



Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Melkite Catholic Church  
— 256 Hamilton St., Worcester —

# Middle Eastern Picnic

## Sunday, September 13, 2026

# 12-6pm

• DELICIOUS FOOD • MUSIC • DANCING • FAMILY FUN •








### MENU

- ✦ Chicken Shawarma
- ✦ Baked Kibbeh
- ✦ Chicken Kabobs
- ✦ Beef Kabobs
- ✦ Stuffed Grape Leaves
- ✦ Tabbouli
- ✦ Hummus
- ✦ Pastries
- And more ...

For details  
visit  
[olphworchester.org/picnic](http://olphworchester.org/picnic)

### ENTERTAINMENT

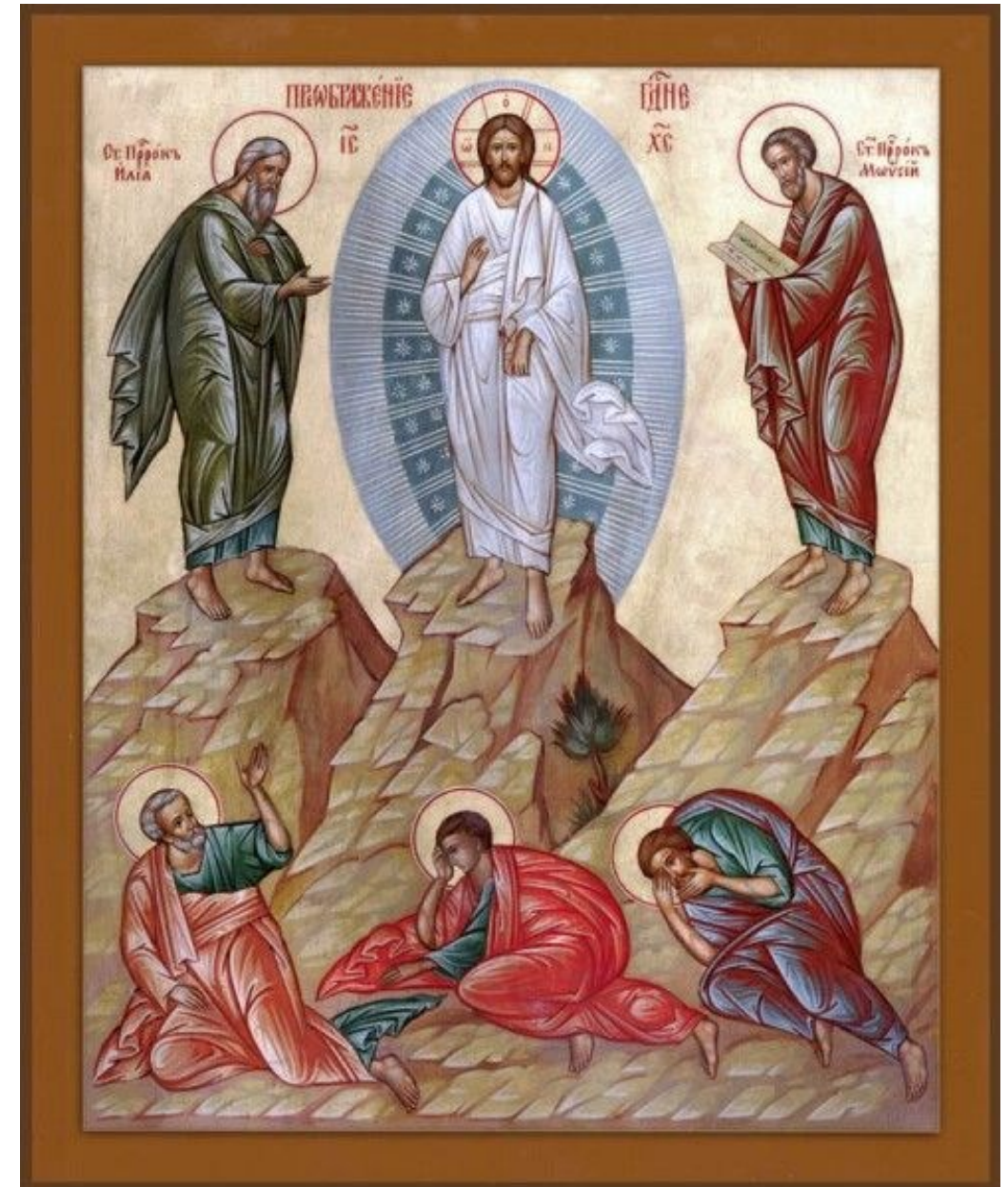
- 🎵 Live Music
- 💃 Dancing
- 👦 Kids' Activities
- And more ...

### RAFFLES




*Faith • Community • Tradition • Together*

**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**AUGUST 2, 2026**



**TRANSFIGURATION (August 6)**

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**

**256 Hamilton St.**

**Worcester, MA 01604**

**Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199**

**Email: [olphmelkite@gmail.com](mailto:olphmelkite@gmail.com)**

**Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor**

**Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey**

**Email: [fr.bryan.mcneil@melkite.org](mailto:fr.bryan.mcneil@melkite.org) Cell: (774) 502-8547**

**Website: [olphworchester.org](http://olphworchester.org)**

**Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM**

**Antiphon (1st)**

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His Name.

***Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.***

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

***Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.***

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your Name, O Most High!

***Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.***

**Entrance Hymn**

**Priest:** Come. Let us worship and bow down before Christ.

**People:** *O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, who sing to You: Alleluia!*

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 1. Pg.38)**

After the stone was sealed by the Jews, and while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Therefore the Heavenly Powers cried out to You, O Giver of Life. Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Your Kingdom, glory to Your Economy, O You who alone are the Lover of mankind.

**Troparion of Stephen (Tone 4)**

O protomartyr Stephen, your head was crowned with a kingly crown on account of all the struggles you endured for Christ or God. You beheld the vision of your Savior seated at the right hand of God. Do not cease to intercede with him for the salvation of our souls.

**Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, pg. 15)**

In giving birth you preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

**Kontakion of the Transfiguration (Tone 7)**

On the Mountain You were transfigured, O Christ our God,, and your disciples saw as much of your glory as they could hold, so that when they should see You crucified they would know You suffer willingly, and would proclaim to the world that You are verily the Splendor of the Father.

**What We Are Meant to Become**

In the mystery of Christ's transfiguration the Church has caught a glimpse of what those who are in Christ are meant to be: persons who in their humanity can have God dwelling in them, reflecting that presence as light. The Lord Himself tells us that at His second coming "*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*" (Matthew 1:43). The custom of depicting saints and angels with haloes derives from this prophetic statement of Christ.

Becoming "righteous" is our task in this life, in preparation for the glory to come. In both the Old and New Testaments we are frequently instructed how we may become righteous. In the New Testament, however, these instructions are phrased in terms of God dwelling in us. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colossians 1:27) is the One whose presence within us guarantees our righteousness before God. This is the "*mystery hidden from eternity*" (Colossians 1:26), which the Greek Fathers called theosis, the process of our transformation by the presence of God within us.

This process of *theosis* begins with our baptism. As we sing so often in our services, "*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:27). God dwells within us but requires that we "put on Christ" by the way we live. "*We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). Our cooperation with God dwelling in us to transform us is called synergy by the Fathers: the life-long task of consciously becoming God-like in our thoughts, words and actions in order to radiate the presence of God within us by baptism.

Despite all our best efforts, none of us – not even the saints – can so unwaveringly combat our passions that we realize our potential on our own. And so Christ has given us an outward sign of His love in the mystery of the Eucharist to which we can return again and again. By sharing in this holy mystery we can reinforce our awareness of His saving presence in us and derive the strength we need for our daily ascent to God.

Through the holy mysteries and our striving to live like Christ we can attain a likeness to God and union with Him so far as possible. We who are not holy by nature can become holy, and become partakers of glory.

**Looking to the Last Day**

In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read his eye-witness account of the transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). This is what follows: "*And so we have this sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*" (v.19). The transfiguration is thus a prophetic anticipation of Christ's glorious second coming when the "morning star" (Christ) will fill us with His light.

The transfiguration, then, symbolizes the life to come and thus the goal of every Christian pursuit. As St Gregory the Theologian expressed it in his Third Oration On the Son, the holy transfiguration of Christ initiates us "into the mystery of the future".

***O Giver of life, You bent down to the pit without falling into it and raised me up who had fallen. You bore my foul-smelling corruption untouched, and made me sweet-smelling with the myrrh of Your divine nature.***

*Canon of the Octoechos, Tone 5*

### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Today**        +**William & Bertha Rahall.** Requested by Nick Rahall  
                  +**Arthur Hall.** Requested by Doreen Samara

**Next Sunday**    +**Souraya Adjami (40 Day).** Requested by Monique Adjami-Shevlin

**This morning's Coffee Hr. this morning is hosted by Nick Rahall**  
**Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Monique Adjami Shevlin**

Please remember in your prayers: Zenon Tencza, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Thomas Houde, Ken Jordan, Mary Rizk, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Jeannine McNeil, Neil Gartner, Linda Gartner, Arthur Hill, Houda Daou, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in Ukraine & the Middle East. Let us also pray for the repose of the souls of Zakeya Assaf, Genvieve Hatem, Hanna Francis, Saddalh Alkateb. If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

### Last Week's Collection

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Weekly</b>     | <b>\$ 1,478</b> |
| <b>Candles</b>    | <b>\$ 43</b>    |
| <b>Coffee Hr.</b> | <b>\$ 215</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>\$ 1,736</b> |

**God bless you for your generosity!**  
**As a reminder, we need \$2,000 per week to meet our expenses.**



**Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.**

**Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.**

### UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

**Mon Aug 3, 6PM - Paraclisis**

**Wed Aug 5, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Transfiguration**

**Mon Aug 10, 6PM—Paraclisis**

**Fri Aug 14, 6PM—Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition**

### FR. BRYAN AWAY

**I WILL BE ON VACATION FROM AUGUST 12 TO AUGUST 29. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE DURING THAT TIME, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH AND DN. ELIAS WILL ASSIST YOU.**

**THERE WILL BE NO ORTHROS ON AUGUST 16 AND AUGUST 23.**

**FR. BRYAN**



Towards the end of Jesus’ public ministry He began preparing His disciples for His approaching death and resurrection of Lyons, and Clement of Alexandria all taught that Christ had descended into Hades. We find the . In Matthew 16 this scene concludes with the following prophecy: “*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*” (v. 28). This is immediately followed by a fulfillment of this prophecy: the holy transfiguration of Christ. As St Gregory Palamas says in his homily on this feast, “It is the light of His own forthcoming transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom.”

At Christ’s transfiguration “*some standing here*” – Peter, James and John – witnessed the Lord in the glory of His kingdom, if only for a moment. He was not changed – they were. They were able to see what is always there but which they could not imagine before: that God dwelt in man.

St Gregory Palamas describes it this way: “Christ was transfigured, not by the addition of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation to His disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While He Himself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is ‘*the true light*’ (John 1:9), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun.”

As St Ephrem the Syrian expressed it, “*They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, His face, visible to them alone*” (Sermon on the Transfiguration, 8). In one sense we can say that Christ was not transfigured; it was the apostles’ ability to see Him which was transfigured.

“What He Really Was”

For a moment Christ was revealed to the disciples as what He really was: God incarnate in our human flesh. “We believe that at the transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine” (St Gregory Palamas, *Homily on the Transfiguration*).

This Light was manifested to the disciples in the radiance of His face and garments: “*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*” (Matthew 17:2). As Mark describes it, “*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them*” (Mark 9:3). The immaterial divine nature of the Son of God in manifested in the physical sign of a shining face and garments because this was all that the disciples could absorb. As we sing in the troparion of this feast, Christ was “showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could behold.”

Over succeeding centuries the Church deepened its understanding of the incarnation, but not without disagreement. It took several hundred years and several Ecumenical Councils for the Church to articulate its faith in Christ as the incarnate Word of God. By the fourth century the Church was calling Christ “Light from Light, true God from true God... of one essence with the Father” but it took several more centuries and councils to grasp the implications of that statement.

As iconography developed it settled on one particular form to represent the divine nature of the light perceived by the disciples. The *mandorla* is a design made up of overlapping geometrical shapes which surrounds the image of Christ in icons of the transfiguration. The basic *mandorla* – an Italian word meaning *almond* – contains three round or oval concentric circles, in shades of blue or gold, representing the Trinity. The innermost circle is of the deepest shade representing the unseen Father. Other geometrical shapes represent the energy of the divine light shining upon the disciples. The mandorla is generally used in icons representing the glorified Christ at His transfiguration and resurrection and when receiving His Mother at her dormition.

Prokimenon

**Reader:** May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**People:** May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**Reader:** Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

**People:** May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

**Reader** May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

**People:** For we have hoped in You.

Epistle: 1 Cor 4:9-16

Alleluia

O God, You granted me retribution and made peoples subject to me and saved me from my raging enemies.

**Verse:** Therefore, I will proclaim You, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to your name.

Gospel: Mt 17:14-23

