



St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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"An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County"
www.sainthermanchurch.org



Important This Week
FASTING RETURNS TO 'NORMAL'
Saturday, 02May, 6PM, Vespers
Sunday, 03May, 10AM, Divine Liturgy

26Apr26

Myrrhbearing Women Sunday

Being Conceived

When does life begin? It is an argument that plagues our society, for there are those who have an agenda to permit removal of an embryo before it is "viable", and there are those who claim that life should "begin" when a heartbeat is first noted, and there are those who would argue (the Church being one) that life begins at the moment of conception.

Why this topic today? Because if the "birthday" of St. Herman's was on January 23rd 2005, then our "conception" was on this day, the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, which occurred on May 11, 2003.

A conception. The word conjures images of life that require nurturing, loving, protection by a loving parent and family. Truth be told, it seems to be an appropriate image for us. On that day now nearly twenty-three years ago, there was the love of a Metropolitan who chose to permit this life to enter the realm of being conceived. There was a core group of faithful from our mother parish who saw the benefit in supporting this new life. And there was a gathering of faithful, the "cells" of

the new Body being formed in this place, in this time.

With new life comes new responsibility. There were plans to be made. There were needs to secure a place to worship, to gather enough financial resources to enable the group to begin operating. Services had to be planned. Letters and advertisements had to be placed. Tell the world—this new life is taking root. Being loved and nurtured as it is, with the Lord's blessing it will grow into something wonderful, beautiful. And by the Grace of God, it will come to serve the needs of those who come to it in faith and love to share in its life.

Now, these many years later, we look back on that Sunday and we find a sense of astonishment. How did this all come to be? How is it possible that we even exist?

Life itself is so very fragile. It is not promised. It is a gift that, once given, must be cherished. And within that gift, there comes a responsibility to conform that life into the image for which God created it, the image for which it was permitted to be conceived.

What image does our Lord want

for us? If we answer honestly, we must say that we, as faithful disciples, haven't seen that vision yet.

In a previous visit for St. Thomas Sunday, His Eminence, in his homily after Liturgy, encouraged all who were present to "believe and embrace the hope". We hope for answers to our prayers, that our Lord will give to us that which is beneficial for our salvation. We "want" things for our own purposes, often without considering if our "wants" conform to God's plan for us. We want growth. We know this would be good. His Eminence's urging is for us to expect that God will answer this good request. We want a firm faith. We know this also to be good. We must expect that God will honor our prayer.

We want so very many things. But only one thing is needful, and that is to love the Lord, and to love our neighbor. When we live in this way, we expect that He has and will give us all that is truly needful!

Christ is Risen!

Indeed, He is Risen!!!

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	Vespers	18Apr	11 faithful	16 views
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	19Apr	47 faithful	23 views

In the News

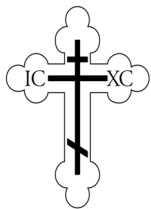
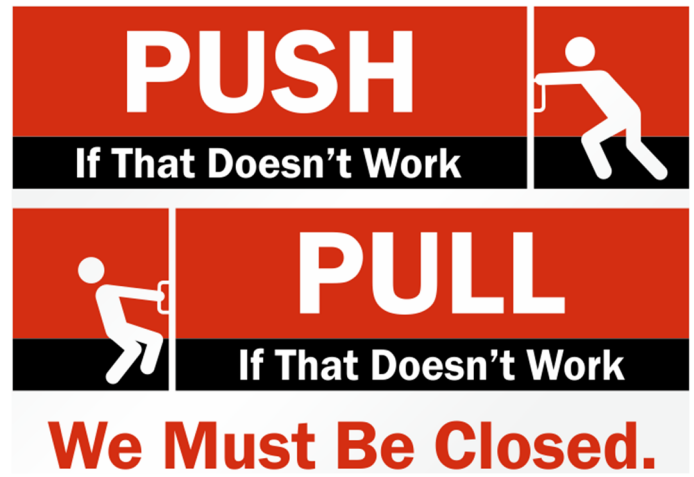
Videos of services can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_FIDe8SoWOW

NOTE TO ALL:

The monthly COCA meeting will be held here at St. Herman on Monday evening, 27Apr starting at 630PM.

We offer our thanks to Joanna Krajci and to Lissa Molchan for serving as representatives for St. Herman's at these regular monthly meetings!

Can I Put These at the Church Doors?



A poor man when he reaches out to you does not beg, but offers you the Kingdom of God.

(Elder Arsenie of Romania)

Catechumens [orthochristian.com/177117.html]

An estimated 16,000-18,000 people were received into Orthodox parishes across the United States during this year's Pascha season, according to new data analysis by the Orthodox Studies Institute.

The figures, presented by Deacon Seraphim Rohlin and Matthew Namee in a livestream discussion, represent conversions that occurred between Lazarus Saturday and Holy Saturday. The estimate is based on reports from approximately 225 parishes—nearly 10% of all Orthodox parishes in the United States—along with diocesan data and historical trends.

By weighting this data by region and cross-referencing with sources including the OCA Diocese of the Midwest's report of 1,100 converts across 69 parishes, the researchers arrived at their national estimate.

At the same time, the Pascha receptions represent only a portion of total conversions for 2026. Many parishes also receive converts at other feast days throughout the year. The researchers estimate that Pascha receptions constitute roughly two-thirds of annual conversions, projecting total 2026 conversions will fall in the 20,000-30,000 range.

To contextualize the figures, Namee provided several historical comparisons. At the time of the sale of Alaska in 1867—after more than 70 years of missionary work—there were 12,000 Orthodox Christians in Alaska. During the lifetime of St. Alexis Toth (1891-1909), approximately 20,000 Eastern Rite Catholics converted to Orthodoxy. The 1987 mass reception of the Evangelical Orthodox Church brought 2,000 people into the Antiochian Archdiocese.

In the 2010s, American Orthodoxy received an estimated 4,000-5,000 converts annually. By contrast, the current Pascha estimate of 16,000-18,000 represents converts only, excluding infants, and covers just a few weeks rather than an entire year.

The influx creates significant pastoral challenges. Using a conservative estimate of one priest per 200 active parishioners, the Pascha conversions alone would require 80 additional priests to maintain adequate pastoral care. The 16,000-18,000 receptions represent approximately a 1% increase in the total American Orthodox population in just two weeks.

Dcn. Seraphim stressed the importance of proper catechesis and integration. "We should rejoice in this... But then also, we need to be really, really sober-minded about what are the implications of 16,000 new people coming into our Church."

On the Myrrhbearing Women [*orthochristian.com, Metropolitan Paul Yazigi*]

*[Editorial Note: On 22Apr2013, Metropolitan Paul Yazigi was abducted by militants during the Syrian Civil War, along with Syriac Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim. Rewards have been offered for information related to identifying those responsible, but there have been no results. In 2020 an investigative report alleged that both bishops were killed by their captors in 2016. Both are still missing. The Middle East Council of Churches declared April 22 as "The Ecu-
menical Day for the Abducted and Forcibly Absented" in honor of both bishops.]*

This Gospel passage makes us wonder and opens to us new dimensions for understanding the Resurrection in depth. The wondrous thing is that even though the myrrh-bearers came early in the morning to anoint the body of Jesus, they did not really anoint Him. The sweet savour of Christ (2 Cor. 2:14-17) has risen from the grave; He is risen; He is not here (Mk. 16:6).

The anointing of a dead man with myrrh was a loving act in order to compensate for the corrupted body. The Pharaohs thought about an illusory eternity for the body, when they anointed their dead. The Jews thought anointing gave honor to the dead. The real anointing is putting on incorruptibility. Christ rose from the grave, Himself being precious myrrh of sweet fragrance. Therefore, human nature carried this precious and new myrrh. The myrrh-bearing women did not anoint Jesus. After His Resurrection, the new myrrh-bearers, humanity, were given the opportunity to put on Christ, and not just to be anointed. In the Songs of Solomon, the Church cries out to the Lord, "Thy name is ointment." This ointment, this myrrh, becomes an anointing of every Christian by the rising of Christ from the grave. St. Nicolas Cabasilas wrote that after its fall, humanity built a wall of enmity and of separation between it and God. After the Resurrection of Christ, however, humanity put on glory and incorruptibility in Christ, and instead of the wall, anointing.

So the resurrection of Christ from the grave as new myrrh made the church a channel of ointment to all, and allowed every Christian to be a myrrh-bearer. The sacraments and rituals of the Church, and all Her life, is an anointing movement with this new myrrh of Christ. The Christian as a myrrh-bearer approaches not to anoint but to be anointed with the heavenly myrrh, so that He may die with Christ and rise with Him in His resurrection.

According to St. John of the Ladder, the secret of the new myrrh-bearers is that this new ointment reveals the identity of the bearers. They become themselves myrrh and sweet, not just in soul but also in body. The relics of saints that give forth myrrh are not rare cases in our Church.

The Church calls the Virgin Theotokos the precious myrrh. This new balm is the life of virtue, and the bearers of it are the men of prayer, and the soul that is full of virtues, purified from the old life of passions and corruption. As the Lord's name is ointment poured forth, the myrrh-bearers are the ones who carry this name. For all the saints were like Saint Paul who was not just living, but had Christ, the heavenly myrrh, living in Him.

The women myrrh-bearers went to the grave moved by their love towards the Lord, expressing their rejection of corruption. Their mission was realized in the Church where Christ, the myrrh of incorruptibility, is, and by whom we are anointed in the sacraments, carrying a life of virtue.

So let us put on Christ, being clothed with an incorruptible body for life eternal. Amen.

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 Feast: (Tone 2) *The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Your most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But You arose on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy.*

Glory to the Father....

Troparion for the Feast: (Tone 2) *The angel came to the Myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said: ‘Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption! So proclaim the Lord is Risen, granting the world great mercy!’*

Now and ever....

Kontakion for the Feast: (Tone 2): *You commanded the Myrrhbearers to rejoice, O Christ! By Your resurrection, You stopped Eve’s lamentations, O God! And You commanded Your Apostles to preach, ‘The Savior is Risen!’*

Epistle: Acts 6:1-7

Gospel: Mark 15:43-16:8

Monthly Financial Tracker

March Total Income \$ 11,569
 March Total Expenses \$ 4,849
 March Net Income (Loss) \$ 6,720

Web Tracker

Web Searches 643 interacts/28 days
 Blog Site Views 120765 Total Views
 Web Site Views 20322 Total Views
 Facebook Views 4910 views/28 days

**St. Herman of Alaska
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 VRevFrBasil Rusen, Pastor**

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**CURRENT WEEK
 HIGHLIGHTED**

April 2026							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
St. Mary of Egypt 29 Divine Liturgy 10AM St.NicholasUnct 5P 10AM Heb 9:11-14 Mark 10:32-45	30 Grt&HolyMon 6 Presanctified Lit 430P Bridegroom Mat 6PM Phil 4:4-9 John 12:1-18	31 Grt&HolyTue 7 Presanctified Lit 430P Bridegroom Mat 6PM Matt 24:3-35	1 Grt&HolyWed 8 Presanctified Lit 430P Holy Unction 6PM Mat 26:6-16	2 Grt&HolyThur 9 StBasil'sLiturgy 10AM 12 Passion Gspels 6PM Mat 26:2-27:2	3 Grt&HolyFriday 10 Royal Hours 10AM VespersEntmb 3PM Lamentations 6PM	4 Grt&HolySatrday 11 DivineLiturgy 10AM Vespers/Conf 6PM Heb 12:28-13:8 John 11:1-45	Lazarus Satrday 4 DivineLiturgy 10AM Vespers/Conf 6PM
PASCHA! 12	Bright Monday 13	Bright Tuesday 14	BrightWednesday 15	Bright Thursday 16	Bright Friday 17	Bright Saturday 18	
Agape Vespers 1130A Acts 1:18 John 1:1-17	Acts 1:12-17:21-26 John 1:18-28	Acts 2:14-21 Luke 24:12-35	Acts 12:1-11 John 15:17-18:2	Acts 2:38-43 John 3:1-15	Phil 2:5-11;Lk10:38-42, 11:27-28	Vespers 6PM Acts 3:11-16 John 3:22-33	
Thomas Sunday 19 Divine Liturgy 10AM T2 Acts 5:12-20 John 20:19-31	20 Acts 3:19-26 John 2:1-11	21 Acts 4:1-10 John 3:16-21	22 Acts 4:13-22 John 5:17-24	23 Acts 4:23-31 John 5:24-30	24 Acts 19:1-8 John 5:30-6:2	Vespers 6PM Acts 5:21-33 John 6:14-27	
Myrrhbearers 26 Divine Liturgy 10AM T3 Acts 6:1-7 Mark 15:43-16:8	27 Acts 6:8-7:5, 47-60 John 4:46-54	28 Acts 8:5-17 John 6:27-33	29 Acts 8:18-25 John 6:35-39	30 Acts 8:26-39 John 6:40-44	1 Acts 8:40-9:19 John 6:48-54	Vespers 6PM Acts 9:20-31 John 15:17-16:2	