



**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



ENTERTAINMENT

- Live Music
- Dancing
- Kids' Activities
- And more ...

RAFFLES



Faith • Community • Tradition • Together

**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 6, 2026**



**NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
SEPTEMBER 8**

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

Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor

Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey

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

Website: olphworchester.org

Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.

Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

P: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

All: O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You. Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6. Pg. 41)

The angelic powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead; and Mary stood at the tomb, seeking Your spotless body; Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life. O Lord, who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Troparion of Michael (Tone 4)

O Captain and Leader of the armies of heaven, unworthy as we are, we beseech you without cease to surround us with your intercessions and cover us beneath the shelter of the wings of your ethereal glory. We bend our knee and cry out with perseverance. “Deliver us from danger, O Prince of the Powers on high!”

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth you have 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 intercessio0n, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

Through your holy birth, O Immaculate One, Joachim and Ann were delivered from the shame of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. Your people redeemed from the debt of their sins celebrate your birth crying out to you: the barren one gives birth to the Mother of God the Sustainer of our Life.

The Place of Mary’s Birth

The Protoevangelium does not identify the place where Mary was born. Different local traditions claim at least two possible locations: the village of Sepphoris, a few miles from Nazareth, and the neighborhood of the “shepherd’s pool” in the old city of Jerusalem. Byzantine basilicas were constructed in both places in the fifth century with the Jerusalem basilica designated as “the place where Mary was born.”

Mary’s birth is celebrated by most of the historic Churches on September 8 (Copts and Ethiopians observe it on May 9). The first mention of this feast is at the beginning of the sixth century when a new church, dedicated to St Ann, replaced the basilica at the Shepherds’ Pool. The present Church of St Ann, constructed by Crusaders in the twelfth century, occupies this site today. A shrine in the church’s crypt commemorates the conception and birth of Mary.

Our Celebration of This Feast

The principal theme of our feast is that “Today grace begins to bear fruit, showing forth to the world the Mother of God, through whom earth is united to Heaven for the salvation of our souls” (vespers).

Other than the names of Mary’s parents, almost none of the narrative details from the Protoevangelium find their way into the hymns of this feast. Rather the focus of our prayer is that now the mystery of our salvation in Christ is beginning to unfold. “Today the barren gates are opened and the virgin, the Gate of God, comes forth... Today ends our nature’s barrenness” (Orthros). Mary will become the one through whom the ancient prophecies will be fulfilled when Christ is incarnate in her. As St Andrew of Crete (650-740) expressed it: “Today’s solemnity is a line of demarcation, separating the truth from its prefigurative symbol, and ushering in the new in place of the old... This day is for us the beginning of all holy days. It is the door to kindness and truth. Today an inspired Temple is provided for the Creator of all, and creation prepares itself to become the divine dwelling place of its Creator.”

Andrew’s contemporary, St John of Damascus (676-749) says, “The day of the Nativity of the Theotokos is the feast of joy for the whole world, because through the Theotokos the entire human race was renewed and the grief of the first mother Eve was changed into joy.”

Hymns of Mary’s Nativity

Today, God who dominates the Spiritual Thrones of Heaven, welcomes on earth the holy throne which He had prepared for Himself. In His love for mankind, He who established the heavens in wisdom had fashioned a living heaven. From a barren stem He has brought forth for us His Mother as a branch full of life. O God of miracles, and hope of those who have no hope, Lord, glory to You!

Today glad tidings go forth to the whole world. Today sweet fragrance is wafted forth by the proclamation of salvation. Today is the end of the barrenness of our nature, for the barren one becomes a mother, the mother of the one who by nature will not cease to be a virgin, even after giving birth to the One who by nature is Creator and God. He it is who took from her His flesh by which He wrought salvation for the lost: He, the Christ, the Lover of Mankind and Savior of our souls! (*Stichera at Vespers*)

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +**Karlie Tautenhan.** Requested by her family
Next Sunday **Our Families and Friends, Living and Deceased**

This morning’s Coffee Hr. is hosted by
There will be no Coffee Hr. next Sunday due to our annual picnic

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, Joyce Kfoury, Neil Gartner, Linda Gartner, Arthur Hill, Houda Daou, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, Joyce Kfoury, 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	
Weekly	\$ 1,158
Candles	\$ 151
Coffee Hr.	\$ 165
Donations	\$ 650
TOTAL	\$ 2,124
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 Sept 7, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos
Mon Sep 14, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

PICNIC MEETING

We will have our final picnic meeting on Tuesday September 8 at 6:30pm. Please join us as we make the final preparations for our annual Middle Eastern Picnic.
We still need volunteers for the day of the picnic as well as a few days before for prep and cooking. If you have not yet signed up on Signup Genius, please do so by going to:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4DACA82EABF4C43-65019769-volunteers#/>
or see Dave Johnson.
God Bless You!

THE BARREN ONE BECOMES A MOTHER

SEPTEMBER 1 MARKS THE BEGINNING of the Byzantine Church Year. An important part of this annual cycle of feasts and fasts is the sequence of the Twelve Great Feasts which, together with the “Feast of Feasts,” Pascha, commemorates the major events in the life of Christ.

The first of the feasts in this annual cycle is observed on September 8, the Nativity of the Theotokos. Our “life of Christ,” then begins with the birth of His Mother, just as it concludes with the commemoration of her Dormition. “This day is for us the beginning of all holy days” (St Andrew of Crete) because the birth of Mary is the overture to the coming of Christ. The Church Year thereby affirms that one cannot glorify Christ apart from His Mother nor can we honor the Theotokos apart from her Son.

This connection is made clear in the troparion of the feast, which moves quickly from honoring Mary to proclaiming Christ: “Your Nativity, O Mother of God, heralded joy to the whole universe, for from you rose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God. Taking away the curse, He imparted the blessings, and by abolishing Death, He gave us everlasting life.”

The Source of Our Celebrations

The Gospels do not record anything about the Holy Virgin prior to the Annunciation. The account of her birth on which our feast is based is found in the *Protoevangelium of James*, a second-century collection of “infancy narratives,” stories describing the births of Jesus and Mary. The first part – which early manuscripts call *The Story of the Birth of Saint Mary, Mother of God* – describes her nativity and her dedication to the temple, an event which we also celebrate in our Church Year (November 21).

Written in Greek, the Protoevangelium was translated into a number of languages and was known throughout the early Christian world. In the early third century, the Alexandrian scholar Origen referred to it as a dubious and recent composition, despite its claim to have been written by James, the brother of the Lord. Today it is thought that the Protoevangelium contains a mixture of apostolic traditions coming down from the first Christians along with narrative embellishments to “fill in the blanks” in the stories of the Lord and His Mother.

This desire to shed light on the hidden lives of Christ and His Mother is especially evident in another work popular in the first millennium, known as *The Book of the Nativity of Mary and the Childhood of the Savior* or the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*. It combines the story of Mary from the Protoevangelium and apocryphal stories of Jesus from the second-century *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*.

The Story of Mary’s Birth

The tradition preserved in the Protoevangelium is that Mary was the daughter of Joachim and Ann, born to them late in life. The literary embellishment in this work tells how Joachim, although a generous donor to the temple, was mocked for being childless. Recalling how Abraham had been given a child in his old age, Joachim retired to the wilderness to pray for a similar blessing. In response angels appeared to Joachim and Ann promising that their prayers have been heard and that Ann would conceive. Our feast of the Maternity of St Ann (December 9) recalls her conception of the Virgin Mary.

Then, “When her time was fulfilled, in the ninth month, Ann gave birth. And she said to the midwife: ‘What have I brought forth?’ And she said: ‘A girl’. Then Ann said: ‘My soul has been magnified this day.’ ... when the days were fulfilled, Ann was purified, and gave her breast to the child, and called her name Mary” (Protoevangelium 5).

Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

Reader: To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

Reader: O Lord, save Your people.

People: And bless Your inheritance.

Epistle: 2Cor 4:6-15

Alleluia

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High abides in the shadow of the God of heaven.

Verses: He will say to the Lord: “My wall, my refuge, my God in whom I will trust!”.

Gospel: MT 22:35-46

IRAQI BBQ

**Immaculate Conception
Chaldean Catholic Mission**

**September 20th
from 12-4**

119 Hartford St, Natick