ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA

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September 13, 2026 – 15th Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Cross
Founding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (335 AD)

Sat Sept 12, 4pm – Great Vespers & confessions
Sun Sept 13, 9am – Divine Liturgy & fellowship

> *September 14 is the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross.*
> Sun Sept 13, 6pm – Festal Great Vespers. *Because of the solemnity of the Feast of the Cross, we will celebrate in the evening instead of following coffee hour.*
> Mon Sept 14, 9am – Festal Divine Liturgy. *Strict Fast Day.*

Correction: There will not be Liturgy for St Sophia & her Daughters at Ss Constantine & Helen this week.

Sat Sept 19, 4pm – Great Vespers & confessions
Sun Sept 20, 9am – Divine Liturgy. Inquirers' Fellowship after Coffee Hour.

> *On September 24 we remember All Saints of Alaska, the Martyrs Juvenaly & Peter, along with St Silouan the Athonite.*
> Wed Sept 23, 6pm – Great Vespers
> Thurs Sept 24, 9am – Divine Liturgy

Sat Sept 26, 1-3p: Fall Retreat w/Abbot Sergius @ Christ the Saviour, Harrisburg

Hymns of the Day

Troparion 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.

Troparion for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Tone 4)

Thou hast revealed the beauty of the holy dwelling place of Thy glory on earth / to be like the splendor of the heavenly firmament, O Lord. / Through the prayers of the Theotokos, / strengthen it for ever and ever / and accept our supplication / which we ceaselessly offer Thee therein, // the life and resurrection of all!

Troparion for the Fore-feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (Tone 4)

We offer in supplication / the life-creating Cross of Thy goodness, O Lord, / which Thou hast granted to us / although we are unworthy. // Through the Theotokos, save all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of man!

Kontakion for the Resurrection (Tone 6)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. // He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

(Glory / Now & ever) for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Tone 2)

Grant renewal of spirit in our hearts, / and illumination to all that is within us, / as we celebrate in faith the sacred dedication of Thy house, / which Thou wast well pleased to have built in Thy divine Name, // O Thou Who alone art glorified in the sanctuary.

Today's Scripture

1st Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18 (Sunday Before the Cross)

Brethren: See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

2nd Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (15th Sunday after Pentecost)

Brethren: It is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in

the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, *"I believed and therefore I spoke,"* we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

1st Gospel: John 3:13-17 (Sunday Before the Cross)

The Lord said: "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

2nd Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46 (15th Sunday after Pentecost)

At that time, a lawyer asked Jesus a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: *'The LORD said to my Lord, / sit at My right hand, / till I make Your enemies Your footstool'?* If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Founding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (335 AD)

The Dedication of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ at Jerusalem celebrates the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection, built by Saint Constantine the Great and his mother, the empress Helen.

When the Roman emperor Titus conquered Jerusalem in the year 70, he razed the city and destroyed the Temple of Solomon on Mount Moriah, leaving there not a stone upon a stone, as even the Savior foretold (Mt.13:1-2).

Later on the zealous pagan emperor Hadrian (117-138) built on the site of the Jerusalem destroyed by Titus a new city named Aelia Capitolina for him (Hadrian Aelius). It was forbidden to call the city by its former name.

He gave orders to cover the Holy Tomb of the Lord with earth and stones, and on that spot to set up an idol. On Golgotha, where the Savior was crucified, he constructed a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Venus in 119. Before the statues they offered sacrifice to demons and performed pagan rites, accompanied by wanton acts.

In Bethlehem, at the place the Savior was born of the All-Pure Virgin, the impious emperor set up an idol of Adonis. He did all this intentionally, so that people would forget completely about Christ the Savior and that they would no longer remember the places where He lived, taught, suffered and arose in glory.

At the beginning of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (306-337), the first of the Roman emperors to recognize the Christian religion, he and his pious mother the empress Helen decided to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. They also planned to build a church on the site of the Lord's suffering and Resurrection, in order to reconsecrate and purify the places connected with memory of the Savior.

The holy empress quickly began the construction of a large church which enclosed within its walls Golgotha, the place of the Crucifixion of the Savior, and the Sepulchre of the Lord, located near each other. The holy Apostle and Evangelist John wrote about this: "Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day, for the tomb was nearby" (John 19:41-42). The Church of the Resurrection was ten years in building, and the holy empress Helen did not survive to see its completion. She returned to Constantinople, and reposed in the year 327. After her arrival in Jerusalem, the holy empress built churches in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane and in many other places connected with the life of the Savior and events in the New Testament.

The construction of the church of the Resurrection, called "Martyrion" in memory of the sufferings of the Savior, was completed in the same year as the Council of Tyre, and in the thirtieth year of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great. Therefore, at the assembly of September 13, 335, the consecration of the temple was particularly solemn. Hierarchs of Christian Churches in

many lands: Bythnia, Thrace, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, participated in the consecration of the church. The bishops who participated in the Council of Tyre, and many others, went to the consecration in Jerusalem. On this day all the city of Jerusalem was consecrated. The Fathers of the Church established September 13 as the commemoration of this remarkable event.

The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross
Celebrated on September 14

The pagan Roman Emperors tried to obliterate the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and rose from the dead, so that they would be forgotten. Emperor Hadrian (117-138) ordered that Golgotha and the Lord's Sepulchre be buried, and that a temple in honor of the pagan "goddess" Venus and a statue of Jupiter be placed there.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the Christian holy places, the Sepulchre of the Lord, and the Life-giving Cross, were discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory over Maxentius (in 312), who ruled the Western part of the Roman Empire, and over Licinius, the ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 Saint Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, by which Christianity was legalized and persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the Empire were stopped. Although Licinius had signed the Edict of Milan in order to oblige Constantine, he continued his cruel persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the Edict of Milan extend also to the Eastern part of the Empire. The Holy Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, triumphing over his enemies in three wars, with God’s assistance, had seen the Sign of the Cross in the heavens. Written beneath were the words: “By this you shall conquer.”

Ardently desiring to find the Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, Saint Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to Saint Makarios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Saint Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches, at Bethlehem the birthplace of Christ, and on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings, and where the Mother of God was buried after her Dormition.

Although the holy Empress Helen was no longer young, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. In her search for the Life-giving Cross, she questioned both Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful. Finally, she was directed to a certain elderly Jew named Jude who stated that the Cross was buried beneath the temple of Venus. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Lord's Tomb was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, and a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord’s Body (March 6).

In order to discover on which of the three crosses the Savior had been crucified, Patriarch Makarios alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead man, he was restored to life.

After witnessing the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-giving Cross had been found.

In the year 326, Christians came in a huge crowds to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching Saint Makarios to lift the Cross, so that those far off could see it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders lifted the Holy Cross, and the people prostrated themselves before the Honorable Wood, saying "Lord have mercy." In so doing, they honored the prophetic acts of Moses who once stretched out his arms, assisted by Aaron and Hur, to help the Israelites defeat the army of Amalek (Exodus 17:8-13). This custom of carrying out the Precious Cross for veneration by the celebrant, with other clergy supporting his arms, continues to this day in many Orthodox churches.

During the discovery of the Life-giving Cross another miracle took place: a woman who was close to death was healed by the shadow of the Holy Cross. The elderly Jude (October 28) and other Jews believed in Christ and were baptized. Jude was given the name Kyriakos, and later he was consecrated as the Bishop of Jerusalem. He suffered a martyr's death for Christ during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363).

Saint Helen took part of the Life-giving Wood and nails with her to Constantinople, where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was then built and consecrated on Sept 13, 335. On the following day, September 14, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross was established.

Another event connected to the Cross of the Lord is remembered also on this day: its return to Jerusalem from Persia after a fourteen year captivity. During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Phokas (602-610) the Persian king Khozróēs II attacked Constantinople defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem, capturing both the Life-giving Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years, and only under Emperor Herakleios (610-641), who defeated Khozróēs and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Lord's Cross returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-giving Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Herakleios, wearing a crown and his royal purple garments carried the Cross of Christ. The Emperor was accompanied by Patriarch Zachariah. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the Emperor stopped suddenly and was unable to proceed. The holy Patriarch explained to the Emperor that an Angel of the Lord was blocking his way. Herakleios was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Herakleios donned plain clothes, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, Saint Andrew of Crete (July 4) says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true is gathered together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast."

Prayers

The newly-departed: Fr. John Charest (8/11). Robert Lewen (7/30).

For health of: Abp. Nathaniel, Abp. Alexander, Abp. Benjamin, Dn Gregory Hubiak, Mat. Katherine White, Pani Anna Marie Slovesko, Mat. Mary Reynolds, Mat. Alexandra Black, Bernard Kusior, Nina Fatula, Gloria Spitko, Jessica (Philothea) Sullivan & infant Lucas, Richard Kawood, Peggy Hay, Christopher Mershon, Cindy Kauffman.

Homebound or confined: Olga Frimenko, Gloria Spitko.

Grieving for the departed: *(for Fr John)* Mat. Laryssa, Sebastian, Avah, Christopher, Richard, Christine, Gregg. *(for Robert)* Abp Mark, Rhonda.

For our Catechumens: Bradley Bosch, Brian Craig, Zaden Mershon, Sheridan Klippel, Christina Monarek.

For our diocese's seminarians and families: Subdeacon Jacob & Mariana Kurtz *(Luka, Noah, & Magdalena)*, Reader Alexander Koropsak, Nicholas & Abigail Sheridan.

Social Hour & Church Cleanup Schedule

	Social Hour	**Church Clean-up**
Sept 6	Tina Gurnavage & Marcia Lutz	Marie Drosdak & Traci Weinstein
Sept 13	Kathy Wanenchak & Stephanie Selis	Tina Gurnavage & Stephanie Drosdak
Sept 20	Elaine Dougherty & Karin Holm	John Lorchak & Phyllis Kawood
Sept 27	Christina Monarek & Natalya Borobina	Marie Drosdak & John Waselus
Oct 4	Peggy Hay & Traci Weinstein	Kyle & Daria Teter
Oct 11	Vicky McDonnell & Phyllis Kawood	Eugene & Kathy Wanenchak
Oct 18	Marie Drosdak & Stephanie Drosdak	Marie Drosdak & John Waselus
Oct 25	Karen Sichak & Becky Kauffman	Russ & Peggy Hay
Nov 1	Daria Teter & Marina Long	Brad & Becky Kauffman

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!*

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.*