



Mother of God Orthodox Church

904 Cherry Hill Road + Princeton, NJ 08540 + mogoca.org



Joy of all who sorrow art thou
and protectress of the oppressed,
feeder of the hungry, consolation of travelers,
haven for the tempest tossed,
visitation for the sick,
protection and aid for the infirm, staff of old age,
O, all pure Mother of the Most High God,
Hasten, we pray, to save thy servants.

We welcome
all who seek to know
Christ in His Word
and in His Church.

Message from Father Peter

“Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands” Psalm 102:25.



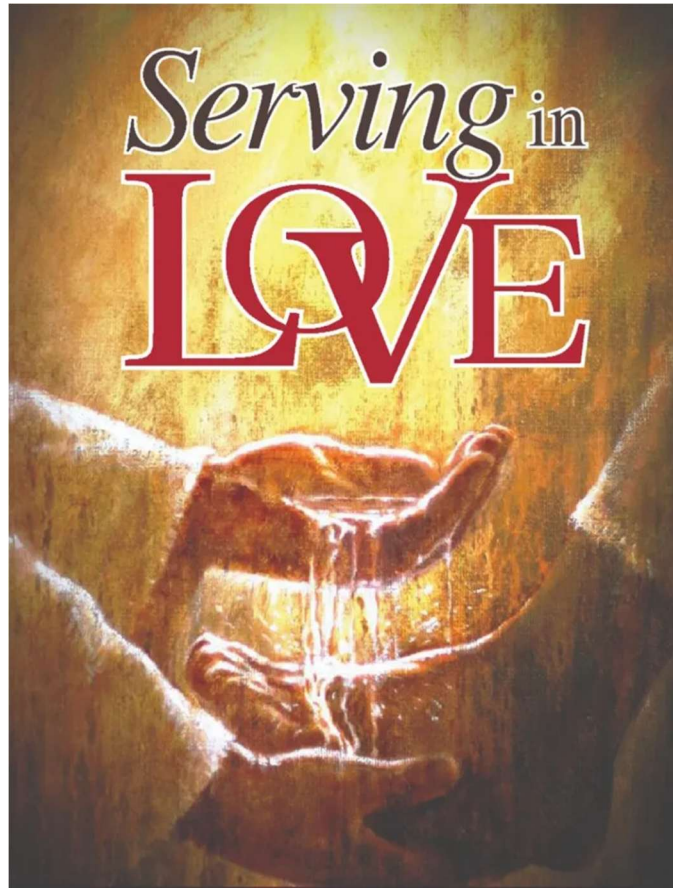
The words of the psalmist remind us that God, our creator, has set us on a firm foundation. He has given us a plan to grow and build on this foundation, which is Christ Himself. Christ has become, "The stone which the builders rejected (and) has become the cornerstone" Psalm 118:22. This stone is the Church, which is built on the foundation of the confession that Christ is the Son of the living God, proclaimed by St. Peter (Matt 16:6). The confession that Christ is the Son of the living God becomes the stone that we are to build and that centers us at Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow. To make this confession is to live this confession. We are to express not only this faith in words, but in deeds. Every aspect of our lives as a community built on the foundation of Christ must reflect the radical change made by the incarnation, death and resurrection of the Son of the Living God.

The first living expression is prayer. How do we live a life of prayer that reflects this confession? We have received the gift of the Divine Services of the Church; do we fully participate in them? These services are not only the Sunday Divine Liturgy, but a cycle of daily prayers, and participation in the sacraments. When was the last time we came to the sacrament of reconciliation and confession? Does our daily prayer practice include an examination of how we lived that day? Do we ask: "Did I bring honor to the Son of the living God, or did I bring shame?" Taking time to reflect upon how we have conducted ourselves in the present day helps us to see the changes we need to make in our lives, and to ask God to help bring about that change in the sacrament of reconciliation and confession.

The second living expression is the pride you have in belonging to a community of faith. We know how to be proud of our accomplishments, schools, family, friends and sports teams. Do we express the pride we have for being a member of the community of faith at Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow? How often do we speak and invite people to attend a service, or ask how we can help our community? Why is it easier to make a restaurant or movie recommendation and not a recommendation to come to worship? Christ tells us: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" Lk 9:26.

Lastly, we live and express our confession in service. We are told: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" 1 Peter 4:10. Christ himself tells us that: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" Mark 10:45. Service is at the core of living and expressing the confession of faith that Christ is the Son of the Living God. There are many opportunities we have at Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow to live a life of service. We can participate in helping the ministry at St. Basil's House. You can greet and welcome those who come and visit our Church. You can provide a hospitality service in sponsoring Sunday fellowship, or even volunteer to help clean the building or the grounds. Throughout the year the sisterhood and parish will support various ministries and charities. Did you know that candles need to be lit before services and blown out after? There are many opportunities to serve.

A new opportunity for us to serve the greater community at Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow is given to us with the completion of the new fellowship area. This year we will be hosting two Diocesan events. The first will be a music workshop, and the second will be the Diocesan Assembly where we will have the honor to have our Primate, His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON join us at the end of October. We will need people to help in many ways to make these two events reflect our commitment to the service of the other. This fall and spring we will plan educational opportunities and offer community events hosted at our Parish that will provide an opportunity to gain experience and to serve. The foundation has been laid for us, and we as a community have learned to build upon it. May we continue to learn how to live our faith and to witness to the love, compassion and forgiveness given to us in Christ.



Services, Feasts & Special Events

~ July/August 2026 ~

Sunday liturgical services are at MOG @ 9:30 A.M. (All are welcome. Masks are optional.) **When services are held inside, capacity may be limited.** Saturday Vesper Services are at MOG @5:00 P.M.

We will continue to stream the services online for those of you who are unable to attend the live services. You can view the live stream and recast at <https://www.youtube.com/@mogprinceton>. **CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD ON SATURDAYS, BEFORE OR AFTER VESPERS, OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

VESPERS CANCELLED DURING THE MONTH OF JULY

Sunday, July 5th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, July 8th	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Sunday, July 12th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, July 15th	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Sunday, July 19th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, July 22nd	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Sunday, July 26th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Blessing of the cars/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, July 29th	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Saturday, August 1st	5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, August 2nd	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, August 5th	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Thursday, August 6th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Saturday, August 8th	5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, August 9th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, August 12th	6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG
Saturday, August 15th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary
	5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, August 16th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, August 19th

6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG

Saturday, August 22nd

5:00 P.M. Vespers Service

Sunday, August 23rd

9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, August 26th

6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG

Saturday, August 29th

5:00 P.M. Vespers Service

Sunday, August 30th

9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Choir Rehearsal



View the master MOG calendar at:



http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar



Wisdom of Our Church Fathers



The wisdom of the Orthodox Church Fathers refers to the spiritual, theological, and practical teachings of the saints and early leaders of the Orthodox Church.

These teachings provide a roadmap for defeating passions, growing in virtues, and achieving spiritual stillness (hesychia).

Core tenets of this patristic wisdom include:

1. The Healing of the Soul

The Fathers view the spiritual life not merely as rule-following, but as a healing process.

- St. John Chrysostom: Emphasized that true fasting is not just abstaining from food, but curbing anger, repressing impure thoughts, and performing acts of charity.
- St. Paisios the Athonite: Taught that the foundation of the spiritual life is putting others first, and that "every passion is a disease of the soul" that requires patience and prayer to overcome.

2. Inner Stillness and Watchfulness (Nepsis)

To hear God, the soul must be clear of "alien thoughts."

- St. Anthony the Great: Reminded believers that the mind cannot pray well to God in contemplation if it is troubled, much like it is impossible to see your face in troubled water.

3. Non-Judgment and Humility

The Fathers place a heavy emphasis on examining one's own faults rather than judging others.

- St. Ignatius Brianchaninov: Advised to "Speak well of those who speak evil of you" and to never condemn anyone, but rather to keep one's eyes on oneself.
- Abba John the Little: Noted that people often take on the heavy burden of self-justification while abandoning the light burden of self-criticism.

4. Love Over Ego

Orthodox theology dictates that a person cannot achieve union with God without actively loving their neighbor.

- St. Basil the Great: Stressed that a Christian ought to rejoice over a brother's good deeds and grieve at his faults, always correcting others in tenderness and the fear of God.





The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha

**"Our purpose is to awaken in the child a consciousness of the presence of God, of His action in our life, of our relationship with God."
- Sophie Koulomzin, Our Church and Our Children**

This year's Church School graduation coincided with Pentecost, making the day even more special! All of the children worked hard throughout the year to learn about their faith by not only attending classes but also participating in the Divine Liturgy as much as possible.

A heartfelt thank you goes to all the teachers and parents who supported this year's program and selflessly dedicated their time and talents.

We are sadly bidding farewell to our Children's Ministry Director, Kristina Baktis. Five years ago, Kristina reimagined the church school program, encouraging children to engage in the divine services alongside their regular classes. If you would like to learn more about her approach, you can read an article written by Kristina in 2023 in our Diocesan Publication, Jacob's Well, by following this link: <https://www.jacobsmag.org/new-page-1>.

We wish Kristina all the happiness in the world as she embarks on a new journey as a future newlywed and parishioner at St. Gregory the Theologian Orthodox Church in Wappingers Falls, NY. They are truly blessed to have her!

Thank you to all who serve in this ministry.



"The bee is more honored than other animals not because she labors, but because she labors for others." ~St. John Chrysostom





ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations for St. Basil's House

Mother of God continues to support St. Basil's House with food donations, placed in the collection bin at the side entrance of the Church.

Please, when you shop, think of those in our community who are in need and bring your offerings to the Church.

Church School

Church school will be on break for the summer months. Please check the bulletin for the opening date of the fall semester.

Enjoy your summer.

For information or to volunteer, contact Father Peter Baktis, pabaktis@gmail.com

Donations for a Garden Fund

MOG is seeking donations for a garden fund to finance more plantings to beautify the outdoors around the church.

A donation basket for this purpose is on the table in the side-door entry room.

Please write "beautification fund" somewhere on your check or just donate cash.

Thank you!

- ❖ Catechetical Class has begun. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Fr. Peter at pabaktis@gmail.com
- ❖ Inquirers class via Zoom:
Contact FP for information
- ❖ Confessions by appointment, please contact FP
- ❖ Thanks to all who donated to the Fellowship Space fundraiser. Please finalize your 2026 pledges!



The summer
choir rehearsals
will take place
after coffee hour
— ~ ~ ~ —
and will be short--
no longer than **15 minutes.**

Church Hospitality

Please contact Matushka Jeanne at jbaktis@hotmail.com or (915) 255-9896 if you are able to sponsor a coffee hour after Sunday Liturgies.



“Work is a blessing, a gift from God. Work gives vigor to the body and refreshes the mind. If God had not given us work, man would have become moldy. Those who are diligent continue to work into their old age.” ~ Saint Paisios of Mount Athos





July and August 2026
stbasilshousenj@gmail.com

THANK YOU for donating canned goods, toiletries, clothing, toys, books and re-usable shopping bags in the bin in the vestibule at MOG; your gifts are greatly appreciated. We are privileged to receive the lovely gifts and to pass them along to our neighbors.

Special thanks to John Dragan, who continues to give us fresh eggs.

More thanks to Carrie and her crew for their work in Ephrosini's Garden! We have been pleased to distribute herbs, radishes, kale, romaine, daikon's, strawberries and peas, and our neighbors are looking forward to the hot-weather harvests. Help is often needed in transporting the produce from MOG to SBH -- is there someone living near MOG and working near Trenton who might undertake this? Tuesdays would be best, or early on Wednesday mornings, once a week; we have folks willing to do it on the first and second Wednesdays of each month, but we need help on other weeks.

We have been blessed to be able to continue to meet during June on Wednesday mornings for breakfast, Bible study and the distribution of clothing and groceries. Grace, Matthew, Natalia T. and Mina have given extra help in May and June. On the second Wednesday of each month, Fr. Peter and Mat. Jeanne have been leading the gathering; they could use an extra hand with serving and clean-up; someone has volunteered to help them on July 8th, but help would be appreciated on August 12, September 9 and October 14. Sometimes, a volunteer cannot come on his or her scheduled day; it would be very helpful to have other people available to fill in as needed. A generous friend has financed the purchase and installation of a dishwasher; using that may allow for extra time to spend with our neighbors.



Natalia T. and George plan to host open houses on the mornings of Saturdays, July 11, August 1, September 5 and October 3. In May, we made pinwheels -- delightful! If volunteers were available, we would be able to host other Saturday gatherings; please consider serving in this way; we each have gifts to share. How about help with journaling or painting or how to recycle or prayer life?

Please continue to pray for us and for our neighbors, especially those struggling with depression. Please pray that God would send people to help so that the work may continue; dependable, younger, stronger volunteers are badly needed.



Gifts from Ephrosini's Garden



Pinwheels!



Some young neighbors joining us



<https://www.facebook.com/stbasilshousenj/>



[stbasilshousetrentonnj](https://www.instagram.com/stbasilshousetrentonnj)



Elias the Prophet

Commemorated July 20



Elias of great fame was from Thisbe or Thesbe, a town of Galaad (Gilead), beyond the Jordan. He was of priestly lineage, a man of a solitary and ascetical character, clothed in a mantle of sheep skin, and girded about his loins with a leathern belt. His name is interpreted as "Yah is my God." His zeal for the glory of God was compared to fire, and his speech for teaching and rebuke was likened unto a burning lamp. From this too he received the name Zealot. Therefore, set aflame with such zeal, he sternly reproved the impiety and lawlessness of Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

He shut up heaven by means of prayer, and it did not rain for three years and six months. Ravens brought him food for his need when, at God's command, he was hiding by the torrent of Horraath.

He multiplied the little flour and oil of the poor widow of Sarephtha of Sidon, who had given him hospitality in her home, and when her son died, he raised him up.

He brought down fire from Heaven upon Mount Carmel, and it burned up the sacrifice offered to God before all the people of Israel, that they might know the truth.

At the torrent of Kisson, he slew 450 false prophets and priests who worshipped idols and led the people astray.

He received food wondrously at the hand of an Angel, and being strengthened by this food he walked for forty days and forty nights.

He beheld God on Mount Horeb, as far as this is possible for human nature.

He foretold the destruction of the house of Ahab, and the death of his son Ohozias; and as for the two captains of fifty that were sent by the king, he burned them for their punishment, bringing fire down from Heaven.

He divided the flow of the Jordan, and he and his disciple Elisseus passed through as it were on dry land; and finally, while speaking with him, Elias was suddenly snatched away by a fiery chariot in the year 895 B.C., and he ascended as though into heaven, whither God most certainly translated him alive, as He did Enoch (Gen. 5:24; IV Kings 2: 11). But from thence also, after seven years, by means of an epistle he reproached Joram, the son of Josaphat, as it is written: "And there came a message in writing to him from Elias the Prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the way," and so forth (II Chron. 21:12). According to the opinion of the majority of the interpreters, this came to pass either through his disciple Elisseus, or through another Prophet when Elias appeared to them, even as he appeared on Mount Tabor to the disciples of Christ (see Aug. 6).

Mary Magdalene, Myrrhberer & Equal-to-the-Apostles

Commemorated July 22



Saint Mary was from Magdala in Galilee on the Sea of Tiberias, and for this was named Magdalene.

When the Lord Jesus cast out seven demons from her, from which she had been suffering, she became His faithful and inseparable disciple, following Him and ministering unto Him even to the time of His crucifixion and burial. Then, returning to Jerusalem together with the rest of the Myrrh-bearers, she prepared the fragrant spices for anointing the body of the Lord. And on the Lord's day they came very early to the tomb, even before the Angels appeared declaring the Resurrection of the Lord.

When Mary Magdalene saw the stone taken away from the tomb, she ran and proclaimed it to Peter and John. And returning immediately to the tomb and weeping outside, she was deemed worthy to be the first of the

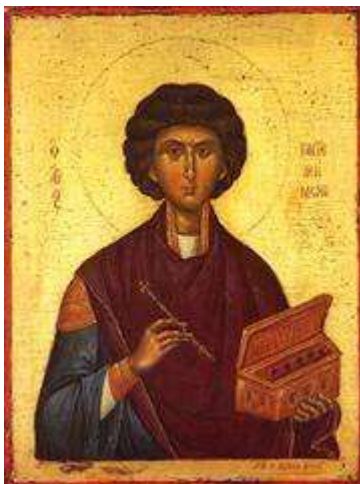
Myrrh-bearers to behold the Lord arisen from the dead, and when she fell at His feet, she heard Him say, "Touch Me not."

After the Lord's Ascension, nothing certain is known concerning her. Some accounts say that she went to Rome and later returned to Jerusalem, and from there proceeded to Ephesus, where she ended her life, preaching Christ.

Although it is sometimes said that Saint Mary Magdalene was the "sinful woman" of the Gospel, this is nowhere stated in the tradition of the Church, in the sacred hymnology, or in the Holy Gospels themselves, which say only that our Lord cast seven demons out of her, not that she was a fallen woman. "Madeleine" is a form of Magdalene.

Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer

Commemorated July 27



This Saint, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him.

Being proficient in the physician's vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon ("in all things a lion"), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning "all-merciful."

On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man's

soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately.

Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian.

Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.





Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow



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- ✓ We now offer the ability to send your contributions online!
- ✓ Our members and friends have even more ways to access current and past contribution's activity – choose the way that suits your lifestyle best!

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- **Help us honor our obligations:** Set up a recurring contribution and automatically deduct the payment from your bank account or credit card on the same day of every month.
- **Save time and money:** Don't be hassled writing checks, stamping envelopes, and/or mailing contributions. View and make contributions from anywhere at any time.
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- **Help the environment:** Reduce the impact you have on the environment by choosing to view and make your contributions online.

Prayer Requests



“...and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

~James 5:16, NKJV

Commemoration of the Living Servants of God:

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who for the sake of Your eternal mercy and loving kindness became man, and suffered crucifixion and death for the salvation of all; Who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, where You hear the prayers of all who call upon You humbly and with their whole heart: incline Your ear to us, and hearken to the prayer which your unworthy servants offer as a spiritual sacrifice for all Your people.

Have mercy, O Lord, upon:

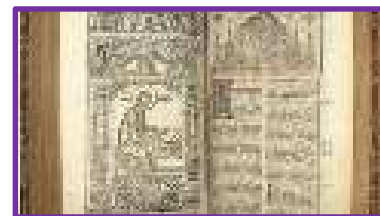
- We pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy. We pray for peace in the Middle East. We pray the same for all war-torn nations.
- Please pray for an end to gun violence, particularly in the United States – especially as we celebrate 250 years of freedom. Please pray for unity, love, peace and joy.
- Please pray for **Father Peter Baktis** as he heals from his rib injury.
- Daria Pettus' husband, **Mark**, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- **Debbie Baktis**, Matushka Jeanne's sister-in-law who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever: Matushka Jeanne has a great update about **David** (her niece's husband), who has been on our prayer list for a while. Thank God he is finally cancer-free!
- **Jan Perkins**, who continues to suffer from mobility and digestive issues, and please pray for Margery's friends **Yuri** and **Taisia** as they look for affordable housing in Bridgeport, CT.
- The **DeLarato Family**. **Nick DeLarato**, who has health issues, and Nick's sister, **Kathy**.
- **Olga Mezina**, friend of Lana.
- **Carson & Addison**, Joe Elchak's granddaughters.
- Nina Robinson's friend, **Stella Goudard**, who has heart issues, and Stella's husband, **Rick**.
- Lauren Ugorji's: husband, **Richmond**, who has health issues, adult children **Jade & Mike Edwards**, who continue to suffer setbacks in quest to rebuild home; **Jordan & Eric Mosurick**, who need jobs, and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Lauren's: dad, **Don Robinson**, as he battles blood cancer and suffers the loss of his youngest brother, **Reggie**; aunt **Kirra** (undergoing chemo treatments for pancreatic cancer) & uncle **Jesse Filkins**, aunts **Scott Brown Pempeit** and **Laverne Tisdale**; friend **Missy Gillespie** and Missy's husband, **Kurt**, who is now on the kidney transplant list – praise God!; and **Lydia**, a family friend diagnosed with cancer (she is 17).

May we join you in prayer for all of those on your minds, all of those in your prayers and all of those in your hearts. Lord Have Mercy!

Please send prayer requests and status updates to: ladyofleasure@yahoo.com

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED Memory Eternal

Daily Bible Readings - For a listing and links to the daily scripture readings go to <http://oca.org/readings>





**Please Pray for the
Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Church
as we move forward.**



God's Will Be Done In All Things!!!