

## Order of the Baptismal Divine Liturgy

**The House of God as a “thin place”.** This is not just a beautiful building, it is a place of power. The barrier between earth and heaven dissolve here. It is a “thin place”. Our reality is being merged with the reality of the eternal worship that surrounds God’s throne. The beauty of our church, the music, the chanting, the vestments, the incense, the cloud of confessors, and the angels who came here with us; all these are part of the majesty of heavenly worship into which we are being drawn. We are like the Prophet Isaiah or the Apostle Paul or St. John the Theologian, allowed to experience things that the eye cannot see nor the mind comprehend. If we open our hearts to this reality, we will be transformed by this mystical journey.

**“Blessed is the Kingdom...”** The Lord God has seen the despair of His people and He has come to rescue us from our affliction. This is the Way of salvation; not just the salvation of our souls which have been lost to sin, but the salvation of this world. War, poverty, oppression... this world groans in agony from the poison with which we have corrupted it. Through the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, we will participate in the transformation of ourselves into the Body of Christ and of this place into the very Throne Room of the Immortal, All-Powerful, and All-Loving God. Christ and our encounter with Him through communal worship and sacrament is the balm to heal all wounds and The Way to perfection. We are entering into the Kingdom of God.

**Great Litany and the First Antiphon.** The prayers of the Great Litany bind us together in an active and loving union. Today we ask for special blessings on the water and for those being baptized. The hymn that follows is Psalm 102/103. We sing it every Sunday.

**Blessing of the Water and Second Antiphon.** In this, we recognize how Christ’s very presence sanctified the water of the Jordan and we ask Him to bless the baptismal water with His presence. The flame, wind, and cross are the symbol/mechanism this transformation; all three are powerful ways He has acted in creation. The oil is also blessed. It is followed by a truncated version of Psalm 145 and an ancient hymn celebrating the Incarnation of the Second Person of God. We sing these every Sunday.

**The Anointing, Baptism, Third Antiphon, Little Entrance, Hymns.** Those to be baptized are anointed with oil and then immersed in the water three times, “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This Mystery/Sacrament is the death of the “Old Man” of the world and the resurrection into Christ. The baptized are now temples of God and members of the Body of Christ. This is followed by the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. We sing them every Sunday. As it is being sung, the clergy process with the Gospel into the Altar. The choir then leads the people in singing the hymns of the week.

**Chrismation and Baptismal Procession.** The second Mystery/Sacrament celebrated today is that of Chrismation (called “Confirmation” in the West). Chrism is the same root as “Christ”, which means “Anointed One” and “Messiah”. Jesus is the archetypal and perfect Messiah, but all of God’s chosen (e.g. David) were anointed as Messiah. We are anointed in imitation of Christ; the Chrism is the “Seal of the Holy Spirit”, allowing us to grow in holiness through Christ. In Orthodox tradition, Chrismation immediately follows baptism so that the baptized can

immerse themselves in the life and Mysteries/Sacraments of the Church. Immediately after the Chrismation, the priest leads the newly illumined around the tetrapod three times, marking their first steps as Orthodox Christians.

**The Completion of the Liturgy of the Word: Epistle, Gospel, and Homily. The Divine Liturgy as Teacher.** Learning requires active participation. It also requires preparation. Worship is not entertainment, but a life experience; the quality of that experience is up to us. Some are transformed into saints by their participation, others waste this powerful time by daydreaming, just trying to enjoy the music, or gutting it out. It is the same as in school (we get out of it what we put into it), but the lesson being taught is so much more important. The homily is part of that. If we have prepared through prayer, fasting, and the study of Scripture, then we will benefit from even the most dull preacher presenting the most formulaic sermon. Again, we control what we get out of the lesson. We need to work with the Holy Spirit so that God can speak whatever words we need to hear into our minds and hearts.

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist I: Litanies and Great Entrance.** During the Great Entrance, the Gifts (i.e. bread and wine) are brought through the nave into the altar. This reminds us of Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem just before his Passion. The Cherubic Hymn sung as this time calls us to lay aside all the things that pull us away from this mystical celebration.

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist II: Anaphora, and Communion** After we have communally affirmed our Orthodoxy (i.e. The Creed), we join Christ as He leads His disciples in “The Institution” (“Take, Eat”), then ask the Holy Spirit to come and change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ (“Amen. Amen. Amen.”). From this point on, there can be no doubt that Christ is Among Us! Next, we pray the prayer He Himself taught us (“Our Father”), then the Holy Doors are closed as we come forward and prepare ourselves for the greatest revelation when Christ comes amongst and shares Himself with us through the Communion that marks the highpoint of every Orthodox Christian’s life. The baptismal party are the first among the laity to commune. While Communion in the Orthodox Church is only for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the mystery (through repentance, fasting, and prayer), we share blessed bread (blessed, but not consecrated) with everyone in anticipation of the great feast which is to come!

**Conclusion: Prayer at the Amvon, Rites of Tonsuring, Ablution, Churching and bestowal of the Cross.** The tonsure is the “first offering.” It is followed by the “ablution” (wiping off of the chrism) and the “Churching” of the baptized infants to the singing of St. Symeon’s prayer; “Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace...” When we sing the “Many Years”, we are celebrating our appreciation of the event and praying that the Lord bless the newly illumined. The service ends when everyone (including visitors) is invited to come forward and greet the priest, receive some of the blessed bread, and congratulate their brothers and sisters in Christ.

**We congratulate Roman, Stephanie, and Vasyl and welcome and thank their family and friends for attending and praying with us – you are always welcome here! Please join us in the fellowship hall (downstairs) after the service for a celebratory reception.**

## Announcements

**Thanks to all our volunteers!** St. Mary's is so blessed to have a cadre of such dedicated workers (glory to God)!

**More opportunities to serve:** on Tuesday 11/27 at 9AM will be baking cookies, on Wednesday 11/28 at 9AM we will be setting up the hall for the sale, and on Friday 11/30 we will be boxing up cookies.

**On 12/1, 9AM – 2PM, we will have our Holiday Sale.** Please spread the word!

**On 12/16 our children will be presenting our St. Nicholas program after Liturgy!**

On 12/30 after Divine Liturgy we will be **“Greening the Church”**, putting up our wreaths and the like. Please see Vera if you would like to help.

Dear Parishioners: **the Jr UOL is having a food drive from now to February 3, 2018** which is also the date of the Super Bowl of Caring. Please contribute to these great events with your donations of non perishable food items and Contribution of your favorite soup to support this great cause.

Our **St Mary's Seniors:** Next meeting – 12/3. (No Hoagies this month). Join us!

The last meetings of the **Fall Bible Study** will be on 11/29, 12/6, & 12/13 (7PM in the chapel). We are working our way through the Old Testament. Come and join us!

We are offering **special one-time “Surviving the Holiday” sessions** to help people who are dealing with the loss of loved ones deal with the special grief that comes during the holidays: 12/17 at 10AM, 12/18 at 6:30PM, & 12/31 at 10AM.

**We have two regular Grief Share groups:** Mondays at 10AM and Tuesday at 6:30PM. Both meet in the Library. See Joe Truchan for details.

For more information on the **“Cloud of Witnesses” Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Group**, see the group's Facebook page (Cloud of Witnesses (Lehigh Valley)), e-mail ambermetz92@gmail.com, or talk to Stephanie or Roman Milan!

**Reader Schedule:** 11/25 Robin Bodnar, 12/2 Dennis Ritter, 12/9 Joseph Truchan.

**Greeter Schedule:** 11/25 Judy Miller & Vera Muzychka, 12/2 Perkins family, 12/9 Eleanor Fox.

11/24/18			
Items needed	cost	\$ raised	\$ needed
Furnace Fund	\$18,000.00	\$5,841.00	12,159.00
Chapel A/C	\$6,833.00	\$3,193.00	3,640.00
SS room water damage	\$1,940.00	\$140.00	1,800.00
Fellowship Hall new roof	\$40,174.00		40,174.00
<b>TOTAL NEEDED</b>			<b>57,773.00</b>

## Today's Hymns and Scripture

**Tropar (Tone 1).** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, / while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body, / You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. / The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: / “Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! / Glory to Your ^Kingdom! // Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and to ages of ages. Amen.*

**Kondak (Tone 1).** As God, You rose from the tomb in glory, / raising the world with Yourself. / Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults, O Master! / Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You: // “You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

**Prokimen (Tone 1; Psalm 32:22, 1)**

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on You!

*v: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!*

**Romans 6:3-11 (Baptism).** Beloved in Christ: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. (Psalm 17:47, 50)**

*v: God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me.*

*v: He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever.*

**St. Matthew 28:16-20 (Baptism)** At that time, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded to you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. Amen.

## Fr. Thomas Hopko on Baptism

The practice of baptism as a religious symbol did not begin with Jesus. Baptism, which means literally the immersion in water, was practiced among the people of the Old Testament as well as the people who belonged to pagan religions. The universal meaning of baptism is that of “starting anew,” of dying to an old, way of life and being born again into a new way of life. Thus, baptism was always connected with repentance which means a moral conversion, a “change of mind,” a change in living from something old and bad to something new and good.

Thus, in the Gospel we find John the Baptist baptizing the people as a sign of repentance in preparation for the Kingdom of God which was coming to men with Christ the Messiah. Christ himself was baptized by John not because he was sinful and needed to repent, but because in allowing himself to be baptized he showed that indeed he was God’s “Beloved Son,” the Saviour and Messiah, the “Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sins of the world” (See Mt 3, Mk 1, Lk 3, Jn 1–3).

In the Christian Church the practice of baptism takes on a new and particular significance. It no longer remains merely a sign of moral change and spiritual rebirth. It becomes very specifically the act of a person’s death and resurrection in and with Jesus. Christian baptism is man’s participation in the event of Easter. It is a “new birth by water and the Holy Spirit” into the Kingdom of God (Jn 3.5). ...

Through the act of immersion, the baptized person dies to this world and is born again in the resurrection of Christ into eternal life. He is clothed with the “garments of salvation” symbolized by the white baptismal robe which is the “new humanity” of Jesus himself who is the new and heavenly Adam (See Jn 3, Rom 5, 1 Cor 15). Thus, the words of the Apostle Paul are chanted as the newly-baptized is led in procession around the baptismal font three times as the symbol of his procession to the Kingdom of God and his entrance into eternal life: “For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia” (Gal 3.27).

In ancient times this procession was made from the baptistery to the church where the newly-baptized received Holy Communion at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Baptisms were normally done in connection with the Easter Liturgy; our present procession around the church building on Easter night is nothing more than our remembrance that we are baptized, that we have left the life of this world to enter the eternal life of the Risen Christ in the Kingdom of God. This new life is given to us in the life of the Church, most specifically in the Divine Liturgy.

## (Advent, Nativity, and Theophany Schedule (also see our website))

<b>Sunday</b>	11/25 9AM	Baptismal Liturgy!!! (Vasyl Milan)
<b>*** Nativity Lent (Advent) Starts on 11/26 ***</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>	11/29 6:30PM	Akathist of the Nativity
<b>Saturday</b>	12/1 4PM	Great Vespers; Service of Repentance
<b>Sunday</b>	12/2 9AM	Divine Liturgy (extra Ukrainian)
<b>Tuesday</b>	12/4 10AM	Divine Liturgy – Entrance of the Theotokos
<b>Thursday</b>	12/6 6:30PM	Akathist of the Nativity
<b>Saturday</b>	12/8 4PM	Great Vespers w/Litya
<b>Sunday</b>	12/9 9AM	Divine Liturgy & Spiritually Speaking
<b>Thursday</b>	12/13 10AM	Divine Liturgy – St. Andrew
	6:30PM	Akathist of the Nativity
<b>Saturday</b>	12/15 4PM	Great Vespers w/Litya
<b>Sunday</b>	12/16 9AM	Divine Liturgy
<b>Wednesday</b>	12/19 10AM	Divine Liturgy – St. Nicholas!
<b>Saturday</b>	12/22 4PM	Great Vespers w/Litya
<b>Sunday</b>	12/23 9AM	Divine Liturgy
<b>Sunday</b>	12/30 9AM	Divine Liturgy (Fr. Jim Cairns serving)
		Greening the Church!!!
<b>Saturday</b>	1/5 10AM	Royal Hours of the Nativity
	4PM	Vespers of Christmas Eve
<b>Sunday</b>	1/6 9AM	Divine Liturgy (Christmas Eve!)
	5PM	Holy Supper (in Hall)
	7PM	Grand Compline of the Nativity
<b>Monday</b>	1/7 10AM	Festal Divine Liturgy of the Nativity
<b>Sunday</b>	1/13 9AM	Deacon's Typika (Dn. Michael Abrahamson)
<b>Saturday</b>	1/19 10AM	Theophany: Divine Liturgy
		& Blessing of Waters
	4PM	Great Vespers w/ Litya
<b>Sunday</b>	1/20 9AM	Divine Liturgy

**Note:** Fr. Anthony will be traveling to Georgia for Western Christmas (on vacation to visit family) and to Romania between our Nativity and Theophany (to represent our seminary and present a paper at a theological conference). This has necessitated a change from the normal Holiday schedule (see above). Thank you for your support!

Welcome to the God-loving and God-protected Orthodox Christian parish of *Pokrova* (“St. Mary Protection of the Holy Theotokos” or “St. Mary’s”)!

**It is a blessing to have you with us today and we encourage you to come back as often as you are able.** Like us, you may find that you have found your spiritual home here (and a wonderful home, it is)!

**We are a parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and our doors and hearts are open to you, your family, and your friends!**

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