

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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Hudson, OH 44236
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“An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County”
www.sainthermanchurch.org



Important This Week

FULL LENTEN FASTING BEGINS SUNDOWN SUNDAY

M-T-Th, 23, 24, 26Feb, 6PM, Canon of St. Andrew W-F,, 25, 27Feb, 6PM, Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday, 28Feb, 6PM, Vespers Sunday, 01Mar, 10AM Divine Liturgy

15Feb26

Sunday of the Last Judgment

“For If You Forgive...”

Our Lord makes it clear from His opening words in today’s Gospel that God’s mercy towards us, while unconditional, is nonetheless weighted by the mercy that we show to others.

This was the message of last week’s Gospel as we were instructed by the Lord to give consideration as to how we are being servants to the *least of His brethren*, in short, as being good and faithful servants, we are called to show mercy to them. Feed them. Clothe them. Heal them. Care for them.

This Sunday is known as Forgiveness Sunday because each year we approach one another seeking forgiveness from one another.

But let me ask the oft unasked question: “What am I asking forgiveness **for**?” You see, this is not an exercise in just saying the words and waiting for the programmed response. If I ask you to forgive me, I must have a target for some way, some words, some actions or some inactions which have caused me to **sin** against you, a target or targets for which I must find a repentant heart as I approach you, carrying a heartfelt desire to receive mercy from you in forgiving me for what I’ve committed or

omitted as your brother (or sister) in Christ.

Jesus gives us clear instruction on how we are to respond to such a petition from a brother or sister. *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* But do we understand that extending the loving mercy of being forgiven, it is equally imperative that we extend the humble heart filled with repentance? For without humility, repentance is purposeless. Without humility, extending forgiveness is meaningless. For in the words above from our Lord in today’s Gospel, we come to understand that our extending the loving act of being forgiving is an act imitating our heavenly Father! It is a step on the path to Theosis.

St. Silouan the Athonite taught this: *It needs neither money nor reputation to come to know God, but only humility.*

And so now, seeing in myself the many failings that are clearly apparent to all, I will stand before you, with the help of our Lord, with that repentant heart. As I gaze into your eyes I will be recalling my sins, and by your prayers may our Lord give to us both that hum-

ble and repentant heart that will allow us in love to embrace one another and share that holy kiss, each in the most heartfelt manner asking forgiveness, each in the most heartfelt manner voicing the kind of forgiveness that comes from deep inside. May we break that embrace being fully reconciled with one another regardless of the sins we’ve remembered as we pray for the grace for the Lord to take from us any further impact of sins unknown to us.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, in humility I ask you to forgive me for all sins, acts, deeds and words that I have done to offend you. Know that in return, from the depths of my own heart, that I hold only love for you without any judgment or animosity. *Forgive me! God forgives all!!!*

Having left one another in this state, let us pray together that we be granted the grace to begin the Fast with joy, that we be sustained throughout the Fast with love, and that we be blessed to share in being witnesses of our Lord’s Holy Passion, and ultimately His Holy Resurrection.

This Week's Prayer Requests

For Health—St. Herman's: Met. Joseph, Pat, Sandra, Richard, Sam, Judy, Mitchell, Joe, Christian, Al, Sam, Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Fr.Jerome, Nora & Bob, Lori, Bill
For the Departed: Patriarchs Maxim and Neofit, Metropolitans Theodosius and Maximos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou, Lainey Kay, Katherine, Jeanne, Margaret, Lenni, Deaconessa Nana

Weekly Statistics

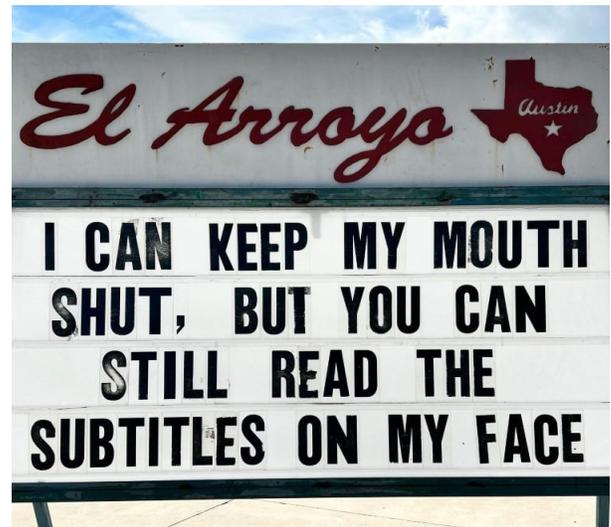
Saturday	Soul Sat Liturgy	14Feb	02 faithful	08 views
	Vespers	14Feb	06 faithful	11 views
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	15Feb	35 faithful	28 views

In the News

Videos of services can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_-FIDe8SoWOW

Please see the flyer on Page 5 for information about a Lenten retreat to be held at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Akron.

Humor Frame Goes on Lenten Hiatus



*If you lose love,
 you have lost a
 lot.
 If you lose
 faith,
 you have lost
 everything.*

**(St. Nikolai
 Velimirovich)**

Enter Into the Silence [Abbot Tryphon]

Great and Holy Lent is seen by most as the forty days before Pascha when we give up certain foods (dairy, meat, eggs, fish), and give more attention to alms giving. The season of the Great Fast is also a time when we try to cut back on entertainment, avoiding movies, nights out with friends, and replace worldly pleasures with increased time attending the divine services in the temple.

Lent is also the time when we increase our spiritual reading, consulting with our priest, or the proprietor of our local Orthodox bookstore, for suggestions on books to accompany our Lenten journey.

I would like to suggest another element, one that is

important, but seldom talked about. During the forty days of the Great Fast, why not put aside the “noise” of this world, and discover the value of silence.

When radio was first introduced on the American scene, an important element in daily living was to be lost forever. No longer was silence a part of everyday life. With families gathering around the radio, often listening to shows or music that were far from edifying, the loss for the human spirit was great.

As we've entered the “information age”, we are experiencing even more noise, for not only do we have televisions blaring from the moment we walk

in our homes, youtube has introduced noise in an even more invasive manner, noise on command at any time. Ipods fill our waking moments with music, and even when we are on walks, these gadgets are shutting out the sounds of nature. Birds chirping, the sound of wind in the trees, the lapping of waves on the beach, these wonderful sounds of nature are all replaced with recorded music.

The Psalmist David tells us, “Be still, and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10).” Silence to the noise of this world opens our ears to the whispers of the Lord, Who speaks to us from within. Silence should not be feared, but sought out, and embraced as though a lover.

On the Sunday of Forgiveness [*Fr. Antony Hughes, stmaryorthodoxchurch.org*]

“It is a lie, any talk of God that does not comfort you.”

That is one of my favorite quotations from the great Western mystic Meister Eckhart. Growing up as a Southern Baptist kid in Tennessee, I heard many things said about God that did not comfort me. In fact, I was often quite frightened of him. Sometimes in Orthodoxy there appears a very negative view of humanity quite the opposite of what our theology teaches. It is easy to fall into the trap of holding a dim view of human nature, since there seems to be so much evidence for it.

Because we do we often project negativity on to Great Lent, seeing it as some kind of dark and dismal and impossible requirement, even as a punishment, to make us worthy to be accepted by God. Nothing could be further from the truth. I think we must resist the temptation to see Lent in a dark and negative light. Lent may be the time of “bright sadness,” as Fr. Schmemmann said, but remember, its brightness is the illumination of God’s unlimited and unconditional love and its sadness is not because we are rejected by him, but because we come to see how our rejection of him robs us of the experience of the fullness of his love.

Lent is an invitation to enter into a journey within. “And you?” writes the poet Rumi, “When will you begin that long journey into yourself?” That journey to the heart, to the kingdom is what Great Lent is all about. It is a pilgrimage to the truth of who we are and who God is.

The truth, of course, is that we are by nature good and endowed with dignity as the image of God. Our fallenness is an aberration and our sin a virus and a parasite. The sin we do is not who we are for nothing can destroy the divine image in which we were made. We are his children, loved most tenderly in a radical and reckless love; a love that brought the Son of God to crucifixion in a sublime demonstration of Divine Love in real time and in living color.

All of the Lord’s life reflected the Father’s compassion. When Jesus stood at the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus he wept. He was moved with compassion. Let me quote from a sermon being delivered this morning by a brilliant seminarian by the name of Kevin Mellis. He puts it so well.

“When you read in the Gospels that Jesus was ‘moved with compassion’ it means that his gut was wrenched, his heart torn open, and the most vulnerable part of his being laid bare.”

There is no reason to believe that God loves us less than he loved Lazarus. That when we are hurt, when our suffering overcomes us, he doesn’t weep for us as he did for his friend.

The truth is that God loves us with tenderness beyond our ability to comprehend. We are precious in his sight. When he sees us, he sees his children, not adversaries, not enemies. He sees his children. Kevin Mellis rightly and beautifully calls the Lord’s Compassion “relentless tenderness.” I like that a lot.

On this Forgiveness Sunday I want you to leave with this message. We are forgiven. There are no hoops to jump through, no tests to take, nothing to prove, no worthiness to conjure up, no prostrations to make, no akathists that have to be prayed before God forgives us because he already has. “Even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

All that is needed now is to let go of our resistance to his too-good-to-be-true salvation. How does our resistance manifest itself most often? Guilt and shame and fear. What if we were to let go of all that and open our hearts to him, as St. Simeon wrote, “the One who loves us so completely?” We would discover the truth that it is God’s mercy that endures forever.

I noticed in our baptismal service a theological note that probably goes unnoticed most of the time. Here it is. “It is God’s will that all should be saved...” We know this, don’t we? For God in Christ has saved the entire human race. But there is more. “It is God’s will that all should be saved AND come to the knowledge of the truth.”

It is not our choice whether to be saved or not. It is done. It is finished. However, it is our choice whether or not we will choose to come to a knowledge of the truth. In other words, whether or not we will dive deliberately into the experience of what it means to be loved, forgiven, and saved and that comes only through an internal pilgrimage. Lent is a quiet time, a much slower time than is normal for most people. If we choose to acknowledge it, everything that happens directs us to look deeper and to live more deliberately and consciously.

Tonight as the service comes to an end and the rite of forgiveness begins, when the lights dim and darkness falls, listen carefully. There are some beautiful hymns that will be chanted for the first time. Unbelievably, paradoxically, mysteriously and wondrously, the bright and joyful Paschal Canon, filled with light and hope and resurrection will be heard, chanted reverently and quietly in the dark stillness. If nothing else, this confirms that Lent is filled with light and joy and hope.

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 4) *When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ our God is risen, granting the world great mercy!”*

Glory to the Father....

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.*

Now and ever....

Kontakion of the Day: (Tone 6) *O Master, Teacher of wisdom, Bestower of virtue, Who teaches the thoughtless and protects the poor, strengthen and enlighten my hear! O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You: “Have mercy on me, a transgressor, O Merciful Lord!”*

Epistle: Rom 13:11-14:4

Gospel: Mat 6:14-21

Monthly Financial Tracker

Dec Total Income \$14,396
 Dec Total Expenses \$ 1,443
 Dec Net Income (Loss) \$12,953

Web Tracker

Web Searches 566 interacts/28 days
 Blog Site Views 113590 Total Views
 Web Site Views 19923 Total Views
 Facebook Views 2629 views/28 days

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

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**CURRENT WEEK
 HIGHLIGHTED**

February 2026														
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday								
Publican/Pharisee Sunday Divine Liturgy 2Tim 3:10-15 Luke 18:10-14	1 Meeting of Lord T1 In Temple 10AM Heb 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40	2	3 NO FAST	4	5 NO FAST	6	7	Vespers/Conf 6PM 2Tim 3:1-9 Luke 20:46-21:4						
8 Prodigal Son Sunday Divine Liturgy 1Cor 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32	9 Leave of T2 Meeting 10AM 1John 2:18-3:10 Mark 11:1-11	10	11	12	13	14	Soul Sat 10AM Divine Liturgy Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Cor 10:23-28 Lk 21:8-9,25-27,33-36							
15 Meatfare Sunday Last Judgment T3 Divine Liturgy 1Cor 8:8-9:2 Mat 25:31-46	16	17	18	19	20	21	Vespers/Conf 6PM Rom 14:19-23,16:25-27; Mat 6:1-13							
22 Cheesefare ForgivenessSu T4 Divine Liturgy Rom 13:11-14:4 Mat 6:14-21	23 Lent Begins CanonStAndrew 6PM Isa 1:1-20, Gen 1:1-13 Prov 1:1-20	24 CanonStAndrew 6PM Isa 1:19-2:4, Gen 1:124-23; Prov 1:20-33	25 PresanctifiedLit 6PM Isa 2:3-11, Gen 1:24-2:3, Prov 2:1-22	26 CanonStAndrew 6PM Isa 2:11-21; Gen 2:4-19; Prov 3:1-18	27 PresanctifiedLit 6PM Isa 3:1-15; Gen 2:20-3:20; Prov 3:19-34	28 Vespers/Conf 6PM Heb 1:1-12 Mark 2:23-3:5								

Orthodox Christian Women (OCW) invites you to join us for a compelling



LENTEN RETREAT *



With special guest speaker

Father Paul Abernathy



Discovering Your Heart:

Finding Christ in the Broken-Hearted...A Message of Hope

Father Paul is the founding CEO at Neighborhood Resilience Project, Pittsburgh, PA. Pastor of St. Moses the Black Orthodox Church, (Pittsburgh), and author of The Prayer of a Broken Heart, an Orthodox Christian Reflection on African American Spirituality.

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 129 S. Union St., Akron, OH 44304

Saturday, March 7, 2026, 9:30am- 3:30pm

\$20 includes Continental Breakfast & Lenten Luncheon

Write checks to OCW. Send to: Sue Evanoff, 404-19th St. Massillon, OH 44646

Questions? Contact Annie Fry 330-714-9844 or Nancy Studebaker 330-807-7640

**Third of three spiritually-enriching events open to all in the 2025-2026 season.*