

The Epistle

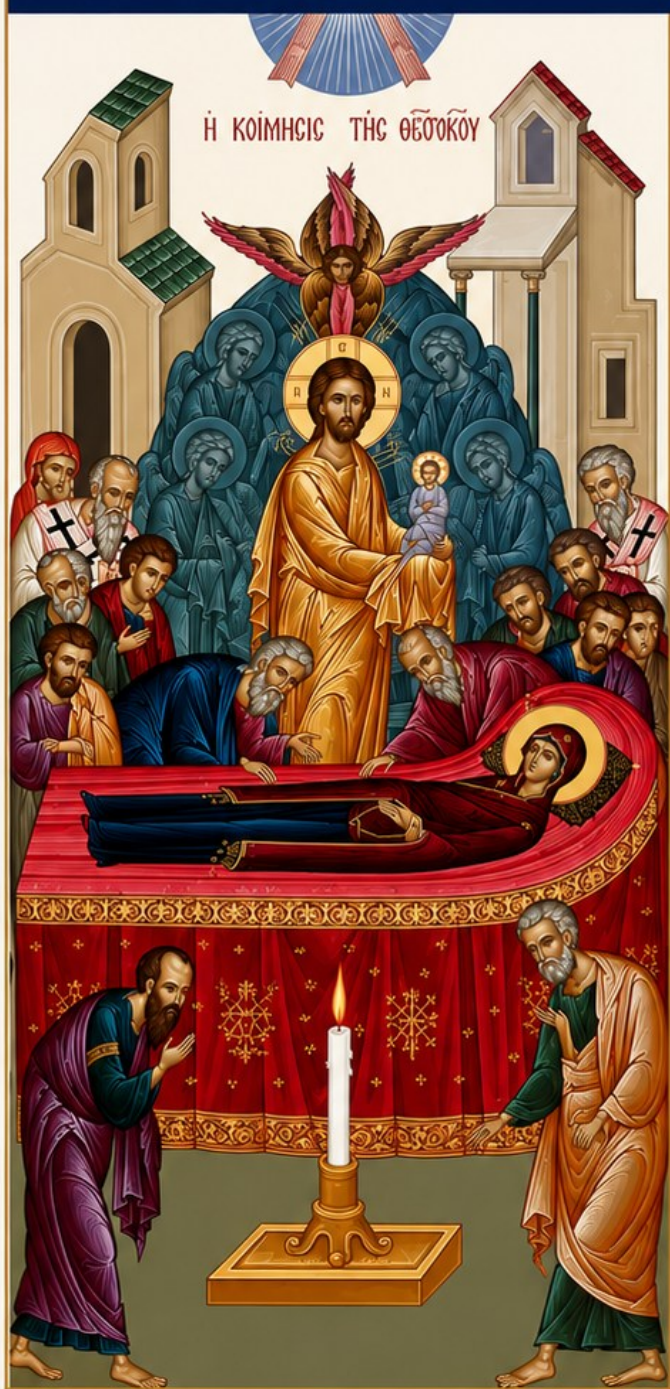
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church

Serving Southeastern Idaho & Western Wyoming

SEPTEMBER 2026



VOLUME 15, ISSUE 9



Dear Faithful,

As we enter the new **Ecclesiastical Year**, let us give thanks to God for the many blessings He has poured upon us and for the opportunity to begin anew in His love. This sacred season invites each of us to renew our commitment to Christ and to seek a deeper, more personal relationship with Him.

The Church, in her wisdom, gives us this new beginning not simply to mark the passing of time, but to remind us that every day is **an opportunity for repentance, spiritual renewal, and growth in holiness**. As the Apostle Paul reminds us, ***“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”*** 2 Corinthians 6:2.

Each new year is a gift from God—a fresh invitation to draw closer to Him and to allow His Grace to transform our hearts. Rather than measuring our lives by the calendar alone, let us **measure them by our love for Christ**, our faithfulness in prayer, and our willingness to serve one another with humility and compassion.

As faithful Orthodox Christians, let us make this year one of spiritual growth. May we dedicate ourselves more faithfully to prayer, the reading of Holy Scripture, participation in the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Mysteries, fasting, and acts of love and mercy. Let us strive to make Christ the center of our homes and our daily lives, seeking His will in every decision we make. Even small, faithful steps taken each day—offering a sincere prayer, reading a passage from the Gospel, forgiving someone who has hurt us, or extending kindness to a neighbor—become powerful means by which God sanctifies our lives. As the Lord Himself teaches us, ***“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”*** Matthew 4:17, calling us continually back to Him with humility and hope.

As we draw closer to our Lord, our hearts are transformed by His grace, enabling us to become living

Continued page 2

witnesses of His light in our homes, our parish, and our community. The world longs for the peace, hope, and joy that are found only in Christ.

May we be instruments of His love, welcoming those who seek Him and encouraging one another to persevere in the life of faith. Let us also remember that no one walks this journey alone. **We are the Body of Christ, called to pray for one another, bear one another's burdens, and rejoice together in God's blessings.**

May this new Ecclesiastical Year be a time of renewal, repentance, and joy for each of us. As a parish family, let us continue to worship with thankful hearts, strengthen our ministries, welcome new faces, and grow together in the love of Christ. May our parish always be a place where the Gospel is lived, where faith is nurtured, and where every person experiences the mercy and compassion of our Lord. May He grant us the wisdom to seek His Kingdom above all else and the courage to remain steadfast in our Orthodox faith until the end.

In Christ,

Father Constantine

Sunday, September 6th

Orthros & Epistle Reader: **Jacob Denton**

Ushers: **Goldie Homan, Ron Sims**

Prophoron: **Hala Dib**

Agape Fellowship: **Phil and Goldie Homan**

Sunday, September 13th Elevation of Holy Cross

Orthros & Epistle Reader: **John Speck**

Ushers-**Tressa Rockwood, Tony Hoskin**

Prophoron: **Sophie McCurry**

Agape Fellowship: **NEED HOST**

Sunday, September 20th

Orthros & Epistle Reader: **John Apostle**

Ushers: **Sophie McCurry, Kade Schmalz**

Prophoron: **Terri Pliley Owen**

Agape Fellowship: **David Harmer in Memory of his wife Jeanne.**

Sunday, September 27th

Orthros: **Steven Swanson, Epistle: Alex Tarasau**

Ushers: **, Dave Harmer, Jaque Swanson**

Prophoron: **Hala Dib**

Agape Fellowship: **Jacque & Steven Swanson**

MINISTRY PROGRAM CALENDAR

Parish Council Meeting, Sunday, September 6th

Catechism Class resumes **Tues. September 15th at 5:30pm.** Zoom or In-person

ZOOM for Bible Study & Catechism Class

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87525594697?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87525594697?pwd=TLIKV2pkcmFTdStza0RLMXkvNC9ydz09)

pwd=TLIKV2pkcmFTdStza0RLMXkvNC9ydz09

Meeting ID: 875 2559 4697, Passcode: 477296

Bible Study, Tuesdays at **6:30pm**, beginning

Tuesday September 15th Zoom or In-person

Sunday School Classes Begin **September 20th**

Ladies Philoptochos Meeting **Sunday, Sept. 20th**

A 1 YEAR MEMORIAL on Sunday, Sept 21st will be said for the servant of God **Jeanne Harmer**. The service is offered by her husband David. Everlasting be her Memory!

WORKING AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPS OUR SOUL

In our quest for union with God we cannot limit ourselves to the development of all the possibilities inherent in the physical world. We must also reach out and develop that which is spiritual in each of us. It is through our cooperation with others in parish activities that we learn how to help others as well as ourselves, to develop our spiritual potential.

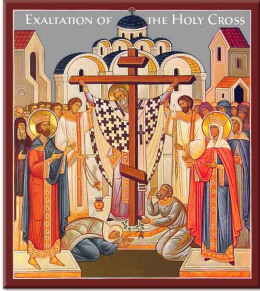
As we work on our own spiritual growth, through discipline of our actions and by increasing attention we give to every activity, we become more capable of doing good to others. We learn to be good neighbors. We learn to love and be loved. We find the way to live the life prescribed and lived by Christ Himself. We come closer to God in the process.

After months of preparation we recently held our Annual Greek Festival. This is a very large event. There are some who say this activity is all about making money for the parish's Building and Restoration Program. But there are others who say it's about developing our souls.

As we work together with a common purpose we learn to set aside our differences, we take action to help each other, we put into practice to the best of our ability the virtues we have gained. As we are challenged during this activity, we can see immediately our weaknesses and where we need to grow.

When we hold a spiritual aim for this kind of activity it becomes a process of spiritual growth for all of us. Our difficulties become opportunities for the expression of love and spiritual growth.

FEAST DAY of the ELEVATION of the HOLY and LIFE-GIVING CROSS WILL BE OBSERVED SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH



The Sunday School students are asked to attend the Divine Liturgy and to be part of the procession of the Holy Cross. Parents are asked to please make every effort to attend this memorable day in the life of their child.

At the conclusion of the litany a Special Blessing Prayer will be bestowed on the students as they begin their classes, growing closer to our Lord.

In our Orthodox liturgical observance, the *Universal Elevation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross* commemorates both the finding of the *True Cross in 326 A.D.* and its recovery from the Persians in 628 A.D., and is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the church year. September 14 is always a fast day and the eating of meat, dairy products and fish is prohibited. The Saturday and Sunday before and after September 14 are also commemorated with special Epistle and Gospel readings about the Cross at the Divine Liturgy.

Due to distances of our parishioners the parish will observe the Feast day of the Elevation of the Holy Cross on Sunday Sept 13th. The cross is taken from the altar, placed on a tray that has been decorated with fresh basil leaves and flowers with candles burning before it and processed around the sanctuary while singing "Holy God." The priest carries the Cross up to the Royal Doors and places it on a sacramental table in the middle of the Solea (front of Altar steps). A censuring is performed around the cross to the thrice-repeated singing of the Troparion, "Save, O Lord, Thy people," after which the exaltation of the cross and the blessing of the people on all four sides of the sacramental table takes place to multiple repetitions of "Lord, have mercy." At this time the priest intones a special litany, at each petition of which "Lord, have mercy" is sung one hundred times.

The exaltation itself consists of the following: with the cross the priest thrice blesses the sides of the table, he then bows down to the earth, holding the cross in both hands. He then "raises himself up;" that is, he stands up. Both the bowing down and the standing up must be done slowly, while "Lord, have mercy" is being sung multiple times. This should recall how, at the finding of the cross, *Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem* ascended to an elevated place and from there raised the cross in all directions so that all might see it, and the people, throwing themselves down before the cross, cried out, "Lord, have mercy."

During the singing of the Kontakion Hymn the cross is again laid on the tray, after which the veneration of the cross takes place while chanting "*Before Thy cross we fall down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify*" is sung thrice, first by the clergy, then by the chanters. At the conclusion of the liturgy the priest distributes basil and flowers to the faithful who cross themselves and kiss the blessed Cross.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION -Begins with procession of the Cross SUNDAY, Sept.13th

The first day of Sunday School Classes will be on Sunday September 13th with the celebration of the procession of the Holy Cross; all the students will process with the cross. At the conclusion all the children will gather with Father Constantine when he will offer a blessing upon them and for a photo op. As last year, classes will be divided into three levels: younger/pre-school children, elementary level, and middle school and older. We hope that parents will make every effort to allow their children an opportunity to enjoy fellowship and grow closer to our Lord. We are seeking additional teachers who will team teach the different class levels.

A wonderful youth program for our children was instituted a few years ago that has been enjoyed by those who participated. We invite all parents to be involved with the program. This Year with the help of the women of Philoptochos, we will once again visit our seniors and bring them Holiday Baskets and sing Christmas Carols. We also plan group activities in Idaho Falls, American Falls and Pocatello.

WHY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS PRAY TO THE THEOTOKOS AND THE SAINTS



One of the most common questions people ask about the Orthodox Faith is, “Why do Orthodox Christians pray to the Theotokos and the Saints?” The answer begins with an important distinction: Orthodox Christians worship **God alone**—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Worship belongs only to the Holy Trinity. When we pray to the Theotokos and the Saints, we are not asking them to replace Christ or to grant us salvation. Rather, we are asking them to **pray with us and for us**, just as we ask members of our parish, our family, or our friends to pray for us.

The Church teaches that those who have fallen asleep in the Lord are not dead but alive in Christ. Our Lord Himself declared, “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). The Saints are alive in His heavenly Kingdom, standing before His throne, continually glorifying Him. Because they are united with Christ, they continue to love His people and intercede on behalf of the Church. The bond of love within the Body of Christ is never broken by death.

The Scriptures remind us that “the prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). If the prayers of righteous Christians on earth are powerful, how much more are the prayers of those who have completed the race, received the crown of righteousness, and now dwell in the presence of God? Asking for their prayers is not a sign of weak faith in Christ; rather, it is an expression of our belief that the Church is one—both on earth and in heaven.

The **Theotokos** holds a unique place among all the Saints because she is the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through her humble response, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord,” she became the living Temple through whom the Word became flesh. The Church honors her because Christ honored her first. Every generation fulfills the prophecy of the Gospel by calling her blessed (Luke 1:48). As a loving mother continually cares for her children, so the Theotokos lovingly intercedes for all who seek her prayers.

A beautiful example of her intercession is found at the **Wedding at Cana** (John 2:1–11). When the wedding guests ran out of wine, the Theotokos noticed the need before anyone else. She brought the concern to her Son, saying simply, “They have no wine.” Although Christ said, “My hour has not yet come,” He nevertheless performed His first public miracle, turning water into wine. Notice what happened: the Theotokos did not solve the problem herself; she brought the need to Christ. She then instructed the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” This is exactly what she continues to do today. She always leads us to her Son, never to herself. Her intercession points us to Christ, who alone is the Giver of every good gift.

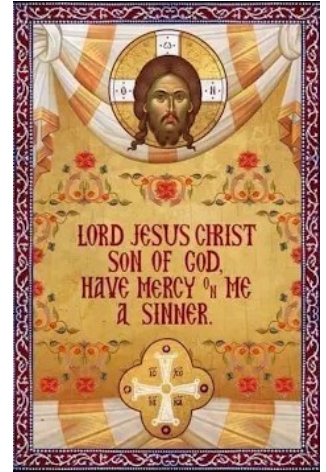
We can understand this through a simple example from everyday life. Imagine that someone you love is seriously ill. You ask your parish priest to pray for them. You ask members of your parish, your family, and your friends to remember them in prayer. You do this because you believe that many prayers offered together are a blessing. Asking the Saints to pray for us is no different. The only difference is that the Saints are already in the presence of God. We are asking our brothers and sisters in heaven to join their prayers with ours before the throne of Christ.

Therefore, when Orthodox Christians pray, “Most Holy Theotokos, save us,” **we do not mean that the Theotokos is our Savior. Christ alone is our Savior.** Rather, we ask her to save us **by her prayers**, by her **loving intercession**, and by leading us ever closer to her Son. Every prayer to the Theotokos and every Saint ultimately ends where it should—with Jesus Christ, “the Author and Finisher of our faith.” The Saints never draw attention to themselves; their entire lives, both on earth and in heaven, point us to the Lord. Through their prayers and examples, they encourage us to remain faithful until we, too, are united with Christ in His eternal Kingdom.

A STANDARD DAILY PRAYER RULE

FOR PARISHIONERS AND THOSE SEEKING TO EMBRACE THE ORTHODOX FAITH

One of the greatest blessings we can offer our Lord each day is our time. Prayer is not merely saying words—it is entering into a living relationship with God. The Holy Fathers teach us that consistency in prayer is more important than praying a great deal only occasionally. Establish a prayer corner in your home with an icon of Christ, the Theotokos, a cross, and, if possible, a vigil lamp or candle. Stand before your icons with reverence, making the sign of the Cross, and offer your prayers with humility and attention.



Morning Prayer

Upon rising:

- Make the Sign of the Cross.
- Offer thanksgiving to God for the gift of a new day.
- Pray the Trisagion Prayers.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer.
- Read Psalm 50 (51).
- Read the daily Scripture readings appointed by the Church.
- Pray for your family, parish, clergy, the sick, those who suffer, and those who have departed this life.
- Ask God to guide your thoughts, words, and actions throughout the day.
- Conclude by asking your Guardian Angel and your Patron Saint to intercede for you.

Throughout the Day

Seek to remember Christ continually.

Before every meal:

- Pray the Lord's Prayer or a brief blessing.

Throughout the day:

- Frequently pray the Jesus Prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

- Repeat this prayer while driving, walking, working, or during quiet moments. Let it become the prayer of your heart.
- Practice forgiveness quickly, avoid idle speech, and look for opportunities to serve others with kindness and humility.

Evening Prayer

Before retiring:

- Make the Sign of the Cross.
- Light your vigil lamp or candle if possible.
- Thank God for the blessings of the day.
- Examine your conscience honestly.
- Ask forgiveness for your sins and for anyone you may have hurt.

Continued page 6...

Continued.....A Standard Daily Prayer Rule

- Pray the Trisagion Prayers.
- Pray Psalm 90 (91) or Psalm 50 (51).
- Read a portion of the Holy Gospel or the Lives of the Saints.
- Pray for those in need and for the departed.
- Entrust yourself and your family to God's loving care before sleep.
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Weekly Spiritual Rule

- Participate faithfully in the Divine Liturgy every Sunday and Feast Day.
- Prepare prayerfully for Holy Confession.
- Receive Holy Communion with the blessing of your spiritual father and with proper preparation.
- Observe the fasting disciplines of the Orthodox Church.
- Read a chapter from the Holy Gospel and a small portion of an Orthodox spiritual book several times each week.
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A Final Word

Do not become discouraged if you occasionally miss your prayer rule. Simply begin again with humility and gratitude. The Christian life is not about perfection but about faithfulness. Little by little, through daily prayer, repentance, participation in the Holy Mysteries, and acts of love, Christ transforms our hearts into His dwelling place.

May this prayer rule help you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos, your Guardian Angel, and all the Saints, may the Lord strengthen you each day as you walk the path of salvation.



PRAYER REQUESTS Please offer names (first name only) to our clergy of those who are suffering from illnesses or challenges in life so they can be included in our prayers during the divine services. The prayer list will be published in *The Epistle Newsletter* monthly so that our parishioners can include the names in their personal prayers as well. Contact Father Constantine (805) 570-6525 to submit your names.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED Heavenly Father, physician of our souls and bodies, who sent Your only begotten Son and Lord Jesus Christ to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit and heal also your servants: **Erini, Tressa, Annie, Kenny, Ocey, Ethel, Michael, Larisa, Stella, Venetia, Larisa, Rebecca, Jon, Gary, Ahmad, Jason, Tommy, John, Natalia, Svitlana, Ivanna, James, Pam, Christoforos, Hosea, Richard, Jeanne, Sotirios, Fr. Achilles, Kathy, Mary Frances, Lavada, Steven, Alicia, Christopher, Barbara, Georgia, Vlasios, Vivian, Thomas, Sienna, James, Casi, Jim, Scarlett, Zachary, Sara, Martha, Anna, Kieran, Valentin, Valentina, Rose Mary, Patricia, Sotirios, Anthony, Maria, Michael, Krista, John, Bobby, Eric, George, Martin, Gayle, Alicia, Dianna, Chelsea, Dell, Gregory, Dimitri, Oleg, Tania, Ocey, Ethel, Carol, Robert, Casi, Jack, Carol, Roger, Anna, Steve, Christopher, Freda, Larry, Maria, Judy, Ignatius, Elaine, George, Barbara, Nicholas, Matthew, Jeff, Jacqueline, Dianna, Alton, Anna, Larry, Paula, Stacey, Orestes, Helen, Catherine, Andrew, Mary, Steve, Nicholas, Scarlett, Marie, Demetrios, George, Melissa, Galina, Sofia, Cheryl, Christ, Carolyn, Paul, Mary, Nick, John, Elaine, Nicholas** from all physical and spiritual ailments through the grace of Your Christ. Grant them patience in this sickness, strength of body and spirit and recovery of health. Lord You have taught us through Your Word to pray for each other that we may be healed. I pray that You heal these, Your servants and grant to them the gift of complete health. For You are the source of healing and to You I give the Glory to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**2026 ASSUMPTION
STEWARDS AS OF
8/31/26**

*Father Constantine Zozos
John & Candice Apostle
Betty Angelos
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Arvas
Kelly Moses Autrey
Naglaa & Chris Bargelski
Thomas & Molly Beseris
Evan Bittner
Brandon & Melissa Black
Ryan Bowlby & Robin Chal-
lender
James & Cynthia Carter
Afton & Jamie Carlson
Penny Blue & Martin Carl-
sen
John N. Christ
Cornelia Cirneleaga
Clarence & Vivian Close
Dean & Sandy Coobac
Jim & Janet Cozakos
Mary Frances Cozakos
Kayne & Amy Cummins
Ben & Elizabeth Danielson
Hala & Gassan Dib
Kenneth & Kristina Dudu-
nakis
Scott & Rebecca Eames
Stella Firkins
Angela Fullmer
Vicky & Rocky Fullmer
Nicholas & Stella Gdontakis
Ted Georges
Monika & Botros Hanna
Mark & Sally Hanna*

*Dave Harmer
Dean & Kathy Harris
Seth & Brooke Harris
Goldie Homan
Philip Homan
Anthony & Svitlana Hoskin
Tom & Tracey Hugie
Nathan and Rosie Jamison
George & Betty Katsilometes
Angela & Daniel Kimball
Sean & Chloe Koehler
James & Cora Ligor
Tony & Georgia Ligor
Heidi Linehan
Randall Lillie
Kim Lundstrom
Dina Manolis
Andrea Marks
Sophie McCurry
John & Stephanie Mermigas
Mark Mellor
Scott & Elly MacDonald
Robert & Kaitlin Miklos
Nate & Samantha Mountain
Christopher Mulkey
Nick & Jennifer Nichols
Jake & Nichole Nyenhuis
Christine & Jerry Otto
Greg & Olenda Painter
Filio & Sam Paloukos
David & Terri Pliley Owen
Sergey & Catherine Rash-
keev
Trisha & Colby Reddin
Yolanda Riech
Scott & Tressa Rockwood*

*Les & Helene Poulos-Edmo
Tyler & Hanna Sands
Aaron & Annie Sandy
Anne Marie & Bradley
Schulze
Kade & Devyn Schmalz
Ian & Chayla Schoenrock
Annie Semons
Sawyer Shaffer
Rita Sherburne
Jeff & Panayota Semons
Short
Ron & Kim Sims
Ryan & Kim Smith
Karen Solomon
Phil & LuAnn Spain
John Speck
Nathan & Sophia Speck
Skyler & Brittani Spigelmire
Steven & Jacque Swanson
Tim & Maria Swore
Travis & Ryan Swore
Alex & Ashley Tarasau
Nicholas & Tasia Tsakrios
Pauline Thiros
Vadym Ustianskyi
Lionel Weisburg
Anna & John Workman
Nikko Yanase
James & Jocelyn Zissi
Dimitri & Paulie Zozos*



There are many opportunities to contribute to the work of the Assumption Church by giving of your Time, your Talents and your Treasures. Our organizations and ministries provide opportunities for you to donate your Time and your Talents and we encourage you to become as involved as possible in the work of the Church—you will find it deeply rewarding.

Since the earliest days of the Church, we have also been called to sacrifice our worldly Treasures to make regular gifts to the Church. This allows parishioners to pool their resources to fund a physical space within which they can gather and practice their religion in the private setting of their own community. It also helps to fund the philanthropic ministries of the Parish, and it serves as an exercise that reminds us not to grow too attached to our worldly possessions.

Stewardship vs. Membership

Stewardship is the cornerstone of giving to the Church. It represents each family's individual financial commitment to the continuation of the Church, and the collective commitments serve the practical function of allowing our church to meet its expenses.

The Church's goal is to completely offset its annual operating expenses through stewardship contributions. Meeting that goal would provide the Church with the stability and sustainability to use funds from fundraisers and other donations to expand ministries and to build existing programs, rather than having to use those proceeds to cover the Church's operating budget.

The Assumption Church does not require a minimum stewardship pledge of its members. The Church asks of everyone to give according to their ability. Therefore, to help us reach that point of financial stability, we ask each of you to use the annual expenses per family as a starting point in calculating your stewardship contribution for the year. This is our Parish, and by working together, we can sustain its energy and its important work.

If you would like to discuss your Stewardship Pledge with Father Constantine, please call his cell 805-570-6525.

STEWARDSHIP FOLDERS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CANDLE STAND!

We are thankful for your continued generosity and support!

2Corinthians 8:7 - "But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also."

This verse emphasizes that stewardship is about faithfully managing what God has entrusted to us, giving generously and cheerfully, supporting those who minister, and recognizing that everything ultimately belongs to God.

OUR PARISH IS TRULY BLESSED!

As the echoes of traditional Greek music fade and the last of the baklava crumbs are swept away, we find ourselves reflecting on what can only be described as our most successful Greek Festival to date. This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the incredible outpouring of support from our parishioners, friends, and the broader community who embraced our celebration with such enthusiasm and generosity.

A Community United in Purpose

While there are too many to name individually, each and every one of you who contributed your time, talent, and resources deserves our heartfelt gratitude. From the early morning preparation crews who arrived before dawn to knead dough and prepare ingredients, to the volunteers who stayed late into the evening to clean up, your dedication transformed our vision into a vibrant reality.

The spirit of *philoxenia* – the Greek tradition of hospitality and love for strangers – was evident throughout our parish community. Whether you spent hours in the kitchen, managed booth operations, coordinated logistics, or simply spread the word about our festival, your contributions were invaluable to our success.

Culinary Excellence That Honored Our Heritage

The food at this year's festival was nothing short of extraordinary. Our traditional Greek dishes – from the perfectly seasoned souvlaki and tender lamb to the creamy pastitsio, dolmathes, and fresh Greek salad and of course Gyros– transported visitors straight to the Mediterranean. This year we also offered marinated souvlaki (Shis-ka-bobs). The authentic flavors and careful preparation reflected the love and skill of our volunteer cooks who preserved some family recipes passed down through generations, also included in the Ladies Philoptochos Greek Cookbook. And then there were the pastries – absolutely outstanding creations that had visitors returning again and again. The golden, flaky baklava dripping with honey, the delicate kourabiethes dusted with powdered sugar, and the rich ouzo cake were more than desserts; they were edible expressions of our cultural heritage. Many guests commented that our pastries rivaled those found in the finest Greek bakeries, a testament to the expertise and dedication of our baking teams.

Dance: Where Tradition Comes Alive

One of the most moving aspects of this year's festival was the exceptional dance performances by the Dionysios Dance Group from Salt Lake City and the young dance group from Ogden. They captivated audiences throughout the day. From the youngest children taking their first steps in traditional folk to the accomplished young adult performers, brought the rich tapestry of Greek regional traditions to life.

The excitement was palpable as audiences watched the graceful movements of the Kalamatiano, the energetic steps of the Hasapiko, and the intricate formations of island dances from across Greece. These performances were more than entertainment; they were living connections to our ancestors and powerful expressions of cultural continuity. The joy on the faces of both performers and spectators reminded us why preserving these traditions is so important to our cultural identity.

Sharing Our Orthodox Faith

Perhaps most meaningful of all were the well-attended church tours that allowed us to share the beauty and depth of our Orthodox faith with visitors. These tours provided wonderful opportunities to explain our iconography, discuss our liturgical traditions, and answer questions about Orthodox Christianity in a welcoming, educational environment. Many visitors expressed genuine interest in learning about our worship practices, the significance of our sacred iconography, and the theological foundations of our faith. These conversations planted seeds of understanding and respect, fulfilling one of our festival's most important purposes: serving as ambassadors for Orthodox Christianity in our greater community. ...**Page 10**

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Community Business Support

We are also deeply grateful to the more than 80 businesses and organizations that supported our festival through their advertisements in our program book. This remarkable show of community support not only helped offset festival expenses but also demonstrated the strong relationships our parish has built throughout the region.

These business partnerships reflect the interconnected nature of our community and show how local organizations recognize the positive impact our parish makes beyond our church walls. To each business owner and organization leader who chose to support us, we extend our sincere appreciation for your investment in our success. Much appreciation is extended to all the Community VIP Food servers.

Looking Forward with Gratitude

As we look back on this year's festival, we see more than just a successful fundraising event. We see a celebration that strengthened our parish bonds, shared our heritage with the wider community, and created lasting memories for participants and visitors alike.

The success of this year's Greek Festival stands as a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we work together with a common purpose. It reflects the strength of our parish community and the enduring appeal of Greek culture and Orthodox faith.

To every volunteer, every visitor, every business supporter, and every friend who made this festival possible — from the bottom of our hearts, *efcharistó* — **thank you**. Your support has made this year's Greek Festival not just our best ever, but a true celebration of faith, heritage, and community spirit.

Dances of the SLC accomplished young-adult performers brought the rich tapestry of Greek regional traditions to life. The excitement was palpable as audiences watched the graceful movements of the Kalamatiano, the energetic steps of the Hasapiko, and the intricate formations of island dances from across Greece. These performances were more than entertainment; they were living connections to our ancestors and powerful expressions of cultural continuity. The joy on the faces of both performers and spectators reminded us why preserving these traditions is so important to our community identity.

In Our Beloved Lord,
Father Constantine



DID YOU KNOW The Lord's Day

Did you know Orthodox Christians observe the Sabbath on Sunday — the Lord's Day? In the book of Exodus, God commands His people to keep the Sabbath — Saturday — as a day of rest, because on the seventh day, God rested after creating the world. But in the Gospel of Matthew, we read that “after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week,” the women came to the tomb — and found it empty because Christ had risen.

That first day of the week, Sunday, became “the Lord's Day” (Κυριακή in Greek), the day of joy, of new creation, and eternal life in the light of the Resurrection. The early Christians, including the Apostles, gradually shifted communal worship from Saturday evening into Sunday, celebrating the Holy Eucharist and gathering in the joy of the Resurrection. By the time of the First Ecumenical Council in 325, Sunday had become the central day of Christian worship. We don't rest because of the seventh day — we rejoice because Christ is risen!

Dear Parishioners and friends,

Saturday, August 29, 2026 will be forever etched in memory as one of the greatest community events hosted. Our Pocatello's "Southeastern Idaho" Greek Festival is always special, this year, your participation and hard work made it even more remarkable.



THANK YOU! Those two words do not significantly reiterate the effort you offered toward the success of the **2026 Greek Festival**. I want to express my gratitude for so many of you who spent countless hours and volunteered time helping to put together our parish Greek Festival and helped to make it an overwhelming success. A very special thank you is expressed to **Tressa Rockwood, Philip Homan, Christina and Gabriel Paull & Family, Goldie Homan, Ashley Tarasau, Filio Paloukos** who led the committees with outstanding leadership. The Committee's tireless efforts helped keep things moving forward with a positive result. With deep faith and open communication they overcame all obstacles for a successful Festival. I witnessed

the cooperation of so many of our parishioners beginning with the Festival Committee who spent months and hours planning and organizing, ordering and taking care of so many details, food chairs who made sure everything was ready and to all of you who spread the word through Facebook and other social media about our festival. Also for those parishioners who donated from the Festival List of paper, pastry, and food product items; the response was outstanding. Over **\$13,068** was freely donated, including **out-right donations ear-marked "wherever needed."** Your generosity helped defray much of the expense for the Festival, including the outstandingly designed Festival T-Shirt. **What wonderful cooperation from the entire parish family—as well as former members living in other states, to all of you I express my sincerest appreciation and gratitude.** I want to express our heartfelt appreciation to those who went the extra mile to make sure things ran smoothly. We received **many compliments on Facebook** as well as in person, how organized we were and how much they appreciated that we sponsor the Greek Festival. **Some people stood in line for over one and a half hours to taste our food.**

Those who came had a wonderful time enjoying the fantastic food and pastries, listening to Greek music and also enjoying Greek Dance Performances, but most of all sharing time with family, friends and neighbors. **Because of you and many friends who gave their time, talents and financial resources, the Festival was an overwhelming success.** Of course, we should be also thankful for those individuals who made sure the tents, tables and chairs were set up, the electrical safely installed, supplies ordered, the food workshops coordinated, menu items prepared weeks and months ahead of time, the pastries prepared, baked, and packaged, the produce washed, chopped, sliced, and beautifully packaged for sale, to those who set up and provided music for the day, those who attended the food and pastry workshops, for those who put up display signs, ordered the beer, wine, and soda pop, worked over the grills to provide delicious food items, also those who **manned the ovens and roasting pans and rice pots, cleaned tables, serving trays, and emptied trash** all day long, to those who worked in the Loukoumathes booth over those fryers, to those who donated all the **Loukaniko, Legs of Lamb, Produce, Pastitsio**, to those who marinated the **pork-kabobs** and skewered them, to those who donated and prepared all the **Dolmathes**, to those who donated pastries like the hundreds of **Kourabiethes, and Ouzo Cake**, all the ingredients for the **Loukoumathes and Paximathia**, as well those who donated the **Tzatziki sauce**, for those who worked over the sinks making sure every pot and pan was cleaned and never enjoying the out-doors, for all those who served on the food lines, for those who made **Greek Frappes and Baklava Sundaes**, the food runners, those who worked at the **cash registers** throughout the day and those who were responsible **for the accounting**, and then finally to everyone who stayed and cleaned and put everything away the night of the Festival and the next few days. **The faithful who cleaned the kitchen, ovens and put away all the pots and pans in their proper place.**

Truly the pastries and food were outstanding, the **Pastitsio, Roasted Lamb, Souvlaki** and those

...continued page 12

who marinated the **Legs of Lamb** to perfection, **Rice, Dolmathes, Spanakopita, Tyropita, Gyro and Grilled Loukaniko**, and for the third year **Frozen Pastitsio and Spanakopita Pans** take and bake were a great hit. And thanks to the many who **washed, sliced and arranged all the produce** for the outstanding salad and the gyro ingredients. Much appreciation for those who cleaned serving trays and hauled away trash, God Bless you. Our appreciation also **to those who arrived 5:00 in the morning** to begin cooking the **Rice, Dolmathes, Pastitsio, Spanakopita and Tyropita**. Much appreciation for the **spiritually enriched Church Tours** which brought people to better understand our faith. And also **those who greeted the public** as they arrived at the Festival. What would we do without our ingenious young children, so many worked tirelessly till the end.

Much appreciation to the **Dionysios Folk Dance Group** from our sister parishes in Salt Lake City who entertained attendees. They not only performed four times during the Festival, they asked for no compensation, neither food nor drink when offered. As their director informed us, they came to assist the parish in raising money, not taking any. After I prayed for them, following their last performance they handed me a bag of their tips which were offered by attendees for their outstanding dancing. Truly, wonderful young people who love their church and God. I especially want to thank **all the sponsors of the Festival Program Book** whose support was crucial to our success. Also much appreciation and gratitude for the **40+ VIP Community Volunteers** in our Food Lines. These were individual business owners and leaders in Pocatello/Chubbuck who volunteered to help serve our delicious food throughout the day. Again much appreciation to our Chairs and organizers.

BUT MOST OF ALL WE OFFER UP THANKSGIVING TO OUR LORD WHO MADE ALL THIS POSSIBLE...FOR WE DO ALL THINGS FOR HIS GLORY AND HIS CHURCH!

+**Father Constantine**



A 40 day Blessing was said for the son of Whitney and Brandon Beck. The Becks are seeking to embrace the Orthodox Faith! Congratulations!



SAINT OF THE MONTH

ST. EUPHROSYNOS THE COOK (SEPTEMBER 11)

As we begin the month of September and a new ecclesiastical year, we give thanks to Almighty God for His countless blessings and for the opportunity to continue our journey of faith together. The beginning of the Church year reminds us that every season of our lives is an opportunity for spiritual renewal, deeper prayer, sincere repentance, and a closer relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Mysteries, the Divine Services, and our daily prayer, Christ continually invites us to grow in holiness and to become living witnesses of His love.

This month, the Orthodox Church honors **St. Euphrosynos the Cook (September 11)**, a humble monk whose life teaches us that holiness is not found in recognition or worldly accomplishments, but in faithful service offered with love. Though he worked quietly in the monastery kitchen, his humility, obedience, and pure heart made him great before God. His life reminds each of us that every act of service—whether in our homes, our parish, or our community—becomes a holy offering when it is done for the glory of God.

Story of Apples from Paradise As Euphrosynos fulfilled his monastic obedience in the kitchen as a cook for the brethren of the monastery. He continually dwelt in prayer and fasting. The brethren often reproached him, but he did not complain and endured every unpleasantness. St. Euphrosynos pleased the Lord by his inner virtue that he concealed from people, the spiritual heights of which their unassuming fellow-monk the Lord Himself revealed to the monastic brethren. One time, a priest of the monastery prayed asking the Lord to show him the blessings prepared for the righteous in the age to come. In a dream it seemed to the priest that he was standing in a garden. In it he also saw Euphrosynos, the cook of his monastery. Amazed at this encounter, the Priest asked Euphrosynos how he came to be there. The saint replied that he was in Paradise through the great mercy of God. The priest then asked if Euphrosynos would be able to give him something from the surrounding beauty. In reply, St. Euphrosynos suggested the priest take whatever he wished, and so the priest pointed to three luscious apples growing in the garden of Paradise. Euphrosynos picked the three apples, wrapped them in a kerchief and gave them to his companion.

When the priest awoke in the early morning, he initially thought the vision a dream, but suddenly he noticed next to him the cloth with the fruit of Paradise wrapped in it, emitting a wondrous fragrance. Later, the priest found St. Euphrosynos in church and asked him under oath where he was the night before. He replied that he was where the priest also was. Then, the monk continued that the Lord, in fulfilling the prayer of the priest, had shown him Paradise and had bestowed the fruit of Paradise through him, "the lowly and unworthy servant of God, Euphrosynos." Then, in an assembly of the monastery brethren, the priest related everything he had experienced, pointing out the spiritual heights of Euphrosynos in pleasing God and to the fragrant fruit of Paradise. Deeply impressed by what they heard, the monks went to the kitchen to pay respect to St. Euphrosynos. But, they did not find him there. Fleeing human glory, Euphrosynos had fled the monastery. The place where he concealed himself remained unknown, but the monks always remembered that their monastic brother St. Euphrosynos had come upon Paradise, and that they, in being saved through the mercy of God, would meet him there. The pieces of the apples from Paradise, the brethren reverently kept and distributed for blessing and for healing.

May the example of St. Euphrosynos inspire us to embrace humility, serve one another with joy, and seek first the Kingdom of God. As we continue our worship, ministries, and fellowship at our Assumption Parish, let us ask the Lord to strengthen our faith and grant us hearts that are filled with His peace, mercy, and love.

Parish volunteers spend countless hours preparing our authentic Greek Cuisine. They embody the Greek concept of "philoxenia"—love of strangers— by treating every visitor like an honored guest.



Our Annual Greek Festival drew enthusiastic crowds throughout the day, with families and visitors filling the grounds to enjoy authentic cuisine, traditional music, and Greek Dance Performances. The event's tremendous turnout exceeded expectations, creating a vibrant celebration that brought the community together and showcased the rich heritage of Greek traditions.



*Preparing and marinating legs of lamb.
John Mermigas and Ryan Smith*



LuAnn Spain and friends Pam Ward, Patty Watanabe and below Rita Sherburne and Granddaughter Challis preparing Ouzo Cake

*Preparing the thousand of Koulourakia!
Vicky Fullmer, Goldie Homan, Cynthia Carter, Kim Sims and Betty Katsilometes*



Sophie McCurry and Cynthia Carter preparing Koulourakia.

Many thanks to Jordan Roan who managed an efficient pest control of our facilities, as well as tree, shrub and foundation spraying. He also sprayed our property across the ally. If you need his expertise call Jordan or see him at church. 208-973-8293



Father Gabriel and son Dominic Preparing the Pork Shish-ka-bob.

KOURABIEDES

GREEK BUTTER COOKIES



KOURABETHES WORKSHOP

Terri Pliley Owen, Tressa Rockwood, Dean Paull, Christina Paull, Dominic Paull. Not pictured Gabriel Paul and son Demetri.

The OUZO TEAM of bakers they include co-chairs Lu Ann Spain and sister Rita Sherburn with granddaughter Challis Sherburne and friends Pam Ward, & Patty Watanabe. Preparing the Ouzo Cake whose recipe was handed down from their parents.

"To our incredible Greek Festival volunteers - who spent hours in the kitchen, to every person who helped make our delicious food and homemade pastries, to all our hardworking volunteers who served, cleaned, and made this event possible - your generosity of time and spirit made this celebration truly

To our incredible Greek Festival volunteers - who spent hours in the kitchen, to every person who helped make our delicious food and homemade pastries, to all our hardworking volunteers who served, cleaned, and made this event possible - your generosity of time and spirit made this celebration truly special. Also those who contributed financially and donated product to defray the cost of the Festival that made our Festival a delicious success. Efcharistó (Thank you) from the bottom of our hearts!"



John Mermigas and Ryan Smith put on the final touches to the Roasted Lamb.



The PhD Tent Makers lead by Ron Sims and Scott Rockwood



Our wonderful ladies were hard at work preparing the fresh vegetables for the Festival's fabulous Greek Salad! With care and teamwork, they washed, cleaned, chopped, and dried every vegetable to make sure each salad was fresh, crisp, and delicious. They also prepared our homemade Greek Salad Vinaigrette, adding the perfect finishing touch to this Festival favorite. We are so grateful for all the time, love, and dedication they put into making our Greek Festival such a success!

An army of ladies cutting, assembling and creating assorted trays of the 15,000 pieces of pastry.



Filio and daughter Ailaine preparing the Tzatziki.



John Speck setting up Wi-Fi for the square readers.



Team Paull: Parents Gabriel and Christina with sons Dylan, Demitri, Dominic, & Dean.



Afton Carlson, Ryan Smith and Kade Schmalz cutting and skewing kabobs.



The Fabulous Dionysios Dancers

Much appreciation to the following for their donations to defray the expenses of the Festival.

SO SORRY IF WE MISSED SOMEONE!

ITEMS DONATED FROM LIST

Clarence & Vivian Close 4 leg of lamb

Goldie Homan-Olive Oil

Jim & Cora Ligori-partial Greek wine/beer

Treon Maroudas-lamb

FREE WILL DONATIONS

Scott & Rebecca Eames

Ted Georges

Mark Mellor

Randall Lillie

Rohan Mital

John Speck Jr.

David Harmer

Ryan & Kimberly Smith

Nathan & Rosy Jamison

Filio & Sam Paloukos

Afton & Jamie Carlson

David Murdoch

Anne Schulze

Kayne & Amy Cummins

Jake & Nichole Nyenhuis

Angela Ward

Ron & Julie Kuhn

George & Betty Katsilometes

Manal ElAasar

Ryan & Robin Bowlby

Warren & John Drakos in Memory of

Chris Drakos

Tressa & Scott Rockwood

Paula Rosa

FOOD DONATIONS

SOME/ALL EXPENSES COVERED BY:

Dolmathes-Annie Semons & Poppy Semons

Short

Loukaniko- Rocky & Vicky Fullmer

PASTRY EXPENSES BY:

Gabriel & Christina Paul & Family

Karidopita-Sophie McCurry

Frappe -Trisha & Coby Ridden

Ouzo Cake - Rita Sherburne & LuAnn Spain



Your gift of time, your energy, your love, brought blessings from above for our community. Though "thank you" seems too small for all you've done.



*Scent of gyro fills the air,
Laughter, music everywhere.
Ouzo clinks and dancers spin—
OPA!*





The Fullmer Loukaniko Grillers!



GYRO, GYRO, GYRO Crew



Afton and the Souvlaki crew



The Swore Cousins working the Frappe, Baklava Ice-cream and T-shirt Booth.



Thirsty anyone!!!!



The never ending line for our delicious pastries!



*The Loukoumathes Fullmer Team
You can't just eat one!*



Annie Semons prepares the wonderful delicious Dolmathes.



*Getting some fresh air! Cooks Philip Homan,
Ryan Smith & John Mermigas.*



Keeping count of everything! Theron Hill & Dave Harmer



*Greek Music for all to enjoy!
Travis Swore Scott Eames*

*Assumption of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church
518 N. 5th Avenue*

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(208) 232-5519*

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On-Line Giving

<http://assumptionpocatellochurchtrac.com/give>

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PARISH COUNCIL

*Tressa Rockwood-President
Gregory Painter -Vice Pres.
David Harmer-Treasurer
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Vicky Fullmer, Vivian Close
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A PRAYER FOR THE NEW ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR!



In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As we start our new
Church year, O Lord, we
ask that You would enable
us by the power of The
Holy Spirit to place our
lives entirely in Your Ho-
ly Hands. Grant us Lord,
Your Divine, Saving

Grace that we may live according to Your Holy Precepts.

Guide us, teach us, empower us with the strength to overturn temptation. Establish our souls on firm, solid ground, that we may build upon a foundation unshaken by the woes of this sinful world. Cleanse us from every stain or defilement of flesh and spirit, that we may start our new beginning revitalized by Your Holy Grace.

Hear us, Heavenly Father, as we acknowledge that on our own, we do not have the power to make or follow through on any resolution. But by calling upon Your strength and guidance, we may accomplish this new beginning. AMEN.



ENTRANCE PRAYER: Master, Lord our God, who has established the orders and hosts of angels and archangels in heaven to minister to Your glory, grant that holy angels may enter with us, that together we may celebrate and glorify Your goodness. For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and the Son and