



# 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, 13Sep—Vespertal Liturgy, Elevation of the Cross, **6PM**  
Friday, 15Sep—Catechism Class, **7PM**; Saturday, 16Sep—Vespers, **6PM**  
Sunday, 17Sep, Divine Liturgy, **10AM**

10Sep23

14th Sunday/Before Elevation—Tone 5

## Invitations

Preface this writing with the recognition that all of us, writer as well as reader, are human. As such, we share certain characteristics.

To the point of this article's topic, one of these characteristics relates to receiving invitations to attend events.

Some such invitations are received with great joy. Perhaps we are invited to a 50th anniversary party for some beloved relative. Perhaps we're asked to attend the baptism of a child whose parents have struggled long and hard to become parents, and the event becomes the culmination of the answer to their prayers. We receive such invitations with full intention of attending and showing loving support for those to be honored at the event.

Some such invitations are received with little interest or enthusiasm. Perhaps it's an invitation to a birthday party for the schoolmate of one of our children. Perhaps it's related to a bridal shower of the daughter of a coworker. In either case, we relegate the invite to someone "fishing for a gift" and RSVP with a message saying we can't attend.

All of this is "human nature."

But today's parable from the Lord is different. The invitation isn't from someone we hardly know. It is

from "the King". And while the invitation is to a wedding feast, the invitation isn't even asking for us to come bearing gifts. The One doing the inviting is providing the gifts Himself. He is honoring us with providing the invitation to accept from Him that which He intends to provide for us. Nothing is expected in return EXCEPT for our accepting with enthusiastic gratitude His magnanimous invitation!

And herein lies that which runs outside of the expected response of "human nature." The apparent honor of just being invited is snubbed by the invitees. Their rejection of the honor goes deeper than just choosing to not attend. Jesus says that the servants sent by the King to bring to the feast those who were invited were *treated spitefully, and killed* by the invitees.

Those who were given the honor of the invitation rejected not just the event, but they rejected the King Himself.

All of the above is what is seen from the 'surface' of the parable. What is present beneath reaches to the heart of the matter.

Once again, we're tempted to point to the parable as being Jesus indicting the Jews for their rejection of Him. And while this is not an incor-

rect view, it is an incomplete one.

For you see, the King's invitation was given to Israel as a nation, and yes, they rejected the Son, whose wedding to His Bride, the Church, was the event of record.

But the Lord always intended for His working salvation for all of mankind to be extended to all of humanity, not only to the Jews. And what do we find in the world around us today?

St. Theophan teaches that "the invitation" is the preaching of the Gospel. While the Gospel continues to be preached, is it accepted by those who hear it? Or is the message of the Gospel viewed like some kind of restaurant menu, "I like this and that, but none of the other, please"?

He further teaches that the one who came by was not dressed for the wedding feast indeed believed, but didn't live according to his faith.

The parable of today's first Gospel reading is as important for our day, and I dare say more important, than it was to those who heard the words directly from the Lord's lips 2000 years ago.

Will WE accept the invitation? Will WE be properly dressed for the event?

**This Week's Prayer Requests**

**For Health—St. Herman's:** Met. Joseph, Pat Blazosky, Sandra, Richard, Sam, Judy  
**Others:** Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Don, Hannah, Natalje & Scott  
**For the Departed:** Patriarch Maxim, Metropolitans Theodosius and Maxi-

mos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou, Lainey Kay

**Weekly Statistics**

Friday	01Sep	Catechumens	3 faithful	
Saturday	02Sep	Vespers	5 faithful	9 views
Sunday	03Sep	Divine Liturgy	25 faithful	11 views
Thursday	07Sep	Vesperal Liturgy	5 faithful	1 view

**In the News**

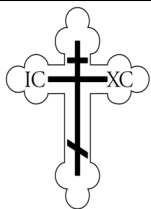
Thanks to Laurie Tomi, we've received another charitable outreach opportunity. The Homeless Charity & Village in Akron is seeking jeans and shoes in any size and any condition to distribute to the homeless in Akron. Think of it as a "Coats for Kids" equivalent effort but for feet and legs! They're also seeking PLASTIC BAGS from stores—you know, grocery or convenience store bags that you either throw away or take to a recycle bin at Giant Eagle? Yeah—those! Bring them, too! There's a BIN at the exit door in the social hall where your donations can be placed!

Church school starts today, and we're still looking for volunteers to serve as teachers. You'll see our young ones and the current short-staff of teachers leave Liturgy after participating in the Eucharist. The homily will therefore move to the end. Many of you would make excellent teachers for our young people. Just do it!

There will be Covered Dish in honor of St. Sophia's Feast Day NEXT SUNDAY after Divine Liturgy. Bring one!!!

**That's a Bit Unnerving**

**Felt  
uncomfortable  
driving into the  
cemetery. The  
gps blurted out  
you have reached  
your final  
destination.**



*The Lord isn't  
blasphemed as  
much by the  
unclean life of  
the pagan as  
He is by the  
corruption of  
the Christian.*

**(St. John  
Chrysostom)**

**Ancient Faith (Abbot Tryphon)**

In an age when many Christian denominations are trying to appear relevant and modern, I am finding that large numbers of people are drawn to the Ancient Faith by the beard and robe. I am constantly thanked for dressing as I do by people who appreciate symbols of faith in the midst of a secular world. Many Orthodox jurisdictions that previously wanted to blend in with their Catholic and Protestant neighbors by having our clergy put off the traditional "look" of Orthodoxy, are now rediscovering the wisdom of these traditions. Now that large numbers of clean shaven and modern attired heterodox clergy have been discredited in the minds of the world due to theological and moral lapses, is there any logical reason we Orthodox would really want to imitate them?

Like so many other Orthodox clergy, I can also attest to the fact that my beard, and my way of dress, are a great aid in keeping me, sinner that I am, constantly attuned to my vocation as a monk, and as a priest. It is hard to forget your high calling when you "dress for work" each and every hour of every day. Our appearance is a constant reminder that we, as priests, have been set apart as Guardians of the Mysteries, and Servants of

the Most High.

From my personal observations, I have come to believe that Orthodoxy, if it is to thrive into the next century, must adhere to the ancient traditions and roots of the faith that have set her apart from the religions. The Church must proclaim the Good News of Christ in all its purity, so that the mystical and sacramental core of her very being is clearly seen by a world that so needs this ancient, unchanging faith. The world must see by our differences that Orthodoxy offers the transformational healing that comes through the life of Christ's Church. By clinging to her ancient, God inspired Tradition, the Church takes seriously the mystical and sacramental roots of her divinely founded self.

As we Orthodox look in amazement at the phenomenal resurrection of our Church following the fall of communism, with thousands of new churches being reopened, new ones built, and monasteries growing at a phenomenal rate, we will see that the twenty-first century could well be the Age of Orthodoxy. And for this to happen, we must put off everything that has brought down Western Christianity.

Accountability must be foremost in how we operate as religious institu-

tions. Bishops and priests must be accountable to one another, transgressions against the Body of Christ must be rooted out, and the clergy (including bishops) must serve others as humble servants of Christ, and as living icons of the Gospel message. Our co-suffering Savior must be seen in how we serve, in how we live, in how we love. The transformational power of Orthodoxy must be allowed to change the world, as the "institutional" church is replaced with the gospel vision of the Church as Hospital of the Soul.

The Orthodox Church will thrive in the twenty-first century only if we commit to being the otherworldly people we are called to be, living in the world, but not being of the world. The Church will thrive, not because she adapts to modern styles of dress, and modern trends of moral and theological thought, but because of her willingness to serve the world in imitation of the holy fathers of the Church who have gone on before us, and who refused to conform to the styles and fashions of a world that has always been in need of the unchanging Faith that has the power to transform lives, and usher the human race into communion with the Most High God.

## Sunday Before Elevation (*Fr. Philip LeMasters, blogs.ancientfaith.com*)

One of the most dangerous temptations that we can face is to despair, to give up hope that we and those we love will ever be any different than we are today. Too many of us have abandoned hope for anything but more of the same. Sometimes we justify that in the name of a false humility that says nothing more could be expected of broken, imperfect people like us. But when we do so, we turn away from the joy of the new creation that our Lord has brought to the world through His cross.

If there were ever a couple tempted not to have hope, it would have been Joachim and Anna, an elderly Jewish couple with no children. In a faith that began with the promise that Abraham would be the father of a multitude, that was a real problem. But God heard their fervent prayer and gave them a daughter named Mary, who became the Living Temple of the Lord when she freely agreed to become the virgin mother of the Son of God. Through this New Eve, the New Adam came into the world in order to free us from the corruption and fear of death and to bring life even from the tomb.

Ever since our first parents became slaves to corruption, every generation had repeated the cycle of life leading to death. But across the generations of the Hebrew people, God prepared the way for the coming of the One who would destroy death by His cross and resurrection. Like Abraham and Sarah, Joachim and Anna were miraculously blessed by a child in old age, perhaps in part to make clear that God was mercifully doing something new, not simply calling them to continue life as they had always known it. With the birth of the Theotokos, the Living Temple arrives through whom Christ brings us into the “new creation” of His salvation, the “eighth day” of the heavenly kingdom. As the Savior said to Nicodemus, He did not come to condemn the creation, but to save it.

In today’s epistle text, St. Paul refutes the Judaizers who required Gentile converts to be circumcised and obey dietary and other laws in order to become Christians. He saw the danger in those requirements, for obedience to law does not bring us into the life of God or make us participants in the new creation of His Kingdom. Following rules simply by our own power may make us more religious, moral, or civilized, but it does not make us “partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Pet. 1:4) Our problems are not so slight that we simply need a few more instructions in order to be set right. No, we need to be born anew into eternal life, which is possible only through the One who conquered death through His cross.

The Judaizers wanted Gentile converts to obey the law of Moses, in which Nicodemus was an expert as a Pharisee. But Christ made clear His superiority to Moses by saying “No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man.” Moses received the law and beheld the glory of God, but only Christ is the God-Man who came down from heaven and ascended in glory after His resurrection. The Lord referred to a miracle worked through Moses when the Hebrews were saved from poisonous snake bites by looking at a bronze serpent that he held up for them to see. (Numbers 21:9) The people were saved through Moses from physical death on a particular day, but Christ—who will be lifted up upon the cross at His crucifixion—will give eternal life to those who believe in Him.

As blessed a prophet as Moses was, he did not bring anyone into the fullness of the new creation. Only Jesus Christ is able to do that. He is so unique that we cannot talk about Him simply in terms of ideas, laws, or doctrines. Instead, we speak of profound realities such as birth, death, creation, and resurrection. We bring to mind outrageously shocking events such as barren senior citizens having babies and a holy virgin who becomes pregnant with the Son of God in her womb. We see the One who spoke the universe into existence born in the humility of a barn with a manger for His crib. We see Him rejected, despised, and killed as He offers Himself in free obedience on the cross. “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) And then we see the strangest thing of all when He rises in glory after three days in the tomb, bursting the bonds of Hades and defeating even death itself. That is what a new creation looks like, and it is anything but life as usual.

As hard as it is to believe, the Savior enables us to participate in the new life of the heavenly kingdom even as we live and breathe in this world. To be in Him is to be set free from the fear of death, from slavery to sin, and from domination by our disordered desires, including the obsession with making ourselves worthy by our own accomplishments. Unfortunately, many of us remain addicts to self-justification, to the impossible task of saving ourselves from shame, anxiety, and despair by an outward show of respectability or success. Whether it is religion, work, money, physical appearance, family or anything else, self-justification is ultimately the idolatry of worshiping ourselves, of glorying in our own flesh, as St. Paul said of the Judaizers. He wrote, “But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”

Christ’s cross is the end of all human attempts at self-justification, including of any form of religion that sees salvation as just another human achievement. Our problem is too grave to be solved by an outward show of piety, ethics, or anything else. The glory to which we are called is too sublime to be fulfilled even by our best efforts. It is beyond us to conquer death and shine with divine light simply by trying really hard. That is a path to worry, failure, and fanaticism, not to the peace, joy, and holiness of the Lord. Like St. Paul, we must die to our addiction to self-justification if we are to understand the infinite love of the God-Man who offered Himself on the cross and endured the wages of sin in order to conquer death on our behalf for our salvation. He died that we might live. He went into the tomb and Hades to bring us into the new creation, the “eighth day” of His heavenly kingdom.

We will not secure the meaning and purpose of our lives by self-reliance or maintaining an impressive outward appearance in any way. Instead, we must become like Joachim and Anna in their patient trust in God to bless them. We must become like the Theotokos, their long-awaited daughter, who welcomed Christ into her life in a unique way as His Living Temple. We must become like St. Paul in dying to everything that keeps us from entrusting our lives fully to the mercy of our crucified and risen Lord. Following their examples, let us all embrace as fully as possible the new life that He has brought to the world. For that is truly what we all need: a new life; a new birth; and a new creation. Those who worship the false gods of the world may be able to achieve certain goals, but they will miss the one thing needful that we cannot give ourselves. As Christ said to Nicodemus, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

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 of the Feast:** (Tone 4) *Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shown from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing. By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life!*

**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 :** *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 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:** 2Cor 1:21-2:4/Gal 6:11-18

**Gospel:** Mat 22:1-14/John 3:13-17

**Financial Tracker**

July Total Income \$ 4887  
 July Total Expenses \$ 3218  
 Mnth Net Income (Loss) \$ 1669

**On Facebook @**

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

**Our Blog:**

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

**Web Tracker**

StHerman Google Bus Site 515 views/28 days  
 Blog Site Views 28,377 Total Views  
 Web Site Views 186 in past 30 days  
 Facebook Followers 5500 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**

September 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Church New Year Catechum 7PM	1 Vespers/ Conf 6PM
13th Sunday 3 Divine Liturgy 10AM 1Cor 16:13-24 Mat 21:33-42	T4 2Cor 12:10-19 Mark 4:10-23	2Cor 12:20-13:2 Mark 4:24-34	2Cor 13:3-14 Mark 4:35-41	6 Forefeast Nativ Theotokos Vespereal Liturgy 6PM Gal 1:1-10,20-2:5 Mark 5:1-20	7 Nativity of Theotokos NO Catechum! Phil 2:5-11;Lk 10:38-42,11:27-28	8 Before Elev of Holy Cross Vespers/ Conf 6PM 1Cor 2:6-9 Mat 10:37-11:1
10 Before Elev of Holy Cross Divine Liturgy 10AM 2Cor 1:21-2:4 Mat 22:1-14	T5 Gal 2:11-16 Mark 5:24-34	11 Gal 2:21-3:7 Mark 6:1-7	12 Forefeast Elev Holy Cross Vespereal Liturgy 6PM Gal 3:15-22 Mark 6:7-13	13 Elevation of Holy Cross 1Cor 1:18-24;Jn 19:6-11,13-20,25-35 Mark 6:45-53	14 Catechum 7PM Gal 4:8-21 Mark 6:45-53	15 After Elev of Holy Cross/StSophia Vespers/ Conf 6PM 1Cor 1:26-29 John 8:21-30
17 After Elev of Holy Cross Divine Liturgy 10AM 2Cor 4:6-15 Mat 22:35-46	T6 Gal 4:28-5:10 Luke 3:19-22	18 Gal 5:11-21 Luke 3:23-4:1	19 Gal 6:2-10 Luke 4:1-15	20 Leave of Cross Elevation Adult Study 7PM Eph 1:1-9 Luke 4:16-22	21 Catechum 7PM Eph 1:7-17 Luke 4:22-30	22 Conception STJohnForerunner Vespers/ Conf 6PM 1Cor 10:23-28 Luke 4:31-36
24 16th Sunday 1st Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM 2Cor 6:1-10 Luke 5:1-11	T6 Eph 1:22-2:3 Luke 4:37-44	25 Eph 2:19-3:7 Luke 5:12-16	26 Eph 3:8-21 Luke 5:33-39	27 Adult Study 7PM Eph 4:14-19 Luke 6:12-19	28 Catechum 7PM Eph 4:17-25 Luke 6:17-23	29 Vespers/ Conf 6PM 1Cor 14:20-25 Luke 5:17-26