

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



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**15th Sunday Post-Pentecost,
21 September 2025**

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
This is the first and great commandment.”*

(Matthew 22:37-8)

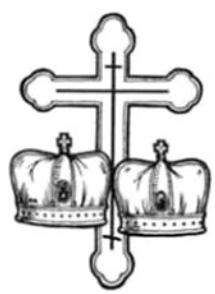
LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 14 – 21 SEPTEMBER 2025

Sunday 21 September Tone 6	15th Sunday Post-Pentecost Nativity of Theotokos <i>Epistle:</i> 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 <i>Gospel 1:</i> Matthew 22:35-46 <i>Gospel 2:</i> Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 <i>Gospel 3:</i> John 3: 13-17	8:40 am , Hours of Prayer (CC) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC) <i>Major Holy Day Today!</i>
Saturday 27 September	Universal Exultation of Cross <i>Major Holy Day Today!</i>	9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (CC) <i>Cross Procession & Blessing of Crosses</i>
Sunday 28 September Tone 7	16th Sunday Post-Pentecost Sunday After the Cross <i>Epistle:</i> 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4 <i>Gospel 1:</i> Matthew 22:1-14 <i>Gospel 2:</i> Luke 4:16-22	8:40 am , Hours (PH) 9:00 am , Divine Liturgy (PH)

~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: BANNS OF MATRIMONY



The above image is taken from the OCA Marriage Service Book, clipart by John Matusiak.

What are the “banns of matrimony” (marriage), and why are they important?

Although the custom made its way into Orthodox practice through Western influences, it is, nonetheless, a custom with meaning and practical purpose. *Banns* refers to the public announcement of the names of two persons intending to be married. The object of their publication in church is to discover impediments, to avoid secret marriages, and to give interested parties an opportunity to intervene if they have legitimate reasons to do so. *Banns* are usually announced in church three successive times prior to the actual wedding. Historically, the Orthodox Church requires a priest to obtain permission from the bishop for the marriage (crowning), with the specific procedures and requirements varying by jurisdiction. This includes the vetting of the couple for canonical impediments.

Why do you ask? The answer is a joyous one: we are pleased to announce the ***First Banns of Matrimony*** for Nik Kephart and Haily Nicole Wagoner. If anyone has cause to oppose the union of these two persons (according to the Apostolic and Œcumenical Canons), please present your concern to Fr. Elijah immediately. Each set of *banns* will be published for two weeks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remaining Holy Day this Month: please note that September has one remaining Holy Day. Liturgy is planned for the 27 September, when we commemorate the Universal Exultation of the Cross. In spite of being a Saturday, this is still a fast day because of the nature of the feast!

Blessing of Crosses: if you have a cross and would like it blessed, please bring it to church on 9/27. This includes neck crosses, wall crosses, or icon crosses. This is a most appropriate day, and all are encouraged to bring their crosses for blessing.

Regarding the Bulletin and Online Publishing: on 16 September 2025, the OCA national website published a statement, New Article Warns Parishes of Copyright Challenges (publically available here: <https://www.oca.org/files/PDF/NEWS/2025/2025-0912-Churches-Beware-Copyright-Trolls.pdf>). The prelude to this article reads:

The Orthodox Church in America is drawing attention to a growing problem for parishes and nonprofit institutions: so-called “copyright trolls.” Specialized law firms scour the internet for unauthorized uses of copyrighted images and issue costly settlement demands. A simple mistake in using an image found online can become an expensive problem for a parish, monastery, or other institution. To address this issue, the Orthodox Church in America is sharing a new article by Dn. Kenneth Liu, Executive Director of the Orthodox Christian Attorney Network and an experienced intellectual property attorney. In his article, *Churches: Beware of Copyright Trolls*, Dn. Kenneth explains the risks of unlicensed image use, outlines the basics of copyright law, and offers practical guidance for churches and institutions. He also addresses questions related to icons and copyright. Parish leadership, clergy, and those responsible for websites, bulletins, and other publications are strongly encouraged to read the article and share it with their Parish Councils in order to avoid legal claims.

What does this mean for our parish? You will notice that every article in the bulletin is properly attributed. In addition, the images used, including the icons, are all in the public domain. Fr. Elijah has taken the extra step of providing copyright information for the clipart image below. Many of you may recall that when the question of our website renewal arose, and the possibility of posting the PDF version of the bulletin, Father was opposed (for this very reason, as well as that it enables the bad behavior of those who refuse to attend the church but still want to know what is going on, as well as those using the online bulletin for other purposes of entrapment). The solution is simple, and effective. As of 9/27, if you want a full church bulletin, you may pick one up in church immediately following Divine Liturgy. The PDF version of the bulletin will be removed from the website, and only the schedule and announcements will be printed, as well as the linked articles. We need to understand that the world is not good and honest, and cares little for our free exercise of belief. Fr. Elijah strives to create a highly educational and appealing bulletin, and never intentionally violates copyright law. Mistakes can happen, however, and in order to prevent that, we are responding. We can be targeted at any time, and thanks to this warning from the National Church Administration, we are responding appropriately.

Facility Problem: we were informed on 9/20, that there is an issue with the water in the church hall. Until it can be resolved, please do not use the restrooms or kitchen sink. We apologize for the inconvenience, and are working to solve it!



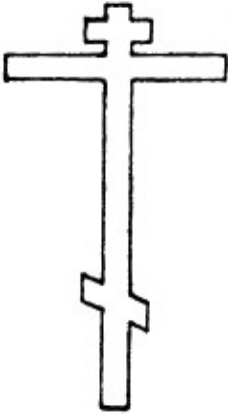
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AVAILABLE

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SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS

John 3:13–17

Archimandrite Chrysostomos Michaelides



In anticipation of the forthcoming celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, we are all invited today to contemplate the significance of the Holy Cross in our lives. For many non-believers — but I would also add, and believers — the Cross has only historical significance: our Lord was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was buried. But for Christians throughout history and all over the world the Holy Cross determines who we are — that is to say, it determines our identity — but it is also the source of life; it is life-giving. We speak of the Holy and Life-giving Cross. We draw from the Life-Giving Cross our life, our protection, our strength, our identity.

In today’s Gospel reading from the Gospel of John we are reminded of a discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus, the secret admirer and follower of Jesus. Jesus reminds Nicodemus of the presence of the Holy Cross before its appearance on Golgotha. He states: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14–15).

The Lord is referring to the Old Testament (*cf. Numbers 21*). The people of Israel were attacked by poisonous snakes, venomous vipers, as a result of their own disobedience. The people then went to Moses for help, and Moses consulted with God. God then instructed Moses to make an image of a snake and mount it on a pole. Anyone who looked at the snake would be cured of the bites and live. This events foreshadows the saving power of the Holy Cross, which also implies faith in something beyond ourselves. The idea of being healed simply by looking at the bronze snake left no doubt in the minds of the Israelites that it was God’s power, not their own, that brought healing and salvation. In the same way, “Whosoever believeth in him” that is lifted up on the Cross; it is God’s salvific power which is at work, not our own.

Additionally, the holy Cross transforms our perception of God. For example, when we refer to God’s power to act — *actus purus*, as the say in Latin — we naturally project our experience of power into the divine. If there are powerful men, then God is all-powerful. If men are wise and knowledgeable, then God is all-wise and omniscient. There is always something positive to say about these expressions. However, if we refer to “Christ crucified” for our salvation, this is a scandal to the human mind. St Paul says, “unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but [unto them that believe, it is] the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:23–24).

The biggest scandal for the human mind: How is it possible for God to die and be crucified? Where is God’s power? The crucified God is a contradiction to our perception of God Almighty. Where is God’s power? It’s as if Jesus is saying, “I am accepted only by my qualities. For example, by having the power to act, or the power to do as I please. And we only perceive God in this way. However, is it possible to be worthy of one’s acceptance through my inability to act?” This is what’s God is saying through Jesus on the Cross. And it is his inability to act which revealed the power of his love. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). 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
Sandi	Stephanie	Sophie	Nancy	Chrystyna
Noah	Emma	Henry	Natalia	Peter
Mary-Evelyn	Bryan	Gregory	Debbie	Nancy
Donna	Kevin	Nick	Anne	Nick
Robert	Mary Etta	Cory	Sharon	Kara
Helen	Sandy	Kenneth	Scott	Jon
Bill	Sam	Betty	Jerry	Allan
Charles	Dakota	Kathy	Sue	Debbie
Mary-Elizabeth	Darcel	Jennifer	Mary	Karis
Lisa	Thelma	Shane	Mary Ann	Peter
Jonathan	Tammy	Kathie	Chris	Larry
Betty Lou	Renée	Alexandra	Roxanne	Alexis
Izzy	James	Curtis	Lita	Suzanne
George	Jean	Dale	Allen	Steven
Mitch	Johnnie	Charles	Nancy	Annette
Johnnie-Mac	David	Agnes	Barbara	Katherine
Jan	Larry	Daniel	Monica	Dwain
Magdalena	Dorothy	Francesca	Kara	Andrew
Taissia	Daniel	Barbara	Mary Ann	Dave
James	Eric	Mary-Louise	Barbara	Denise
Andy	Andrea	Amanda	John, Jr.	Mike
Ann	Mark	Samantha	Susan	Mary
Robert	Tim	Don	Mary Ann	Judith
Phyllis	George	Mary	Heidi	Dee Ann
Jeanne	Tim	Samantha	Bernie	Gene
Eleanor	John	Dave	Chuck	Anna-Sophie
Ray	Helen	Maryann	Julia	Jim
Shirley	Greg	Megan	Bob	Ann-Marie
Walt	Edward	Shaun	Hayes	Sue Y.
Betty	Robert	Jennifer	Ron	Linda
Judy	Richie	Ray	McKenzie	Brady
Richard	Josephine	Shirley	Sandy	Karl
Janet	Tammy	Donna	John S.	Paige
Pastor Dave	Keith	Johannes	Marcella	Linda
Tammy	Jodi	Nancy K.	Rod	Larry
Marsha	George	Louise	Jessica	Matthew
Mike	Hannah	Mary Ann	Lubomyr	Tom
Emerson	Tiffany	Gary	Cindy	Amy

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!



ON THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
From: Volume II – Worship, The Church Year, OCA.org

In addition to the celebration of the Annunciation, there are three major feasts in the Church honoring Mary, the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity which is kept on the eighth of September.

The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in the hymns and verses of the festal liturgy is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant—“the poor and the needy”—who were awaiting the promised messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since among the Jews barrenness was a sign of God’s disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ.

Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe. The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse he bestowed a blessing. By destroying death he has granted us eternal life (Troparion).

By your nativity, O most pure virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life (Kontakion).

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary’s birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the actual background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it “for us men and for our salvation” is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary’s birth, of Mary herself and of her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the

salvation of the world. For the “Vessel of Light,” the “Book of the Word of Life,” the “Door to the Orient,” the “Throne of Wisdom” is being prepared on earth by God Himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.

The verses of the feast are filled with titles for Mary such as those in the quotations above. They are inspired by the message of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The specific Biblical readings of the feast give indications of this.



At Vespers the three Old Testament readings are “mariological” in their New Testamental interpretation. Thus, Jacob’s Ladder which unites heaven and earth and the place which is named “the house of God” and the “gate of heaven” (Gen 28.10–17) are taken, to indicate the union of God with men which is realized most fully and perfectly—both spiritually and physically—in Mary the Theotokos, Bearer of God. So also the vision of the temple with the “door ‘to the East’” perpetually closed and filled with the “glory of the Lord” symbolizes Mary, called in the hymns of the feast “the living temple of God filled with the divine Glory” (Ezek 43.27–44.4). Mary is also identified with the “house” which the Divine Wisdom has built for himself according to the reading from Proverbs 9.1–11.

The Gospel reading of Matins is the one read at all feasts of the Theotokos, the famous Magnificat from Saint Luke in which Mary says: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Lk 1.47).

The epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy is the famous passage about the coming of the Son of God in “the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man” (Phil 2.5–11) and the gospel reading is that which is always read for feasts of the Theotokos—the woman in the crowd glorifies the Mother of Jesus, and the Lord himself responds that the same blessedness which his mother receives is for all “who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11.27–28).

Thus, on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, as on all liturgical celebrations of Christ’s Mother, we proclaim and celebrate that through God’s graciousness to mankind every Christian receives what the Theotokos receives, the “great mercy” which is given to human persons because of Christ’s birth from the Virgin.

Note: The image above is an antique Russian Icon, and therefore predates the 100 year requirement for copy written images.