles. This is about anyone who has been given the invitation to the feast of faith and refuses to take advantage of it. Yes, the Jews as a nation lost their status as the chosen people because they would not join the new chosen people, which is the Church. But any Orthodox Christians can also lose his status as being among the chosen if he will not accept Christ’s invitation to the feast of faith. Just because we are formal members of a parish does not mean that we are feasting at the banquet. It is not only Jews who have lost their place at the table—whole parishes and even nations who have abandoned Christ have found themselves outside the communion of the chosen.

That is why this parable should serve as a warning to any church and to any Christian who do not avail themselves of what the Son of God is offering as He calls us into the marriage banquet. You cannot count yourself as a wedding guest if you do not show up to the wedding. It is not enough merely to have received the invitation. It is not enough merely to send a gift or a card. You have to show up. You have to participate. You have to be engaged. Or else you are not a guest at the banquet. But there is more to this story.

This version of the parable of the marriage feast here in Matthew 22 adds another detail not found in Luke’s account—the man who comes to the feast and is found without a wedding garment. The king is visiting with his guests, and he sees this man without a wedding garment on. And he asks him how he got in there without that garment. And the man says nothing. He is “speechless.” So the king casts him out from the feast.

Now, this may seem like a strange detail—why would this man be cast out of the marriage feast just because he’s not wearing the right clothing? Didn’t the king insist on finding people out in the streets to come to the feast? Are they really all supposed to be suited up? There is a cultural detail we need to know to understand this piece of the story. In that time and place, the wedding garment was provided by the host and given to the guests as they came into the feast. So why did this man not have one on? The answer is that he must have been given one but either refused to put it on or that he put it on and then later decided to take it off.

Even though we don’t hear this Gospel every year, the image presented here of the wedding garment should be quite familiar to us, as it is sung about at the Bridegroom Matins services served in the evenings of the first part of Holy Week. It is one of the most famous hymns and most famous melodies in the Byzantine musical tradition. Here is the text:

*I see Thy bridal chamber adorned, O my Savior, but I have no wedding garment that I may enter.  
Make radiant the vesture of my soul, O Giver of Light, and save me.*

This is the prayer of someone who has heard the call and come to the wedding banquet and is standing outside ready to come in. He sees the bridal chamber “adorned” but confesses that he has “no wedding garment” so that he can enter. And he prays to the “Giver of Light” that He would make his soul’s vesture “radiant” so that he can enter into the bridal chamber and therefore be saved. So what is this “wedding garment” for us?

It is the grace of baptism. If you have ever been to an Orthodox baptism, you know that a white baptismal garment is placed on the newly baptized Christian. It is perhaps less noticeable for babies than it is for adults, but there is still that white garment put on. This is the “wedding garment” that is needed for entrance into the marriage feast. But the physical garment is a symbol of the garment of baptism, which is Christ. “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” as we sing, quoting St. Paul (Gal. 3:27). Christ Himself is the “wedding garment,” the “vesture of [the] soul” that we sing to be made “radiant.”

But we should not think that, just because we have entered into the marriage feast that begins by becoming part of the Church through baptism and eating and drinking from the Table of the Lord—the Holy Eucharist—that we are thereby guaranteed to be able to stay at the feast. This man from the parable was definitely at the feast. And he had been given the wedding garment. But when the King came for him, he was not wearing his garment. He was not “wearing” Christ. So he was bound, hand and foot, and “cast into outer darkness”; “there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” Why? Because he did not obey the Lord of the feast.

So we have two warnings in this passage: The first is for those who were invited to the marriage feast but refuse to come—these are those who make excuses. Historically, they were the Jews, who did not heed Christ’s call and instead killed Him. And the Gentiles were therefore invited in and took their place. But this applies even now to any who are invited but do not come. This is not just about Jews and Gentiles. It is also about “members” and “not yet members.” Just because someone is a “member” or has an Orthodox Christian heritage does not mean that he is actually at the marriage feast. He has to respond to the invitation and enter in.

The second warning is for those who accept the invitation but do not do what is needed in order to remain at the feast. The man found without his wedding garment was cast out by the king. And if we do not keep the wedding garment on for ourselves, keeping Christ on by imitating Him, by repenting of our sins, by receiving the sacraments, by sacrificing ourselves and our possessions, then we who once put on Christ by baptism have put *off* Christ by our failure to obey Him.

May we see the beauty of the feast and enter in. And coming to that great marriage banquet, our prayer will be that glorious hymn from Holy Week:

*I see Thy bridal chamber adorned, O my Savior, but I have no wedding garment that I may enter.  
Make radiant the vesture of my soul, O Giver of Light, and save me.*

To the Giver of Light and the Lord of the Feast be all glory, honor and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.