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FROM FR. KOSTA

Beloved in Christ,

When we are baptized, we are given a second birth, not one "according to the flesh and the will of man, but according to the will of God" (John 1:13). We are given a new birth, "born again by water and the Holy Spirit" (John 3:5). Those who are baptized in Christ put on Christ and belong to the Kingdom of God, as they are "called out" of this world. At our immersion in the baptismal waters, our old nature dies. Sin is washed away, and we rise out of the water to a new life, renewed and resurrected in Christ, to live the resurrected life of the future Kingdom even after our exit from this world.

This is not a symbolic death and resurrection but a real existential change. At baptism, our nature changes into a new creation united with Christ. We begin our journey to reach the purpose we were created and designed for: eternal communion with God in His presence. At baptism, we also receive Chrism (Myrrh), or as the prayers explain it, "the Seal of the Holy Spirit. We accept the Holy Spirit through it, and God marks us, seals us as His own, and grafts us onto the Body of Christ. We renew that seal as we remain with

the Lord through the Holy Eucharist, all the Sacraments of the Church, our repentance, and our faithfulness to Him.

In Christ, we become human in the true sense as we begin to realize and work toward our potential for holiness. It is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. In Him, there is no confusion about who and what we are - men and women, created in the image and likeness of God, called to honour that image and likeness by remaining faithful to God so He may sanctify the body and soul He gave us at our conception. Our duty is not to destroy, distort, or abuse but to preserve and sanctify these gifts we were given out of love and wisdom and to become stewards, not abusers, of all creation.

Acknowledging and living this existential truth puts us on the virtuous path of humility, faithfulness, and, ultimately, theosis (holiness) by the grace of God and our good works, which are inspired by our faith and God's love for us.

(Continued on the next page)

SIGNIFICANT COMMEMORATIONS & FEASTS

- Circumcision of the Lord (Jan. 1)
- Theophany of the Lord (Jan. 5 -6)
- St. Anthony the Great (Jan 17)
- The Three Hierarchs (Jan. 30)



patirxristos.gr

Hymn of the Circumcision of Christ (Tone 1):

In essence, being God, the most compassionate Master, You assumed human nature without transmutation. Fulfilling the Law of Your own will, You accepted circumcision in the flesh to end the shadow and remove the passions that cover us. Glory to Your benevolence, O Lord; glory to Your compassion; glory to Your inexpressible condescension, O Word.

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FROM FR. KOSTA (CONTINUED)

The opposite of all that is what we see when we deny our origin and spiritual heritage and inheritance: pride and the consequent separation from God, resulting in a broken spirituality that leads to the disfigurement of the image and likeness of God in us.

Too often, we try to re-create ourselves and the world around us with God removed from the world, nature, from our bodies, souls, and minds so we are not reminded of humility, our responsibility as stewards of another's creation, and the consequences our actions and decisions have on our souls. But in trying to be "free" from God, we chain ourselves to teachings, ideas and spiritualities that do not nourish our spirit and cannot offer what we crave: communion with our Creator God and the eternal life that was promised to us from the beginning and which only He can provide, because we and the whole universe exist and move according to His will and design.

Our existence begins at birth, and by God's grace and love, it has no end. It continues eternally in the presence of the One who made all things. How we experience His presence is up to us. This alone should pause, humble us, and even make us contemplate our relationship with Him, ourselves, and our neighbour.

We live out our baptism by obeying Christ's words and commandments. In the Sacrament, we ask God that the one being baptized "may preserve his baptismal garment spotless and blameless on the fearful Day of Christ." But how many of us have not sinned since our Baptism? How many have preserved our baptismal garment spotless? How often do we forsake our purpose to become temples of God and try to dictate to God, who gave us our bodies and souls, the conditions of our existence instead of worshipping and honouring Him? How many of us have kept our vow to "renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his

worship, and all his angels, and all his pomp?" In short, how often have we decided that we know better than the One Who calls us to salvation, eternal life, and blessedness?

The truth is that everyone has sinned except for Jesus Christ. He knows that and welcomes us anyway. Just as the father ran to the prodigal son and met him, hugging him and calling him back home, where he could wash, eat, and enjoy his father's presence and gifts, God calls us to Him to share His gifts and joy with us.

St. Paul reminds us: "Likewise you also, consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body...and do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Sin is not a crime we have to pay for because God is angry with us, but a spiritual illness that affects our lives when we separate ourselves from God. Even if we went astray, little or a lot, let us remember and renew our baptism, especially during the Lord's Baptism on the Feast Day of Theophany on January 5 and 6. Let us again take this opportunity to turn our minds and lives to God, reconcile with Him through the Sacrament of Holy Confession and strengthen our connection to our Saviour, Jesus Christ, repeating with firm faith the words we affirmed at our Baptism: "I pledge allegiance to Christ. I believe in Him as my King and my God. I bow down and worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the consubstantial and indivisible Trinity."

I wish you a blessed, prosperous, healthy New Year and enlightening Feast of Theophany.

In Christ,
+Fr. Kosta

CHURCH SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2025

WEDNESDAY	1	THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS CHRIST, St. Basil the Great Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:30 am
SUNDAY	5	SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am EVE OF THE BAPTISM AND THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD Great Vespers followed by Divine Liturgy of St. Basil & Blessing of the Waters 6:00 pm
MONDAY	6	THE BAPTISM AND HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AT THE JORDAN Matins & Blessing of the Waters 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am
TUESDAY	7	SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET JOHN THE BAPTIST & FOREFUNNER Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am
SUNDAY	12	SUNDAY AFTER THE THEOPHANY Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am
FRIDAY	17	ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am
SUNDAY	19	12TH SUNDAY OF LUKE Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am
SUNDAY	26	15TH SUNDAY OF LUKE Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am

ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟ 2025

ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ	1	Η ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, Αγίου Βασιλείου του Μέγα Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασιλείου 10:30 π.μ.
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ	5	ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ. ΠΡΟΕΟΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Μέγας Εσπερινός Μετά Θείας Λειτουργίας Αγ. Βασιλείου & Αγιασμού 6:00 μ.μ
ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ	6	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Ορθρος & Αγιασμός των Υδάτων 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.
ΤΡΙΤΗ	7	ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΟΥ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ	12	ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.
ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ	17	ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ	19	12Η ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΛΟΥΚΑ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ	26	15Η ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΛΟΥΚΑ Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:30 π.μ.

BLESSING OF HOMES FOR THEOPHANY IN JANUARY

Feel free to contact Fr. Kosta via phone, text, or email to set up a time for him to bless your home or business. Let him know when you'll be available, and he'll happily arrange a visit!

House Blessings for January 2025 (Weather permitting)

- **Wednesday, January 8th:** All Day until 7:30 pm
- **Thursday, January 10th:** 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 7:30 pm
- **Friday, January 11th:** 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 7:30 pm
- **Monday, January 14 (if necessary):** All Day

For a visit outside of the above times, please make direct arrangements with fr. Konstantinos.

Talks on the Orthodox Faith

Every second Sunday at coffee hour.

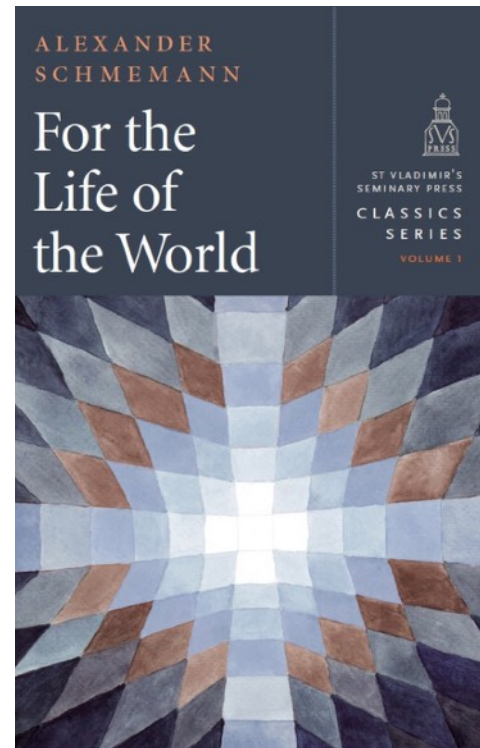
Some of the Topics covered:

- Major Feast Days
- Orthodox Life & Spirituality
- Great Lent
- Q & A

Everyone Welcome.

The schedule may be adjusted for Christmas and Easter breaks and special occasions.

READING/LISTENING CORNER



For the Life of the World

By

Alexander Schmemmann

In *For the Life of the World*, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann suggests an approach to the world and life within it that stems from the liturgical experience of the Orthodox Church. He understands issues such as secularism and Christian culture from the perspective of the Church's unbroken experience, as revealed and communicated in her worship and liturgy—the sacrament of the world, the sacrament of the Kingdom.

Found at:
store.ancientfaith.com
www.amazon.ca

The ebook is available through Apple, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble.

IN MEMORIAM THIS MONTH

This month, we remember and pray for the souls of our following departed Orthodox brothers and sisters who lived in Thunder Bay. The following list is based on our church's Registry Book of Deaths and Funerals entries.

Please inform our priest if there are any errors or omissions.

May the Lord our God rest the souls of
His servants:

Konstantinos Savvas (1957)
Thomas Kebezis (1959)
Polychromes Costas (1961)
Athanasios Savvas (1966)
Andreas Makropoulos (1977)
Petros Pothakos (1977)
Athanasios Pazianos (1977)
Stamina Mellas (1983)
Theodore Pantoulis (1989)
Theodore Theodoropoulos (2008)
Diana Drombolis (2014)
Dimitrios Stathopoulos (2014)
Sheila Glymitsas (2024)

*With the Saints, give rest, O Christ, to Your
servants' souls where there is no pain,
sorrow, or lament, but life everlasting.*

May their memory be eternal.

—

*Μετά των Αγίων ανάπυσσον Χριστέ τας
ψυχάς των δούλων Σου, ένθα ούκ εστί
πόνος, ου λύπη, ου στεναγμός, αλλά ζωή
ατελεύτητος.*

Αιωνία αυτών η μνήμη.

GOD BLESS THE STEWARDS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND THEIR FAMILIES

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep, and my sheep know me." (John 10:14)

2024

1. Angie Amorgianos
2. Steve Amorgianos
3. Phyllis Amorgianos
4. Joyce Avgeropoulos
5. Peter Avgeropoulos
6. Nick Balina
7. Katerina Biniaris
8. George Biniaris
9. Athena Blieske
10. Edric Blieske
11. Alex Bradatanu
12. Iuliana Bradatanu
13. Ourania Biniaris
14. Anastasios Catanzaro
15. Gus Chimbakis
16. Helen Chimbakis
17. Bill Commimos
18. Angela Damianakos
19. Athena Damianakos
20. Bill Damianakos
21. Vicki Dowhos
22. Paul Dowhos
23. Lori Florindo
24. Maria Forget
25. Joanne Frisky
26. Tara Giardetti
27. Peter Giardetti
28. Harry Glymitsas
29. Dimitra Glymitsas
30. Jennie Hartviksen
31. Sotirios Hatzis
32. Theodora Hatzis
33. Bill Hatzis
34. Stella Hatzis
35. Penny Kahramanos
36. Lisa Kahramanos
37. Andreas Karanasos
38. Despina Kargatzis
39. Faye Karoutas
40. Nick Koukos
41. Joyce Koukos
42. Peter Koukos
43. Ray Leino
44. Virginia Leino
45. Jack Lotsios
46. Effie Lotsios
47. George Lotsios
48. Chrysoula Mayer
49. Katherine Mayer

50. Bess Melville

51. Despina Metsopoulos
52. Achileas Metsopoulos
53. Angela Metsopoulos
54. Theressa Meyer
55. Penny Milionis
56. Maria Morakis
57. Florina Nisioiu
58. Peter Pantoulis
59. Helen Pantoulis
60. Nikki Pantoulis
61. Jim Pazianos
62. Tom Pazianos
63. Leila Pazianos
64. Olivia Pietrangelo
65. Effie Saïtes
66. Maria Sancarier
67. Katerina Scocchia
68. Steven Scolie
69. Irene Binaris
70. Marinos Spourdakis
71. Constantin Todosia
72. Manuella Todosia
73. Elaine Tsekouras
74. Harry Tsekouras
75. Lily Tsekouras
76. Constantine Tsekouras
77. Jane Tsekouras
78. Ahileas Tsekouras
79. Paul Tsekouras
80. Sylvia Tsekouras
81. John Tsekouras
82. Daniel Vasiliu
83. Christine Vlotaros
84. Peter Vlotaros
85. Theodora Voulgaris
86. Georgina Voulgaris
87. Pat Welbourne
88. Chris Welbourne
89. Austin Williams

2025

1. Nikki Pantoulis

Please get in touch with Fr. Kosta if there are any errors in this list.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST (JANUARY 1)

Eight days after the birth of Christ, on the first of January, our Church celebrates the circumcision of Christ. It is a Jewish ritual ordinance that Jesus fulfilled, like all the Israelites, but which was deemed unnecessary in the Church. What sense does it have for the Orthodox Church to celebrate it? It is a question that spontaneously arises more or less in all of us.

Of course, there is a simple answer which we can immediately think of. With the feast, we honour an event in the life of Christ, significant in that it belongs to His religious state and signifies the time of His naming. He took the name Jesus, and the angel's prophecy was verified that the son Mary would give birth to would be named so. When we love a person – much more so – when we worship God, every moment of His history rightly becomes an object of attention and a reason for joy. In our Church, however, every event of God is transformed into an event of us, and every celebratory act transports us to the divine act. How can this be understood on the feast of Circumcision?

Our God-enlightened theologians establish a great message: the message of obedience. Christ is circumcised; that is, he undergoes rituals such as circumcision to obey the law and to declare submission to the will of God, even though the Son of God does not need to undergo suffering or declare submission. And we, His Christians, learn that we have a duty to obey the law of God, not according to our sense of morality or righteousness but according to His command, even if it seems paradoxical in our world and our habits. Our Lord, obeying in all things as a human being, could rightfully abolish the law, and His faithful people, imitating His obedience, can be freed from sin. Thus, the hymnologist sings, “The all-good God was not pleased that the flesh should be circumcised, but gave himself, a type and an underlining, all for salvation” (a hymn of Vespers).

However, the very history of the event of circumcision, when considered in its spirit, reveals a high spiritual answer to our question of why we celebrate Christ's Circumcision. By this rite, God appointed Abraham, according to the covenant and agreement that He made with him, a visible and indelible sign on the very body of His believers to constantly remind them of their relationship with their Lord. Just as he who wants to secure His property puts His seal, a personal mark on what belongs to him, God marked His people with circumcision to show them and other peoples that they are His. Circumcision, therefore, reveals God's presence, declares man's obedience and presupposes faith, a bond of absolute trust between the Lord and the believer. Its abolition could not abolish these holy concepts.

Jewish circumcision ceased to be valid for the Church of Christ. From the moment Christ was circumcised, all Christians who are His members are now circumcised in His name and circumcision as a sign of our flesh is no longer needed. However, we need circumcision made “without hands,” as a conscience and as an experience in our heart, as a fact in our being. We need a mentality that will cut off and drive away the will of the world from us and keep the will of God alive in our lives. We receive this circumcision-made-without-hands with the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation (Confirmation) and renew it with the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession. In these Mysteries, each of us makes an agreement with God, enters into a covenant, declares himself a servant of the Lord, and the Lord seals him with His grace so that he may belong to Christ, confesses submission and accepts adoption by the Father, renounces Satan and aligns himself with Christ.

So, today, within the Church, we live our circumcision by celebrating the circumcision of Christ. We renew our decision to belong to the Lord and to observe the terms of our relationship with Him. The awareness that we are His people by our choice and His grace helps us to keep ourselves pure from contrary and anti-Christian identities, trends, stances, and teachings. The conviction that we are His voluntary servants pushes us to do His will effortlessly. Thus, we feel that He also recognizes us as His own, and we experience His protection and comfort at every moment. But this is how the world knows us as servants of Christ, as children of God and the Church, and sets us apart. Without having the sign of Jewish circumcision upon us, we are marked by the circumcision of passions, by the cutting off of evils, by the cutting off of our self-loving and selfish will. Although this is never done perfectly because of our weakness, our disposition and will are always blessed by God.

CHILDREN IN THE DIVINE LITURGY

To the parents and grandparents of our young children, may we suggest...

Relax! God put the wiggle and curiosity in children; don't feel you must suppress it. All are welcome! Sit somewhere that is easier for your little ones to see and hear what is going on—even if that means you sit at the front. They tire of seeing the backs of others' heads. We know how hard it is to have small children in Liturgy. Please don't be discouraged. We love you and want you here.

If you need to give your child a break, that's fine too. Usually, a walk outside, in the church hall, or the narthex is enough to help them refocus.

Quietly explain the Liturgy to your children:

The Small Entrance

The Gospel (the Good News) coming into the world

The Epistle and Gospel Readings

Our message for the day

The Sermon/Homily

The clergy speaks about the Bible readings, the Saints, and the Holy Days.

The Offering (Anaphora)

Bowing to our King and offering Him our gifts, that He may change them into His Body and Blood and offer them back to us

Holy Communion

Christ is in us, and we are in Him. It's not just bread and wine, but the Mystical Body and Blood of our Lord.

Sing hymns, pray, and respond with the chanters and congregation. Children learn liturgical behaviour by imitating adults. Remember, we worship Christ. If you temporarily need to step out with your child, please return after they've calmed down. As Christ said, "Let the children come to Me." We also encourage visits to the church and Fr. Kosta with your children when there's no service to explain the church to them. Sometimes, children appreciate the church more when they have it to themselves.

To the members of our Community, the presence of children is a gift to the Church and a reminder that our Community is growing. Please pray for our children and welcome them by giving a smile of encouragement to their parents. Remember that how we welcome children in the Church directly affects how they respond to the Church, Christ, and one another. Let them know they are home!

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT (JANUARY 17)



wikimedia.com

St. Anthony is a renowned Christian ascetic of Egypt and founder of monastic life in the East.

Anthony was born around 250 in Koma, Upper Egypt, to wealthy and pious parents. He lived during the reigns of Roman emperors, such as Diocletian (284-305), Maximian (285-305), and Constantine the Great. From childhood, he was frugal and self-sufficient and showed interest in the church's worship life.

At the age of 20, he lost both his parents. Six months later, he distributed his possessions to the poor, obeying the gospel passage of the rich young man, and retired to a desert cave, where he lived an ascetic life for 25 years. His fame soon spread to the local churches, and many Christians fled to the same area to practice asceticism and listen to his teachings.

In the year 311, during the persecution of Emperor Maximinus (307-313), he descended to Alexandria to encourage and help the believers of the local church. When the persecution ceased, Anthony returned to the desert. However, he felt disturbed by the presence of many believers who went to meet him, so he sought a new refuge on Mount Colchis on the Red Sea. Even there, however, many Christians came to receive his blessing. His fame reached even the highest echelons of the empire. Constantine the Great and his sons, Constantius and Constans, regularly corresponded with and consulted him on various matters.

During his ascetic life, he never changed his clothes or washed his body or feet with water. He taught his disciples not to consider anything superior to the love of Christ and not to think that because they abstain from worldly goods, they are deprived of something worthwhile. To leave earthly goods, he said, is like despising a copper drachma to gain a hundred gold ones. He emphasized that we should not forget that human life is temporary compared to eternal life and that we should not strive for the acquisition of temporary goods, which we cannot take with us, but for the acquisition of eternal goods, namely wisdom, justice, sobriety, courage, understanding and love.

Saint Anthony, called by the church the Great, died in 356 at 105, in perfect physical and spiritual health. Shortly before his falling asleep, he gave his two most eminent disciples, Serapion and Athanasius the Great, his only possessions: a tunic and two sheepskin coats. According to his wish, the place of his burial remained secret. Later, his relics were transferred to the Saint John the Baptist church in Alexandria under Justinian (561) and from there in 635 to Constantinople. In the 11th century, they were received by a French nobleman named Joscelin, who placed them in the Abbey of Saint Anthony in the homonymous city of South-East France (Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye), where they are today.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Memorial Services are offered for Orthodox Christians, typically on the fortieth day after death, six months after death, and the anniversary of death. They are usually held on Sundays at the end of the Divine Liturgy or may also be held as separate services on weekdays at the church or the grave. Please speak with our Priest if you have any questions regarding Koliva or to arrange for a Memorial Service.

Items needed for a memorial at the church:

- Koliva (boiled wheat tray) - Recipes can be found online or through our Priest.
- Prosporo and red wine (Mavrodaphne or a red dessert wine)
- The names of the persons commemorated.

Memorials cannot be held on the following days:

- Feast Days of the Lord (Christmas, Theophany, Easter, Presentation, Transfiguration, etc)
- All Feast Days of the Mother of God (Nativity of the Theotokos, Entrance into the Temple, Dormition, Annunciation, etc)
- From the Saturday of Lazarus up to and including the Sunday of Thomas, which is the Sunday following Easter)
- Sunday of Pentecost

WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS

Information on the Sacraments can be found on our website, www.gothunderbay.org. Please speak with Fr. Kosta directly regarding dates, sponsors (Koumbaroi), preparations, and any other questions about booking a Sacrament. Please ensure the church and the Priest are available for weddings and baptisms before booking reception venues.

Dates a Wedding cannot be performed:

- Any evening that comes before one of the Twelve Major Feasts
- Nativity Fast (Nov. 15 – Dec. 24)
- Great Lent in the Spring (dates change each year)
- Apostles' Fast (the Monday after All Saints to the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul on June 29)
- Dormition Fast (Aug. 1 – Aug. 14)
- Aug. 28/29 (the Beheading of St. John the Baptist)
- Sept. 13/14 (the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

Dates a Baptism cannot be performed:

- Christmas Day through the Feast of Theophany (December 25-January 6)
- Holy Week (dates vary each year)
- Great Feast-days of the Lord

FUNERALS

An Orthodox funeral is offered to all who are baptized Orthodox Christians and are not canonically impeded from receiving an Orthodox Funeral Service.

An Orthodox Priest may perform a short funeral for a non-baptized person as an extreme dispensation in an emergency.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

Stewardship is not just membership fees. We can take ownership of our church and teach our children to do the same in many other ways.

There are many items our church needs to replenish throughout the year, such as:

- Phosphoro (Bread used for the Eucharist)
- Charcoal disks
- Incense
- Candles
- Oil & Oil Lamp Wicks
- Red Wine for Holy Communion (Mavrodaphne or other red dessert wines)

Ways to help out our church prepare for major Feast Days and throughout the year:

- Washing the Holy Communion cloths
- Ironing the coverings for the Altar table and the icon stands.
- Decorating the church for major Feast Days
- Helping organize retreats and events for youth and adults.

Please speak with our Priest about opportunities to get involved in our church.

WHICH SEAL IS PROPER FOR PROSPHORO?

Use a proper stamp when preparing the Offering Bread for the Divine Liturgy. The symbols in the Prosphora (Offering Bread) Seal convey theological and doctrinal truths, and it is, therefore, essential for them to be correct. The correct seal bears the lettering ICXC NIKA or ΙΣΧΣ ΝΙΚΑ.



THE THREE HIERARCHS (JANUARY 30)



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During Emperor Alexius Comnenus's reign (1081-1118), a controversy arose in Constantinople among the people regarding the three holy Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom. Some argued for Saint Basil, praising his unmatched ability to explain the mysteries of Faith and his angelic virtues. As the organizer of monastic life and a leader in the fight against heresy, he was a strict shepherd of Christian morals, devoid of anything base. Thus, they considered him superior to John Chrysostom, whom they saw as more lenient towards sinners.

Saint Chrysostom's supporters argued that he was as zealous as Saint Basil in fighting vices, urging repentance, and elevating the faithful in Gospel teachings. The eloquent bishop enriched the Church with his sermons, skillfully interpreting the divine word and its daily applications, surpassing the two other bishops.

A third group preferred Saint Gregory the Theologian for his majestic, pure, and profound language. They claimed he mastered ancient Greek wisdom and eloquence, achieving a unique insight into God and perfectly expressing the Holy Trinity's dogma.

As each faction pitted one Father against the other, the whole Christian community became embroiled in a dispute that fostered ill-feeling and endless arguments instead of devotion to the Saints. One night, the three holy Hierarchs appeared in a dream to Saint John Mauropus, the Metropolitan of Euchaita, first separately, then together, and speaking as one, they said: "We are with God, united without discord. Each of us wrote and taught what is necessary for mankind's salvation. We have no hierarchy; the other two are present when one is invoked. Tell those quarrelling not to divide the Church through us, for we worked to restore unity on earth. You can combine our commemorations into one feast and create a service with hymns for each of us. Transmit it to Christians and command them to celebrate it annually. If they honour us, we promise to intercede for their salvation." Upon finishing, the Saints ascended to heaven in radiant light, conversing by name.

Saint John quickly gathered the people to share this revelation. Respected for his virtue and admired for his eloquence, he helped the three parties make peace, with everyone urging him to plan the joint feast swiftly. He wisely chose 30 January for the celebration, marking the month when each Hierarch had a separate commemoration: Saint Basil on 1 January, Saint Gregory on 25 January, and Saint John on 27 January.

The three Hierarchs, an earthly trinity in their troparia, taught us to worship the Holy Trinity, the One God in three Persons. These Church luminaries spread the true Faith worldwide, facing dangers and persecutions. They left us a sacred inheritance to attain blessedness and everlasting life with God and the Saints.

At the end of January, during the feast of the Three Hierarchs, the Church honours the memory of glorious bishops, confessors, and ascetics who witnessed to the Orthodox faith through their writings and lives. This feast celebrates the ministry of teaching in the holy Church, illuminating the hearts and minds of the faithful by commemorating the Fathers of the Church—models of evangelical perfection raised by the Holy Spirit as prophets and apostles, guiding souls heavenward and supporting the Church in truth.

Taken from www.goarch.org. Adapted from The Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church, Vol. 3, compiled by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra and translated from the French by Christopher Hookway (Chalkidike, Greece: Holy Convent of the Annunciation of Our Lady, 2001) pp. 352-354 and edited for this bulletin.

Hymns of the Feast

Apolytikion: First Tone

Luminaries of the tri-solar Godhead, who lit up the whole world with rays of divine doctrines; those mellifluent rivers of wisdom, who irrigated all creation with the waters of the knowledge of God; Basil the Great, and Gregory the Theologian, and the illustrious John, whose tongue produced golden words! Let all of us enamoured of their words come together and sing hymns to honour them, for they are ever interceding with the Trinity on our behalf.

Kontakion: Second Tone

You have taken to yourself, O Lord, the pinnacles among Teachers, those sacred theologians and preachers, to enjoy Your blessings and repose. You accepted their labours and toil as being higher than any whole-burnt offering, for only You glorify Your Saints.

STEWARDSHIP & FEES

We truly appreciate all the financial and volunteer support our church receives. We kindly invite you to renew your stewardship and continue to support our church with an annual commitment, ensuring we can thrive together!

Please pay all fees to the treasurer or send them through e-transfer at holytrinity@tbaytel.net.

Annual Stewardship ("Membership")

- Family (couple): \$600
- Single Regular Members (Age 18+) & Seniors: \$300/person
- University/College Students: \$100
- Associate Members (non-Orthodox spouses): \$150

Funerals

- Up-to-Date Members: No Fee
- Not Up-to-Date Members: \$300 for each year of no Stewardship paid, up to 2 years

Hall Rentals

- Members: \$150
- Non-Members: \$400

Sacrament/Services Fees

Wedding: \$250 Baptism: \$150

The treasurer must receive fees at least two (2) weeks before a Sacrament.

- Parents, godparents, couples, and sponsors must be financially current by paying their stewardship for the past two years. Please consult our treasurer for compliance.
- Brides, grooms, godparents, and wedding sponsors (koumbaroi) must be in good standing in the Orthodox Church by being baptized Orthodox, having their marriages blessed, and not participating in Sacraments outside the faith. Out-of-town sponsors and godparents need a letter from their priest affirming their eligibility for participation in an Orthodox Sacrament.
- Couples with one non-Orthodox member must consult the Priest before booking a Wedding.

Who is a Member?

An Orthodox Church member is anyone baptized and chrismated by its rites, but not all members are Stewarts.

Who is a Steward?

A Steward is a baptized Orthodox Christian aged 18 or older, self-supporting, committed to their local church, and invests their time, talent, and treasure to advance the Church's mission mission.

These commitments embody Stewardship and reflect Active faith, but not every Steward is Active.

Who is an Active Steward?

The Active Steward lives their faith, contributing not only treasure but also time. They regularly attend Divine Liturgy and participate in Holy Communion and Confession. They offer their talents to the church's ministries and strive to adhere to Orthodox teachings, avoiding Sacraments outside the Orthodox Church. This steward is considered a "member in good standing with the Orthodox Church."

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship involves contributing time, talent, or treasure to your Church without demanding perfect participation or a minimum financial commitment. It is based on biblical teachings that outline the Four Fundamental Principles of Stewardship.

1. **Ownership:** God created and owns everything. Everything we are and have is a gift from God. [Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 8:28]
2. **Responsibility:** We have been entrusted with managing and administering God's gifts, making us Stewards. Therefore, giving Stewardship is committing ourselves and our possessions to advance the Ministry of Christ to others. [Mt. 25:14-30]
3. **Accountability:** Having been entrusted with this sacred responsibility, the Parable of the Talents reveals that each of us will be called to give an account of how we managed God's gifts. [Mt. 25:14-30]
4. **Reward:** St. Paul reminds us, "Whatever [we] do, work it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for man since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." [Colossians 3:23-24; Prov. 18:16; Lk. 6:38]

Weekly Income	Monthly Contribution			
	10%	5%	4%	2%
\$500	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$10
\$750	\$75	\$37	\$30	\$15
\$1000	\$100	\$50	\$40	\$20
\$1500	\$150	\$75	\$60	\$30
\$2000	\$200	\$100	\$80	\$40

Example of a breakdown for weekly Stewardship.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

Food and drink, including gum, are not allowed in the church. Phones should be silenced and not used, and conversations should be avoided during services.

Irreverent behaviours include hands in pockets, wearing sunglasses or earbuds, crossing legs, and having private conversations during services.

Arrive before Divine Liturgy or any service, and wait to enter the nave during:

- Small and Great Entrance, or other Processions
- Scripture readings and sermon
- Anaphora (offering) and when kneeling
- Recitation of the Creed and Lord's Prayer
- When the priest offers incense
- When the priest faces the congregation

We cross ourselves when entering the nave, hearing the Holy Trinity or a Saint's name, or walking in front of the Altar.

Holy Communion

Those who are baptized Orthodox and in good standing may receive the Sacraments. If you have questions, speak with our priest before Sunday.

If you aren't receiving Holy Communion, kindly stand reverently at your pew.

Please remove your lipstick before approaching the Chalice.

Hold the Communion cloth under your lower lip to prevent spills, and wipe your lips gently. Do not kiss or touch the Chalice.

Antidoron (blessed bread)

Cup the bread in your hand while eating to avoid crumbs. If you see pieces of Antidoron on the floor or left behind, pick them up and toss them outside for birds. Antidoron is blessed; do not throw it in the trash or leave it in inappropriate places.

Dress Code

Please be respectful in your outfit. Do not wear hats, shorts, tank tops, flip-flops, or clothing with disrespectful or inappropriate logos or writing.

When in doubt, err on the side of caution. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our priest.

DIGITAL CHANT AND CHURCH SERVICES RESOURCE

The services for all Sundays and significant feast days of the year are available in Greek and English in PDF format—what many of our churches use for their services. Visit their website or download their Digital Chant Stand app.

dcs.goarch.org

I'M ORTHODOX; WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

This booklet answers the fundamental questions about what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. It is available on the website below or through our Priest.

goarchdiocese.ca

PRAYER BOOKS

We have prayer books printed by our Archdiocese available. The books include prayers for morning and evening, meals, and various occasions and circumstances. Please speak with Fr. Kosta about whether you'd like a prayer book for your home or if you'd like to discuss prayer at home, icon corners, and other aspects of practical Orthodoxy.

STAY IN TOUCH AFTER YOUR VISIT

Are you a guest but would like to receive our monthly bulletins and other announcements via email? Please email us at holytrinity@tbaytel.com and ask for your email to be added to our list. You can also follow our Facebook page at [holytrinitythunderbay](https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitythunderbay).

If you'd like to receive updates on our Souvlaki Takeout, you can find us on Facebook by searching for "souvlakidinner" or email us at greekdinner4@gmail.com and ask to be added to the email list.

COMMON QUESTIONS BY VISITORS OR INQUIRERS

Q: What does "Greek Orthodox" mean?

The term Greek Orthodox may refer either to the Orthodox Church as a whole, to the churches of the Eastern Roman Empire or "Byzantine" areas, or to Orthodox Christians of Greek descent. However, "Eastern Orthodox" is a more correct term for the whole Church. Greek Orthodox also refers to the style of liturgical rite used in the Church.

Q: What language are your services in?

Our Divine Liturgy is conducted in Greek and English, with English being the predominant language. Prayers are said in English. The hymns chanted by the cantors are usually balanced between Greek and English. Vespers and Matins (Orthros) are chanted in both Greek and English. The sermon is given in English.

Q: Do I have to be Greek or Orthodox to attend services?

You do not have to be Orthodox or Greek to attend services. Everyone is welcome to visit and inquire about our theology and liturgical practices. We often have visitors in our Church.

* Please note that you must be baptized as an Orthodox Christian and in good standing with the Church to receive the Sacraments. Our Priest is available if you have any questions about attending our Church. Don't hesitate to contact him via text or email a few days before your visit, and he'll answer them.

Q: What worship service can I attend if I've never been to an Orthodox service?

It would help if you spoke to the Priest beforehand about attending a service so you will be prepared for what to

expect. You're always welcome to participate in Sunday Divine Liturgy and speak with our priest during coffee after the service.

Q: How will I fit in your congregation if I'm not Greek?

You will fit in just fine. Our congregation is comprised of people of different nationalities. Orthodoxy is universal. You do not need to be Greek to attend our church. You're encouraged to come to the church hall for coffee hour after the Sunday Divine Liturgy and have a coffee with Fr. Kosta and the rest of the congregation.

Q: I'm an Orthodox Christian but visiting for the first time. What should I do?

Please inform the Priest that you are visiting, especially if you wish to receive Holy Communion.

Q: Can I speak with the Priest privately regarding learning more about the Orthodox Church?

Of course! Our Priest is available to speak with you most days and at all times. Please feel free to contact him. His contact information is in this bulletin.

Q: What's the most significant difference between the Orthodox Church and other denominations?

Apart from the liturgical, theological, and visual differences, the mentality and way we approach God, the Saints, spirituality, and sin differ from some, if not most, "Western" theological approaches. Our approach to the Bible and Holy Tradition may vary from one's experience. Depending on one's background, the above can be of the more considerable differences and the most significant adjustments for those exposed to the Orthodox

approach to the Saints, life, death, and God.

Q: Can I receive the Eucharist at Holy Trinity if I belong to the Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox Churches?

Since Thunder Bay is relatively isolated, if your church is not located in the Thunder Bay area, you may receive Holy Communion upon permission from your priest or bishop. Our Archdiocese has granted this special exemption, as the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches are still not in full communion. However, to make our church your permanent spiritual home or to continue receiving the Sacraments for a long time, you must discuss this with our priest.

Q: Do you rent your church to other denominations or faith groups?

We do not rent our church. The policy is that only our parish priest can celebrate worship services unless another canonical Orthodox Priest is visiting, has written permission from his bishop and our Archdiocese, and has discussed it with our priest to lead services.

The church hall is available for rent as long as the event does not contradict the spirit of the Orthodox Christian faith.

Orthodox services can be overwhelming or confusing for those experiencing them for the first time. Feel free to speak with our Priest after the Service regarding your experience. We'd love for you to join us in the church hall after Sunday's Divine Liturgy for fellowship and coffee.

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Olivia Pietrangelo JD, is a member in good standing with the Greek Orthodox Holy Trinity Church in Thunder Bay. She also works as a lawyer at Larson Lawyers.

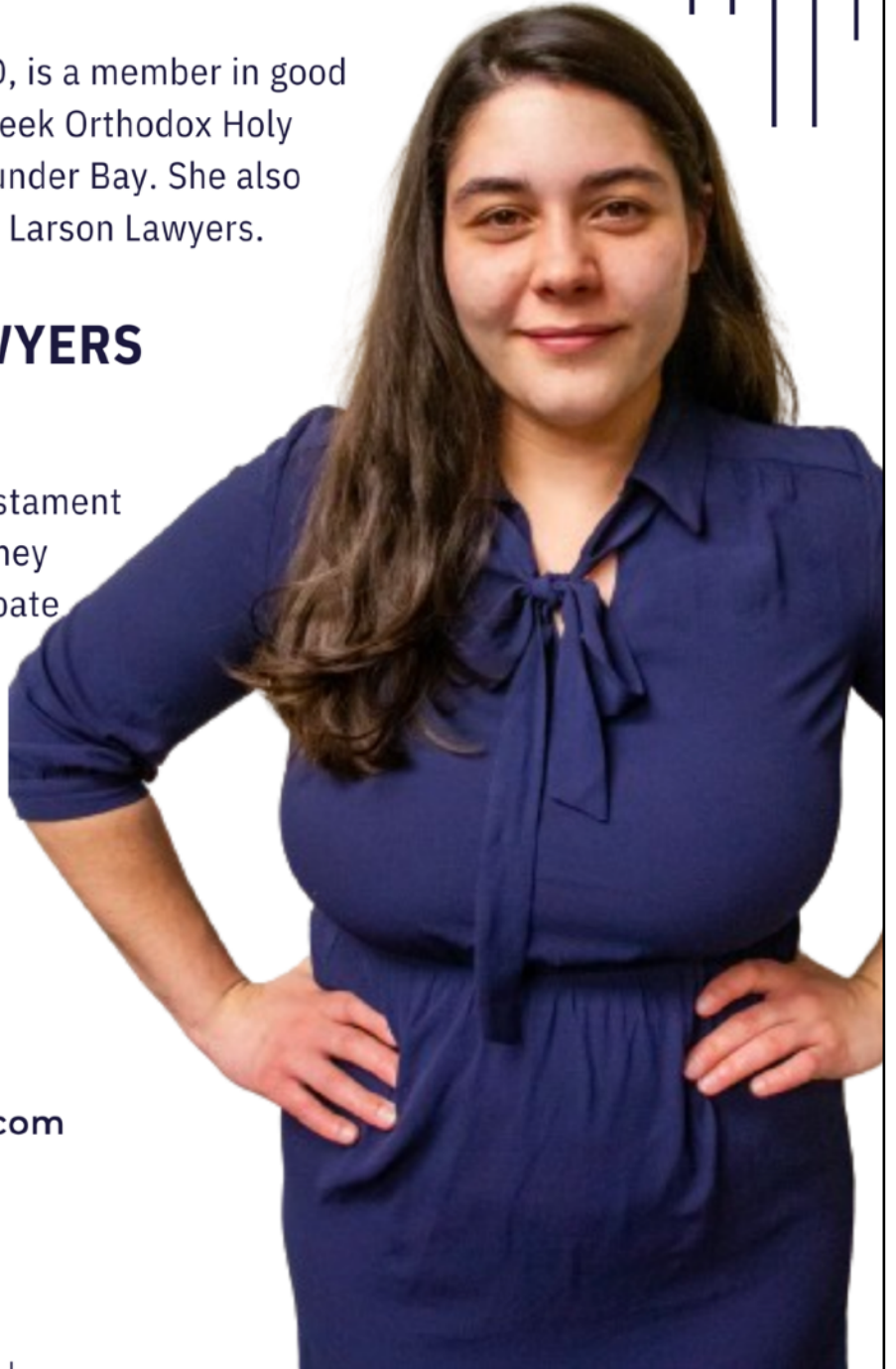
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With your annual Stewardship (membership), please fill out the following form and return it to our church office or Fr. Kosta, or drop it off at our mailbox.



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Members Information Form

(Please Print Clearly)

NAME: _____
(First) (Middle/Maiden) Last

MOBILE PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

BIRTHDAY: _____

CHURCH AFFILIATION (IF NOT ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN): _____

SPOUSE (If Applicable): _____
(First) (Middle/Maiden) Last

MOBILE PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

BIRTHDAY: _____

CHURCH AFFILIATION (IF NOT ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN): _____

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: _____

PLACE WHERE MARRIAGE WAS SOLEMNIZED: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

NAMES OF CHILDREN AND CHURCH AFFILIATION (IF NOT ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN):

If you wish to renew your annual Stewardship commitment, payment can be made by cheque, cash, or e-transfer at holytrinity@tbaytel.net.

Με την ετήσια συνδρομή σας, παρακαλείσθε να συμπληρώσετε το παρακάτω δελτίο με τα στοιχεία σας και να το επιστρέψετε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας, τον π. Κων/νο, η στο γραμματοκιβώτιο της εκκλησίας.



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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