ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

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March 8, 2026 – 2nd Sunday of Great Lent

St Gregory Palamas

We welcome our Archpastor, His Eminence Archbishop Mark 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, 9:30-4 – **Lenten Retreat** w/ Fr Andrew Damick, *at St Paul's Orthodox Church, 156 East Main St, Emmaus PA.*

Sat March 14 – **6:00 PM – Small Vigil for the Sunday of the Cross**
Sun March 15, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship.

Wed March 18, 6pm – Presanctified Liturgy with area parishes at St Matthew's, 8477 Allentown Pike, Blandon

Hymns of the Day

For the Resurrection (Tone 6)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure body. / Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

For St Gregory (Tone 8)

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, / O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, / O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace: // always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

Glory ... for St Gregory (Tone 8)

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, / joyful trumpet of theology, / together we sing your praises, O God-inspired Gregory. / Since you now stand before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father, // so that we may sing to you: "Rejoice, preacher of grace!"

Now & ever ... for the 2nd Sunday of Lent (Tone 4)

Now is the time for action! / Judgment is at the doors! / So let us rise and fast, / offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: / "We have sinned more than the sands of the sea; / but forgive us, O Master of all, // so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!"

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Brethren: To the Son, God says, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

“Blessed are those who mourn.”

There is a temptation to think this blessing is for anyone who mourns. But in the Church, we read the passage where this blessing is given specifically on feasts for saints (like St. Alexis of Moscow who was commemorated yesterday). We read this on such feast days because the saints mourn. They mourn for the evil in the world and the evil in themselves. Those who mourn with this mourning are blessed.

The mourning they experience is a type of grief. It is a deep sense of sorrow that one feels when they become aware of something precious that they have lost or missed. It is the grief of the bridesmaids who didn't have enough oil. It is the grief of the wedding guests who missed the great feast. Grief is a “hole” where something should have been but isn't.

The mourning that the saints feel is the loss of the presence of God in their lives. They see, often painfully and with tears, how far they are from their loving Creator. They see how they have wasted their lives in fruitless pursuits: the lust, the flesh, and the pride of life. And they see how the world also suffers from it's own alienation from God. They see the evil and the betrayal we have all committed against the only One who is truly Good. We have wandered, we are lost, and we are dying in darkness.

How then should we respond to the evil we see in the world and in ourselves? Not with anger, not with outrage, not with any other worldly expression. Instead, we respond like the saints with mourning and tears. We respond like Christ standing near the tomb of His friend Lazarus. Our tears and mourning lead us to God in prayer, prayer that is supported by fasting and almsgiving.

But those who find their life in Christ do not mourn without hope. Every tear will be wiped away, every sorrow will be turned to joy, every moment of grief will be turned into rejoicing. Christ is risen! This is so important to remember. I preach no other Gospel than this, that Christ is risen! His resurrection is the good news. We will rise again because of Him as new creatures, but the entire cosmos will also be remade and rise again. Christ will return with all the heavenly hosts and overwhelm creation with His holiness. It will be an unquenchable fire that will destroy and remake the entire cosmos. Evil will disappear. We won't remember it. It won't even be a distant memory. Evil will finally fulfill it's ontological reality: it won't be. Only God's holiness will be everywhere. It will be paradise!

And so, for now we mourn, but with hope. We repent with hope in the coming of the new age when all things will be made right. May the Lord comfort us and those who mourn with us until the day of rejoicing arrives.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”

– Fr. Peter Runyon

Prayers

The newly-departed: Archbishop Seraphim (Sigrist) (2/7). 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.

When someone who is not Orthodox comes to the Orthodox Church he must go through a furnace of repentance, of change and regeneration of his entire way of thinking and living. This will take a long time. In order for someone's positive attitude towards Orthodoxy to become an experience of his heart, he must lead a life of asceticism and crucifixion for many years under the guidance of an experienced spiritual father. Otherwise the 'old self' will remain, with the result that unbelief and the inclination to go back to the old way of life will often occur.

– St Sophrony of Essex

Attendance

Sun Feb 22 Liturgy: 15, 0 children (Communion: 10) *(Forgiveness Sunday)*
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: 10 *(St Theodore)*
Sun Mar 1 Liturgy: 33 adults, 2 children (Communion: 21 adults, 1 children)
Wed Mar 4 Presanctified: 20

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, as they are able.*