

## 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

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**  
**29 June 2025**

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*  
**(Matthew 6: 33)**

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 29 JUNE – 6 JULY 2025

**Sunday  
29 June  
Tone 2**      **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**  
*Epistle:* Romans 5:1-10  
*Gospel:* Matthew 6: 22-33      **8:40 am**, Hours of Prayer (PH)  
**9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy (PH)

**Sunday  
6 July  
Tone 3**      **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**  
*Epistle:* Romans 6: 18-23  
*Gospel:* Matthew 8: 5-13      **8:40 am**, Hours (CC)  
**9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy (CC)  
*Coffee Social Following Liturgy*

**~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.*

**MR. ROGERS DID NOT ADEQUATELY PREPARE ME  
FOR THE PEOPLE IN MY NEIHBORHOOD...**

Seminary did not prepare me for the nonsense that I have to deal with as a parish priest. Advanced degrees in ministry or theology can never anticipate the weirdness of reality. And yet, here we are, struggling through the complexities of a real world, trying to focus on salvation, and trying to insure dignity and order in the church and her affairs. Did you ever wonder why there’s only a stairway to heaven, but a highway to hell? Think about this...

I hint at things, and it goes unnoticed. I ask politely, and am ignored. I state things honestly, and am criticized for being “mean.” Subtlety does not work here. Polite requests do not work here. Only the unequivocal harshness of reality seems to get any attentions. Sadly, here is a harsh reality with which we must contend.

Ss. Peter & Paul Parish (Berlin/Pine Hill) engaged a lawyer to file a cease and desist notice, as well as a notice of criminal trespass against an individual agitating in the parish cemetery. The State Police have been informed, and charges will be filed if this agitation persists.

This is **not** a polite reminder. This **is** a real warning to everyone: you are not entitled to do whatever you want in the church cemeteries (or, for that matter, in the church itself). You may not treat church property as you would your own, and, without a legal easement document, you are not entitled to burial in the cemetery. We don’t care what your last name is. We don’t care who your parents were. This is especially true if you are not a Baptized Orthodox Christian, and you do nothing to support the church. The burial grounds are for the faithful, not their deadbeat children. The local undertaker and county coroner have been instructed that this agitator is not to be buried in the church cemetery, and no future funeral will occur without the priest’s permission and proof of plot “ownership.”

No church council and no individual member of the church board has the authority or right to enter into negotiations without the express consent and participation of the priest. This is a hierarchal church, and like it or not, not one thing takes place without the permission of the rector (the priest in charge).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Divine Liturgy Today (6/29):** please remember that Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Pine Hill. It is the duty and obligation of the faithful (who are physically able) to attend Sunday Divine Liturgy in the church where it is offered. We’ll be there, will you?

**Regulations for the Apostles Fast:** The rule for this variable-length fast is more lenient than for Great Lent. As it appears according to the Monastic Charter, Monday, Wednesday, Friday are strict fast days. Tuesday and Thursday, oil and wine are permitted. Saturday and Sunday, fish, oil and wine are permitted. Those who are physically able are expected to keep the fast. Those with genuine infirmity may relax the obligations only in as much as it is necessary to preserve health. The time is far past for the faithful to learn and understand that fasting is a regular part of our faith, an expectation, not an option.

**Altar & Volunteer Society Meeting:** was postponed due to attendance. They will attempt to meet during coffee social next Sunday! All are welcome.

**Summer Travels:** If you are traveling, you can search for an Orthodox Church through the Assembly of Canonical Bishops’ website: <https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/directoriest/parishes/>. If you plan to commune in another canonical Orthodox Church, it is appropriate to email or call the priest first to introduce yourself. Fr. Elijah can provide references, if necessary. Please don’t hesitate to ask!

**Cemetery Blessing:** the blessing of graves at Ss. Peter & Paul Cemetery in Pine Hill will occur today. Family members of the departed are encouraged to attend.

**Quarterly Officers Meeting:** the officers of Holy Assumption will meet for their quarterly meeting. The ideal day and time for this would be during coffee social on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of July.

**Prayers for Orthodox Christians in Damascus:** last Sunday, two suicide bombers entered the Church of St. Elias in Damascus and detonated explosive devices. The death toll amounts to 22, with 53 injured. The Antiochian Patriarchate is referring to these as the New Martyrs of Dwela’a in Damascus. The act has been condemned by all orthodox jurisdictions, and calls for the government to address this violence are mounting. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Damascus!





QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Do you have a question about the Orthodox faith? If so, please feel free to ask. It could be a question related to Liturgy and worship, or a question about cultural practices. Honest answers based on the theology of the church, and patristic sources (the ancient fathers of the church) will be provided.



The recent glorification of Matushka Olga in Alaska sparked much interest. Among the questions raised were those of cultural practices: why did all of the women have their heads covered?

It is true that this is a cultural practice, but it has historical significance and is rooted in theological principles. It has nothing to do with gender bias, or an attempt to subjugate women. It pre-dates Christianity, and was even common in Catholicism and Protestantism until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In the book of Genesis, we read about Rebekah, on a journey to meet her future husband, Isaac: *“Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; for she had said to the servant, “Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took a veil and covered herself”* (Genesis 24:64-65). Her godly discretion is a model for women today. She did not flaunt her physical beauty. Rather, she veiled herself, increasing her allure through an outward display of modesty.

Women’s head coverings are one of the many points of similarity between Israel and the Church. Godly women had covered their heads for thousands of years prior to the advent of Christ. And when the New Testament Church was born, godly women continued the practice. In St. Paul’s first epistle to the church in Corinth, he instructs everyone to follow the holy traditions which have been received: *“Now, I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you”* (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Women’s head coverings are one of the holy traditions which the Church had received, and St. Paul says that head coverings manifest honor, in the context of worship: *“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.”* (1 Corinthians 11:4); *“Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head”* (1 Corinthians 11:5). The message is pretty clear: It is honorable for a woman to wear head coverings during worship, but it is dishonorable for men to wear them. This is why men remove their hats for prayer, even to this day.

There is a symbolism and significance dealing with *modesty and humility*: modesty isn’t just about attire but also about attitude. Covering the hair is a symbolic act of humbling oneself before God. Covering one’s hair can also be seen as a tangible commitment to one’s faith. It symbolizes dedication and a deep spiritual connection. As with many traditions, perspectives on hair covering have evolved. Some view it as outdated, while others see it as an essential link to their spiritual heritage. Today’s feminist movements often question traditional practices. However, many Orthodox women argue that covering their hair is a personal choice, deeply rooted in faith and not enforced patriarchy.

***“Is any among you sick? 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
Emerson	Cairo	Toni	Gary	Cindy	

***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!***

**ENLIGHTENED LIVING**  
**by: Fr. Anthony Hughes**

“The eye is the lamp of the body,” Jesus says. This is a beautiful phrase, and mysterious. “If your eye is sound,” he continues, “then your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is evil, then your whole body will be full of darkness.”

The meaning of this verse is really rather simple. What does it mean to have a sound eye? It hinges on the question of what it means to have a sound eye.

“No one can serve two masters.” St. James uses the term “double-minded.” The person with a sound eye worships God alone. Jesus says it this way, “You cannot serve God and mammon, which basically means that if we wish to serve God, then we cannot serve anyone or anything else.

So, if our eyes are clouded with self-interest, by a desire for worldly things, like wealth and power, and are not focused on God alone, then our eyes are not sound, and we will be full of darkness. Jesus calls us to single-mindedness and to a simplicity of life that will set us free.

I have been watching the show The Vikings. Excellent show! The different Earls of various tribes are always fighting each other for supremacy usually in very bloody and costly wars. And all for power. They even sacrifice their loved ones if it serves their self-interest as pawns in their game of thrones.

In the show there is a single Christian, Athelstan, who embodies what it means to be a Christian. He is captured and lives as a slave among the pagans. He is not a blind Christian; he sees that in some ways the ways of the Vikings are superior to his own. He validates the Viking Earl and his people, he does not try to convert them, or change them even when he is horrified by their practices. He practices the twin arts of validation and radical acceptance and earns the love of respect of the Earl and soon to be King, Ragnar.

Athelstan alone sees clearly. He wants nothing from the Vikings. But his acceptance and unconditional regard get him tortured and nearly crucified to death by the Christian Archbishop of Wessex and ultimately martyred by a jealous Viking who, wants, of course, power. Athelstan sees things clearly, his vision is crystal clear, the light in him is the light of God, he is, in other words, enlightened.

How does we attain such enlightenment? By continually emptying ourselves of self-interest. The enlightened person seeks no personal gain, like the Son of God who had

nothing to gain for himself by coming into this world. In Greek this is called kenosis, a self-emptying. As long as we are blinded by the desire for gain, the light in us is darkness and we do not yet know God.

To serve God is to become like empty like him, empty of desire, empty of self-interest, empty of everything, completely open and therefore free. To be like Him is to become utterly disinterested in gain of any sort. To be like Him is to let go of fear and desire for God fears nothing, God needs nothing. Only the ego desires. Only the ego fears. God is free and therefore empty of both. When the ego is in charge, the egoist can only see himself no matter where he looks.

The poet Mary Oliver, a writer in touch with a deep, natural mysticism, writes of a life free of egoistic constraints in these lines, "The dream of my life is to lie down by a slow river and stare at the light in the trees - to learn something by being nothing."

In other words, it is her prayer to "lay aside all earthly cares" which means to be open to the light in the trees, the sun through the branches, the soft, gurgling sounds of the slow moving stream and therefore to God who shines in them and through them, to be clear sighted, conscious, awake and aware, unencumbered and free.

I like Metropolitan KALLISTOS Ware's definition of faith, "Faith is not the supposition that might something be true, but the assurance that someone is there." Faith is in God, not concepts. Something that is not me. And if we look deeply enough with mindful, un-obscured vision, what we shall see is God peeking through all things. The sound eye sees the truth of what Metropolitan KALLISTOS declares, "That the cosmos is one vast burning bush, permeated with the fire of divine power and glory."

From this enlightened vision unending joy permeates life, burning away the fear and desire that obscure our eyes and make our light darkness.

- + - + - + - + - + -

*“Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”*

