

**:: From the Life of St. Herman of Alaska ::**  
**By Virginia Nieuwsma for Antiochian.org**

One time, St. Herman was asked, “How do you, Fr. Herman, manage to live alone in the forest, don't you get bored?” He answered “No, I'm not alone there! There is God, and God is everywhere! There are holy angels! How can one be bored with them? With whom is it more pleasant and better to converse, angels or people? Angels, of course!”

In addition to conversing with the angels throughout his hours of prayer and worship, St. Herman worked tirelessly. ... With his own hands he built his cell and chapel, hauled baskets of kelp from the ocean to fertilize his garden, and in the midst of the labor meticulously kept the monk's rule of services and prayers.

Tending his own garden and diligently observing his monastic rule didn't keep St. Herman from reaching out with great love and concern to his Aleutian neighbors. On feast days and Sundays, he would gather them in the chapel next to his cell, and lead them in holy services; the people loved to listen to his spiritual teaching, and would visit him at all hours of the day and night, staying until early morning to absorb his instruction. The local Russian governor Yanovsky recalled, “To my amazement he spoke so powerfully, so sensibly, and argued so convincingly that it now seems to me that no education or earthly wisdom could withstand his words. We conversed every day until midnight, and even later, about the love of God, about eternity, about the salvation of the soul, and about Christian life. His sweet speech poured forth from his lips in an unceasing stream.”

Saint Herman especially loved the Aleutian children, for whom he would bake cookies, and he watched over those who were weak and powerless. He started a school for orphans, tended the sick during a plague that decimated the population, and defended the native Aleuts before the Russian fur traders who were exploiting them. The people began to tell each other of miracles they'd seen. Father Herman would tell someone of a future event and it would come to pass; animals, even bears, would eat from his hands; he placed an icon of the Mother of God in the sand and a tidal wave receded back into the ocean.

People flocked to the elder for counsel and help. Affectionately, the Aleuts began to call him their “North Star,” referring to how his teaching guided and grounded them, or the even more intimate “Apa,” which meant grandfather. Couples with troubled marriages would seek his advice. With meekness, he would reproach people for their lack of sobriety or their cruelty. He himself for years refused any titles of elevation within the church, preferring the simplest designation, “monk.” His letters reflect his simplicity and tender disposition.

*Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.*



## St. George Orthodox Church of Spring Valley

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### December 15, 2013 – Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Hieromartyr Eleutherios, bishop of Illyria and his mother, Martyr Anthia; Venerable Paul of Lata; Stephen, bishop-confessor of Surozh; Venerable Tryphon of Pechenga

**Orthros Morning Prayers, 9:00 am**  
**Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am**  
**Coffee hour afterwards – all are welcome!**

#### **Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8):**

O Compassionate One, Thou didst descend from the heights; Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou mightest deliver us from passion. Thou art our life and our resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee!

#### **Troparion of St. George (Tone 4):**

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls!

#### **Kontakion of Advent (Tone 3):**

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word before the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds Him who shall appear by His own will as a new babe, being God before the ages.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
The Most Reverend Metropolitan PHILIP, primate  
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest  
[www.antiochian.org](http://www.antiochian.org)

### **Orthros Gospel Reading: Mark 16:9-20**

When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that attended it. Amen.

### **Epistle Reading: Colossians 3:4-11**

BRETHREN, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 14:16-24**

Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the

master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, 'none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

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## **Announcements and Upcoming Events**

*For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, consult the calendar on our newly-updated website, [www.stgeorgeorthodox.org](http://www.stgeorgeorthodox.org).*

Next Sunday, December 22 at 10:00 AM, before the Divine Liturgy, we will celebrate the baptism of **Jax Ronald Thompson**. Please make every effort to join us for this blessed event!

**Only 10 more days until Christmas! As we prepare our homes and our families to celebrate the birth of our Lord, remember the meaning of the Advent season: a blessed season of spiritual preparation.** This is a good time to increase our devotion the Lord through prayer, fasting, church attendance and personal Bible reading. The Sacrament of Confession is available before and after each service, or by appointment with the priest. Please also do not forget the poor and lonely among us during this holy time. If you have any questions about fasting or other Christian disciplines, do not hesitate to ask Fr. Andrew.

Speaking of Christmas, our annual **Christmas Vigil** will be held **Tuesday, December 24 at 6:00 PM.**

Fr. Patrick Kinder of St. Ignatius Church in Madison, WI has graciously donated to us a box of CDs of their "Akathist of Thanksgiving" recording. The CDs are available in the basement for a suggested donation of \$15 each; all proceeds will go to St. George Church. Please see Fr. Andrew or Kh. Patty if you are interested in purchasing one.

*"Our sins, do not in the least hinder our Christianity... Sin, to one who loves God, is nothing other than an arrow from the enemy in battle. The vain desires of this world separate us from our homeland; love of them and habit clothe our soul as if in a hideous garment. We who travel on the journey of this life and call on God to help us, ought to divest ourselves of this garment and clothe ourselves in new desires, in a new love of the age to come, and thereby receive knowledge of how near or how far we are from our heavenly homeland."*

*- St. Herman of Alaska*