

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Parish Feast Day Transfiguration of the Lord		Friday	Saturday
2 Matins 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00A Paraklesis 6:30PM	3 At Will's Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:30PM	4 Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:30PM	5 Great Vespers 6:30PM <i>Blessing of Fruit & Community Meal</i>	6 Liturgy 9AM <i>Blessing of Fruit</i>	7 Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:30PM	8 NO SERVICE
9 Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM Paraklesis 12:30PM	10 Paraklesis to the Theotokos 9:00AM	11 Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:30PM	12 At Amber's Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:30PM	13 Paraklesis 9:00AM	Feast of Virgin Mary 14 Great Vespers 6:30PM 15 Divine Liturgy 9:00AM Bring Flowers to be blessed	
16 Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	17	18	19 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	20	21	22
23 Blessing of Backpacks Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	24	25	26 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	27	28	29
30 Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	31	New Liturgical Year Sept. 1 Divine Liturgy 9:00AM	2 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	3	4	5
6 Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	7 Labor Day	8 Holy Day Birth of The Virgin Mary Liturgy 9AM	9 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	10	11	12

+CONFESSIONS: Please call Fr. Jonathan to make an appointment. Confession is a sacrament of the Church through which we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Understanding sin as an illness of the soul, in confession we share our sins like we would an illness to a doctor and the priest offers the prayer of forgiveness and at times a word to encourage hope and may prescribe / suggest ways to invite Christ into needed areas of our life.

+PASTORAL NEEDS, HOSPITAL CALLS, NURSING/REHAB AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS: If you have a pastoral need or emergency and would like to speak to Fr. Jonathan or know of someone who cannot make it to church and would like to schedule a pastoral visit, please contact Father by phoning at 815.721.4852



+ NEW PARISH WEBSITE



New Online Giving Platform.

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR



ORTHODOX CHURCH

August 2nd 2026

1802 Pershing Ave. Rockford, Illinois 61108
Father's Cell Phone: 815-721-4952

Father Jonathan Bannon
e: jsbannon@gmail.com



- **SUNDAY August 2nd 2026**
Matins 9AM. Divine Liturgy 10AM. Fellowship / Coffee Hour to follow. Inquiring Minds 12:30PM
Evening: Paraklesis 6:30PM
 - Coffee Hour Set Up / Clean Up: Please consider this beautiful ministry, all are welcome!
- Monday: At Will's Paraklesis 6:30PM Address: 3854 Allenhurst Lane, Rockford
- Tuesday At Church Paraklesis 6:30PM
- **Wednesday Transfiguration Feast!** PARISH FEAST VESPERS + MEAL + BLESSING OF FRUIT 6:30PM
- **Thursday Transfiguration Feast!** PARISH FEAST LITURGY + BLESSING OF FRUIT 9:00AM
- Friday: At Church Paraklesis 6:30PM
- **Saturday: No Service**
- **UPCOMING FAST: August 1st - 15th Honoring the Death of the Virgin Mary, called the Dormition "The Falling Asleep in the Lord" of the Theotokos.**
- **Sunday August 9th: Matins 9AM, Liturgy 10:00AM, AFTERNOON: Paraklesis 12:30PM**



•**UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:**
Feast of Prophet Elias Monday July 20th , PARISH FEAST DAY August 5th and 6th!
Take the day off and attend!

•**EXPLORING ORTHODOXY?**
We have an inquiring minds class on most Sundays following service at 12:30. 12:30PM and on Wednesdays after our Bible Study. Please feel welcome to attend and bring any questions you may have. Enjoy the day of Pascha, and if you need A prayer rope or are interested in learning more about Cultivating a prayer routine, a heart of remembrance of God, Please feel confident to ask Fr. Jonathan. The name of The Lord is food and drink for the thirsty soul.

•**PARISH RULE OF PRAYER:**
WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER?
15 MINUTES:

5 minutes - Scripture
5 minutes - Jesus Prayer
5 minutes - Stillness / Silence

ATTENDING TO EACH OTHER WITH EMPATHY What Can we do to care for each other as brothers and sisters in Christ?

- Be respectful and love others as we would care for ourselves. We are brother
- Be curious without pressure: Ask a question and listen. Put away the phone and be present. If someone is suffering we do not need to have "answers" we can however have presence. Sit with another in their pain. If someone says I had a rough week, instead of responding about ourselves and how hard our week was, ask a question, "What was rough about your week?" "Tell me more about that."

Ministries of our Parish

- **PROSFORA Ministry:** Pani Marianna
 - Prosfora offered today by Meier Family
- **CHOIR:** Caroline Erber
- **ATRIUM (Montessori):** Laura Warmke
- **SCRIPTURE CLASS:** Kevin Shedd
- **LIBRARY & BOOK STORE:** Amber Hathcock, Christine Blanco, & Fr. Jonathan
- **HOSPITALITY/ COFFEE HOUR:**
Point Persons: Manal & Maurice AlMassad
- **SISTERHOOD WOMEN’S GROUP:**
President: Sophie Brucki
Vice President: Jenna Shedd
Treasurer: Irena Larson
- **Candle Ministry:** Curtis Barnes
A day for making candles will be scheduled.
Share your interest with Curtis!
- **Incense Ministry:** Ben and Amy Fairweather.
- **MEAL TRAINS:** Jenna Shedd, Savannah Diaz
- **OCLife Sanctity of Life Group:**
Dan Daub, Tyler and Savannah Diaz
- **Venison Ministry!** Deer Meat locally bow-hunted and offered to care for others.
- **Love in Deed:** (Caring for our Oldest Members): Christine Blanco, Vashawn Harshman, Curtis & Pamela Barnes
- **Church Maintenance:**
Victor Nafranowicz with Jesse Gruber
- **College Student Ministry:**
OCF Chapter: Rockford Region
Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Jonathan
Are you a college student and seeking fellowship and the programs OCF provides? Speak with Fr. Jonathan and check out OCF.net
- **Serving Our Neighbor Food Pantry:**
Non-Perishable Food Care for our immediate neighborhood: Naomi Reid, Curtis and Pam Barnes, Gerhard and Nicole Meier, and all who would like to join the conversation with designing the cross / container that will hold the items for those in need.
- **PARISH BOARD / COUNCIL:**
Parish Priest: Fr. Jonathan Bannon
Parish Board President: Maurice AlMassad
Parish Board V. President: Curtis Barnes IV
Treasurer: Jenna Shedd
Financial Secretary: David Shinn
Recording Secretary: Amber Hackiewicz

- Coffee Hour Set Up and Clean Up?
Sign Up Online.
- **Interested in serving your God and His Church?**
Ask your priest, a board member, and anyone of the main contacts of these growing ministries.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

We are happy you have joined us today. It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God’s Blessings to all who visit with us today & hope you stop in again soon!

You have just experienced the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. It is our ordinary service of worship on regular Sundays in the Orthodox Church. The Liturgy - as experienced this morning- stems from the 4th century though its practices were inherited from the time of the Apostles in the book of Acts. It also represents a time when all Christians worshipped in One Undivided Church. If you have any questions in regards to our worship or the Orthodox Church in general please see Fr. Jonathan and he will gladly answer any of your questions to the best of his ability. He looks forward to meeting you.

At our best, we are known for our welcoming attitude, hospitality generosity and compassion. At our worst, we are sinners, but we’re working out our salvation together and could use your help. If you are looking for a church home, and a church where we work on our own hearts first we hope you prayerfully consider making Christ the Savior’s that place. Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory Be Forever!

SPEAKING WITH YOUR PRIEST:

Please know you can reach out to set up a time to talk if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. Called to be a Father to our parish, please have confidence in calling if you need someone to listen or to pray for you.

Fr. Jonathan’s Cell: 815-721-4952

Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. - Fr. Jonathan

God. The Paraklesis transforms the fourteen August evenings into a time of filial trust directed at the one who is closest to the Son.

The central troparion of the Paraklesis captures this theology with striking economy: "Do not commit my supplication to men, O all-holy Mother, but receive my prayer and grant me what I need, for you are our only hope." This prayer, repeated every evening for two weeks, is not a formula — it is a school of trust in the intercession of the Theotokos.

The Paraklesis and converts in the English-speaking world

For many Orthodox converts in America, Canada and the UK, the Paraklesis is one of the most unexpected discoveries of their first years in the Church. Nothing in most Western Christian backgrounds prepares for it: a two-week cycle of evening prayer services dedicated entirely to asking the Mother of God's intercession, sung in the middle of August with a musical beauty that is difficult to describe in words. Many converts report that the Paraklesis — precisely because it is quiet, summer, and lacks the dramatic framing of Holy Week — is where their relationship with the Theotokos becomes real and personal for the first time. In the Dormition Fast, many converts find themselves genuinely praying to the Mother of God, not performing a liturgical obligation.

August 6: the Transfiguration at the heart of the fast

The **Transfiguration of the Lord**, celebrated on August 6, falls exactly at the midpoint of the Dormition Fast — and it is the fast's only day of fish dispensation. This position is not incidental: it says something important about the spiritual structure of the fast.

The Transfiguration is the feast on which Christ reveals His divine nature before Peter, James and John on Mount Tabor: *"His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light"* (Mt 17:2). It is the feast of the *Uncreated Light* — the divine light that is not of this world, which the Apostles beheld in anticipation of the Resurrection. The fast prepares two feasts: the one that gives us the Light, and the other that manifests divine mercy.

The Transfiguration says, in the middle of the fast: you are not fasting in darkness — you are fasting toward the light. The body is deprived of food so that the soul may become capable of receiving the Taboric light that the saints contemplate in prayer. And the fish dispensation on this day is the Church's way of saying: rejoice, even in the midst of effort — the glory is already there.

In the United States, August 6 also carries a solemn civic resonance: it is the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. Some Orthodox communities in America — particularly those with a strong peace and justice witness — observe a moment of prayer for peace on this day, noting the striking paradox that the feast of the revelation of divine light falls on the anniversary of the unleashing of nuclear fire. The Transfiguration becomes for these communities a feast of prayer for the conversion of human power toward life rather than destruction. - Article shared from <https://boutique-orthodoxe.com/>



The Transfiguration of Jesus on Tabor

By the former Abbot of Vatopedi
Archimandrite Joseph Vatopednios
(A disciple of 10 years under St. Joseph the Hesychast)

When we say ‘deification’, we mean the elevation of a person beyond the natural state and to similarity to God, as far as this is possible. This is attainable because of the incarnation of God the Word and sanctification by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Deification is the center and basis of Christian soteriology and is what we’re destined for. Orthodox mysticism revolved around this in the past, continues to do so and will continue in the future. It was developed by our own Fathers who thereafter transmitted it, as a token of their good will, to the daughter Churches of the Slav peoples. Deification can’t be described in human terms. The Lord revealed a pale image of it at his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor*.The Lord’s words that the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father (*Matth.* 14, 43) are also an allusion to deification. Some traces of deification were also borne by the Prophet Moses on his face when he descended from the peak of Sinai. As a result, the Israelites were unable to gaze upon him until he covered his face.

Many of our holy Fathers bore the grace of deification, as we can see from their *Lives*, such as, for example, Abba Pambo, Abba Sisoë, Saint Nifon, Bishop of Constantine (fl. 4th century), Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saint Seraphim of Sarov and all the others who by Christ’s grace ascended the ladder of sanctity.

This divine radiance which shone from the body of the deified saints was the divine state which permeated them and which illumines and sanctifies the whole psychosomatic being of a person. All the psychosomatic members of such people are sanctified and share in the incorruption and fragrance of holiness. Meanwhile their faces shine like the sun, though this brightness is not

perceptible to those around, unless divine grace permits it to show, for the edification of the faithful. It’s this grace that sanctifies their bones, their garments and whatever else they made use of, as we read in their *Lives*. Thus we see that even their ‘handkerchiefs and aprons’ (*Acts* 19, 12) worked miracles and effected cures.

In short, then, deification is the transfiguration of the human person, by divine grace, into their initial state of being ‘in the image and likeness of God’. Made possible by the incarnation of God the Word, it’s the adoption of a person on God’s part, by grace.

Deification is participation in divine glory and divine bliss to the extent that this is possible for human nature.

It’s also that state described by Saint Paul where ‘what is mortal has been swallowed up by life’, where the faithful are raised as ‘new persons’, ‘created after the likeness of God’, ‘resembling the Son of God in all things’.

Deification also means serenity, and perfection and spiritual knowledge and love, as well as cleansing of the passions and total imperviousness to anything wicked.

****This is why Christ says to the disciples on that occasion that some who are standing there will not die until they have had a foretaste of the Kingdom of God: ‘Before they see the Kingdom of God in its potential state’. This and the quotation from Matthew which follows are examples of Jesus’ davarim. A davar is not a wise saying like those one finds in Wisdom literature and Greek philosophy, but a divine revelation concerning hidden mysteries and, as such, was directed to ‘those who have ears to hear’. As the above article illustrates, Elder Iosif was clearly such a person.***

Why Grapes?

For centuries they have been the subject matter of paintings, stepped on for their juices, harvested around the world and made into wine that in turn is offered upon the Lord's altar in countless churches. No other fruit has been given such honor and on the great feast of the Lord's Transfiguration we celebrate with blessing the first fruits of the harvest, with grapes. This fruit undergoes such a metamorphosis when prepared for Holy Communion as it is with the human heart that prepares to become the dwelling place of God. Our parish looks forward to celebrating our feast day with the blessing of

grapes this August! - Fr. Jonathan (Image: Grapes by Van Gogh)



AUGUST HOLY DAYS *AND* A FAST

Our Parish Feast Day: Holy Transfiguration of the Lord August 6th

Holy Dormition of Theotokos Feast Day August 15th

Tell me about the last Fast of the Liturgical Year: August 1st - 15th

There is something paradoxical about the Dormition Fast. It is the shortest of the four great Orthodox fasts — only fourteen days. And yet it is one of the two strictest of the year, equal to Great Lent in its ascetic demands. It is a summer fast, in the middle of August, when the natural world is at the height of its warmth and abundance. And it prepares a feast that the Orthodox tradition calls the "*Pascha of Summer*" — the Dormition of the Mother of God, the greatest of all Marian feasts. Fourteen days of intense sobriety to reach the greatest Marian joy: this is the logic of the Dormition Fast.

For Orthodox Christians in the English-speaking world — Americans, Canadians, Britons, Australians, whether lifelong faithful or recent converts — the Dormition Fast is often the least familiar of the four great fasts. It falls in summer, when attention is elsewhere. It lacks the cultural scaffolding of Great Lent. And it prepares a feast — the Dormition of the Theotokos — that Western Christianity barely knows. This guide presents it in full: its fixed dates, its historical origins, its theological meaning, its defining liturgical service (the Paraklesis), its detailed fasting rules, and the particular experience of keeping it in the English-speaking world.

The Paraklesis: the defining service of the Dormition Fast

The Dormition Fast is the only one of the four great Orthodox fasts that possesses a liturgical service entirely its own: the **Paraklesis** (Greek: *Paraklêsis*, "supplication, comfort"). This service is sung **every evening** during the fourteen days of the fast — and its unique character deserves careful attention.

What is the Paraklesis?

The Paraklesis is a **supplicatory canon addressed to the Mother of God** — a prolonged, poetic and musically beautiful prayer in which the Church lays its sufferings, needs and fears at the feet of the Theotokos and asks for her intercession. It exists in two versions: the *Small Paraklesis* (shorter, attributed to the monk Theostiriktos, 9th century) and the *Great Paraklesis* (longer, attributed to Emperor Theodore II Laskaris, 13th century). In practice the two often alternate during the fourteen evenings of the fast.

The theology of the Paraklesis

The Paraklesis expresses a fundamental Orthodox theological conviction: **the Mother of God intercedes for the living**. She is not a figure of the past, honored for what she did two thousand years ago — she is a living intercessor, present with her Son in heavenly glory, who hears the prayers of her children and carries them before

The Leaven

When baking prosфора bread for the Divine Liturgy, one of the first actions of the recipe is mixing in the leaven or the yeast that causes its ability to expand and become a loaf of bread. The Lord used this language when warning us of the hearts and minds of the Pharisees and Sadducees or rather “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” Matthew 16:6.

We are called to be watchful and guard our hearts / souls so as to stay close to the Lord growing in His image and likeness.. and so as to avoid falling to life-stealing, peace-stealing sins. The goal is never to simply avoid sin but to grow in relationship with God.

What leaven have we received in our hearts this past week? Is there something quietly working in the soul inviting us to move away from past sins, inviting us to move closer to the meek Jesus’ heart?

Cast away gossip for what peace has ever come from it.

Cast away all that gets between us and the Lord’s peace. There is a leaven we do not want that will puff us up, harden our hearts, and isolate ourselves. We have all been given a beautiful gift with this life. It has been entrusted to us to care for and to care for one another. May the leaven of peace rest in your soul and work quietly.

DORMITION FAST 2026

*Attend Services.
Pray.
Fast.
Read.
Confess.*



- 1) **Attend Services:** We have Paraklesis service offered almost every night! Bring names to be prayed for. It is a 45 minute prayer service where we sing hymns honoring the Virgin Mary.
- 2) **Pray:** Wherever you are and whatever you are doing... pray. Brushing teeth? Getting ready for the day? Eating a meal? About to drive? Getting to your destination? Prayer is not restricted to a prayer corner or time of day.
- 3) **Fast:** Speak to your spiritual father always. Consider what the Church guides us to fast from and what you can handle this year. No Meat? No Meat and Dairy? Medical concerns always come first.
- 4) **Read:** Why not pick up a book written by a saint who led a life of prayer and purity during this fast? They have insight to many current and modern situations our hearts may be in at this time.
- 5) **Confess:** This is the best way. Confession invites the grace of God because it takes true humility to hold ourselves accountable and confess where we have fallen short of God's grace, where we have missed the mark. The Church is a hospital for souls and confession is a great medicine for us. There is no judgement, come and confess, or as our hierarch likes to say, "get rid of the garbage"... so we can ascend.

ORTHODOX TRADITIONS: AUGUST 5th/6th BLESSING OF FRUIT



Bring in any fruit to be blessed on August 6th with Divine Liturgy 9AM or the evening before.

This is our parish's feast day with Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor.

Why is this Feast Important?

This is the first time Christ reveals His Divinity in the flesh by shining the uncreated Light of God. He was so bright the Apostles fell over and hid their faces, Christ became brighter than the sun.

How does the Transfiguration affect me?

Christ was not showing Peter, James and John a neat trick, that he could glow with uncreated Light. Christ was strengthening the faith of these three Apostles for the crucifixion was approaching and here they saw He was truly God if his miracles were not enough. ALSO we see that human flesh can become Light-bearing, that is to say we can become like God by grace and His Grace is part of Who He is like the rays of the Sun are not divided from the Sun itself. So you also can shine the uncreated Light

WHY ARE WE BLESSING FRUIT?

Around this time of the year we collect the first fruits of the harvest. In bringing some of the "first" fruits to Church we offer them to the Lord asking that He bless the fruit and the rest of the harvest as well. Grapes were common in parishes in Mediterranean areas, Apples were common in the Slavic regions. Any fruit can be brought to be blessed! What fruit are you bringing this year?

PARAKLESIS SERVICES ASKING OUR MOTHER MARY FOR HELP



Why August?

There is a special season dedicated to honoring the Virgin Mary and calling her blessed. August 1st - 15th we fast and increase our prayers as she fell asleep in the Lord on August 15th.

Why Ask Mary for Help?

In the New Testament we see Mary has a special relationship with Jesus her Son. She is His mother and at the wedding at Cana she interceded for those who ran out of wine. Christ did not ignore His mother but humbly interceded. We do not receive salvation from Mary but we do receive great blessings and an aid in someone who hears our prayers and is so close to God in Heaven. The Virgin Mary was chosen by God to play a special role in His incarnation. We are all invited to that same relationship with God dwelling in us and bringing new life to our lives and the world.

What is a Paraklesis?

(Greek: Παράκλησις, Slavonic: молебень) This is a supplicatory service / prayer and in this case we are supplicating the Virgin Mary (NOT Worshipping her) The service is filled with psalms, petitions for the the living and sick and also many poems/prayers written by the monk Theostriktus, but ascribed by others to Theophanes.

When are Services?

Almost every day from Aug. 1 - 14th with Liturgy on the 15th celebrating the feast of the Dormition.