

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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“An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County”

www.sainthermanchurch.org



Important This Week:

Thursday, 24Nov—NO Adult Study—Thanksgiving Day!

Saturday, 26Nov— 6PM Vespers

Sunday, 27Nov, 10AM—Divine Liturgy

20Nov22

23rd Sunday After Pentecost/9th Luke/Tone 6

Entry of the Theotokos

If a tree is known by its fruit, and a good tree bears good fruit (Mt. 7:17; Lk. 6:44), then is not the Mother of Goodness Itself, She who bore the Eternal Beauty, incomparably more excellent than every good, whether in this world or the world above? Therefore, the coeternal and identical Image of goodness, Preeternal, transcending all being, He Who is the preexisting and good Word of the Father, moved by His unutterable love for mankind and compassion for us, put on our image, that He might reclaim for Himself our nature which had been dragged down to uttermost Hades, so as to renew this corrupted nature and raise it to the heights of Heaven. For this purpose, He had to assume a flesh that was both new and ours, that He might refashion us from out of ourselves. Now He finds a Handmaiden perfectly suited to these needs, the supplier of Her own unsullied nature, the Ever-Virgin now hymned by us, and Whose miraculous Entrance into the Temple, into the Holy of Holies, we now celebrate. God predestined Her before the ages for the salvation and reclaiming of our kind. She was chosen, not just from the crowd, but

from the ranks of the chosen of all ages, renowned for piety and understanding, and for their God-pleasing words and deeds.

So begins a homily on today's Feast, of the Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple, by St. Gregory Palamas.

It is fortuitous that this Feast comes one week into the Nativity Fast. For we find ourselves in 'new territory'. Not that we haven't fasted before, not that the season is unfamiliar to us, not even that what lay ahead is not totally known. Rather, the unknown territory is our encounter with things Divine, and attempting to embrace them with human arms and hearts—fleshly members not suited to the task, attempting to understand things which are beyond our understanding.

“What things Divine?”, you ask.

How is it that this child finds such favor with God? How is it possible that a small female is carried by a priest into the Holy of Holies, a place into which he himself is not permitted to go on this day according to the Law of Moses? The Holy Spirit will not come until the day of Pentecost, some roughly 40 years or more into the future, and yet He works here today—in the Temple,

and dwells caring for the 'throne' of the King Whom He knows is coming. How is this possible? How is it that God the Son will come forth from her body? How is it that God will allow Himself to be contained in a human body. How can God allow Himself to submit that body to human death?

Today's Troparion teaches openly, “*Today is the prelude of the good will of God...*” God's good will extends to His creation to create the means by which He will take on our flesh. He of His own free will chooses to put on that which by our sins we have caused to be fallen, our human nature. Today's child is His means by which He will fulfill His divine plan of salvation, not for one, not for the few. His plan for salvation He makes available to all who choose to seek Him with their whole heart. The Theotokos is the “divine plant” from which God's life-giving food will spring forth for all of mankind.

Five weeks from this day we will encounter that fruit, that divine plant, which proceeds from the flesh of the Mother of God. Let us, like the angels and the virgins, rejoice in today's prelude.

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

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|----------|----------------|-------|-------------|---------|
| Saturday | Vespers | 12Nov | 3 faithful | 7 views |
| Sunday | Divine Liturgy | 13Nov | 29 faithful | 6 views |
| Tuesday | Cleaning | 15Nov | 5 faithful | |

In the News

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

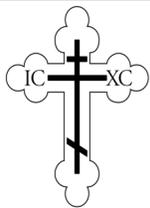
As we enter the Advent Fast, please remember that the term "fasting" does not apply ONLY to food. Yes, food is an essential aspect of our regular fasting. But as we *decrease* our food intake, we must also *increase* our almsgiving, our caring for the needs of others, our prayer rule. We must seek ever more fervently the state of humility so that the Lord might see our efforts and bless us in return for seeking to draw ever nearer to the perfection to which He calls us.

Guilty As Charged

The Leading Cause Of Injury In Old Men Is



Them Thinking They Are Still Young Men



Evil is not a substance or independent reality; it is the willful misuse and distortion of God's sacred creation.

(Bishop Irenei Steenberg)

"The Place"

A number of years ago I drove to Northern Idaho to spend time with my brother Dwayne before the onset of winter, thus avoiding the snows that would soon make Snoqualmie Pass on I-90, perilous. This visit turned out to be one of the best I'd had with my brother, and the highlight was the day we drove to a remote portion of Priest Lake, where our grandfather had built a lake cabin. It was the first time I'd been there since my senior year in high school.

The place was just as I'd remembered it, with the cabin still the same color my grandfather had chosen, and Priest Lake, with the snow capped moun-

tains off in the distance, and the little island just off shore, just as tranquil as the first time I had walked on that beach, soon after my grandparents had purchased the property from the Idaho Department of Forestry. I remember camping in a tent, while my grandfather began clearing trees, and selecting the site where he'd build his lake home.

The photo of me standing next to the dock is especially meaningful for me, for it was this dock that served as my special place of solitude as a sixteen year old. I would spend hours sitting in a deck chair, alone, praying, and reading the Bible and theological works. It

was on this dock that I first experienced the contemplative life, and sensed God calling me to be a monk.

This beach overwhelmed me with memories of my youth, for it was here where I first felt the desire to wear a black robe, and live a life that would be focused on communing with God. It was this place where God first instilled in me a desire to spend my future in solitude, prayer, and community, as a monk. No longer a sixteen year old with dreams, but a seventy-seven year old monk, wearing that black robe, and gazing out at the beauty that first instilled in me a desire to live a life in communion with God.

9th Sunday of Luke *(Fr. Antony Hughes, stmaryorthodoxchurch.org)*

What does it mean to be "rich towards God"? All human beings are intrinsically "rich towards God" because we are made in His divine image and likeness. The problem is that we have forgotten who we are. Abraham Heschel once wrote, "Man is a messenger who has forgotten the message." The Holy Fathers often echo the ancient admonition to "know yourself." Orthodox mystics consider self-knowledge to be the greatest of the spiritual gifts.

We do not know who we are. Why? Because we consist of two realities: we are both physical and spiritual; the one we can see the other we can't. We know we have bodies. All our five senses revolve around the fact that we have a body. It takes no more effort than looking in the mirror to see that. But the spiritual part, that is something different entirely. We cannot see it. What evidence is there for the soul? Where is it? What does it look like? How does it work? Do we have any control over it? The idea of the soul sounds either like a fantasy or like far too much work so we would rather just stick with the physical. And we say, "It's ok for those poor fanatics who care about invisible things (they are a little crazy anyway, right?), but as for me, I am just not religious."

So, the race is on. The decision is made. I will chase the Great American Dream for it is the only reasonable road to happiness. And if I can find some church that agrees with that, well maybe I will join up and get a little divine help in pursuing my material happiness. If not, then it means that spirituality is as irrelevant to my life as I have always thought and I will proceed without it. It turns out, in the end that we end up chasing a dream that can never come true. The happiness we seek, when it comes, never stays for long.

While we are busy making our ways in the world we still feel something inside, a dissatisfaction, a slight discomfort, a feeling that something isn't quite right. We aren't really happy and we don't know why. Nothing seems to fill the hole we feel inside no matter how hard we try to fill it. So after we fill up the barns we have and find no lasting satisfaction in them, we accumulate more stuff and build bigger ones. Still, the excitement doesn't last and we think, "I will build an even bigger one! That will do it! Just one more!" But that doesn't do it either. Happiness is always just one step, one barn, one trophy spouse, one toy, one achievement away. Always just around the bend.

The excitement over winning the lottery fades quickly, dissolving into that black hole inside we sense is ready to devour us. It is the fear of that interior emptiness that drives us so relentlessly. Life turns into a frantic exercise in trying to stay ahead of the uneasy feeling that is biting at our heels. It is an exhausting way of life with only momentary benefits and finally comes the day when it all ends in death and all we have worked for crumbles into dust or ends up in somebody else's hands leaving us nothing to hold on to.

It is easy to understand existentialists, nihilists and the writer of Ecclesiastes, "vanity of vanity, all is vanity." Why? Because we have forgotten the message. We are made in the image of the invisible God. If we ignore invisible things we are badly missing the boat. The road to happiness does not lie without but within. When we finally recognize that everything we can touch is passing away and everything we can gather is like sand through our fingers, then we begin to regain our memory. We are made in God's image. Nothing we can see, touch or gather can make us happy, only God can. Until we pay attention to the vague sense of uneasiness we feel and get a handle on what that is all about, we will never find the way out. We have to stop trying to make it go away with whatever it is that gives us momentary relief and get on with finding some real answers. This means we have to stop running away and face the music. We need a little courage. It is, as we suspected, not an easy road. There is a barn made by God inside of us that needs filling. It is much bigger than we could ever build and there is only one thing that can fill it.

"Man is an animal which has been given the vocation to become God." The only real and lasting happiness we will find in life comes in connecting with this truth and living it out moment by moment. That black hole of a barn inside begins to close when Jesus is allowed to enter our conscious lives for He is the only one who can fill that immense and infinite space.

And it is simple, oh so simple. Once we have opened that door our job is to keep the door open! How? By living each moment with a conscious awareness of our vocation and the Lord's presence. By living each moment as if life really mattered. By learning to see God in every blade of grass, in every changing leaf, in every child, in every friend, in every neighbor, in every stranger. By mining the great treasure that God has placed in our depths by meditation and prayer. By touching the divine image deeply. By rejoicing that we have been so marvelously and gloriously made. By learning to sing His praises with every breath we take. And ultimately by silence.

The Name of God in the Old Testament cannot be pronounced. It is represented by four letters in Hebrew called the sacred tetragrammaton, YHWH. Although unpronounceable one can try, but the only sound you can squeeze out of those mysterious, sacred letters is the sound of the breath going in and going out. Thus, with every breath, whether we know it or not, we are saying the Name of God. The secret is to remember this as often as we possibly can. It is as simple as that. This is the foundation of Christian spirituality. That is how we have been made. That is how close God is to us. He is in the very air we breathe and in every breath we take. When we become conscious of this, a new life takes root and one little breath at a time we begin to wake up from our long sleep and see things as they really are. At last we begin to remember who and why we are.

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 6) *The angelic powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure Body. You have captured hell, not being tempted by it. You have come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord, Who arose from the dead, glory to You!*

Troparion of the Feast: (Tone 4) *Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. The Virgin appears in the Temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her: “Rejoice, O fulfillment of the Creator’s dispensation.”*

Glorify 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 Feast: (Tone 4) *The most pure Temple of the Savior, the precious Chamber and Virgin, the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, is presented today to the house of the Lord. She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, which the angels of God do praise. Truly this woman is the abode of Heaven!*

Epistle: Eph 2:4-10; Heb 9:1-7

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

| Monthly Financial Tracker | | Yearly Financial Tracker <i>(based on year-to-date income/expenses)</i> | | Web Tracker | |
|---------------------------|---------|--|----------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| October Total Income | \$ 4895 | Projected 12mo Income | \$55,594 | StHerman Google Bus Site | 2908views/28 days |
| October Total Expenses | \$ 3133 | Projected 12mo Expenses | \$51,455 | Blog Site Views | 13495 Total Views |
| Month Net Income (Loss) | \$ 1762 | Projected Year Income (Loss) | \$4,139 | Web Site Views | 97 visits/30 days |
| | | | | Facebook Reach | 561 people/28 days |

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

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**CURRENT WEEK
HIGHLIGHTED**

| November 2022 | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 20th Sunday 30 6th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Gal 1:11-19 T3 Luke 8:26-39 | 31 Phil 4:10-23 Luke 11:29-33 | 1 Sts. Cosmas & Damian 1Cor 12:27-13:8 Mat 10:1, 5-8 | 2 Col 1:18-23 Luke 11:42-46 | 3 Col 1:24-29 Luke 11:47-12:1 | 4 Col 2:1-7 Luke 12:2-12 | 5 Vespers/Conf 6PM 2Cor 3:12-18 Luke 9:1-6 |
| 21st Sunday 6 7th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Gal 2:16-20 T4 Luke 8:41-56 | 7 Col 2:13-20 Luke 12:13-15,22-31 | 8 Synaxis of the Archangels Heb 2:2-10 Luke 10:16-21 | 9 Evangelist Matthew 16 Col 3:17-4:1 Luke 12:48-59 | 10 Luke 13:1-9 | 11 Col 4:10-18 Luke 13:31-35 | 12 Vespers/Conf 6PM 2Cor 5:1-10 Luke 9:37-43 |
| 22nd Sunday 13 8th Luke/StJohnChrys Divine Liturgy 10AM Heb 7:26-8:2 T5 John 10:9-16 | 14 1Thes 1:1-5 Luke 14:12-15 | 15 Nativity Fast Begins 1Thes 1:6-10 Luke 14:25-35 | 16 Evangelist Matthew 16 1Cor 4:9-16 Mat 9:9-13 | 17 1Thes 2:9-14 Luke 16:1-9 | 18 1Thes 2:14-19 Luke 16:15-18,17:1-4 | 19 Forefeast Entry 19 Vigil/Conf 6PM 2Cor 8:1-5 Luke 9:57-62 |
| 23rd Sunday 20 9th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Eph 2:4-10 T6 Luke 12:16-21 | 21 Entry of Theotokos Heb 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 | 22 1Thes 3:9-13 Luke 17:26-37 | 23 1Thes 4:1-12 Luke 18:15-17,26-30 | 24 Grt Martyr Catherine Eph 6:10-17 Luke 21:12-19 | 25 Leave of Entry Theotokos 1Thes 5:9-13,24-28 Luke 19:12-28 | 26 Vigil/Conf 6PM 2Cor 11:1-6 Luke 10:19-21 |
| 24th Sunday 27 10th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Eph 2:14-22 T6 Luke 13:10-17 | 28 2Thes 1:1-10 Luke 19:37-44 | 29 2Thes 1:10-2:2 Luke 19:45-48 | 30 Apostle Andrew 30 1Cor 4:9-16 John 1:35-51 | | | |