

# St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

5107 Darrow Road  
Hudson, OH 44236  
330 608-8896

*"An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County"*  
[www.sainthermanchurch.org](http://www.sainthermanchurch.org)



## Important This Week:

Wednesday, 24May, 6PM—Vespertal Liturgy, Feast of Ascension  
Saturday, 27May, 6PM—Vespers  
Sunday, 28May, 10AM—Divine Liturgy

21May23

Sunday of the Blind Man/Sts. Constantine & Helen/Tone 5

## *"...and there was a division among them!"*

Division. In the Greek text, the word used is *σχίσμα*, *schisma*, SCHISM, literally a separation of one group (those who declared the Lord's mercy as a sin) from the other (those who understood that such a miracle could ONLY come at the hands of one who pleases God).

Jesus elsewhere taught His Apostles, *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."* (Mat 10:34)

A sword is not the symbol of a device used to unify...

This past week, a news article hit that caught our attention. The title was, *"Rising number of Americans are switching religions."* It was based on a survey taken by Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI). The lead paragraph states, *"Nearly a quarter of Americans say they used to follow a different religious tradition or denomination than the one they practice now—a percentage that keeps growing."*

WHY are people "faith-shopping"?

Top 6 reasons: 1) Stopped believing in the religion's teachings; 2) Negative religious teachings about LGBTQ+ people; 3) Family was not religious when growing up; 4) Scandals with leaders in the religion; 5) A traumatic personal event; 6) Congregation became too political.

The first thing to notice is that there is no mention of FAITH, only religion. What's the difference?

One who is religious (according to Webster) *shows devotion to an acknowledged deity or ultimate reality.*

One who has faith (same source) *has a firm belief in something for which there is no proof.*

What's the difference? In the first case (religious), the person involved (in being 'religious') is a member of a group who organizes to share in a manner or mode of worship. In the second case (faithful) we find a person whose belief has its foundation at his or her core, the *nous*, and it is related to their own personal conviction and embracing of that which cannot be known, only embraced without proof.

In today's Gospel, Jesus comes to the blind man. The Lord's purpose is to heal. But this purpose isn't reserved for the unfortunate one born blind. The healing is offered also to the unbelieving Pharisees. They're given another chance to change their perspectives—to repent, and come to see that He Who gave the Law gave it to be used for the good of all, not for those He created to interpret it judgmentally against others. The Jews openly stated that only God can forgive sins, while at the same time judging others against their human inter-

pretation of perfection.

The Pharisees were religious, but lacking in faith!

God is love! Those who have faith in God have faith in and through love. Those who have religion have templates and prescriptions, things that are expected as responses to stimuli.

The blind man shows his faith by his testimony before the Pharisees. He becomes the teacher. He further shows his faith as our Lord comes to him after his being cast out by the Pharisees. We hear Jesus' question, *"Do you believe in the Son of God?"* responded to with his own question, *"Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"* Recognize the affirmation within the formerly blind man's question of his pre-acceptance of this Son of God! If You show Him to me, I will believe!!!

In response to our Lord's revealing Himself to the blind man, St. John records, *"And he worshipped Him (Jesus)!"*

In offering the possibility of repentance to the Pharisees, they reject the loving offer, no less loving than that given to the blind man, and they enter further into *schism*, division from God's plan, God's will, and God's love.

Christ is Risen!!!

**This Week's Prayer Requests**

**For Health—St. Herman's:** Met. Joseph, Pat Blazosky  
**Others:** Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Judy  
**For the Departed:** Patriarch Maxim, Metropolitan Theodosius and Maximos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou

**Weekly Statistics**

Saturday	13May	Vespers	4 faithful	8 views
Sunday	14May	Divine Liturgy	28 faithful	7 views
Wednesday	17May	Catechism Class	3 faithful	
Thursday	18May	Adult Study	5 faithful	

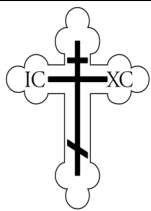
**In the News**

Videos of services can be found at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH\\_FIDe8SoWOW](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_FIDe8SoWOW)

The Feast of Ascension is this coming Thursday, celebrated with Vespers Liturgy this Wednesday at 6PM. Just a quick piece of "advance notice" to prepare for an upcoming Vespers Liturgy.

Also, we're coming up on two other items. First, our annual Diocesan Convention will be held the weekend that includes Sunday, July 23, on which we'll CANCEL church services for that weekend. Second, our Annual Craft Show will happen on that following weekend, Saturday, 29Jul!!! All hands on deck!!!!!!

**A Booth at This Year's Craft Show Maybe?**



*The acquisition of virtues, whether of the body or of the soul, should be gradual, climbing up little by little.*

**(Father Jack Sparks)**

**Simplicity (by Abbot Tryphon)**

Orthodoxy has traditionally avoided clericalism, yet in more recent times this very corruption of priestly service has entered the doors of the Orthodox Church. It has led some clergy to seek out, for personal gain, even the heavy burden of hierarchical service to Christ's Church. Motivated by their desire for princely honor, their sight is clouded so as to endanger not only their own souls, but the souls of the laity who are in need of humble, fatherly, pastoral care, and who will suffer under their "pastoral" guidance.

This quest for honor has led many clergy to participate in a culture of abuse, where they even turn on one another in their sad attempt

at aligning themselves with "officialdom". The culture of abuse that is encouraged and fomented by refusing to live in adherence to the simplicity and humility of Christ's example, is not much different than that of the grade school pecking order where the bully builds alliances based on fear.

It is the same culture that chooses to ignore destructive behavior which undermines the message of the Church, and displaces the ministry of healing, replacing it with a worldly culture not unlike that of the fiefdoms of medieval Europe.

As the Church founded by Christ, we Orthodox need to return to the basics. Our bishops need to put off all royal pretensions and princely ways, and give

themselves over to being loving fathers to their priests and people. Our bishops need to lead their dioceses with biblical standards based on love of their people, and love of Christ, and not rule by fear and tyranny. Priests need to lead their people as loving fathers, and not as local governors appointed by Caesar.

We are living in dangerous times, and the people of God must be given the spiritual tools needed to thrive as society falters, and Christianity itself is under increased attack. The road ahead requires bishops and priests to be more than religious officials, they must be holy men who lead their people as loving, caring, and merciful pastors.

## On the Feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen ([orthodoxsaskatoon.com.com](http://orthodoxsaskatoon.com.com))

Today on the feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen we celebrate the joy of conversion. When we bless the pre-sanctified lamb, during lent, we remember that because of Jesus' death, "sacrifice to idols has ceased." In the case of the conversion of St. Constantine, the persecution of the Christians also ceased, and eventually the whole Roman Empire became Christian.

The joy of conversion is not just for converts, and not just at the point of conversion. The life of Christ is a continual conversion. We are continually re-baptized in the tears of repentance. The single moment of conversion is but a single moment of joy, and should not be represented as any kind of fulfillment. At my own conversion, when I was Chrismated, the priest told me that the battle had just begun. Now comes all the work.

Orthodox Christians have been tempted to see the conversion of Constantine as a kind of fulfillment of the Kingdom on earth, a kind of Millennialism still survives, curiously, even though the Byzantine Empire which was supposed to be identical to the Kingdom of God does not survive. Has the Kingdom of God ceased at the fall of Constantinople? Of course not. Because they were not identical.

Jesus said, in today's gospel reading, "I am the gate." The good news of the conversion of Constantine is that he found Christianity and was given the mercy of joining the church, not that Christianity found Constantine and was given the mercy of receiving him.

If you are looking for a way to see the will of God and the mighty acts of God do not look for political signs. You will not see God if you look for conspiracies, political parties, or big cosmic narratives. You will not see the divine perspective on the world by turning on your TV or computer but by turning them off.

The work of God is, rather, seen on the road to Damascus. Listen to today's epistle:

Acts 26:1-5, 12-20

*"Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."*

*So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently. "The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'*

*"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'*

*"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

*"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds."*

When Jesus comes with great power, he changes the heart of one person at a time. And that is the miracle which is celebrated today on the feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen. That is the mighty act of God: repentance and obedience. The glory of God is a man fully alive.

The Divine Liturgy is your personal road to Damascus experience, which empowers you to be conformed to the image of Christ. Come to the Divine Liturgy to see what God is doing.



We welcome you to our humble church, and we pray that your experience here will be spiritually rewarding, calling you back to pray with us at our next scheduled service.

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church is established with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of New York, and is one of approximately 30 parishes or missions that are all part of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, Bulgarian Patriarchate.

Our worship is exclusively in English, and we use “contemporary” English translations of liturgical texts wherever possible. Singing is congregational. The Divine Liturgy is literally “the work of the people”, and as such your presence and participation in the service are essential parts of our worship. The worship of others here present is diminished when you are absent or unable to participate.

Participation in the Eucharist is important to us, and as such we ask you to recognize that it is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared for receiving the very Body and Blood of our Lord. Preparation includes fasting from the previous evening and recent confession. If you are not known to our priest, please let him know as you approach that you are Orthodox and prepared to receive! Please do not be offended if the priest so questions your approach—this is important, truly “our Life”!

**Troparion for the Day:** (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.*

**Troparion to Saint Herman:** *O blessed Father Herman of Alaska, / north-star of Christ’s holy Church, / the light of your holy life and great deeds / guides those who follow the Orthodox way. / Together we lift high the Holy Cross / you planted firmly in America. / Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ, // singing His holy Resurrection.*

**Glory to the Father....**

**Troparion to Saint Sophia:** (Tone 8) *You blossomed in the courts of the Lord as a fruitful olive tree, Holy Martyr Sophia! In your contest, you offered to Christ the sweet fruit of your womb, your daughters Faith, Hope and Love. Together with them, intercede for us all!*

**Now and ever....**

**Kontakion of the Feast:** (Tone 4) *I come to You, O Christ, blind from birth in my spiritual eyes, and call to You in repentance: ‘You are the most radiant Light of those in darkness!’*

**Epistle:** Acts 16:16-34

**Gospel:** John 9:1-38

**Financial Tracker**

April Total Income \$ 9660  
 April Total Expenses \$ 8358  
 Month Net Income (Loss) \$1302

**On Facebook @**

<https://www.facebook.com/StHermanHudson/>

**Our Blog:**

<https://sainthermanchurchhudson.blogspot.com/>

**Web Tracker**

StHerman Google Bus Site 527 views/28 days  
 Blog Site Views 15960 Total Views  
 Web Site Views 210 in past 30 days  
 Facebook Followers 4977 following

**St. Herman of Alaska  
 Eastern Orthodox Church  
 VRevFrBasil Rusen, Pastor**

5107 Darrow Road  
 Hudson, OH 44236  
 Phone: 330-608-8896  
 Email: frbasilr@gmail.com

**CURRENT WEEK  
 HIGHLIGHTED**

May 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
					<b>Theotokos Lifegiving Font</b>	6
	Acts 6:8-7:5,47-60 John 4:46-54	Acts 8:5-17 John 6:27-33	Acts 8:18-25 John 6:35-39	Acts 8:26-39 John 6:40-44	Acts 8:40-0:19 John 6:48-54	<b>Vespers/Conf 6PM</b> Acts 9:20-31 John 15:17-16:2
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>Paralytic</b>	<b>Apostle John</b>		<b>Mid Pentecost</b>	<b>Sts. Cyril and Methodius</b>		
Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15	1John 1:1-7 John 19:2-27,21:24-25	Acts 10:21-33 John 7:1-13	Acts 14:6-18 John 7:14-30	Heb 7:26-8:2 Mat 5:14-19	Acts 10:44-11:10 John 8:21-30	<b>Vespers/Conf 6PM</b> Acts 12:1-11 John 8:31-42
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Samaritan</b>						
Woman						
Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 11:19-26,29-30 John 4:5-42	Acts 12:12-17 John 8:42-51	Acts 12:25-13:12 John 8:51-59	Acts 13:13-24 John 6:35-39	Acts 14:20-27 John 8:39-10:9	Acts 15:5-34 John 10:17-28	<b>Vespers/Conf 6PM</b> Acts 15:35-41 John 10:27-38
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>Blind Man</b>			<b>Leave of Pacha</b>	<b>Feast of Ascension</b>		
StsConst/Heler			VespLiturgy 6PM			
Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 26:1-5, 12-20 John 10:1-9	Acts 17:1-15 John 11:47-57	Acts 17:19-28 John 12:19-36	Acts 18:22-28 John 12:36-47	Acts 1:1-12 Luke 24:36-53	Acts 19:1-8 John 14:1-11	<b>Vespers/Conf 6PM</b> Acts 20:7-12 John 14:10-21
28	29	30	31			
<b>Holy Fathers</b>						
First Council						
Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 20:16-18,28-36 John 17:1-13	Acts 21:8-14 John 14:27-15:7	Acts 21:26-32 John 16:2-13	Acts 23:1-11 John 16:15-23			