



**Saint Nicholas  
Greek Orthodox Church**

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**Sunday, April 12, 2026**

*Great and Holy Pascha*

11:30pm (Sat.) Paschal Vigil

12am Paschal Orthros and Divine Liturgy

11am Agape Vespers

## **Paschal Sermon of St. John Chry- stom**

If you are devout and love God, enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival. If you are a grateful servant, enter, rejoicing, into the joy of your Lord. If you followed the fast, receive your payment now.

If you worked from the first hour, receive today your just reward. If you came after the third hour, you are welcomed to celebrate. If you arrived after the sixth hour, have no doubt; for you suffer no loss. If you delayed until the ninth hour, come near with no cause to hesitate. If you arrived even at the eleventh hour, do not be fearful of the lateness; for the Lord is generous and accepts the last as He does the first.

He gives rest to him of the eleventh hour, as to him who worked from the first hour. He shows mercy to the last and attends to the first. To the one is given and to the other is granted. He accepts the works and welcomes the volition. He honors the act and praises the intention.

All of you, therefore, enter into the joy of our Lord; both first and last, receive your reward. You rich and poor, with one another dance. You who are abstinent and you who are indolent, honor this day. You who have fasted and you who have not fasted, be glad today. The table is richly laden; all of you, feast sumptuously. The calf is plentiful; let no one depart hungry. All of you partake of the banquet of faith. All of you enjoy the wealth of goodness.

Let no one deplore his poverty, for the Universal Kingdom has been revealed. Let no one lament for transgressions, because forgiveness has dawned from the Tomb. Let no one fear death, for the death of the Savior has set us free.

He subdued it when it took hold of Him. He despoiled Hades when He descended into Hades. He embittered it as it tasted of His flesh. And anticipating this, Isaiah cried out, "Hades was embittered when it encountered You below."

*It was embittered,* for it was abolished.

*It was embittered,* for it was mocked.

*It was embittered,* for it was mortified.

*It was embittered,* for it was dethroned.

*It was embittered,* for it was enchained

It received a body and came upon God. It received earth and met up with heaven. It received what it saw and stumbled upon what it did not see. Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?

*Christ is risen, and you are overthrown.*

*Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen.*

*Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice.*

*Christ is risen, and life rules.*

*Christ is risen, and not one is to be found dead in the tomb.*

For Christ rising from the dead has become the First to awaken among those who are asleep. To Him be the glory and the power to the ages of ages. Amen.

## Hymns of the Day

### **Apolytikion of Holy Pascha in the Plagal First Mode**

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

**Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Ἁγίου Πάσχα. ᾠχος πλ. α΄.**

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζωὴν χαρισάμενος.

### **Hypakoe of Holy Pascha in the Fourth Mode**

When the women with Mary had come before dawn, and they found that the stone had been rolled away from the sepulcher, they heard from the Angel, “Why do you seek among the dead, as a mortal man, the One who exists in everlasting light? See the grave clothes in the sepulcher. Run and proclaim to the

world that the Lord has risen and put death to death; for He is the Son of God who saves the human race.”

### **Kontakion of Holy Pascha in the Plagal Fourth Mode**

Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, yet You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out “Rejoice” to the Myrrh-bearing women, and gave peace to Your Apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection.

### **Instead of ‘Holy God’**

You who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, Alleluia.

Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. Ἄλληλούϊα.

### **Hymn to the Theotokos**

*The Angel cried aloud to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin; and again I say Rejoice. Your Son has truly risen from the grave on the third day.*

Arise, shine! Arise, shine, O new Jerusalem! Shine! \* For the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. \* Zion, exult and be glad now. \* O pure Mother of God, rejoice, celebrating \* the resurrection of Christ your Son!

### **Communion Verse**

Receive the Body of Christ; taste from the immortal fount.

Σῶμα Χριστοῦ μεταλάβετε, πηγῆς ἀθανάτου γεύσασθε.

# Gospel and Epistle Readings

## Orthros Gospel Reading

### Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back—it was very large.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him, as He told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

## Epistle Reading

### Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8.

In the first book, O Theophilos, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father,

which, he said, “you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” He said to them, “it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 1:1-17**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only

Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.’”) And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

## **Patriarchal Encyclical for Holy Pascha, 2026**

Most honourable brother Hierarchs  
and blessed children in the Lord,

Having arrived, through fasting, prayer, and solemnity, at the radiant and all-festal day of Holy Pascha, we hymn and glorify the world-saving Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, which marks the manifest victory of life over death, renews all creation, and opens to humanity the way of deification by grace. The Church of Christ preserves the paschal experience in her liturgical life, in the labours of the Saints and Martyrs of the faith, in the eschatological impulse of monasticism, in the proclamation of the Gospel “to the ends of the earth,” in theology and the ecclesial arts, in the good witness of the faithful in the world, in the culture of love and solidarity, and in the immovable certainty that evil does not have the final word in history.

The Resurrection of the Lord is lived as a Christ-bestowed freedom, which inspires, nourishes, and strengthens the creative powers of the human person and the good struggle for “whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable,” while reminding us all that the journey toward the Resurrection is inseparably bound to the Cross. The joy of the Cross and the Resurrection has preserved the people of

God from identifying themselves with the spirit of this world, while at the same time safeguarding them from barren insularity and a spirituality devoid of dynamism and hope-bearing breath. The life of the faithful, in the crucified and risen Christ “for us men,” still today refutes every alien narrative of Christian ethos as a “morality of the weak,” supposedly embodied in humility, forgiveness, sacrificial love, asceticism, the Lord’s saying “but I say to you, do not resist the evil one,” and other principles and dispositions that belong to the very core of our identity. Nothing could be further from the truth than this reading of the ethos of Christianity — of sacrificial love that “does not seek its own,” a love interwoven with courage, boldness, and existential authenticity. Pascha is a hymn to this freedom, to faith “working through love,” which is not our own achievement but grace and a gift from above, and which is lived in the holy Sacraments of the Church and in the “mystery” of service to one’s neighbour. Indeed, “love for God does not in any way tolerate hatred toward one’s fellow human being.”

The Church of Christ — the “salt of the earth,” the “light of the world,” the city “set on a hill,” the lamp placed “on the lampstand” — bears active witness in the world, before the signs of the times, about the grace that has come and “the hope that is in us.” The message of the Cross and the Resurrection resounds today as a Gospel of peace, reconciliation, and justice. War, hatred, and injustice stand opposed to the fundamental Christian principles for whose realization and establishment the people of God pray and labour each day. In the light of the Resurrection, we beseech the Lord on behalf of the victims of wartime violence, the orphans, the mothers who mourn their children, and all those who bear in body and soul the effects of human cruelty and callousness. “Christ is risen” is a denial and condemnation of violence and

fear and an invitation to a life of peace. War brings forth lamentation and death; the Resurrection conquers death and bestows incorruptibility.

Before the daily images of the cruelty of war, the Church raises her voice and proclaims the sacredness of the human person — of every concrete human being anywhere on earth — and the duty of absolute respect for that dignity; and she calls upon us to “know our own worth, honour the Prototype, recognise the power of the mystery, and understand for whose sake Christ died.” The Resurrection of the Lord is the restoration of the human being to his pre-eternal calling. As the “beginning of another eternal life,” it heals alienating relationships and establishes the peace “which surpasses all understanding” — a peace that encompasses worldly reconciliation and pacification.

Inspired by God, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church — the tenth anniversary of whose convocation we honour this year — underlined the duty of the Church “to encourage whatever truly serves the cause of peace (Rom. 14:19) and opens the way to justice, brotherhood, true freedom, and mutual love among all the children of the one heavenly Father, as well as among all peoples who make up the one human family.”

Holy Pascha is the whole of our spiritual civilization, the very core of our piety. The Resurrection of the Lord is also our own resurrection in the present age, and at the same time a prefiguration and foretaste of the “common resurrection of all human beings” and of the renewal of the whole creation. Illumined by the all-radiant light of the face of the Risen Christ, and glorifying in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs His all-holy Name — the Prince of Peace, who is with us “always, unto the end of the age” — we wish you a blessed Resurrection, a paschal season filled with divine gifts, and every day

of your lives likewise, crying out the universal proclamation of joy: “Christ is risen! Truly the Lord is risen!”

Phanar, Holy Pascha 2026

† Bartholomew of Constantinople

*fervent supplicant for you all to the Risen Lord*

## Great and Holy Pascha

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Saviour on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. On the morrow, because of the law which forbids work on the day of the Sabbath, they rested for the whole day. But at early dawn on the Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulchre with the spices to anoint His body.

While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulchre, but did not find the Lord’s body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Saviour was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings.

Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the

supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His “three days” in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that “seventh day” in which it is said that the Lord “rested from all His works” (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose “while it was yet dark, very early in the morning” on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

As we celebrate today this joyous Resurrection, we greet and embrace one another in Christ, thereby demonstrating our Saviour’s victory over death and corruption, and the destruction of our ancient enmity with God, and His reconciliation toward us, and our inheritance of life everlasting.

## Parish Information

### Byzantine Chant Classes

Byzantine chant classes take place on **Saturdays at 4pm**. If you are interested in learning and helping out, please feel free to attend!

### Men’s Breakfast

Our next Men’s Breakfast will take place on Saturday, **May 2 at 8am**. Feel free to invite a friend!

### Ladies’ Potluck Luncheon

Our Ladies’ Potluck Luncheon group meets on the second Thursday of each month! The next luncheon will take place in the Church hall on **Thursday, April 16** at 12pm.



# ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΗ!

## This Week at St. Nicholas

- Monday, April 13 **Renewal Monday:** 9am Paschal Hours & Divine Liturgy (*St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, Delta, CO*)
- Tuesday, April 14 **Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, & Irene of Lesvos:** 8:30am Orthros, 9:30am Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday, April 15 **Renewal Wednesday:** 8:30am Paschal Hours & Divine Liturgy (*Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission, Grand Junction, CO*)
- Thursday, April 16 **Renewal Thursday:** 8:30am Paschal Hours & Divine Liturgy (*St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, Delta, CO*), 12pm Ladies' Luncheon
- Friday, April 17 **Life-giving Spring of the Theotokos:** 8:30am Orthros, 9:30am Divine Liturgy
- Saturday, April 18: 9:30am Paschal Hours & Divine Liturgy (*Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission, Grand Junction, CO*), 4pm Byzantine Chant Class, 5pm Great Vespers