

### 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 are 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*

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**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost,  
31 August 2025**

*“Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor,  
and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’”*

**(Matthew 19:21)**

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 31 AUGUST – 7 SEPTEMBER 2025

<b>Sunday</b> <b>31 August</b> <b>Tone 3</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost</b> <i>Epistle:</i> 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 19: 16-26	<b>8:40 am,</b> Hours (CC) <b>9:00 am,</b> Divine Liturgy (CC)
<b>Sunday</b> <b>7 September</b> <b>Tone 4</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost</b> <i>Epistle:</i> 1 Corinthians 16:13-24 <i>Gospel:</i> Matthew 21:33-42	<b>8:40 am,</b> Hours of Prayer (CC) <b>9:00 am,</b> 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 AND ANSWERS: ON COMMUNION WITH GOD**

**From:** OCA.org

Orthodoxy teaches about the experience of God and communion with God. Do you really believe that these things are possible for men?



If communion with God is not possible, then there is no Christian Faith and certainly no Orthodoxy. The entire faith of the Church is built on the fact that “God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us.” This biblical line is solemnly sung at every Morning Service in the Orthodox Church.

God has revealed Himself! He has not merely told some things about Himself, or communicated some data about His divine existence and purposes. He has shown forth Himself and has given Himself to men for divine communion.

According to Orthodoxy, there is no other meaning to the life of man except in communion with God. God is the end of all longing, the fulfillment of all desires, the source and the goal of man’s very humanity made in God’s divine image and likeness.

Through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, man comes to living communion with God the Father Himself. There is no other meaning and purpose to the Church and to life itself.

Man and all creation with him must come to be divine by sharing the being and life and action of God Himself. All of the attributes of divinity—as one saint put it—must become ours; eternal life, truth, goodness, holiness, purity, joy... all perfections summed up in the greatest which is Love. For God is Love! This is the meaning of life, and it is certainly possible for men to attain it. At least, once more, according to the Orthodox Faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome Today:** to all of our family and friends (and parishioners we haven’t seen in quite a while)! Thank you for joining us for this dual celebration of Ss. Peter & Paul and the Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos. As always, the liturgical celebrations take precedence over all other activities, but we are happy to still have the ability to provide fellowship and a lovely meal. Welcome all, and thank you for taking the time to celebrate with us!

**Cleaning Party:** thank you to the five volunteers who joined Fr. Elijah on Friday morning to clean the church and hall. The facilities look great, and your help was appreciated!

**Flowers & Icons Today:** Thank you to all who contributed toward the purchase of flowers for church today. Also, thank you all who brought your icons of the Theotokos for blessing and veneration today—it was a beautiful sight to have so many different icons of the Mother of God!

**Feast of the Dormition:** it’s very difficult to explain to people that even though we are having a big party on Sunday, the Holy Day, and therefore the actual feast of the Dormition (our parish name-day) was on Thursday. As always, the feast is the feast. We don’t play the game of moving feast days to make it more convenient for people. There is no transference of holiness from a weekday to a Sunday. Thank you to the ten people (incidentally, all women, excepting Fr. Elijah) who attended the church feast-day liturgy on the actual Holy Day (a major holy day, by the way)!

**Light of Orthodoxy:** our Archdiocesan semi-annual publication, *The Light Of Orthodoxy*, is available on our website as a PDF document. A copy is also hanging on our bulletin board for anyone who would like to read it. If you want a copy and do not have access, please let Fr. Elijah know.

**Thank You:** the following message of thanks comes with mixed emotions; the parishioners and volunteers at Ss. Peter & Paul, Pine Hill, donated their coffee social supplies (cups, utensils, plates, etc...) to the church kitchen in Central City. Because of the condition of the hall at Pine Hill (and the condition of the volunteers) socials are now discontinued there. We thank God for the social time spent there, and look forward to the times to come in Central City. Thank you, Ss. Peter & Paul Parish.





**FREEDOM FROM POSSESSIONS**  
**By:** Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

The Lord warns us today of how difficult it is for a man who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God. Does it mean that the Kingdom of God is open only to destitute, to those who are materially poor, who lack everything on earth? No. The Kingdom of God is open to all who are not enslaved by possessions. When we read the first Beatitude, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven’, we are given a key to this saying: the poor in spirit are those who have understood that they possess nothing of their own.

We have been created as an act of God, loved into existence; God offers us communion with Him, to which we have no rights. All we are, all we possess is not our own in the sense that we have not made ourselves, we did not create what is seemingly ours—all that we are and have is love—the love of God and the love of people. And we cannot possess anything, because everything is a gift that escapes us the moment we want to have possession of it, and say, “It is mine”.

On the other hand, the Kingdom of God is really the kingdom of those who are aware that they are infinitely rich, because we can expect everything from divine love and from human love. We are rich because we possess nothing, we are rich because we are given all things. Thus, it is difficult for one who imagines that he is rich in his own right to belong to that kingdom in which everything is a sign of love, and nothing can be possessed, as it were—taken away from others; because the moment we say that we possess something which is not given us either by God or by human care, we subtract it from the mystery of love.

On the other hand, the moment we cling to anything we become slaves of it. I remember when I was young, a man told me, “Don’t you understand that the moment you have taken a copper coin in your hand and are not prepared to open your hand to let it go, you have lost the use of a hand, the use of an arm, the use of your body? Because all your attention will be concentrated on not losing this copper coin—the rest will be forgotten.”

Whether we keep in our hand a copper coin, or whether we feel rich in so many other ways—intellectually, emotionally, materially is irrelevant. We are prisoners, we have lost the use of a limb, the use of our mind, the use of our heart; we can no longer be free, and the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of freedom.

On the other hand, how difficult it is for one who has never lacked anything, who has always possessed more than he needs, to be aware of the poverty or the need of another—their material, emotional or intellectual poverty, or any other lack. It requires a great deal of understanding and sympathy, it requires from us that we should learn to be attentive to the movements of other people’s hearts and to their material needs in order to respond to them. There is an old Russian saying: A satisfied person no longer understands a hungry person. Who of us can say that we are hungry in any respect? And this is why we do not understand the needs of people—here, or of people beyond the confines of our congregation.

So, let us reflect on that. Poverty does not mean destitution. It means freedom from enslavement to an illusion that we are self-sufficient, self-contained, the creator of what we are and what we possess. It is also freedom from enslavement to what is given us, to make us stewards of God.

Let us reflect on this; because if we learn this, if we learn what Saint Paul said, that whether he is rich, whether he is destitute, he is equally rich because his richness is in God and in human love. Then we will be able, whether we possess material things or not, to be free of them, and to belong to God’s Kingdom—which is a Kingdom of mutual love, of mutual solidarity, of compassion for one another, of giving to one another what we were given freely. Amen.



***“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	Mary Ann	Lubomyr	Tom	Lilly
Emerson	Tiffany	Gary	Cindy	Amy	Jim

***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 SELF-EXILE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

**By:** Archpriest Oleg Stenyayev

Translation by OrthoChristian.com, “Azbuka.” Orthodox Sermons

Today’s Gospel at the Divine Liturgy is from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 19, beginning at verse 16. Here we find the following account: *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* (Matthew 19:16).

In the rich young man’s question, we see two errors: He addresses Jesus Christ as a mere man, calling Him “Good Master,” “Rabbi” in Hebrew, and at the same time, he calls Him “Good.” But as we know, only God is absolutely good. On the other hand, he asks a misguided question, one that reveals the misunderstanding of the Old Testament church: *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* The very formulation of the question is incorrect.

Indeed, what can a person do to inherit eternal life? Nothing. If we were to live a hundred years doing only works pleasing to God, we could merit a hundred years in paradise—no more, no less. Fair enough; one hundred years of righteous living, in exchange for one hundred years in paradise. But here we are talking about eternity: *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Love of goodness begins by saying that it is impossible through temporary life to acquire eternal life. It is impossible to gain heavenly life through earthly life, or to acquire incorruptible life at the cost of a corruptible one. These are simply incomparable things. What we are able to do, and on the contrary, eternal blessed life, are simply incomparable.

So what does the Lord answer this man? The Lord says to him: *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God* (Matthew 19:17). Here, Christ seems to be saying: You called me good; call me Lord as well. Why do you say, “Good Master?”

Next, in response to the second part of the question, Christ says: *But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments* (Matthew 19:17). With these words, Christ seems to say: “On your part, obedience to My law is required, but salvation is entirely in My hands.” As the apostles once asked Jesus Christ: *Who then can be saved?* Christ answered them: *With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible* (Matthew 19:26). That is, we follow God’s law not because by doing so we can earn eternal life—for it is impossible to earn eternal life with temporal life—but through this, we show love toward God.

Here we see a dialogue between Christ and the rich young man, and between Christ and His disciples. In the Jewish understanding, a rich person was considered a pious person. And when they heard from the dialogue between Christ and the rich young man that perfection was inaccessible to this man, they were troubled with the question: “Who then can be saved, if not the rich?” And they asked Christ: “Who then can be saved, if the rich cannot be saved?” Christ says: “With men this is impossible.”

Thus, Christ teaches us that where we can fulfill God’s Law, we should do so. But salvation is entirely from God. In other words, by striving to fulfill the Law, we show love for God and submit to His Divine will, but only the Creator has the power to grant us salvation or deny it to us. An Orthodox Christian is one who recognizes his own imperfection and does not boast, as the young man did, saying: “I have kept all these things from my youth.”

There was another young man named Saul, who also thought he had kept all of God’s Law. But when Saul became a Christian with the name Paul, he later wrote about himself: *Touching the*

*righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ* (Philippians 3:6-7). Why did Paul write this? He may not have murdered, but as we know from the Book of Acts, he consented to the stoning of Stephen the deacon. He may not have committed adultery, but he may have looked with lust. He may not have stolen, but he may have been envious. And although, by Jewish moral standards, he was not a murderer, not an adulterer, and not a thief, in the light of the Gospel, whoever is angry with his brother without cause is already a murderer, and whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart. Thus, in the light of the Gospel revelation, the entire universe is guilty before God. And this awareness of one’s guilt, for which we cannot possibly answer, drives a person into the arms of forgiving grace through the blood of the Son of God.

Both Apostle Paul and the other apostles understood that God’s Law is like a mirror that shows us our true state. And that young man who claimed to have fulfilled everything was living in a fantasy, a kind of proud and arrogant delusion. Outwardly, he may have fulfilled the commandments, but inwardly, he was no different from other people. As I often say, we are all well-disguised sinners, but in God’s eyes, we are completely transparent. And when we come to God with our claims, saying, “We have fulfilled everything,” we must remember the words of the Apostle Paul, who said: *Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ*. The path to God begins with the recognition of one’s sinfulness, and no one comes to God who does not consider himself a sinner. And our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written in the Epistle to the Romans, *died for the ungodly* (Romans 5:6). And it is further written: *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die* (Romans 5:7). Why die for a righteous person? There is no need for it. This is why Christ said: *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance* (Matthew 9:13).

The tragedy of this young man lay in the fact that he did not see his true condition. He thought of himself as a good person, but when Christ asked him: “Are you, a good person, willing to sell all that you have and follow Me?” it became clear that he could not free himself from the bondage of material wealth that weighed him down. And here we see a young man, just starting his life, already a slave to possessions, a slave to sinful desires.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, today’s Gospel reading about the rich young man teaches us not to be overly self-confident, to be critical of ourselves, and not to have the double-mindedness that this young man had, who cleverly called the Lord sometimes “Teacher,” sometimes “Good,” sometimes God, sometimes man, without openly confessing that Christ is truly Lord and Eternal Life. Let this moral lesson inspire us not to be hasty in our own self-confidence, to always question our so-called righteousness, and to wholly rely on the salvation granted to us through the blood of the Son of God. As Blessed Jerome taught: “We become righteous when we confess that we are sinners, and when we place the matter of our salvation not on our own deeds or actions, but entirely on the mercy of God.” May Christ save you!

