

## 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."

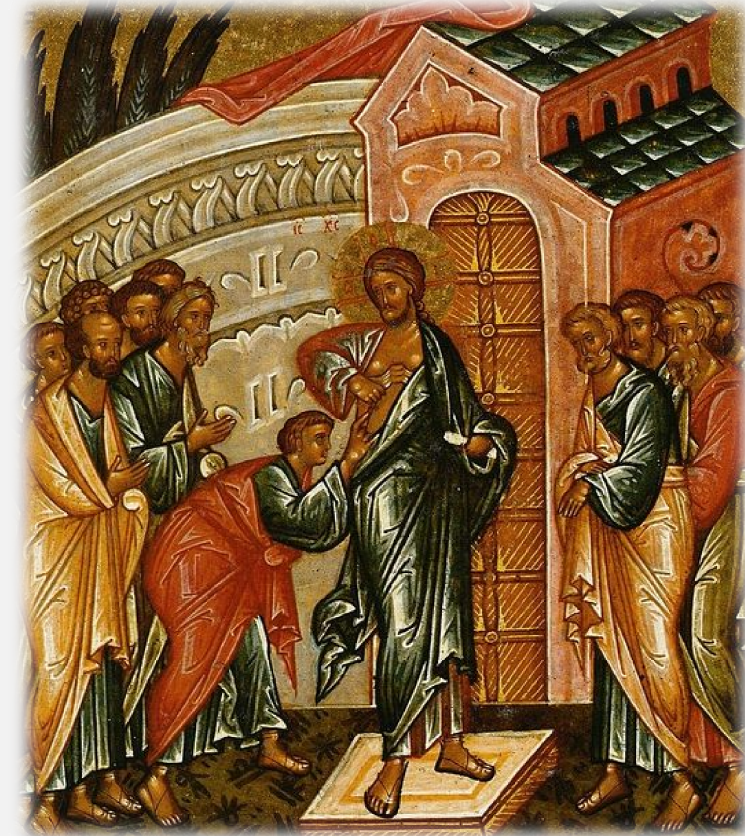
**Prayer When Lighting A Candle:** "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify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

**Sunday of St. Thomas, 27 April 2025**

*"... because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."*  
**(John 20: 29)**

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 27 APRIL – 4 MAY 2025

Sunday  
27 April  
Tone 1

**Sunday of St. Thomas  
Antipascha**

Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 5: 12-20  
Gospel: John 20: 19-31

8:45 am, Paschal Hours (PH)  
9:00 am, Liturgy (PH)

Sunday  
4 May  
Tone 2

**Third Sunday of Pascha  
The Myrrh-Bearing Women**

Epistle: Acts of the Apostle 6: 1-7  
Gospel: Mark 15: 43 – 16: 8

8:45 pm, Paschal Hours (CC)  
9:00 am, Divine Liturgy (CC)

Христос воскрес из мертвых, смертию смерть поправ, и сущим во гробех живот даровав!

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life!

**~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.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Paschal Greeting:** the greeting for the next 40 days is “Christ is Risen!” to which we respond “Indeed, He his Risen!” In Church Slavonic, we say Христовъ воскресъ! Khristósŭ voskrése! and the traditional response is Боугину воскресъ! Voístinu voskrése!

**Next Sunday:** coffee social will follow Divine Liturgy next Sunday, 5/4, at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church. We hope to see you for Liturgy and social! All are welcome!

**An Apology and a Thank You:** to all of our faithful parishioners, I would like to offer my sincere apologies for our recent schedule upheaval, as well as my gratitude for your prayers and support during our recovery from flu. Thank you, all. Christ is Risen!

**Red Taper Candles:** for the duration of the Paschal Season please use the red beeswax tapers for our sandboxes at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church! Glory to God these candles became available again!

**Memory Eternal, Christ is Risen:** Archpriest Alexander Poshyvajlo, 92 of Curtisville, West Deer Township, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday April 22, 2025 at home with his family by his side. He served St. Michael’s Orthodox Church, Curtisville, PA, where he had been the pastor for the past 62 years. Christ is Risen!

**Charity Projects:** thank you, all, for your kindness and generosity! We collected boxes full of dog and cat treats/food/supplies, as well as monetary donations for the Woman’s Help center, Johnstown. God bless your kindness! Christ is Risen!

**Schema-Archimandrite Panteleimon (Voepel) Reposes in the Lord:** the former abbot of Holy Cross Monastery (Wayne, West Virginia), Fr. Seraphim (recently tonsured Schema-Archimandrite Panteleimon, reposed in the Lord and was buried this Bright Week. Memory Eternal! Christ is Risen!



**CHRIST IS RISEN, LET NONE DISBELIEVE!**  
By: St. John Maximovich

When the words of the Lord had been fulfilled, that He had come to give His life for the salvation of many (cf. Matt. 20:28), then His disciples wavered in their faith. Forgotten were His words, that after His suffering, on the third day He would rise.

With sorrow the disciples of Christ said: *And we had hoped that He would save Israel* (Lk. 24:21) As it seemed, darkness had conquered light forever, the darkness of sin had conquered the Light of Truth. But at the very time when visible victory was still on the side of the enemies of Christ, Christ in actuality had already overthrown the foundations of hell and freed its captives, had conquered death and risen from the grave.

Thus not a few times the Lord has permitted His Church too to undergo diverse trials, during the course of which it seemed that her end and ruin had come. But after these trials even brighter did victorious TRUTH shine out!

The Roman emperors persecuted the Church, Julian the Apostate mocked, the iconoclasts destroyed. Their dominion ended in infamy, while the Church of God attracted to herself ever new followers, enlightening whole peoples and shining with eternal glory!

Now too the Orthodox Church is undergoing terrible trials, especially the Orthodox Russian people. In truth, as it was on Golgotha, the sun has been eclipsed over Holy Russia!

*They divided My garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots* (Ps. 21:19).

But have not her sons, perhaps, been sent over the whole surface of the earth for a purpose—so that all ends of the earth might turn to the Lord? Must we not yet more burn with zeal for true Christian life, so that the light of Orthodoxy may shine before men, and they may glorify our Father Who is in Heaven?!

The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church of Christ! (cf. Matt. 16:18).

*Death, where is thy sting, hell, where thy victory?* (1 Cor. 15:55).

God will arise, and His enemies will be scattered (cf. Ps. 67:2)!

Let us only take care that we ourselves be not numbered with those enemies. Let us preserve true faith and un-hypocritical love toward Christ, imitating John the Baptist and the myrrh-bearing women, who remained the whole time faithful to Christ, and not those who fled from Him at the time of danger, renounced Him, and betrayed Him for silver.

Let us rather suffer, remaining in the truth and leading a righteous life, than possess the temporary sweetness of sin! (cf. Heb. 11:25). Let us suffer together with Christ so that we may experience the true joy of His Resurrection! Let us endure everything so that we may reign with Him! (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12). And together with our Mother Church let us cry out: “Yesterday O Christ, I was buried with Thee, and today I rise with Thy arising. Yesterday I was crucified with Thee. Glorify me, O Savior, with Thee in Thy Kingdom” (Paschal canon).

*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. Sasha	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Laryssa	Abp. Michael Fr. Jim	Fr. Michael Mat. Sarah	Mat. Valeria	
Allison	Elaine	Charles	Katie	Mike	Pat
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	Scott	Jon	Rhonda
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
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	Matthew	James
Mike	Hannah	Mike	Lubomyr	Tom	Lilly

***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!***





## HIS BODILY WOUNDS AND OURS

*By: Fr. Philip LeMasters*

I was surprised a few years ago in one of my college classes when even the best students were surprised to learn that Christian hope for eternal life includes the resurrection of the body. They were comfortable thinking of human souls experiencing eternal life, but doubted that our actual physical bodies would have any part in the Kingdom of Heaven. Especially on this Sunday of St. Thomas, we celebrate how Christ's bodily resurrection is the basis of hope for our own. Today we proclaim that our Savior brings healing and transformation to whole, embodied persons, for that is how He conquered death on the third day.

As we continue to celebrate the glorious good news of this season of Pascha, we recall how Christ called doubting Thomas to faith in His great victory. "He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.' Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" Still bearing His wounds even in His glorified body as the God-Man, the Risen Christ brought Thomas to faith through the witness of His own deified flesh.

We have probably heard the story so many times that we have become deaf to its importance. Nonetheless, it remains the case that the Savior's resurrection is not an escape from the body or the physical world, but instead their healing and sanctification. Likewise, St. John referred in his epistle to that "which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it..." The Apostles saw the Lord after His resurrection with their eyes, touched Him with their hands, heard His voice with their ears, felt His breath on their skin, and even saw Him eat food. (Luke 24: 36-43) The good news that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" comes from a resurrection in glory of a complete Person with a human body marked by the wounds of torture and crucifixion. His resurrection is not an escape from the body, but its fulfillment. The Eternal Word Who created us by breathing into the dust of the earth now breathes physically on His Disciples as He empowers them to carry out His ministry of bringing salvation to the world, even to the point of forgiving sins in His name. Here are powerful signs of what it means for human beings to be in the likeness of God and partakers of the divine nature by grace.

These are not merely details of ancient history, but reminders that we participate in Christ's Passover from death to life by how we live as whole, embodied persons. We were baptized physically with water into Christ's death in order to put Him on like a garment, in order to rise with Him into a new life of holiness. To be blunt, the Christian life is not simply about our emotions, ideas, or opinions; it is not reduced to what we say we believe. For those who are truly in Christ will live in ways that manifest the brilliant life of the resurrection, that radiate the holy light of the Savior's great victory over sin and death. As St. John put it, "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."

We participate in the new life of our Risen Lord by walking into His light, by embracing as fully as we can the blessed healing of the human being that He has brought to the world. Christ's Passion was not a matter simply of His feelings, words, or ideas, but of His complete Self-offering through crucifixion, burial, descent to Hades, and resurrection from the dead. He rises in glory with His wounds, and we cannot begin to make sense of His salvation without speaking of the most bodily of realities, such as torture, execution, death, and burial in a tomb that was later found to be empty.

We are probably all tempted at times to think how much easier it would be to serve God if we did not have our particular set of bodily limitations and problems. Some are challenged by physical or mental illness, while others wrestle with passions for the pleasures of food, sex, alcohol, or other substances. Eating disorders and unrealistic expectations of what their bodies should look like ruin the health and well-being of some, while others struggle to accept that their male or female bodies are signs of who they are in God's image and likeness. Many today ignore the sacredness of the intimate bodily union of man and woman, which makes two into one flesh. The epidemic of pornography in our culture reflects a repudiation of the sacredness of the flesh and blood through which we encounter the living icons of Christ. Some refuse to honor the bodies of their neighbors by becoming blind to the humanity of children in the womb, of people with skin of a different color, or of terminally ill patients in chronic pain. And whether it is greed, sloth, anger, or refusal to help the needy with our time, attention, and resources, there is no sin that does not show itself physically in some way in the lives of those who struggle with it.



No matter what someone's particular struggles, weaknesses, or failings are, we must respond with compassion, for we too are among the sick who need the Physician. Nonetheless, no physical condition can ever make us sin or do evil. The problem is not that we have bodies, but that we choose to remain in the tomb, that we would rather walk in the darkness than in the light. For it is no sin to be ill or to be tempted in any way. The Lord Himself suffered terribly on the cross and was tempted. It is a sin, however, to let any of our wounds become excuses for not walking in the light as best we can. It is a sin to let anything fill our lives with such darkness that we refuse to open our eyes—and our lives—to the good news of the resurrection. It is a sin when we think that God must remove this or that problem in order to earn our faithfulness, in order to be worthy of our devotion. As we celebrate Christ's great victory over sin and death, we must not be afraid to expose our wounded selves to Him with humility as we say with St. Thomas "My Lord and my God!"

Remember that the Savior has taken upon Himself even the worst bodily wounds. It is through them that He has brought life out of death and brilliant light out of the darkest tomb. He has conquered even death itself. Do you see what that means? Even our darkest inclinations ultimately do not stand a chance against His glory, if we will only expose them to Him, if we will only offer them to Him for healing. And though it probably will not happen instantaneously, our wounds will find healing as we move step by step further into His light. Darkness is simply the absence of light and it disappears when it is illumined. The same Lord Who conquered Hades and the tomb for our salvation, and Who invited Thomas to touch His wounds, will bring us as whole, embodied persons into the new day of His Kingdom if we will only keep

turning as best we can from the darkness as we struggle to live faithfully each day in the midst of the problems, pains, and weaknesses that beset us. We must all take that journey one day at a time.

The good news is that Christ does not ask us to conquer sin and death by our own power, for He has already done that. But He does ask us truly to have faith, which requires a faithful life, even as we constantly ask for His mercy and strength to participate as fully as possible in the joy of His resurrection. We will not do that with a fake spirituality that relies purely on emotions or ideas, but as whole persons of flesh and blood enlivened by the One Who made us in His image and likeness and even died and rose again for our salvation. So let us celebrate Pascha by walking in the light as best we can with all our wounds, for that is how we will open ourselves to the light that has made even the tomb radiant with the divine glory. If He can do that to a grave, just imagine what He can do with us.