

At every Divine Liturgy of our Church we have Pentecost. How does the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ? Don't they become through the descent of the Holy Spirit? There is Pentecost! Every Holy Altar of the Orthodox Church is the Upper Room of Pentecost. At every Baptism we have Pentecost. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, a person becomes a Christian and becomes one with the Body of Christ. Every ordination of a Deacon, Priest and, of course, a Bishop, is a new Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends and makes a person a co-worker with God. Every Confession of a Christian is again Pentecost. The moment the Christian kneels to his Confessor and with humility tells him his sins with repentance and the Confessor reads him the blessing of forgiveness, he is forgiven by the grace of the Holy Spirit. At every gathering and at every Mystery of the Church it is a continuation of Pentecost, because they are performed in the presence of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, all activities, prayers and the Mysteries of the Church begin with a prayer: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth...come and abide in us..." We ask the Comforter to come, the Paraklete, the Holy Spirit. And He comes. Wherever the Orthodox Church—the true Church of Christ—meets, there also is the grace of the Holy Spirit. Every Saint of our Church is a Spirit-bearing man or woman, full of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a person of Pentecost. —*Abbot George of Mount Athos*

Next week we have the joy of baptizing Morwenna Georgiana Danford at 9 AM. Please update your June calendar.

Our annual Fort Ross Divine Liturgy pilgrimage is scheduled for Friday, July 3rd, with the Divine Liturgy beginning at 10 AM sharp. The printed June calendar inadvertently had the time at 10:30—which is incorrect. I will need help in transporting liturgical items to the Fort Chapel. Please let me know if you are able to help. —*Fr Lawrence*

Pentecost week is fast free. However, on the Monday after that, June 8, we begin the Apostles' Fast, which runs until the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on June 29.

Fr Daniel will continue his study of Genesis on Wednesdays at 6:45 PM during June and part of July. We will also have, by request, Q&A sessions for catechumens and inquirers on Saturdays at 4 PM during June.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



May 31, 2026

PENTECOST - The Descent of the Holy Spirit



• TROPARION OF PENTECOST, Tone Eight:

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net; O Lover of man, glory be to Thee.

• KONTAKION, Tone Eight:

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity; therefore with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 2: 1–11

Gospel: John 7:37–52, 8:12

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, May 29: 8 AM, Matins, Leave-taking of Ascension
11:30–1 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, May 30: 10 AM, Decorating the church for Pentecost
5 PM, Vigil for the Feast
6 PM, *Vigil at Holy Trinity in SF (Green St)*
- Sunday, May 31: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy
9 AM, Choir Rehearsal
9:30 AM, Chrismations
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Pot-Luck Agape Meal
1 PM, *Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost*
- Monday, June 1: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy—Day of the Holy Spirit
and the Feast of St. Justin the Martyr
- Wednesday, June 3: 5:30 PM, Akathist to St. Olga of Alaska
6 PM, Vespers
6:45 PM, Genesis Study
- Thursday, June 4: 7 PM, Online Bible Study with Fr James
- Friday, June 5: 8 AM, Matins
11:30–1 PM, Confessions

At all the feast days, the culmination and fulfillment of our expectations and participation is the reception of Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy for that Feast. On Pentecost, after the Vigil the evening before and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, there is another highlight, a concluding “consummation” let’s say, at the Vespers which follows the Liturgy. At that Vespers we pray three long, beautiful and very contrite prayers, during which we kneel for the first time since Holy Week. Many parishes, maybe most, including ours, normally begin Vespers as Liturgy ends, immediately. This year I scheduled Vespers to begin at 1 PM after the lunch, so that we might have a brief rest and refreshment at the lunch. I’ve had second thoughts about how pastorally wise it is to delay Vespers, but let’s see if this works for us. For this year in any case, I encourage all of you to return to the Church at 1 PM for this Vespers, just as we would return after the Agape

meal for the Forgiveness Sunday Vespers. This unique Vespers is indeed a once a year gift to us, an offering of praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, on this particular day, fifty days from Pascha. I’d like us to experience that moment, the crowning of Pascha no less, as much as we can. “As we kneel during the three long prayers,” writes Elder Aimilianos of Mt Athos, “may our kneeling be not merely a moment of discomfort, a moment of time empty for not having tasted the *fruit of the Spirit* (cf. Gal 5:22), but rather a cry: “Come Holy Spirit. Come and dwell in me.”

Pentecost is the “Feast of Weeks,” or more exactly, the feast of seven weeks, for beginning on the day after Passover (Pascha/Pesach), the Israelites counted forty-nine days, then commenced the celebration of the feast of Weeks on the following day (Lev 23:15-16; Deut 16:9-10). This feast is called “Pentecost” that is, “fiftieth” (e.g., Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8).

- This is also the “Feast of First-Fruits”—*Hag ha-Bikkurim*—on which the first fruits of the early harvest were brought to be offered in the Temple. The seven weeks from *Pesach* to Pentecost are just enough for a new crop of wheat to be planted, nurtured, tended and harvested in time to be offered. An ancient Christian prayer sees the grain gathered together and transformed into bread as a symbol of the Church, gathered into unity from all the nations.
- This is also the “Feast of the Giving of the Law”—*Hag Matan Torah*—celebrating the giving of the Law—not the receiving of the Law. The Law was given to Moses on a particular day in a particular year, and Pentecost celebrates that unique event, but, as the Jewish teachers point out, the receiving of the Law is something that should happen every day. The Christian Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Spirit, poured out on the Apostles and disciples as tongues of fire descending from above. No longer are we under the Jewish Law, for we live under Grace and walk (live, serve, work and follow Christ) by the Spirit, as St Paul so clearly explains in his epistles.

Many Years to those who will be receive Holy Chrismation on Sunday morning at 9:30 AM: Kira Boyd and the Gonzalez family: Antonia, Esmeralda, Antonia Jr, and Valentina! Please come to pray for them and support them as they are united to the Church.

Congratulations to Gabriel Nicholson, who received his Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering. Many Years!