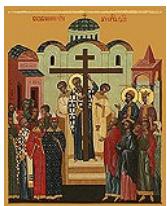


❖ Bulletin ❖

Week of January 4th to January 10, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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30th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5
Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Forefeast of the Theophany. Sunday before Theophany

Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: James (Jacob), the brother of the Lord; Mark the Evangelist; Luke the Evangelist; Cleophas, the brother of Joseph the Betrothed; Simeon, the son of Cleophas; Barnabas; Justus; Thaddæus; Ananias; Stephen the Archdeacon; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas of the Seven Deacons; Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Onesimus; Epaphras; Archippus; Silas; Silvanus; Crescens; Crispus; Epenetus; Andronicus; Stachys; Amplias; Urban; Narcissus; Apelles; Aristobulus; Herodion; Agabus; Rufus; Asyncritus; Phlegon; Hermes; Patrobus; Hermas; Linus; Gaius; Philologus; Lucius; Jason; Sosipater; Olympas; Tertius; Erastus; Quartus; Euodius; Onesiphorus; Clement; Sosthenes; Apollos; Tychicus; Epaphroditus; Carpus; Quadratus; Mark, called John; Zenas; Aristarchus; Pudens; Trophimus; Mark; Artemas; Aquila; Fortunatus; and Achaius. (1st c.). Ven. Theoctistus, Abbot at Curomo, in Sicily (800). Repose of St. Eustathius I, Archbishop of Serbia (ca. 1285). St. Aquila, Deacon, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.). Confessors Zosimus the Hermit and Athanasius the Commentarius (Superintendent of Prisoners), Anchorites, of Cilicia (3rd-4th c.). St. Nikephoros the Leper (1964). Ven. Euthymius and twelve other Monks, martyred at Vatopedi (Mt. Athos—1285). Ven. Onuphrius of Chilandari (Mt. Athos), Martyr (1818).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday January 4, 2026

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Monday January 5th

5:30 pm – Great Compline with the Great Blessing of Water

Feast of Theophany (Strict Fast)

Tuesday January 6th

8:45 am – Hours

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Feast of Theophany

Weekly Schedule

Sunday January 4th

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Liturgy

The Holy Trinity
By Fr. George Timko

It is through the life-giving power of the Holy Trinity that we are regenerated from death to Eternal Life. For this reason, we place all our trust for the salvation of our souls upon the Three Persons designated by these names: the Father who is the Fountain of Life; the Only-Begotten Son who is the Author of Life; the Holy Spirit of God who is the Giver of Life...

The Lord gave men the rule of baptismal invocation by this command: 'Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Why in the name of the Father? Because He is the primal cause of all things. Why in the name of the Son? Because He is the maker of the creation. Why in the name of the Holy Spirit? Because He is the power completing all. The generation or birth of believers takes place through the Holy Trinity so that he who is begotten by this Trinity is equally begotten of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Our life is one which comes to us by faith in the Holy Trinity. It has its source in God the Father of all; it flows through the son, and it works in us by the Holy Spirit. Having this full assurance, we are baptized as we are commanded; we believe as we are baptized; and

we stand firm as we believe. So that with one mind, our baptism, our faith and our worship are directed to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. [St. Gregory of Nyssa]

The Appearance of God
By Fr. George Timko

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises:
"Thou hast come and revealed Thyself,
O unapproachable Light."

-Kontakion of Theophany

On January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Festival of Theophany. This Festival is usually understood as the celebration of Christ's baptism. This is but one aspect of the celebration. There is another, deeper meaning of the Theophany Festival.

The proper name of the Feast is the "Holy Theophany." The word "Theophany" means "the appearance of God." So, the Feast of Theophany is dedicated primarily to a commemoration of God's appearance to mankind. [The Feast is often called "Epiphany" because the word "Epiphany" means an "appearance"; used to designate this Christian Feast Day, it implies a divine appearance.]

The feast of Theophany focuses on Christ's baptism because it was at the baptism of our Lord that God appeared in the form of the Trinity. This Trinitarian manifestation is clearly expressed in the troparion of the feast:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son;
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Here at the baptism of Christ, we see affirmed one of the central tenets of the Christian faith; that is, the belief that God is One in Essence and Three in

Persons. Here we see God revealing or making Himself known as a Triune Being. Here God makes an appearance, and we hear the Father speaking; we see the Holy Spirit descending; and we observe the Only-Begotten Son being baptized.

The doctrine of Trinity is a great mystery. Our limited minds find it difficult to fully comprehend. Yet the teaching of the Trinitarian concept expresses a meaningful truth about God that we can understand to some degree. This truth reveals that there is only one God who exists as Three Persons, that each Person possesses Divine Nature and Power, and that each Person is God. From all eternity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have been personally distinct yet living in a oneness of mind and spirit and being, and in a union of life and love and agreement.

In God there is a perfect fellowship of Three Persons, living in a divine unity of nature, will, knowledge, understanding, and activity. This relationship is deeply intimate and vital and personal. It consists of an ideal communal life of social harmony and friendship, of common purpose and sharing. It is a perfectly unified life of love and peace and goodness.

God has appeared precisely to restore us to that perfect life of unity and peace that prevails among the Divine Persons of the Trinity. He descended to elevate us to the fellowship of Trinitarian Life; that is, to lead us to the life of many living in social harmony and personal love.

Because of God's appearance, we know that God is a Trinity of Life and love, a Trinity that is supremely active in our human life. God appears to mankind because of His love for human beings. He comes to reconcile us with Himself. He appears to share Himself with us and to give us His life.

Therefore, we should do everything possible to enter into that Gift of Divine Life. Each and every one of us should earnestly desire and seek this unity and fellowship of God's Being. For the aim and goal of our Christian existence is to be united with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to share the blessed union of their Divine Life and Being.

Jesus Christ put it this way: It is the will of the Trinity that we be one as They are One; that we love one another as They love each Other; that we be united in the Trinity as They are united in each Other. [John 17]

God has given us the potential to share this Divine Unity of Life. He has endowed us with the affinity to be incorporated into the unified life of the Trinity. By abiding in spiritual communion with the Father, by living in Jesus Christ, by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to dwell in the holy fellowship of the Three Divine Persons.

The Trinitarian truth is very precious and meaningful to the Christian. For the Trinity is the source and pattern of our life and unity. This is why St. Gregory of Nyssa said: "a Christian is characterized by his faith and life in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Salvation means unity; unity with God and our fellow men in God. If we are to achieve the perfection of our being, we must be united with the Trinity. If we are to realize God's purpose for us, we must come to share the divine life of the Holy Trinity. Communing with the Trinity is our salvation, as we proclaim at every Divine Liturgy:

"We have seen the True Light; we have received the Heavenly Spirit; we have found the True Faith by worshipping the Undivided Trinity. For this is our salvation."

Schedule of Weekly Services

Saturday January 17th

4:30 pm - Great Vespers

Saturday January 24th

4:30 pm - Great Vespers

Friday January 30th

8:45 am – Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers and Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom.

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

God Grant You Many Years!

Birthdays

Jay (Nicholas) Willis 01/01

Natalia Fitts 1/15

Dmytro Yaremenko 1/17

Obadiah Fitts 1/19

Jillian Tomlinson 1/20

Travis (Gabriel) Steiner 1/29

Anniversaries

John/Viktoria Graham 01/15

2026 Monthly Donations for Church Votive Candles

The church uses 12-hour 51% Beeswax votives, which are a cleaner burning candle and protect the church walls from soot. The approximate monthly cost of these votives for weekend Vespers & Divine Liturgy is \$100.00 per month. If you would like to donate (as a memorial, thanksgiving, or just to donate), please see David Bartos. Thank you!

January

February

March

March Lent

April

Holy Week/Pascha

May

June

July

August

August Feast Days

September

October

November

December

December Feast Days

Annual Parish Meeting – January 18, 2026

Holy Cross annual parish meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 18, 2026 following Divine Liturgy. Per the Diocese of the South, Orthodox Church in America, Uniform Parish By-laws, Article IV, Section 1:

The Parish Meeting is the highest authority of the Parish as a civil corporation. All members of the Parish as defined in Article III, Section 1 which are those persons who have been baptized and chrismated, or otherwise canonically received, into the Church and who consciously uphold and profess the Orthodox Faith, who have been members for a period of six months and are at least eighteen years old may attend and vote at the Parish Meeting.

[tithe.ly.com](https://tithe.ly)

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

James Clark – Parishioner of St. Herman’s

Carolyn – Robert & Debra’s Forster’s daughter

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 5 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion *(Forefeast)*

Prepare, O Zebulon,
and adorn thyself, O Naphtali!
River Jordan, cease flowing,
and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized!
Adam, rejoice with our first Mother,
and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in Paradise;
for having seen you naked,
He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment.//
Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

Tone 3 Troparion *(Apostles)*

Holy Apostles of the Seventy
entreat the merciful God //
to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

Tone 5 Kontakion *(Resurrection)*

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man,//
and we cry to Thee: “O Lord, save us!”

Tone 2 Kontakion (Apostles)

O faithful, let us praise with hymns
the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ.
They have taught us all to worship the undivided Trinity,
for they are divine lamps of the faith.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Forefeast)

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:
"Do not be afraid to baptize Me.//
For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Sunday Before)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!
(Ps. 27:1a)

2 Timothy 4:5-8 (Epistle, Sunday Before Theophany)

Brethren: But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. O God, be bountiful to us and bless us, show the light of Thy countenance upon us, and have mercy on us. (Ps. 66:2)

V. That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all the nations. (Ps. 66:3)

Mark 1:1-8 (Gospel, Sunday Before Theophany)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of

sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading Mark 1:1-8

By Blessed Theophylact
Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

1-3. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" The evangelist calls John, who was the last of the prophets, the beginning of the Gospel of the Son of God. For the end of the Old is the beginning of the New Testament. The testimony concerning the Forerunner is taken from two prophets: "Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee". (Malachi 3:1) and "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." is from Isaiah 40:3. Here God the Father is speaking to God the Son, calling the Forerunner an "angel" because of John's angelic and all but immaterial way of life, and also because he comes to announce and to proclaim the coming of the Christ. John prepared the way of the Lord by preparing the souls of the Jews to accept Christ. He did this by baptizing, that is, immersing them in water. "Before Your face" means "Thy messenger will be close to Thee", showing the kinship of the Forerunner to Christ, just as those who go directly before a king in a procession are of the king's own household. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" refers, perhaps, not only to the Jordan desert but also to the desolate synagogue of the Jews. "The way" is the New Testament; the "paths" are the Old Testament which was well trodden. The Jews needed to be prepared for the way, that is, for the New Testament, and they also needed to make straight the Old Testament paths which they had once followed but from which they had turned and become wayward.

4-5. John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. The baptism of John did not bestow the

forgiveness of sins but instead only led mankind to repentance. Why then does Mark say here “for” or “unto” the remission of sins? We answer that John preached the baptism of repentance. Where did this preaching lead? Unto the remission of sins, that is, to the baptism of Christ, which bestows the remission of sins.¹ Likewise it might be said that a soldier arrives before the king to summon people to prepare the king’s meal, assuring them that it will be for their own good to do so. But that does not mean that the soldier himself will be the benefactor of those who prepare the king’s meal. Rather, that the soldier has only commanded the preparation of the meal, and it will be the king who will reward those who have prepared the meal and received him. In like manner, the Forerunner proclaimed the baptism of repentance so that those who repent and receive Christ would have the forgiveness of sins.

¹ A commentary in the Greek text adds: “For before the Savior, nowhere does it appear that remission of sins was given, but Christ was the first Who bestowed this gift through Himself and through His own baptism. Therefore, it is clear that the baptism of John was a preparation for the remission of sins.”

6. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. We have spoken of these things in the *Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* and we will now speak only of what we did not mention there. John’s clothing was a symbol of mourning, for the prophet is showing that he who repents must mourn for his sins. The hairshirt indicates mourning; the belt of dead animal flesh signifies the deadness of the fleshly Jews.² The Lord Himself says that John’s clothing indicates mourning, when He says, “We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented, (Matt 11:17)⁷ where “mourning” refers to the Forerunner’s way of life. For He says, “John came neither eating nor drinking, and you say, he hath a demon.” The food that John ate certainly showed his self-control.

² Elsewhere, Bl. Theophylact calls “fleshly” those Jews who understand the Mosaic law in a literal and superficial manner. See *The Explanation of St. Matthew*, ibid., p.125.

7-8. And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” John is saying, “I, the least of His servants, am not worthy to unloose the tied thong of His sandal.” It may also be understood as follows. All those

who came and were baptized by John, by their repentance were loosed from the bond of their sins when they later believed in Christ. Of all these John loosed the thongs and the bonds of their sins. But he was not able to loose the thong of Jesus, because he found no thong, that is, no sin in Him.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!