Sunday Bulletin – September 27, 2026.
The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church
1025 N Belle Vista Ave, Youngstown, Ohio 44509

Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian
Orthodox Church

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Altar Servers
Church Choir
Church School
Adult Education
St. Mary's Sisterhood
Sts. Peter & Paul Brotherhood
Senior UOL Chapter
Junior UOL Chapter
Youth Ministry
Orphanage Mission Ministry
Bingo Team

Fr Mykola Zomchak - Editor

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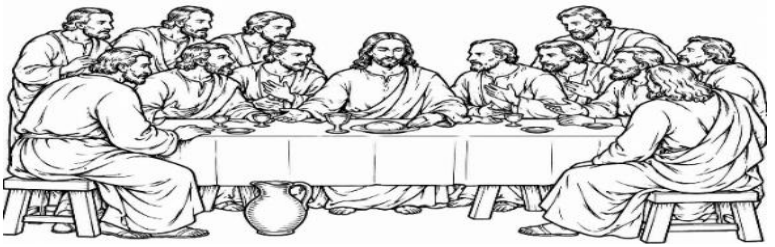
STS Peter & Paul UOC
Ukrainian Orthodox Church



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CHANGEABLE PARTS OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

Troparion Tone 1 *(of the Feast)*

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Grant Thou victory unto Orthodox Christians over their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross do Thou preserve Thy habitation.

Kontakion — Tone 4 *(of the Feast)*

As You were voluntarily raised upon the cross for our sake, / grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God; / make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power, / granting them victories over their adversaries, / by bestowing on them the Invincible trophy,
Your weapon of Peace.

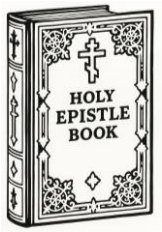
Instead of the Trisagion:

BEFORE THY CROSS WE BOW DOWN, O MASTER,
AND THY HOLY RESURRECTION WE GLORIFY (3X)

Tone 7 Prokeimenon *(of the Feast)*

Reader: Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship the footstool of His feet for it is holy.

V. The Lord reigns, let the people tremble! (Ps. 98:1a)



The Reading is from the Letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians

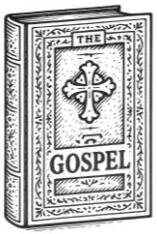
(for the Feast) 1 Cor. 1:18-24

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Alleluia and Verses Tone 7

V. *Remember Your congregation, which You have gotten of old! (Ps. 73:2)*

V. *God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth!*



The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. John

(for the Feast) Jn. 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35

Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.” The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So

they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

Instead of "It is truly meet…"

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord.

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou art a mystical Paradise, who untilled hast brought forth Christ. He hath planted upon the earth the life-giving Tree of the Cross: therefore at its exaltation on this day, we worship Him and thee do we magnify.

Communion Hymn

The light of Your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

EMORY ETERNAL

PLEASE PRAY FOR RESTING OF THE SOULS

Tom Orlo, Darrell & Verna Swartz, Carl Joe Swartz, Patricia Zylka, Rev. John Charest, Barbara Melewski, Marilyn O`Leary, Zenon O. Forosty, Ruth Graves, Yaroslav Lyubuska, Paula German, Nicholas Yurchyk, George Demetrios, Carl Joe Swartz, Andrew Kurty, Mary Kurty, David , George Bundy, Jimmy Johnson, Mary Johnson, James O'Neill, Andrew Kurty, James Cuddy, Larry Brasko, Sandy Burlock, Robert Rudolph, Patricia Mogish, Helen Fusco, Maria Koval-Melnykovich, Peter Hucul, Mary Bobersky, Walter Duzzny, Dennis Currie, Julian, Vasyl Zomchak, Heather Rhodes, Joe Zemko. Victims of the war in Ukraine.

PRAYER LIST

PLEASE PRAY FOR HEALING, COMFORT, AND SPIRITUAL PEACE

Metropolitan Antony, Archbishop Daniel, Judith Shonn, Peter & Cheryl Rudolph, Rick Wilson, Barb Novicky, Missy Bugzavich, Fr. Andrew Gall, Isaiah, Bill Starr, Gene, Rasa, Fr. Philip, Beth Zets, Shirley Duffy, Denny Lightner, Kevin Finnerty, Alice Dobransky, Jamie Maluk, Lori, Christine Kline, Larry, Soldier Ivan, Dolly Mehalco, Stephen Shonn, Thelma Zemko, Artur Bohuslav, Lori Hayda, Michele (Senediak) Caulder, Dobrodiyka Lilya, Marianne Carmack, Pauline Witkowsky, Eileen Maluk, Peter Anderson, Albert Auden, Boris & Kathleen Vuksanovich, Kathy Zebel. People Suffering from any Illnesses. Ukrainian people suffering from war.

LET US ALL PRAY FOR THOSE PREPARING FOR THE HOLY BAPTISM & (OR) CHRISMATION:

Sarah, Monica, Michael & Melissa

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

September 6, 1981 – JoAnn & Bernard Gnat
September 15, 1979 - Tom & Diane Senedak
September 21 – Wilhelm Rhonos
September 28, 2019 – Davin & Anna Blair
September 29, 2012 David & Heather McCormick
September 30, 2017 Marcell & Amanda Vitello

God Bless you with good health & joy for Many & Blessed Years!

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Kloey Nichole Woloschak	14 Joanna Newton
4 Joe Buzzelli	14 Maria Zomchak Sr.
5 Heather McCormick	16 Peter Rudolph
5 Shaun Rappach	18 Zena Farka
6 John Ewanish	19 Joseph Sanetrick
6 Sandra O Neill	20 Bonnie Borovitcky
7 George Demetrios	22 Dolly Mehalco
8 Yvonne Mark	22 Zachary James McCormick
12 Raymond Stermer	25 David Wilhelm
13 Rev Ivan Tchopko	27 Gary Andrews
13 Carol Rappach	28 Archbishop Daniel

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Sarah Rhodes	18 David Spanja
5 Christopher Rappach	18 Carla Rogensky
7 Delia Walkowiec	21 Joseph Owens
8 Elizabeth Zets	23 Waltraud Demetrius
11 Addison Ratliff	27 David Zylka
12 Linda Serrano	27 Artem Zhelyabin
13 Volodymyr Koval	28 Steven Majetich
14 Pat Mounce	29 Margie Senediak
14 Dominic Woloschak	29 Mary K. Woloschak
15 Jessica Slagel	30 Mary Bobersky
16 Fred Battisti Jr.	31 Sharlene Senediak
17 Charles G. Senediak	31 Rick Wilson

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

October 8, 1955 - Joseph & Thelma Zemko
October 12, 2024 – Brandon & Stefanie Rappach
October 15, 2016 - Eryna & Joe Sanetrick

Bulletin Dedication

(in Memory of a loved one, or in honor for a Birthday or an Anniversary)

Sun **Sep 6** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Sep 13** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Sep 20** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Sep 27** Not Available	
Sun **Oct 4** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Oct 11** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Oct 18** 1. Available 2. Available	Sun **Oct 25** Not Available	

Liturgical Schedule & Feast Days

SERVICE AND FEAST DAY SCHEDULE

- Sunday, Sep 27, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy,** **The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.** Jn: 19, 6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35
- Sunday, Oct 4, 9:30AM – **Divine Liturgy, 18th** Sunday. **Jesus Calls His First Disciples_ .** Lk 5:1-11

Upcoming dates & events

- Thursday Bible Study at 6pm: Oct 8
- Sr UOL Meetings: Oct 4 (after fellowship)
- Nov 15 - Parish Annual Meeting

St. Mary`s Sisterhood Updates:

1. October 3 - Brushes & Blessings - Fall Sip & Paint: Rustic Sunflowers
2. October 4 – Breast cancer awareness and fellowship

Greeters Schedule

(be a greeter on the available dates (?) – call or text 234-247-1534, Anna

Date	Greeters	Date	Greeters	Date	Greeters
Sept. 27	Nadiya & Bohdan	Oct. 11	Anna & Bailey Blair	Oct. 25	Kathy Battisti
Oct. 4	Bobbi & Nick Yarosh	Oct. 18	Mike Senediak	Nov. 1	Ron Kishton

BINGO KITCHEN WORK SCHEDULE 2026 (*Updated Sep 25*)

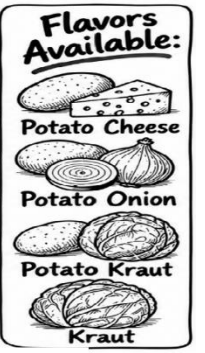
Date	Register	Server	Server
Mon., Sep 28	Crystal Walkowiec	Karen Semchee	?
Mon., Oct 5	Crystal Walkowiec	?	?

Please call or text Annie Woloschak if you would like to help – 330-766-0182

Pyrohy Schedule

ORDER BY (Call or text by this date)	PICK UP 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Mon. Oct. 5	Fri. Oct. 9
Mon. Oct. 19	Fri. Oct. 23
Mon. Nov. 2	Fri. Nov. 6
Mon. Nov. 16	Fri. Nov. 20
Mon. Nov. 30	Fri. Dec. 4

Call or Text: 234.247.1534, Anna



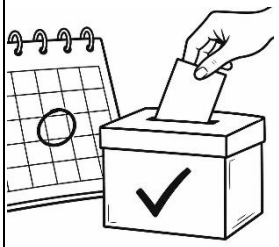
Offerings to the Lord: Sunday, Sep 13 - **$2417.00** | Sunday, Sep 20 - **$1696.00**
Donation from our parish towards **Backpacks for Ukrainian Children - $4,415.00**

ANNOUNCEMENTS & GREETINGS:

- **Thank You**

I thank God for answering prayers and am deeply grateful to my church family for your prayers, cards, and well wishes. Your kindness has meant so much to me.

- With gratitude, Marty Woloschak

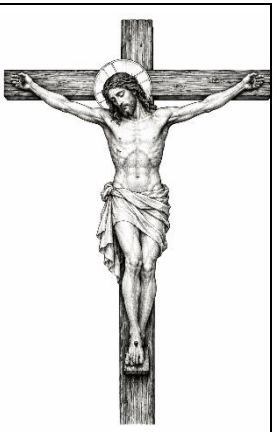


- **Liturgical Calendar Vote**

After much discussion, the Parish Board has decided to bring to a vote at the Parish Annual Meeting on November 15, 2026, the question of adapting the Liturgical Calendar from the Old Julian Calendar, which our parish currently follows (e.g., Christmas on Jan 7), to the Revised Julian Calendar (e.g., Christmas on Dec 25).

- Parish Board

The Seven Last Statements of Jesus on the Cross



The four Gospels preserve the final words of Jesus from the Cross. Taken together, they reveal His compassion, His trust in the Father, and the saving purpose of His death.

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
Even as He was being crucified, Jesus prayed for those who were putting Him to death. His words reveal a mercy that reaches even toward His enemies. They also echo the prophecy of Isaiah, who spoke of the suffering Servant interceding for transgressors *(Is 53:12)*.

2. "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
One of the criminals crucified beside Jesus mocked Him; the other admitted his guilt and asked to be remembered. Jesus answered the repentant man with a promise of life with Him. This moment shows that no one is beyond the reach of God's mercy when they turn to Him with faith and humility.

3. "Woman, behold your son!" … "Behold your mother!"
Seeing His mother and the beloved disciple standing near the Cross, Jesus entrusted them to one another's care. Even in His suffering, He attended to their needs and formed a bond of love and responsibility between them.

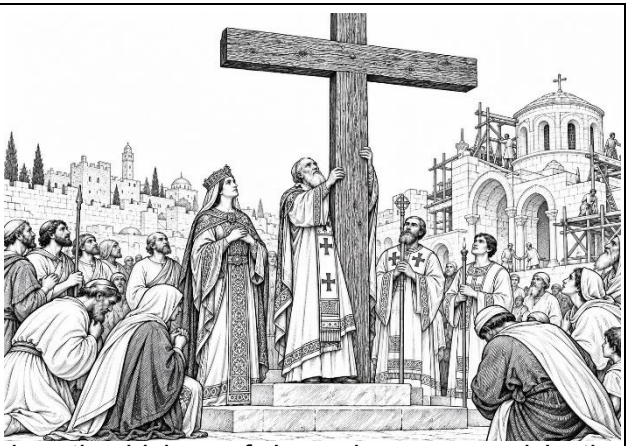
4. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
Jesus begins the words of Psalm 22, a psalm of anguish that also moves toward trust in God and hope in His deliverance. On the Cross, Christ truly entered the depths of human suffering. His cry expresses that agony; it does not mean that the Father and the Son were separated in their divine life.

5. "I thirst."
Jesus' thirst was a real human need amid the physical torment of crucifixion. John also connects these words with the fulfillment of Scripture, including the words of Psalm 69:21. The One who had offered living water to others now endured thirst Himself.

6. "It is finished."
Jesus declared that His work was completed. He had faithfully fulfilled the mission given to Him: to reveal the Father, proclaim the Kingdom, and offer Himself for the life of the world. His words do not make the violence of the Cross good; they proclaim that evil would not have the final word.

7. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."
With these words from Psalm 31, Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father and breathed His last. His death was real, and the injustice done to Him was evil. Yet Jesus willingly accepted the Cross, offering His life in love and placing Himself in the Father's hands.
The Cross is at once a sign of humanity's cruelty and the supreme revelation of Christ's love. Jesus was not overcome by death; He entered it freely, trusting the Father and giving Himself for the salvation of the world.

The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (1)



The Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, celebrated on September 14, recalls the discovery of the Cross of Christ in Jerusalem and its lifting up for the faithful to venerate. According to the Church's tradition, Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, traveled to Jerusalem in the fourth century to honor the places of Christ's life, death, and Resurrection. There, with the help of Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem—revered in the Church as Patriarch Macarius—she sought the Cross on which the Savior had been crucified.

The tradition tells that three crosses were found near the place of Christ's tomb. These were believed to be the crosses of Christ and of the two thieves who had been crucified beside Him. But there was a problem: no one knew which of the three was the Cross of the Lord.

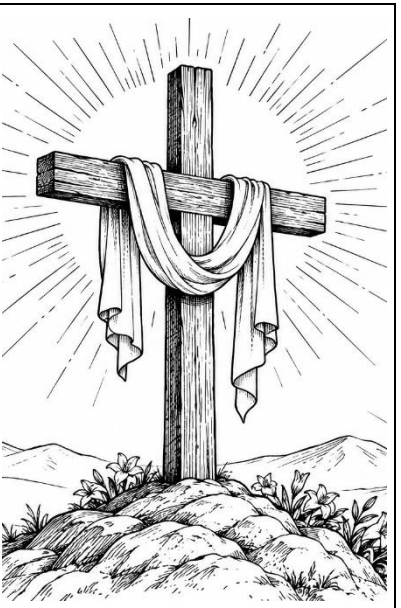
According to the traditional account, Patriarch Macarius trusted that God would reveal the True Cross through a sign. A woman who was gravely ill and near death was brought before the three crosses. Each cross was brought to her in turn. When she was touched with the first cross, nothing happened. The same occurred with the second. But when the third cross was brought to her, she was suddenly restored to health. The miraculous healing was received as the sign that this was the Cross upon which Christ had been crucified. Another form of the tradition tells that the crosses were brought to a funeral procession and that a dead person was restored to life when touched by the True Cross. In either account, the life-giving power associated with the Cross revealed which of the three was the Cross of the Savior.

News of the discovery spread, and a great crowd gathered, longing to see and venerate the Cross. Because there were so many people, most could not approach or even see it. They called upon Patriarch Macarius to raise the Cross high above the crowd. Standing in an elevated place, the bishop lifted the Cross so that all could behold it. The people bowed down in reverence and repeatedly cried, **"Lord, have mercy!"** This solemn raising gave the feast its name: the **Exaltation**, or lifting up, of the Cross.

Emperor Constantine later built a great church over the places of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. The Church of the Resurrection, known today as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was dedicated on September 13, 335. The feast of the Cross was celebrated the next day. The feast also remembers the Cross's return to Jerusalem after it had been taken to Persia; according to tradition, Emperor Heraclius brought it back and carried it into the city.

For Christians, the Cross is more than a historical relic. It was an instrument of humiliation and death, yet Christ transformed it into the sign of victory over sin and death. When we bow before the Cross, we do not worship the wood; we honor Christ, who gave Himself upon it for the life of the world. The feast calls us to take up our own crosses, to remain faithful in times of hardship, and to place our hope in the Lord, whose love was revealed on the Cross and whose Resurrection opened the way to life.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (2)



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Today the Church places before us the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see the Cross everywhere: on our churches, in our homes, around our necks, and we make its sign upon ourselves every day. Because it is so familiar, we sometimes forget how extraordinary it really is. In the ancient world, the cross was an instrument of suffering, humiliation, and death. Yet Christians lift it high and call it precious and life-giving. Why? Because Christ changed the meaning of the Cross.

Before Christ, the cross represented defeat; through Christ, it became victory. It represented death; Christ made it the path to eternal life. It represented shame; Christ filled it with glory. The Cross shows us how deeply God loves humanity. Christ did not remain distant from our suffering. He entered it. He experienced rejection, betrayal, loneliness, physical pain, and death itself. Because of this, there is no suffering in our lives in which Christ cannot be present with us.

Jesus tells us, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Christ never promised His followers a life without difficulties. Every one of us carries some kind of cross. It may be illness, grief, family difficulties, financial worries, disappointment, loneliness, or concern for someone we love. Some crosses are visible, while others are known only to us and to God. The question is not whether we will have a cross, but how we will carry it.

This does not mean that God sends every painful thing into our lives. We live in a fallen world, and sometimes suffering comes from circumstances, from the actions of others, or even from our own mistakes. But the Cross teaches us that God can take even something terrible and bring something good from it. The crucifixion itself was an act of cruelty and injustice, yet God transformed it into the means of salvation. In the same way, God can take our suffering and use it to deepen our faith, teach us compassion, humble us, and draw us closer to Him.

The Cross is also not simply about suffering. At its heart, the Cross is about love. Christ willingly gives Himself for the life of the world. And that teaches us that true love always requires something from us. Sometimes our daily crosses are very ordinary: being patient with someone, forgiving someone who hurt us, caring for a family member, giving our time to another person, admitting that we were wrong, or putting another person's needs before our own. These sacrifices may seem small, but when they are offered with love, they become part of our Christian life.

And most importantly, the Cross is never separated from the Resurrection. This is why we sing, "Before Thy Cross, we fall down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify." We bow before the Cross, but immediately we speak about the Resurrection. Good

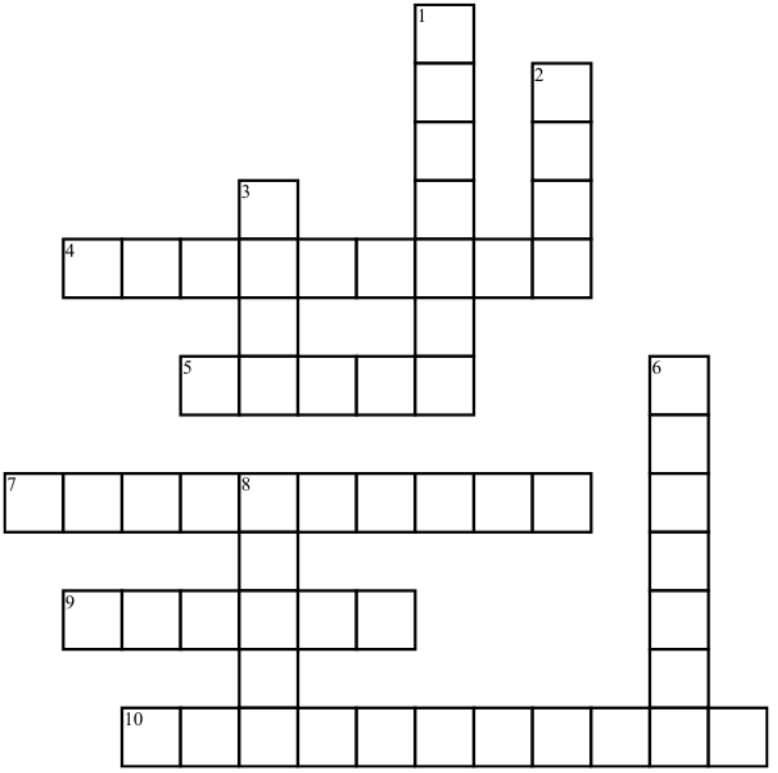
Friday leads to Pascha. Suffering does not have the final word. Death does not have the final word. Christ does.

So today, as we venerate the Holy Cross, perhaps each of us can think about the cross we are carrying right now. We can place it before Christ and say, "Lord, I may not understand why I must carry this, but help me to carry it with You." We do not carry our crosses alone. Christ has already walked this road before us, and He walks it with us.

The Cross was not the end of Christ's story, and our crosses are not the end of ours. Beyond the Cross stands the empty tomb. Beyond suffering is the promise of resurrection. This is why we do not simply remember the Cross today—we **exalt** it. We lift it high because through the Cross Christ has conquered death and given life to the world.

Amen.

The Cross



Across

4. Jesus made the ultimate _____.

5. Who was cruxified on the cross?

7. When Jesus walked on earth, who was he considered to be?

9. Who is Jesus to us?

10. Jesus was _____ on the third day.

Down

1. What did Jesus die for?

2. GOD is _____.

3. What was the other name that peter refered to as the cross?

6. We can ask GOD to _____ us.

8. Jesus was hung on the Cross by _____.

Where the Pain Is Greatest, the Church Must Be Present: UOC of the USA Continues Its Ministry of Mercy in War-Torn Ukraine

From food and hygiene packages for displaced families to backpacks placed into the hands of children returning to school, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA continues to transform the generosity of its faithful into a living ministry of Christian love.

The photographs arriving from Ukraine tell two very different stories.

In one image stand buildings scarred by explosions - windows shattered, walls torn open, homes reduced to rubble by Russia's continuing war against Ukraine. Behind those ruined walls are families who once lived ordinary lives: parents went to work, children attended school, grandparents cared for their grandchildren, and families gathered around their tables.

In another image, however, a child smiles while holding a new backpack filled with notebooks, pencils, markers, paints, and everything necessary for the beginning of another school year.

Between those two images - between destruction and hope - stands the continuing humanitarian ministry of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA.

With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony and under the coordination of His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, the clergy, parishes and faithful of the UOC of the USA continue to provide direct humanitarian assistance to internally displaced Ukrainians, refugees, elderly people living alone, children, and families whose lives have been devastated by the war.

Through the dedicated ministry of *Very Rev. Fr. Kostyantyn Kuznetsov, Dobrodiyka Natalia Kuznetsova, and their son Dmytro,* assistance funded by the UOC of the USA reaches people directly in communities where the need is greatest, including the Kharkiv region and other cities, towns and villages receiving displaced families from the occupied and heavily damaged regions of Ukraine.

Humanitarian assistance is purchased, transported, unloaded, sorted, packaged and then delivered into the hands of people who need it. Food, hygiene products and other necessities are assembled into individual packages for families who have lost homes, employment and, in many cases, nearly everything they once possessed.

"We are on the road again, going where the pain is greatest," Fr. Kostyantyn explains. "We Go Where It Hurts - The ministry is deliberately personal. We meet displaced families, elderly people who are alone, and those who suddenly find themselves in extremely difficult circumstances. We bring food and hygiene supplies, but we also try to bring a warm word and the assurance that they have not been forgotten."

The work of Fr. Kostyantyn, Dobrodiyka Natalia and Dmytro allows the charitable offerings made thousands of miles away in the United States to become something tangible in Ukraine- a package of food placed into the hands of an elderly woman, hygiene supplies delivered to a displaced family, school materials given to a child, and, perhaps most importantly, the presence of another human being willing to listen.

For Archbishop Daniel, this personal encounter is essential to the Church's understanding of humanitarian ministry.

"Christian charity cannot remain an abstract idea or simply a financial transaction," Archbishop Daniel stated. "When our faithful in America make an offering, that offering travels across an ocean and ultimately becomes bread on a family's table, medicine or hygiene supplies for someone in need, a

backpack for a child, and a human embrace for someone who feels abandoned. This is the Gospel becoming visible through works of mercy."

The devastation of war cannot be measured only by destroyed buildings, damaged infrastructure or statistics.

Every ruined home represents a family story interrupted. Every abandoned village contains memories. Every displaced person carries an invisible burden. Those delivering humanitarian assistance repeatedly encounter people whose physical needs are obvious but whose interior wounds are much harder to see.

As the volunteer team reflected after one of its recent missions, feeding an exhausted body, finding shelter or providing medicine may sometimes be the easier part of humanitarian work. Far more difficult is reaching a soul wounded by war.

"In every pair of eyes there is a personal pain," Fr. Kostyantyn said.

"There is a lost world and often a grief that has not yet found words. We understand that food is necessary, but people also need hope. Together with Natalia and Dmytro, we try again and again to kindle even a small flame of faith in tomorrow. Healing will be a long journey, and we must walk that road with them."

This is why the ministry supported by the UOC of the USA seeks to offer more than material assistance. It seeks to communicate presence: you have not been abandoned; you have not been forgotten; the Church is with you. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1) These words have become more than a familiar verse. For families living amid uncertainty, they express the conviction that God continues to care for His people - and that Christians are called to become instruments of that care.

As another academic year begins in Ukraine, the ministry has taken on a particularly joyful dimension. The annual **"Backpack of Kindness"** initiative is once again providing backpacks and school supplies to children and young people from internally displaced families.

These are children who have experienced realities no child should have to know. Some have lost their homes. Some have fled occupied territories. Some have changed schools repeatedly. Some continue their education amid air-raid sirens, in shelters and even in basements. Yet they continue to learn. They continue to draw. They continue to dream. And they continue to smile.

With support from the UOC of the USA, Dobrodiyka Natalia and the volunteer team have been purchasing backpacks, notebooks, pens, colored pencils, markers, sketchbooks, paints and other school necessities. Packages are also being shipped through Nova Poshta to displaced families in different regions of Ukraine.

Each backpack is prepared with care and contains the basic materials necessary for study and creativity. A notebook may seem like a small gift compared with the enormous destruction of war. Yet to a displaced child, that notebook says something important: your education matters; your creativity matters; your future matters.

"The smiles of these children are among the most powerful answers to the darkness of war," Archbishop Daniel reflected. "A missile may destroy a classroom. A bomb may destroy a family home. War may force a child into a shelter. But we must never permit war to convince that child that there is no tomorrow. Every backpack we place on a child's shoulders is our way of saying: 'We believe in your tomorrow. Keep learning. Keep dreaming. Ukraine needs you.'"

The backpacks reaching children in Ukraine are made possible by communities of faithful throughout the United States who continue to respond generously to the appeals of the Consistory.

Among them is Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Youngstown, Ohio, where the faithful, under the pastoral leadership of Rev. Fr. Mykola Zomchak, responded to the Consistory's call by collecting funds and forwarding them for the purchase of backpacks and school necessities for displaced Ukrainian children. For the Youngstown parish community, the initiative is a natural expression of Christian stewardship and solidarity with Ukraine. "Our parish understands that these children are not strangers to us," Fr. Mykola Zomchak said. "They are our children in Christ. When a child in Ukraine opens a backpack provided through the generosity of our faithful, we want that child to know that Ukrainian Orthodox Christians in America remember them, pray for them and believe in their future."

The contribution of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish represents something much larger than one collection. Across the UOC of the USA, parish communities, clergy, organizations, families and individual donors have repeatedly answered appeals for humanitarian assistance since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

Their offerings become food. Their offerings become hygiene supplies. Their offerings become humanitarian deliveries. And now, once again, their offerings are becoming backpacks filled with hope.

One of the defining characteristics of this humanitarian effort has been the ability of the UOC of the USA to connect donors directly with those suffering on the ground.

Through trusted clergy and volunteers such as Fr. Kostyantyn, Dobrodiyka Natalia and Dmytro Kuznetsov, financial contributions are transformed into practical assistance, while the volunteers themselves provide the human and spiritual presence that no shipment can replace.

The process involves considerable work: identifying urgent needs, purchasing supplies, coordinating transportation, unloading deliveries, assembling individual food and hygiene packages, organizing school materials and distributing assistance.

Yet behind all that logistical work is a profoundly Christian purpose.

"This ministry is not about numbers," Archbishop Daniel said. "It is about names, faces and human lives. Christ never commanded us merely to feel compassion from a distance. He calls us to feed the hungry, care for those in distress and bear one another's burdens. Every person we serve in Ukraine is an icon of God whose dignity must be protected."

The Archbishop expressed particular gratitude to the parishes and individual benefactors who continue their generosity despite the fact that the war has now continued for years.

"I ask our faithful not to become accustomed to Ukraine's suffering," Archbishop Daniel said. "The danger of a long war is that the world begins to treat extraordinary suffering as ordinary. For the mother who has lost her home, it is not ordinary. For the child studying during an air raid, it is not ordinary. For the elderly person waiting for food or medicine, it is not ordinary. Therefore, our response cannot become ordinary either. Our love must remain active."

War leaves behind rubble, wounded bodies and broken hearts. It attempts to convince people that destruction is stronger than creation and that despair is stronger than hope.

The Church answers differently.

A food package says: you will eat today. A hygiene kit says: your dignity matters. A visit says: you are not alone. A backpack says to a child: there is a tomorrow. And prayer says: God has not abandoned you.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA extends profound gratitude to every parish, clergy family, organization, donor and friend who has made this ministry possible, as well as to Fr. Kostyantyn, Dobrodiyka Natalia, Dmytro and the volunteers who place themselves directly in the service of people living amid the consequences of war. But the need remains enormous.

As another school year begins and humanitarian needs continue throughout Ukraine, the Consistory once again calls upon the clergy, parishes and faithful of the UOC of the USA, as well as friends and benefactors of Ukraine, to continue supporting the Church's humanitarian ministry.

Do not allow compassion to grow tired! Do not allow distance to make suffering invisible!

Continue helping us provide food for displaced families, hygiene supplies for those who have lost everything, assistance for elderly people living alone, and backpacks and educational materials for children determined to learn despite the war surrounding them.

"Every gift becomes an act of hope," Archbishop Daniel concluded. "Perhaps we cannot rebuild every destroyed home today. Perhaps we cannot immediately heal every wounded heart. But we can stand beside our brothers and sisters. We can feed them. We can clothe them. We can educate their children. We can pray with them. And together, by the grace of God, we can remind the world that light will overcome the darkness, mercy will overcome cruelty, and life will overcome death."

Together, we continue to carry hope where the pain is greatest.

Article From the website of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church:
https://uocofusa.org/news/4742/where-the-pain-is-greatest-the-church-must-be/

Sep 25, 2026

Dear Parishioners,

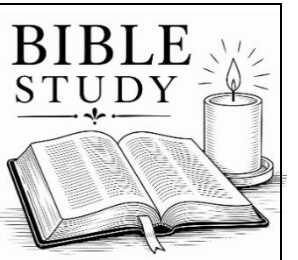
We are pleased to share that Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church has sent $4,415.00 to support the Backpacks for Ukrainian Children in Need project.

This generous amount was raised through a special collection on Aug 30, donations received in the mail and contributions from our parish organizations towards the project.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this gift possible and support children in Ukraine.

With gratitude,
Rev. Mykola Zomchak, *Parish Pastor*
Chuck Woloschak, *Parish President*
Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Bible Study – Session 4



OLD TESTAMENT: GENESIS 20-40

Genesis 20–21 — Abraham, Isaac & Ishmael
Abraham again calls Sarah his sister. God identifies Abraham as a **prophet (20:7)**—the first explicit use of the word "prophet" in the Bible. Isaac is then born when Abraham is **100 years old**; his name means **"he laughs."** Ishmael is also blessed by God, but **Isaac carries the covenant promise**.

Genesis 22–23 — Isaac & Sarah
God tests Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac. Abraham declares, **"God will provide for Himself the lamb."** Isaac becomes a powerful Christian image of Christ—the beloved son carrying the wood of sacrifice—although Isaac is ultimately spared.
Sarah dies at **127**. Abraham purchases the cave of Machpelah. Remarkably, although God promised Abraham the land, the first land Abraham actually owns is **a burial place**.

Genesis 24–25 — Rebekah, Jacob & Esau
Abraham's servant finds Rebekah after praying for a sign. Her willingness to water several camels demonstrates remarkable hospitality and service.
Jacob and Esau are born, with Jacob holding Esau's heel. Esau later **sells his birthright for food**, exchanging a lasting inheritance for immediate satisfaction. Abraham dies at **175**, and Isaac and Ishmael bury their father together.

Genesis 26–27 — Isaac, Jacob & the Blessing
Isaac repeats Abraham's mistake by calling his wife his sister. Later Jacob, helped by Rebekah, deceives Isaac and receives Esau's blessing.
Remember the distinction: **Birthright = firstborn status/inheritance. Blessing = the father's solemn blessing.** Jacob receives both, but through very different circumstances.

Genesis 28–30 — Bethel, Leah & Rachel
Jacob dreams of a **stairway between heaven and earth** with angels ascending and descending. He calls the place **Bethel — "House of God."** Jesus later uses similar imagery about Himself in John 1:51.
Jacob then experiences deception himself: after working seven years for Rachel, Laban gives him **Leah** instead. From this complicated family eventually come the ancestors of the **twelve tribes of Israel**.

Genesis 31–33 — Jacob Becomes Israel
After about **20 years** with Laban, Jacob leaves with his family and possessions. Before meeting Esau, Jacob wrestles through the night with a mysterious Man and receives a new name: **Israel**. He leaves the encounter with both a blessing and a limp.
Jacob expects Esau's revenge, but instead **Esau runs to him, embraces and kisses him, and they weep together**.

Genesis 34–36 — Dinah, Bethel & Edom
After Dinah is violated, Simeon and Levi slaughter the men of Shechem. Their revenge reminds us that **Scripture recording an action does not mean Scripture approves of it**.
Jacob returns to Bethel and tells his household to put away their foreign gods. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin, and Isaac dies at **180**. Esau's descendants become the nation of **Edom**, later an important neighbor and rival of Israel.

Genesis 37–38 — Joseph, Judah & Tamar
Joseph is **17** when his jealous brothers sell him. They cover his garment with goat's blood to deceive Jacob. There is striking irony: **Jacob had used a goat and clothing to deceive his father; now his sons use a goat and clothing to deceive him.**
Judah's story with Tamar seems like an interruption, but their son **Perez becomes an ancestor of King David and ultimately Jesus Christ**.

Genesis 39–40 — Joseph in Egypt
Joseph refuses Potiphar's wife's advances because he sees sin ultimately as **sin against God**. Although innocent, he is falsely accused and imprisoned.
In prison Joseph correctly interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. Yet after the cupbearer is restored, **he forgets Joseph**. Joseph has been betrayed, falsely accused, imprisoned, and forgotten—but **God has not forgotten him**.

The big picture of Genesis 20–40
If I were teaching this section in Bible Study, I would emphasize five themes: **God remains faithful despite human failure; actions and deception have consequences across generations; God's chosen people are deeply imperfect; suffering can be part of providence even when its purpose is not yet visible; and God repeatedly turns human evil and weakness toward His larger purpose.**
And there is a beautiful progression: **Abraham receives the promise → Isaac inherits it → Jacob struggles and becomes Israel → Israel's sons become the foundation of the twelve tribes → Joseph goes into Egypt**, preparing the way for the entire Exodus story.

NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 8–13

The Centurion — Matthew 8:
A Roman centurion asks Jesus to heal his servant. He tells Christ, **"Only speak a word, and my servant will be healed"** (Matthew 8:8). Jesus marvels at his faith. The centurion was a **Gentile**, yet he trusted Christ more deeply than many who had already seen His miracles. Faith is not simply seeing miracles—it is **trusting the authority and word of Christ**.
Calming the Storm — Matthew 8:
While the disciples are crossing the sea, a violent storm arises. Jesus is asleep, and the frightened disciples wake Him. Christ rebukes the winds and the sea, and immediately there is calm. The disciples ask, **"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"** (Matthew 8:27). The miracle reveals more than Christ's power—it reveals **who He is**. In the Old Testament, God alone has authority over the sea and the forces of creation. Jesus exercises that same divine authority.
Healing the Paralytic — Matthew 9:
A paralyzed man is brought to Jesus. Before healing his body, Christ tells him, **"Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you"** (Matthew 9:2). The scribes immediately recognize the significance: **Who can forgive sins except God?** Jesus then heals the man physically to demonstrate His authority to forgive sins. Christ came not simply to heal our bodies but to heal the deeper sickness of humanity—**sin and separation from God**.
Matthew the Tax Collector — Matthew 9:
Jesus sees Matthew sitting at the tax office and simply says, **"Follow Me."** Matthew gets up and follows Him.
When criticized for eating with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus answers: **"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"** (Matthew 9:12). The Church is not a gathering of people who believe themselves perfect. **Christ is the Physician, and we come to Him because we need healing.**
The Harvest — Matthew 9:
Seeing the crowds, Jesus says, **"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few"** (Matthew 9:37). There are many people searching for God, suffering, confused, or needing spiritual guidance—but there are too

few willing to serve them. Christ therefore tells His disciples to **pray for laborers**. Christian ministry is not simply a job; it is participation in God's work of gathering His people.

Sending the Twelve — Matthew 10:

Jesus gives His **twelve Apostles** authority and sends them out to preach, heal, and cast out demons.

The number twelve is significant. Israel had **twelve tribes**, and now Christ establishes **twelve Apostles**, showing the renewal and fulfillment of God's people in the Church. Christ also warns them that following Him will involve sacrifice and persecution: **"He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me"** (Matthew 10:38). This is before the Crucifixion. Jesus is already teaching that discipleship means **dying to ourselves in order to live for God**.

John the Baptist's Question — Matthew 11:

While imprisoned, John sends his disciples to ask Jesus, **"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"** (Matthew 11:3). Jesus points to what is happening: **the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the poor hear the Gospel**. These signs fulfill Old Testament prophecies, especially Isaiah, showing that the promised **Messiah has arrived**.

"Come to Me" — Matthew 11:

Jesus gives one of the most comforting invitations in the Gospel: **"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28). Christ does not promise that we will never carry burdens. He invites us to **carry them with Him**. True rest is not necessarily the absence of problems—it is having **Christ with us in the middle of them**.

Lord of the Sabbath — Matthew 12:

When the disciples are criticized for picking grain on the Sabbath, Jesus declares: **"The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath"** (Matthew 12:8). The Sabbath was established by God. For Christ to declare Himself **Lord of the Sabbath** is therefore an extraordinary statement about His divine authority. Jesus also teaches that **"it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath"** (Matthew 12:12). God's commandments were never meant to become an excuse to withhold mercy.

The Unforgivable Sin — Matthew 12:

Jesus warns about **blasphemy against the Holy Spirit** (Matthew 12:31–32). This does not mean that someone can accidentally say one wrong thing and become permanently unforgivable. The warning concerns a heart that continually and deliberately **rejects God's grace**, even calling God's work evil. God's mercy is available to the repentant. The danger is reaching the point where a person refuses the very grace that could lead him to repentance.

The Sower — Matthew 13:

Jesus tells the parable of a sower whose seed falls on different kinds of soil. The **seed is God's Word**, but the condition of the soil determines what happens to it. The same Word can be heard by many people and produce very different results. The question is therefore not only, **"Do I hear God's Word?"** but also, **"What kind of soil is my heart?"**

Wheat & Tares — Matthew 13:

Jesus describes wheat growing together with weeds. The servants want to pull the weeds out immediately, but the master tells them to wait until the harvest. The parable teaches us to be careful about **judging people too quickly**. Good and evil exist together in this world, but the final judgment belongs to God. God is patient because there is still time for **repentance and transformation**.

Mustard Seed — Matthew 13:

Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a tiny **mustard seed** that grows into something much larger.

God often begins His work in ways that appear small and insignificant. Christ began with a small group of disciples in a small part of the world, yet the Gospel spread throughout the nations. **Never underestimate what God can do with something small when it is placed in His hands.**

UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 17, 2026

12:00 Noon – 6:00 PM

Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Center

1025 N. Belle Vista, Youngstown, Ohio 44509

For information call: 234 247 1534 or 412 565 9441

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