



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, 22May, **7PM** Adult Study—ENTER THRU FRONT DOOR!!! NO Enquirer's Class on Friday
Saturday, 24May, Vespers; Sunday, 25May, **10AM** Divine Liturgy

18May25

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Saint Photini

The New Testament describes the account of the "woman at the well" (John 4:5-42), who was a Samaritan. Up to that point she had led a sinful life, one which resulted in a rebuke from Jesus Christ. However, she responded to Christ's stern admonition with genuine repentance, was forgiven her sinful ways, and became a convert to the Christian Faith - taking the name 'Photini' at Baptism, which literally means "the enlightened one".

A significant figure in the Johannine community, the Samaritan Woman, like many other women, contributed to the spread of Christianity. She therefore occupies a place of honour among the apostles. In Greek sermons from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries she is called "apostle" and "evangelist." In these sermons the Samaritan Woman is often compared to the male disciples and apostles and found to surpass them.

Later, Byzantine hagiographers developed the story of the Samaritan Woman, beginning where Saint John left off. At Pentecost Saint Photini received baptism, along with her five sisters, Anatole, Photo, Photis, Paraskeve, Kyriake, and her two sons, Photinos and Joseph. She then began a missionary career, traveling far and wide, preaching the good news of the Messiah's coming, His death and resurrection. When Nero, the emperor of Rome, began to persecute Christians, Photini and her son Joseph were in Carthage, in Africa, where she was preaching the Christian gospel. After Jesus appeared to Photini in a dream, she sailed to Rome. Her son and many Christians from Africa accompanied her. Photini's arrival and activity aroused curiosity in the capital city. Everyone talked about her, "Who is this woman?" they asked. "She came here with a crowd of followers and she preaches Christ with great boldness."

Soldiers were ordered to bring her to the emperor, but Photini anticipated them. Before they could arrest her, Photini, with her son

Joseph and her Christian friends, went to Nero. When the emperor saw them, he asked why they had come. Photini answered, "We have come to teach you to believe in Christ." The half-mad Emperor did not frighten her. She wanted to convert him! Nero asked the saints their names. Again Photini answered. By name she introduced herself, her five sisters and younger son. The emperor then demanded to know whether they had all agreed to die for the Nazarene. Photini spoke for them. "Yes, for the love of Him we rejoice and in His name we'll gladly die." Hearing their defiant words, Nero ordered their hands beaten with iron rods for three hours. At the end of each hour another persecutor took up the beating. The saints, however, felt no pain. Nothing happened to their hands. Photini joyfully quoted a psalm: "God is my help. No matter what anyone does to me, I shall not be afraid." Perplexed by the Christian's endurance, Nero ordered the men thrown into jail. Photini and her five sisters were brought to the golden reception hall in the imperial palace. There, the six women were seated on golden thrones. In front of them stood a large golden table covered with gold coins, jewels and dresses. Nero hoped to tempt the women by a display of wealth and luxury. Nero then ordered his daughter Domnina, with her slave girls, to speak with the Christian women. Women, he thought, would succeed in persuading Christian sisters to deny their God.

Domnina greeted Photini graciously, mentioning the name of Christ. On hearing the princess' greeting, the saint thanked God. She then embraced and kissed Domnina. The women talked. But the outcome of the women's talk was not what Nero wished.

Photini catechized Domnina and her hundred slave girls and baptized them all. She gave the name Anthousa to Nero's daughter. After her baptism, Anthousa immediately ordered all the gold and jewels on the golden

table distributed to the poor of Rome.

When the emperor heard that his own daughter had been converted to Christianity, he condemned Photini and all her companions to death by fire. For seven days the furnace burned. But when the door of the furnace was opened, it was seen that the fire had not harmed the saints. Next the emperor tried to destroy the saints with poison. Photini offered to be the first to drink it. "O King," she said, "I will drink the poison first so that you might see the power of my Christ and God." All the saints then drank the poison after her. None suffered any ill effects. In vain Nero subjected Photini, her sisters, sons and friends to every known torture. The saints survived unscathed to taunt and ridicule their persecutor. For three years they were held in a Roman prison. Saint Photini transformed it into a "house of God." Many Romans came to the prison, were converted and baptized. Finally, the enraged tyrant had all the saints, except for Photini, beheaded. She was thrown first into a deep, dry well and then into prison again. Photini now grieved that she was alone, that she had not received the crown of martyrdom together with her sisters Anatole, Photo, Photis, Paraskeve and Kyriake and her two sons, Photinos and Joseph. Night and day she prayed for release from this life. One night, God appeared to her, made the sign of the cross over her three times. The vision filled her with joy. Many days later, while she hymned and blessed God, Saint Photini gave her soul into God's hands. The Samaritan Woman conversed with Christ by the well of Jacob, near the city of Sychar. She drank of the "living water" and gained everlasting life and glory. For generation after generation, Orthodox Christians have addressed prayer to the woman exalted by the Messiah when He sat by the well in Samaria and talked with her.

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, Fr. Owen
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

Weekly Statistics

Saturday	Vespers	10May	Cancelled	
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	04May	39 faithful	15 views

In the News

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

After Divine Liturgy TODAY we need to empty out the Social Hall. Flooring Company will be in the building for 5 days starting TOMORROW Monday, 19May. For those who have keys to the building, PLEASE STAY OUT for the duration of this coming week. We will not have either Adult Study on Thursday, or Enquirer's Class on Friday!

Please check the Coffee Hour signup sheet for available Sundays to sponsor an upcoming Sunday!

Lurnin' English

Y'all'd've

Triple contraction of "You all would have."
 Colloquial, used mostly in the South and in neighboring regions.

Example: We could've met y'all there if y'all'd've just waited!



Initially grace arouses the conscience in a divine manner. That is how even sinners have come to repent and so to conform to God's will.

(St. Kosmas Aitolos)

They're DOING It in Bulgaria!!! [orthochristian.com/169792.html]

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church published a statement on 13May in support of compulsory religious education in national schools—something the Church has been working for since the fall of communism more than 30 years ago.

The Synod states that it supports the introduction of the course with the working title "Virtues and Religion" and also supports the "Virtues and Religion in School" procession that will be held on Saturday, May 17, in front of the St. Alexander Nevsky Patriarchal Cathedral, the Bulgarian Church reports.

"We call on all Orthodox Christians and all people who wish to take part in the procession to jointly declare our convinced civic position on the necessity for Bulgarian children to become acquainted

with the timeless Orthodox Christian values and moral virtues, and with our centuries-old Orthodox culture and history built on these values," the hierarchs state.

Religious education has long been available as an elective course, but there has been a major push recently to introduce a relevant course into the regular curriculum. According to news.bg, more than 80% of Bulgarians support the initiative, though there have also been protests against it.

According to Minister of Education Krassimir Valchev, incorporating religious and ethical subject matter into school programs is not incompatible with broader educational objectives. Valchev emphasized that Christian foundations underpin both Bulgarian and European cultural heritage, providing essential con-

textual knowledge for students' comprehensive development.

From 2020-2023, the Holy Synod created new textbooks on Religion, Christianity-Orthodoxy for all students from 1st to 12th grades that received the approval of the Ministry of Education.

"Guided by its millennial experience in the exceptional educational power of Orthodox Christianity, our Church does not cease emphasizing the great importance of spiritual and moral education of children from an early age—in the family, in the church, in kindergarten, in school. This our Holy Church does out of love for its people, out of concern for the growing generations and out of compassion for the pains and problems of modern man," the Synod said in a statement in August 2023.

Living According to His Will *[orthochristian.com / 169751, Mother Theodosia]*

Mother Theodosia was born in 1922, and she considered her birthday to be November 4, the feast of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, in the village of Velemya, Skopin district, Ryazan region. Her name was Natasha. She was a simple girl—modest and kind. Her family was poor and worked in the countryside.

One day, an accident occurred at work, and Natasha fell ill. Later, there was another accident, in which the tailgate of a truck fell on her—directly on her head. At the time she was thirty-three years old. The official medical diagnosis was: “brain concussion.” Before all of this happened, Natasha had a dream in which a woman approached her and said, “Do not marry! You will be covered in flowers!”

After the accident, Natasha lay in the hospital. Her sisters wept over her. One day, an old man appeared to them—later revealed to be St. Nicholas the Wonderworker—and said, “Do not cry! Many people will come to you. You will not be alone.” Natasha suffered terrible headaches; she cried and screamed from the pain. She was taken to Ryazan, where she was given disability status. Later, in a state of unconsciousness, she was placed in a psycho-neurological hospital. Natasha begged to be taken out of there, because they were giving her injections, which made her feel much worse. Soon her sister Olga took her home.

The illness caused by the head trauma continued to develop, and she was diagnosed with traumatic encephalopathy with personality changes. She was assigned to the first group of disability. Soon, Mother fell into a coma—not for a day or two, but for nearly fourteen years. Mother Theodosia awoke from the coma on Pascha, April 18, 1971. On the Feast of the Ascension, May 27, she opened her eyes. It took her a long time to adjust to her new state. Her eyes were not always open. The first word she spoke was “mama.” Her coma had lasted from the autumn of 1957; that is, about thirteen years and five months. When she awoke, she was exactly forty-eight years old.

Mother Theodosia did not age as she slept in her coma. To the astonishment of many, she suddenly knew the entire Gospel, the Psalter, prayers, and akathists, though she had been completely illiterate. Mother later said, “When my eyes opened, they were filled with blood. They put drops in them. My eyes began to clear, and I finally saw light. And then I began to see.”

While she slept in her coma, they fed her with a bottle and a spoon. Whether she was full or not, no one knew. When she woke up, she said: “I was full, the Mother of God fed me. Don’t worry about me, my joy! And I heard everything while I was asleep—even the flies that bit me! And in that other world, they read and sang, and I repeated after them. That’s how I learned! I must serve God!” Most often, Mother spoke in parables and revealed things differently each time.

She did not say much about how she slept or where she had been during that time, but once she said: “There was one woman who slept and slept... Slept a whole week. They led her around the next world, showed her everything. Not only where the dead were, but also where the living would end up. And then they told her, ‘Tell no one what you saw.’” Mother Theodosia said, “The Lord has prepared everything for us—it all exists, both heaven and hell—and we will answer for everything!”

One day, Mother Theodosia shared something for our encouragement. She had grown weary of lying in bed—it was hard for her. And she began to weep. “Lord, I’m so tired! Take me!” She wept for a long time... She said that the roof of the house had disappeared, the sky opened, and an Angel appeared. The Angel placed a book on the table, opened it, and said, “Read!” “I read it and was at peace,” she said, “and the vision vanished. It was the book of my life. That was when I found humility.”

People often tenderly called Mother Theodosia, “Our Little Sun!” She radiated light, though she bore a burden beyond what most people today could endure—she was completely paralyzed and dependent on those who cared for her. Pelagea, who looked after her, would often beat her, leave her unfed, and keep people from visiting. And what humility Mother had! She never once complained. On the contrary, she even felt sorry for Pelagea. It is nearly beyond our comprehension.

To one woman, Mother Theodosia revealed something extraordinary: Upon entering the cell, the woman saw all the icons come alive—all the saints were moving, and Mother was speaking with them. Mother said to her, “Tell no one what you saw!” She also used to say, “I’ve been ready to go for a long time, but you won’t let me—you keep praying for me!”

For the sake of Mother Theodosia, her sister Olga gave up her own life, sacrificing everything. Her love for her disabled sisters (including her other sister Anna) was greater than her love for the man who had wanted to marry her. Olga carried this sacrifice to the end of her life. Mother loved her sister dearly and said she survived thanks to her. Doctors came from Moscow in order to diagnose her unusual condition, and they asked to take her to an institute for study, but her sister answered firmly, “As long as I’m alive, I will never give Natasha away!” When Olga died, Mother Theodosia grieved deeply. She wept so bitterly that the bed itself trembled under her.

“It would be nothing terrible if I die while receiving people. That is why I live, and I will go on receiving them as long as I live.” Even when her blood pressure rose to 300, she would keep receiving visitors, saying, “No! I must receive everyone! I must serve God!”

The love that radiated from Mother Theodosia was so all-embracing that sometimes people would simply come in and weep. They would leave, and everything in their life would be set aright. Without a word. The same still happens now, at her little chapel where she is buried. The feeling of love is so palpable that you hardly know whether you are on earth or in heaven. She lay in her bed for over forty years, endured everything, received everyone with humility, and prayed unceasingly in the village of Oktyabrsky in the city of Skopin, Ryazan Province. There were times when people saw the Mother of God enter Mother’s cell—even though all the doors were shut. Later, Mother confirmed these appearances. Her counsel was simple, and her speech was homey. She would say, “It’s better to sing than to despair!” That’s why she even composed poems and songs. But the notebook in which her spiritual children recorded them has yet to be found. To those refused to listen to her advice, she would simply say, “As you wish! As you like!” Mother Theodosia would give everyone chocolates as a blessing. And to this day her spiritual children bring chocolates to her cell, and others take them away as a blessing from her and for consolation. She would also offer tea and food. That is why tables stand next to her chapel even now, and on commemorative days, everyone—absolutely everyone—is treated to pies with tea and compote and various sweets. While she was alive, Mother often asked everyone to keep peace amongst themselves. This was her principal commandment to all her spiritual children. And of course, she told them to go to confession and receive Communion more often, to attend church. She could not understand how anyone could fail to go to church on a Sunday. “There are busses running, and people even have their own cars, so why don’t they go to church?” she would say. “Well, I will die, I won’t be here with you forever. But don’t be troubled—I will still pray for you there!”

Mother Theodosia once said: “Be patient! Be patient! Even if fire burns me—I will be patient! Temptation? Endure it with all your strength! Don’t worry! Don’t quarrel! Just say, ‘Lord, give me strength.’” “You see how many years I’ve lain here—and I smile. So you too, endure just a little!” “How the Mother of God weeps! And I weep with Her! She came and said that women should not wear trousers—they offend Her terribly!” “What a pure and blessed land this Ryazan soil is! So many saints were born here!”

“Be united in times of trouble—all of you! Keep peace! And remember: Come to my grave, ask, and I will always help you. I will never forsake you, I won’t forsake anyone. Remember that! Whoever remembers me and calls upon me after my death, I will come to help them.”

Mother Theodosia remained immobile until her very repose. She fell asleep in the Lord on May 15, 2014, still receiving people even on the eve of her approaching death. That morning, she received Holy Communion, and then peacefully departed unto the Lord.

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!’*

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: (Tone 8) *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 of the Feast: (Tone 8) *The Samaritan woman came to the well in faith. She saw You, the water of Wisdom, and drank abundantly! She inherited the Kingdom on high, and is ever glorified!*

Epistle: Acts 11:19-26, 29-30

Gospel: John 4:5-42

Monthly Financial Tracker

April Total Income \$7807
April Total Expenses \$8683
April Net Income (Loss) \$ 876
[Loss in April Due to Insurance bill of over \$7300!!]

Web Tracker

StHerman Google Bus Site 575 interacts/28 days
Blog Site Views 56201 Total Views
Web Site Views 18320 Total Views
Facebook Followers 5386 Total

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

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**CURRENT WEEK
HIGHLIGHTED**

May 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Acts 4:23-31 John 5:24-30	Acts 5:1-11 John 5:30-6:2	BrookeWheeler 3PM Vespers 6PM Acts 5:21-33 John 6:14-27
Sunday of the Myrrhbearers T2 Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 6:1-7 Mark 15:43-16:8	4	5	6	7	8	9
Acts 6:1-7 Mark 15:43-16:8	Acts 6:8-7:5,47-60 John 4:46-54	Acts 8:5-17 John 6:27-33	Acts 8:18-25 John 6:35-39	Apostle & Evangelist John Adult Study 7PM 1John 1:1-7 Jn 19:25-27;21:24-25	BlazoskyRehrs 4PM NO Enqr's Class Acts 8:40-9:19 John 6:48-54	BlazoskyWed 4PM NO Vespers Acts 9:20-31 John 15:17-16:2
Sunday of the Paralytic T3 Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15	11	12	13	14	15	16
Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15	Acts 10:1-16 John 6:56-69	Acts 10:21-33 John 7:1-13	Mid Pentecost Acts 14:6-18 John 7:14-30	Adult Study 7PM Acts 10:34-43 John 8:12-20	Enqr's Class 7PM Acts 10:44-11:10 John 8:21-30	Vespers 6PM Acts 12:1-11 John 8:31-42
Sunday of the Samaritan Woman T4 Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 11:19-26;29-30 John 4:5-42	18	19	20	21	22	23
Acts 11:19-26;29-30 John 4:5-42	Acts 12:12-17 John 8:42-51	Acts 12:25-13:12 John 8:51-59	Sts.Constantine & Helen Acts 26:1-5,12-20 John 10:1-9	Adult Study 7PM Acts 8:26-39 John 6:40-44	Enqr's Class 7PM Acts 8:40-9:19 John 6:48-54	Vespers 6PM Acts 9:20-31 John 15:17-16:2
Sunday of the Blind Man T5 Divine Liturgy 10AM Acts 16:16-34 John 9:1-38	25	26	27	28	29	30
Acts 16:16-34 John 9:1-38	Acts 17:1-15 John 11:47-57	Acts 17:19-28 John 12:19-36	Leave of Pascha Vespertal Liturgy 6PM Acts 18:22-28 John 12:36-47	Ascension NO Adult Study Acts 1:1-12 Luke 24:36-53	NO Enqr's Class Acts 19:1-8 John 14:1-11	Vespers 6PM Acts 20:7-12 John 14:10-21