

Holy Week and Pascha 2018



Lazarus Saturday	31st March	10.00 am	Divine Liturgy
		5.00 pm	Great Vespers
Palm Sunday	1st April	9.15 am	Matins
		10.15 am	Divine Liturgy (and Procession)
Great and Holy Monday	2nd April	8.00 pm	Bridegroom Matins
Great and Holy Tuesday	3rd April	8.00 pm	Bridegroom Matins
Great and Holy Wednesday	4th April	8.00 pm	Holy Unction (Healing) Service
Great and Holy Thursday	5th April	8.00 pm	Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil
Great and Holy Friday	6th April	9.00 am	Matins with 12 Gospels
		3.00 pm	Vespers (Deposition from the Cross)
		8.00 pm	Matins (Lamentations)
Great and Holy Saturday	7th April	6.00 pm	Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil & Baptism
		9.00 pm	Reading of Acts of the Apostles
		11.30 pm	Midnight Office and Paschal Procession
		00.30 am	Paschal Matins
Pascha Sunday	8th April	1.30 am	Paschal Liturgy
		10.00 am	Divine Liturgy
		11.45 am	Agape Paschal Feast

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A Guide to Holy Week in the Orthodox Church

The Services of Holy Week are many and a rich source of salvation in our lives through the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. Through them we become more closely conformed to Christ through whom we receive the death destroying life of Pascha from the Father. Here follows a very short guide to the services we shall celebrate this year.

On Great and Holy Monday and Tuesday we serve the Bridegroom Matins. This puts our hearts in readiness to receive Christ the Bridegroom who will come perhaps when we least expect. We must always be prepared to greet him by watchfulness and prayer.

On Great and Holy Wednesday evening we serve the Unction Service of Healing. Hearing the 7 gospels and imploring the healing grace of Christ we are anointed and made whole.

On Great and Holy and Thursday at the Liturgy we celebrate our Lord's Institution of the Eucharist in the Vespereal Liturgy. (NOTE: We serve all Vespereal Liturgies in the evenings).

On Great and Holy Friday at Matins we proclaim the 12 Passion Gospels. In this service the holy and life giving cross is installed in the nave. (This service is served on Holy Friday morning). At **Vespers** (mid-afternoon) we take down the image of our Lord from the Cross and place it in a white shroud in the altar. Shortly afterwards the burial epitaphion is solemnly processed into the nave where the icon of the crucified Christ is venerated with great devotion. At **Matins** later in the same evening we sing the solemn but joyful funeral chant for our Lord and process with his icon in the epitaphion outside the Church. The people walk under the epitaphion as they come into Church to signify that through the cross they have passed from death to life. They then venerate the gospel book and receive a flower from the epitaphion (venerated at the end of the service).

On Great and Holy Saturday at the Vespereal Divine Liturgy we anticipate the resurrection victory of Christ our God and particularly see this as a fulfilment of the great promise of redemption in the Law and the Prophets proclaimed in the 15 Old Testament Readings. During the Song of the Three Holy Children, the Temple and the Vestments are all changed from purple to white/gold to signify this change. Baptisms and chrismations often take place in this service. The epitaphion is then brought into the Altar where it remains until the feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

After the Vespereal Liturgy we read the **Acts of the Apostles** in its entirety. Pascha marks the beginning of the new Israel of God, the Church. Afterwards we serve the **Midnight Office** or **Nocturnes** which prepare our hearts and minds to enter into the joy of Paschal victory. We then process around the temple, enter and celebrate the resurrection with "**Christ is Risen!**" in many languages - concluding with the famous **Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom**. There then follows **Paschal Matins and the Paschal Liturgy**. ***You should not go home at this point but rather stay for the Liturgy*** – if you cannot do so, please come back in the later morning when an extra **Liturgy** is served at 10.00 am for those who will find it difficult to come at the traditional time. This year the Gospel in many different languages will happen at this Liturgy rather than at Paschal Vespers which will not now take place. **The Agape Party** follows the morning Liturgy at about 12 noon.