ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

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January 4, 2026
Sunday Before the Theophany of Our Lord
Synaxis (High Feast) of the Seventy Apostles

Schedule

Sat Jan 3, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun Jan 4, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship

January 6: Holy Theophany

Mon Jan 5, 6pm – **Small Vigil & Great Blessing of Water**
Tues Jan 6, 9am – **Festal Divine Liturgy**, followed by
Tues Jan 6, 11:45am – **Outdoor Blessing of Water @ Wyomissing Creek** *at the Footbridge near Reading Museum Planetarium. Parking may be available on Parkside Drive South. (No parking on Parkside Drive North. Please do not park in the museum lot unless you are also visiting there.)*

Sat Jan 10, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun Jan 11, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. Parish Council.

Sat Jan 17, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun Jan 18, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. ANNUAL MEETING.

Announcements

Sunday January 18 is our Annual Parish Meeting. (2nd Announcement)

THANK YOU for all your donations throughout Advent to International Orthodox Christian Charities. We will be sending $175 to IOCC.

We are urgently seeking a donation for Sacramental Wine ($215). *Please check with Fr John before donating, to avoid duplicates. THANK YOU to those who have already pledged for the Incense and the four Lenten Icons.*

Prayers

For the repose of: *Newly-departed:* Archpriest Paul Pyrch (12/2), Kyra Kopestonsky (12/23), Diane Hutnyan (12/20/2025) and Nicholas Hutnyan (1/1/2022).

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

For our catechumens: Bradley Bosch, Brian Craig.

Hymns of the Day

For the Resurrection (Tone 5)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, / co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead // by His glorious Resurrection.

Forefeast of Theophany (Tone 4)

Prepare, O Zebulon, / and adorn thyself, O Naphtali! / River Jordan, cease flowing, / and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized! / Adam, rejoice with our first Mother, / and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in Paradise; / for having seen you naked, / He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment. // Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

(Kontakion) For the Resurrection (Tone 5)

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior, / shattering its gates as Almighty, / resurrecting the dead as Creator, / and destroying the sting of death. / Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, // and we cry to Thee: "O Lord, save us!"

Glory *... For the Seventy Apostles (Tone 2)*

O faithful, let us praise with hymns / the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ. / They have taught us all to worship the undivided Trinity, // for they are divine lamps of the faith.

Now & ever *... Forefeast of Theophany (Tone 4)*

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John: / "Do not be afraid to baptize Me. // For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Today's Scripture

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8

My son Timothy: Be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.
As it is written in the Prophets:

"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.
The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" [1]

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

[1] Isaish 40:3

Baptism is the most decisive event in our lives. But how little attention it has received! Participation in the Feast of the Resurrection, our common baptismal feast, is a vivid reminder of how "we too might walk in newness of life." And what is that newness of life which is present at the Easter Feast? We experience it when we take part in the Eucharist. Thus it is most natural and important that all baptized member of the Church should partake of Holy Communion also.

– Abp Paul of Finland, The Faith We Hold (SVS Press, 1980), 38-39.

Attendance

Sun Dec 7 Liturgy: 28 adults, 2 children (Communion: 16 adults, 1 children)
Dec 12/13, St Herman's Feast: Vespers 11, Liturgy 29, Communion 24
Sun Dec 14 Liturgy: 10 adults, 1 children (Communion: 8 adults, 1 children)
Sun Dec 21: (unknown)
Christmas Day Liturgy: 25 adults, 2 children (Communion: 15 & 2)

God's blessing comes when we give a blessing

Elder Savvas the Philotheusite had told me that during the great famine of 1917, the Iberians, seeing the monastery's storehouses empty, had reduced their hospitality. In fact, a stingy superior insisted and cut it off completely. Next, Christ would stop all His blessings. Then the fathers began to starve and complain to Christ and the Virgin Mary that they were not taking care of their monastery. Unfortunately, they had not realized their mistake.

One day, therefore, Christ appeared to the Monastery's Gatekeeper, as a poor man, and asked him for a little bread. The Gatekeeper sadly said to him: “We have nothing, my brother, and that is why we have cut off our hospitality. But wait a moment while I bring you this little piece that I have in my cell for myself.” He ran, went to his cell and brought him the bread he had for himself and gave it to him. But he saw the poor man's face shining. After the Poor Man took the bread, he said to the Doorman: *“Do you know why this misfortune came to the Monastery? Because you expelled two from the Monastery: the ‘give’ and the ‘it will be given’.”* After that, he disappeared, scattering a light that dazzled the Doorman.

The Doorman then lost his mind and, frightened, ran to the Superiors of the Monastery and told them the incident. At first, the Fathers racked their brains to remember which people they expelled. But then they understood that the poor man was Christ and they understood His Gospel words: "Give and it will be given to you". They immediately repented of their mistake and as soon as they began to give from their surplus to the poor, God's rich blessings arrived.

– author unknown

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.*