ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

sthermanshillington.org

133 West Broad Street
Shillington, PA 19607
610-775-4461

Fr. John Black, rector
johnmblack@gmail.com

Welcome Home! We are glad you are with us today.
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March 1, 2026 – 1st Sunday of Great Lent
The "Triumph of Orthodoxy"
, on which we celebrate the Restoration of Icons

Sat Feb 28, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun March 1, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. *1st Sunday of Great Lent*
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 2)

His Eminence, Archbishop Mark will visit our parish this weekend.

Sat March 7, 4pm – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sun March 8, 9am – Divine Liturgy. *Inquirer's Fellowship with Abp. Mark.*

Wed March 11, 6pm – Presanctified Liturgy with area parishes at Ss. Constantine & Helen, 1001 E Wyomissing Blvd, Reading
Fri March 13, 7pm – *Akathist* to the Mother of God (part 3)

Sat March 14, 9:30am – 4pm Lenten Retreat @ *St Paul's Orthodox Church, Emmaus PA w/ Fr Andrew Damick.*
Sat March 14 – Vespers TBD. *We may have a later service, a "small vigil" for the Feast of the Cross. This would also allow us more time to return from the retreat.*

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.

For the Restoration of Icons (Tone 2)

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One; / and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. / Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy. / Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee: / "Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior, // for Thou didst come to save the world."

Glory ... Now & ever ... Restoration of Icons (Tone 8)

No one could describe the Word of the Father; / but when He took flesh from thee, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, / and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty. // We confess and proclaim our salvation in words and images.

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

Brethren: By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward....

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us....

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

At that time, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

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.*

Attendance

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
Sun Feb 22 Liturgy: 15, 0 children (Communion: 10)

Mon Feb 23 Great Canon: 9
Tue Feb 24 Great Canon: 5
Wed Feb 25 Presanctified: 12
Thu Feb 26 Great Canon: 3
Fri Feb 27 Akathist: 4
Sat Feb 28 Liturgy St Theodore: 10

Why Icons?

The Orthodox Church has a rich tradition of iconography as well as other church arts: music, architecture, sculpture, needlework, poetry, etc. This artistic tradition is based on the Orthodox Christian doctrine of human creativity rooted in God's love for man and the world in creation.

Because man is created in the image and likeness of God, and because God so loved man and the world as to create, save, and glorify them by His own coming in Christ and the Holy Spirit, the artistic expressions of man and the blessings and inspirations of God merge into a holy artistic creativity which truly expresses the deepest truths of the Christian vision of God, man, and nature. The icon is Orthodoxy's highest artistic achievement. It is a gospel proclamation, a doctrinal teaching, and a spiritual inspiration in colors and lines.

The traditional Orthodox icon is not a holy picture. It is not a pictorial portrayal of some Christian saint or event in a "photocopy" way. It is, on the contrary, the expression of the eternal and divine reality, significance, and purpose of the given person or event depicted. In the gracious freedom of the divine inspiration, the icon depicts its subject as at the same time both human and yet "full of God," earthly and yet heavenly, physical and yet spiritual, "bearing the cross" and yet full of grace, light, peace, and joy.

In this way the icon expresses a deeper "realism" than that which would be shown in the simple reproduction of the physical externals of the historic person or happening. Thus, in their own unique way the various types of Orthodox icons, through their form and style and manner of depiction as well as through their actual contents and use in the Church, are an inexhaustible source of revelation of the Orthodox doctrine and faith....

The traditional Orthodox architecture also expresses the doctrine of the Church, particularly in its emphasis on "God with us" and the complete communion of men and the world with God in Christ. The use of domed ceilings, the shape and layout of the buildings, the placing of the icons, the use of vestments, etc., all express the teachings of the Church. The traditional Orthodox church architecture and artwork are expressions of the Orthodox Christian doctrines of creation, salvation, and eternal life.

It is a very important spiritual exercise for Christians to study the holy icons and the hymns of the Church's liturgy. One can learn much about God and His gracious actions among men by a careful and prayerful contemplation of the artistic expressions of Church doctrine and life (see Worship).

– Fr Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith, Vol. I: Doctrine and Scripture.*

The 1st Sunday of Lent: The Triumph of Orthodoxy

Disputes concerning the Person of Christ ... continued through the eighth and ninth centuries. This time, the controversy focused on icons—pictures of Christ, the Theotokos, the saints, and holy events—and lasted for 120 years, starting in AD 726. Icons were kept and venerated in both churches and private homes.

The first group in the controversy were the *Iconoclasts*, "icon-smashers," who were suspicious of any art depicting God or humans; they demanded the destruction of icons because they saw icons as idolatry. The other group were *Iconodules*, "venerators of icons," who defended the place of icons in the Church.

The controversy, however, was more than a struggle over different views of Christian art. Deeper issues were involved, and it is these the Council addressed:

- The character of Christ's human nature
- The Christian attitude toward matter
- The true meaning of Christian redemption and the salvation of the entire material universe

The iconoclasts had support from both inside and outside the Church. Outside the Church, there may have been influence from Jewish and Muslim ideas....

Largely through the work of St. John of Damascus (c. 676-749), who, ironically, was housed in Muslim-controlled lands and therefore outside the reach of the Empire, the iconodules' position won out. He addressed the charges of the iconoclasts thus:

"Concerning the charge of idolatry: Icons are not idols but symbols, therefore when an Orthodox venerates an icon, he is not guilty of idolatry. He is not worshipping the symbol, but merely venerating it. Such veneration is not directed toward wood, or paint or stone, but towards the person depicted. Therefore relative honor is shown to material objects, but worship is due to God alone.

"We do not make obeisance to the nature of wood, but we revere and do obeisance to Him who was crucified on the Cross... When the two beams of the Cross are joined together I adore the figure because of Christ who was crucified on the Cross, but if the beams are separated, I throw them away and burn them."

The last Emperor to persecute the Church's use of icons was Theophilos, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established veneration. Empress Theodora

proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel.

(Originally, the Holy Prophets Moses, Aaron, and Samuel were commemorated on this Sunday. The Alleluia verses that precede today's Gospel reflect this older usage.)

I honor all matter, and venerate it. Through it, filled, as it were, with a divine power and grace, my salvation has come to me. Was the three-times happy and blessed wood of the Cross not matter? Was the sacred and holy mountain of Calvary not matter? What of the life-giving rock, the Holy Tomb, the source of our resurrection — was it not matter? Is the holy book of the Gospels not matter? Is the blessed table which gives us the Bread of Life not matter? Are the gold and silver, out of which crosses and altar-plate and chalices are made not matter? And before all these things, is not the body and blood of our Lord matter? Either stop venerating all these things, or submit to the tradition of the Church in the venerating of images, honoring God and his friends, and following in this the grace of the Holy Spirit. Do not despise matter, for it is not despicable. Nothing that God has made is. Only that which does not come from God is despicable — our own invention, the spontaneous decision to disregard the law of human nature, i.e., sin.

– St John of Damascus

The Song of Tears: The Great Canon of St Andrew

*"No sin has there been in life, no evil deed, no wickedness, that I have not committed, O Savior. I have sinned as no one ever before, in mind, word, and intent, in disposition, thought, and act" (Ode 4, ¶ 13). "**More than all men have I sinned** (Ode 2, ¶ 3)."*

This lamentation resounds throughout the whole length of the Great Canon; indeed throughout the Byzantine liturgy in general. **"Thou didst come into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,"** as is said just before receiving Communion. This is no mere figure of speech—such a thing would be intolerable—but rather **the expression of a fundamental grace** given to assist us as we progress on the path to repentance, the grace of being able to perceive the ontological **unity of the entire human race**. Each one of us ... **is Adam**, from whom we inherit, not a personal culpability but an existence unto death. "What then," asks St John Chrysostom, "does the word *'sinners'* mean? To me it seems to mean ... condemned to death." In becoming aware of one's condition-of one's own sins, certainly, but at a profounder level of a "sorrow ... that produces death" (2 Cor 7.10)—one discovers that there is a deviance, a failure that is that of humanity as a whole. **The history of the species becomes one's own history.**...

Then, once he enters a state of *metanoia [repentance; a change of heart]*, **man begins to chant the lamentation of the "total Adam,"** exiled as he is from paradise and vainly seeking in the passions a means of staving off his nostalgia. He recapitulates in himself the history of the fall.... Only this panhuman **experience of lamentation** will enable us to understand **what it is that we are saved from**. Only our ontological solidarity with the first Adam will give us an even stronger solidarity with Christ, the definitive Adam. **Only the mysterious communion of sinners will open a way for us to the communion of saints.**

– Olivier Clèment, *The Song of Tears: An Essay on Repentance Based on the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete* (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2021), 35-36.

The "Synodikon"

The Great Proclamation concerning the Veneration of Icons
Established at the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 AD)

As the Prophets beheld,
as the Apostles have taught,
as the Church has received,
as the Teachers have dogmatized,
as the universe has agreed,
as Grace has shown forth,
as Truth has revealed,
as falsehood has been dispelled,
as Wisdom has made manifest,
as Christ has awarded:
Thus we declare;
thus we affirm;
thus we proclaim
Christ our true God,
and honor his Saints
in words, in writings,
in thoughts, in sacrifices,
in churches, in holy icons;
on the one hand,
worshiping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord;
and on the other,
honoring the Saints as true servants of the same Lord of all,
and offering them proper veneration.
This is the Faith of the Apostles.
This is the Faith of the Fathers.
This is the Faith of the Orthodox.
This is the Faith which has established the universe!

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). Olga Oscavich (2/23).

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). ***For our Catechumens:*** Bradley Bosch, Brian Craig.

Social Hour & Church Cleanup Schedule

	Social Hour	**Church Clean-up**
	Great Lent: Meat & Dairy Fast	
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