

**Christ is Risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and to those in the tombs
bestowing life!**

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

**Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church
Woodstock, Georgia**

Pascha 2024

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St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church
2265 E. Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188
*A parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
Ruling Hierarch: His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa*

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen! Welcome to St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church! Thank you for being here to celebrate the Great Day of the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ on this most joyous morning! If you have never been to an Orthodox Church before, you are about to participate in the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday of the year. Liturgy means the work of the people. That means that we all have special and holy work to do this morning, and that all of your prayers are necessary! We hope you will stay and join us as we continue the celebration of Christ's Resurrection all throughout the day. Please feel free to ask Fr. Matthew any questions you might have! May the joy, hope, and salvation found in Christ's Resurrection be with you always and may God grant you many happy and blessed years, Christ is Risen!!

The Great Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 ***Gospel:*** John 1:1-17

All of the special hymns for today's Festal Divine Liturgy for the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ can be found starting on page 193

St. Thomas Sunday - May 12, 2024
2nd Paschal Sunday

Epistle: Acts 5: 12-20 **Gospel:** John 20:19-31
St. Thomas Sunday Tropar and Kondak—Blue Book pg 199. Everything else for the Paschal season can be found on pages 193-196

Sunday of the Myrrh- Bearing Women May 19, 2024
3rd Paschal Sunday

Epistle: Acts 6:1-7 **Gospel:** Mark 15:42-47, 16:1-8
Tropar and Kondak—Blue Book pg 200. Everything else for the Paschal season can be found on pages 193-196



Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

using the Blue Pew Book

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Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, non-Orthodox visitors and inquirers are invited to come forward at the end of the Liturgy to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread).

Weekly Schedule

- Bright Monday 05/06 9 am-** Divine Liturgy
Bright Tuesday 05/07 9 am- Divine Liturgy
Bright Wednesday 05/08 6 pm- Paschal Vespers
Bright Friday 05/10 9 am- Resurrection Matins
7pm ACRY Meeting & Cookout *Bring Your Own Stuff to Grill*
Bright Saturday 05/11 4 pm- Great Vespers
Sunday 05/12 10 am- Divine Liturgy - Mother’s Day
Saturday 05/18 4 pm- Great Vespers
Sunday 05/19 10 am- Divine Liturgy
Friday 05/24 - Monday 05/27 - National ACRY Fellowship Weekend and Archpastoral Visit to Saint Elizabeth’s
Friday 05/24 5 pm-10 pm ACRY Visitors Welcome & Hospitality Room -*Bonfire at Dusk*
Saturday 05/25 9 am- ACRY Bowling at Cherokee Lanes
4 pm- Special Plain Chant Church Music Class taught by Danielle Bartko
5 pm- Great Vespers
6 pm- ACRY International Festival Dinner
Sunday 05/26 10 am- Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
7pm -ACRY Banquet / BBQ Dinner



Office of the Metropolitan

312 Garfield Street

Johnstown, PA 15906

Protocol No. 7/2024

May 5, 2024

PASCHA ARCHPASTORAL LETTER

To the Very Reverend Protopresbyters, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, and Faithful Laity (young and old) of our God-Protected Diocese:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

“The reign of life has begun, the tyranny of death is ended. A new birth has taken place, a new life has come, a new order of existence has appeared, our very nature has been transformed! This birth is not brought about by human generation, by the will of man, or by the desire of the flesh, but by God.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa

Today I greet you with great love and joy in the Name of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ following His glorious Resurrection. On Great and Holy Pascha, we behold the triumph of Christ, as He rose from death to life, from darkness of the tomb into the Light. With the Resurrection of Christ, all Creation is filled with a new Light of life and joy. On this Feast of Feasts, this Holy Day of Holy Days, we all proclaim the only truth that matters, the Truth that Christ is Risen!

We gather together as family and friends, in joy and in love, celebrating the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst, singing with one voice the triumphant hymn “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life.” As true believers and followers of Jesus Christ we can shout out joyfully that “CHRIST IS RISEN!”, “CHRISTOS VOSKRESE!”, “CHRISTOS ANESTI!”. And we can respond “INDEED HE IS RISEN!”, “VOISTINNU VOSKRESE!”, “ALITHOS ANESTI!”.

Let us sing the beautiful hymn of the Resurrection with great strength and joy every day, multiple times a day, for 40 days.

On this Bright and Holy Feast, I extend my prayerful best wishes to you, the Clergy and Laity, Friends and Supporters of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese. May you truly experience the love, joy and excitement of the early followers of Christ when they first saw Him after His Resurrection. Christ is Risen!

Greetings from Johnstown with much agape,

+ Metropolitan Gregory
+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

Paschal Greeting From Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, & Isaiah

Dear Parish Family and Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has destroyed death and opened the doors of paradise on this Pascha, the Great Day of our Lord's Resurrection!

What a joy and privilege it is to be with all of you as we celebrate the Feast of Feasts - the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! On behalf of Pani, Lazarus, Isaiah, and myself, we extend our warmest greetings, love, and prayers to you all. *How good it is when brothers dwell in unity!* It is such a gift to serve as the priest of this beautiful family in Christ.

As we celebrate the joys of new life in the light of our Lord, we also send our love and prayers to our Hierarch and Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory, to all the clergy, seminarians, and people of our God-protected Diocese, to Metropolitan Alexios and to all the Orthodox clergy and people in the greater Atlanta area, and to all those who are celebrating with us today. May the joy and hope of the Resurrection be with us all.

This day marks the passage from death to life and the liberation from the shackles of sin. The joy of the Paschal Liturgy is filled with this reality, this is a gift from God to all of creation. The very gift of life and freedom itself. Hold on tightly to the joy of this day; to the peace and hopefulness of this moment. The struggles of life and the weight of our cross can be heavy, but Christ is risen, and he is always with us! As followers of Christ, we must always have hope, because Christ is risen!

As we gather together for fellowship in our newly renovated Church Hall, it's impossible not to notice how truly beautiful our community is. Special thanks to Charlie and Mike for using their building expertise in this project and to all of you who pushed this project forward by sharing your wise words and input at our annual meeting. Your love of Christ and commitment to trusting His will and caring for His Church is what has made all of this possible. From the first Divine Liturgy served at Saint Elizabeth's all the way to today, it is your faith in Christ, by the Grace of God, that allows our community to shine. No matter how beautiful our Church building may be, it is all of you and your love of Christ and each other that make this the wonderful Church family that it is. There is not a Cathedral in the whole world that I would rather be in to hear the first singing of "Christ is risen" than at Saint Elizabeth's with all of you.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the life and ministry of our blessed community. Thank you to Deacon Stephen, to Seminarian Alex, Trip, Graham, John, and all the young boys who serve at the Altar. Their piety and service to the Church is a blessing for us all. Thank you to those who sing and those who read the Epistle. Thank you to all those who sacrifice their time throughout the week to clean and care for the Church just like the myrrh-bearing women who care for the Body of Christ. Thank you to those who generously provided the Paschal flowers and those who arranged them for the glory of God and those who planted flowers to beautify our Church grounds. Thank you to Mark for tirelessly building the beautiful wall around the bell tower and all those who use their time and talents for the building up of God's House. Thank the children who bring joy to us all and the parents who continuously bring their children to the feet of Christ in His Church. Thank you to Rachel and all the Sunday School teachers who minister to our little saints. Thank everyone who volunteered in the food sales, and all those who serve on the Parish Council. Thank you to all our founding members, those who are with us in the flesh and those who have fallen asleep in the Lord and guide us by their prayers. I know I mentioned a few names here, but every single one of you deserve a thank you and hug for all that you freely and lovingly pour out of yourselves for Christ and His Church here at Saint Elizabeth's. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! In the joys of the Resurrection, let us forgive everything and sing: "Christ is risen!"

As we continue our journey in faith, may the joy of the Resurrection be with you always. Let us continue to grow in unity, love, and faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

With love in Christ,



Fr. Matthew Dubs



Icon of our Lord's Resurrection "Search & Find!"

Do you see **Christ's robes**? Notice how they look like they are flowing upward in the wind? This symbolizes how Christ descends into Hades to free those held captive by the sting of death.



Can you find these **golden bars**? Christ stands victoriously on top of these bars because they are the gates of death that He shatters and tears apart, opening the doors of paradise.



Can you find the **almond shape that's surrounding Christ**? It's called a *Mandorla*. The *Mandorla* becomes progressively darker as it moves toward its center, which is Christ. Those who seek God find that the more they *know* Him, the less they *comprehend* Who He is. To *know* God, to *experience* Him, is to walk in the darkness of His light, to enter into the mystery of His presence.



Can you find this **figure bound in chains** underneath the shattered gates of Hades? This figure represents death or the devil himself who has been bound in chains and conquered by Christ. This is why we sing "*Christ is risen from the dead trampling down death by death.*" The power of the devil and death have been destroyed through the life-giving death of our Savior.



Do you see these **three figures to the left of Christ**? These people vary from icon to icon, but they are prominent Old Testament figures. Abel is the shepherd holding the staff & Moses is next to him.



Can you find any **keys**? The keys symbolize that Christ has unlocked the gates of Hades and conquered sin and death.



Do you see **Christ reaching his hands out to these two figures**? Christ is pulling Adam and Eve, our first parents from their tombs. This shows us that Christ's victory redeems all mankind, even back to the beginning. It also foreshadows the general resurrection of the body before the Final Judgment.

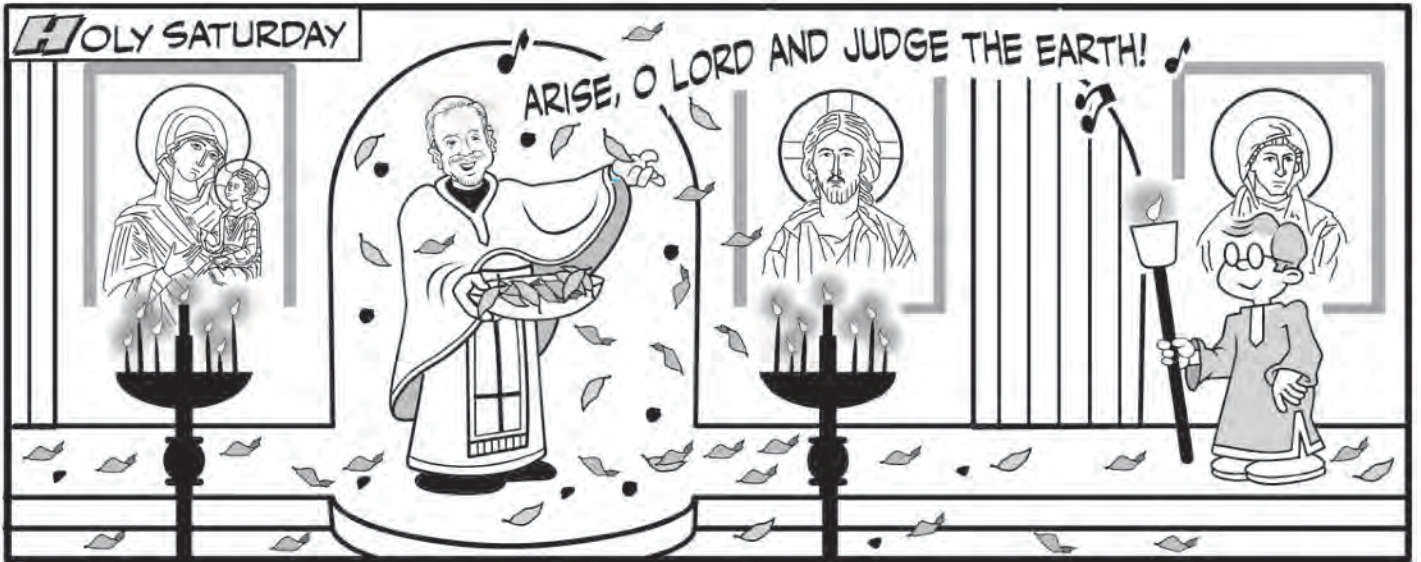


Do you see these **three figures to the right of Christ**? Here we find King David & Solomon, Christ's ancestors in the flesh along with John the Baptist who announced Christ's coming to those on earth in his life, and to those in Hades after his death.



THE KIDS OF SAINT ELIZABETH

INSPIRED BY JANET AND ALEXANDER



The Lord Descends into Hades....

An Ancient Homily from Holy Saturday by St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus

Something strange is happening - there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and He has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and Hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, He has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, He who is both God and the Son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won Him the victory. At the sight of Him Adam, the first man He had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone, "My Lord be with you all." Christ answered him, "And with your spirit." He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying, "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.



"I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by My own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in Hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the Life of the dead. Rise up, work of My hands, you who were created in My image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in Me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated.

"For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

"See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in My image. On My back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See My hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

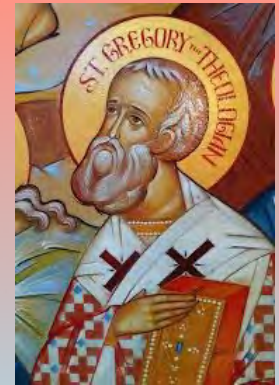
"I slept on the Cross and a sword pierced My side for you who slept in Paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in Hell. The sword that pierced Me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

"Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly Paradise. I will not restore you to that Paradise, but I will enthrone you in Heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am Life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The Bridal Chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity. "

-From the Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion, Fr. David and Mother Gabriela, eds., HDM Press, Rives Junction, MI, 1999 pp. 160-161.



*Yesterday I was crucified with Him;
 today I am glorified with Him.
 Yesterday I died with Him;
 today I am made alive with Him.
 Yesterday I was buried with Him;
 today I am raised up with Him.
 Let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us ... ourselves,
 the possession most precious to God and most proper.
 Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us
 become Divine for His sake, since for us He became Man.
 St. Gregory the Theologian-
 "Easter Orations"*



"...Now since you are celebrating the holy Pascha, you should know, brethren, what the Pascha is. Pascha means the crossing-over, and so the Festival is called by this name. For it was on this day that the Children of Israel crossed over out of Egypt, and the Son of God crossed over from this world to His Father. What gain is it to celebrate unless you imitate Him Whom you worship; that is, unless you cross over from Egypt, that is, from the darkness of evildoing to the light of virtue, from the love of this world to the love of your heavenly home?"

St. Ambrose of Milan - "The Sunday of the Resurrection"



One of My Favorite Hymns: By Stephen Price

This is one of my favorite hymns of the Pascha seasons and there is a link below to the version sung by the Choir of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. I hope it will be as much a blessing to you as it is to me!

The Megalynarion of Pascha, commonly known as "The Angel Cried", is sung throughout the celebration of Pascha, for 40 days from the Sunday of Pascha until its leavetaking on the day before the Ascension of our Lord.

The angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace: "Rejoice, Rejoice O Pure Virgin!" Again I say: "Rejoice! Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead! Rejoice, rejoice all you people!"

"Shine! Shine! Shine O New Jerusalem! The Glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exalt now, exalt and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!"

[The Angel Cried \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



MY BABA'S LOVE STORY By Judy Sponhaltz

Growing up, I lived between our church and my grandparents' home. My Baba, Irene Warbel, loved the Lord our God. Over the years, I was so fortunate to observe her faithfulness to her church.

She came from the "Old Country" which she would say when talking about her roots in the past. She brought all her beliefs with her when she sailed to America.

Baba was always in church on Sundays, Holy Days, and Vesper services. She very seldom missed church. She would put on her Babushka and walk to church no matter what the weather. She would cross herself as she walked past the front of the church. She was always ready to clean the church and help raise money for the church by baking bread and her pierogi.

Baba firmly believed in helping those in need. She became Baba to unmarried priests. They would walk over to her house for companionship and good food!

During the depression, my dad said she provided the food she could to hungry men passing through. My grandparents were fortunate to have a small farm with beef cattle, hogs, chickens, and vegetables.

My brothers and I learned about faithfulness through the examples our Baba showed us. My Aunt Mary was our Sunday School teacher and followed her mother's lead by teaching us about our faith.

Baba would sit by the upstairs window of her home and read from her prayer book in the afternoons. She read it so many times that the pages had come loose from the binder. After reading the prayer book, she would close it up and bind it with rubber bands. Then she would tie the book with a white ribbon.

Her prayer book was buried with her when she passed at the age of 102.

She truly was a servant of God!

As I reflect on this piece, I see many people at Saint Elizabeth's Orthodox Church must have had families like mine because I see it in their worship and service to the church! **GOD BLESS YOU ALL!**

Dear Children, let us not love with word or speech, But with actions and in truth. -John 3:18 (NIV)



My First Confession

Recently, I went to confession for my first time. At first I was scared about what to say and what to do. I tried to think of a sin I committed but I couldn't. People, including myself, want to think they are a good person so you can't think of a sin because you don't want to. Once I got to confession I was extremely worried but Father Matt guided me through it. When it was over I felt like I was relieved of my sins and that the lord had blessed me.

Alex Jones

(Alexis Toth)



Why I Choose to Wear a Head Covering in an Orthodox Church

By Evelyn Melnikoff+

As society modernized, the ancient custom of women wearing head coverings in the Orthodox Church was forgotten by many. I too fell in line with the trend during the 1970s, despite being raised differently by my late grandfather, an Orthodox priest in Albania.

Recently, while looking through decades-old scrapbooks, I've found joy in reminiscing about my childhood church experiences. I see my mom and her three young daughters in our Sunday church hats. As I turn the pages, I see myself as a young wife and mother of three toddler sons heading to church with my Sunday church hat atop my head.

Then suddenly there was a change. Why are so many of my following photos hatless? I guess I joined the non-head covering group. Years later, when St. Elizabeth was just establishing itself, one of our parishioners and friends passed away. His wife was one who always followed the traditional custom of covering her head. As a show of support to the family and as a way to remember our friend, the ladies of St. Elizabeth decided we would all wear head coverings to the funeral.

This was my "AHA" moment!! Why had I drifted away from my roots? It was now time to follow what I had been taught. The ancient tradition of women wearing head coverings is still practiced in many Orthodox communities around the world. This practice has its basis in Holy Scripture, specifically 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, where St. Paul instructs women to cover their heads while praying. The purpose of this tradition is to show humility before God and serve as a visual reminder of one's faith, piety, and dedication to God.

Do I wear a hat because I find it stylish, fashionable, chic? No, no and no! I wear one because I was raised in a household that followed this ancient custom. I wear one because when I look at the Icons of the Mother of God and of Saint Elizabeth they wear them. I wear one because our angels delight in it. I wear one to be obedient to my Father in Heaven.



My Experiences Attending Holy Week Services at Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church in Woodstock, GA- by John Marion

This year (2024) is my 9th year attending the different worship services that take place during Holy Week. I have not attended every service each year, but over the years I have attended every one of the services described in this article. Here are some of my thoughts about the experiences I've had attending the Holy Week Services.

Vespers of Palm Sunday. The Vespers worship service takes place on Saturday evenings each week and is the beginning of Sunday morning worship. Since Lazarus Saturday marks the beginning of Holy Week, the Vespers of Palm Sunday on Saturday evening is an important service to experience at the onset of Holy Week. The weekly Vespers worship service always includes specific prayers and hymns that are related to the Sunday Divine Liturgy worship service the next morning. This is especially noticeable the day before one of the major feast days when the priest processes with the icon for that feast day around the church and places it on the table at the front of the church.

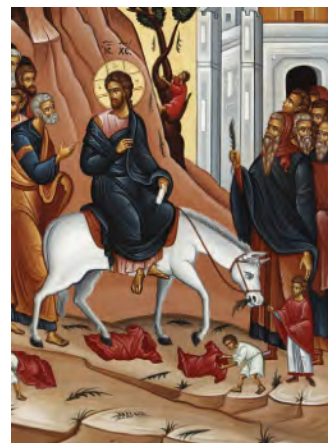
The focus of Palm Sunday is the Triumphal Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem and is the focus of the Saturday evening Vespers service. Experiencing Vespers for Palm Sunday has always helped me to get ready for the week ahead.

Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy. This is the Sunday morning worship service where palm leaves are blessed and distributed to everyone. My experience is that the service is celebratory: the Triumphal Entrance of Christ riding on a donkey into Jerusalem! The celebratory mood of the worship also reminds us that things are about to change very quickly: the Gospel reading, John 12:1-18, includes a mention of Judas who would betray Jesus and the death and burial of Jesus.

Bridegroom Matins. This service is on Palm Sunday afternoon or evening. The icon of Christ the Bridegroom is processed around the church and replaces the icon of the Triumphal Entry. This icon change is accompanied by a change of the intonation of the prayers and hymns used throughout the service. The changes that take place are dramatic and for me is a reminder to be careful that I pay attention to my spiritual life as a follower of Christ.

Presanctified Liturgy x 3. The Presanctified Liturgy occurs during Great Lent including three times during Holy Week (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday). The service is shorter than the normal Sunday Divine Liturgy mainly because the sections of the Liturgy sanctifying the bread and wine that become the body and blood of Christ do not occur during this service. The gifts have literally been pre-sanctified during a Divine Liturgy and are kept on the altar for use during the Presanctified Liturgy. The worship experience of Presanctified Liturgy is substantially different than the Sunday Divine Liturgy and is particularly noticeable at the Great Entrance. When the priest carries the gifts in the chalice, he does so silently and with his head bowed and covered. It is a solemn occasion which reflects the fact that the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. The prayers and content of the worship service is very familiar to us as Orthodox Christians but for me the worship *experience* of Presanctified Liturgy is significantly different from Sunday Divine Liturgy. This experience has shown me the reverence the Orthodox Church teaches about the holiness of God and receiving the body and blood of Christ. This is reflected in the pronouncement inviting parishioners to partake in Communion, "In the fear of God, with faith and with love, come forward." Attending Presanctified Liturgy has taught me to have a greater respect of communion and to be careful about the serious nature of partaking the body and blood of Christ.

The Mystery of Holy Unction. On Wednesday evening during Holy Week the worship service is devoted to the sacrament called Holy Unction. This worship service teaches about the Mystery of Holy Unction and the anointing by the priest with Holy Oil for the healing of soul and body. There are readings from 14 New Testament passages. Seven are from the Epistles and seven are from the Gospels. My experience attending this service includes getting anointed with Holy Unction and learning about the use of Holy Oil by the priest in the visiting of the sick. I continue to have questions about the Mystery of Holy Unction and this service is an important one to experience to find the answers.



The Vespers-Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. This worship service takes place Thursday morning during Holy Week. It is a combination of both Great Vespers and Divine Liturgy mashed together into one worship service. The Vespers-Liturgy is served twice during Holy Week and is rarely served at other times of the year (maybe Christmas and Theophany but ask the priest about this). My experience attending Vespers on Saturday evenings has helped me to follow the somewhat confusing Vespers-Liturgy service. It starts out as a Vespers worship service then changes into a Divine Liturgy during the service. The experience of attending is mind-blowing, and this is especially true for me the more I experience the separate Vespers and Divine Liturgy services of the church regularly throughout the year. This Vespers-Liturgy on Thursday morning of Holy Week has a longer-than-usual Gospel reading, Matthew chapter 26 and the first two verses of chapter 27 which includes the Last Supper (aka the Mystical Supper and the Institution of the Eucharist). The reading includes accounts of the betrayal of Christ by Judas, the arrest of Jesus, and the denial of Christ by Peter and then abruptly ends when Christ is led away to be delivered to Pontius Pilate.

NOTE: Experiencing the Vespers-Liturgy, as well as the Presanctified Liturgy, has helped me to ask questions about the church's teaching concerning time in relation to worship. The concept of time and how it relates to worship is a good topic of conversation to have in a class taught by Orthodox clergy or in a conversation with the priest.

The Matins of Great and Holy Friday and The Reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels. When I first experienced this service, I was surprised at the volume of readings from the Bible that takes place throughout the entire service. The focus is on reading from each of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) about the events and teachings of Christ leading up to and including his crucifixion and burial. This is one of the services I have experienced that I call a *Bible reading marathon*. The amount of time spent reading scripture left an impression on me when I was inquiring about Orthodoxy. I realized that the Orthodox Church is the original Bible Church. Hearing the Twelve Passion Gospels chanted reverently and hearing the message of the readings in one worship service is a powerful experience which I find helps to prepare me spiritually for the next services on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This service is two hours long and a video of the service at Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church is available on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/5Pioj0DJam8?si=hwuJB2vZiAPs_5Xd

The Royal Hours of Good Friday. This is another service that includes extensive Bible readings from different sections of the Old and New Testaments. The service, like The Reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels, is a Bible reading marathon focused on the passion of Christ.

The readings are taken from the Psalms, the Prophets, the Epistles, and the Gospels. The service is focused on the Bible passages that are chanted with prayers and hymns between each of the passages.

Attending this service has taught me about how the Orthodox Church relates the Old Testament prophecies of Christ to his suffering and death which are read in the New Testament passages. My experience attending this service has also taught me to pause and focus my attention on the suffering of Christ for an extended time compared to what I was used to before I became an Orthodox Christian. While the focus of attention does quickly change from the death of Christ to the resurrection by Saturday night (Sunday morning), this service has taught me to be more attentive to the passion of Christ.

This service is two hours long and can be viewed on the Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church YouTube channel:

https://youtu.be/l_3ykZnRCrI?si=-goenuIm_ffZBkM



The Vespers of Good Friday: The Burial Service of our Lord. It's nearly impossible to put my experience attending this worship service into words. This is truly an astonishing service and has been a transforming experience for me. The unique feature of this service is a focus on the death and burial of Christ. The Gospel reading is the account of the passion of Christ, His crucifixion, death, and burial. The experience of hearing the Gospel reading end at the burial of Christ is somewhat jarring and unexpected. I want the reading to continue but the focus remains on the death and burial of Christ and the reading ends at the tomb. The service culminates with what appears to be a reenactment of the burial of Christ with the procession of a shroud by the priest around the church and then the shroud, depicting the dead body of Jesus, is placed in the tomb. I have since learned that this is not merely a reenactment, or not a reenactment at all. Christ is truly being placed in the tomb for the salvation of the world. The service concludes with a sermon by the priest and after the dismissal the parishioners come forward to respectfully venerate the shroud icon in the tomb. Many people linger on for some time in the church to pray or sit quietly. This service, like all the services of the Orthodox Church, is meant to be experienced and it is always a profound experience.

The Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday. This is the second time during Holy Week that the Vesperal Liturgy is served, the first being Holy Thursday. The experience of attending this particular Vesperal Liturgy on Saturday morning after the Friday night service is particularly meaningful as Christ is still in the tomb but we are vividly reminded that the celebration of the Resurrection is coming soon. During this service the priest throws bay leaves throughout the church. The leaves look beautiful in the church, but their meaning is even more beautiful; they represent Christ breaking the chains of death. The experience of attending this service always makes me think of new questions to ask the priest.

Resurrection Matins. This service occurs on Saturday night at our parish. The experience attending this service runs from the death and burial of Christ to his Resurrection. The second half of the service is a joyful celebration of the resurrection (Saturday night is Sunday Morning!). I never want to miss this service in addition to the Sunday morning service celebrating the resurrection. Everyone who can, should attend both services in order to experience how the Orthodox Church celebrates the Resurrection of Christ.

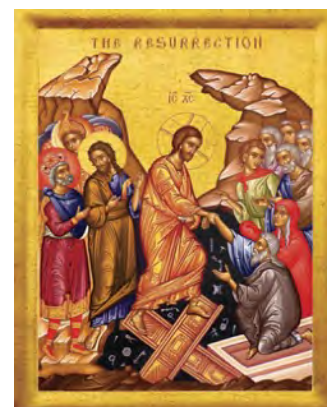
The Divine Liturgy on the Great Day of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the Pascha / Easter Sunday morning service. Attending the Resurrection Matins on Saturday night and then the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning is the experience of how the Orthodox Church celebrates the Resurrection of Christ. The worship experience is obviously a stark contrast to all the services experienced during Holy Week. This joyful service is somewhat indescribable and is best experienced by attending on Sunday morning. One of the astounding experiences for me is always the Gospel reading. Prior to learning about the Orthodox Church, I would have never imagined that the passage of scripture that is read would ever be read in the Sunday morning worship service celebrating the Resurrection of Christ. You should attend the service to find out what Gospel passage is read and experience it for yourself!

Sunday Afternoon Paschal Vespers. A worship service Pascha Sunday after Divine Liturgy? Yes. Come and See!

NOTES:

Liturgical Colors. Throughout Holy Week you will see different colors of the vestments worn by the clergy and on the altar: Purple, gold, red, black, and white. Experiencing these changes always catches my attention. There is always a reason why the colors change.

Blessing of the Pascha Baskets and Celebration. I was shocked the first time I experienced this celebration at Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church. Many parishioners bring baskets filled with food that we place on the ground in front of the cross in the parking lot. The priest blesses the food with Holy Water and prayers of blessing. After the blessing, everyone takes their baskets into the church hall and/or hangs out outside for a shared celebration filled with joy, laughter, great food and other refreshments. Bonus: we fire up the big grill we use for the Woodstock International Food Festival, and you are welcome to come outside and cook the meat you brought to celebrate the occasion. This is the best day of the year! Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!



Prayerful Easter Flowers

In Blessed Repose grant eternal rest o Lord, to the souls of God's departed servants, in the place where the souls of the righteous dwell, where there is no pain, sorrow, or lamentation, but life everlasting!

In Memory of: All the Founding Members of Saint Elizabeth's+, Metropolitan Orestes+, Bishop John+, Metropolitan Nicholas+, Frank+, Mary+, Anastasia+, Tamara+, George+, Theodora+, Violet+, baby George+, Boris & Evelyn Melnikoff+, John Haddad+, Helen & Lewis Knuth+, Robert+, Patricia+, Fr. William+, Mary+, George Page+, Anna+, Beth Johnson+, James Wasserman+, Lorraine Solinko+, Robert Stirk+, Fred & Helen Milesenko+, Anna Blannar+, Peter & Wanda Blannar+ Charles Salome+, Jeanne McAuliff+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Carl+, Barry+, Helen+, Fr. Hazuda+, Fr. William, Fr. Paul+, Yvonne Sajem+, John Sajem+, Metropolitan Nicholas+, Fr. Stephen & Pani Mary Dutko+, George & Margaret+, Steve+ & Catherine+, Pani Blaschak+, Pani Patsy, Fr. Tony+, Betty+, Barb+ & Harry+, Dean+, Fr. John Baranek+, Fr. & Pani Polanichka+, Sally+, Michael+, Jospeh+, Michael+, Mary+, Veronica+, Louise+, Cleaston+, Helen+ & Lewis+, David+, Sally+, David+, Kenny+, Fr. John+, Art+, Mary+, Jane+, George+, Gregory+, Mary+ & Herbert+ Bishop Mathias+ & May the Lord God Remember in His Kingdom all of our departed loved ones!

Lord of Powers be with us, for in times of distress we have no other help but You!

***For the Health of:* Metropolitan Gregory, the Melnikoff Family, Athanasia Page, Ethan, Mary, The Novak Family, The Sparks Family, Barbara, Cora, Rick, Jeff, Joanna & James, Marilyn, Erica, Gary, Victor, Violet, Deacon Steven, Michelle, James, Fr. Andy, Davina & Alexandra, Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, & the Dutko & Szapka families, Cheryl, Christina, John & Michele, David & Paulette, Nectarios, Simon, Teddy, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy, The Korchaks, Micky, The Ellis Family, Judy, Ben, Melissa, Gene, Joy, Melanie, Brooke & for all the members of The St. Elizabeth Parish Family & all of our loved ones!**

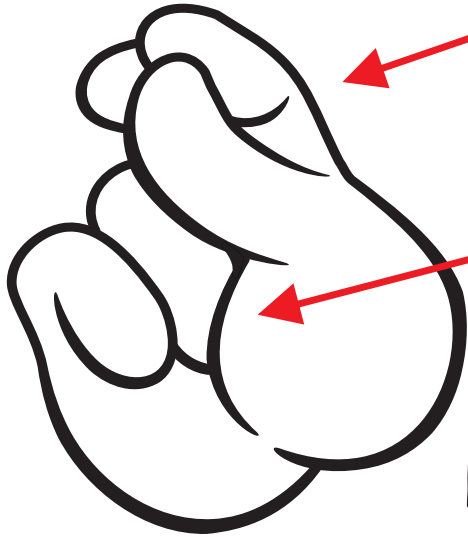


Elizabeth News



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Making the Sign of the Cross



With your right hand, place your thumb, first finger and second finger together like this. This represents the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One in essence and undivided.

The other two fingers are placed in the palm of your hand. They represent the two natures of Jesus Christ, both fully human and fully Divine.

Hold your hand like this and then:



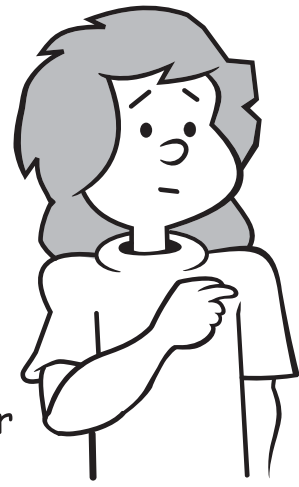
1. Touch the center of your forehead



2. Touch the center of your chest



3. Touch your right shoulder

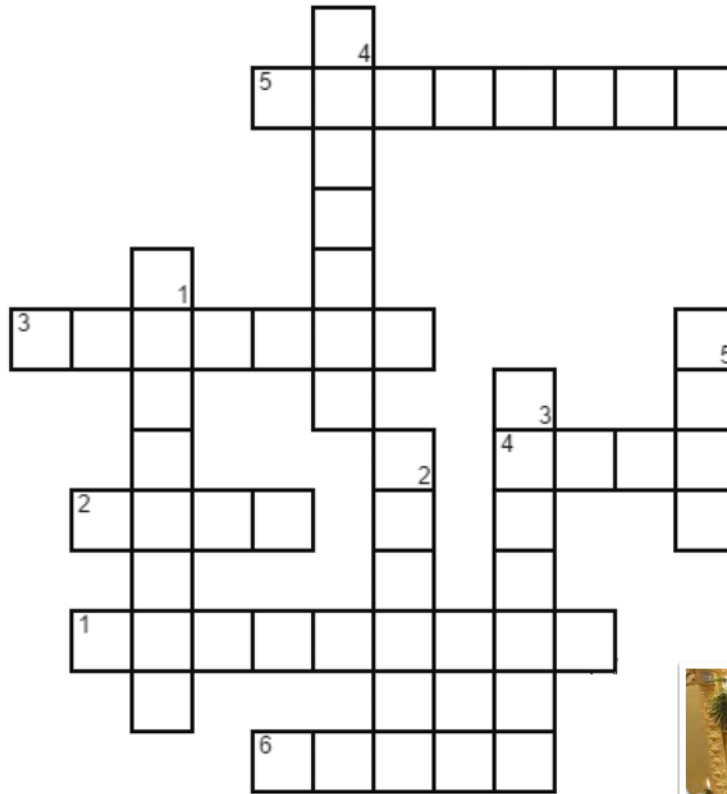


4. Touch your left shoulder

Special thanks to Johnny Sajem, our in house cartoonist who is currently working on a Divine Liturgy Book with cartoons for the children of our parish to follow along with.

What a blessing!

The Great Day



Across

1. We are the New _____.
2. Instead of finding Christ's body, they instead found an empty _____.
3. The first people to see the Risen Lord were the Myrrh _____ Women.
4. Christ is called the New _____.
5. On Easter Sunday, we read the _____ of the Gospel of John.
6. "As smoke vanishes so let them vanish, as wax _____ before a fire!"

Down

1. Pascha means the _____ from death to life.
2. "Bless God in the Churches, bless God you of _____'s wellspring!"
3. On Pascha, after Liturgy, we traditionally bless Easter _____.
4. After the Cross, and before the Resurrection, Christ was _____ those held captive in Hades.
5. Because Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices, he is also known as The _____ of God.

The women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Very early on the first day of the week, they were on their way to the tomb, and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

Help the women find their way back along the path.

Use the code to find out what they found when they got to the tomb.



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◇	N	R	H	I	M
♥	K	D	G	S	V

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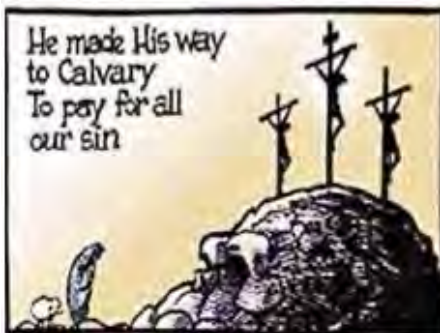
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“He is not here!”



Christ
is  Risen!



From the Cave to the Tomb

As we celebrate Pascha, I've been thinking about the profound journey that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, undertook for our salvation. Christ the Word of God, the One Who Is, left the Heavens to become one of His creations. The same Christ who was born in a humble cave and wrapped in swaddling clothes was later placed in a tomb and wrapped in a winding grave sheet. The same God who once nursed on His mother's breast was offered vinegar to drink. The same Lord who was presented with myrrh by the wise men was anointed by Joseph of Arimathea and the Myrrh-bearing Women. These events show us depth of God's steadfast love for us and His willingness to do whatever it takes to save us.



The tomb, like the manger that Christ was placed in in a cave as an infant, was a temporary resting place for our Lord before His glorious resurrection. The state of sin that we all too often find ourselves in can be temporary too if we look to Christ. If we love Him, trust Him, and serve Him with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. Just as Christ emerged from the tomb victorious, we too can rise from the graves of our own sins through our faith in Him and our hope in His most holy Resurrection. The same Christ who was born in a cave and wrapped in swaddling clothes is the same Christ who triumphed over death and sin.

Golgotha, the place of the skull, the place where Christ was Crucified, is the traditional burial place for Adam. This place of death is now a place of life. The same Word of God who once walked with Adam and Eve under the trees in the Garden of Eden was hung upon the tree of the cross for our salvation. All of this was done out of God's infinite love for us. He sent His only begotten Son to destroy death and make it possible for us to be with Him in paradise once again. Just as he offers peace, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation to the repentant thief on the Cross, he offers it to us as well when we repent and come home to our Heavenly Father.

May the same Christ who was born in a humble cave and placed in a tomb for salvation bring us closer to Him and grant us eternal life as we joyfully proclaim Christ is risen from the dead and to those in the tombs bestowing life!

The Memory of Something Good...

Over a quarter century ago, a group of Orthodox Christians gathered together to celebrate the first Divine Liturgy in the history of St. Elizabeth Orthodox Mission. On a January day over twenty five years ago, Fr. John Zyboyovski celebrated that first Liturgy for our parish family. At the Paschal Divine Liturgy the same Chalice that was used at our first Liturgy's used once again. Paschal blessings to all of the former pastors & their families, to the founders, builders, and benefactors of this church, and to our beloved diocese and Metropolitan who have supported us every step of the way. May our risen Lord grant rest to all of our departed parish family members, may their memory be eternal, Christ is risen!



“You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory...if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us.” -Dostoyevsky - The Brothers Karmazov

May this day and it's memory be such a day in your life!



PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL FOR HOLY PASCHA

Prot. No. 244

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

BY GOD'S MERCY

ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME

AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH:

MAY THE GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY OF CHRIST RISEN IN GLORY

BE WITH YOU ALL

* * *



Most honorable brother Hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord,

By the pleasure and grace of God, the giver of all gifts, having run the race of Holy and Great Lent and spent with compunction the Week of our Lord's Passion, behold we delight in the celebration of His splendid Resurrection, through which we were redeemed from the tyranny of Hades.

The glorious Resurrection of the Lord Christ from the dead is a shared resurrection of the entire race of mortals and a foretaste of the perfection of all, as well as of the fulfilment of the Divine Oikonomia in the heavenly Kingdom. We participate in the ineffable mystery of the Resurrection in the Church, being sanctified in its sacraments and experiencing Pascha, "which has opened to us the gates of Paradise," not as a recollection of an event in the past, but as the quintessence of ecclesiastical life, as the presence of Christ ever among us, closer to us than we to ourselves. On Pascha, the Orthodox faithful discover their true selves as being in Christ; they are integrated into the movement of all things to the End Times, "with inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Peter 1.8), as "children of light . . . and children of day" (1 Thess. 5.5).

The central feature of Orthodox life is its Resurrectional pulse. Philosophers have wrongly described Orthodox spirituality as "sullen" and "autumnal." By contrast, Westerners rightly praise the refined perceptiveness of the Orthodox in relation to the meaning and depth of the paschal experience. Yet this faith never forgets that the way to the Resurrection passes through the Cross. Orthodox spirituality does not recognize the utopianism of a Resurrection without Crucifixion, nor the pessimism of the Cross without the Resurrection. For this reason, in the Orthodox experience, evil does not have the final word in history, while faith in the Resurrection serves as the motivation for the struggle against the presence of evil and its consequences in the world, acting as a powerful transformative force. In the Orthodox self-consciousness, there is no place for surrender to evil or for indifference toward the development of human affairs. On the contrary, its contribution to the transformation of history has theological basis and existential grounding and it unfolds without running the risk of identifying the Church with the world. The Orthodox believer is conscious of the antithesis between worldly reality and eschatological perfection. And so he or she cannot remain idle before any negative dimensions of the world. For this reason, the Orthodox Church has never considered the struggle for transforming the world as a meaningless matter. Our faith in the Resurrection has preserved the Church both from introversion and indifference for the world, as well as from secularization.



For us Orthodox, the entire mystery and existential treasure of our piety is condensed into Pascha. When we hear that the Myrrh-bearers “were astonished” upon “entering the tomb and seeing a young man dressed in bright clothes” (Mark 16.5), this characterizes the vastness and essence of our experience of faith as the experience of existential wonder. When we hear that “they were astonished,” this means that we find ourselves before a mystery that becomes deeper the more we approach it, in accordance with what has been said, that our faith “is not a journey from mystery to knowledge, but from knowledge to mystery.”

While the denial of mystery existentially reduces human nature, the respect of mystery opens to us the gates of heaven. Faith in the Resurrection is the deepest and clearest expression of our freedom; or rather, it is the birth of freedom as a voluntary acceptance of the supreme divine gift, namely of deification by grace. As “experienced Resurrection,” the Orthodox Church is the space of “authentic freedom” that for the Christian life is the foundation, way, and destiny. The Resurrection of Christ is the good news of freedom, the gift of freedom, and the guarantee of “shared freedom” in the “eternal life” of the Kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

With these sentiments, most precious brothers and beloved children, filled with the complete joy of participating in “the feast that is shared by all,” having received light from the unwaning light and given glory to Christ risen from the dead and brought life to all – even as we remember during this all-festal “chosen and holy day” all of our brothers and sisters in difficult circumstances – we pray to our Lord “who trampled down death by death,” the God of peace, that He might bring peace to the world and guide our steps toward every deed that is good and pleasing to Him, proclaiming the all-joyous hymn “Christ is Risen!”

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2024

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

Fervent supplicant for you all to the Risen Lord



Paschal Greetings from Around the World!

Language	Greeting	Response
Aleut:	Khristus anahgrecum!	Alhecum anahgrecum!
Aleut:	Khris-tusax agla-gikux!	Agangu-lakan agla-gikux!
Albanian:	Krishti U Ngjall!	Vertet U Ngjall!
Alutuq:	Khris-tusaq ung-uixtuq!	Pijii-nuq ung-uixtuq!
Amharic:	Kristos tenestwal!	Bergit tenestwal!
Anglo-Saxon:	Crist aras!	Crist sodhlice aras!
Arabic:	El Messieh kahm!	Hakken kahm!
Armenian:	Kristos haryav ee merelotz!	Orhnial eh harootyunuh kristosee!
Athabaskan:	Xristosi banuytashtch'ey!	Gheli banuytashtch'ey!
Bulgarian:	Hristos voskrese!	Vo istina voskrese!
Byelorussian:	Khrystos uvaskros!	Saprawdy uvaskros!
Chinese:	Helisituosi fuhuole!	Qeshi fuhuole!
Coptic:	Pchristos aftooun!	Alethos aftooun!
Czech:	Vstal z mrtvých Kristus!	Vpravdě vstal z mrtvých!
Danish:	Kristus er opstanden!	Ja, sandelig opstanden!
Dutch:	Christus is opgestaan!	Ja, hij is waarlijk opgestaan!
English:	Christ is risen!	Indeed He is risen!
Eritrean-Tigre:	Christos tensiou!	Bahake tensiou!
Esperanto:	Kristo levigis!	Vere levigis!
Estonian:	Kristus on üles tõusnud!	Ta on tõesti üles tõusnud!
Ethiopian:	Christos t'ensah em' muhtan!	Exai' ab-her eokala!
Finnish:	Kristus nousi kuolleista!	Totisesti nousi!
French:	Le Christ est réssuscité!	En verite il est réssuscité!

Language	Greeting	Response
Gaelic:	Taw creest ereen!	Taw shay ereen guhdyne!
Georgian:	Kriste aghsdga!	Cheshmaritad aghsdga!
German:	Christus ist auferstanden!	Wahrlich Er ist auferstanden!
Greek:	Christos anesti!	Alithos anesti!
Hawaiian:	Ua ala hou 'o Kristo!	Ua ala 'I 'o no 'oia!
Hebrew:	Ha Masheeha houh quam!	Be emet quam!
Hungarian:	Krisztus feltamadt!	Valoban feltamadt!
Ibo (Nigeria):	Jesu Kristi ebiliwo!	Ezia o' biliwo!
Indian (Malayalam):	Christu uyirthezhunnettu!	Theerchayayum uyirthezhunnettu!
Indonesian:	Kristus telah bangkit!	Benar dia telah bangkit!
Italian:	Cristo e' risorto!	Veramente e' risorto!
Japanese:	Harisutos Fukkatsu!	Jitsu ni Fukkatsu!
Javanese:	Kristus sampun wungu!	Tuhu sampun wungu!
Korean:	Kristo gesso!	Buhar ha sho nay!
Latin:	Christus resurrexit!	Vere resurrexit!
Latvian:	Kristus ir augsham sales!	Teyasham ir augsham sales vinsch!
Lugandan:	Kristo ajukkide!	Amajim ajukkide!
Norwegian:	Christus er oppstanden!	Sandelig han er oppstanden!
Polish:	Khristus zmartwyckwstal!	Zaprawde zmartwyckwstal!
Portuguese:	Cristo ressuscitou!	Em verdade ressuscitou!
Romanian:	Hristos a inviat!	Adevărat a învial!
Russian:	Khristos voskrese!	Voistinu voskrese!
Sanskrit:	Kristo'pastitaha!	Satvam upastitaha!
Serbian:	Hristos vaskrse!	Vaistunu vaskrse!
Slovak:	Christos vstal z mŕtvych!	Vpravde vstal z mŕtvych!

Language

Greeting

Response

Spanish:

Cristo ha resucitado!

En verdad ha resucitado!

Swahili:

Kristo amefufukka!

Kweli amefufukka!

Swedish:

Kristus är uppstånden!

Han är sannerligen uppstånden!

Syriac:

M'shee ho dkom!

Ha koo qam!

Tlingit:

Xristos Kuxwoo-digoot!

Xegaa-kux Kuxwoo-digoot!

Turkish:

Hristos diril - di!

Hakikaten diril - di!

Ugandan:

Kristo ajukkide!

Kweli ajukkide!

Ukrainian:

Khristos voskres!

Voistinu voskres!

Welsh:

Atgyfododd Crist!

Atgyfododd yn wir!

Yupik:

Xris-tusaq Ung-uixtuq!

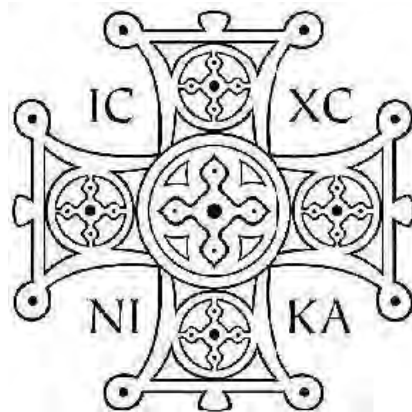
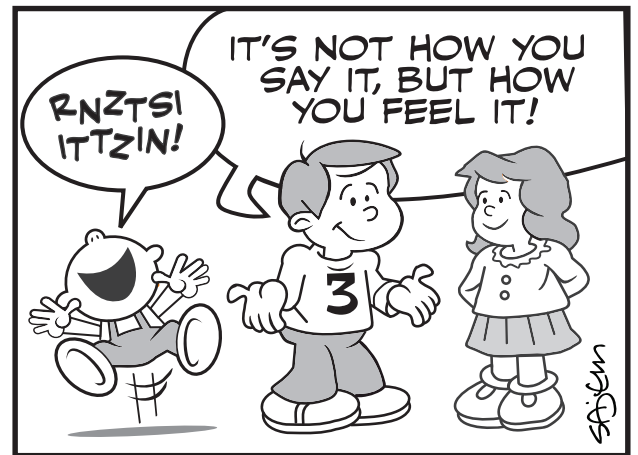
Iluumun Ung-uixtuq!

Zulu:

UKristu uvukile!

Ngempela uvukile!

PASCHA



Parish Family Prayer List

For the Health of: The Melnikoff Family, Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Kara, Joanna, James, Athanasia, Ethel, Tyler, Maria, Page Family, Dean, Metropolitan Gregory and his family, David, Joseph, Maria Starcova, David & Paulette Novak, Suzette, Bob, David, Marilyn & family, Mark, Fr. Dcn. Stephen, Michelle, James, Rachel, Kate, Fr. Blaschak & Family, Larry, Alexandra, Tammy, Trahan & Skiba Family, The Hood Family, the Mileszko Family, the Blonar Family, Burt, Sandy, Stephanie, Mary, Tommy, Stephen, Emilia, Simon, Alisha, & Aaron Zak, the Puziculiks Family, Fr. Andy, Davina, & Alexandra, Stan, Fr. Dcn. Charlie & Family, Justin, Charlie, Spencer, Julie, Anna, Galina & Family, Irinia & Family, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy Dutko, Rick, Katlain, Elenor, Teddy, Mark, Robert & Cindy, Melissa, Ben, Anthony, Rachel, Christine, Cora, Rick, Michelle, Tim, Robert, The Kelemecz Family, Leonard, Leo, & the Olaru Family, Joanna Price, Kim, Isaiah, the Wells Family, Dave, Ashley & family, Mary, Tim, Andrew, Robert, Derrick, Michael, Eli, Ean, Ellie, Amber, Christopher, Deborah, Nick & Rosemary, Mike, Elaiane, Roy, Lin, Dave, Sarah, George, & Edward, Stephen, Caleb, Amelia, Simon, David, the Gdovin Family, the Rodgers Family, the Kundrat Family, Yvone, George, Amberly, & baby Stella, Jessie, Dexter, Julia, Dan, Cora, Gabriel, Ethan, Tripp, Rachel, Lilly, Emmie, Charlie, Michelle, Serge, Mark, Johnny, Yvette Christine, Johanna, Nicole, Caroline, Alexander, Kelly, Henery, & Benjamin

For the Departed: Evelyn & Boris Melnikoff+, Patricia+, James+, Stephen+, Anna+, Charles+, Robert+, Loraine+. Helen+, Lewis+, Jeane+, Vera+, George+, George+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Barry+, Josph+, Phillip+, Jenny+, Peter+, Bryan+, Rebecca+, Fr. Paul+, Maria+, Fr. Hazuda+, George Smisko+, Helen Spanovich+, Bob+, Alma+, Bo+, Saddie+, Fr. William George+, Violet+, Fr. Kozar+, Benjamin+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileszko+, Anna+, Natalie+, Lilly+, Christine+, Anna+, Tamara+, Anastasia+, Yvonne+, John+, Betty+, Ada+, Peter+ & Wanda+, George+, Jerry+, Barb+ & Harry+, Beth+, Louise+, Nikolay+, David+, Fr. Michael+, Natalie+, Helen+, Ted+, Tom+, Mike+, Madeline+, Tim+, Fr. John Baranek, Reader Stephen+, Dean+, Fr. Larry+, Kris+, Wathen+, Pani Elenor+, Fr. Michael+, Sally+, David+, Gene+, Kenny+, Ava+, Fr. Tony Josph+ & Pani Patsy+, Anatoly+, Fr. Scott+, Steve+, Claudia+, Dave+, Fr. John Duranko, Michael+, Sarah Elizabeth+ Ester+, Julie+, +Michael, +Joe, Mary+, Joseph+, Joan+, Margaret+, Herbert+

Through the prayers of the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth, The Holy Fathers & Mothers, and all the Saints, may our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!

Holy Saint Elizabeth Pray for us!

Eternal Memory!



Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church
 Become a Steward

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.
 John 15:16
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
 Fill out a Stewardship Offering Card Here!

www.stelizabethga.org

Keep Your Parish Family in Your Prayers!

Christ is Among us!

Keeping the Joy of Pascha Alive – St. Thomas Sunday- Father Christopher Foley

I am sure many of us experience what I have come to call the “post-Paschal funk.” We spend long hours in church during the Great Fast and Holy Week. We experience the intensity of the Lord’s final days in Jerusalem. We stand at the foot of the Cross and see him laid in the tomb. We experience the palpable joy of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead. We feast together in our own resurrection with Christ and then, the let down. We have a hard time keeping the Paschal joy intact. Liturgically, Bright Week in parish life is rarely observed. A repeat of the Paschal Liturgy is called for everyday as well as Paschal Matins and Vespers. It is hard to sustain another week of a full liturgical cycle in a parish context, but the result is that we can very easily sink into the “post-Paschal funk”. Just like a young kid on Christmas, we open all the presents and then are somehow let down once they are all opened.

How are we to keep the joy of Pascha alive within our hearts after Pascha, and, for that matter, the whole year? We go through times of doubt, despair, difficulties, and somehow the Bright Light of Pascha begins to fade and we again find ourself standing not at the empty tomb of Christ but back to Holy Saturday, that unique moment between death and resurrection.

Thank God that the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has given us many days to continue pondering and feasting the resurrection of Christ. This is why we are given Thomas Sunday as the first Sunday after Pascha. The Church knows how quickly we forget, how quickly we fall into the darkness of doubt and how that can squeeze out all of the joy of the resurrection.

Thomas the Apostle is sometimes called the doubter but, if we remember and are attentive to the Holy Gospels, we see that he was also the one who, as Metropolitan Anthony Bloom reminds us,

When the Apostles and the Lord heard of the illness of Lazarus, Christ said to them: Let us return to Jerusalem. To which the others said: But the Jews wanted to kill you there. Why should we return? Only Thomas the Apostle answered: Let us go with Him and die with Him. He was prepared not only to be His disciple in words, not only to follow Him as one follows a teacher, but to die with Him as one dies with a friend and, if necessary, for a friend. So, let us remember his greatness, his faithfulness, his wholeness.

Saint Thomas was faithful and his doubt becomes the very means by which we all have come to behold the resurrection of Christ. In fact the hymns even praise his doubt:

The Disciples were assembled on the eighth day, and the Savior appeared to them. He gave them peace and said to Thomas: “Come, Apostle! Feel my hands, which were pierced by the nails!” Most wonderful doubt of Thomas! It brought the hearts of the faithful to knowledge. And with fear he cried: “My Lord and my God, glory to You!” O most glorious wonder! Doubt bore certain faith!



The Lord confirmed Thomas in faith through his doubt. We read this in the Gospel given for this Sunday

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

The other theme given to us for this particular Sunday is the closed doors. Christ appears to His disciples even though the doors were shut. The closed doors through which Christ appears are linked to the sealed tomb through which Christ has shown forth:

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life! Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God. Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit, by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all! Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Keeping the Joy of Pascha Alive – St. Thomas Sunday- Father Christopher Foley

It is always striking to close the doors before Vespers on Thomas Sunday Vespers. The service books instruct us to close all of the doors of the iconostas that have been open all of Bright Week before 9th hour before the Vespers of Thomas Sunday. Then we hear all of the references to the closed doors through which Christ appears. Then it dawns on us - Christ can manifest Himself to us even when our doors are shut. Is this not the key to the joy of Pascha remaining with us? We recall lines from the lamentations from the Matins of Holy Saturday as we stand at the sealed tomb:

*Oh Life how can You die, how can You dwell in a narrow tomb?
When You were placed in a tomb, O Christ the foundations of hell
shook and the graves of the dead were opened. You descended to
earth so that You might save Adam, not finding him on earth, O
Master You descended as far as Hades in search of him. O the joy,
O the boundless delight, with which You filled those who lay bound
in hell, when You made light blaze throughout its murky depths.
Your tomb O Christ is the fountain of our resurrection!*

Christ indeed comes searching for us, even in our doubt, even in our “post-Paschal funk”. He comes to us even though the doors of hearts are shut, even when we are in a terrible place and have closed our doors – He still comes. We put our hands in the wounds in His hands and we touch his side. He comes to dispel all sorrow and sadness. Again from the services of Thomas Sunday:

*O Lord, shining with the splendor of Your divinity, You came through
closed doors to Your Disciples, showing Your pierced side, the wounds from the nails, dispelling all sadness
and sorrow! O friends, see that I am not a spirit, but truly man! You commanded the disbelieving Disciple to
look, saying: “Prove to yourself, then come and believe!” He touched Your side with his own hand and cried
in faith and fear: “My Lord and my God, glory to You!”*

Christ’s coming to the disciples through closed doors is the effect of Christ’s resurrection. What He accomplished through the power of His resurrection is still being accomplished today. Pascha is not merely a commemoration of an event in the past but one in which we continue to participate in daily. Christ comes to us every day. He comes to us today through closed doors.

Christ’s death and resurrection is our death and resurrection. We are dead and Christ comes to bring us back to life again. It is entering again and again into our baptism into Christ. Olivier Clément reminds us,

*Life in the spirit means gradually becoming aware of “baptismal grace,” and this awareness transforms the
whole person, Each present moment has to become baptismal: a moment of anguish and death if I seek to cling
to it and so experience its non-existence, but a moment of resurrection if I accept it humbly as “present” in both
senses of the word.... We come finally to the moment of agony when we are overwhelmed by the waters of
death. Through our baptism, according to the measure of our faith, they will be transformed into the womb of
eternity.*

Each day may we continue to rejoice in our Lord’s resurrection. May we continue to offer our praise and glory and even offer our glorious doubt like Thomas. Christ continues to come to us even though the doors are shut and leads us to deeper faith in Him. He not only offers His hands and His side but allows us to be partakers of Himself in His Holy Mysteries. O most glorious wonder! As we sing from the depths of our hearts as we did on that Bright night:

*This is the day of resurrection, let us rejoice, O people. Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord. For from death to life
and from earth to heaven. Christ our God has led us, as we sing the hymn of victory!*





WOODSTOCK, GEORGIA



NATIONAL ACRY WEEKEND

74TH ANNUAL
METROPOLITAN
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Invitation to the 74th Annual Memorial Metropolitan Orestes Bowling Tournament

Dear Members of the Saint Elizabeth's Parish Family,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits as we travel through the final days of great Lent and approach the solemn time of Holy Week. The members of our local ACRY chapter are writing to extend a warm invitation to you and your families to join us for a weekend filled with fellowship, and fun in Christ as we host the 74th Annual Memorial Metropolitan Orestes Bowling Tournament.



Before we delve into the exciting details and great opportunities of this event, we wanted to shed some light on the organization behind it - the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Youth (ACRY). The ACRY is more than just an organization; it's a vibrant community and family filled with Orthodox Christians from all across our diocese. The ACRY is dedicated to fostering fellowship, philanthropy, and spiritual growth. Local chapters like ours here at Saint Elizabeth's come together under the umbrella of the national organization, supporting our parishes, engaging in charitable endeavors, and nurturing strong bonds of camaraderie. As many of our local families here at Saint Elizabeth's have discovered, this group is for everyone!

Our parish began its relationship with the ACRY back in 2016, recognizing the value of connecting with fellow diocesan members and Orthodox Christians beyond the confines of our local community. Since then, we've witnessed the profound impact of this decision, both within our parish and in the wider diocesan family. It's been a source of joy to see individuals of all ages and backgrounds come together, united by their love for our faith in Christ, their desire to serve others, and promise of developing bonds of friendship with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

This year, we have the distinct honor of hosting the 74th Annual Memorial Metropolitan Orestes Bowling Tournament. This tournament holds a special significance as it pays homage to our founding bishop, Metropolitan Orestes, a beloved figure known not only for his spiritual leadership but also for his passion for sports, particularly bowling. It's a fitting tribute to his memory and a testament to the enduring spirit of fellowship that he championed throughout his life.

We invite you to partake in this weekend of celebration and fellowship, where you'll have the opportunity to meet and mingle with fellow parishioners, members of our diocesan family, and our beloved bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory. Whether you're a seasoned bowler or just looking to enjoy some quality time with your church community, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

In addition to the bowling tournament, we have planned a series of fellowship events and activities designed to deepen our bonds as a parish and strengthen our connection to the wider diocesan family. Aside from the bowling, there will be fellowship events and meals at the Church on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday this Memorial Day Weekend from the 24th-27th of May. Please consider volunteering and participating in the events of the weekend by purchasing a meal package. A special prize will be offered to members and families who like to learn more about the ACRY and volunteer to host this special event in the life of our community. The Church will be full that weekend for Vespers and Liturgy and it is something you will be grateful that you attend. The memory of our Church full echoing the Paschal Hymn "Christ is Risen!" with full voice will be one to cherish.

Our priest, Fr. Matthew spent his childhood and young adult years very active in this organization and he currently serves as one of the spiritual advisors for the Jr. ACRY. This event promises ample opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together in faith and fellowship.

We sincerely hope you'll join us for this memorable weekend as we come together to celebrate our shared faith and the beauty of belonging to a faith community that extends far beyond the walls of our church. Together, let's embrace the spirit of unity and love that defines the ACRY and make this event one to remember.

With warm regards & love in Christ,

The members of Saint Elizabeth ACRY Chapter #9

Help Make the National ACRY Diocesan Bowling Tournament Weekend a Success!

You can help make National ACRY Weekend & Bowling Tournament a success this year, by placing a small ***note / comment / commemoration / thought / family photo / ad*** in the booklet for yourself or your family or by passing this information on to a friend or someone you do business with.

(See page 2 for formatting and cost))

You can submit your completed art in jpg, png or pdf format (at least 200dpi, please)

OR

you can write out a description, or scribble it on a piece of paper and we will do the art for you at no additional charge.

Send information to sajem@aol.com or if scribbled on a napkin, bring it to church.



Payment can be made at:



www.ACRYWoodstock.com

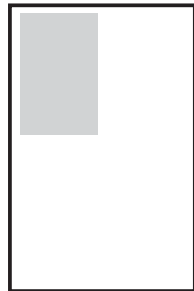
Deadline for inclusion in the booklet is May 10, 2024



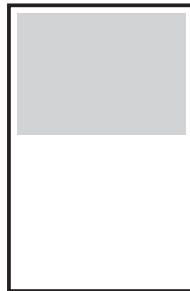
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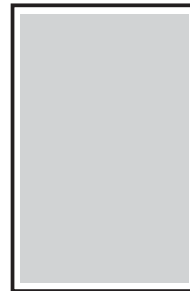
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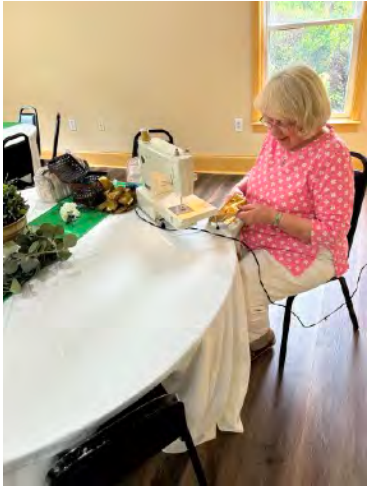
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The Joys of Holy Week! Christ is Risen!

The Memory of Something Good

“You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory...if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us.” -The Brothers Karmazov



Grant O Lord to Your Newly Illumined Servants Joy, Melanie, and Brooke along with their family peace, health, prosperity for many happy and blessed years!



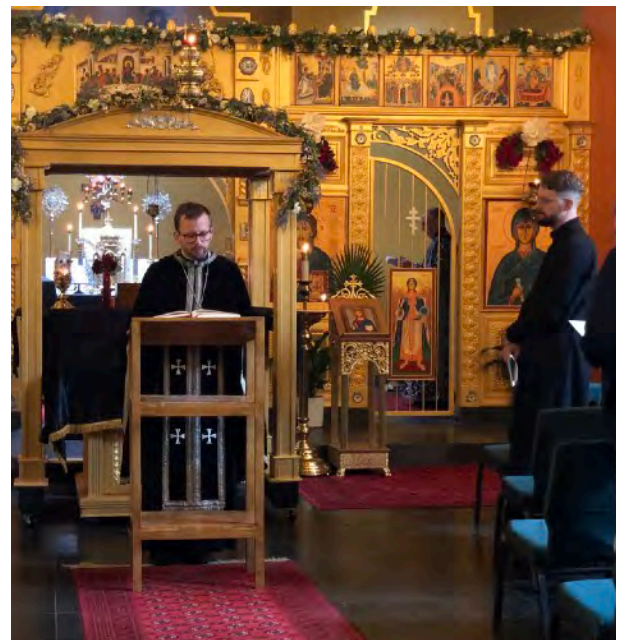












The St. Elizabeth News

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!



This is the Day the Lord Has Made. Let us Rejoice and be Glad in it!
Palm Sunday Parish Family Photo 2024

