



St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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



Important This Week:

Sunday, 08Jan, 10AM—Divine Liturgy
Thursday, 12Jan, 7PM—Adult Study
Saturday, 14Jan, 6PM—Vespers

08Jan23

Sunday After Theophany/Tone 5

Repent...

For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

These are the first words of instruction that our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel of St. Matthew. Prior to this, He speaks to the Forerunner (*Let it be so for now, for thus is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*), and He speaks to Satan in the desert the three rebukes for the three temptations.

But these words are now different. They are directed at all people—for all time.

Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

For those being taught how to communicate in the forum of public speaking, the first axiom taught is, "Lead with the message you are attempting to communicate." In other words, start with strength and set the direction.

These nine simple words from the lips of the Word are the greatest example of this. If we as faithful followers of our Lord begin our efforts, our struggles, with the focus being on repentance, all of the other virtues will fall into place.

What are the other virtues?

FAITH: How can one fully embrace faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the Trinity without being repentant? God, Who IS love and Who loves all of us, both the evil and the good, shows that we cannot approach Him without sharing in that love. And how can we love when we do not repent? How can we separate our sins from our interactions with our fellow man?

HOPE: Hope is that virtue that calls us to hold out for that which is good. We expect it from God. We have hope in others for good. We even expect ourselves to turn from evil toward good. But that's the definition of repentance. Without repentance, there is no hope!

HUMILITY When we repent, we place ourselves into that position which we pray in each of our "Prayers before communion," where we declare ourselves to be one of all sinners, but we declare ourselves as the first among sinners. If I see myself as less sinful than ANY other, then I lack true humility. And the only way to change this condition is—by repenting, proving myself to be first among sinners.

We could continue through the list of virtues, but we'd come to the same conclusion in each case—the virtues are acquired by submitting to this first of our Lord's instructions to us.

REPENT

But Jesus continues with the words that follow.

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The Greek word used for "at hand" is *engizo*. It carries the meaning that the subject being pointed to is near, NOT at some distance. Jesus is saying that we don't need to look to the sky to imagine heaven in the distance. Heaven is here, in amongst us, around us.

At the Feast of Nativity, we sang with great joy, "GOD IS WITH US!" If He is with us, and He is in heaven, then where are we to find heaven, if not truly also here, with us?

The Lord makes it clear that God does not despise the broken and contrite heart (Ps 51:17). This is the offering, the 'sacrifice' He asks us to bring to Him—our Repentance!

This Week's Prayer Requests

For Health—St. Herman's: Met. Joseph, Pat Blazosky
Others: Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Judy, Barry, Anne, Keith
For the Departed: Patriarch Maxim, Metropolitans Theodosius and Maximos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia

Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou, Matthew

Weekly Statistics

Saturday	Vespers	31Dec	4 faithful	5 views
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	01Jan	25 faithful	17 views
Thursday	Vesperal Liturgy	05Jan	7 faithful	6 views

In the News

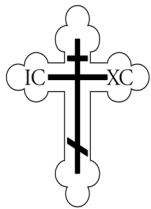
Videos of services can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_FIDe8SoWOWw

Congratulations, and "MANY YEARS!" to the Globke family as they entered the Holy Church together on the Feast of Theophany!!! It was a glorious event, to ever be remembered in conjunction with the Glorious Feast of our Lord's Theophany!!

We are beginning to get out for house blessings. Expect calls this week if you've already signed up on the sheet in the church hall. If not, get there soon!

It's True!

WHAT HAS FOUR LETTERS, OCCASIONALLY HAS TWELVE LETTERS, ALWAYS HAS SIX LETTERS, BUT NEVER HAS FIVE LETTERS



Fasting is a mechanical aid to cleansing the mind, to subjecting the will to the mind.

(Fr. Daniel Sysoev)

Our Salvation is a Process *(Abbot Tryphon)*

According to Protopresbyter George Metallinos, Dean of the Athens University School of Theology, "For we Orthodox the unique and absolute goal of life in Christ is theosis, our union with God, so that man – through his participation in God's uncreated energy – may become "by the Grace of God" that which God is by nature (without beginning and without end). This is what "salvation" means, in Christianity."

As Christians we know that salvation is an ongoing process that, as believers, we are called to cooperate in. We are instructed to "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). The Apostle Paul made clear the necessity of human cooperation when he told us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is

God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:1-13)".

Our salvation is a process by which we become more and more like Christ. Our faith is a free gift from God, not dependent upon anything we can do, but this life long process of salvation requires that we cooperate with God's grace, that we might be transformed by the Holy Spirit, and made holy. If we are to spend eternity with God, transformation must take place.

The sole purpose of the Church is the salvation of every human person, whereby we are united to Christ, and transformed by Him in all holiness, and prepared for eternal life. Through the Church we hear the Good News, that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, and that he rose from the dead, and

because of this we have eternal life. This work of salvation is a gradual, life-long process by which Christians become more and more like Christ. Our salvation begins the moment we commit ourselves to Christ, and within the abounding grace of the Holy Spirit, we are ever drawn closer in communion with God.

Theosis goes far beyond the simple restoration of people to their state before the Fall. Because Christ united the human and divine natures in his person, it is now possible for us to experience closer fellowship with God than Adam and Eve initially experienced in the Garden of Eden. Some Orthodox theologians go so far as to say that Jesus would have become incarnate for this reason alone, even if Adam and Eve had never sinned.

Sunday After Theophany (*Fr. Antony Hughes, stmaryorthodoxchurch.org*)

On the Sunday after the Feast of Theophany we read from St. Matthew's Gospel about how the people "who sat in darkness have seen a great light," specifically those who dwelt in the "land of Zebulon and Naphtali the Galilee of the Gentiles."

A more literal interpretation tells us that Jesus brought the Light of Love into the darkest corners of the world, into those places his own people did not believe the Light would shine, that is, to the Gentiles. If Jesus took on human nature itself, then the light shines in every human being and therefore in every land. That is what our theology teaches us.

Going a little deeper we know that our responsibility as followers of Christ is to take the light we have "received" into the dark places in our families, communities, and society. The Gospel has social implications we ignore far too often. Jesus says that we will be judged if we do not care for the "least of the brethren" who are listed as the sick, the hungry, the naked, and those in prison. Of course, that list is not exhaustive. And when we do care for them we are caring for Christ Himself who became for us and remains for us, as He says, "the least of the brethren."

Going one step further, into a psychological interpretation, we come to see something wonderful and frightening. Let's quote Professor Jung.

"What if I should discover that the poorest of the beggars and the most impudent of offenders are all within me; and that I stand in need of the alms of my own kindness, that I, myself, am the enemy who must be loved -- what then?"

The answer to "What then" is this. We need to recognize the beggars and offenders inside of us and meet them with compassion, tend to their wounds, draw them close to us, and transform their sadness into joy. This is probably the hardest thing of all to do because we have spent so long ignoring the sorrowful voices within and trying to drown them out with video games and alcohol and sex. We discover them when we are alone and the world is quiet and suddenly we hear them and they frighten us. We cannot drown them out forever. We try to run away, but we cannot run forever. We think death will end them? No, it won't. We will take them into eternity with us and there is nothing there but beautiful Silence. In heaven those voices will sound like cathedral bells. Our wounds must be healed and they will be either here or there.

The final revelation is this: the "beggars and offenders" that haunt us within, they too are Christ. He has identified himself with them and so must we. Another scriptural metaphor for the dark lands of Zebulon and Naphtali is the Valley of the Shadow of Death in Psalm 23. There the Lord prepares a table for us in the presence of our "enemies" which is a metaphor for the "least of the brethren." Who is more "least" in our eyes than those who hate us? At this table we are to invite them to eat with us and at this table we are called to serve them. Then our "enemies" become our friends and more: we see them for what they are. They are also us.

Now, one more thing before I close. We hear at the end of this reading Christ's first recorded sermon. It is short and simple. "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repent of what? Repent of the belief that the kingdom is not "at hand." We think repentance is a making a list of sins and confessing them before God. Well, yes perhaps on a very superficial level, but there is far more to it than that and if it remains there we will never get anywhere.

The root of the problem of sin is that we have been taught and believed the lie that the kingdom is somewhere else, off in the future, that there is a safe distance between us and the kingdom, that there is enough time in life for us to live a life that doesn't take the kingdom into consideration. But it is consistent with Orthodox interpretation that Jesus did not come to bring the kingdom, but rather to reveal its eternal presence. The kingdom is the very heart of the whole of creation. It is said that when the Buddha reached enlightenment under the Bodhi tree he touched the earth and creation burst into flower. When we see the kingdom everywhere, then we see that the whole cosmos is Communion.

Where God is there is the kingdom and God is everywhere. Repentance is a change of mind from believing that God is not everywhere, that He is where we want Him to be, in our little boxes, in our grand churches, in our ethnic communities and not in those "dark places" where people worship God with strange names and their faces are different colors and beliefs are odd and suspicious. In the end the only thing that matters is that we wake up to the fact that God's light is shining now in all the earth and that allow it to penetrate to the very depths of our unconscious.

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, coeternal 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/Feast: (Tone 1) *When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, and called You His beloved Son, and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ, our God, Who has revealed Yourself, and has enlightened the world, glory to You.*

Glory to the Father....

Troparion to Saint Herman: *O blessed Father Herman of Alaska, NorthStar 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 for the Day: (Tone 5) *You descended into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty; resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, and we all cry to You: O Lord, save us!*

Epistle: Eph 4:7-13

Gospel: Mat 4:12-17

Monthly Financial Tracker

November Total Income \$ 4160
 November Total Expenses \$ 3728
 Month Net Income (Loss) \$ 432

Yearly Financial Tracker

(based on year-to-date income/expenses)
 Projected 12mo Income \$55,078
 Projected 12mo Expenses \$50,844
 Projected Year Income (Loss) \$4,234

Web Tracker

StHerman Google Bus Site 2379 views/28 days
 Blog Site Views 13918 Total Views
 Web Site Views 180 visits/30 days
 Facebook Reach 612 people/28 days

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

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**CURRENT WEEK
 HIGHLIGHTED**

January 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Before Theoph. 1 Divine Liturgy T4 Circumcision 10AM Col 2:8-12 Luke 2:20-21,40-52	2 Heb 8:7-13 Luke 20:27-44	3 Heb 9:8-10, 15-23 Luke 21:12-19	4 Heb 10:1-18; Luke 21:5-7,10-11,20-24	5 Forefeast of Theophany Vespers/Liturgy 6PM 1Cor9:19-27 Luke 3:1-18	6 Feast of Theophany Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 Mat 3:13-17	7 AfterTheophny StJohnForenr Vespers/Conf 6PM Acts 19:1-8 John 1:29-34
30th Sun 8 After Theophar T5 Divine Liturgy 10AM Eph 4:7-13 Mat 4:12-17	9 Heb 11:17-23, 27-31 Mark 8:11-21	10 Heb 12:25-26, 13:22-25; Mark 8:22-26	11 Jas 1:1-18 Mark 8:30-34	12 Jas 1:19-27 Mark 9:10-16	13 Jas 2:1-13 Mark 9:33-41	14 Leave of Theophany Vespers/Conf 6PM Col 1:3-6 Luke 14:1-11
31st Sunday 15 Divine Liturgy 10AM 1Tim 1:15-17 Luke 18:18-27	16 Jas 2:14-26 Mark 9:42-50	17 St. Anthony the Great Heb 13:17-21 Luke 6:17-23	18 St. Gregory Theologian Jas 3:11-4:6 Mark 10:11-16	19 St. John Chrysostom Jas 4:7-5:9 Mark 10:17-27	20 St.Euthymius Heb 13:17-21 Luke 6:17-23	21 Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Thes 5:14-23 Luke 16:10-15
32nd Sun 22 Apostl Timothy T7 Divine Liturgy 10AM 1Tim 1:15-17 Luke 18:35-43	23 Jas 2:14-26 Mark 10:46-52	24 Jas 3:1-10 Mark 11:11-23	25 St. Gregory Theologian 1Cor 12:7-11 John 10:9-16	26 Jas 4:7-5:9 Mark 11:27-33	27 1Pet 1:1-2,10-12,2:6-10; Mark 12:1-12	28 Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Thes 5:14-23 Luke 17:3-10
Zaccheus Sun 29 Divine Liturgy 10AM 1Tim 4:9-15 Luke 18:35-43	30 Three Holy Hierarchs Heb 13:7-16 Mat 5:14-19	31 1Pet 3:10-22 Mat 5:14-19	1 Meeting XC Temple Vespers/Liturgy 6PM 1Pet 4:1-11 Mark 12:28-37	2 Meeting of XC in Temple Heb 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40	3 Righteous Simeon 2Pet 1:1-10 Mark 13:1-8	4 Vespers/Conf 6PM 2Tim 2:11-19 Luke 18:2-8