

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."

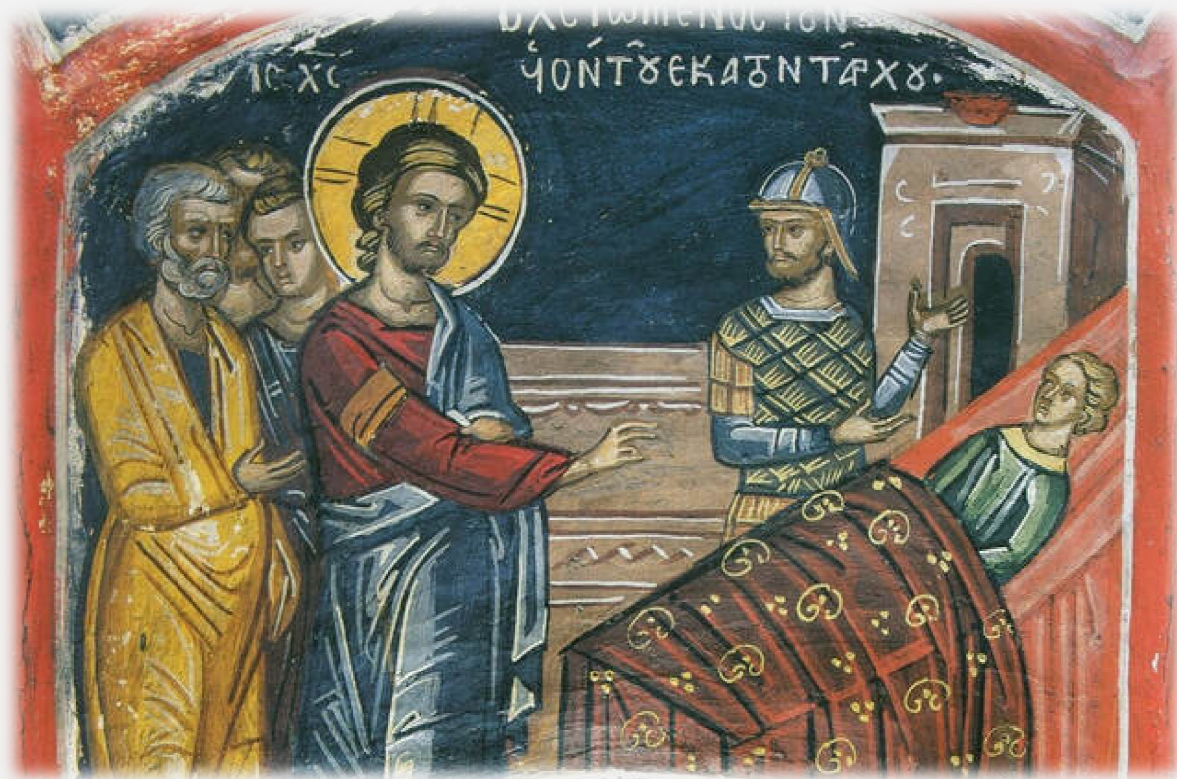
Prayer When Lighting A Candle: "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee,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

4th Sunday Post-Pentecost
6 July 2025

*"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you."
And his servant was healed that same hour."*

(Matthew 8: 13)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 6 – 13 JULY 2025

Sunday 6 July Tone 3	4th Sunday Post-Pentecost <i>Epistle:</i> Romans 6: 18-23 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 8: 5-13	8:40 am , Hours (CC) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC) <i>Coffee Social Following Liturgy</i>
Saturday 12 July	Holy Apostles Peter & Paul <i>Major Holy Day!</i>	9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC)
Sunday 13 July Tone 4	5th Sunday Post-Pentecost <i>Epistle:</i> Romans 10: 1-10 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 8:28-9:1	8:40 am , Hours of Prayer (CC) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC)

~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.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Recently, some of our parishioners visited St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church in Belle Vernon, Pa. for the visit of the miracle –working Hawaiian Iveron Icon of the Theotokos. They returned with an informational pamphlet titled “Reverence in the Church.” The pamphlet is reprinted here!

When in church...

- † We dress modestly and appropriately (shorts are for young children).
- † We silence our cell phones and put them away until after the service.
- † We venerate the icons upon entering the church (blotting off lipstick before so doing).
- † We arrive on time, or early, to pray and find a place to stand (or sit, where applicable).
- † If arriving late, we stand quietly in the rear of the church during the small and great entrances, the reading of the Epistle & Gospel, and during the sermon before finding a seat.
- † We always strive to be reverent, saving conversations, hugging and greeting, for after the service, outside the sanctuary, after the dismissal.
- † Children are allowed to be children, under the supervision of their parents. They should be permitted to venerate the icons, and light candles, but under the guidance of their parents.
- † We pay attention to the words of the liturgy, and learn how to use our pew books.
- † We sing the responses with the cantors or choir—church isn’t a spectator sport.
- † If physically able, we stand at the appropriate times: during the small and great entrances, the Epistle & Gospel readings, the Anaphora, the Lord’s Prayer, and during communion.
- † We look at our own salvation, and don’t worry about what other people are doing (or not doing).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Social Today (7/05): coffee social will follow Divine Liturgy today. All are welcome. The officers will have their quarterly meeting, and the Altar Society will have a brief meeting. This coffee social will also celebrate the 90th Birthday of Mrs. Oriel Swirchack. Many Happy Years!

Feast of Ss. Peter & Paul and Annual Picnic: our parish of Ss. Peter & Paul will celebrate their patronal feast day on 7/12. Liturgy, however, will be in Central City at 9:00 am. Whereas almost 75% or more of the active parishioners of Ss. Peter & Paul will travel to Central City, almost no-one from Central City will go to Berlin. For logistical reasons, and climate control, the holy day will be in Central City. Also, for the first time in many years, there will be no annual picnic in Berlin. There is not enough help to clean and prepare the parish grounds, to prepare the food, and to host the picnic, and far too little interest in the church services being offered there to sustain this tradition. Instead, parish members are planning a brunch outing following Liturgy on the 27 July. More information will follow as plans are finalized. Last Sunday, for liturgy at Ss. Peter and Paul, the attendance breakdown was as follows: seven individuals from Pine Hill, three from Central City, and 4 out of town patrons. Statistically, we should have 30 able-bodied parishioners worshipping regularly. Last Sunday we realized less than half that number, with four guests making up the difference. Our churches will only last as long as there are people to attend them.

Prayers for Orthodox Christians in Damascus: two weeks ago, 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!

Legal Issue, Ss. Peter & Paul Cemetery: this past week, a cease and desist order was sent to an agitator from Brothersvalley Township who was performing unsanctioned maintenance in the cemetery. A copy of the order was sent to the Somerset State Police Barracks. Maintenance of family plots is permitted, but care for the entire cemetery is contracted through the church. If anyone is discovered performing unsanctioned work in the cemetery, you are encouraged to immediately call Fr. Elijah, then the State Police, Somerset Barracks (814) 445-4101. Also, unless you possess a funeral plot easement, legally notarized, there is no burial in any of our parish cemeteries. The local coroner’s association has been notified, and all burials must be properly permitted.



FLAG RAISING FEATURES
JEROME CELEBRATION

Impressive flag raising exercises were a feature of the Fourth of July observance at Jerome. The affair was of a community nature and was sponsored by the Russian Orthodox congregation, Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the American flag being raised to the top of the large flagpole on the church grounds. The Rev. Stephen Sipayda, pastor of the church, was in charge and was assisted by the Rev. John Fedak, of St. John the Baptist church Conemaugh, and the Rev. Gregor Chonka, of Holy Ascension church Colver.

A special service of blessing was held over the flag in the church, Father Chonka being in charge. Following this service, the Russian Poland and Slovak societies joined in a parade through the streets of Jerome. The Citizens Band provided splendid music for the exercises. Speakers at the flag raising were: Judge Norman Boose, former Judge J. A. Berkey, Attorney George S. Duzansky, of Johnstown who spoke in Slovak, and the Rev. Gregor Shomka who spoke in Russian.

The Rev. Roy Rummel, of Jerome opened the dedicatory services with prayer. Two pigeons were concealed in the folds of the American flag as it was raised to the top of the mast, and they were released as the flag unfurled. A salute was fired simultaneously by the boys of the Jerome American Legion. Dinner was served at the church by the ladies of the conparish house of the sponsoring gregation.

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

The article at left was printed on 7 July 1930 in the Somerset Daily American, and discusses the patriotic flag raising ceremonies conducted at the former Holy Assumption Orthodox Church, Jerome, Pa.

In our present social and political climate, this article takes on new meaning. Jerome was one of the last bituminous mining communities to unionize. It was a holding of the Hillman Coal Company (still in existence and now know for their contributions to the Hillman Cancer Center). Hillman Coal resisted unionization until it was no longer feasible. Violence and intimidation were tactics employed by outside agitators to accomplish the goal of unionization.

The Russian Orthodox community was understandably nervous: the clergy had first-hand memories of the Russian Revolution, and the atheistic communists who drove them from their churches, murdered the faithful, and laid waste to their villages. Embracing the pervasive secular culture was not going to be the answer. Don't believe me? A second article from the Daily American printed on 13 September 1934 was titled "Communists force Priest from Church," and again referenced the situation in Jerome. This time, radicalized elements of the community attempted to force their secularized philosophy upon the governance of the church. Having merged with the Boswell congregation, Holy Assumption was considered de-facto closed by 1952. The labor movement destroyed the bituminous mining industry, and the church in Jerome was one casualty of this secularized philosophy.

The historical record is clear, and should serve as a warning for the present moment: acts of patriotism can never take the place of faith, and if there is no faith, there is no church. Self-interest is not the goal of the church. The question is not "What is the church going to do for me?," but rather, "What is it that I can do through the church to become closer to God?"

We support our civil authorities, but first and foremost, we do the work of the church for the glory of God and our salvation, and for no other reason.

"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!



THE WOUNDS OF LOVE
by: Fr. John Chakos

One of the most meaningful prayers prior to receiving Holy Communion reads as follows: "You have smitten me with yearning, O Christ, and by your divine love you have changed me." To be smitten by Christ is the most profound of all mystical experiences. Jesus Himself, as it were, wounds our hearts with His love. From that moment we can never again be the same. One desire is only to be with Him, to serve Him and to make Him known to others.

Matthew's story of a Roman centurion (Math. 8:5-13) presents us with a moving testimony of the heroic lengths to which love will go. He was a man who willingly crossed the lines of a rigid caste system to seek healing for his paralyzed slave. As if that were not enough, he crossed the imposing religious divide that separates Jew from Gentile. Finally, he crossed the greatest barrier of all and manifested a faith that knew no spatial limitation when it came to healing. He knew that Jesus only had to say the word and his servant would be healed. And by this he proved that his was a caliber of faith that had never been seen in all of Israel. This is what can happen to us when we are smitten by Christ. We will cross every barrier and confront every obstacle for the sake of His love.

One such barrier that the Centurion nimbly vaulted over was his ego. In the Gospel passage we read that he was a man used to issuing commands. But because of his humility he dared not ask the Lord to come under the roof of his house.

He also knew that it was not lawful for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile, since the dwelling places of Gentiles are viewed as unclean in Jewish law. The fact that he humbled himself before Jesus is in itself amazing, since most Gentiles harbored a deep hatred for Jesus, who were considered to be haters of all humanity. In Alexandria the story went that Jews had taken a deliberate oath never to show kindness to any Gentile, and it was said that the Jewish ceremonies involved the yearly sacrifice of a Gentile. This would make them nothing less than satanists by today's standards. But to the Centurion none of these deep prejudices mattered. Humility impelled him to breach the social etiquette of his station. The love he felt emanating from Christ made every obstacle appear petty.

This humility was also in evidence in the way the centurion treated his slave. His was not the double standard of many who say they love the Lord but despise a brother or sister. In the Centurion we find that perfect blend of love of God and neighbor. He loved his slave, thus proving himself to be an unusual man.

In antiquity a slave was an object. To quote Aristotle: "a master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave." Varro, the Roman writer on agriculture, has a passage which divided the instruments of agriculture into three classes- the articulate comprising the slave, the inarticulate late comprising the cattle, and the mute comprising vehicles. The only difference between a slave and a beast or a wagon was that the slave could talk. Any and all ill-treatment was completely justified by the law. In the words of Petrus Chrysologus, "Whatever a master does to a slave, undeservedly, in anger, willingly, unwillingly, in forgetfulness, after careful thought, knowingly, unknowingly is judgment, justice and law."

In an age such as ours when much attention is given to human rights, we can see that in the ancient world the slave was not only devoid of all rights, but his very humanity was denied. Besides profound humility and love of neighbor, there was a third ingredient in the mix of the centurion's incredible personhood faith. What was so amazing about the centurion's faith that even Jesus marveled at it? He believed that all Jesus had to do was "say the word" and his servant would be healed, even without visiting him.

This kind of wonder-working faith is needed by all of us, not just faith in the existence of God. Many people

believe in the existence of a deity, or even in the dogma of their faith, but how many believe~in the possibility of miracles. "Only say the word, and my servant will be healed," the centurion declared. It's this kind of faith that inspired the following hymn of our Church: "Who is so great a god as our God. You are the God who performs wonders."

That the centurion was smitten by Christ and transformed by His love cannot be denied. It brings to mind the prophecy of Jesus about those who would one day sit at table with Him in the kingdom: "I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness" (Math. 8:12).

Let me conclude with one such contemporary account from the mission field about Joseph, a Masai warrior, who was smitten by Christ like the centurion. His face bears the ritual scars every young man receives after killing his first lion with only a spear and a shield. One day, as he was walking along a hot, dusty African road, he met a missionary who shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him. So taken was Joseph by this disclosure that the first thing that he wanted to do was to return to his own village and share that same Good News with the members of his local tribe. He began going door-to-door, telling everyone he met about the Cross of Jesus and the salvation it offered, expecting to see their faces light up the way his had. To his amazement the villagers not only didn't care, they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.

Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a water hole, and there, after days of passing in and out of consciousness, found the strength to get up. He wondered about the hostile reception he had received from people he had known all his life. Impelled by the wound of love, he decided he must have omitted something or told the story of Jesus incorrectly. After rehearsing the message he had first heard, he decided to go back and share his faith once more.

Joseph limped into the circle of huts and began again to proclaim Jesus. "He died for you, so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God," he pleaded. Again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him, re-opening fresh wounds that had just begun to heal. Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die.

To have lived through the first beating was truly remarkable. To survive a second was nothing short of miraculous. Again, days later, Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scarred- and determined to go back. He returned to the small village and this time, they attacked him before he had a chance to speak. As they whipped him for the third and probably last time, he again witnessed to them about Jesus Christ. Before he passed out, the last thing he saw was that the women who were beating him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health. The entire village had come to Christ.

Joseph is no longer known by the ritual scars carved in his face. He is recognized by the wounds he suffered for the sake of Christ. These wounds are not only on his skin, but also in his heart. They are the very wounds of love that Jesus Himself endured for our salvation. He will suffer in every one of us again and again until every precious soul is redeemed.

Today, Christ wants to wound each one of us so that we, too, will never cease loving and serving Him. Let us open ourselves up to this wondrous action of grace, this mystical stabbing of our hearts. Let us gladly endure the scars that the piercing love of Christ inflicts. Let us faithfully persist in our resolve to carry out every commandment of Jesus, even to the point of death. Then Jesus will say to us, as He did to the centurion, "...not even in Israel have I found such faith" (Math. 8:10).