

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Fr. Gregory Fedorchak, Parish Rector 607-427-3286, father.fedorchak@gmail.com*

**Upcoming Services:**

**April 15 Holy Tuesday**

6pm – Bridegroom Matins

**April 16, Holy Wednesday**

6pm – Holy Unction

**April 17, Holy Thursday**

9am – Vespers Liturgy (Mystical Supper)

6pm – Matins of Holy Friday

(12 Passion Gospel Readings)

**April 18, Holy Friday**

8am – Royal Hours

3pm – Vespers of Holy Friday

7pm – Matins of Holy Saturday w/ Lamentations

**April 19, Holy Saturday**

9am – Baptisms & Chrismations

and Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil

11:30pm – Midnight Office, Paschal Matins,

and Divine Liturgy

**April 20, GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA**

2pm – Agape Vespers & Fellowship

**April 21, Bright Monday**

10am – Divine Liturgy

**April 23, Bright Wednesday**

6pm – Akathist to St George

**April 24, Bright Thursday**

8am – Divine Liturgy

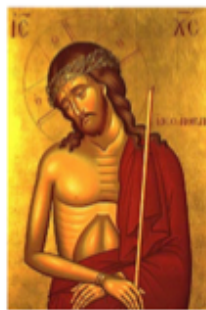
**April 25, Bright Saturday**

5pm – Great Vespers

**April 26, St Thomas Sunday**

10am – Divine Liturgy (9:40am Hours)

**Christ is Risen! ☩ He is Risen Indeed!**  
**April 20**



**Holy Week | Bridegroom Services, The Last Supper, Great and Holy Friday: The Crucifixion**

## **Holy Thursday**

**From *The Orthodox Faith* - Volume II: Worship**  
**By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko**

The vigil on the eve of Holy Thursday is dedicated exclusively to the Passover Supper which Christ celebrated with his twelve apostles. The main theme of the day is the meal itself at which Christ commanded that the Passover of the New Covenant be eaten in remembrance of Himself, of His body broken and His blood shed for the remission of sins. In addition, Judas' betrayal and Christ's washing of His disciples feet is also central to the liturgical commemoration of the day.

In cathedral churches it is the custom for the bishop to re-enact the foot washing in a special ceremony following the Divine Liturgy. At the vigil of Holy Thursday, the Gospel of Saint Luke about the Lord's Supper is read. At the Divine Liturgy the Gospel is a composite of all the evangelists' accounts of the same event. The hymns and the readings of the day also all refer to the same central mystery.

*When Thy glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened by the disease of avarice, and to the lawless judges he betrayed Thee, the Righteous Judge. Behold, O lover of money, this man because of avarice hanged himself. Flee from the insatiable desire which dared such things against the Master! O Lord who deals righteously with all, glory to Thee (Troparion of Holy Thursday).*

*In the regions of the Master, at the Table of Immortality, in the high place, with minds lifted up, come, O ye faithful, let us eat with delight (Ninth Ode of the Canon of Matins).*

The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil is served on Holy Thursday in connection with Vespers. The long gospel of the Last Supper is read following the readings from Exodus, Job, Isaiah and the first letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11). The following hymn replaces the Cherubic Hymn of the offertory of the liturgy, and serves as well as the Communion and Post-Communion Hymns.

*Of Thy mystical supper, O Son of God, accept me today a communicant, for I will not speak of Thy mystery to thine enemies, neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss, but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy kingdom.*

The liturgical celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday is not merely the annual remembrance of the institution of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Indeed the very event of the Passover Meal itself was not merely the last-minute action by the Lord to "institute" the central sacrament of the Christian Faith before His passion and death. On the contrary, the entire mission of Christ, and indeed the very purpose for the creation of the world in the first place, is so that God's beloved creature, made in His own divine image and likeness, could be in the most intimate communion with Him for eternity, sitting at table with Him, eating and drinking in His unending kingdom. Thus, Christ the Son of God speaks to His apostles at the supper, and to all men who hear His words and believe in Him and the Father who sent Him:

*Fear not, little flock, it is Your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32).  
You are those who have continued with Me in My trials; as My Father appointed a Kingdom for Me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom . . . (Luke 22:28–31).*

In a real sense, therefore, it is true to say that the body broken and the blood spilled spoken of by Christ at His last supper with the disciples was not merely an anticipation and preview of what was yet to come; but that what was yet to come—the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven—came to pass precisely so that men could be blessed by God to be in holy communion with him forever, eating and drinking at the mystical table of His kingdom of which there will be no end.

Thus the "Mystical Supper of the Son of God" which is continually celebrated in the Divine Liturgy of the Christian Church, is the very essence of what life in God's Kingdom will be for eternity.

*Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God (Luke 14:15).  
Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).*

## Holy Friday

Matins of Holy Friday are generally celebrated on Thursday night. The main feature of this service is the reading of twelve selections from the Gospels, all of which are accounts of the passion of Christ. The first of these twelve readings is Jn 13.31–18.1. It is Christ's long discourse with his apostles that ends with the so-called high priestly prayer. The final gospel tells of the sealing of the tomb and the setting of the watch (Mt 27.62–66).

The twelve Gospel readings of Christ's passion are placed between the various parts of the service. The hymnology is all related to the sufferings of the Saviour and borrows heavily from the Gospels and the prophetic scriptures and psalms. The Lord's beatitudes are added to the service after the sixth gospel reading, and there is special emphasis given to the salvation of the thief who acknowledged Christ's Kingdom.

The Hours of Holy Friday repeat the Gospels of Christ's passion with the addition at each Hour of readings from Old Testament prophecies concerning man's redemption, and from letters of Saint Paul relative to man's salvation through the sufferings of Christ. The psalms used are also of a special prophetic character, e.g., Ps 2, 5, 22, 109, 139, et al. There is no Divine Liturgy on Good Friday for the same obvious reason that forbids the celebration of the eucharist on the fasting days of lent...

## Holy Saturday

The first service belonging to Holy Saturday—called in the Church the Blessed Sabbath—is the Vespers of Good Friday. It is usually celebrated in the mid-afternoon to commemorate the burial of Jesus.

Before the service begins, a "tomb" is erected in the middle of the church building and is decorated with flowers. Also a special icon which is painted on cloth (in Greek, *epitaphios*; in Slavonic, *plaschanitsa*) depicting the dead Saviour is placed on the altar table. In English this icon is often called the winding-sheet.

Vespers begins as usual with hymns about the suffering and death of Christ. After the entrance with the Gospel Book and the singing of Gladsome Light, selections from Exodus, Job, and Isaiah 52 are read. An epistle reading from First Corinthians (1.18–31) is added, and the Gospel is read once more with selections from each of the four accounts of Christ's crucifixion and burial. The prokeimena and alleluia verses are psalm lines, heard often already in the Good Friday services, prophetic in their meaning:

*They divided my garments among them and for my raiment they cast lots (Psalm 22.18).*

*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me (Ps 22.1).*

*Thou hast put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep (Ps 88.6).*

After more hymns glorifying the death of Christ, while the choir sings the dismissal song of Saint Simeon, the priest vests fully in his dark-colored robes and incenses the winding-sheet which still lies upon the altar table. Then, after the Our Father, while the people sing the troparion of the day, the priest circles the altar table with the winding-sheet carried above his head and places it into the tomb for veneration by the faithful.

*The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure body from the Tree, wrapped It in fine linen and anointed It with spices, and placed It in a new tomb (Troparion of Holy Saturday).*

The Matins of Holy Saturday are usually celebrated on Friday night. They begin in the normal way with the singing of God is the Lord, the troparion The Noble Joseph, and the following troparia:

*When Thou didst descend to death O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!*

*The angel standing by the grave cried out to the women: Myrrh is proper for the dead, but Christ has shown himself a stranger to corruption.*

In place of the regular psalm reading the entire Psalm 119 is read with a verse praising the dead Saviour chanted between each of its lines. This particular psalm is the verbal icon of Jesus, the righteous man whose life is in the hands of God and who, therefore, cannot remain dead. The Praises, as the verses are called, glorify God as "the Resurrection and the Life," and marvel at his humble condescension into death.

There is in the person of Jesus Christ the perfect unification of the perfect love of man toward God and the perfect love of God toward man. It is this divine human love which is contemplated and praised over the tomb of the Savior. As the reading progresses the Praises become shorter, and gradually more concentrated on the final victory of the Lord, thus coming to their proper conclusion:

*I long for Thy salvation, O Lord, Thy law is my delight (Ps 119.174).*

*The mind is affrighted at Thy dread and strange burial.*

*Let me live, that I may praise Thee, and let Thy ordinances help me (119.175).*

*The women with spices came early at dawn to anoint Thee.*

*I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments (119.176).*

By Thy resurrection grant peace to the Church and salvation to Thy people!

After the final glorification of the Trinity, the church building is lighted and the first announcement of the women coming to the tomb resounds through the congregation as the celebrant censes the entire church. Here for the first time comes the clear proclamation of the good news of salvation in Christ's resurrection.

The canon song of Matins continues to praise Christ's victory over death by His own death, and uses each of the Old Testament canticles as a prefigurative image of man's final salvation through Jesus. Here for the first time there emerges the indication that this Sabbath this particular Saturday on which Christ lay dead—is truly the most blessed seventh day that ever existed. This is the day when Christ rests from His work of recreating the world. This is the day when the Word of God “through Whom all things were made” (Jn 1.3) rests as a dead man in the grave, saving the world of His own creation and opening the graves:

*This is the most blessed Sabbath on which Christ sleeps, but to rise again on the third day (Kontakion and Oikos).*

Again, the canon ends on the final note of the victory of Christ.

*Lament not for Me, Mother, beholding Me in the grave, the son whom you have born in seedless conception, for I will arise and be glorified, and will exalt with glory, unceasingly as God, all those who with faith and love glorify you (Ninth Ode of the Canon).*

As more verses of praise are sung, the celebrant again vests fully in his somber vestments and, as the great doxology is chanted, he once more censes the tomb of the Savior. Then, while the congregation with lighted candles continually repeats the song of the Thrice Holy, the faithful—led by their pastor carrying the Gospel Book with the winding-sheet of Christ held over his head—go in procession around the outside of the church building. This procession bears witness to the total victory of Christ over the powers of darkness and death. The whole universe is cleansed, redeemed and restored by the entrance of the Life of the World into death.

As the procession returns to the church building, the troparia are sung once again, and the prophecy of Ezekiel about the “dry bones” of Israel is chanted with great solemnity:

*“And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, O my people. And I will put my spirit within you and you shall live . . .” (Ezekiel 37.1–14).*

With the victorious lines of the psalms calling God to arise, to lift up his hands, to scatter his enemies and to let the righteous rejoice; and with the repeated singing of Alleluia, the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians is read: **“Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed”** (1 Corinthians 5.6–8). The Gospel about the sealing of the tomb is read once more, and the service is ended with intercession and benediction.

The Vespers and Matins of the Blessed Sabbath, together with the Divine Liturgy which follows, form a masterpiece of the Orthodox liturgical tradition. These services are not at all a dramatic re-enactment of the historical death and burial of Christ. Neither are they a kind of ritual reproduction of scenes of the Gospel. They are, rather, the deepest spiritual and liturgical penetration into the eternal meaning of the saving events of Christ, viewed and praised already with the full knowledge of their divine significance and power.

The Church does not pretend, as it were, that it does not know what will happen with the crucified Jesus. It does not sorrow and mourn over the Lord as if the Church itself were not the very creation which has been produced from his wounded sides and from the depths of his tomb. All through the services the victory of Christ is contemplated and the resurrection is proclaimed. For it is indeed only in the light of the victorious resurrection that the deepest divine and eternal meaning of the events of Christ's passion and death can be genuinely grasped, adequately appreciated and properly glorified and praised.

## **Easter Sunday: The Holy Pascha**

A little before midnight on the Blessed Sabbath the Nocturne service is chanted. The celebrant goes to the tomb and removes the winding-sheet. He carries it through the royal doors and places it on the altar table where it remains for forty days until the day of Ascension.

At midnight the Easter procession begins. The people leave the church building singing:

*The angels in heaven, O Christ our Savior, sing of Thy resurrection. Make us on earth also worthy to hymn Thee with a pure heart.*

The procession circles the church building and returns to the closed doors of the front of the church. This procession of the Christians on Easter night recalls the original baptismal procession from the darkness and death of this world to the light and the life of the Kingdom of God. It is the procession of the holy passover, from death unto life, from earth unto heaven, from this age to the age to come which will never end.

Before the closed doors of the church building, the resurrection of Christ is announced. Sometimes the Gospel is read which tells of the empty tomb. The celebrant intones the blessing to the “holy, consubstantial, life-creating and undivided Trinity.” The Easter troparion is sung for the first time, together with the verses of Psalm 68, which will begin all of the Church services during the Easter season.

***Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee from before his face!  
Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life  
(Troparion).  
This is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!***

The people re-enter the church building and continue the service of Easter Matins, which is entirely sung.

The canon hymns of Christ’s resurrection, ascribed to Saint John of Damascus, are chanted with the troparion of the feast as the constantly recurring refrain. The building is decorated with flowers and lights. The vestments are the bright robes of the resurrection. The Easter icon stands in the center of the church showing Christ destroying the gates of hell and freeing Adam and Eve from the captivity of death. It is the image of the Victor “trampling down death by his own death.” There is the continual singing and censuring of the icons and the people, with the constant proclamation of the celebrant: Christ is risen! The faithful continually respond: Indeed He is risen!

***It is the day of resurrection! Let us be illumined for the feast! Pascha! The Pascha of the Lord! From death unto life, and from earth unto heaven has Christ our God led us! Singing the song of victory: Christ is risen from the dead! (First Ode of the Easter Canon).***

Following the canon, the paschal verses are sung, and at the conclusion of the Easter Matins, the Easter Hours are also sung. In general, nothing is simply read in the Church services of Easter: everything is fully sung with the joyful melodies of the feast.

At the end of the Hours, before the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant solemnly proclaims the famous Paschal Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom. This sermon is an invitation to all of the faithful to forget their sins and to join fully in the feast of the resurrection of Christ. Taken literally, the sermon is the formal invitation offered to all members of the Church to come and to receive Holy Communion, partaking of Christ, the Passover Lamb, whose table is now being set in the midst of the Church. In some parishes the sermon is literally obeyed, and all of the faithful receive the eucharistic gifts of the Passover Supper of Easter night.

The Easter Divine Liturgy begins immediately with the singing once more of the festal troparion with the verses of Psalm 68. Special psalm verses also comprise the antiphons of the liturgy, through which the faithful praise and glorify the salvation of God:

***Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Sing of his name, give glory to His praise.  
Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee! Let it praise Thy name, O most High!  
That we may know Thy way upon the earth and Thy salvation among all nations.  
Let the people thank Thee, O God! Let all the people give thanks to Thee.***

The troparion is repeated over and over again. The baptismal line from Galatians replaces the Thrice-Holy Hymn. The epistle reading is the first nine verses of the Book of Acts. The gospel reading is the first seventeen verses of the Gospel of Saint John. The proclamation of the Word of God takes the faithful back again to the beginning, and announces God’s creation and re-creation of the world through the living Word of God, his Son Jesus Christ.

***In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . all things were made through Him . . . In Him was life and the life was the light of men. . . .  
And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth . . . we have beheld His glory, glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, and from His fullness have we all received grace upon grace (John 1.1–17).***

The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom continues, crowned in holy communion with the Passover Lamb at his banquet table in God's Kingdom. Again and again the troparion of the Resurrection is sung while the faithful partake of Him "Who was dead and is alive again" (Rev 2.8).

In the Orthodox Church the feast of Easter is officially called Pascha, the word which means the Passover. It is the new Passover of the new and everlasting covenant foretold by the prophets of old. It is the eternal Passover from death to life and from earth to heaven. It is the Day of the Lord proclaimed by God's holy prophets, "the day which the Lord has made" for His judgment over all creation, the day of His final and everlasting victory. It is the Day of the Kingdom of God, the day "which has no night" for "its light is the Lamb" (Rev 21.22-25).

The celebration of Easter in the Orthodox Church, therefore, is once again not merely an historical reenactment of the event of Christ's Resurrection as narrated in the gospels. It is not a dramatic representation of the first Easter morning. There is no "sunrise service" since the Easter Matins and the Divine Liturgy are celebrated together in the first dark hours of the first day of the week in order to give men the experience of the "new creation" of the world, and to allow them to enter mystically into the New Jerusalem which shines eternally with the glorious light of Christ, overcoming the perpetual night of evil and destroying the darkness of this mortal and sinful world:

*Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone upon you! Exult and be glad O Zion! Be radiant O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!*

This is one of the main Easter hymns in the Orthodox Church. It is inspired by Isaiah's prophecy and the final chapters of the Book of Revelation, for it is exactly the New Creation, the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly City, the Kingdom of God, the Day of the Lord, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb with His Bride which is celebrated and realized and experienced in the Holy Spirit on the Holy Night of Easter in the Orthodox Church.

## Presanctified Liturgy with Archbishop Michael Wednesday, April 9, 2025



## Palm Sunday Sunday, April 13, 2025



## UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

### **Festival of Sacred Music and Text**

Sunday, April 27, 3:00 PM at St. Mary's Catholic Church (20 Lawrence Ave., Potsdam)

### **Parish Council Meeting**

Tuesday, April 29, 7:30 PM

### **Book Club**

Thursday, May 1, 5:45 PM – 7:15 PM. We will finish T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and start Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. There will be food.

## UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

### **Divine Liturgy with Archbishop, and Camp Open House**

Bright Saturday, April 26 at St. Andrew's Camp

### **Camp Fundraiser**

Sunday, May 4, at 4:00 PM: a "Spaghetti and Song" fundraiser for St. Andrew's Camp will be held at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Endicott. Tickets can be purchased at <https://givebutter.com/KzEdEw>.

### **Young Adult Retreat**

Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18 at St. Andrew's Camp. Open to Orthodox young adults, catechumens, and inquirers age 18-35. For questions, contact [LonnBologna@gmail.com](mailto:LonnBologna@gmail.com) or text 203-258-5324.

### **Parish Council Conference, NYS Deanery West**

Saturday, June 14, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY. The theme of the 2025 Parish Council Conferences is "Integrating New Converts into Our Parish Families."

### **Altar Server Retreat, NYS Deanery**

Saturday, June 28 at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY.

## OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Vigil at the Tomb Sign Ups** – Beginning Holy Friday after Vespers until Saturday night, we will keep collective vigil at Christ's tomb. Use [this link](#) to sign up for a 90-minute slot. Come to a quiet church and read psalms.

**SAFETY** – Please steer clear of the basement as work intensifies. You may still use the bathroom, but please avoid the kitchen area and debris.

**Food Drive** – A Lenten almsgiving opportunity: we are collecting shelf-stable food items for our local Norwood Food Pantry. They would like pasta, pasta sauce, and condiments. See the box in the side narthex.

**PARISH NEEDS** – Bottled water, Food for Wednesday after the Holy Unction/Healing service.



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