



St Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

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Priest Silouan Cohen

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Week of January 5, 2025

Sunday, January 5

TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 3. SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY. EVE OF THEOPHANY. Hieromartyr Theopemptus & Martyr Theonas. Venerable Synkletika of Alexandria. Prophet Micah the First. Saint Apollinaria of Egypt. Venerable Phosterius the Hermit. Venerable Means of Sinai. Venerable Gregory of Crete. Venerable Romanus the Martyr.

9:05am -The 3rd & 6th hours

9:30am - Divine Liturgy followed by the blessing of the waters

11:30am - Agape meal (coffee hour)

This Sunday's Hymns and Readings

Tone 3 *Troparion* *(Resurrection)*

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy.

Tone 4 *Troparion of the Forefeast*

The River Jordan was turned back by the mantle of Elisha, after Elijah had been taken up to heaven. The waters were parted in two, and the stream became a dry path. This was truly a type of baptism, by which we pass over the stream of life. Christ has shone forth in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.

Tone 3 *Kontakion* *(Resurrection)*

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Tone 2 *1st Kontakion* *(Forefeast)*

O Christ, in Thy compassion and infinite mercy, Thou art coming as a man to be baptized in the Jordan, in order to take away the many transgressions of us all, clothing me in the garment of ancient glory of which I was cruelly stripped bare.

Tone 4 *2nd 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)*

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

Tone 8 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. 66:1)* **V.** *That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all the nations. (Ps. 66:2)*

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 *(Sunday Before)*

This Week's Schedule

Monday, January 6. The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Venerable Macarius of Athos.

- **No services or offices hours**

Tuesday, January 7. Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John.

- **9:30am - 11:30am Fr Silouan's office hours**
- **[House blessings begin]**

Wednesday, January 8. Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Venerable George the Chozebite, Abbot. Venerable Domnica of Constantinople. Saint Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus. Venerable Gregory, Wonderworker of the Caves of Kiev.

- **6:00pm Daily vespers**

Thursday, January 9. Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Martyr Polyeuktos in Armenia. Hieromartyr Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia.

- **9:30am - 11:30am Fr Silouan's office hours**

Friday, January 10. Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa. Saint Theophan the Recluse, Bishop of Tambov.

- **No services or office hours.**

Saturday, January 11. Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Venerable Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch.

5:00pm Great Vespers

Announcements

Blessing of the waters

This Sunday, January 5, just before the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, I will serve the rite of the blessing of the waters. I also have invited the faithful of St Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Mission from Paris to join us for these celebrations. Please bring a food and/or drink item.

On the use of holy water

Holy water is sanctified for our spiritual benefit. It is used to bless the faithful at church, to bless their homes, vehicles, boats, livestock, gardens, beehives, icons, church items, clerical vestments, etc. It is also given to the sick and suffering for the healing of soul and body. Due to its sanctification, I do not encourage the faithful to take holy water home – especially in large amounts which are often neglected. Instead, the faithful are encouraged to consume a bit of holy water any time they are at church. The holy water will be stored in a large glass container with a spigot for easy dispensing, held up by the wooden frame already in the narthex. A stainless steel cup will be hung on the frame for common use. If we run low on holy water, there are other times throughout the year when water is typically blessed, such as the mid-feast of Pentecost and the Procession of the Cross in August.

House blessings

There are two sign up sheets available, each posted on the bulletin boards in the narthex and activity center. Please sign up ASAP. If you live outside of Grayson County, however, or the suggested times truly do not work for you, contact me directly to schedule. Before I arrive, please make sure your home is clean, all electronic devices are turned off, your prayer corner is neat, and you have a candle and a list of *immediate* living and departed ready. No meal or honorarium is expected.

Annual meeting

Please make sure that you mark your calendars for Sunday, January 26 as we will hold our annual church meeting after a shortened coffee hour. We will discuss our financial status and outlook for 2025. I also will formally introduce myself and my intentions as the priest of St Paul's: all liturgical, sacramental, and non-liturgical intentions and expectations. All are strongly encouraged to attend, but only members are allowed to vote (recall the defining terms of membership on your Time, Talent, and Treasure cards).

Confession

I will resume hearing confessions beginning this Wednesday, January 8. Eventually, confessions will be heard only in my office, as I would like to keep the Nave as a place only for the words of the divine services and the proclamation of the scriptures. When that time comes (that is, when my office is ready) I will notify everyone.

A Word from the Fathers

“Because we know and believe that God is our Father, we view the church, especially when we celebrate the Liturgy, as our true home. We come in and go out freely, we are happy to be here, we make the sign of the cross, we light our candles, we speak with our friends, and it is easy to see that the Orthodox feel that the church is their home. And the church is our home. Our family is the gathering (*synaxis*) of the church. Our family is not simply our children and relatives, however many we have. It is rather all of us, all humanity, including all those who have turned aside to the left or to the right, or who have perhaps not yet even thought about God, or dared to admit that their heart is filled with cries and groans, and that, with these, they hope to open heaven, or that God will answer them, but they are hesitant and are ashamed.

The Liturgy is our family, our gathering, our house. And what a spacious house it is! Together with us are those who are absent, along with sinners,

and the wicked, and the dead, indeed, even those who are in hell, but who may yet remember something about God. And who knows how many of these will find relief, be drawn out of Hades, and even dragged up from the depths of hell, thanks to the prayers of the Church, her memorial services, and divine liturgies. This is our home. We believers have such a large house!"

--Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra, "Our Church Attendance: Reflections on the Divine Liturgy of St James" *a sermon delivered in the Church of our Lady Katholike, Limassol, Cyprus, on Sunday, October 23, 1988 in The Church at Prayer: The Mystical Liturgy of the Heart, ed. The Holy Convent of the Annunciations, Ormylia, Greece (Athens: Indiktos, 2005), pp. 83-4*