ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Welcome Home! We are glad you are with us today.
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February 22, 2026 - Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)
(the final Pre-Lenten Sunday, the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise)
We also remember today the 1st & 2nd Finding of the Head of John the Baptist.

Sun Feb 22, 9am – Divine Liturgy. *Forgiveness Sunday, a.k.a. Cheesefare Sunday, remembering the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise. Liturgy followed immediately by* ***Forgiveness Vespers****, then coffee hour.* ***Inquirers' Fellowship*** *during coffee hour.*

THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT
(Most Weekday Evenings are 7pm, except for evening Liturgies at 6pm.)

Mon Feb 23, 7pm – Great Canon of Repentance
Tues Feb 24, 7pm – Great Canon of Repentance
Wed Feb 25, **6pm** – Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thurs Feb 26, 7pm – Great Canon of Repentance
Fri Feb 27, 7pm – *Akathist* to the Mother of God (part 1)

Sat Feb 28, 9am – Divine Liturgy for the Miracle of St Theodore
Sat Feb 28, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun March 1, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. *1st Sunday of Great Lent (Triumph of Orthodoxy & Restoration of Icons)*

> Sun March 1, 4pm – Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 1607 West Union Blvd, Bethlehem, PA. *Guest Homilist: Fr Andrew Stephen Damick*

Wed March 4, **6pm** – Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Fri March 6, 7pm – *Akathist* to the Mother of God (part 1)
Sat March 7, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun March 8, 9am – Divine Liturgy. *Archpastoral Visit; Inquirer's Fellowship with Abp. Mark.*

Hymns of the Day

For the Resurrection (Tone 4)

Let the heavens rejoice! / Let the earth be glad! / For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. / He has trampled down death by death. / He has become the first born of the dead. / He has delivered us from the depths of hell, / and has granted the world // great mercy.

For St John the Baptist (Tone 4)

The head of the Forerunner has shone from the earth, / sending forth rays of incorruption and healings to the faithful. / It gathers together a multitude of angels above / and summons the human race below // to send up glory with one voice to Christ our God.

Glory ... For St John the Baptist (Tone 2)

O Prophet of God and Forerunner of Grace, / we have found thy head as a sacred rose. / Therefore we always receive healings from it, // and, as in times past, now thou preachest repentance to the world.

Now & ever ... For the Expulsion from Paradise (Tone 6)

O Master, Teacher of wisdom, / Bestower of virtue, / Who teachest the thoughtless and protectest the poor, / strengthen and enlighten my heart! / O Word of the Father, / let me not restrain my mouth from crying to Thee: "Have mercy on me, a transgressor, // O merciful Lord!"

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

Brethren: Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

The Lord said: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men

to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh was asked,
"What shall we do with children in church? They interfere with our prayers."
He replied, "When you begin to pray, they will stop bothering you".

The Faith We Hold: Faith and Works

There is no problem of "**faith and good works**" in the spirituality of the Church. The relationship between faith and good works becomes a "problem" only when justification is understood as an outward legal process between God and man. In that case people either fear that good deeds will come between the soul and Christ or, on the contrary, they regard deeds as merits in the eyes of God. In the Orthodox view deeds are not an end in themselves for the doer, but are more like **a saving instrument in the transformation of man's corrupted nature into a "new creation."** *(2 Cor 5:17)* Therefore **Christ's gospel commandments are not law but grace and mercy**. They are like **medicine** given for our use, without which we cannot get well. Let us think of any virtue recommended to us in the Gospel: humility, for instance. How else could we grow in humility except by really humbling ourselves in practice? A prayer from Psalm 119 is often repeated in church services: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes!"

Because of man's corrupted nature, he has no other way of **showing gratitude and love towards Christ** than by trying to fulfil in his life the commandments which Christ has given, which work towards his own salvation. *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (Jn 14:15)* The fulfilment of these commandments of Christ which are contained in the Gospels, such as prayer, fasting, serving one's neighbour, humility and refraining from condemning anyone else, can be seen as **the leaves of the spiritual tree**. The gifts of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, correspond to the fruits of the tree. *(Gal 5:22)* They are the signs of a purified heart. The wisdom and difficulty of the spiritual pilgrimage lie in the fact that the leaves must not be regarded as fruits, nor yet can one imagine that one can bear fruit without leaves; **one cannot acquire the gifts of the Spirit without effort**.

– Abp Paul of Finland, *The Faith We Hold* (SVS Press, 1980), 24-25.

Prayers

The newly-departed: Archbishop Seraphim (Sigrist) (2/7). Apr. Andrew Moulton (1/9). Apr. Stephen Plumlee (1/14). Apr. John Pawelchak (1/17). Mat. Julia Romanchak (1/11). John Susko (2/14).

For health of: Abp. Nathaniel, Abp. Alexander, Abp. Benjamin, Bernard Kusior, Nina Fatula, Gloria Spitko, Jessica Sullivan and her infant Lucas, Richard Kawood. ***On hospice:*** Vera Eckert (mother of Kathy Wanenchak) & Olga Oscavich (a parishioner of Bethlehem who is confined to a facility here in Shillington). ***For our Catechumens:*** Bradley Bosch, Brian Craig.

Social Hour & Church Cleanup Schedule

	Social Hour	**Church Clean-up**
	Great Lent: Meat & Dairy Fast	
Feb 22	Mat. Alexandra & Haven Black	Marie Drosdak & John Waselus
March 1	Peggy Hay & Traci Weinstein	Tina Gurnavage & Stephanie Drosdak
March 8	Kathy Wanenchak & Stephanie Selis	John Lorchak & Phyllis Kawood
March 15	Elaine Dougherty & Karin Holm	Vicky McDonnell & Traci Weinstein
March 22	Tina Gurnavage & Marcia Lutz	Russ & Peggy Hay
March 29	Vicky McDonnell & Phyllis Kawood	Kyle & Daria Teter
April 5	Marie Drosdak & Stephanie Drosdak	Eugene & Kathy Wanenchak
April 12	*PASCHA*	
April 19	Karen Sichak & Becky Kauffman	Marie Drosdak & John Waselus
April 26	Daria Teter & Marina Long	Brad & Becky Kauffman

Attendance

Sun Feb 1 Liturgy: 20, 0 children (Communion: 13)
Mon Feb 2 Feastday Liturgy: 1
Sun Feb 8 Liturgy: 24 adults, 2 children (Communion: 11 adults, 1 children)
Sat Feb 14 Vespers: 4
Sat Feb 21 Vespers: 13 adults, 4 children

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.*