



The Witness

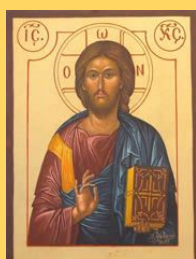


Metropolis of Denver

The Monthly Newsletter of Holy Apostles Orthodox Christian Church
Cheyenne, WY

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Prince Vladimir and the Baptism of Russia: The Blade of Christ's Grace

by Archpriest Andrei Tkachev

(written for the commemoration of 1,000 years after the repose of St. Vladimir, the Equal-to-the-Apostles)

Vladimir baptized Russia, but first he was baptized himself. Here is Constantine the Great, who presided over the First Ecumenical Council and was called an "external bishop," who patronized the Church in the Empire - but he was not baptized until he was approaching death. The moral sense of Vladimir is dearer, because before changing the lives of others, he himself changed.

There is no need to doubt his holiness, as is the custom of some to do. And let us not be confused by the sinful darkness in which he passed his life before baptism. Rare is the kind of holiness when someone is pure from childhood to old age. More often, people's lives are divided in two: "before" and "after."

Christ's grace, as apprehended by man, is a dissecting blade. And here it is important to understand that the truly holy person is not one who was flawless from childhood, but rather one who after receiving grace does not allow himself to return to that which was "before." Vladimir did not go back. Vladimir is holy.

He is very important for us, this Prince, who before

continued on next page...

baptism bore in himself all the ailments of the popular soul. In lust he was insatiable, to intoxication he was not indifferent, in wrath he was terrible, in mercenary deeds he was cunning. This is the portrait of a true pagan, the son of passions and the servant of demons. Such a person is not ashamed of sin, but only of weakness and failure; he hates his enemies with all his soul, and does not give favor to any weak views. He cherishes his passions and, looked at from the outside, the mind cannot imagine what would have to happen for this questionable “child of nature” to change his way of life for the better.

Such, most likely, were the Teutons whom the Romans systematically and brutally conquered and forcibly ameliorated. Such were our neighbors to the north: the Normans, who for centuries wrought terror on all their neighbors by their raids. The morals of these historical persons were humbled and tamed by missionaries and preachers.

But our Prince humbled himself and then showed the path to another life to his people. In our moral rebirth there was no participation by either the agents of cultural transmission from occupying armies, nor detachments of foreign missionaries. The Prince is important to us in that he himself changed. I ask that you draw your attention to this thought. Like a river, it divides into two branches.

First, many rulers suffer from the false idea that they need to rule well, while their own morality is something unimportant. Either they dissemble, or they are unaware that an unpurified person cannot purify others. Therefore one needs to look upon Vladimir as a teacher, who humbled himself and came to know God before he began to lead the simple people to the Dnieper for baptism.

The second point concerns all of us in general. It consists of the fact that Vladimir changed! We so rarely and so poorly allow ourselves changes for the better. We all put off our correction, or we put off our half-hearted attempts until the New Year, or until Monday.

And we can certainly not accuse God of our futility. He grants grace, does not refuse to come to our assistance, and says to all the faithful: He shall



cry unto Me, and I will hearken unto him (Psalm 90:15). It seems that most of us are double-minded and weak-willed, but the Prince-Baptizer was not. Vladimir arose from the baptismal font another person. His lust faded, his cruelty was replaced by the desire to feed the hungry, and his proud and cunning thoughts were supplanted in his soul by the simplicity of the Gospel. In this we ought to imitate the Prince.

He who is capable of understanding the invaluable importance of a change for the better, accomplished by man once and for all, will never doubt the holiness of a changed man. And it is unimportant what sins were earlier hidden in this man.

Vladimir, as Tradition states, watched from the hills upon the Dnieper, where the old and the young of his people were baptized in the coastal waters. Waves of delight and great thoughts filled his astounded mind while the waves of the Dnieper cleaned people in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

There, raising his hands like Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, he prayed for the renewal of his people. Let it be known to us that prayer that is fiery and from the heart does not die. Directed to the Living God, it itself becomes living and immortal, and continues to sound and act throughout the ages. Therefore, on the Day of the Baptism of Russia, let us labor to stand noetically at the foot of that hill on which the Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince prayed with raised hands. He prays for us, too, and God hearkens to his prayer.



Sermon on the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

by St John of Kronstadt

"Magnify O my soul, the honourable Translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven." (Refrain for the 9th Ode of the Canon)

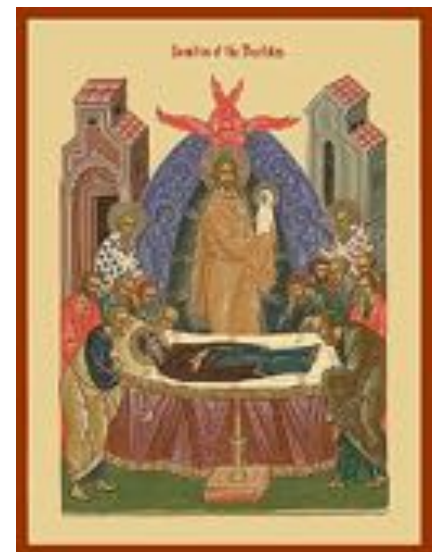
Let us be happy, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exists on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our

Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonor the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth!

Today the Holy Church solemnly glorifies the honorable Dormition or translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. A wonderful translation - she died without serious illness, peacefully. Her soul is taken up in the divine hands of Her Son and carried up into the heavenly abode, accompanied by the sweet singing of angels. And then, her most pure body is transferred by the apostles to Gethsemane where it is honorably buried, and on the third day it is resurrected and taken up to heaven. You see this on the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos. On it is represented the life-bearing body of the Theotokos laying on a bier, surrounded by the apostles and hierarchs, and in the center of the icon the Lord holding in His hands the most pure soul of the Theotokos. The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world.

We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the cross. But there is a translation, i.e, a rearrangement of his condition, i.e. his soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep”. It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially the person’s preparation throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention,



spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbor.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. "We will come to him and make our dwelling with him" (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.



Charities Committee

Family Promise is the new name for Interfaith Families Support Services, of IFSS as we often referred to it. We have partnered with St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Community Action of Laramie County to feed homeless families in our city. Holy Apostle families plan, cook, deliver and serve dinner for six nights every 9 weeks. The families are housed at St. Mark's and their community provides over night coverage and breakfast and lunch food. We are providing meals August 3- August 8. Remember we do this every 9 weeks, so you have about 6 times a year to contribute! If you want more information or if you want to help contact Jamie for details.



August 16- September 13 We will start collecting items for Blessing Bags. These bags will be slightly different then the ones we did in the past. Look for details displayed at church.

SAVE THE DATES: While planning for school and winter this fall

Coat drive in October: Remember to save your no longer wanted or too small gently used coats, hats and mittens to donate



Monday: October 12, baking treats to take to Whispering Chase, there is no school this day

Wednesday, Nov 11, baking of cookies for FE Warren Airforce Base Cookie Drive for Airmen living in the barracks. This is an early release from school date.



Reminder: Use your King Soopers Cards! We have sold 34 cards, only 15 cards have been reloaded and we have spent \$2,373.00 for the month!

Just think if we were using all 34 cards, we could easily reach \$5,000.00 a month in reloads and receive \$250.00 for our church. In one year we would have earned \$3000.00!

And all we did was buy our groceries at King Soopers with our reloadable gift cards. (We've already received our first check of \$269!!!)



Remember to use Amazonsmile! <https://smile.amazon.com/45-5331534>, every time you place an order Holy Apostles gets a percentage!



Thanks for your help!

Next on Media Mondays...

In August, we will begin a new series for Media Mondays: Five lectures by Fr. Josiah Trenham on the topic of "The Good Wife." A companion series to our perviously-listened-to series, "The Good Husband," this sequel series looks at the proper role of a the wife in a marriage according to the Scriptures and various Saints of the Church. Lectures can range from 35 minutes to an hour. Keep in mind that, as with the previous series, this topic is suitable for men and women!!! They are particularly great for couples to listen to together!!! The lectures will be as follows:

August 17 - The Good Wife as the Help-Mate

August 24 - The Good Wife as the Homemaker

August 31 - The Good Wife as the Lover and the
Healing Potent Drug

September 7 - NO SESSION

September 14 - The Good Wife as the Heart of the Family

September 21 - The Good Wife as the Faithful Friend



Some Practical Liturgical Notes...

There are times during the Divine services in which we actually refrain from crossing ourselves. For this month's practical liturgical notes, we will explain the two more common times in which people typically cross themselves when, in fact, they should not.

1) When **NOT** to cross oneself:

- a. During the Praying of the 6 Psalms of Orthros (These Psalms are traditionally understood to be those which will be read at the Final Judgment; thus, from the beginning of the psalms until the very end - even at the "Glory to the Father..." in the middle - we remain standing, motionless, not even crossing ourselves.)
- b. When the Priest blesses or censes the congregation (In this case, we do not cross ourselves as we are already being blessed; instead, we *receive* the blessing being offered through the bowing of our heads.)

A Message from Fr. Paul

Dear Ones in Christ,

As you have heard me discuss many times, the Orthodox Church is a worshipping Church... In fact, man is - as intended in his creation by God - a *worshipping* being; we are at our most authentic when we are worshipping God in purity and without distraction. We were made for worship, not because God *requires* or *is benefitted* by our worship but because *we* are benefitted by it. In true and perfect worship, we find the truth, beauty, and love for which our souls so eagerly yearn.

The pinnacle of worship in the Church, of course, is the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is an expression of joy, a “crying out” to the Lord in unison with the Angelic Hosts who ceaselessly worship Him in Heaven. This is not mere poetic babble; many Saints have seen, as the Liturgy began, the Heavens open and Angels descend into the church. Even if we cannot see this, we have the certainty that it happens.

But the Divine Liturgy is so much more beyond even this. Perhaps the most common descriptive name of the Liturgy is “The Heavenly Banquet.” This name makes a great deal of sense, as the Liturgy’s main purpose for us is to convey an actual *meal*: the very Body and Blood of Christ. The true success of a parish is found primarily in how much reverence, love, and seriousness is conveyed by parishioners toward the Liturgy. In this sense, the Heavenly Banquet is much like an earthly banquet: we show our love and respect for our hosts by how we behave and conduct ourselves in their home. Do we dress well? Do we pay attention to the conversation or let our minds wander? Do we become distracted by our phones or other things? Do we constantly step in and out?

One very important question we could ask is about earthly parties/banquets is: Do we show up on time and stay until the evening is over? Certainly, we don’t finish eating and then immediately get up to leave. This principle is true at the Heavenly Banquet as well.

Unfortunately, I have seen that sometimes as much as a quarter of our congregation is gone before the end of the Divine Liturgy. While there certainly is preparation to be made for fellowship, we do not wish to offend our Divine Host - Jesus Christ - by leaving His Heavenly Banquet in order to prepare an earthly one.

For this reason, beginning on the Sunday of August 9th, I ask that everyone remain in the Nave until the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy (at *Through the Prayer of our Holy Fathers...*). After I finish consuming the Holy Gifts and before de-vesting, I will come into the fellowship hall to bless the food. Because we have announcements, the passing out of Antidoro, and the Thanksgiving Prayers after Communion, this should give whoever is in charge of fellowship that day time to prepare; if additional time will be needed, I ask that preparation be done before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.

In this way, nobody will have to leave the Liturgy early where our greatest fellowship takes place. I thank you in advance for being mindful of this request.

With great love in Christ,

✠ *Fr Paul*

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Assisting in Upcoming Services...

(August & September)



Prosforo

8/2/15 (2) - Lexie Garrett
8/6/15 - Adrienne Johansen
8/9/15 (2) - Fay Zaharas
8/15/15 - Angie Galeotos
8/16/15 (2) - Sarah Pullos
8/23/15 (2) - Kathy Joannides
8/30/15 (2) - Stacey Galeotos
9/1/15 - Presbyteria Lavinia Truebenbach
9/6/15 (2) - Stephan Pappas
9/13/15 (2) - Laura Smith
9/14/15 - Estelle Haeefe
9/20/15 (2) - Adrienne Johansen
9/26/15 - Tina Marquardt
9/27/15 (2) - Jamie Pullos

Fellowship

8/2/15 - Driko & Christine Pappas

8/9/15 - Greg & Tara Pappas
8/16/15 - Chris & Jackie Karajamnis
8/23/15 - George & Fay Zaharas
8/30/15 - Stephan & Kay Pappas
9/6/15 - Rob & Tina Marquardt
9/20/15 - Julie Lehman, Kayla & Kaycee Rambo
9/27/15 - Bob & Ellyn Phillips

Greeter

8/2/15 - Tyler Garrett
8/9/15 - Jamie Pullos
8/16/15 - Tim Joannides
8/23/15 - Dave Johansen
8/30/15 - Sarah Pullos
9/6/15 - Driko Pappas
9/13/15 - Cameron Karajanis
9/20/15 - Zoe Christopoulos
9/27/15 - Driko Pappas

*Thank you for your service
and dedication!!!*

Please keep an eye out for
updated lists!!!

Building Cleaning and Lawn Maintenance ...

(August & September)

Interior Cleaning: Week of...

8/2/15 - Nick Bellack

8/9/15 - Nancy Wagner & Zoe
Christopulos

8/16/15 - Stacey Galeotos, Andrea
Hanslovan, and Irina Needhamer

8/23/15 - Driko & Christine Pappas

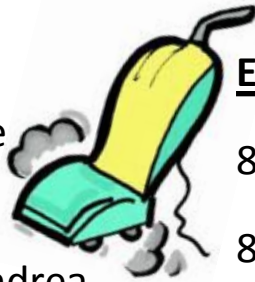
8/30/15 - Nick Bellack

9/6/15 - Nancy Wagner & Zoe
Christopulos

9/13/15 - Stacey Galeotos, Andrea
Hanslovan, and Irina Needhamer

9/20/15 - Driko & Christine Pappas

9/27/15 - Nick Bellack



Exterior Lawn Care: Week of...

8/2/15 - Cameron Karajanis

8/9/15 - Chris Karajanis

8/16/15 - Jared Marquardt

8/23/15 - George Zaharas

8/30/15 - Steve Zaharas

9/6/15 - Cameron Karajanis

9/13/15 - Chris Karajanis

9/20/15 - Jared Marquardt

9/27/15 - George Zaharas



*Thank you for your service
and dedication!!!*

Please keep an eye out for
updated lists!!!

Many Years!!!

Happy Birthday to...

Nancy Wagner (8/5)

Fay Zaharas (9/5)

Nick Bellack (8/10)

Tina Marquardt (9/8)

Alicia Schamber (8/14)

Alexis Zaharas (9/12)

Jackson Garrett (8/16)

Katie Zaharas (9/12)

Dr. Take Pullos (8/22)

David Johansen (9/19)

Kelly Zaharas (8/26)

Greg Pappas (9/20)

Tara Pappas (8/30)

Rebecca Pullos (9/22)

Jarrold Turner (9/3)

Charlie Radich (9/24)

Happy Anniversary to...

Fr. Paul & Pres. Lavinia (8/17)

Sam & Stacey Galeotos (9/10)

Rob & Tina Marquardt (8/18)

Andy & Barbara Andrikopoulos
(9/27)

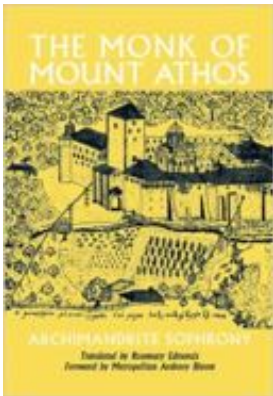
Dr. Take & Jamie Pullos (9/6)

(If you don't see your birthday or anniversary here, please forgive me for missing it, and let me know when it is! - Fr. Paul)

Conversing with the Fathers...



Each month, our “Conversing with the Fathers” class will meet to discuss one of the works of a Holy Father of Orthodoxy. This is a wonderful opportunity to read, study, and converse about the Divinely-breathed words of the Saints of our Church. The class meets the first Monday of each month. Please join us in this holy work! Below are the first three books of our series...

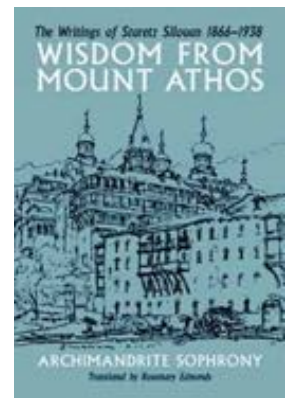


July selection (to be read in July and discussed at the August meeting):

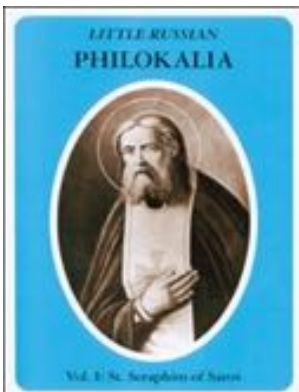
For our July selection, we will read the short life of St. Silouan the Athonite: The Monk of Mount Athos. This work was written by St. Silouan's disciple, Elder Sophrony of Essex. Elder Sophrony, though not officially glorified as of yet, is no doubt also a Saint of the Church. This is a book, then, about a modern Saint written by a modern Saint! For the month following, we will continue with St. Silouan's own counsels, so this is a great opportunity to get to know a couple modern holy figures of our Church!

August selection (to be read in August and discussed at the September meeting):

For August, we will continue our examination of the 20th-century Saint, Silouan the Athonite. Having finished a book about his life, we will move on to a book containing his teachings and writings. St. Silouan wrote very little... and nothing formally. He wrote thoughts on scraps of papers. But these, along with personal teachings relayed to Elder Sophrony, have been compiled into this volume. This book is a great opportunity to gaze into the mind and heart of a modern Orthodox Saint!



September selection (to be read in August and discussed at the September meeting):



For our September selection, we will read volume 1 of the “Little Russian Philokalia” series on St. Seraphim of Sarov. The book contains a short life of St. Seraphim, one of the most beloved and universally-venerated Russian Orthodox Saints, along with his instructions to laymen and monks and his very famous and Spirit-filled conversation with his spiritual child on the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. This conversation is a **MUST-READ** for all Orthodox. This volume can be found at www.sthermanmonastery.com

Some Words from Modern Saints & Elders...

St. Silouan the Athonite (+1938) - Commemorated Sept 24



1) "When bad thoughts are planted in you, then cry to God: 'Lord, my Maker and Creator. You see that my soul is in agony from bad thoughts. Have mercy on me.' Teach yourself to root out thoughts immediately. But when you forget and don't root them out immediately, then offer repentance. Work on this, so that you get a habit."

2) "Filled with love, the holy Apostles went into the world, preaching salvation to mankind and fearing nothing, for the Spirit of God was their strength. When St. Andrew was threatened with death upon the cross if he did not stay his preaching he answered: 'If I feared the cross I should not be preaching the Cross.'" In this manner all the other Apostles, and after them the martyrs and holy men who wrestled against evil, went forward with joy to meet pain and suffering. For the Holy Spirit, sweet and gracious, draws the soul to love the Lord, and in the sweetness of the Holy Spirit the soul loses her fear of suffering."

3) "If the Lord has left us ignorant of the ordering of many things in this world, then it means it is not necessary for us to know: we cannot compass all creation with our minds. But the Creator Himself of heaven and earth and every created thing gives us to know Him in the Holy Spirit."

4) "I ask you to try something. If someone grieves you, or dishonors you, or takes something of yours, then pray like this: "Lord, we are all your creatures. Pity your servants, and turn them to repentance," and then you will perceptibly bear grace in your soul. Induce your heart to love your enemies, and the Lord, seeing your good will, shall help you in all things, and will Himself show you experience. But whoever thinks evil of his enemies does not have love for God and has not known God."

5) "Whoever will not love his enemies cannot know the Lord and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us to love our enemies in such way that we pity their souls as if they were our own children."

6) "It is my belief that one should eat just so much that after a meal one feels like praying."

7) "If we know many things let us thank the Lord for the knowledge given to us. But knowledge by itself is not enough: the fruits of the Holy Spirit, be it but one small seed that will grow in good time and bear abundant increase, must be in the soul."



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*All proceeds of this dinner event will go directly to the building fund of
Holy Apostles Orthodox Christian Church of Cheyenne.*



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Future Dates to Keep in Mind...

Thursday, 8/13 – 4:30pm Next
PC Meeting

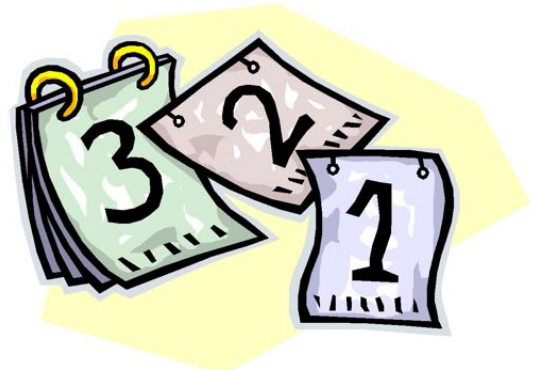
Sunday, 8/16 – Anniversary
Picnic after Liturgy (at HA)

Monday, 9/14 – 5:00pm
Fundraising Meeting

Sunday, 10/11 – General
Assembly after Liturgy

Sunday, 11/1 – Stewardship
Sunday

Saturday, 11/14 – Open House
& Car Raffle Drawing





AUGUST

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	 1 6:00pm Great Vespers
 2 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy 6:00pm Paraklesis	 3 9:30am Paraklesis (at SCH) 12:00pm Stewardship mting 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Husband 5	 4 7:00am Men's Group 5:00pm - Conversing with the Fathers 6:00pm - Paraklesis	 5 5:30pm Great Vespers at HA	 6 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Holy Transfiguration 6:00pm Paraklesis (at SCH)	 7 6:00pm Paraklesis	 8 6:00pm Paraklesis (at SCH)
 9 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy 6:00pm Paraklesis	 10 6:00pm Paraklesis (at SCH)	 11 7:00am Men's Group 6:00pm Paraklesis	 12 6:00pm Paraklesis (at SCH)	 13 12:30 Women's Study Group 4:30pm PC Meeting 6:00pm Paraklesis	 14 5:30pm Great Vespers at SCH	15 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Dormition of the Theotokos
16 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy Parish anniversary picnic after Liturgy	17 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Wife 1	18 7:00am Men's Group	 19 6:00pm - Paraklesis	20	 21	22
23 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	24 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Wife 2	25 7:00am Men's Group	 26 6:00pm - Paraklesis	27 12:30 Women's Study Group	 28	 29 9:30 Liturgy at SCH - Beheading of St John the Baptist
30 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	31 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Wife 3	1	2	3	4	5  = strict fast  = wine/oil allowed  = fish allowed

SEPTEMBER

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
30	31	1 8:45 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy - Ecclesiastical New Year	 2 6:00 pm Paraklesis	3	 4	5 6:00pm Great Vespers
6 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	7 No Media Monday	8 7:00am Men's Group 8:45 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy - Nativity of the Theotokos 5:30pm - Conversing with the Fathers	 9 6:00 pm Paraklesis	10 12:30 Women's Study Group	 11	12
13 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy HAYA meeting after Liturgy	 14 8:45 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy - Elevation of the Holy Cross 5:00pm Fundraising meeting 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Wife 4	15 7:00am Men's Group	 16 6:00 pm Paraklesis	17	 18	19
20 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	21 5:30pm Media Monday: The Good Wife 5	22 7:00am Men's Group	 23 6:00 pm Paraklesis	24 12:30 Women's Study Group	 25	26 8:45 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy - Translation of John the Theologian
27 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	28 5:30pm Media Monday: Subject TBA	29 7:00am Men's Group	 30 6:00 pm Paraklesis	1	2	3  = strict fast  = wine/oil allowed  = fish allowed