



SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)

Metropolitan SABA
Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

PRIEST
Rev. Fr Luke Toumi
frluke@peterpaulpotomac.org
(301) 765-3400 office
(610) 844-2583 cell

DEACON
Dn. Christian Manasseh
DnChristian@peterpaulpotomac.org

PASTORAL ASSISTANT
Steven Roberts
Steven.Roberts@peterpaulpotomac.org

COUNCIL
Chairperson
Michael El-Hage
Vice Chairperson
Ken Bailey
Treasurer
Scott George
Secretary
Suzy Ghurani
Members
Frank Abdou
Olivia Azat
Ron Cook
Wissam El Hage
Abraham Fannoney
Chris Jackson
Amjad Khalil
Vanessa Mourad
Ulisses Santamaria
Alexa Tsintolas

CHURCH OFFICE MANAGER
Nidale El Achkar
office@peterpaulpotomac.org
(301) 765-3400 ext. 0
WhatsApp 301-755-0320

CHOIR DIRECTOR
Kristopher Reese
choir@peterpaulpotomac.org

ASSISTANT CHOIR DIRECTORS
Marie Hyder
Mark Buchko

SUNDAY, MAY 31ST, 2026

THE GREAT FEAST OF PENTECOST

****Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom****
(Search for the text of the Liturgy in the
Service Book in the Pews)

If life always went well, would we not become so attached to our present state, even though we know it will not last, and by deception become enslaved to pleasure? In the end, we would think that our present life is the best and noblest, and forget that being made in the image of God, we are destined for higher things.

St. Maximos the Confessor

Great Vespers: Saturday 6:00 pm
Check the Calendar
for possible cancellation or changes
Matins: Sundays 9:20am
Divine Liturgy: Sundays 10:30am
Confessions: By appointment

BYZANTINE CHOIR
Led by Amjad Khalil

USHERS
Jerry Audi
Abe Fannoney
Sam Khalil
Steve Simon

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP
Sam Khalil

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
Svitlana Sweat

CHURCH SCHOOL
Directors
Samia Zolnerowich
Jennifer Montgomery
SundaySchool@peterpaulpotomac.org

TEEN SOYO & YOUNG ADULTS
Advisors:
Sbdn Steven Roberts
Tia Saah
Lina Saah
President: Cynthia Nasser
Vice President: Tala Tohmeh
Secretary: Angelina Kehdy
Treasurer: Gabriel Shamess
Social Media & Comms
Coordinator:
John Khoury

KOGOK HALL RENTAL
Manager
George Rados
Sales Coordinator
Nidale El Achkar

CHARITIES COORDINATOR
Paula Massouh

ORDER of ST. IGNATIUS
Jumana Misleh

GIFT SHOP
Antiochian Women

*Please note that we livestream
our services on the Church's
YouTube channel
@SaintsPeterPaulAntiochian*

We welcome all our guests worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy. Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!

Please know that we take Holy Communion very seriously and is offered to Orthodox Christians, after preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession. **Non-Orthodox** visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour. The reason is simple following the advice of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 27-31: *"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many die."*

THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On this day, the eighth Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate Holy Pentecost.

Verses

In a mighty wind Christ distributeth the Divine Spirit

In the form of fiery tongues unto the Apostles.

In one great day, the Spirit was poured out on the Fishermen.

On this day—the fiftieth after Great and Holy Pascha—we commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the holy Disciples and Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. Numbering about 120, they who followed the Master gathered in Jerusalem in the upper room of a house to await the Lord's promise to send the Holy Spirit. At about the third hour of the day, there came a sound from Heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house. Cloven tongues immediately appeared, like as of fire, and sat upon the head of each of them. The Apostles began to speak, not with the languages of their ancestors, but with other languages with which the Holy Spirit supplied them, as He inspired them. After the Apostle Peter explained what had happened, 3,000 people joined the Church on the inauguration of the priesthood of grace. The objectives of Pentecost are, namely, the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world, the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus Christ, and the completion of the undefiled hope of the Apostles.

By the intercessions of the Holy Apostles, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF THE FEAST

Be Thou exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength; we shall praise and sing of Thy mighty acts. Save us, O Good Comforter, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

APOLYTIKION OF PENTECOST IN TONE EIGHT

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise, having sent upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou hast fished the universe, O Lover of mankind, glory to Thee.

KONTAKION OF PENTECOST IN TONE EIGHT

When the High One descended, confusing tongues, He divided the nations. And when He distributed the fiery tongues He called all to one unity. Wherefore, in unison we glorify the most Holy Spirit.

THE ANTI-TRISAGION HYMN

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Dynamis!

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

For the Health of These Parishioners

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Abdallah, Jackline & family
Nancy Dahir & Family	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary & Nada Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Christiane Ghusn & Family
Isabel Threddeh	Zakieh & Family	Mary Christakis & Family
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Paul Misleh	Hind, Habib & Family
Margo, Sam & Family	Allison Ayoub	Barbara Zamer & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Saydeh Shaheen	Mary Sahouri & Family
Michele Forzley	Nico Michels	Fadia, Rich & Family
Eleanor Husson	John & Bette Adam	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Heidi Saba & Family	Jesse Daumit	Antoinette Najmeh & Family

DEPARTED

Ann Marie Moses
 Laure Mufarrij Najjar
 Abdallah Ghusn
 Karimah Akel
 Nahla Farkouh Nasser
 Hani Said
 Mousa Azat
 Laila Azat
 Nahla Zarour

Special Prayer This Week for

Nouhad & Hani Atrash	Joseph, Olivet, Michael, Andrea, and Kathy Ghanem
Basil Nasser	Wael & Sonia and Family
Eiad & Lynn and Family	Audi Family
Tawil Family	Said Family
Olivia Azat and Family	Jamilee Bellone

Coffee Hour and Holy Bread are offered by **Olivet & Joseph Ghanem** in loving memory of **Karimah Akel** and for the health of **their Family**.

Holy Bread is offered by **Nelly Audi** in loving memory of **Hani Said**, and for the health of **her Family**.

Holy Bread is offered by **Olivia Azat** in loving memory of **Mousa Azat, Laila Azat, and Nahla Zarour**, and for the health of **her Family**.

*To offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour, please scan the **Multilink QR Code** on the next page.*

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Friday, June 5th, **Forever Young!** Keeping your mind sharp, 11:30-2:30 PM

Parish Life Conference, July 1st- 4th, Bealeton, VA

Sunday, July 12th, **Church Annual Picnic**

Friday, September 11 - Sunday, September 13, **41st Annual Mediterranean Festival**

Festival Cooking Sessions

We are making Grape Leaves
On June 6 at 10 AM

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Participate

Parenting Toward the Kingdom (All Parents Invited)

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

June 11

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Participate

FOCUS North America

Love Made Visible

Help make FOCUS DMV a reality
Make a special gift today!

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Donate

Vacation Bible Camp The Armor of God Aug 17 - 21 (9:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

K - 12

K-5 Spaces Are Limited

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

May Charity Drive

Donations will be divided between the following charities

Tree House Advocacy Center of Montgomery County that is dedicated to reducing trauma and promoting healing for child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect.

World Central Kitchen (Lebanon and Gaza) that is first to the frontlines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.

*Scan the Multilink QR Code
For Online Donations*

LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan the QR Code
to Follow Along the Service

Got a Question about Orthodox Christianity or Our Faith & Worship

Join Us every Sunday
in the social hall
after the Divine Liturgy
for a Catechism Class

Join the Order of St Ignatius

*Scan the Multilink QR Code
to Submit your interest in the Order*

St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and toiletries to our neighbors in need.

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Participate

Forever Young! First Friday of the Month

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

*Scan the Multilink QR Code
to Request a Prayer*

Pursuing Christ as a Community Bible Study

(8:30 PM/ZOOM)

June 2, 16

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

Ss. Peter & Paul Church Annual Picnic July 12 After the Divine Liturgy

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

MULTILINK QR CODE

For your online donations, registration for events,
and participation in activities

- 1- Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code
- 2- Click on the Appropriate Link



THE EPISTLE

Their voice has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (2:1-11)

When the day of Pentecost had come, the Disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (7:37-52; 8:12)

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, many of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over Him. Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd, who do not know the Law, are accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to Him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our Law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The **Kneeling Prayer** at the end of the Divine Liturgy is available online to follow along. Scan the multilink QR code or visit PeterPaulPotomac.org/liturgical-texts.

Regarding the Priest's Clothing

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Toward the end of the last century, a lively debate arose in Greece—especially in Athens—over what a priest should wear outside the liturgical services: the traditional cassock or the clerical suit. It is said that during that period, Saint Paisios the Athonite received many visitors asking for his opinion on the matter. After the questions became frequent, the saint removed all the leaves from one of the two olive trees in the garden of his hermitage. Thereafter, he would answer the question by saying: "Look at these two olive trees and tell me: which one is more beautiful?"

I begin with this story to speak briefly about a phenomenon that has become increasingly common in our Archdiocese. Many priests have begun to abandon the clerical suit and return to the traditional priestly garment, along with long hair and beards. This development deserves careful study and analysis of the factors that have contributed to it. As the metropolitan of this Archdiocese, and although I personally prefer the cassock with a neatly trimmed, moderate beard (I may explain my reasons on another occasion), I have not imposed a specific style of outward appearance on the clergy. I continue to leave this matter to the history and conscience of each priest, while taking into account the realities of American society, the history of our Archdiocese, and the changes that have taken place over the past twenty years. Clothing does not sanctify a person, but it does play a role in expressing who he is and the ministry he serves.

Yet as extremes have begun to appear in both models, a clarifying and guiding word is due.

Traditionally, a priest's attire outside the liturgical services consisted of the cassock (*gounbaz*), the outer robe (*exorasso*), and the hat (*kalimavkion*). As patterns of life changed, cities expanded, transportation increased, and pastoral responsibilities diversified, many priests began wearing only the cassock during routine travel and informal visits. At the same time, the *exorasso* remained essential and used whenever the priest entered a church or monastery, since it is the principal garment of his priestly vesture. In the archdioceses of the diaspora, however, the clerical suit became the norm. During the 1970s, practical considerations also led many priests to shorten their hair and beards. Another contributing factor was that some clergy entered secular professions for various reasons beyond the scope of this article.

Two problematic tendencies emerged during this period. The first was an excessive relaxation of standards. Some priests ceased wearing even the clerical suit and began dressing in whatever casual clothing was most comfortable, to the point that they were no longer distinguishable from others. Outward appearance reflects one's inner disposition. External conduct reveals what is within. Some clergy lost a sense of dignity and forgot that they are consecrated to the service of God twenty-four hours a day.

The second tendency began after the 1990s as a reaction against the spirit of secularization that had dominated many church circles during the second half of the twentieth century. One visible expression of this reaction was a return to long hair and beards and the rejection of the clerical suit. Some went so far as to claim that priests who do not maintain a traditional appearance somehow lack

sacramental grace. This dangerous way of thinking must be recognized and treated with patience, discernment, and calm.

This issue has a particular dimension in our Archdiocese. Many converts were drawn to the Orthodox Church because of the modernization adopted by their former churches, along with the liberalizing trends that followed — developments that far exceeded what those who launched the "Church for Our World" movement in the 1960s had envisioned. The more forcefully secularization manifests itself in the Church, the more strongly traditionalism tends to arise in response. This is a principle that rarely fails.

At one luncheon, a newly consecrated bishop asked the deacon of a well-known metropolitan — renowned worldwide for his spiritual depth and theological writings — how many sets of liturgical vestments his elderly metropolitan owned. The metropolitan answered his deacon and replied: "Tell him that I do not concern myself with the theology of ribbons." His response was sharp, but no sharper than the triviality of the question. I personally know how meticulously this elder celebrated the liturgy and how deeply he cared about both its outward beauty and inner meaning. But he wished to teach the young bishop a lesson: focus on depth and substance and avoid becoming preoccupied with appearances and liturgical extravagance.

I therefore urge our priests always to "go deeper" in everything.

It is important that a priest's clothing conform to the traditions of the Church and to the guidance followed in his Archdiocese. I allow the priests of our Archdiocese to follow either style in their outward appearance: the traditional attire or the clerical suit. This is a matter related to their spiritual conscience and the direction of their spiritual life. For that reason, I do not compel them to act against their conscience. What I do require is a dignified appearance and impeccable cleanliness. A priest should not dress in a flashy manner, following the latest fashion trends. Rather, his appearance should be appropriate, clean, and well-ordered. Those who wear the clerical suit should avoid excessive elegance and should not replace it with casual daily clothing. Likewise, priests who follow the traditional style should not allow their hair and beards to become excessively long, unkempt, or untrimmed. They should appear orderly and respectable. A parish priest is not a monk secluded in his monastery. He is a married man responsible for his wife and children, and his priestly ministry calls him to accompany his parishioners in every circumstance of life. Both groups should also pay close attention to personal hygiene, especially if they serve in humid, hot, and coastal regions.

The Fathers of the Church teach us that virtue lies in moderation. It is the "middle way between two extremes." Generosity, for example, stands between wastefulness and stinginess. Courage lies between recklessness and cowardice. The same principle applies here. A priest's appearance should be neither overly refined nor overly neglected. It is even advisable to wear a small amount of subtle, non-overpowering fragrance. Let us be dignified both inwardly and outwardly—in form and in substance, in appearance and in essence. In this way, we may fulfill our ministry with reverence and godliness, taking great care that it be pleasing to God before anyone else.

Honoring Our 2026 Graduates

Timothy Buchko

Timothy is graduating from George Mason University with a Bachelor's of Applied Science with a concentration in Cybersecurity.

Nadeem Callas

Nadeem is graduating from Oakton High School with a High School Diploma. He will be attending the University of Wisconsin.

Yazan Callas

Yazan is graduating from Old Dominion University with an Undergraduate Certificate in Business — Marketing.

Sophie Elfasi

Sophie is graduating from the Catholic University of America with a degree in Theology and Religious Studies/Philosophy in Pre-Law.

Kelly George

Kelly is graduating from the College of William and Mary with a Bachelor's degree.

Scott George, Jr

Scott Jr is graduating from Johns Hopkins University with a Bachelor's of Guitar Performance.

Alya Giavis

Alya is graduating from James Madison University with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts, Minor in Asian Studies.

Christian Hadeed

Christian is graduating from McLean High School with a High School Diploma.

Alexander Jarboe

Alexander is graduating from Loyola University of Maryland with a BS in Finance.

Angelina Kehdy

Angelina is graduating from Chantilly High School and attending Virginia Commonwealth University in their Honors College, majoring in Biology on the Pre-Med Track.

Sarah Kelkay

Sarah is graduating from Paint Branch High School with a High School Diploma.

Sofia Najjar

Sofia is graduating from College of William & Mary with a Bachelor of Science, Major Biology and Minor Bioengineering.

Cynthia Nasser

Cynthia is graduating from Winston Churchill High School with a High School Diploma. She will be studying Public Health Science on the Pre-Med Track.

Lucas Neill

Lucas is graduating from Northwest High School with a High School Diploma.

Aidan Michael Rowe

Aidan is graduating from Calvert Hall High School. He will be attending University of Maryland Baltimore County for Engineering.

Lina Saah

Lina is graduating from George Mason University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Finance/minor in Government Contracting.

Emily Sakai

Emily is graduating from University of Maryland with a Bachelor in Government and Public Policy.



Congratulations!

