ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

sthermanshillington.org

133 West Broad Street
Shillington, PA 19607

Fr. John Black, rector
johnmblack@gmail.com

Welcome Home! We are glad you are with us today.
Find a parish close to you: orthodoxyinamerica.org
Interested in the Orthodox Faith? orthodoxintro.org

November 23, 2025
24th Sunday After Pentecost. 9th Sunday of Luke.
After-feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple.

Schedule

Sat Nov 22, 4:00pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun Nov 23, 9am – Divine Liturgy *(continuing our teaching on the Liturgy)*
Prosphora Project following Coffee Hour.

Thanksgiving Services offered in/around our area:

Sun Nov 23, 5pm – Akathist of Thanksgiving @Holy Apostles Mechanicsburg
Wed Nov 26, 5pm – Vespers & Akathist @ Ss Constantine & Helen
Wed Nov 26, 6:30pm – Akathist of Thanksgiving @ Transfiguration Orthodox Church, Lititz
Thanksgiving Day, 9am – Divine Liturgy @ Ss Constantine & Helen

Sat Nov 29, 4:00pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun Nov 30, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. *Apostle Andrew.*

Looking ahead: Sat Dec 13 is St Herman's "winter feast". Friday 6pm Small Vigil; Saturday 9am Festal Liturgy.

Hymns of the Day

Troparion for Sunday (Tone 7)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. / To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. / For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, / to proclaim that Thou art risen, // granting the world great mercy.

Troparion for the Feast (Tone 4)

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, / of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. / The Virgin appears in the Temple of God, / in

anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. / Let us rejoice and sing to her: / "Rejoice, O Fulfillment // of the Creator's dispensation!"

Glory ... Kontakion for Sunday (Tone 7)

The dominion of death / can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: / "The Savior has come to those in faith; // enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

Now & ever ... For the Feast (Tone 4)

The most pure Temple of the Savior; / the precious Chamber and Virgin; / the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, / is presented today to the house of the Lord. / She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, / therefore, the angels of God praise her: // "Truly this woman is the abode of Heaven!"

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22 (24th SAP)

Brethren: Christ Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21 (9th Luke)

The Lord spoke this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." '

"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Prayers

For the repose of: Mat. Virginia Lecko (10/18). Eleana Silk (10/21). Rebecca Ream (11/3).

For the health of: Archbishop Nathaniel, Archbishop Alexander, Archbishop Benjamin, Bernard Kusior, Nina Fatula, John (Erick) Bohlin.

For those who are grieving: *(For Fr. Theodore)* Mat. Lorissa Gregory. *(For Rebecca)* Pani Anna Marie Slovesko, David Ream, Jesika & Justin Wilhelm, Justin & Danielle Ream.

For our catechumens: Stephanie Selis, Bradley Bosch.

Welcome to all visitors who have prayed and celebrated the Divine Liturgy with us this morning! We invite all of you downstairs for fellowship after the conclusion of the Liturgy. If you have any questions, please reach out to Fr. John at any time. *We love you and hope to see you again!*

Please note: In the Orthodox Church, the receiving of Holy Communion is the sign of one's ***full participation in the mystery of the Faith****, and all Orthodox Christians should receive it frequently.*

For this reason, Communion is offered only to Orthodox Christians who are ***prepared*** *to receive it (through* ***prayer****,* ***fasting****, and a recent* ***confession****) and are* ***at peace with each other****. Those who partake of the Eucharist normally fast from food and drink in the morning before the Divine Liturgy, if they are able.*

"My father-in-law had another favorite Bible story (I said he had several): the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace. This story is, incidentally, a favorite of Orthodox liturgical worship as well. It stands as a Biblical image of our rescue from Hades. In the midst of the fiery furnace, together with the three young men, is the image of a fourth. Christ is with them, and in the hymnography of the Church, 'the fire became as the morning dew.' For my father-in-law it was the confession of the three young men before the evil threats of the wicked King Nebuchanezer. To his threats of death in a terrible holocaust they said, 'Our God is able to deliver us, O King. But even if He does not, nevertheless, we will not bow down and worship your image.' It was their defiant 'nevertheless,' that would bring tears to my father-in-law's eyes. For much of our experience here includes furnaces into which we are thrust despite our faith in Christ. It is there that the faith in the goodness of God says, 'Nevertheless.' It is confidence in the goodness of God above all things."

– Fr. Stephen Freeman, "The Life of Thanksgiving", *Glory to God for All Things*, Nov 24 2010.

Attendance

Sun Oct 26 Liturgy: 34 adults, 5 children (Communion: 24 adults, 3 children)
Sun Nov 2 Liturgy: 29 adults, 5 children (Communion: 17 adults, 2 children)
Sun Nov 9 Liturgy: 32 adults, 7 children (Communion: 27 adults, 5 children)
Sun Nov 16 Liturgy: 23 adults, 3 children (Communion: 15 adults, 2 children)
Feast of the Entry, Nov 21:
Vespers: 8, Liturgy: 9, Communion: 7
Sat Nov 22 Vespers: 8

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
(a reflection from St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church, Greenville, SC)

As we keep this Feast of the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, the Church gives us a glimpse into a mystery that St. Ephrem the Syrian loved to proclaim: Mary herself is the true Holy of Holies, the new Eden, the living Temple in whom God chooses to dwell. The Temple made by human hands is a type and shadow of the Mary.

St. Ephrem cries out, "God's Eden is Mary; in her is no serpent that harms, but from her springs the Tree of Life that restores the exiles to Eden." And in this feast we watch the little child Mary ascend those Temple steps, three years old, yet already the fulfillment of the prophets, entering the sanctuary that no one else may enter, because she herself is the sanctuary "not made by hands."

All of Israel's history has been moving toward this moment. Joachim and Anna bring her with lamps in their hands, and the high priest receives her with awe, because as St. Gregory Palamas says, "She entered the Holy of Holies as the only one worthy of the Most Holy." The Temple welcomes her because she is already what the Temple only prefigures. The gold, the incense, the veils, all are but shadows pointing toward the one who will contain the Uncontainable.

Ephrem presses this even further. He tells us that Mary is the Garden watered by the rain of the Father, and that from her "springs the Tree of Life whose fruit gives life to souls." This is the great reversal: Eve once stretched out her hand toward a tree and brought death; Mary stretches out her whole life toward God, and brings forth the Life of the world. The handwriting of Eve's debt, Ephrem says, is torn up in Mary.

And so, today, as we see this small child enter into the Temple, we see more than a pious story. We see the whole human race being led back into the Holy of Holies. We see the first entrance of the one who will later open the door for all. As another hymn says, "Today the living Temple enters the Temple of the Law, to prepare the dwelling for the Lord of all."

This feast, then, is about our entrance as well. Each of us is called to become what Mary reveals: a heart that can receive the Holy Spirit, a life that becomes a temple, an interior place where Christ is at home.

And this is why this feast is not simply a remembrance but an invitation. The child Mary goes before us. She teaches us that holiness is not maturity of years but openness of heart. That the way back into Eden is humility, purity, and the offering of ourselves, entirely, to God.

So let us celebrate this feast with St. Ephrem's vision set before our eys: "From Mary's bosom blossomed the Tree of Life." May that Tree take root in us, so that Christ may dwell in us, and we may enter with joy the Kingdom that she opened.

Most Holy Theotokos, save us.