

The Epistle

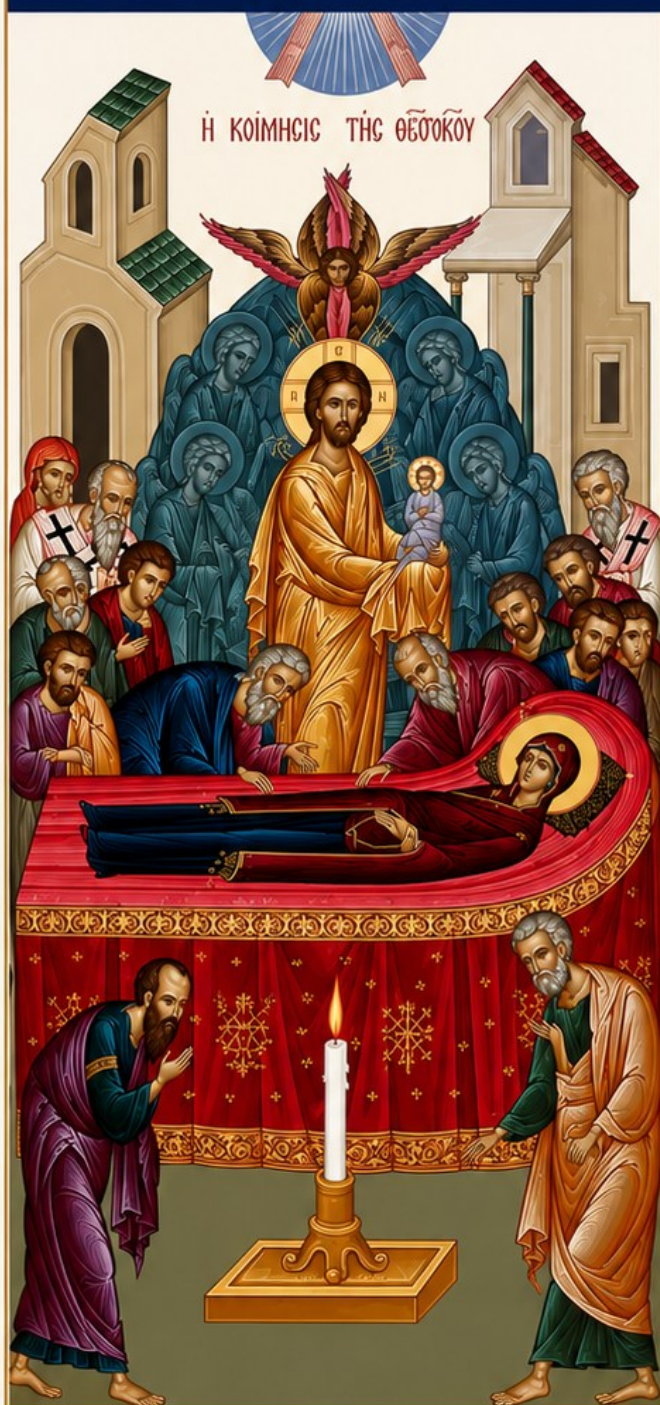
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church

Serving Southeastern Idaho & Western Wyoming

August 2026



Volume 15, Issue 8



A Season of Growth: Embracing the Orthodox Way of Life Together

Dear Faithful,

As we prepare for our beloved Greek Festival, there is an even greater celebration that fills our hearts with joy—the Feast of our Patroness, the **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. This holy feast reminds us who we are as a parish family and why God has called us together. While the festival is a wonderful opportunity to welcome our community and share our faith and heritage, our greatest celebration is gathering around the Holy Altar to honor the Most Holy Theotokos and give glory to God.

We have so much for which to thank our loving Lord. He continues to bless our parish in countless ways. We rejoice as new catechumens are preparing to enter the Orthodox Faith, and we are witnessing spiritual growth among so many of our faithful. Our ministries are flourishing, our children are learning the faith, and our parish family continues to grow in love, fellowship, and service. These are not simply signs of success—they are signs of God's grace at work in our midst.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, let us offer our heartfelt gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ for His abundant blessings. Let us ask the Most Holy Theotokos to continue to intercede for our parish, that we may remain faithful to her Son, united in love, and steadfast in our Orthodox faith for generations to come.

I encourage each of you to participate in the Divine Services leading up and on the Feast of the Assumption. Come and receive the blessings that God has prepared for us through prayer.

Together, we are building more than a parish, we are nurturing a spiritual family that will endure for generations to come. May God grant us the wisdom, humility, and love to be faithful stewards of this sacred trust.

Together, let us thank our Lord for all He has done, all He is doing, and all He will continue to do in the life of our beloved Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church.

With love in Christ,
✙ *Father Constantine*

We have a real need for Hosts for Sunday August 9. Please consider offering to host a Sunday. Perhaps team up with another family. Call Goldie Homan ASAP 208-643-3031.

If you have not signed up to help during the Festival please call Manpower Chair Ashley Tarasau at 208-221-3046

**SUNDAY SERVICES ORTHROS 9:00AM
DIVINE LITURGY 10:00AM**

Sunday, August 2nd

Orthros & Epistle Reader: John Speck

Ushers: Vicky Fullmer, Ron Sims

Prophoron: Sophie McCurry

Agape Fellowship: Mark Mellor, Cynthia & James Carter

Sunday, August 9th

Orthros & Epistle Reader: Gregory Painter

Ushers: Goldie Homan, Sophie McCurry

Prophoron: Hala Dib

Agape Fellowship: **HOST(S) NEEDED**

Sunday, August 16th

Orthros & Epistle Reader: Jacob Denton

Ushers: Jaque Swanson, Dave Harmer

Prophoron: Terri Pliley Owen

Agape Fellowship: Afton & Jamie Carlson

Sunday, August 23rd

Orthros Reader: Steven Swanson

Epistle Reader: Alex Tarasau

Ushers: Ron Sims, Kade Schmalz

Prophoron: Sophie McCurry

Agape Fellowship: Kyle & Sammie Bingham

Sunday, August 30th

Orthros Reader & Epistle Reader: John Speck

Ushers: Goldie Homan, Tony Hoskin

Prophoron: Hala Dib

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION FAST PERIOD AUGUST 1ST-14TH

**Prayer Service of Intercession
WEDNESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12th
SUPPLICATION SERVICE 6:00PM**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15th, 9:00AM
The Parish Feast Day Celebration of the Assumption will be observed.
Divine Liturgy & Artoclasia Service

CATECHISM CLASSES: Those interested in learning more about the Orthodox Faith and becoming catechumens are asked to attend in-person or on Zoom.

**CATECHISM & BIBLE STUDY CLASSES
WILL START UP AGAIN IN
SEPTEMBER**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Well done thou good and faithful servant." (Mt.25:23)

In the Gospel of St Matthew (6:19), Christ instructs us, "Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal..."

Often in life, we pursue and collect those things that do not last. We must ask, "One hundred years from now, where will our possessions be?" Our greatest blessing is our family. As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be stewards of this great gift. If we are faithful to His calling, perhaps our Lord will say to us as he did to the faithful steward,

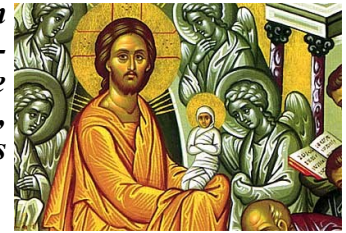
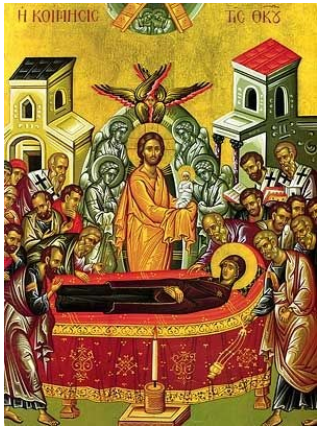
"Well done thou good and faithful servant."

SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS



A soldier asked Abba if God accepted repentance. After the old man had taught him many things he said, "Tell me, my friend, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?" He replied, 'No, I mend it and use it again.' The old man said to him, 'If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God be equally careful about his creation?'

The Icon of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos shows her on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles. Christ is standing in the center looking at His mother. He is holding a small child clothed in white representing the soul of the Virgin Mary. With His golden garments, the angels above His head, Christ is depicted in His divine glory.



The posture of the Apostles direct attention toward the Theotokos. On the right, Saint Peter censes the body of the Theotokos. On the left, Saint Paul bows low in honor of her.

Together with the Apostles are several bishops and women. The bishops traditionally represented are James, the brother of the Lord, Timothy, Heirotheus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. They are shown wearing episcopal vestments. The women are members of the church in Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul bows in honor of the Theotokos.

The Theotokos lies in the center of the icon surrounded by the Apostles and a candle in front of her bed.

This great Feast of the Church and the icon celebrate a fundamental teaching of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the Theotokos, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come.



We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love.

VERSES FROM THE SERVICE OF THE SMALL PARAKLESIS TO THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

I lie now in failing health upon my bed, and there is no cure for my ailing body. But I entreat, O good Lady who gave birth to the Reliever of illnesses, who is God the Savior of the world, and plead: raise me up from the ravages of disease.

Deliver us your humble servants from perils, O Theotokos, as for refuge, after God, we all flee to you, an impregnable fortress and protection. Entreat for us, O spotless Maiden who gave birth to the divine Word inexplicably through a word in the latter days, since you indeed speak with motherly freedom.

Kontakion Hymn of the Theotokos

O Protection of Christians that never fails, intercession with the Creator that never fails, we sinners beg you, do not ignore the voices of our prayers. O good Lady, we implore you, quickly come unto our aid, when we cry out to you with faith. Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who protect now and ever those who honor you.

***FEAST DAY of Our Blessed Assumption Church
and the Service of Artoklasia -
The Blessing of the Five Loaves will be observed on
SATURDAY, AUGUST 15th at 9:00am***



ARTOKLASIA, which means “breaking of bread” is a special prayer service offered typically on a Feast day or special family occasion. The Blessing of Five Loaves of Bread is a brief service of thanksgiving through which we express our gratitude for all the blessings of life. The service takes place at the end of the Divine Liturgy or at Great Vespers. It includes hymns, petitions and prayers for health, well-being and strength to endure all of life’s difficulties.

The five loaves are reminiscent of the five loaves that Jesus Christ blessed in the desert and by which five thousand of His followers were fed.

Items required for the service are five loaves of Artoklasia bread, a small container of oil, a small container of wine, and the names of the faithful. These items are viewed as the most basic elements necessary for life.

The bread is divided among the faithful in the hope that God’s blessings will be shared and multiplied. The wine symbolizes the blood of Christ and the olive oil symbolizes the healing of our bodies and souls.



THE MONTH OF THE PANAGIA (Most Holy) THE SUMMER PASCHA



*It's been said and written thousands of times that the feast of the **Assumption (Dormition)** of the **Theotokos** is called the "**Pascha of the Summer**" or "**Summer Pascha**." But why? Are there in fact similarities between this feast and Lord's Pascha that we celebrated in the Spring?*

Pascha means (as we know) "to pass over." It is a feast with an opportunity to renew our spiritual powers, in order to escape from the miserable and vile and resort to the joyful and optimistic, without this bringing social loafing, abandonment, fatalism and frustration. We are not the silly of society, but the hope-bearers of the Church.

WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO FEASTS?

Both feasts have similar fasting as a means of abstinence, and never as torture and an excuse to make Christians hungry. The measure we have with food is an occasion to put a measure, until annihilation, on our failures, our weaknesses, among which could be food as either quantity or quality.

Further, like Great Lent, there is a rich hymnography. The Supplication Services are not simply wonderful melodies with rich meaning, but a heartfelt and fully fortified prayer of Christians, particularly for those who have been beaten painfully by the waves of life.

The Assumption period from August 1st-15th is when we sing the Lamentations to the Theotokos, like another Good Friday.

The Lord will prove everyone wrong and at the same time bring great joy. He will receive Her soul and Her body which will be assumed into heaven—according to Church teaching and writings. She is alive and intercedes for all of us.

There is also another contrast between the two feasts, of Pascha of Spring and the Pascha of the Summer. In the first case which puts a break in this solemn period is the Annunciation to the Theotokos. In the Pascha of the Summer there is the feast of the Transfiguration of the Savior, a break for commemoration to show that the ultimate goal and purpose of life is the transfiguration of all, from the good to the better, and finally to the excellent, which is His Kingdom.

*She is not our savior, for only Jesus saves. Indeed, She is the one who **intercedes with prayers for our salvation**. In the rich hymns of these days She has an important seat, which is proved by Her miracles which are another proof that She lives. She is not the end to our lives, but She practically helps us pass over to our desired salvation. She influences us with Her prayers to our Lord, in order for us to be forgiven and redeemed.*

With Her falling asleep, She reminds us that when it appears an end awaits us, essentially, we are experiencing a beginning, joyful and eternal.

A Heartfelt Thank You: Our Community's Festival Spirit Shines

As we approach our annual **Festival on Saturday, August 29th**, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the incredible outpouring of support from our parish family. The spirit of community and fellowship that has emerged in preparation for this special day truly embodies the best of who we are as a congregation.

Time, Treasure, and Talent

We extend our deepest appreciation to all those who have generously offered their time to lead and participate in Festival workshops and a very special thank you to **Tressa Rockwood and Philip Homan** for their leadership **and all the other chairs of the various workshops**. Your willingness to share your skills and knowledge has been instrumental in preparing for what promises to be our most successful festival yet. From planning sessions to hands-on preparation, your dedication has not gone unnoticed.

To those who have opened their hearts and wallets to help defray festival expenses, we are profoundly grateful. Your financial contributions, both large and small, demonstrate your commitment to our shared mission of supporting the restoration and expansion of our church campus and facilities. Every donation brings us closer to realizing our vision for an enhanced worship and community space.

We also thank the many parishioners who have contributed food items, ensuring that our festival will offer the authentic flavors and hospitality that make our celebration so special. Your culinary contributions are a tangible expression of love and community spirit.

Beyond Our Walls

Our blessed parish continues to demonstrate that our mission extends beyond our own needs. Through our congregation's efforts and the dedicated work of the Ladies Philoptochos Ministry, we proudly support local nonprofits and community organizations. The Festival serves not only as a means to enhance our own facilities but as a way to strengthen our entire community.

The Final Stretch

As Festival Saturday draws near, there remains much work to be accomplished, particularly during the week leading up to the event. This is our opportunity to come together one final time in preparation ensuring that every detail reflects the care and dedication our community deserves.

We encourage every parishioner to find ways to contribute during these crucial final days. Whether you can spare a few hours or dedicate several days, your participation will help make this the best Festival our parish has ever hosted. Together, we can create an event that not only supports our restoration and expansion goals but also showcases the unity and love that define our parish family.

The success of our Festival rests in the hands and hearts of each parishioner. As we work side-by-side in these final preparations, we embody the very spirit that makes our parish such a special place to worship, grow, and serve.

Thank you for your continued generosity, dedication, and love. Together, we will make Festival Saturday a celebration to remember.

WHY DO WE AS ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS PRAY TO THE BLESSED THEOTOKOS AND THE SAINTS?



Many Christians outside the Orthodox Church sincerely ask, “Why do Orthodox Christians pray to the Virgin Mary and the saints? Why not just pray directly to Jesus Christ?”

It is an important question, and one that deserves a thoughtful answer. Orthodox Christians do pray directly to Christ every day. In fact, every Divine Liturgy, every sacrament, and nearly every prayer is centered on the worship of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our salvation comes from Christ alone. Yet the Church also asks the Mother of God and the saints to pray for us, just as we ask our fellow Christians on earth to pray for us.

The key word is **intercession**. Orthodox Christians do not worship the Theotokos or the saints. Worship belongs to God alone. We honor them because God honored them, and we ask for their prayers because they are alive in Christ.

Our Lord Himself taught that God “is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). Those who have departed this life in faith are not separated from Christ. They are alive in His heavenly Kingdom. Death does not break the unity of the Church. The Church is one Body of Christ, united across heaven and earth.

The Apostle Paul reminds us, “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:26). This communion does not end at death.

Those who stand before God’s throne continue to love us and pray for us.

The **Book of Revelation** gives us a beautiful image of this heavenly intercession. St. John sees the twenty-four elders before the throne of God holding “golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Revelation 5:8). Later he sees an angel offering the prayers of the saints before God (Revelation 8:3–4). Scripture reveals that the saints in heaven participate in presenting the prayers of God’s people before His throne.

Some ask, “Why involve anyone else? Why not go straight to Jesus?”

Orthodox Christians do go directly to Christ. Every day we cry, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” We receive His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. We confess our sins to Him. We worship Him as God.

But asking others to pray for us has always been part of the Christian life. St. Paul repeatedly asks believers to pray for him (Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:18–19). If asking a friend or priest to pray for us does not diminish Christ’s role as the one Mediator, then neither does asking those who have finished the race and now stand in His presence.

Some point to 1 Timothy 2:5: “There is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

The Orthodox Church wholeheartedly believes this. Christ alone bridges the gap between fallen humanity and the Father through His Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection. No saint replaces Christ’s unique mediation. Rather, every prayer of the saints depends entirely upon Him. Their intercessions are possible only be-

cause they are united to Christ, just as our prayers for one another are possible because we are united to Him.

The Theotokos holds a unique place among all the saints because she freely said “Yes” to God’s plan of salvation. Through her obedience, the eternal Son of God took flesh. At the wedding in Cana, she simply brought the needs of others to her Son and told the servants, “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5). Even today, her role remains the same. She never points to herself. She always points to Christ.

The early Church understood this from the beginning. Christians honored the martyrs, celebrated their heavenly birthdays, and asked for their prayers. This was not a later invention but part of the living Tradition handed down through the generations.

The Holy Fathers beautifully expressed this faith.

St. John of Damascus wrote:

“The saints are living and with boldness stand before God, praying for those who call upon them.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem explained that during the Divine Liturgy:

“We commemorate the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that through their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petitions.”

These Fathers did not believe they were replacing Christ. They understood that the entire Church—on earth and in heaven—is united in Him.

An illustration may help. Imagine a family gathered around the bedside of someone who is seriously ill. The father prays. The mother prays. The children pray. Friends pray. No one says, “Don’t ask others to pray. Go directly to God.” Instead, everyone joins together because love naturally leads us to pray for one another.

Now imagine members of that family who have entered eternal life and stand before the throne of God. Has their love ended? Certainly not. If anything, their love has been perfected in Christ. Why would they stop praying for those they love?

When an Orthodox Christian says, “Most Holy Theotokos, save us,” the Church is not saying that Mary is our Savior instead of Christ. Rather, we are asking for her saving help through her prayers, just as St. Paul could say that he “saved” some through his ministry (1 Corinthians 9:22), always meaning that God’s saving grace works through His faithful servants.

Everything in Orthodox devotion ultimately leads to Jesus Christ. The saints are like windows through which the light of Christ shines. They are mirrors reflecting His holiness. They do not compete with Him; they glorify Him.

The final goal of every **Orthodox prayer is union with the Holy Trinity**. The Mother of God and all the saints simply join us in that prayer, surrounding us as “a great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), encouraging us to persevere until we, too, stand before the throne of God.



When Orthodox Christians ask the Theotokos or the saints to pray for them, they are not turning away from Christ. They are **drawing nearer to Him through the communion of His Body, the Church**. Together with the angels, the Mother of God, the apostles, the martyrs, and all the saints, we glorify the One who alone is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Christ remains the center, the source of salvation, and the object of all worship. The saints simply help lead us more deeply into His eternal love.

**2026 ASSUMPTION
STEWARDS AS OF 7/25/26**

If you have given toward Stewardship and your name does not appear on the list please contact +Fr Constantine or Tressa Rockwood, Stewardship Chair.

*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 Challenger
James & Cynthia Carter
Afton & Jamie Carlson
Penny Blue & Martin Carlsen
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 Dudunakis
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 Ligori
Tony & Georgia Ligori
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 Rashkeev
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*



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

PRAYER FOR THE SICK: 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 Jesus Christ to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit and heal also your servants: **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** 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 glory. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

ONLINE GIVING

Our Assumption Parish is pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option for making your stewardship payments and other regular and special offerings.

To use On-Line Giving you must first create an account with your password.

You can access our on-line giving portal on the:

- **Church website at: <https://www.assumptionpocatello.net>**
- **Or directly at: <http://assumptionpocatello.churchtrac.com/give>**
- **Or by scanning the following QR code into your cell phone**

You may use your Credit /Debit Card or the ACH (direct out of your Checking Account)

There is a 2.9% fee for Credit Card use. If you select to use a Credit Card, you can choose to pay the fee by checking the box option. We recommend using the ACH, the fee is only .25 cents, less expensive than mailing in your donations.



You may also purchase a Candle and offer a Prayer on the giving portal. Your candle (s) will be lit by Father 15 minutes before the service on Sunday.

Over these past six years, our parish has had an influx of families and individuals migrating from the Northwest and California. We have also been blessed with many who have come seeking the Historic Christian Church, and thus found themselves here in Southeastern Idaho and the parish of the Assumption. Once a month, The Epistle will feature a family or individual who has embraced the Faith and how they came to Orthodoxy.

JOURNEY TO ORTHODOXY: Barton Kelly “Moses” Autrey Jr.



I came across an article online a year or so back detailing St. Moses of Ethiopia's life and works. I heard his story dozens of times before, but still, since God had baptized me with his name, I wanted to read for any more useful details possibly missed with other accounts. Upon going through this account, one simple statement made me reflect upon how much God was looking out for me in my life; It said “He lived a life of profligacy.” I had never heard this word before and looked it up, and at that moment it struck me. To live a life of profligacy was to constantly indulge oneself in the sensual pleasures of life. The consequences of my past profligate actions are the very reason I hurried into the Church almost four years ago. To hear a word encapsulate my battles and reality so succinctly was humbling and reassuring to say the least.

I did not grow up religious, my family and their friends were not religious either. The only exposure, from a young age, I received was in passing from my grandparents on occasion. I have never been openly blasphemous against God, but the conclusions I made regarding the faith were that it was simply not for me. If he existed, he was simply in the distant past and had already set everything in motion, but it did not feel as if he was actively in my life. Despite this conclusion, I attended religious private schools; the education there was second to none and my parents wanted to ensure a better path for me growing up. I attended an Episcopalian school for nearly my entire school life, and all I simply took away from the required services were banal moral goods during each homily. Most of the students I attended with, were most likely doing the same. In fact, I never came across an Episcopalian outside of the priests while attending.

During my adolescent years and up until finding the Orthodox Church, I battled severe depressive episodes stricken with barely leaving my bed, eating, and sleeping. I could recognize each time that I was not doing well but felt totally unable to fix it. Each mental solution shown or offered felt inadequate to address the nature of my suffering. After graduating high school, I attended college twice to middling success. During this time, like many others I turned to drugs as a way to, in my mind, numb the source of my anguish. I then subsequently convinced myself that psychotropics could be an underutilized pharmaceutical solution to mental illness. Psychedelics, Marijuana, and any psychotropic substance I could get my hands on became my solution and idol to my perennial Nihilism, and profligacy became my creed and savior. All this time I withdrew more and more, and my grades reflected that. Struck with the loneliness of covid shutdowns and with my inability to be successful in my college career I dropped out. Isolated and in my room, the biological background of my degree came into focus as I saw the hypocrisy of the shutdowns. This rabbit hole ultimately led me to stare into the abyss and for it to stare back. I saw true undiluted evil and it shook me to my core. I was in a state of psychosis during this time, and was

...continued pg. 19

...JOURNEY TO ORTHODOXY

scared of my own shadow fearing that this evil was all consuming and present. The hubris and delusions I had gathered through drugs scattered my psyche in two

I stumbled into the Church to be quite honest. In this pursuit to calculate the origin and nature of this evil I kept coming across Christians defying the orders openly on their platforms and talking about it. They said this pandemic and its lies had a source and it was from the evil one. Eventually with desperation, I bared my soul online on one of these online creators forums, hoping I could find a Church that could help me escape my own suffering. That's when someone asked if I had heard of the Orthodox Church. I had not and asked very foolishly if he could give me an elevator pitch regarding it. He simply answered in the timeless manner, come and see. It confounded me and took me several months before attending again, but during those gaps, and despite my own psychosis, God kept guiding me back to Him. It has taken time to heal my scars, but it has just been about 3 years since my baptism. Thanks to the Church, I have never felt more alive, connected, grateful, and joyous. Through the Orthodox Church and through the people I have met at each parish I've attended, I finally feel home. It feels as though I have been plucked from the hell of my own creation and given life.

I would also like to say that I feel home especially here in Pocatello, it has one of the kindest and most joyous congregations in my travels throughout the US and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else but here and now with them. Thank you all for reading and for your continued support and love despite my transgressions, may God be with you all.

With Faith and with Love,
Barton Kelly "Moses" Autrey Jr.



**Jacob Denton Ben Barnhart,
Joshua Corral**

WITH MUCH GRATITUDE

We thank the dedicated young men from our parish who answered the call to tackle the challenging task of clearing the weeds, overgrown bushes from our property across the alley. Their hard work and willingness to serve has transformed an overgrown area into a space ready for improvement.

A special thank you to **Dean Harris** who mowed down the tall weeds. **The work crew included: Moses Autrey, Jacob Denton, Joshua Corral, Tristan Laudenklos Aaron Murdoch, and Ben Barnhart.** Thanks to their efforts, we're now one step closer to creating the additional asphalt parking area that will greatly benefit our parish community. Their generous volunteer spirit and commitment to enhancing our church grounds truly embodies the values of service and stewardship that make our parish family so special.

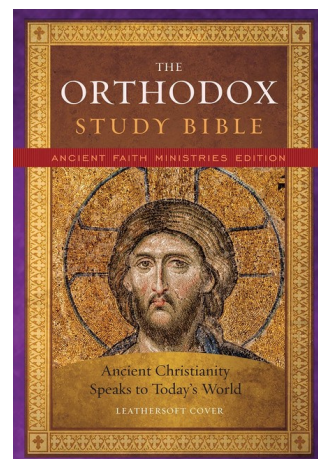
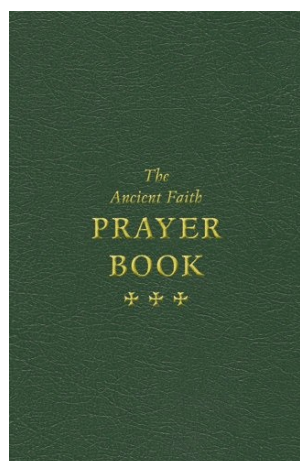


THE AGAPE BOOKSTORE

Members of the Orthodox faith are often called "The Church Militant" because, while we are alive, we are engaged in a spiritual battle for Salvation. We don't struggle in our spiritual lives to bargain our way into Heaven or avoid punishment. We Orthodox participate in our own Salvation through prayer, worship, and asceticism to draw closer to God and to live in Christ. We engage in this good fight to save our souls to be worthy to partake in Communion and all the other Divine Mysteries of our Church. We fight against our sinful desires for the greater benefit of partaking in Christ's Love and being worthy of an eternity in His presence. Our goal is to work toward the healing and restoration of our souls to what they were intended – a reflection of the Grace and Goodness of the Holy Trinity. This true path of Salvation is called Theosis. As St. Athanasius described it, *"God became man so that man might become god by Grace."* Thus, our true purpose in life is *Salvation through Spiritual growth in Christ.*

The Agape Bookstore, located in the Orthodox Center, was created to help our parishioners to flourish in their spiritual growth. We offer a variety of prayer books, Bibles, contemporary writings, and source material written by the Church Fathers and Saints to edify and encourage you in your spiritual struggle. We've recently expanded our selection of books to include titles published by St. Anthony's Monastery in Arizona and Ex Fontibus Press. We carry everything you need for your home prayer corner including icons, candles, incense, and prayer ropes as well as gifts and children's items. We also offer exclusive stretched canvas custom icons in a variety of sizes to suit your needs.

Brandon, Devyn, and Jake are happy to help anyone in our parish find or order a book or icon that is right for them. We invite everyone to come and see our store on Sundays during Agape Fellowship directly following the Divine Liturgy. Glory to God for All Things!



AN ORTHODOX HOME ALTAR

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the spiritual significance of the Christian home, encouraging families to make their homes "a little church" or a "miniature church." He taught that the Christian family home should be a place where the gospel is first heard, where repentance is learned, and where virtues are formed.

While he may not have specifically used the term "home altar" as it's understood today (a dedicated physical structure for worship), his writings emphasize practices that would likely lead to such a space or similar devotional elements within the home:

- 1) He highlighted the importance of prayer in the home, suggesting that "wherever you may find yourself, you can set up an altar to God in your mind by means of prayer."
- 2) He urged families to prepare two tables in their homes: "one for the food of the body and the other for the food of Sacred Scripture," implying the importance of family Bible reading and spiritual nourishment within the household.

Having a dedicated altar or icon corner in the home serves as the spiritual heart of an Orthodox Christian household, creating a sacred space that connects the family to the divine presence throughout their daily lives. This consecrated area, typically featuring icons of Christ, the Theotokos, and family patron saints along with a vigil lamp or candles, transforms the home into a "domestic church" where prayer becomes a natural and integrated part of family life.

The physical presence of holy images and the regular lighting of candles or oil lamps creates an atmosphere of reverence that reminds family members of God's constant presence, encouraging spontaneous prayer and fostering a deeper awareness of the spiritual dimension in everyday activities.

For Orthodox families with children, the home altar becomes an invaluable tool for spiritual formation and religious education. Children naturally learn to make the sign of the cross, offer simple prayers, and develop a personal relationship with Christ and the saints through daily interaction with the sacred space.

The visual nature of Orthodox spirituality through icons helps young minds understand abstract theological concepts, while family prayers before the altar create lasting memories and establish lifelong spiritual habits. This consistent exposure to Orthodox tradition and practice in the home reinforces what children learn in church and provides parents with countless opportunities for informal religious instruction, ultimately helping to raise children who see faith not as something separate from daily life, but as its very foundation and source of meaning.



OUR AGAPE BOOKSTORE WILL HAVE MOST EVERYTHING YOU WILL NEED TO SET UP YOUR HOME ALTAR.

JOIN THE LIST

ITEM FROM LIST

Clarence & Vivian
Close
Goldie Homan

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

David Murdoch

DONATIONS

SOME/ALL EXPENS- ES COVERED BY:

Dolmathes-Annie
Semons & Poppy
Semons Short

Loukaniko– Rocky &
Vicky Fullmer

Gabriel & Christina
Paul & Family

Frappe Ingredients
Trisha & Colby Reddin

PASTRY EXPENSES BY:

2026 GREEK FESTIVAL FOOD DONATION LIST

You may offer an item or a partial donation for an item or a FREE-WILL DONATION

ITEM	COST PER CASE	CASES NEEDED	TOTAL COST
Lamb Legs	\$45.00 per leg	46 legs of lamb	\$2,225.00
Filo	\$45.79 / case	15 cases	\$687.00
Gyro Meat	\$63.35 /case	50 cases	\$3,117.50
Pita Bread	\$39.00 /case	16 cases	\$1,056.00
Butter	\$71.69/case	2 cases	\$144.00
Clarified butter	\$110.00 /case	5 cases/	\$550.00
Feta	\$92.00/bucket	7 buckets	\$644.00
Olive Oil	\$368.00/case	1case	DONATED
Walnuts/almonds	\$138.00/case/\$125/case	2 cases/1 case	\$276/\$124
Flour	50lbs	1 Bag	\$17.00
Hinged Plastic Containers	\$50/case	7 cases	\$350.00
Rice	\$35.00 /case	3 (50 lb. case)	\$105.00
Olives	\$88.00 /case	1 case	\$88.00
Pepperoncini	\$38.00 / case	2 cases	\$76.00
Sodas	\$15.00 /case	27 cases	\$405.00
Liquid Eggs	\$130.00 /case	3 Cases	\$390.00
Eggs	\$63.42 / case	2 cases	\$127.00
Spinach	\$20.00 /case	25 cases	\$384.00
Cottage Cheese	\$64.00 /case	6cases	\$652.00
Eating Utensils/ Napkins	\$30.00 /case	10 cases	\$372.00
Lemon Juice	\$47.00 /case	3 cases	\$141.00
Tzatziki Sauce	\$42.71 /case	13 cases	\$555.00
Red Wine Vinegar	\$40.00 /case	2 cases	\$80.00
Sugar	\$70.00/case	2 cases	\$140.00
Paper Plates	\$130.00/case	5 cases	\$520.00
Ground Beef (Pastitsio)	40 pounds	\$5.50 per lb.	\$220.00
Ground Sausage (Pastitsio)	24 pounds	\$5.50 per lb.	\$132.00
Misko #2 Pastitsio Noodles	144/case	2 cases	\$288.00
Main Festival Tent Rental	One tent	75'x30'	\$2,000.00
Greek Wine & Beer	Greek Wine/Mythos Beer		\$1,100
Foil Pans	\$110case	3 case	\$330.00
Hinged Styrofoam Container	\$28.00/case	12 cases	\$345.00
Domestic Beer		5kegs	\$600.00



WE ARE THE AMBASSADORS OF THE GREEK FESTIVAL

The Summer Festival typically sees thousands of people pass through our church grounds. Please remember our number one call to action at the Festival is to invite our neighbors into the church for a Church Tour or to visit us on a Sunday so that they can experience our Orthodox Christian Faith. On August 29th our call to action is simple, "I hope you enjoyed your meal, don't forget to visit our church for a tour before you leave. Visit us on a Sunday as well." This is part and parcel of "Outreach" and "Share the Orthodox Christian Faith" with church members and non-members to expand Christ's message to Southeastern Idaho and beyond. Let us remember as a church we have more to offer our city, state, and nation, than Gyros and Baklava. The greatest gift for the world is found within the walls of every local Orthodox Church.

I hope that we all have a great time at the Festival! Enjoy the food, music, and dancing. Thank you all in advance for volunteering and raising funds for our church, and our ministries.

2026 GREEK FESTIVAL SATURDAY, AUGUST 29th

Festival Food and Pastry Workshops Schedule
ALL WORKSHOPS WILL BEGIN AT 10:00AM

We need everyone to PLEASE offer their time to assemble these food items

BOTTLE SALAD DRESSING WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26th 10:00AM

SALAD PREPARATION THURS. AUG 27th & FRI. AUG 28th 10:00AM

PACKAGING PASTRY (lots of help needed)

THURS & FRI AUGUST 27th-28th
10:00AM



SET-UP THE FESTIVAL TENTS, TABLES, & CHAIRS THURS. AUG 27th & FRI. AUG 28th 10:00AM



2026 GREEK FESTIVAL FOOD ITEM or CASH DONATION FORM

- Item to be Donated **or** Part of an Item _____
Amount enclosed \$ _____ **or**
- I/We would like to offer a CASH DONATION wherever needed for the Festival.
Donation Amount \$ _____

NAME _____
Address _____

Return with your donation to:
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
PO Box 4567
Pocatello, Idaho 83205

COMPLETE
DONATION FORM

ITEM
SELECTION
AND OR
FREE-WILL DONATION.

* Your donation is tax deductible and will appear on your Annual Church Statement.



Ryan, Kim & Khloe Smith,
Yoland Riech, and Phil Homan



Scott Rockwood, Goldie
Homan, Kim Sims, Tressa
Rockwood



GREEK FESTIVAL PASTITSIO WORKSHOP VOLUNTEERS

*Much appreciation to the following parishioners who volunteered at the
Pastitsio Workshops:*

*Yolanda Riech, Philip Homan, Tressa & Scott Rockwood, Goldie
Homan, Jacob Denton, Filio Paloukos Ryan, Kim & Khloe Smith, Kim
Sims, Christine & Jerry Otto, Cynthia Carter, and Jake Nyenhuis*

More photos back page.



MELOMAKARONA WORKSHOP A FAMILY AFFAIR



Our heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation go to **Christina and Gabriel Paul**, along with their wonderful young men **Dean, Dylan, Demetri and Dominic**, for their loving dedication in making and baking the delicious Meletakrona for our upcoming Greek Festival.

Watching the entire family work together was truly inspiring. Each person pitched in, creating an assembly line with smiles, laughter, and a spirit of love as they carefully formed each perfect “Melo.” Their teamwork is a beautiful example of what it means to serve Christ and His Church as a family.

Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and love with our parish. May our Lord richly bless the Paul family for their generosity and faithfulness, and may He continue to strengthen them with His abundant grace.

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

Mailing Address

**PO Box 4567
Pocatello, ID 83205
(208) 232-5519**

Live-Stream Services

Website

www.assumptionpocatello.net

On-Line Giving

<http://assumptionpocatellochurchtrac.com/give>

PRIEST

**Fr. Constantine A. Zozos
(805) 570-6525**

assumptiongochurch@gmail.com

PARISH COUNCIL

**Tressa Rockwood-President
Gregory Painter -Vice Pres.
David Harmer-Treasurer
Goldie Homan-Secretary
Vicky Fullmer, Vivian Close
Anthony Hoskin, Tom Hugie,
Kade Schmalz, Ron Sims
Jacque Swanson**

IN THIS ISSUE

Father's Message.....	1
Service Schedule	2
Assumption Feast Day.....	3-6
-Heartfelt Thank You.....	7
-Assumption Prayer List Form	
--Why do we Pray to the Theotokos .	8-9
-On-line Giving.....	10-11
2026 Stewards	
Prayer for the Sick	
-Journey to Orthodoxy.....	12-13
-Agape Bookstore.....	14
-An Orthodox Home Altar.....	15
-Festival Food Donation List Free Will Donation & Festival Workshops	16-17
-Festival Workshop Photos.....	18-20



Jacob Denton, Christina & Jerry Otto, Phil Homan,
Goldie Homan, Scott & Tressa Rockwood

