

Entrance of the Theotokos & Nativity Fast



NEW START TIME FOR GREAT VESPERS!

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Thank you very much to those who participated in the Great Vespers Start Time Survey!

In total, we had 40 Responses.

The majority of our responses asked for a 5pm start time, with the bulk of the replies falling in the 5pm, 530pm & 6pm categories.

To come up with a happy medium, we will be starting Great Vespers every Saturday at **530pm**, starting **Saturday November 1st**.

Also that same evening (November 1-2) we will be 'Falling Back' our Clocks by one hour, so this should give everyone who attends Great Vespers an extra hour of sleep!

Weekday services won't be affected by this change. Please check our Monthly Calendars for weekday service start times...

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Weekly Services:

Every Saturday:
530pm Great Vespers

Every Sunday:
930am Matins
10am Divine Liturgy
12pm Potluck Lunch
1pm Catechism Classes

Feast Days:
Please Check our Calendar

7221 - 198B Street
Langley, BC V2Y 1R9

Fr. Gregory



Nativity Fast & Fasting

On November 15th we begin our 40 Day Fast, as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (aka Christmas)!

So what's the deal with all of this Fasting!?

The world around us celebrates Christmas in advance with Christmas parties, get togethers, baking, eating, drinking and feasting. Company and Secular Christmas Parties all come to an end on December 25th. Almost nobody in our society says 'Merry Christmas' after December 25th...

This is not the way things have always been...Have you ever heard the Christmas Carol 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'?

This Christmas Carol is one of the last reminders in our modern world of the season that spans from December 25 to January 5, a period also known as Christmastide or Twelvetide. It concludes on January 5, known as Twelfth Night, and is followed by the Feast of the Theophany (the Baptism of Christ) on January 6.

In the Orthodox Church we prepare ourselves for Christmas (as we do other Great Feasts such as Pascha, Dormition, and Sts. Peter & Paul) with Fasting. The more we participate in the Fast, the more we appreciate the Feast.

We prepare ourselves for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord with Fasting, and then we celebrate this Great Feast from Christmas day through Theophany.

Fasting is not just about abstaining from food. It is intended to be complimented with increased prayer and almsgiving, and as a spiritual discipline over our bodily passions and desires. I was once told: 'Fasting without Prayer is pointless...'

Nativity Fast is a great place to start for newer members who have not practiced Fasting before. It's an easier fast, with Fish, Wine & Oil allowed on many days. Please check the church calendar on the last page of this newsletter to see Fasting Guidelines.

The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with legalism. One very important part of Fasting is not judging others. Not everyone is able to fast the same way. Elderly, the sick, and those with medical concerns are not able to fast the same way as a healthy 20 year old...

While preparing for the Fast we need to remember: *'for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17)."*

Fr. Gregory

Looking Ahead to Our Annual General Meeting



With the new year on the horizon, I'd like to share a few thoughts on our upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) on February 15th and the meaningful role it plays in the life of our parish.

We're about 3½ to 4 months away from this important event. For many of our newer members and catechumens, this may be your first experience with an AGM, so it's a great time to reflect on what this gathering means – not just from a legal perspective, but as part of our life together in Christ.

First, yes – there's a legal side to it. As a registered non-profit in British Columbia, we are required to hold this meeting annually to review our operations and keep our status in good standing. While that might sound a bit clinical, it is currently the necessary legal framework that supports the spiritual and community life we're building together.

But more importantly, the AGM is a time for us to come together as the Body of Christ – to listen, to reflect, and to celebrate the work that has been done over the past year.

We'll hear updates on various ministries, recognize the many contributions of our volunteers, review our finances, and approve the budget for the year ahead. It's a meaningful opportunity to see how the whole community has been serving – both within our walls and beyond.

It's also a chance to look ahead. What's next for our parish? What are our hopes and goals? The AGM gives us space to ask questions, cast vision, and align our personal commitments with the mission of our parish – especially as we prepare our hearts for the season of Great Lent.

And finally, there's a relational aspect. The AGM allows us to see one another in a new light – as fellow stewards and co-laborers in the work God has given us. We get a glimpse of the broader picture, including the efforts of the Archdiocese, and we reaffirm our commitment to journey together in faith.

Let's continue to move forward together – with faith, transparency, and unity – as we prepare for this important moment in the life of our parish.

With gratitude,

*Sava Duran
"El Presidente"*



The Theology of the Iconostasis

Few features of Orthodox worship are as visually striking and theologically profound as the iconostasis. Though it may appear as a “screen of icons,” it is, in truth, a visible sign of an invisible mystery. A liturgical threshold where heaven and earth meet. While, at the most obvious level, it does separate the physical space of the sanctuary and the nave, the iconostasis ultimately unites. Through its icons of Christ, the Theotokos, the saints, and the feasts, it mediates between the divine and the human, inviting the faithful into the life of the Kingdom of God. It is not a wall of division but a window of communion.

In the New Covenant, we approach God by the “new and living way” opened by Christ. The iconostasis enacts this reality in visible form, symbolically manifesting the mystery of God’s presence. Knowable in His energies, yet incomprehensible in His essence. Far from concealing the divine, it radiates with the light of participation, drawing the worshipper’s attention beyond wood and paint toward the uncreated Light.

St. John of Damascus, in his *On the Divine Images*, offers the classical theology of the icon, which in turn grounds our understanding of the iconostasis. For him, the icon is not a mere representation but a manifestation of divine truth within material form. Because “the honor shown to the image passes to its prototype,” the icon participates in the reality it depicts, revealing but not replacing the presence of the holy. The icon, then, stands at the meeting point of the visible and invisible, of time and eternity. Each icon becomes a vessel of remembrance, calling to mind the Incarnation itself, in which the invisible God took visible flesh. In venerating the icon, the soul is awakened to that mystery; it recalls the heavenly reality from which it came and toward which it is drawn.

Thus, the iconostasis is not merely a structure before the altar; it is the living cloud of witnesses; the saints, prophets, and angels who surround the divine mystery. It marks the sacred boundary between the visible and the invisible, between the earthly and the heavenly. Through the icons arranged in its tiers, the faithful behold a vision of “the sphere where heavenly glory dwells.” The iconostasis both conceals and reveals, veiling the ineffable mystery even as it draws us toward participation in it. The saints’ radiant faces shine as transparent thresholds to divine life, inviting the worshipper to pass, in heart and mind, from the world of shadows into the light of the Kingdom.

Where others probe the inner meaning of the iconostasis, Orthodox architect and liturgical designer Andrew Gould complements this with a practical vision. In his series *An Icon of the Kingdom of God* (*Orthodox Arts Journal*), he shows how all the liturgical arts (architecture, iconography, music, vestments, and furnishings) work together to make the church itself an icon of the Kingdom. The iconostasis, he insists, is not an isolated ornament but an anchor for this unity. Its form, placement, and relationship to light, space, and movement integrate worship into a single sacred whole.

Continued next page...



The Theology of the Iconostasis, Continued...

For Gould, the iconostasis also offers a corrective to modern fragmentation, especially in diaspora communities that inherited only parts of a once-unified tradition. Properly understood, the iconostasis becomes a catechesis in images and a visual Gospel in which the faithful stand before an image of the eternal Kingdom, surrounded by its living witnesses.

To stand before the iconostasis, then, is to stand at the threshold of the Kingdom, among those who are alive in Christ and who bear His uncreated light. It is not a barrier but an opening, a radiant veil through which heaven and earth meet.

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus... through the veil, that is, His flesh... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” Hebrews 10:19–22..



Patriarchal Monastery of Peć – Church of the Holy Apostles, 13th Century (Balkans) <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/media-oaj/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/16182659/pec-6.jpg>

Sidebar: A Brief History of the Iconostasis

In the earliest centuries of Christian worship, the altar was marked only by a low railing or lattice. A practical boundary that still allowed full visibility and participation. By the 4th century, this evolved into the templon, a row of columns joined by a beam, often hung with curtains and later adorned with icons. After the triumph of icons in the 9th century, images of Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints began to fill these spaces, transforming the templon into a theological threshold between heaven and earth.

In Slavic lands, wooden construction encouraged larger, multi-tiered icon screens depicting the entire history of salvation. By the 16th–17th centuries, the familiar “wall of icons” had emerged, crowned with prophets and forefathers. Yet through all its forms, the iconostasis has remained what it was from the beginning: a meeting point between the visible and invisible Church, revealing the unity of heaven and earth in worship.

Dn. Theodore

Children & Youth Ministry

Sunday school 9:30am Fellowship hall

Approx Ages: Preschool-Grade 6

● Nov 9- No Sunday School -Due to Bake sale/Photo set-up

● Nov 30- Nativity Skit Practice begins!! 9:30am * skit details to follow

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7:

"THESE COMMANDMENTS THAT I GIVE YOU TODAY ARE TO BE ON YOUR HEARTS.
IMPRESS THEM ON YOUR CHILDREN.

TALK ABOUT THEM WHEN YOU SIT AT HOME AND WHEN YOU WALK ALONG THE ROAD,
WHEN YOU LIE DOWN AND WHEN YOU GET UP."

YOUTH NIGHT!

Saturday, November **15**

YOUTH: Grades 7-12

Food, Fun, Faith, Friends

Stay tuned for exact time

St. Herman's Fellowship Hall





Notes from the Choir...

Going through the motions...

“Sorry for just going through the motions.”

This phrase has been looping in the back of my mind ever since I heard it sung as the refrain to a worship song during Chapel, at the Christian high school I work at. (Don't worry, this is in no way intended as Orthodox Triumphalistic “Protestant-bashing”. I feel blessed to be a part of another Christian community, as well as my “church family” here at St. Herman's.) As noted, I got stuck on this phrase, on the idea of apologizing to God for “just going through the motions”. After all, as Orthodox Christians, we go through many motions at our church services. We light candles. We kiss icons. We cross ourselves. We sing. We receive Holy Communion. These motions we are going through, these actions we are performing, are precisely how we offer our whole selves to God. They are all part of our “sacrifice of praise” (as we sing during the Anaphora).

Clearly, what the songwriter meant by “going through the motions” was praising or serving God without really “meaning” it, the subtext of which seems to be that in order to “mean” something, you must be feeling an appropriate way. While worshipping, you must be feeling fervent or loving or grateful to God, and if you're not, you therefore don't really mean it.

If this is the case, I, for one, am in trouble because I am rarely feeling any of those feelings during church services.

What I'm trying to do in church (and after 54 years of being Orthodox, I'm still not consistently successful) is to focus on what I am doing, NOT how I may or may not be feeling. It is my will that is important, rather than my feelings. Actually, it is a synergy of God's grace and our individual wills that enable each of us to go through these liturgical motions, to offer our whole selves, individually and collectively, to God. You may or may not experience “worshipful” feelings during a service. That is largely irrelevant. You did not come to receive warm, fuzzy feelings; you came to receive Christ Himself. You were here. You “went through the motions”. You did your small part as a member of the Body of Christ. As a wise man (Fr. Stephen Freeman, writer of the Orthodox blog “Glory to God for all Things”—check it out!) once noted: “99% of Orthodoxy is just showing up.”

Andrea Rajan, Lead Choir Director



All proceeds to St. Herman's

CHRISTMAS Bake Sale



**SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 9TH**

After Liturgy

- Christmas baking
- Photos by Kristy
- Waffle bar
- Children's ornaments

Email Tiffany

Email Melanie

savatiffanyduran@hotmail.com melanieymare@gmail.com



St. Herman of Alaska
ORTHODOX CHURCH • LANGLEY, BC

St. Herman's Christmas Bake Sale

Baking Spirits Bright!

We're looking forward to the St. Herman's Christmas Bake Sale! This festive event will be held in the food serving room on Nov. 9th following liturgy. Please join us! Enjoy a freshly made waffle with delicious toppings at the Waffle Bar, purchase some baking to prepare for Christmas festivities, have your Christmas portrait taken, and more!

We hope to see an array of baked goods that you can purchase from and enjoy! If you haven't checked out the baking sign-up sheet in the narthex, please do so! The more baking the merrier! We have extended the deadline for signing up to Oct, 26th. There will be bags and boxes available for your purchase(s) to go home with you, so please bring your donated baked goods in a single container the morning of the 9th. You can drop off your baked goods in the food serving room. We are also requesting anyone who donates baking, to please bring a list of ingredients on the day of the sale, for anyone who may have an allergy.

Also available for purchase, Christmas ornaments made by the parish's church school children, beautiful hand embroidered quilted bags (also known as icon bags) made by Kim Tully, an array of wonderful Orthodox children's education toys made by Alex Goncharov, as well as a variety of icons written by Alex. We are also very excited to offer Christmas photos captured by Kristy Duran! She will have a Christmas scene/backdrop set up, so come and get your portrait taken! Families, kids, couples, friends...capture some memories!

Payments may be made by cash or by etransfer (treasurer@saintherman.net; please make note in the etransfer 'bake sale'), so please come prepared if you want to participate. All proceeds will be for St. Herman's. There will be a form available at the event to keep track of your purchases which will allow you to make one payment via etransfer before you leave that day; hassle free spending!

If you have any questions, or want to help in any capacity, please contact Tiffany Duran or Melanie Mare. We are looking for a few more helping hands to help during the event and for clean-up following.

savatiffanyduran@hotmail.com

melanieymare@gmail.com

We hope to see you there!



Church Etiquette...

Handling the Holy Bread (“Antidoron”)



After receiving Holy Communion, and again at the end of the Divine Liturgy, it is traditional to eat a piece of blessed bread or antidoron—the left-over bread from which Holy Communion was prepared and various commemorations were made.

While antidoron is not the Body and Blood of Christ, it is still blessed bread, and as such, we should take precaution to eat it carefully so that crumbs don't fall to be trampled underfoot. Please monitor the children as they take the antidoron, teaching them to eat respectfully.

Likewise, at Great Vespers with Litya, and at Vigil Services, it is traditional to eat a small piece of Artoklasia (another type of blessed bread) which is dipped into a cup of blessed wine before being consumed. This is likewise not the Body and Blood of Christ, but it is still blessed bread and wine, and it should be eaten with reverence.

Orthodox Christians, Catechumens, and Visitors are allowed to consume the Blessed Bread (either Antidoron or Artoklasia), but Catechumens and Visitors should never approach the Chalice which contains the Precious Body and Blood of Christ.

The practice of taking extra Antidoron to hand out to Visitors is discouraged. Rather please welcome them to our community, and please encourage them to come up to venerate the Cross at the end of the Liturgy, and take some of the blessed bread for themselves, if they wish to.

November 2025

 **Strict Fast** (No meat, fish, wine, oil, dairy, eggs)

 **Fish, oil and wine** (No meat, dairy and eggs)

 **Wine & Oil** (No meat, fish, dairy, and eggs)

Great Vespers start at 5:30pm
Sunday Matins start at 9:30am
Divine Liturgy starts at 10am

Children's Sunday School 9:30am Sundays (in Church Hall)
Youth Connection- after liturgy during lunch in the youth room/library

Fr. Gregory Wright 604-788-7546 frgregory@saintherman.net

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nativity Fast Nov. 15 - Dec. 24 Please note new time for Great Vespers						
2 Matins & Liturgy	3	4	5 ✙	6	7 ✙	1 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions Fall back 1 hour
9 Matins & Liturgy Bake Sale	10	11	12 ✙	13	14 	8 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions
16 Matins & Liturgy	17 ✙	18 	19 ✙	20 	21 8 AM Liturgy - Entrance of the Theotokos 	15 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions Youth Event! 
23 Matins & Liturgy	24 ✙	25 	26 ✙	27 	28 ✙	22 5:30pm Great Vespers & Confessions 
30 Matins & Liturgy						29 