



# ***Mother of God Orthodox Church***

904 Cherry Hill Road + Princeton, NJ 08540 + [mogoca.org](http://mogoca.org)

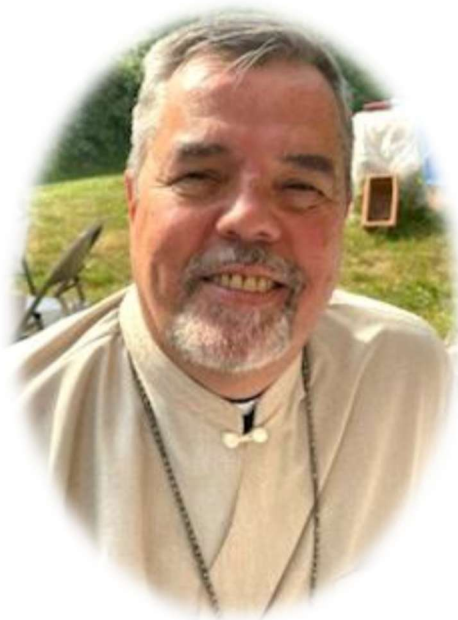


Joy of all who sorrow art thou  
and protectress of the oppressed,  
feeder of the hungry, consolation of travelers,  
haven for the tempest tossed,  
visitation for the sick,  
protection and aid for the infirm, staff of old age,  
O, all pure Mother of the Most High God,  
Hasten, we pray, to save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

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



## A Message from Father Peter



*Come, all you nations, let us fall down in worship before the blessed Tree, by which eternal justice has come to pass! For he who deceived Adam by a Tree is caught by the lure of the Cross; and he who held under his tyranny the creature endowed by God with royal dignity is brought down in a headlong fall. (Lord, I call Vespers of the Exaltation of the Cross)*

On September 14, we will celebrate the feast that commemorates the finding of the True Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, in the year 326. This celebration reminds us of the centrality of the cross in our lives as Christians. The meaning of the incarnation and salvific work of Christ is understood in his voluntary death upon the cross. Christ showed humanity's rebellion and the evil one's reign to be fully exposed and destroyed, ushering in the reconciliation between God and His creation. The words from the service of vespers remind us that the one who deceives is only deceived by his

arrogance and pride. Humanity's understanding of justice is now put to the test by the standard of God's justice in being unjustly condemned to death because of blind ambition and pride.

As believers and followers of Christ, we must use the cross as our measure of testing truth and any form of justice we are challenged with in our lives. The cross reveals how the lies and deception of the evil one are carried out by the rulers and people who sought to maintain their structures of injustice and ask for a thief to be released by Pilate instead of Christ. Evil fears truth and will use this as a means of controlling the narrative. We see this in our world today. Why are nations at war, and the world allows for innocent people to be slaughtered and starved to death? The narrative is created that makes humans into objects to be feared and, therefore, something to be done away with. Pilate knew of Christ's innocence, and yet out of fear of losing his authority or power by a rebellious crowd, he washed his hands and passed the judgment, condemning those who sought Christ's death.

God, however, turned this death into a life-creating force that overcame the evil one and transformed fear into hope and forgiveness. Christ did not fear the rage of humanity, nor the deception of the evil one; He faced them boldly and trusted His Father's will to be done, asking that those who unjustly condemned Him be forgiven. A new concept of justice, where people are not objectified, but held accountable and given the chance to turn from their fear, lies and deceit. A justice where compassion, love and forgiveness are the standard, not punishment and stigmatization.

We celebrate this feast, which allows us to embrace the mind of God. We are called to embrace the cross, to fall in veneration where we can find the eternal justice given by God. May we embrace this gift given to us by God, and live His truth and justice, so that others may come and embrace the gift freely given to all.



## MOG Fellowship Space

# Fundraising Goal

**\$120,000**



**Raised  
\$85,000**



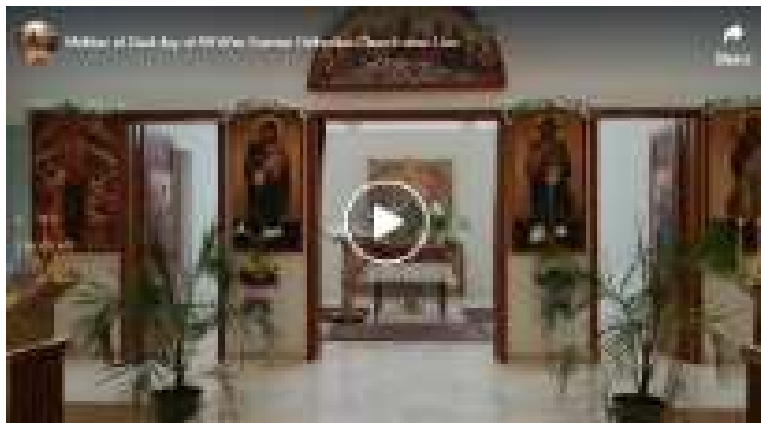
## Services, Feasts & Special Events

~ September 2025 ~

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.facebook.com/mogprinceton/>. **CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD ON SATURDAYS, BEFORE OR AFTER VESPERS, OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

Monday, September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Ecclesiastical New Year
Saturday, September 6 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, September 7 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy
Monday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, Nativity of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary
Saturday, September 13 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, September 14 <sup>th</sup>	930 A.M. Divine Liturgy, Elevation of the Venerable and Life Giving Cross
Saturday, September 20 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, September 21 <sup>st</sup>	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy
Saturday, September 27 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, September 28 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy



View the master MOG calendar at: [http://www.bit.ly/MOG\\_calendar](http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar)



## Church School



**WE ARE IN NEED OF TEACHERS TO  
VOLUNTEER FOR THE UPCOMING  
CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM.**

**IF YOU ARE ABLE TO VOLUNTEER,  
PLEASE CONTACT KRISTINA AT  
[kbaktis@gmail.com](mailto:kbaktis@gmail.com) AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE.**

**Thank you.**



## Wisdom of Our Church Fathers

ORTHODOX CHURCH FATHERS



The Prophets compiled the Scriptures, the Fathers have copied them, and the men who came after them learned to repeat them by heart; then came this generation and its children have placed them in cupboards as useless things.

Sayings of the Desert Fathers







## The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha

**Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**Time: After Divine Liturgy**

Dear Sisters in Christ,

We warmly invite all the women of our parish to join us this September for the Sisterhood of Sts. Mary and Martha Women's Group meeting.

As Orthodox Christian women, we follow the inspiring examples of these two holy sisters—Mary, who sat and listened at the feet of Christ, and Martha, who served Him with love.

Together, we gather to grow in faith, strengthen our fellowship and uplift one another on our spiritual journey.

Our meetings include:

- Prayer and Reflection
- Inspiring Fellowship
- Opportunities to Serve
- Building Lasting Friendships in Christ's Love

We look forward to praying, learning and serving alongside you as we build up our parish family in Christ's love.

All women of the parish are welcome! We look forward to seeing you there!

***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***



## Church Hospitality

Please contact Matushka Jeanne at [jbaktis@hotmail.com](mailto: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*







## 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**

Look for Date of the Fall Session

For more information or to volunteer, contact Kristina Baktis, [kbaktis@gmail.com](mailto:kbaktis@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
- ❖ Adult Study via Zoom: Send suggestions for consideration to Fr. Peter
- ❖ Confessions by appointment, please contact Fr. Peter
- ❖ Please consider donating to the Fellowship Space fundraiser, and finalize your 2025 pledges!





**September 2025**  
**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.

We have been meeting on **Wednesday mornings** for breakfast, Bible study and the distribution of clothing and groceries. We have enjoyed herbs, cucumbers, tomatoes and berries from MOG's Ephrosini's Garden; many thanks to John! Joe has cooked lovely and varied breakfasts. Fr. Peter, Mat. Jeanne and Margery led the group on August 13. We were closed Wednesday, August 27, but otherwise we met every week. Many thanks to our volunteer hosts, Grace and Julia. Volunteers are needed on the second and fifth Wednesdays of each month.

Natalie and George planned to host an open house on **Saturday**, August 30, and lead a **craft** project. If volunteers were available, we would be able to host other Saturday gatherings; please consider serving.

Please continue to **pray** for us, and for our neighbors. Please pray that God will continue to send even more people to help, so that the work can continue and expand to His glory.

## Gratitude & Needs

We appreciate your donations and invite you to join our weekly activities, including breakfast, Bible study, and clothing/grocery distribution. We also seek volunteers for the Saturday, Aug. 30, event and craft project.

## Save the Dates

- Save the mornings of **September 3, 10, 17, 24** to volunteer at MOG's St. Basil's House weekly Wednesday breakfast, Bible study and gift distribution gatherings.
- Attend and/or volunteer to run special Saturday events in September!



Please like, follow and share  
St. Basil's Facebook page!



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



St. Basil's House is now  
on Instagram! Please  
follow,  
share & support us there!



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



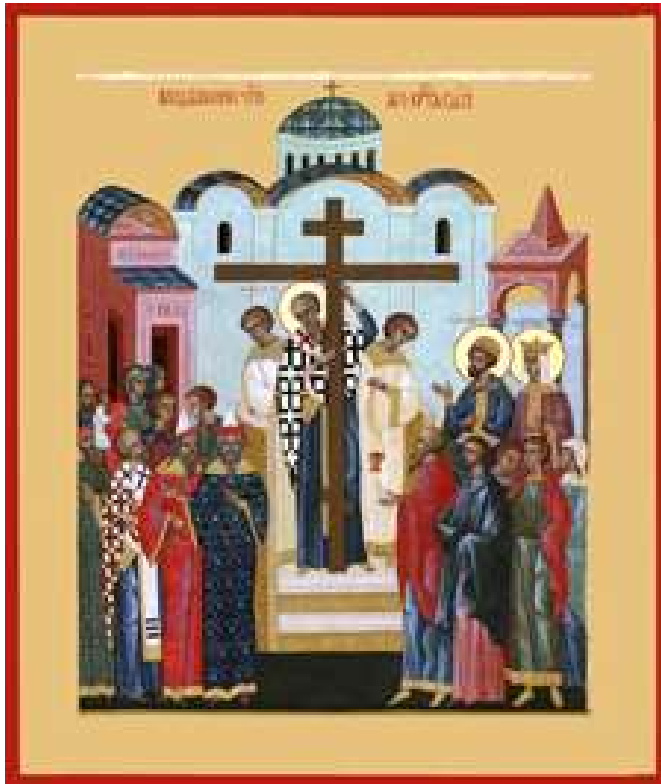
Thank you all for your continued support! ~ **Katya, Deacon John & Matushka Judith**



**Saint John Maximovitch**

## The Cross, The Preserver of the Universe

Commemorated on September 14<sup>th</sup>



In the prophet Ezekiel (9:6) it is said that when the Angel of the Lord was sent to punish and destroy the sinning people, it was told him not to strike those on whom the “mark” had been made. In the original text this mark is called “tau,” the Hebrew letter corresponding to the letter “T,” which is how in ancient times the cross was made, which then was an instrument of punishment.

And so, even then was foretold the power of the Cross, which preserves those who venerate it. Likewise, by many other events in the Old Testament the power of the Cross was indicated. Moses, who held his arms raised in the form of a cross during the battle, gave victory to the Israelites over the Amalekites. He also, dividing the Red Sea by a blow of his rod and by a transverse blow uniting the waters again, saved Israel from Pharaoh, who drowned in the water, while Israel crossed over on the dry bottom (Exodus, Chs. 14, 17).

Through the laying on of his hands in the form of a cross on his grandsons, Jacob gave a blessing to his descendants, foretelling at the same time their future until the coming of the “expectation of the nations” (Genesis, Ch. 48).

By the Cross, the Son of God having become man, accomplished our salvation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8). Having stretched out His hands upon the Cross, the Saviour with them, as it were, embraced the world, and by His blood shed on it, like a king with red ink, He signed the forgiveness of the human race.

The Cross of the Lord was the instrument by which He saved the world after the fall into sin. Through the Cross, He descended with His soul into hell so as to raise up from it the souls who were awaiting Him. By the Cross, Christ opened the doors of paradise which had been closed after our first ancestors had been banished from it. The Cross was sanctified by the Body of Christ which was nailed to it when He gave Himself over to torments and death for the salvation of the world, and it itself was then filled with life-giving power. By the Cross on Golgotha, the prince of this world was cast out (John 12:31) and an end was put to his authority. The weapon by which he was crushed became the sign of Christ’s victory.

The demonic hosts tremble when they see the Cross, for by the Cross the kingdom of hell was destroyed. They do not dare to draw near to anyone who is guarded by the Cross.

The whole human race, by the death of Christ on the Cross, received deliverance from the authority of

the devil, and everyone who makes use of this saving weapon is inaccessible to the demons.

When legions of demons appeared to St. Anthony the Great and other desert-dwellers, they guarded themselves with the Sign of the Cross, and the demons vanished.

When they appeared to Saint Symeon the Stylite, who was standing on his pillar, what seemed to be a chariot to carry him to heaven, the Saint, before mounting it, crossed himself; it disappeared and the enemy, who had hoped to cast down the ascetic from the height of his pillar, was put to shame.

One cannot enumerate all the separate examples of the manifestation of the power of the Cross in various incidents. Invisibly and unceasingly there gushes from it the Divine grace that saves the world.

The Sign of the Cross is made at all the Mysteries and prayers of the Church. With the making of the Sign of the Cross over the bread and wine, they become the Body and Blood of Christ. With the immersion of the Cross, the waters are sanctified. The Sign of the Cross looses us from sins. "When we are guarded by the Cross, we oppose the enemy, not fearing his nets and barking." Just as the flaming sword in the hands of the Cherubim barred the entrance into paradise of old, so the Cross now acts invisibly in the world, guarding it from perdition.

The Cross is the unconquerable weapon of pious kings in the battle with enemies. Through the apparition of the Cross in the sky, the dominion of Emperor Constantine was confirmed and an end was put to the persecution against the Church. The apparition of the Cross in the sky in Jerusalem in the days of Constantius the Arian proclaimed the victory of Orthodoxy. By the power of the Cross of the Lord, Christian kings reign and will reign until Antichrist, barring his path to power and restraining lawlessness (Saint John Chrysostom, Commentary on 11 Thes. 2:6-7).

The "sign of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:30), that is, the Cross, will appear in the sky in order to proclaim the end of the present world and the coming of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of God. Then all the tribes of the earth shall weep, because they loved the present age and its lusts, but all who have endured persecution for righteousness and called on the name of the Lord shall rejoice and be glad. The Cross then will save from eternal perdition all who conquered temptations by the Cross, who crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts, and took up their cross and followed their Christ.

But those who hated the Cross of the Lord and did not engrave the Cross in their soul will perish forever. For "the Cross is the preserver of the whole universe, the Cross is the beauty of the Church, the Cross is the might of kings, the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful, the Cross is the glory of angels and the scourge of demons" (Monday Matins).

*Reprinted from [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)*







## Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow



### Contribute to Mother of God online!

- ✓ 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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for more information  
and to sign up.

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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. Please pray for unity, love, peace and joy.
- Please pray for **George Gabriel**, and for...
- **Debbie Baktis**, Matushka Jeanne's sister-in-law who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Praise for Matushka Jeanne's niece's husband, **David**. His last brain scan was clear of all cancer. He is doing his chemo rounds and is handling the treatment well.
- **Jan Perkins**, who continues to suffer from mobility and digestive issues. And **Dana Talley**, who is struggling with aggressive prostate cancer. Also, please pray for Margery and Jan's friend, Carl, who is struggling with alcohol addiction and is resisting rehab.
- **Jackie and Nick DeLarato**, who have health issues. Also, Nick's sister, **Kathy**.
- **Olga Mezina**, friend of Lana.
- **Carson & Addison**, Joe Elchak's granddaughters.
- Lauren Ugorji's: husband, **Richmond**, who still struggles with health issues, adult children **Jade & Mike Edwards**, **Jordan & Eric Mosurick** (and all young couples struggling with health issues and getting permanent homes) and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Her dad, **Don Robinson**, for continued good health as he battles blood cancer. Aunt & Uncle **Kirra & Jesse Filkins** and Aunt **Scott Brown Pempeit**. Her friend **Missy Gillespie** and Missy's husband, **Kurt**, who needs a kidney transplant. Also, continued prayers for her humble mother, **Nina Robinson**.

*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](mailto: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!!!

