# ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**April 5, 2026 – PALM SUNDAY**

## HOLY WEEK & PASCHA SCHEDULE

April 5, Palm Sunday, 9am – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship

April 6, Holy Mon, 9am – Presanctified @ Ss Const & Helen
April 6, Holy Mon, 7pm – Bridegroom Matins

April 7, Holy Tues, 9am – Presanctified @ Ss Const & Helen *(FrJ serving)*
April 7, Holy Tues, 7pm – Bridegroom Matins

April 8, Holy Wed, 9am – Presanctified Here *(w/ area clergy)*
April 8, Holy Wed, 6pm – **Holy Unction**

April 9, Holy Thurs, 9am – *The Mystical Supper.* Vesperal Liturgy
April 9, Holy Thurs, 7pm – Matins of the Passion (12 Gospels)

April 10, Good Fri, 9am – Royal Hours. *(Tomb preparation to follow)*
April 10, Good Fri, 3pm – Burial Vespers
April 10, Good Fri, 7pm – Holy Sat Matins. *Procession with the tomb.*

April 11, **Holy Sat, 9am** – Vesperal Liturgy. *The "First Liturgy of Pascha". Christ's victory over death, the Old Testament Prophesies of the Resurrection, and the festive changing of colors.*

**GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA: Sat April 11, 10pm** – *Nocturnes, Procession, Paschal Matins & Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Baskets and Paschal Fellowship.*

Sun April 12, 12 noon – Vespers of Pascha
Mon April 13, 9:30am – Bright Monday Liturgy, Holy Trinity, Pottstown
Mon April 13, 9:30am – Bright Monday Liturgy, Christ the Saviour, HBG
Tues April 14, 9:00am – Bright Tuesday Liturgy (here)

## Hymns of the Day

*For Palm Sunday (Tone 1)*

**By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, / Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God. / Like the children with the palms of victory, / we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: / "Hosanna in the highest! // Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."**

*(Glory ...) Another, Tone 4*

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God, / we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection. / Now we praise Thee and sing: / "Hosanna in the highest! // Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!"

*Now & ever Kontakion (Tone 6)*

Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven, / carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God, / accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: // "Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam!"

*Instead of "It is truly meet"*

God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! / Celebrate the feast and come with gladness! / Let us magnify Christ with palms and branches, / singing: "Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!"

## Today's Scripture

*Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9*

*Brethren:* Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

*Gospel: John 12:1-18*

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone;

she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

*"Fear not, daughter of Zion;*
*behold, your King is coming,*
*sitting on a donkey's colt."*

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

## Announcements

**If you are new to the Orthodox Faith**, please note that our "Easter" (Pascha) celebration is one week later than the Catholic/Protestant date this year. Today (April 6) is our Palm Sunday; *next* week (April 12) is our Pascha. And our Paschal celebration (including Divine Liturgy) is in the middle of the night, beginning Sat April 11 at 10pm (there is no Liturgy at the usual Sunday Morning time that day).

If you have not yet sought confession, please do so *before* Wednesday evening. Once we begin to celebrate the betrayal and passion of Our Lord, the time for repentance is over. (Exceptions can be made for those traveling from out of town, sick or shut-in, college students, etc.)

Pascha Flowers – Please consider donating to offset the cost, in addition to your regular stewardship. Any amount is welcome. Please write *who you are praying for* on the envelope (either in thanksgiving for the living, or in memory of the departed).

If you are able to help mow the lawn a few times during the Spring and Summer months, please see the sign-up sheet downstairs by the door.

Excerpts from "Our Journey through Holy Week", by Dr. Constance Tarasar

*Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday*

The services of these first three days are called the **"Bridegroom Services,"** for the theme of the hymns that are repeated each evening refer to **Christ, the Bridegroom, Who comes at midnight**.

> Behold! The Bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching; and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom. But rouse yourself, crying: "Holy! Holy! Holy! art Thou, O our God, through the Theotokos, have mercy on us!"

The other major theme of the Gospel readings is **the "End,"** the time of Judgment. The Bridegroom comes at midnight, in the darkness, to judge all people by the light of His truth. The verses call us to **be prepared and watch**, for we know not the day nor the hour when the Lord will come [John 12:31-36; Matthew 25:13].

The Gospels for the first three days of Holy Week further develop these themes.

- [On Sunday night], we hear about **the fig tree that bore no fruit**—a symbol of the world that was created to bear spiritual fruits but failed in its response to God. At the Presanctified Liturgy, we hear of the signs and announcement of the End: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
- [On Monday night], our Lord condemns **the blind and hypocritical religion of the Pharisees**, who see themselves as leaders and the light of the world, but who instead "shut up the Kingdom of heaven to men." Two parables—that of **the Wise and Foolish Virgins** and the **Last Judgment** [Matthew 24:36-26:2] are read at the Presanctified Liturgy. The first reveals the need to be ready and prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom, while the second reminds us that we will be called to account for how we have loved and served others.
- [On Tuesday night], Jesus says: "Now is the judgment of the world." He came as light into the world, but those who prefer the darkness and do not believe Him, or the Father Who sent Him, will face judgment by His Word. During the Presanctified Liturgy, we remember **the woman who poured the precious oil** on Jesus as the image of love and repentance. She is contrasted with **Judas, who betrayed Christ out of his love for money**.

## *Great and Holy Thursday*

The main theme of **Great and Holy Thursday** commemorates the Lord's Supper:

> Come, O faithful. Let us enjoy the Master's hospitality: the Banquet of Immortality! In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, let us receive the exalted words of the Word, Whom we magnify!

The **Lord's Supper** is commemorated during the **Vesperal Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning**. [It is also at this Thursday Liturgy that the priest in each church must set aside the reserved particles of the Eucharist to commune the sick for the rest of the year.]

## *Good Friday Matins (Thursday night)*

Matins of Good Friday, served Thursday night, consists of **12 readings from the Gospels** that recall the final instructions of Jesus to His disciples during the supper. They include the accounts of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His trials before the High Priest and Pilate, the governor. The gospels continue with the readings about His crucifixion, death and burial. In between the readings are hymns giving the meaning of these events for our life.

The **Cross** is placed in the **center of the Church** during Matins. In some churches, it is carried out in procession during the singing of a beautiful hymn for the 15th Antiphon, between the fifth and sixth Gospel readings.

> Today He Who hung the earth upon the waters is hung on the tree. / The King of the angels is decked with a crown of thorns. / He who wraps the heavens in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery. / He who freed Adam in the Jordan is slapped on the face. / The Bridegroom of the Church is affixed to the Cross with nails. / The Son of the Virgin is pierced by a spear. */ We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / Show us also Thy glorious resurrection.*

The *Exaposteilarion* [Hymn of Light] tells us that it is never too late to repent and to ask for God's forgiveness, for Christ forgave **the thief on the Cross** who said: "Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom." Jesus answered, saying, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

> **The wise thief** didst Thou make worthy of Paradise
> in a single moment, O Lord.
> By the wood of Thy Cross, illumine me as well, and save me.

*Good Friday Vespers (Friday afternoon)*

During **Vespers**, we remember the **death and burial of the Lord**. Towards the end of the service, with the singing of "The Noble Joseph," the clergy bring the shroud with the image of Christ's Body from the altar and **place it on a tomb** in the center of the church.

> **The noble Joseph**, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen, and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. / The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said, "Myrrh is meet for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption.

*Great and Holy Saturday Matins (Friday night)*

The resurrection of Christ and the granting of new life to those in Hades begins ... **in the depths of Hades**, where Christ goes to defeat the very power of death. In Saturday's Matins, celebrated on Friday evening, we hear these words in a long series of hymns chanted between the verses of Psalm 118. They give us a picture of **Christ coming to earth to find His friend Adam**. But Adam and his descendants **have died**; after their expulsion from the Garden, they could no longer live forever with God. So Christ comes to save us by dying for us. He **descends to the place of death itself to find Adam** and to raise the dead by destroying the very power of death, as we hear in these hymns.

*Great and Holy Saturday Vesperal Divine Liturgy*

The **Vesperal Liturgy** of Saint Basil the Great, celebrated on **Holy Saturday**, has several important elements.

- The verses sung at the beginning of Vespers announce the **battle** in Hades **between Christ and the power of death** and Christ's victory over death. *"Today Hell cries out groaning: 'I should not have accepted the man born of Mary! He came and destroyed my power!' ..."*
- The **Readings from the Old Testament** that follow speak of God creating life "in the beginning." They include the **crossing of the Red Sea**, **Jonah** and the people of Nineveh, **Elijah** and **Elisha** who each brought a boy back to life, God sparing **Abraham's son**, Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant God makes with His people, and the **Three Young Men in the Furnace**.

The climax of Holy Saturday comes when the Prokeimenon announces: "**Arise, O God, judge the earth**, for to Thee belong all the nations." At this point, **all the vestments** of the clergy and servers **and the cloths** on the Altar and analogia are **changed from dark to white**, for the resurrection

has already begun in Hades and will soon be announced to us. Immediately we hear the Gospel reading from Matthew 28:1-20, in which the news of Christ's resurrection is given to the Myrrhbearing Women at the tomb. As the Liturgy continues, we are reminded that the tomb is still present in the center of the church. Christ's work in Hades has begun, yet **we must wait** to hear the Good News. The Great Entrance with the Holy Gifts is done in silence:

> **Let all mortal flesh keep silent**, and in fear and trembling stand, pondering nothing earthly minded. For the King of kings and the Lord of lords comes to be slain, to give Himself as food to the faithful....

*The Great Paschal Vigil, Liturgy, and Eucharist*

We have several hours until the late evening to wait for the joyful news. In the meantime, the church will be dark. [At the Nocturnes that begins the Vigil], the light from candles begins to illumine the church. Outside in procession, the light of our candles also illumines the darkness, as we anticipate the resurrection by singing, *"Thy resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels in heaven sing. Enable us on earth to glorify Thee in purity of heart."* Then, after circling the church, we hear these joyful words: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life! Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!" The joyful hymns of the Paschal Kanon are sung as the clergy cense the church over and over again.

Finally, as the Paschal Matins service ends, the Paschal Verses are sung:

> This is the day of resurrection, let us be illumined by the feast. Let us embrace each other. Let us call "brothers" even those that hate us, and forgive all by the resurrection, and so, let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Saint John Chrysostom's Paschal Homily is read, in which we hear that essential question, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown! Christ is risen and the demons are fallen! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen and life reigns! Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the grave! For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen."

## Prayers

***The newly-departed:*** Patriarch Ilia of Georgia (3/17) Archbishop Seraphim (Sigrist) (2/7). Fr Theodore Mozes (3/9). John Susko (2/14). Olga Oscavich (2/23).

***For health of:*** Abp. Nathaniel, Abp. Alexander, Abp. Benjamin, Pani Anna Marie Slovesko, Mat. Elizabeth Meyer, Bernard Kusior, Nina Fatula, Gloria Spitko, Jessica (Philothea) Sullivan and her infant Lucas, Richard Kawood. ***On hospice:*** Vera Eckert (mother of Kathy Wanenchak).
***For our Catechumens:*** Bradley Bosch, Brian Craig.

*And for all who are seeking the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of the Orthodox Faith.*

*Attendance*

Wed Mar 4 Presanctified: 20
**Sun Mar 8 Liturgy**: 26 adults, 2 children
**Sun Mar 29 Liturgy**: 31 adults (Communion: 21)
Wed April 1 Presanctified: 22
Fri Apr 3 Lazarus Sat Eve: 3
Sat Apr 4 Lazarus Sat Liturgy: 9
Sat Apr 4 Palm Sunday Eve: 7

***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.*