



ST MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN RINCON/SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2025 LEAVETAKING OF THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

Scripture Readings

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Epistle)

Brethren, it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Matthew 22:35-46 (Gospel)

At that time, when one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?' If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Feast Day: Leavetaking of the Elevation of the Cross

Today we mark the Leavetaking of the Elevation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, bringing to a close the liturgical celebration of this great feast. The Elevation of the Cross itself recalls the recovery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem by St. Helen, the mother of St. Constantine, and its solemn exaltation in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Called the Church of Holy Resurrection by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem) in the 4th century. Each year on September 14, the Church lifts up the Cross in the midst of the faithful, as it was once lifted high for all the world to see, proclaiming that in this wood we find the victory of Christ over death. During the days following the feast, the Church continues to chant hymns glorifying the Cross and its power, as if we are still standing before it in awe and thanksgiving. On the Leavetaking, these hymns are sung for the final time, and the Cross is solemnly returned to the altar. This reminds us that the feasts of the Church are not mere anniversaries, but living encounters where we have truly stood at the foot of the Cross, venerated it, and received its blessing into our lives. As we conclude the celebration, the Church calls us not to leave the Cross behind, but to carry it with us daily. The Leavetaking impresses upon us that every Christian life is lived under the sign of the Cross: a sign of victory in suffering, strength in weakness, and hope in the face of death. By the Cross, joy has come into all the world, and by the Cross, we follow Christ on the path to Resurrection.

SEPT. Birthdays, Names Day, & Anniversaries

- 3rd - Dn. Vassily Kocher
- 5th - Kate Bright
- 8th - Eliana Nyantakyi
- 8th - Suzanne Upchurch
- 9th - Samson Woodthrop
- 11th - Mary Ann Rigato
- 12th - Nate and Bree Hall
- 13th - Dakota Harrod
- 14th - Jerry and Mary Ann Welsh
- 14th - Braden Hoover
- 15th - Alison Somich
- 22nd - Brett (Aaron) Tomlinson
- 29th - Anthony and Susan Ally

SCHEDULE

September 24th - Wednesday

Molieben (5:45 PM)

Wednesday Evening Orthodox Study (6:00 PM)

September 26th - Friday

Coffee Chat at Paddles (10:00 AM)

September 27th - Saturday

Baptism for Ciana Rose (4:00 PM)

Great Vespers (5:00 PM)

September 28th - Sunday

Hours (9:00 AM)

Divine Liturgy (9:30 AM)

WISDOM

"Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. For though the prince of this world seeks to destroy me by the Cross, it is by that same Cross that I am brought to life. To die for Christ is to be free indeed." - St. Ignatius of Antioch

"The martyrs loved the Cross of Christ, not for its wood and nails, but because by it they were made companions of His sufferings and sharers in His crown." - St. John Chrysostom

WEEKLY JOKES

My wife: How do you feel? Me: With my hands.

I accidentally sprayed deodorant in my mouth. Now when I talk I have this weird axe scent.

The lizard store is struggling to remain open. It's had financial issues right from the gecko.

THANK YOU, O LORD! IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE!

Monthly Parish Financial Report (As of September 17th, 2025):

September Income Goal: \$11,910
Weekly Goal for September: \$2,978
September Collection Up to Date: \$6,419

This is the first time that we have actually been at a net positive to start the month. We are up 8% already and at our current pace, will not only make our goal but go over it.

Thank you, and please continue offering back to the Lord from His blessings.

Donate Securely Online:

<https://savannahorthodox.com/help-us-grow/>

Financial Report:

Many have requested a full copy of our up-to-date budget is available here: <https://savannahorthodox.com/reports/> and will be included in the weekly newsletter as a downloadable link.

Special Projects/Extra Expenses:

While we budget for regular expenses, there are some extra needs that you can give toward specifically:

AC Repair in Church – \$521.60 (Not Funded)

Let us continue to give faithfully and generously, so that the work of Christ in our parish may flourish and every need be met to the glory of God.

Ask Yourself This Daily:

Have you brought someone NEW this month or reached out to someone to come back?

Have you gone to Great Vespers at least once this month?

Are you giving your first offering to God/tithing regularly?

Prayer List

Departed

Juniper, Charles, Iryna, child Fletcher, child Harper, Pam

Living

Clergy: Abp. Benjamin, Abp. Nathaniel, Abp. Alexander, Met. Isaiah, Fr. Michael, Fr. Matthew

Community: Mother Cassiana, Tammy, Litsa, child Lilliana, Carl, Olga, Rita, child Ciana Rose, Jamie, Ray, Alexandra, Dorthy, Issac, Sandy, Donald, Cole, Joseph, Chad, Landin, Austin, Catherine Ann, Katherine, Jeff, David, Andrew, Polly, Ann, George, Doug, David, Katie, Kerri, David, Lilly, Haley, Sean, William, Mary Ann, Vicki, Kati, Tonya, Patricia, Tina, James, Bill, Lansen, Helen, Nicholas, Irena, Pina, Andre, child Oliver, Laurie, Akira, Vic, Sharrell and her newborn Ozias

Expecting Mothers: Savannah, Libby, Emma

Catechumens: Andrew, Mary Ann, Ally, Andrew Jr, Noah, Luke, Dusty, Evan, Josh, Nicole, Winry, Jeremiah, Dakota, Bridgette, Theodore, Zach, Asher, Audra, Victor, Charlie, Ethan, Nathan, Cullen, Kwasi, Saiah, James, Eliana, Austin, Kasey, Bently, Raelynn, Emma, Oakleigh, Bree, Tyler

Prisoners: Basil, Mark

Orthodox Missions: St. James (Beaufort) St. Basil (Marietta), St. John the Merciful (Kissimmee), St. Anthony (Rock Hill), Holy Resurrection (North Augusta), Annunciation (Jacksonville), St. John the Baptist (Colorado Springs), Ss. Mary and Martha Monastery (Wagner) and all missions and monasteries throughout the Diocese of the South and USA.

And all of those who are suffering in our community and the world who are in need of prayers.

Orthodox Did You Know?

Did you know that in the Byzantine Empire, the True Cross discovered by St. Helen was not only venerated in churches but also carried into battle? Yup! Emperors and soldiers believed it was their greatest protection, inspiring courage and its presence alone would inspire the soldiers to what they were fighting for. It showed how deeply the Cross was woven into the life of the Empire, not just in worship, but as the very banner of Christian civilization. Makes you wonder if we shouldn't carry out our crosses more boldly...

Confessions - Every Saturday Before (4:30 PM) & After Vespers. Also By Appointment.

Parish Happenings

Everyone loves a fresh pot of coffee, a tidy parish hall, and well kept grounds, but those blessings don't appear by Disney magic (though could you imagine if they did? Wow haha). They're made possible by parishioners who give their time and talents to make those things possible. Signing up is an act of love that everyone benefits from, so please, sign up. Don't wait to be asked. Just do it.

Weekly Church Clean-up (through Sept.): <https://savannahorthodox.com/keeping-our-community-clean/>

Maintenance Items and Projects: <https://savannahorthodox.com/maintenance-and-projects/>

Coffee Hour (Updated for September): <https://savannahorthodox.com/coffee-hour/>

Kids Church School: Every Sunday after Coffee Hour. See Jeanie with questions if your child is not enrolled.

Adult Classes: Join us every Wednesday evening for our adult class series and every Sunday after Coffee Hour for Bible study. All classes are recorded and available online and on all major podcast platforms.

Coffee Chat: After experimenting with the second location, the general consensus of the regulars who go is to keep it at Paddles going forward. We did enjoy Grounds of Grace but Paddles feels more welcoming. For the time being we will just be going there. That said, every Friday will be at Paddles at 10 AM.

Saturday Night Questing (Next Session October 4th): See David Reynolds (Cell: 706-224-2721) to learn more.

Youth and Young Adults Groups

After talking with some of our parents, we're reorganizing into two groups: Kids (ages 1-12) and Young Adults (ages 13-25). Each group will now have activities geared to their age, along with parish-wide events open to everyone. Once a month, I will be taking the teens out of Church School for a special lesson with either myself or Dn. Vassily. The older young adults are welcome and encouraged to join those classes as well. We'll also mix in service projects along with fun events, with our first project being to help clean the parish grounds. More details will follow soon. The first class will be on the 28th, taught by Dn. Vassily and the subject will be on iconography and its use in church. If you have any questions or suggestions, please come see me.

Congrats to Jordan and Sharrell! Many Years on the birth of their first born!

I got word at 5:20 AM on Saturday, September 20th, that Sharrell gave birth to a baby boy! Welcome Ozias Gabriel White to the world and May God keep and protect him all the days of his life. Many Years to Jordan and Sharrell and we can't wait to meet your newest member of your family.

Young Adult League at St. Paul's (6 PM - September 27th)

Fr. Thomas at St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church has extended an invite to any young adult (ages 18-25) who may be interested in meeting up for fellowship, food, and other faith based activities. If you are interested, the first one is next Saturday at 6 PM. Address: 14 W Anderson St, Savannah, GA 31401.

Josh's Baptism Moved (Tentatively October 5th, but TBA)

This past week, Josh and his wife Akira received some difficult news. Out of love and respect for them, please refrain from asking questions at this time, but do keep them both in your fervent prayers. Josh's baptism, originally planned for this weekend, will be moved to the first Sunday in October or later, as God provides.

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