

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

30th Sunday Post-Pentecost, Theophany of the Lord, 19 January 2025

“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”
(Matthew 3: 15)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 19 – 26 JANUARY 2025

Sunday
19 January
Tone 5

30th Sunday Post-Pentecost
Theophany of the Lord

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Gospel 1: Matthew 3:13-17
Gospel 2: Mark 1:9-11

8:40 am, Hours (CC)
9:00 am, Liturgy (CC)
Sanctification of Water

Sunday
26 January
Tone 6

31st Sunday Post-Pentecost

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1: 15-17
Gospel 1: Luke 18: 35-43
Gospel 2: Matthew 4: 12-17

8:40 am, Hours of Prayer (PH)
9:00 am, Divine Liturgy (PH)
Sanctification of Water
Panakhya: + John Slifco & + Jerry Klotz, req. by Sue Slifco-Klotz

~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.

INAUGURATION DAY, 2025 – KEEPING AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

Excerpted from: Fr. Ted Bobosh



The petitions of the Divine liturgy for civil authorities are not asking that they accomplish their political agendas, but only that God will be merciful to them, and through them to us. A prayer the priest recites in St Basil's Liturgy makes this abundantly clear: "Remember, O Lord, this country and all civil authorities: grant them a secure and lasting peace; speak good things into their hearts concerning your Church and all your people, that we, in their tranquility, may lead a calm and peaceful life in all godliness and sanctity." When we pray in the Spirit for our president, the congress, the supreme court or for any civil authority, we aren't telling God to make them succeed in their political agenda (even if we agree with that agenda or those policies). What we want and need from civil authority is that they be at peace and that they see the church at prayer as an essential blessing for the country and allow us to obey the Gospel commandments. We want the government to act peaceably towards us so that we, in their tranquility, may lead a calm and peaceful life in all godliness and sanctity. The prayer is not "allow us each to do whatever we want" but allow us to be holy as God commands – do not impose on us behaviors which are ungodly and unholy. The only political agenda we are pushing is that our civil leaders be granted a secure peace so that

the entire world, including us Christians, can live in peace, godliness and sanctity. That attitude in prayer means allowing the Gospel to guide our prayers for our politicians. Political partisanship is not part of our prayer – God's peace is.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Nativity Greeting: for the 40 days of the Nativity Season, we use the greeting "Christ is Born, Glorify Him! Христосъ раждается, славите его! Christos razhdayetsya! Slavite Yego!" Today, on the feast of Theophany, you may hear the less-used greeting "Christos Khreshchayetsya" ("Christ is Baptized!") and the response "Vo Yordani" ("In the Jordan").

Today: is the Theophany of Christ. This is a major holy day (one of the Great Feasts of the Church). Major holy days in the Orthodox Church are important because they serve as key moments to commemorate significant events in the life of Jesus Christ and the Theotokos, allowing us to deeply connect with our faith through the celebration of liturgy, essentially acting as spiritual milestones throughout the liturgical year. We will bless water during the Divine Liturgy today. Please feel free to bring jars/containers for holy water. Dispose of old holy water by pouring it around the foundation of your home, or bring it to the church and pour it around the foundation of the church.

The Winter Weather: please exercise caution during periods of foul weather. No one will ever tell you it's ok to "skip" church, but use your best judgment when traveling in poor conditions. The same is true of parking and entering/exiting the church. Please do so with caution, and at your own risk.

Fr. Elijah's Schedule and House Blessing: please note that my semester doctoral intensive begins on 1/20, and runs for two weeks. This encompasses Monday through Friday from 12 noon till 9 pm (the professors for this semester are all on Pacific Time). House blessings will occur once the intensive is over (so, beginning in February). In the meantime, in the event of an emergency from 1/20 through 1/31, please contact Fr. George Johnson @ 814-539-8613, or Fr. Dragan Vokovic @ 814 244-4063. Thank you for your consideration.

Upcoming Archdiocesan Youth Event: there will be a skating party at PPG Place on Sunday, 2 February from 3:00 pm to 4:45 pm. All are invited, not just children. Contact Fr. Alexander Cadman to register, or for more information: alexandercadman@outlook.com. Cost is \$17 per person, and must be pre-paid by 27 January.

Nativity Decorations: may be taken down at any point. Volunteers are appreciated. Please let Fr. Elijah know so that an announcement about a work session can be printed. Also, on Saturday, 2/1, there will be a 1 pm cleaning party at the church to tidy the main church and clean the bathrooms in the hall. Help is appreciated. Thank you!



THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER IN THEOPHANY

From: Orthodoxy 101



Water plays a central role in Theophany, symbolizing purity, life, and transformation. It's perceived not only as a physical substance but also as a spiritual one, carrying profound connotations within Orthodox Christianity. During Theophany, water is blessed and believed to take on holy properties, becoming a conduit for sanctification and an emblem of divine grace.

As I delve into the scriptures, it's clear that water carries a duality of destruction and regeneration. In the Old Testament, it is seen in the great flood that cleanses the world of sin, and in the New Testament, it appears as the waters of the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. This baptismal water signifies a new beginning, washing away the old self and refreshing the spirit akin to the rebirth of Creation after the deluge.

The practice of blessing bodies of water during Theophany also holds symbolic weight. Orthodox Christians often gather at rivers, lakes, or seas, where the blessing is performed. This ritual signifies the sanctification of nature and is

a reminder of the participation of all creation in the redeeming act of Christ's baptism.

Moreover, Theophany water is used throughout the year for various sanctifying purposes, reinforcing its significance far beyond the feast day:

- Blessing homes
- Healing purposes
- During other sacraments and rituals

In baptism, the symbolism of water reaches its zenith. It represents a tomb and a womb simultaneously — a tomb for dying to sin and a womb for giving birth to new life in Christ. Orthodox faithful view their own baptism as a personal participation in Jesus' baptism. They're reminded that through the waters, they're initiated into the faith, emerging as changed individuals ready to embark on their spiritual journey.

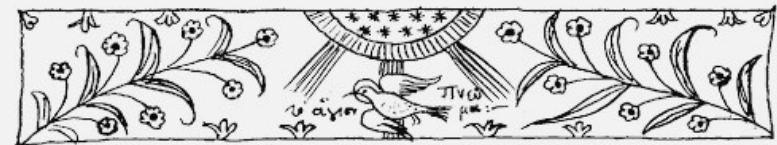
In the liturgy, the use of water serves as a material and mystical link between the physical and the divine. The blessing of the waters during Theophany is a vivid enactment of divine incarnation and sanctification, encapsulating the essence of God's closeness and the transformative power of His presence in the world.

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	Abp. Melchisedek	Abp. Michael	Fr. Michael	Mat. Valeria	
Mat. Sasha	Mat. Suzanne		Mat. Laryssa	Fr. Jim	
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.	Mike	Hannah	Mike	Lubomyr	

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!



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THEOPHANY IN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

From: Orthodoxy 101



As I delve deeper into the importance of Theophany, it's essential to understand the profound impact it has on the spiritual lives of Orthodox Christians. This feast is far more than a mere commemoration; it's a celebration of Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River. This event marks the manifestation of God as the Holy Trinity to the world — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — providing a profound revelation of Divine truth that resonates with believers.

Theophany stands as a pivotal point where heaven meets earth. During the liturgical services, I've witnessed the vivid imagery used to illustrate this junction, especially through the Great Blessing of the Waters. This ritual is not only about purification but also signifies the sanctification of the entire creation. Orthodox theology teaches that when the waters are blessed, they become a means of spiritual renewal, symbolizing the washing away of sins.

Indeed, every aspect of Theophany is imbued with deep symbolism which adherents internalize and reflect upon. The icons depicting the feast portray the voice of God the Father proclaiming Jesus as His beloved Son, the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, and the figures of angels in awe. These are not just static images but invitations for us to contemplate the mystery of God becoming manifest in the world.

Orthodox Christians believe that participating in Theophany services invokes a renewal of their own baptismal vows. The prayers and hymns are designed to draw us closer to the heart of our faith, where I've felt a personal call to embrace the transformative teachings of the gospel. It's during Theophany that we reaffirm our commitment to live a life in accordance with Christ's example.

By observing Theophany, I'm reminded of the unity between the cosmic and the personal elements of my faith. The feast illustrates that salvation history is not confined to the past but is an ongoing narrative that continues within the life of every believer. Through this understanding, we grasp the scope of God's redemptive work, which is both intimate and universal.

The history of Theophany stretches back to the earliest days of Christianity. In the Christian tradition, the feast commemorates not only Christ's baptism but also His first public manifestation to the world. Theophany's origins are tightly interwoven with the liturgical traditions that emerged in the early Church.

Liturgical records from as early as the 4th century detail the observance of the feast, illustrating its ancient roots and enduring importance. It was considered a major feast, sometimes even correlated with the celebration of Easter, accentuating its significance in the context of Christian redemptive events.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Theophany is sometimes referred to as 'Epiphany,' a term that signifies a divine revelation. The feast is deeply rooted in the scriptural accounts of the Gospels, particularly in the works of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These texts detail the event of Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, marking it as an occasion where the Heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Jesus, while a voice from Heaven proclaimed Him as the beloved Son. Celebrated on January 6th, this feast not only observes the baptism but also Christ's first miracle at the wedding of Cana, which occurs shortly thereafter according to the Gospel of John. This dual focus on baptism and miracle underscores the multifaceted nature of divine manifestation and the profound mystery of God's presence.

Orthodox Christians recognize this event as a cornerstone of their faith, as it reveals the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — to the world, and establishes the foundation for the sacrament of baptism. By looking at the roots of Theophany and its establishment in the early Christian Church, one gains a deeper appreciation for its central place in Orthodox ritual and doctrine. It continues to resonate through centuries as a powerful expression of faith, an acknowledgement of the divine mystery, and a call to a life transformed by the recognition of Jesus Christ's divinity.

In the rich tapestry of Orthodox Christianity, the Feast of Theophany stands out, particularly for its commemoration of the baptism of Jesus Christ. This moment in the Jordan River signifies far more than a mere ritual. It marks the beginning of Christ's public ministry and the divine approval of his mission on Earth. When I reflect upon this event, I'm moved by its profound significance, encapsulated in the voice from heaven declaring Jesus as the beloved Son.

Scripture recounts this pivotal moment with poignant clarity. As Saint John the Baptist lowers Jesus into the waters, the heavens open, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove — a scene capturing the full revelation of God's triune nature. The baptism thus serves as a direct manifestation of the Trinity, fortifying the relevance of Theophany in today's observances.

Beyond its doctrinal import, the baptism also symbolizes a model for personal transformation. In Orthodox tradition, followers re-commit to spiritual renewal, mirroring the purifying act that Jesus himself underwent. This moment beckons the faithful to embody Christ's virtues and fosters a profound connection to his journey.

Moreover, the baptism induces a ripple effect throughout the liturgical year. It's not merely an isolated event but a gateway to the subsequent narratives of Christ's life and teachings. Each year, as I celebrate this feast, I'm reminded of the seasons that follow — each echoing the resonant themes introduced by the baptism.

As the story of the baptism unfolds, the multifaceted themes interwoven in the Theophany celebration emerge starkly. Through liturgy and iconography, the Orthodox Church encapsulates the transformative power of water, the inauguration of Christ's ministry, and a life led by example. These threads bind the observance, not only to the past but also to our contemporary journey in faith. The baptism of Jesus Christ remains an enduring call to renew and deepen our spiritual lives in alignment with the core precepts of Orthodoxy.