

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 8, 2019

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 8

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

12:00p.m. Play: *"On Life of St. Nicholas"*

WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 11

7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to

St. Spyridon (+348)

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 12

7:00.m. Vespers; Confessions

FRIDAY/DECEMBER 13

St. Herman of Alaska (+1837)

9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 14

9:30a.m. Akathist to Our Lord; Confessions

3:00p.m. Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY OF HOLY FOREFATHERS/DECEMBER 15

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

11:20a.m. Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

Fasting Modifications:

Sun/Dec. 08: fish, wine & oil

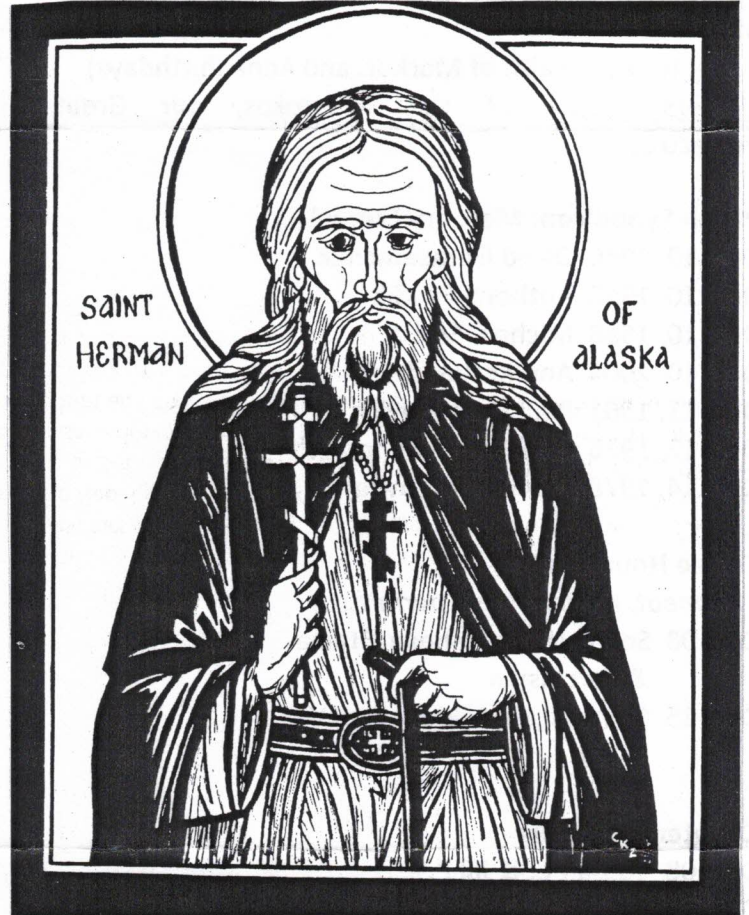
Tue/Dec. 10: wine & oil

Thurs/Dec. 12: wine & oil

Fri/Dec. 13: fish, wine & oil

Sat/Dec. 14: fish, wine & oil

Sun/Dec. 15: fish, wine & oil



A certain monastery had a sizable piece of the Holy Cross with Jesus' blood on it. In the fifteenth century, when the Turks began attacking various monasteries in Crete, the Cross was given to a family to protect it. Five centuries later its story begins. A three-year old boy named Kosta fell from a second floor balcony and the doctor pronounced him dead. The father went to get a coffin. The mother took out the piece of the Holy Cross that had been passed down to her and placed it on his heart. She prayed that God restore him and she wept bitterly. In a few minutes, he began to move his hands and feet and opened his eyes and began to speak. Since Kosta had not yet been baptized, they named him Stavros, which means Cross, and today he is a priest on Crete that heals with this Cross.

Offerings Week of December 8

Relic Candle: in memory of Ivanna; for the health of Alexia; in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalie, Anastasia, Melania and Ivanna; in memory of Nicholas, Eleanore, Ann Marie, John and Jerome.

Olive Oil: for the health and salvation of Vera and in memory of Jan; in honor of St. Spyridon and for the health of Alexander (birthday); in memory of Constantin, Gabriella, Floarea, Gheorghe, Elena, Petre, Maria-Valeria, Maria and their families; for the health of Basil (birthday).

Wine: for the health of Mark Jr. and Anna (birthdays)

Flowers: honor of the Theotokos, our Great Protectress.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 10, 1946 David Gerasemchuk
Dec. 10, 1956 Anthony Pawlik
Dec. 10, 1988 Michael Sofko
Dec. 10, 2004 Ann Kralovich
Dec. 11, 1961 Paul Romanovich
Dec. 12, 1976 Christian Swidonovich
Dec. 14, 1978 Pauline Jackowlew

Coffee Hour Hosting

No meat, no dairy (fish permitted)

Dec. 08 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Staina
& Sarchisian
Dec. 15 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda
& Sue

Counters Schedule

Dec. 08 Ciprian C. & Jill P.
Dec. 15 Irina S. & Lisa K.

Ushers Schedule

Dec. 08 Jerome S. & Adrian M.
Dec. 15 Dennis F.

Readers Schedule

Dec. 08 Austin K. /Dec. 15 Ciprian C.

Christmas Cookie Walk

Sunday, December 15th at 11:20a.m.

Bakers are sought. Baking in Upper Hall on Fri, Dec. 13th starting at 6:00p.m.

The 40 Day Nativity Lent: Nov. 15th thru Dec. 24th

This is one of the Four Lents of the year. A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. There are days that permit modifications. These are indicated on your parish wall calendar. When does the Nativity Fast end? After the Divine Liturgy, Dec. 25th.

The Mysteries of Holy Confession and Holy Communion Are Essential in Preparing for the Nativity of our Lord, December 25th

Regular communicants must receive these two Mysteries of the Church sometime in the months of November and/or December. Irregular communicants are encouraged to also receive these Holy Mysteries so as to celebrate in grace, the Nativity of Christ.

Ss. Peter & Paul Parish Library & Friends Presents:

A Story About the Life of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Sunday, December 8th at 12:00noon in the Upper Hall. All are Invited!

2020 Parish Wall Calendars on table in church nave

Please take one per family. Thanks.

The Master Parish Calendar for 2020

On our Parish website you will find the schedule for the entire year of 2020 – of course, subject to changes.

Changes to the Schedule

Due to weather or unforeseen happenings, the calendar schedule may need to be changed. These changes will be posted at least 1 hour before they are to take place. Make reference to 1) the parish website; 2) your parish e-mail list; 3) face book: friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church.

Nativity Lent Almsgiving/Charities

- *Annual Christmas Letter:* Our once a year collection to benefit the work of our charitable parish venue, St. Philaret the Merciful. Deadline is December 15th. Forms in church vestibule.
- *7th Annual Coat Drive:* Clean coats, hats, gloves and scarves may be placed in the bin in the lower hall for benefit of families of Appalachian Coalfield Mountains. Deadline is December 16th.

December 12 (December 25)

ST. SPYRIDON

An example of quiet, courageous, unshakeable faith

WE DO NOT KNOW exactly when St. Spyridon was born, because he was not a writer who left records of what he did and said. Much of his early life was during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian at the end of the third century.

Spyridon's personality was so delightful that he inspired people to tell stories about him, and these stories were intended to show that in all things he did, Spyridon felt the presence and help of God. These stories were not told with the same intention that we report facts today.

We know that Spyridon was born in Cyprus and was a shepherd. He married and had a daughter, but later when his wife died, the people wanted him to be a bishop. He was given the small, poor see of Trimythous on the eastern coast of Cyprus. Later he journeyed to the Council of Nicaea in 323 A.D.

One night, when Spyridon was watching his sheep, he fell asleep and robbers came to steal them. Later when he awoke, Spyridon found the robbers still there. They had not been able to steal the sheep nor run away because they were held by a kind of paralysis. Spyridon prayed for them and they were released. He felt sorry for them for their sinful experience and gave them a ram, telling them that another time, if they should be in need; they should ask for what they wanted and not come at night to steal.

On another occasion a traveler came to Spyridon when he had no bread in the house. It was Lent, but in order that his guest should not suffer, he ordered salt pork to be boiled for him. When they sat down to eat, the guest protested that he was a Christian and could not break his fast. There upon Spyridon set the example by eating himself and making his guest free to do likewise. He reminded him that the rules of the

Church are not intended to be unreasonable, but to make people better. "For the Christian no wholesome food is in itself forbidden. To the pure in heart all things are pure," he said.

When the Emperor Constantine called the Council at Nicaea to decide the great arguments that were tearing apart the Christian world, Spyridon was tending sheep and tending souls in Trimythous. He started out with his deacon, and each rode a mule. One of the mules was white and the other black. They were soon joined by other bishops who were much more citified and thought themselves much more important. They looked down upon the gentle, unlearned, humble Spyridon and decided that he would only make a nuisance of himself at the Council. After putting their heads together to decide how to prevent him from continuing the journey, they went out in the darkness of night to the field where the black mule and the white mule were grazing, and cut off their heads.

The next morning Spyridon's deacon got up before dawn and went out into the field to saddle the mules for an early start on their journey. He called the mules. There was no answering sound of feet. It was too dark to see, but he felt around and discovered the cold dead bodies of the mules and their cold cut-off heads. He was broken-hearted, and ran to report to Bishop Spyridon.

"Fear not," replied Spyridon. "With God's help all will be well."

He accompanied his terrified deacon to the field and told him to put the mules' heads back on their bodies. The deacon groped around in the dark and did as he was told. Spyridon knelt down and prayed for God's help. Suddenly the mules scrambled to their feet, kicked their legs and brayed.

Meanwhile the treacherous bishops who thought they had kept Spyridon from attending the Council had started early and ridden ahead. Suddenly they heard the pounding of hooves behind them. They looked around, and what was their surprise to see Spyridon on his white mule and the deacon on his black mule! But what was even more amazing was that the white mule had a black head, and the black mule had a white head! In the pitch darkness the deacon had made a mistake and fitted the bodies with the wrong heads.

THE GREAT MYSTERY

At the Council of Nicaea, Spyridon made a very important contribution. The argument then raging was no different from the argument among the churches today. Some of the bishops had been so trained in science and reasoning that it was impossible for them to believe in the great mystery of Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world in the form of man. They wanted the teaching of the Church to fit the things of this world, and they wanted Christ to be just another man. These people were called Arians because their leader was named Arius, and he came from Alexandria. The people from Alexandria were full of learning and polished speeches. One of these was a man named Evlogios, a pagan philosopher.

Spyridon told him simply that the truth about God and His goodness in sending His Son into the world to save men was not things that anybody could ever prove by argument. They would have to be believed by faith, by deciding to do so.

"Do you believe what I say?" Spyridon asked Evlogios in the presence of all the people in the Council.

"Yes," replied Evlogios, "I do, for I see that words and arguments cannot overcome the goodness that shows itself in an unlearned bishop."

"Then," replied Spyridon, "come with me to the church and receive the Sign of Faith." And Evlogios did so and was baptized.

St. Spyridon is often pictured holding a brick. This is because he used this argument with the Arians when they denied that the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity could be One: he said, "You deny that three can be one. Look at this brick. It is made of earth and water and fire; yet it is one."

St. Spyridon's feast day is December 12 (December 25). We should think of him when we need an example of quiet, courageous, unshakable faith.



St. Herman of Alaska

Wonderworker of All America

Commemoration Date: August 9th

Monk Herman was born in 1756 to a merchant class family in Serpukhov, Russia, part of the Moscow Diocese. As a young boy, he had a very prayerful life. At the age of sixteen, he decided to go to Holy Trinity Sergius Hermitage about twelve miles from St. Petersburg, Russia to study about the church.

From the time he was a young monk at the Monastery, many miracles began to occur in his life. He found a large sore on his neck that grew larger and larger and made it very difficult for him to swallow. His face became disfigured. He decided to lock himself inside his cell, a small room, and pray before the icon of the Theotokos. During the night, he dreamt the Theotokos healed him. When he awoke the next morning, the sore had disappeared.

He lived at the Hermitage for about five years and then decided to go to the Valaam Monastery near Finland. While Monk Herman was at the Monastery, he was chosen, along with nine other men, to go to Kodiak Island in North America. They walked across Russia and Siberia and then went by boat to Alaska. In 1794 his life on Kodiak Island began as he ministered to the Russian fur traders who had settled there.

About a mile and a half by water from Kodiak Island is Spruce Island. Monk Herman loved Spruce Island. It reminded him of Valaam. Spruce Island was covered with trees and for the first summer on the island Monk Herman lived in a cave he had dug by himself. After that summer, the Russian American Company built him a cell in which he lived for the next forty years.

He planted potatoes, cabbage, and many other vegetables and ate fish from the little river that ran through the middle of the island. Whether it was summer or winter, Father Herman wore the same clothes. This included a deerskin shirt without sleeves, shoes, klobuk, and a cassock. He slept on a wooden bench and his blanket was a wooden board.

While he was on the island, he loved to feed the animals by hand, especially the bears. He enjoyed giving advice to people that were having a hard life, and was especially concerned about the children. One day there was a flood on the island and everyone was frightened. The people asked Father Herman for help. He took the icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the ground and asked the people to pray. The water never went past the icon.

Another time, there was a forest fire on the island where Father Herman lived. He and his friend Ignatius dug a ditch and covered it with moss. The fire roared up the hill and stopped as soon as it reached the moss.

These are just some of the miracles that happened during Father Herman's long life. On December 13, 1837, at the age of 81, he died in his cell on Spruce Island. On August 9, 1970, the Orthodox Church in America canonized Father Herman as the First American Saint.

Holy Father Herman Folk Hymn

St. Herman of Alaska

This folk hymn in honor of St. Herman, whose feast is celebrated on December 13 and August 9, was written by the sisters of the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA. It is sung to the same melody as the familiar folk hymn to St. Nicholas. Permission is granted to copy and distribute.

As we sail by canoe or boat
To the isle where you once abode
Spruces tall and evergreen
Remember you for they have seen
Holy Father Herman!

You who are a Holy Fisherman
Caught us in your net of wisdom
Feed us with God's Holy Word
Guide us safely heaven-ward
Holy Father Herman!

You who came to us from afar
As a guide and a bright North Star
Giving Aleuts and us
Orthodoxy's sacred trust
Holy Father Herman!

Lead us like a shepherd leads his sheep
Show the light that we should keep
Lead us through our sins and wrongs
Help us sing a heavenly song
Holy Father Herman!

Simple monk living on Spruce Island
Loving all with God thus united
"Let us love God above all."
May we heed your holy call
Holy Father Herman!

You who love Herman the lowly
Give your life to our God wholly
For you Herman intercedes
Helping you in word and deeds
Holy Father Herman!

Your pure prayer calmed the stormy seas
Intercede for us in our needs.
With our hearts we praise you here
With you close we need not fear
Holy Father Herman!

You who lived in a hermit's cell
Came with you Hosts and Saints to dwell
"Christ is Risen", Herman sang
Joined by angels, heaven rang!
Holy Father Herman!

You who love children as your own
Pray for us now before God's throne
Shield us from all evil darts
Help us love God with our hearts
Holy Father Herman!