



The Epistle

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2022

**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

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Gregory Painter -Vice Pres.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Father's Message.....	1
Service Schedule	2
Assumption Feast Day.....	3-5
-Prayer List Form	
2022 Stewards.....	6
-Prayer for the Sick	
Blessing Baskets of Fruit.....	7
-Desert Fathers Sayings	
-Prayer for the Blessing of Fruit	
Festival Workshops.....	8
-Ambassadors of the Greek Festival	
-Festival Donation List and Order Form.....	9
Fellowship Hosts Needed	10
-You are in Christ's Church when you...	
Let us lift up our hearts.....	11

FATHER'S MESSAGE

Dear faithful, God asks us to walk in the fruit of the Spirit. "Let us live out the purpose God has for us and share our bounty with those around us, so it may bear more fruit."

Is there something that you are gifted at? Do you have a passion for dance or sports? Are you a talented public speaker or leader? Do you enjoy working with animals or building things?

Everyone has certain talents or God-given gifts that they are skilled in. For example, some people are very hospitable and relatable and know how to make people feel comfortable. Some individuals are talented businesspeople, teachers, musicians or parents.

These talents can be more than hobbies or even careers. These gifts can be used for the glory of God. Using your talents for God can allow you to be a part of advancing the kingdom of God, helping others, and improving the world around you.

At every Divine Liturgy we hear the words from James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." The verse tells us that every gift is from God. We all have different talents and God-given gifts, but they are all important and can be used for God's kingdom.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is comparing the individuals in the body of Christ to different parts of

the body. Even though each part serves a different purpose and has a different function, all are important in the whole and are needed for the body to function properly. It is the same with our talents; they are all different but each one serves a purpose.

Some people may know what their talents and gifts are. Other people may not be completely sure of their skills and strong points. There are various ways to find what you are good at including:

♦ *Prayer: Matthew 7:7 tells us to ask, seek and knock. We can pray about and seek out our talents. God can give us wisdom about what our talents are. We can trust the Holy Spirit to lead us about our gifts.*

♦ *Asking Others: Asking others can also give us an idea about our talents. Sometimes it is hard to see qualities and skills in ourselves but easy to see qualities in others.*

♦ *Pay Attention to What You Enjoy: What activities do you enjoy? Sometimes talents and interests align. From landscaping to fixing things, if you enjoy it, it can be one of your strong points that God has gifted you in.*

♦ *Practice: Talents do not develop overnight. They take practice and effort. For example, if you want to be a good baker, you need to practice and improve your baking. Even if you are naturally gifted in something, practice can help you grow in that area and become a good steward of your God-given gift.*

Continued page 2...

Father's Message continued...

Scripture encourages us to be "faithful stewards" of our God-given gifts. Using your talents for God can help you find purposeful work and share God's love. There are many examples of ways talents can be used to show glory to God. If you are gifted in teaching, perhaps you can use your talents to help teach a Sunday school class at church. Perhaps you are talented and creative to help lead our Youth Program, or assist with the Youth Dance Group. If you are an artist, you might use your talent to create the next Greek Festival T-Shirt. Do you find it easy to converse with others? Consider using that gift to ask someone who is lonely to lunch. Is cooking one of your talents? Preparing meals for a person who lost a family member, or someone who has given birth could be a few applications of your talent. Of course helping with food preparation for the Festival is an excellent way of sharing you time and talents. If you are gifted with a singing voice you may consider joining the choir, or reading at the Chanters Stand.

Look for opportunities to serve God and use your gifts in your daily life. Using your talents for God might not look the same every day. Some days you may notice exactly how God is working through your talents; other days it may be more behind closed doors and you may not see how your gift is affecting others.

Even if you do not see how your talent is making an impact, it is important to let yourself be used by God because you may never know how you affected someone's life.

*In the Gifts of the Holy Spirit,
+Father Constantine*

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

VOLUNTEERS MONTH OF AUGUST

Sunday, August 7th

Orthros Reader: Gregory Painter,

Epistle Reader: Dean Harris

Ushers: Yolanda Riech, Goldie Homan

Prophoron: Sophie McCurry

Agape Fellowship: Goldie Homan

Sunday, August 14th

Orthros Reader: Nikko Yanase

Epistle Reader: Karl Thienes

Ushers: Tressa Rockwood, Tom Hugie

Prophoron: Rebecca Tysor

Agape Fellowship: The Tarasau Family

Sunday, August 21st

Orthros Reader: Karl Thienes

Epistle Reader: Gregory Painter

Ushers-Jacque Swanson, Goldie Homan

Prophoron: Dante Dedic

Agape Fellowship: Host Needed

Sunday, August 28th

Orthros Reader: John Speck

Epistle Reader: Nikko Yanase

Ushers: Dave Harmer, Vicky Fullmer

Prophoron: Sophie McCurry

Agape Fellowship: Festival Food

**SUPPLICATION (Paraklesis)
PRAYER SERVICE OF INTERCESSION &
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD
SCHEDULE**

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

Fast: August 1st-14th

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 3RD, Supplication Service
6:00pm

SATURDAY, AUG. 6TH, Holy Transfiguration of
Our Lord Divine Liturgy 9:00am
Prayer for the Blessing of Fruit at the conclusion
of the Liturgy. Faithful are asked to bring their
basket of fruit to be blessed.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 10TH Supplication Service
6:00pm

FRIDAY, AUG. 12TH, Supplication Service,
6:00pm

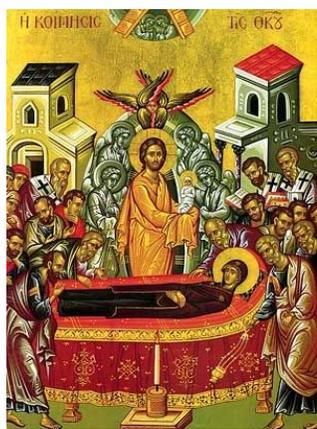
SUNDAY, AUG. 14TH, The Parish Feast Day
Celebration of the Assumption
will be observed.

Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy, 10:00am &
ARTOCLASIA SERVICE

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Sun. Aug14th.

YOUTH GREEK DANCE PRACTICE: Every
Sunday until Festival-time.

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.

LIGHT A CANDLE

If you are unable to attend a service you may light a candle on line at our website.

Fr. Constantine will light your candle(s) at 8:50am on Sunday.



You may also make a Tray Offering through the On Line Giving Tab
<http://assumptionpocatello.churchtrac.com/give>

DIVINE SERVICES are being celebrated at Church every Sunday.

We are also
LIVE-STREAMING SERVICES

During the pandemic, we realized that there is a need for more outreach with those living a distance from the church. We have seniors unable to drive, others that are in assisted living facilities, others who are caregivers and unable to attend services. Also when winter begins and the highways are not safe, those who live in the Idaho Falls area and Rupert/Burley area will be able to tune in and watch the service live-stream. Another plus is that we have noticed many non-Orthodox people are also going on our livestream broadcast, perhaps seeking to learn more about the Orthodox faith.

It is our hope that more and more of our faithful will attend in person.

***FEAST DAY of Our Blessed Assumption Church
and the Service of
Artoklasia - The Blessing of the Five Loaves will be observed on
SUNDAY, AUGUST 14th***



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 Orthros, 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.



**2022 ASSUMPTION
STEWARDS AS OF 7/25/22**

*Fr. Constantine A. Zozos
Betty Angelos
John & Candice Apostle
Chris Arvas
Naglaa & Chris Bargelski
Tom & Molly Beseris
Vadim Butibas
John N. Christ
Mary Frances Cozakos
Nick Cozakos
Scott Eames
Angela Fullmer
Vicky & Rocky Fullmer
Nicholas & Stella Gdontakis
Ted Georges
Vivian Goodner
Dave & Jeanne Harmer
Dean & Kathy Harris
Goldie Homan
Wilma Homan
Anthony & Svitlana Hoskin*

*Tom & Tracey Hugie
Gus & Demetra Kalabokias
John Davis Katsilometes
Maria Katsilometes
James & Cora Ligor
Georgia & Tony Ligor
Alex & Irina Lupanciuc
Konstantina Manolis
Vlasios Manolis
Treon Maroudas
Scott & Elly MacDonald
John & Stephanie Mermigas
Sophie & Dennis McCurry
Robert & Kaitlin Miklos
Joe & Tina Murphy
Nick & Jennifer Nichols
Gregory & Olenda Painter
Sam & Filio Paloukos
Maria Poulos
Les & Helene Poulos-Edmo
Trisha & Colby Reddin
Yolanda Riech
Scott & Tressa Rockwood
David Sandborgh*

*Kade & Devyn Schmalz
Annie Semons
Rita Sherburne
Jeff & Poppy Semons Short
Kim & Ron Sims
Karen Solomon
John Speck
Phil & LuAnn Spain
Steven & Jacque Swanson
Maria & Tim Swore
Travis & Ryan Swore
Ashley & Alex Tarasau
Karl and Carrie Thienes
Pauline Thiros
Nicholas & Tacia Tsakrios
Vadym Ustianskyi
Anna & John Ross Workman
Nikko & Corri Yanase*

*2022 STEWARDS as of 7/25/22,
who have returned their Pledge
Card or have started their Stew-
ardship giving. Please make an
effort to return your 2022
Pledge Card ASAP*



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 **Bill, Jim, Scarlett, Zachary, Sara, Martha, Anna, Kieran, Valentin, Valentina, Rose Mary, Patricia, Sotirios, Anthony, Maria, Lucia, Michael, Krista, John, Bobby, Eric, George, Ludmila, Martin, Gayle, Alicia, Dianna, Chelsea, Dell, Gregory, Dimitri, Oleg, Tania, Ocey, Ethel, Carol, Robert, Casi, Jack, Carol, Roger, Bill, 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*

Explanation of the tradition of blessing fruit on the Feast of the Transfiguration, Saturday August 6th, Liturgy 9:00am



On the Holy Feast-Day of Transfiguration (Metamorphosis) on August 6th, our tradition calls for the Orthodox Christian faithful to bring fruits and even vegetables to be blessed on this day. The most common fruit to be blessed is grapes.

*The blessing of fruits, i.e., grapes, apples, etc., as well as vegetables, on this day is one very beautiful custom of our Holy Church. The practice signifies the final transfiguration of all things in Christ our Savior. **“It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the Paradise of God’s Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the Glory of the Lord.”***

This is an early Christian tradition. The first week of August, on the sixth of August, the farmers used to gather the first fruits of their summer harvest (grapes, figs, etc.) and to offer thanks to God and offer them to the Church to be blessed and then to give them to the faithful present at the Divine Liturgy as a blessing to them. These fruits are called the “beginnings.”

In a text from the 7th century (“the laws of the kingdom”) by Emperor Constantine Porfirogenitos, this tradition is described clearly: “The Emperor of Constantinople gathers the “beginnings” in Chalcedon, where there are many vines, and then he waits for the Patriarch of Constantinople to come on the Holy Day of the Transfiguration of Christ, to bless the fruits and to personally hand out the grapes to the faithful.

Saint John Chrysostom wrote: “Plowman receives fruit from the earth not so much for his labor and diligence, as out of the goodness of God Who grows this fruit, because neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase.”

Grapes are brought to church because they are directly connected to the Holy Eucharistic Mystery; that is why in the prayer for the blessing of grapes the priest says, “Bless, Lord, this new fruit of the vine which reached ripeness because Thou kindly provided good weather, drops of rain and stillness. Let eating this fruit of the vine make us joyful. And give us the honor of offering this fruit to Thee, as the gift of purging of sins, altogether with the Holy Body of Thy Christ.

In the first centuries of Christianity, the faithful brought forth to the church the fruit and crops of the new harvest: bread, wine, olive oil, incense, wax, honey, etc. Of all these offerings, only bread, wine, incense, olive oil, and wax were taken to the altar, while the rest was used for the needs of the clergy and the poor for whom the church was caring. These offerings were to express gratitude to God for all goods, but at the same time to help servants of God and people in need.



Timeless Spiritual Wisdom Found in the Sayings and Stories of the Early Christian Monks of the Desert

- *Just as the most bitter medicine drives out poison, so prayer joined to fasting drives away evil thoughts. +Saint Syncletica of Alexandria*
- *Teach your heart to follow what your tongue is saying to others. +Abba Poemen*
- *“Prayer is food for the soul. Do not starve the soul, it is better to let the body go hungry. Do not judge anyone, forgive everyone. Consider yourself worse than everyone in the world and you will be saved. As much as possible, be more quiet.” + St. Joseph of Optina*
- *“The Lord shows us that we ought not to answer those who ask a question with malicious intent (cf. Mt. 21:23-27). For He Himself did not reply to those Jews who questioned Him with cunning, although He was not at a loss for an answer.” +St. Theophylact*

WE ARE THE AMBASSADORS OF THE GREEK FESTIVAL

These are just a couple of things that we should be mindful of during our annual festival as we welcome our neighbors to the Assumption. 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.

The summer festival typically sees thousands of people pass through our church grounds. Please remember our number one call to action at the festival. Let us 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 27th, 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.

**2022 GREEK FESTIVAL SATURDAY, AUGUST 27TH
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*

Tyropita: Saturday, August 6th-Chair Tressa Rockwood: 208-251-8105

Karidopita: Saturday August 13th (Closed Workshop)-Chair Sophie McCurry: 208-241-8615

Ouzo Cake: Thursday August 17th (Closed Workshop)-Chairs LuAnn Spain & Rita Sherburne

Galopitakia: Saturday August 20th-Chair Tressa Rockwood: 208-251-8105

Salad Prep/Feta/Olives/Tzatziki: Wed-Fri August 24,25,26th-Chairs Goldie Homan 208-643-3031, Filio Paloukos

Pastry Packaging: Friday, August 26th-Chair Tressa Rockwood: 208-251-8105

2022 GREEK FESTIVAL FOOD ITEM or CASH DONATION FORM

• ***Item to be Donated*** _____ ***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

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

2022 GREEK FESTIVAL FOOD DONATION LIST

You may offer an item or a partial donation for an item or a free-will donation

FREE WILL DONATIONS

Karl & Carrie Thienes
 Kim & Ron Sims
 Derick Tormohlen
 John Speck
 Kim & Ron Sims
 Vadym Ustianskyi
 Dave and Jeanne Harmer
 Betty Angelos
 Dina Manolis
 Filio & Sam Paloukos
 Vivian Goodner
 Gus & Demetra Kalabokias

ITEM DONATIONS

Daughters of Penelope
 The Painter Family
 Michael & Faye Strickland
 Marie & Dan Milovanovic
 Goldie Homan
 Rashid & Naila Bisharat
 Philip Homan
 Wilma Homan
 Kim & Ron Sims
 Lara Masterson
 Les & Helen Poulos-Edmo
 Anthony & Svitlana Hoskin
 Stephanie Pahis
 Pauline Thiros

FOOD DONATIONS

Expenses covered by:

Dolmathes-Annie Semons & Poppy Short

Loukaniko- Rocky & Vicky Fullmer

Salad Produce-Chris Drakos

Pastitsio- Dina Manolis

PASTRY expenses covered by:

Kourambietes-Annie Semons & Poppy Short

Ouzo Cake-LuAnn Spain & Rita Sherburne

Melomakarona-Tressa & Scott Rockwood

Karidopita-Sophie McCurry

Paximathia-Filio & Sam Paloukos

ITEM	COST PER CASE/BOX	CASES/BOXES NEEDED	TOTAL COST
Large Lamb Legs	\$42.00 per leg	50 legs of lamb	\$2,100 (11) Donated
Filo	\$40.00 per case	20 cases	\$800.00 DONATED
Gyro Meat	\$55.00 per case	48 cases	\$2,640.00
Pita Bread	\$32.00 per case	19 cases	\$608.00
Butter	\$89.00 per case	6 cases	\$534.00 DONATED
Feta	\$83.00 per bucket	5 buckets	\$415.00 DONATED
Olive Oil	\$149.00 per case	1 case	\$149.00
Walnuts/almonds	\$12.00 per bag	15 bags	\$180.00 1bag Donated
Cream Cheese	\$70.00 per case	1/2cases	\$35.00 DONATED
Rice	\$20.00 per bag	4 bags	\$80.00
Olives	\$80.00 per case	1 case	\$80.00
Pepperoncini	\$24.00 per case	2 cases	\$48.00 DONATED
Sodas	\$13.00 per case	25 cases	\$325.00
Water	\$4.00 per case	23 cases	\$92.00 DONATED
Eggs	\$26.00 per case	3 cases	\$78.00 DONATED
Spinach	\$62.00 per case	7 cases	\$434.00
Cottage Cheese	\$21.00 per box	14 boxes	\$294.00
Eating Utensils	\$60.00 per box	8 boxes	\$480.00
2 Electronic Billboards	\$100 per week ea.	2 boards	\$400.00
Sterno Heating Cans	\$45.00 per case	1 case	\$45.00 DONATED
Lemon Juice	\$12.00 per case	2 cases	\$24.00 DONATED
Red Wine Vinegar	\$25.00 per case	2 cases	\$50.00
Sugar	\$38.00 per lg. bag	1 large bag	\$38.00 DONATED
Paper Plates	\$20.00per sleeve	15 sleeves	\$282.00
Liquid Eggs	\$58.00 per case	2 Cases	\$116.00 DONATED
Yogurt	\$38.00per cont.	10 cases	\$380.00
Beer/ Wine	Cases	Wine & Beer,	\$1,000
Main Festival Tent	one	70x30	\$1,400
Ground Beef (Pastitsio)	40 pounds	\$5.49 lb	\$219.00
Pastitsio Noodles	\$3.60 per Pkg	60 Packages	DONATED

**COMPLETE OFFERING FORM
 ITEM SELECTION AND OR
 FREE-WILL DONATION.**

If you would like to sponsor an AGAPE FELLOWSHIP; for recognizing a name day, memorial, special event or any reason, please sign up at the Fellowship Table.

We all enjoy Fellowship and seeing family and friends from church. We ask that you provide fellowship for 70 people.

Menu item ideas may include, fruit salad, finger sandwiches, potato salad, macaroni salad, various cold-cuts, sandwich rolls, small meatballs, BBQ chicken wings, green salad, pastries, dips with crackers, cut up vegetables coffee cake, potato chips, chili, bagels, donuts. You may also consider bottled water, sodas, punch for refreshments.

Plates, utensils, cups and napkins are provided by the church. Coffee is also provided.



We are seeking additional women or men to assist the Agape Host for their fellowship. These individuals will be responsible for making the coffee, setting-up plates and utensils, throwing away trash, assisting the host in cleaning up and locking up.

A Free-Will Offering is suggested!



“You are in Christ’s Church when you...”

“The Church of Christ is alive and free. In her we move and have our being, through Christ Who is her Head. In Him we have full freedom. In the Church we learn of truth and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).”

You are in Christ’s Church whenever you uplift someone bent down in sorrow, or when you give alms to the poor, and visit the sick. You are in Christ’s Church when you cry out: “Lord, help me.” You are in Christ’s Church when you are good and patient, when you refuse to get angry at your brother, even if he has wounded your feelings. You are in Christ’s Church when you pray: ‘Lord, forgive him.’ When you work honestly at your job, returning home weary in the evenings but with a smile upon your lips; when you repay evil with love—you are in Christ’s Church. Do you not see, therefore, young friend, how close the Church of Christ is? You are Peter and God is building His Church upon you. You are the rock of His Church against which nothing can prevail....Let us build churches with our faith, churches which no human power can pull down, a church whose foundation is Christ....Feel for your brother alongside you. Never ask: ‘Who is he?’ Rather say: ‘He is no stranger; he is my brother. He is the Church of Christ just as I am.’ (Quoting: Fr. George Calciu)

With such a call in our hearts, let us begin really to belong to the Church of Christ, the Orthodox Church. Outward membership is not enough; something must move within us that makes us different from the world around us, even if that world calls itself “Christian” and even “Orthodox.”

Let us keep and nourish those qualities of the true Orthodox world-view which I mentioned earlier: a living, normal attitude, loving and forgiving, not self-centered, preserving our innocence and unworldliness even with a full and humble awareness of our own sinfulness and the power of the worldly temptations around us. If we truly live this Orthodox world-view, our Faith will survive the shocks ahead of us and be a source of inspiration and salvation for those who will still be seeking Christ even amidst the shipwreck of humanity which has already begun today.

—Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) of Platina

Let us lift up our hearts...

At this challenging time, many people are frustrated and depressed. Yet even amidst this pervasive dreariness of heart, there are some who raise our spirits. These persons are bright lights in the darkness. In Proverbs 17:17-18:5, we find, "A merry heart does good, like medicine." As a faithful Orthodox Christian we are called to "lift up our hearts" so that our cheerfulness can be medicine for others in a gloomy world.

Nowadays, the word "merry" is associated with Christmas and its festivities. However, the word in the Hebrew Bible means to be glad, joyful, and rejoicing. On the other hand, the Greek word suggests a good frame of mind.

IT'S HARD TO BE MERRY.

At times, feelings of loneliness, isolation, boredom, and frustration may bury our zest in life. The Hebrew term for broken refers to a spirit that is afflicted or wounded. The Psalmist puts this condition well when he writes, "Why art Thou cast down, O my soul? (Psalm 43:5).

THE INVITATION TO LIFT UP OUR HEARTS.

The image of being bowed down to the ground suggests what the downcast need. They need to be "lifted up," as we are in the Divine Liturgy. As we begin the "Anaphora" ("Eucharistic Prayer"), the priest announces, "Let us lift up our hearts." This is an important invitation to all to raise their spirits from the cares of this earthly life to the joys of heaven.

The Holy Mystery (sacrament) is meant to be celebrated with such an uplifted attitude, for it is the "Eucharist," the "Great Thanksgiving," the high point of our worship of the Holy Trinity. As Fr. Schmemmann wrote, the Eucharist "is the lifting up of the Church to heaven, to the throne of glory, to the unfading light and joy of the Kingdom of God."

We may come to the sacrament exhausted, frustrated, and downcast. Our spirits may seem as dry as the desert at noon. But though we may be downcast, we join the faithful in participating in the Lord's offering of Himself for our salvation. Together as one Body, we raise our hearts to God. Thus, what we find so hard to do by ourselves, we accomplish with the support of the community of believers. We recover the spirit of joy in our hearts. And with our fellow members, we "lay aside all earthy cares" to receive the Lord with

gladness as He comes to us.

The experience of the Eucharist makes us, the followers of Christ, the people of a "cheerful heart." Of all people, we have the promise of our Savior, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). And St. Paul has urged us, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, 'Rejoice!'" (Philippians 4:4).

LET OTHERS KNOW US AS THE PEOPLE OF JOY!

Accordingly, the world around us should know us as the people of overflowing joy. We need not be anxious or troubled about anything. But if we are disheartened about anything, we can bring it to the God of grace (Philippians 4:6). The Great Physician who took the sick by the hand and lifted them up will do the same for us.

But we do not have this "good cheer" of the Lord for ourselves alone. That joyfulness is the medicine that our dreary world so desperately needs. Where else can people find this unshakable gladness in this world of troubles and heartaches?

Dear faithful let us reflect on how our hearts can be filled with the grace of God with overflowing joy. May we find the source of cheer that is so needed in a cheerless world. Above all, that fountain of gladness is found in the Eucharist when the whole Body of believers lifts up their hearts that they may be lifted up into the Kingdom. May our cheerfulness, this deep sense of joy that uplifts us so that we can uplift others.

"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"

*Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church
518 N 5th Ave
PO BOX 4567
Pocatello, ID 83205
(208) 232-5519*

Email: assumptiongochurch@gmail.com

Parish Organizations & Ministries

Philoptochos Society: Goldie Homan

-Church School: Angela Fullmer

-Choir: David Sandborgh, Olenda Painter

-Acolytes: Dean Harris

-Bible Study: Fr. Constantine

*-Chanters: Olenda Painter, David Sandborgh,
Carrie Thienes*

-Catechism Class: Fr. Constantine

*Orthros Readers: Dean Harris, Nikko Yanase,
Karl Thienes, Gregory Painter, John Speck*

*-Prosporon: Evangelia Papapavlos, Sophie
McCurry, Rebecca Tysor, Dante Dedic*

-Greek Festival: Tressa Rockwood

*-Youth Dance Group: Angela Fullmer, Andrea
Sas*

-Fellowship: Goldie Homan

-Live-stream: Adam Painter, Dante Dedic



Use your God-given abilities to reach those who don't know Him—and give Him the credit for your talents. Jesus gives us two commandments: to love the Lord and to love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37–40). And when we steward our talents to honor Him and to bless others, we're doing just that.

Leaving a Legacy

A simple yet powerful way to invest in the future of the Assumption is including our Assumption Church in your estate planning. By leaving a legacy gift, you can become an example for future generations of our beloved Assumption Church.



Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 4567 (518 N. 5th Avenue)
Pocatello, ID 83205

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