The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd
Campbell, OH 44405

JUNE Bulletin Sponsor– OPEN

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, June 7
9:15-9:45 am AM: Confessions by app't
9:35 AM: Hours
10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

Wednesday, June 10
6:00 PM: Fire Meeting & Training

Saturday, June 13
5:15-5:45 PM: Confessions by app't
6:00 PM: Vespers

Sunday, June 14
9:15-9:45 AM: Confessions by app't
9:35 AM: Hours
10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30 (Gospel)

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

ARCHPASTORAL GREETINGS OF THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Beloved Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. Acts 2:2-3

I greet you with joy as we celebrate the great feast of Holy Pentecost. Recalling the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the new-born Church, we give thanks to God for granting the seven-fold gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord to the Holy Apostles gathered in Jerusalem and to the fullness of the Church throughout the ages. May the same Holy Spirit renew our hearts and guide our diocesan family to an always-increasing and ever-deepening life in Christ.

I also extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our diocesan graduates at the various stages of their education: your dedication, perseverance in your studies, and academic accomplishments are a blessing to your families, your parish communities and to our entire Diocese. May the Lord continue to guide your path, granting you strong faith, wisdom, and purpose in every new endeavor. May you always be encouraged to use your gifts and talents to serve Christ and His Church.

As summer begins, I urge everyone to enjoy this blessed season with gratitude and joy. May your summer activities — family gatherings, travel and vacations, camps, barbecues and picnics, parish events, and times of rest and relaxation — be filled with safety, fellowship, and opportunities to grow closer to Christ. Let us continue to remain active in prayer, worship, and acts of kindness wherever we may be.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthen and protect you always. With love in the Lord,

DANIEL, Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a "Thinking of You" card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

Mrs. Mary Fredericks
648 Dumont Ave
Campbell, OH 44405

Matushka Helen Psinka
c/o Concordia Villa St. Joseph
1030 W State Street / Room 1B49
Baden, Pa, 15005

Mrs. Dorothy Shirilla
8362 Van Dr.
Poland, OH 44514

Joan Cross
97 Butler Street / Apt 1-rear
Brooklyn , NY 11201

Mildred Wilfong
153 Runnemede Dr
Boardman, OH 44512

Mrs. Audrey Chengelis
c/o Assumption Village
9800Market Street / Room 1402
North Lima, OH 44452

Emilia Yannitto
8017 Salinas Tr.
Boardman, OH 44512-5402

Mrs. Pauline Fesz
488 Harmony Lane
Campbell, OH 44405

George Horodnic, Sr.
c/o Briarfield Manor
461 South Canfield-Niles Rd / Room 101
Austintown, OH 44515

Mrs. Julia Simko
c/o Woodlands @ Hampton Woods
1525 E Western Reserve Rd /
Room 1101
Poland, OH 44514

Carol Ruff
2207 Birch Trail Blvd
Youngstown, OH 44515-4910

Sue Kennedy
593 Hyatt Ave
Campbell, OH 44405-1479

Ann Cvercko
1875 Mallard Land
North Lima, OH 44452

Congratulations Diocesan Seminarians

His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, along with the clergy, monastics, and laity congratulate the graduating seminarians of the Midwest:

Priest Jarrod Huffman (SVS)

Priest Pedro Sarsama (STS)

Priest Paul Schlafer (STS)

Deacon Eugene Schreder (STS)

Christopher Mescher (STS)

His Eminence was present at the commencement of St. Tikhon's Seminary graduates on Saturday, May 23 and offered the homily at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 24.

To all of the diocesan graduates, may God grant you and your families many years.

2026 Diaconal Liturgical Practicum to be held in Parma, OH

With the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops, and at the invitation of His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, the Diaconal Vocations Program of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is pleased to announce that we will be offering a second Diaconal Liturgical Practicum this Summer: August 25-28, 2026, on the campus of Holy Trinity Church, Parma, OH.

The five-day program (two full days and two half days) will offer intense practical liturgical training for deacons and lay diaconal candidates. In addition to liturgical practice, sessions will also cover chanting and vocal technique and address teaching about the Orthodox faith.

This 20th annual Practicum is put on by the Orthodox Church in America's Diaconal Vocations Program (DVP) and is highly recommended by the Holy Synod for participants in the Church's program and other diaconal formation programs.

The Practicum is highly recommended for participants in the Church's diaconal formation programs by the Holy Synod and is offered at the invitation of His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel, and with the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, with oversight by the Board of Theological Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This second session is being held in Parma, Ohio. Liturgical workshops are delivered by an experienced faculty, including Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, director of the Diaconal and Late Vocations of the Orthodox Church in America, Archpriest Gregory Ealy, and Subdeacon Dimitri Pletz.

You can Register on the Diocesan Website. Con't Next Pg

JUNE Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

NOTE: If anything is missing from the Sponsorships please contact Fr. Andrew ASAP

Bulletin: OPEN
Wine: OPEN
Incense: OPEN
Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: OPEN
Altar Candles: OPEN
Tetrapod Candles: In memory of my family & friends– Given by AP Andrew Bartek
St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in the maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers and those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.– Given by Anonymous
St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: In celebration of Sue Kennedy's 93rd Birthday– Given by Children & Grand children
Protection Icon Candles: OPEN
St. John the Baptist Candles: OPEN
Monthly Flowers: In memory husband Kurtis Shunk – Given by Mrs. Athanasia-Trudy Shunk-Ellmore

$50 per month	$30 per month	$25 per month
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	Flowers– **NEW UPDATED PRICE / DECREASED**
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

Diaconal Practicum con't from previous pg

Course Description

Practical liturgical training for deacons and lay diaconal candidates will be centered on serving the Divine Liturgy and other services. Intensive workshops aim to provide participants with the skills needed to serve effectively in the Orthodox Church as an attentive server, deacon, or priest. Attention will be given to the liturgical patterns of movement that inform the entire rite of the Church. Participants will also receive guidance on concelebrations and hierarchical celebrations so that they can effectively prepare for such occasions. In addition to practicums, focused presentations by faculty will augment the deacon's understanding of his place in the liturgical life of the Church and the deacon's broader vocation as a symbol to the faithful of the diakonia of Christ our Lord. Instruction in speaking about the faith and vocal technique when chanting will also be offered.

Schedule

A welcome BBQ, prayer, and an opening session will launch the Practicum at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25. The Practicum will conclude on Friday, August 28. Participants can plan on leaving around 1 p.m. to take flights from Cleveland afternoon.

Registration and Fee

The cost to register for the Ohio 2026 Diaconal Practicum is $450 and includes all meals throughout the practicum, but does not include transportation and/or lodging. Payment should be made upon completion of registration via the form below.

Setting

Parma, Ohio: Located just south of Cleveland, Parma offers visitors convenient access to one of the Midwest's major metropolitan regions while retaining the character of a close-knit suburban community. Greater Cleveland is home to a rich cultural and religious heritage, with museums, parks, historic neighborhoods, and Lake Erie all within easy reach. Visitors traveling to Parma are served by Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE), located approximately 15 miles from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, with daily nonstop service from major domestic carriers. Parma's central location and accessibility make it an ideal setting for fellowship, worship, and study in the heart of Northeast Ohio.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church: Founded in 1963, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church of the Orthodox Church in America has long been known as a vibrant English-language Orthodox parish with a strong commitment to liturgical life, theological education, and hospitality. Situated on a spacious campus in Parma, the parish grew from the vision of six founding families and today serves a diverse and growing community from across Greater Cleveland. The church temple is beautifully adorned with traditional Orthodox iconography and provides a setting well suited for prayerful worship and rigorous liturgical training. Holy Trinity's clergy and faithful are widely recognized for their dedication to Orthodox Christian outreach, sacred music, and education, making the parish an ideal host for gatherings focused on worship, learning, and fellowship. More information: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Accommodations

Room blocks have been secured at Embassy Suites by Hilton Cleveland Rockside at an event rate of $139/night. Participants are welcome to stay elsewhere as preferred. ***Con't next pg***

JUNE Celebrations

Birthday

1- Anthony Jesko, Sr.
2- Sue Kennedy
5- Peter Adzima / Michael Simko / Ryan Konik / Alex Vansuch
11- Elaine Johnston
13- Fr. Nick Mihaly / Sarah Wilson
15- Emily Kusinski / Aijire Dardovski
19- Emily Sarisky / Victoria Elash
22- Donna Chiarelli
24- John Koval III
25- Ron Zenko
26- John Rusnak
28- Vincent Cavaliere

Anniversary

10- Joey & Mary Ruth Mico
14- Sub-deacon Donald & Susan Tamulonis (80)
21- V.R. Archpriest Dave Lis priestly ordination (41 years 2021)
27-2009- AB Melchisedek of Pittsburgh & Western, PA
29-2021- His Grace Bishop Gerasim of Forth Worth

Names Day

3- Fr. Andrew Bartek
4-Martha Centofanti
24- Gianna Hryb / Joann Biros
27-Joan Cross / Heidi Kuzemchak / Joann Sirilla
29- Pauline Fesz / Mat. Pauline Gemmel

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - *APRIL*	2025	2026
1st– Paralytic		
Vespers	8	11
Liturgy / Communion	51 / 37	35 / 28
2nd Week– Mother's D.		
Vespers	8	13
Liturgy / Communion	64 / 44	61 / 34
3rd Week-Blind		
Vespers	No Vespers	10
Liturgy / Communion Vespers for Ascension Liturgy for Ascension	44 / 35 No Record No Record	35 / 27 10 13 / 7
4th Week –Fathers 1ST		
Vespers	11	10
Liturgy / Communion	47 / 32	45 / 30
5th– Pentecost		
Vespers Liturgy / Communion Kneeling Prayers	6 56 / 37 30	10 49 / 41 40

Diaconal Practicum con't from previous pg

Embassy Suites
5800 Rockside Woods Blvd N
Independence OH 44131

You can book your room here: https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/holytrinityorthodoxchurchroomblock/

Group Name: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
Group Code: XHT
Cutoff Date: July 28, 2026
Central Reservations Number: 1-800-315-1185

Important Notes:

The link should be copied and pasted into the browser as sometimes just clicking on the link can cause it to bring up an error page.

All reservations must be booked no later than July 28, 2026, in order to receive the negotiated rate.

There is a Top Golf right next door if anyone wants to bring clubs.

FAQs

We often receive questions from potential participants regarding ways to prepare for our Diaconal Liturgical Practicum. This section seeks to answer some of these "Frequently Asked Questions."

I already registered for the Practicum in Santa Rosa this summer? Can I switch to the Ohio Practicum?

Yes! Simply request a refund from the Diocese of the West at chancery@dowoca.org and register (again) for this one.

I'm just entering the Diaconal Vocations Program. Should I attend?

The Holy Synod believes that everyone studying for the Diaconate should study and practice liturgics in a regular, organic fashion. Attending an annual summer program with experienced faculty and other DVP participants is a very effective aid in preparation for the Diaconate. You will "get something" from the program every year you attend, whether you are new, returning, or already ordained. Those who wish to serve as Deacons in the Orthodox Church in America are required to attend two Practicums.

I've been a deacon for some time. Is this for me?

Every deacon can benefit from participating in the fellowship, conciliar service, and indeed, a refresher course in liturgical practice. Experienced participants can be a great encouragement to those just beginning their journey to the diaconate. Past participants have described their diaconate as being refreshed after attending. If you are not sure whether you ought to register ***Con't pg 6***

JUNE Reposed List / © Parishioner

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30- Zoopegy Lambrianos (1960) © / Nomikos Grikilis (1960) ©

Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle)

who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented –of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

JUNE READER SCHEDULE

June 7– George Horodnic
June 14– Dc. Jimmy Hyrb
June 21– Proto. Dc. David Gemmel
June 28– Natalia Simko

JUNE SOCIAL SCHEDULE

June 1 - O Club
June 14 - OPEN
June 21 - Father's Day Brunch
June 28 - Sisterhood

PRAYER LIST

PARISHIONERS: Achiles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Gianna Hryb / Sue Kennedy / Matushka Helen Psinka / Nadine Sabo / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Reader Nick Vansuch / Mildred Wilfong

CLERGY: Fr. Basil Duesenberry / Fr. Andrew Gall / AP James Gleason (Fr.) / AP Emil Hutyan / AP Michael Rustic / Fr. Peter Simko / Fr. Theophanes Kamau & family & parishioners at St. Joachim & Anna in Nairobi, Kenya

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mat. Melanie Adamcio / Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Diane Caban (Sirilla) / George Caban (Sirilla) / Donna Chiarelli / Karen Debiec / Erin (Willison) / Thomas Hull, Jr. / Ron Hryb / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Kelly Marie Konya (Candle guy's daughter) / Mary Alyce Koval / Ginny McCay (Fredericks) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Conner (Sabo) Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Matt Turner (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Richard (Tusinac) / Miranda & her unborn baby / Lindsey & her unborn baby / Blaire & her newborn Tatiana

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Kyle Grabovoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky) / Kenneth (Simko) / Brandon Rader (Middle East)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive & Metropolitan Arseny imprisoned / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

Diaconal Practicum con't from pg 4

for the program, please e-mail Archpriest Kirill to discuss at dvp@oca.org.

How can I make myself ready for this Practicum?

Everyone comes to our program from different parishes and with different experiences. With that in mind, our practical training seeks to start at a level where everyone can participate and grow. Already-ordained deacons and future candidates are trained in ways appropriate to their experience. Participants can have the best experience by preparing in the following ways:

• Seek the guidance of your parish priest and the director of your vocations program.
• Experience worship actively.
• Pay attention to the Divine Liturgy and other services of the Church in your parish.
• Without getting "bogged down" in a book, follow the outline of the services in service books.
• Try to anticipate the liturgical actions of the priest, deacon, and servers before they occur. Are there discernible patterns?
• If you are not already a deacon, your priest may invite you to participate in the services as an altar server, reader, or choir member. Be obedient in these matters to your parish priest and try to grow in your abilities under his direction.
• You may wish to seek the guidance of a skilled musician, such as your parish's choir director, if you are inexperienced in church reading.
• Above all, prayerful preparation by faithful participation in the divine services is key.
• Come to the Practicum physically rested and mentally alert for a program that will be challenging but, we pray, rewarding.

Should I bring my own vestments?

We ask that deacons bring a complete set of gold vestments (stikharion, orarion, and cuffs) to ensure a good fit for serving. It is our practice that deacons vest fully for the reception of Holy Communion in the altar. We will provide vestments for those participants serving as subdeacons and servers but you may bring gold vestments if you prefer.

Archbishop Address the Chicago Deanery Clergy

On Thursday, May 28, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest lead a clergy retreat for the clergy of the Chicago Deanery.

The day began with Archbishop serving a moleben with responses sung by the gathered clergy. Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Chicago Dean, welcomed His Eminence and thanked the Archbishop for leading the sessions with the clergy.

Among other topics, updates on diocesan departments and life were discussed and clergy gave brief updates on the ongoing work in their parishes.

JUNE CHARITY

St. Vladimir Seminary

Summer Conducting Lessons Registration Now Open

The OCA Department of Liturgical Music and Translations is pleased to announce an opportunity this summer for intermediate and advanced level choir directors to take private conducting lessons with Dr. Peter Jermihov.

Those who are interested should complete the Registration Form and schedule an interview with Dr. Jermihov at their earliest convenience.

The cost for an 8-week block of lessons is $600, with additional 4-week blocks available at $300 per block.

A recent testimonial from one of Dr. Jermihov's students states:

"I thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from my time with Dr. Jermihov…. He was genuinely interested in me while providing applicable conducting techniques and insights related to my current situation as a small parish choir director.

Choir directors will find a wealth of wisdom and practical information with Dr. Jermihov. He definitely knows conducting and communicates this knowledge with genuine enthusiasm. Highly recommended!"

Other testimonials from previous students continue in a similar vein:

"[Dr. Jermihov] identified and then corrected some bad conducting habits that I had developed over the years."

"Dr. Jermihov is helping me to develop a more advanced vocabulary of gestures to communicate with my choir."

"Dr. Jermihov explains the core principles of conducting in a very clear and comprehensive way…. Most importantly, Dr. Jermihov is a very passionate teacher who has warm and friendly personality."

Dr. Peter Jermihov is a life-long church musician, who has served as a choir director, chanter, teacher, composer and arranger, in a number of parishes in various jurisdictions, including the OCA, ROCOR, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. His mission as a church musician is to bring beauty and professional competence to Divine Worship.

Jermihov holds the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Illinois at Urbana and studied orchestral conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatory under Ilya Musin. He is founder and artistic director of the Society of Saint Romanos the Melodist, a not-for-profit corporation devoted to the furtherance of Orthodox culture in America. For a more complete description of Dr. Jermihov's career, please visit

www.peterjermihov.com or www.societyromanos.org.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon Presides Over the 2026 Commencement Exercises of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

The seminaries of the Orthodox Church in America celebrated their 2026 commencement exercises in May. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon presided at the commencement exercises of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, offering words of encouragement and his archpastoral blessing to the graduates, their families, and the seminary communities. St. Herman Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska, also marked its commencement exercises with the tonsuring of new readers and the recognition of students and members of the seminary community.

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary hosted its 86th Commencement Exercises on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

The celebration began that morning with His Beatitude presiding at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Three Hierarchs Chapel. Concelebrating with His Beatitude were His Grace Bishop John, Auxiliary Bishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and SVOTS Assistant Professor for Pastoral Theology; His Grace Bishop Nikodhim of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese; His Grace Bishop Benedict of Hartford and the Diocese of New England; and His Grace Bishop Vasily of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West. Also serving were Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, and Archpriest John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary.

Following the Divine Liturgy, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chapel Rector, welcomed the bishops, visiting clergy, and guests to Three Hierarchs Chapel.

In the afternoon, the seminary community returned to the chapel for a Molieben of Thanksgiving. At its conclusion, the clergy, faculty, and graduates processed into the Metropolitan Philip Auditorium for the Commencement Exercises.

Guests included His Grace Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church's Northeast American Diocese; His Grace Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan of the Armenian Church's Eastern Diocese of America; the Rev. Mardiros Chevian, Dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary; this year's commencement speaker, Charles Ajalat, J.D., Hon. J.C.D., and his wife Marilee; family members; friends; and members of the SVOTS Board of Trustees.

The class of 2026 was comprised ***Con't next pg***

Seminary Commencement con't from previous pg

of eighteen graduates: fourteen graduated with a Master of Divinity degree, one with a Master of Arts degree, and three with a Master of Theology degree. The graduates were from various dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America, the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, and the dioceses of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in North America and India.

During the ceremony, Priest John Reavis, class salutatorian, and Priest Nathan Jekel, class valedictorian, offered addresses on behalf of the graduating class.

Charles Ajalat, J.D., Hon. J.C.D. delivered this year's commencement address. A former trustee of St. Vladimir's Seminary, he also served as Chancellor of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and has founded multiple Orthodox organizations and initiatives.

At the conclusion of the commencement address, Dr. Tudorie presented him with an icon of St. Vladimir on behalf of the Seminary community, in recognition of the support and generosity he has shown the Seminary over many years.

During the commencement exercises, St. Vladimir's seminarians honored Zachariah Mandell, instructor in Liturgical Music, with the 2026 St. Macrina Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award is selected each year by student vote. Emil Peter, a graduate and outgoing President of the Student Council, announced the award and presented an icon of St. Macrina to Mr. Mandell. The icon was painted by a member of the graduating class, the Priest Daniel Werner.

The graduates also presented two gifts to the Seminary: a new cutting board for the Prothesis table at Three Hierarchs Chapel and a cross for the St. Thomas Malankara Chapel.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Metropolitan Tikhon, President of the Seminary, offered his closing remarks, reminding the graduates of the unique moment facing their ministries.

"Orthodoxy in America is growing, genuinely visibly, in ways that were not predictable even a decade ago. … Priests who are serving are stretched, doing the work of two and sometimes three men available at all hours to all manner of need. … The founders of this Seminary could not have imagined the church you are graduating into. They planted in soil they could not see. Every priest who has gone before you would say the same. The weight is real. The weight is worth carrying and you will not carry it alone. … Go down with humility so that you may be lifted up by Christ and receive the gifts that he bestows on all of us."

His Beatitude likewise presided over the 84th Annual Commencement Exercises at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary on Saturday, May 23, 2026.

On the evening prior, Friday, May 22, students and members of the seminary community gathered in the Archangel Michael Convocation Hall. Also present were His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey, Rector of the Seminary, and His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest, who serves on the St. Tikhon's Seminary Board.

The commencement address delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Kenya from the Patriarchate of Alexandria. His Eminence was unable to attend in person due to international travel restrictions, but offered a message to the graduates where he spoke on the need for the graduates to maintain faithfulness, community, love, and evangelical zeal as they enter a life of service to Christ's Church.

His Beatitude offered his own remarks following, where he reminded the graduates of the life of prayer cultivated at St. Tikhon's Seminary during their studies.

On Saturday afternoon, the hierarchs, faculty, and trustees convened to recognize the graduating class. The Class of 2026 had two co-valedictorians, Priest Seraphim Crossman and Priest John Stiff. The valedictory address was delivered by Fr. John, who offered a reflection on the various pathways to ministry and the shared bond which is enjoyed by men entering the priesthood and future leadership roles in the Church.

Archpriest Nikolai Breckenridge, President of the Alumni Association, presented the Alumnus of the Year Award to Archpriest Basil Stoyka of Lorain, OH, in recognition of his long ministry and many loving years of pastoral service.

The Class of 2026 chose Mr. David Getz, Assistant to the Dean, as this year's recipient of the Father Alexander Atty Service Award, given annually to recognize exemplary sacrificial love within the St. Tikhon's Seminary community. The award and commemorative icon were presented to David by his long-time friend, co-valedictorian Priest Seraphim Crossman.

His Beatitude and Archbishop Michael conferred a total of fourteen Master of Divinity degrees, twelve Certificates in Diaconal Formation, and ten Certificates in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Seven graduates – Priest Evan Ashmore, Mr. Joshua Brown, Priest Seraphim Crossman, Priest John Jovel, Mr. Kuriakose Kurian, Christopher Mescher, Priest Pedro Sarsama, and Deacon Eugene Schreder – were awarded Honors for their theses and senior projects.

St. Herman Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska, held its 2026 commencement observance on Sunday, May 10, 2026.

During the commencement, His Eminence Archbishop Alexei of Sitka and Alaska tonsured ***Con't Next Pg***

Seminary Commencement con't from previous pg

three new readers at the seminary: Mr. Pavel Messenbrink, Mr. Andrei Denicola, and Mr. Nikolai Fisher.

Several students and members of the seminary community were also honored with merit awards in recognition of their diligence, giftedness, and faithful labor in service to the seminary and the people of Kodiak. Among those recognized was Matushka Rachel, the seminary's Yup'ik language instructor, who concludes her service and enters retirement.

In his commencement address, His Eminence encouraged those who were tonsured and those who received Reader's Certificates to continue nurturing their love for the Church and the faithful of Alaska, calling them to preserve the holy words, prayers, reverence, and piety of the Orthodox faith.

The Diocese of Sitka and Alaska also announced that all available spots for the 2026–2027 academic year at St. Herman Seminary have been filled.

The Orthodox Church in America offers congratulations to all those who completed their studies and formation at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and St. Herman Seminary in 2026. May the Lord bless them, their families, and the communities they will serve in their ministries.

Additional photos and information may be found at svots.edu, stots.edu, and sthermanseminary.org

The faithful and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America are urged to intentionally pray for vocations and to support the seminaries, students, faculty, and their families. It is also vital to commit to financially support the three OCA seminaries as they continue the necessary work of providing exceptional education and spiritual formation for the future leaders of the Orthodox Church.

Parishes are reminded of the resolution approved at the 16th All-American Council in Seattle, which calls for parishes of the Orthodox Church in America to allocate 1% of their budget towards the support of these seminaries.

If you want to know more about supporting our seminaries, their work, or learn more about vocation and theological formation, seminary contact information is available on National oca website. .

Donations Sought for July Fundraiser

As you can see from the flyer on page 10 of the bulletin, ng a major fundraiser is scheduled for the week after the 4th of July. Donations are needed to off set the cost of the event.

This ***Festival of Foods*** has the potential to be a big event and will be a vital infusion of funds to our budget. Everyone's help is needed to make it successful. The week prior, the Parish Council will be asking for help to prepare food and the hall.

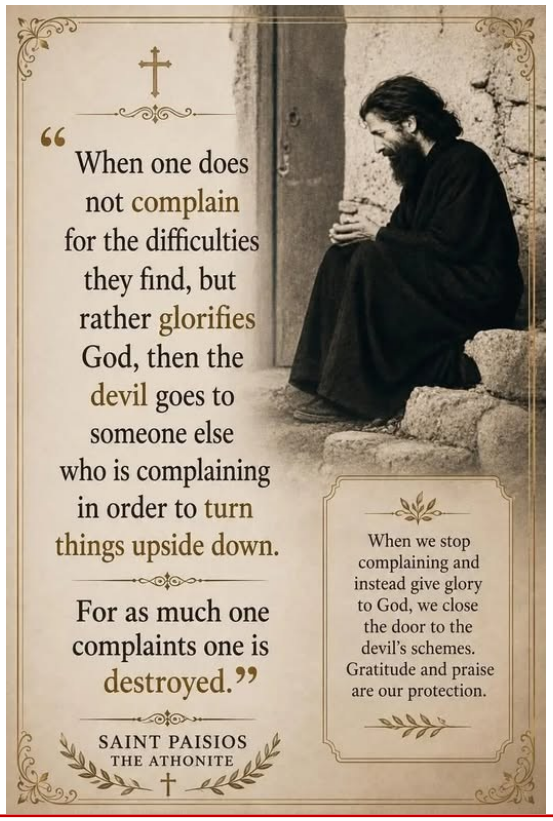
All hands will be needed the day of the event as well. When you are asked, please say YES!

Please post it to your social media and tell your family and friends.

Donations are also needed to help cover the:

- Interactive games
- Bounce House
- Money to defray the costs of the food
- Money to defray the cost of the entertainment
- Money to defray the cost of the police
- Money to defray the cost of the beer & wine

Nancy Tusinic is in charge of the Bake Sale .

Anything anyone can do will be for the Glory of God.

Thank you in advance from Father Andrew and the Committee.