

A Practical Guide for Holy Week & Pascha for Members of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church & St. Nina Mission: 2026

For fuller theological explanations of most of these services as well as broad context, check out [this wonderful 20-page Holy Week Guide](#) by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.

You might also enjoy the [7-part day-by-day video walk-thru of Holy Week](#) and that Fr. Justin and Audrey Wagner created back in 2020.

*Visit our St. Athanasius website [here](#) for full info on parish.
Visit our St. Nina Mission website [here](#) for info on our mission.*

- **April 6 Great & Holy Monday**
 - 9am **Presanctified Liturgy @ St. Nina Mission** (1.5 hour service)
 - *The Gospel readings at these Holy Week Presanctified Liturgies are profound and tie in to the theme of Holy Monday.*
 - 6:30pm **Bridegroom Matins** (1.25 hour service)
 - *In this service we are challenged to ponder the coming of the Lord and our lack of preparation to meet Him.*
- **April 7 Great & Holy Tuesday**
 - 9am **Presanctified Liturgy** (1.5 hour service)
 - *The Gospel readings at these Holy Week Presanctified Liturgies are profound and tie in to the theme of the Holy Tuesday.*
 - 6:30pm **Bridegroom Matins** (both in Nicholasville & Berea) (1.25 hour service)
- **April 8 Great & Holy Wednesday**
 - 9am **Presanctified Liturgy** (1.5 hour service)
 - *All who are working are encouraged to take their lunch break and come to service to partake of Holy Communion. The communing should take place ~12pm and be completed ~12:30pm. We pray the Prayer of St. Ephrem for the last time this year at this service.*
 - 6:30pm **Bridegroom Matins** (1.75 hour service)
 - *Tonight the theme of Bridegroom Matins shifts dramatically to the person of Judas at the Last Supper, who is sharing the Lord's Table, and yet is preparing to betray Him.*

- **April 9 (w/o) Great & Holy Thursday**

- 10am **Vespertal Liturgy** (2 hour service)
 - *On Holy Thursday, we celebrate a Vespertal Liturgy that is sometimes called the Liturgy of the Mystical Supper. At this time, we commemorate the Last Supper and enter into the eternal mystery of it, which is the Eucharist.*
- 6:30pm **12 Passion Gospels Matins** (3 hour service)
 - *On the evening of Holy Thursday, we enter into Great and Holy Friday and encounter Christ Crucified. This is one of the most powerful services in all of Orthodox Holy Week and an absolute high point of the Church year. Adults, please do not miss this service!*

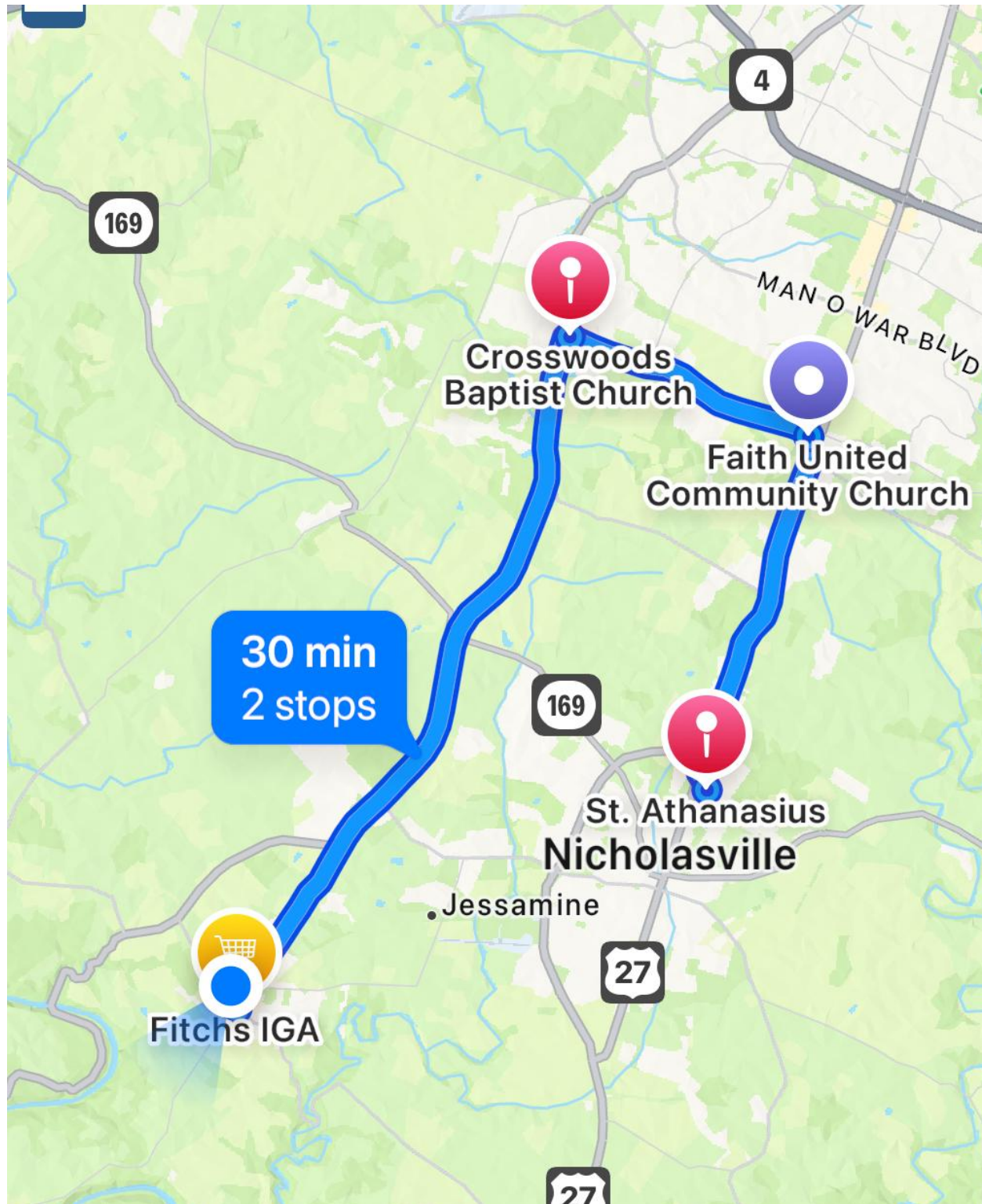
- **April 10 (strict fast day) Great & Holy Friday**

- 9am **Royal Hours** (1.5 hour service)
 - *On the morning of great and Holy Friday, we revisit the cross. We hear the hymns of the previous evening and find Jesus hanging on the Cross for salvation. If you cannot be at the Thursday evening service, know that this service of the Royal Hours covers much of the same content. It is just shorter and during the daytime. Regardless, Royal Hours offers a powerful meditation on the Cross and its meaning. The decoration of the “Tomb” of Christ typically takes place between Royal Hours and the Entombment Vespers.*
- 3pm **Entombment Vespers** (1 hour service, especially child friendly)
 - *During this service we remember the taking down of the Lord’s body from the Cross and his entombment by the Noble Joseph of Arimathea. This is an especially wonderful and accessible service for children as it lasts about 1 hour and has lots of familiar movement.*
 - *Note: this same service will be offered at St. Nina Mission at Noon on Holy Friday!*
- 6:30pm **Matins w/Lamentations & Procession** (2.25 hour service)
 - *Sometimes called the “service of Lamentation” this Matins for Holy Saturday shows us that our lamentation of Christ’s death will soon blossom forth into tremendous rejoicing! During the service our lamentations around the tomb of Christ begin to morph into praises to Him who is about to rise from the dead! The funeral procession is redolent with the coming Resurrection!*
- 9pm **Overnight Reading of the Psalter**
 - *The all-night reading rotation begins right after the Matins w/ Lamentations and continues until the Saturday Morning Liturgy. The church will be unlocked all night. Parents: if you bring your (older) children to help chant, you must be responsible for them and keep them in the room with you at all times. The online sign-up for this wonderful Holy Week activity can be found [here](#).*

- April 11 (wine) Great & Holy Saturday
 - 9am **Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy**
 - *The Vesperal Liturgy ushers in the first strains of the joyous feast. This service is the vespers of Pascha itself and announces what is to come. The vestments and paraments are dramatically changed from black to white, and we hear “Let God arise and His enemies be scattered.” After the Liturgy, we will bless the loaves of bread and wine (juice for the children) and will partake of these things to sustain us through the day. The servers will be responsible for preparing the holy things for Pascha and then many of our faithful will prepare flowers and beautify the church for the feast.*
 - 630-11:30pm **Continuous Reading of Acts of the Apostle**
 - *This is yet another way to prepare for Pascha night and to keep vigil for our Lord. A venerable tradition of the Church is to chant the Acts of the Apostles. Our online sign-up for this can be found [here](#).*
 - 11:30pm **Paschal Nocturnes (aka “The Paschal Service”)**
 - *On Holy Saturday we fast and make preparations all day after the morning Liturgy (including the preparation of sumptuous paschal foods). “Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight” we sang at Bridegroom Matins earlier in the week. Now we gather again before midnight to be ready to meet the Risen Lord. But before we make our triumphal Paschal Procession, we first gather in the church for Nocturnes. Quietly the Lord’s body is taken from the “Tomb” and placed in victory on the Holy table in the altar. All lights in the church are put out and we wait patiently for the first strains of the Paschal song.....”**Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior.**” The paschal light is lit, the priest begins quietly to chant the hymn, the servers join in, and finally the choir and all the people add their voices to the priest’s and server’s voices. The light is passed from person to person and we exit the church and make our Paschal Procession.*

- **April 12 Great & Holy Pascha**
 - 12am **Paschal Procession & Matins**
 - 1:00am **Paschal Divine Liturgy**
 - *We have now entered completely into the joy of Pascha. Christ bursts the gates of death and the gates of Paradise are opened. Coming back into the church, we celebrate the Paschal Matins, hears the Paschal sermon of St. John Chrysostom, and then go right into the Paschal Liturgy. After Liturgy, the priest blesses the Artos and the Paschal baskets of food in the parish hall. All are invited to stay for this meal. People may bring alcohol, but we ask that they abstain from hard liquor.*
 - *Note: Dr. Laura Walther coordinates our multi-language Gospel reading. If you have a language you know well and would like to chant a verse in that language from the John 1 reading, please text Dr. Laura at 859-559-7286.*
 - 2:40am **Blessings of Baskets & Paschal Meal**
 - *It is time to “break our fast!” People can stay as long as they want, sometimes even till sunrise enjoying the parish hall, the tent, and our parish grounds. Please bring extra tables and chairs for use in the tent. We also encourage people to bring a favorite dish to share on the common table AND their own Pascha baskets – all of which will be blessed at around 240am by our clergy.*
 - *Note: if you have any questions about our Paschal Meal or want to know how you can help, please reach out to Tabitha Naughton at 859-858-0106.*
 - *Note: Between 1 and 145pm on Pascha Day **our annual car Paschal Parade** (complete with police escort) will mass first in Wilmore, then along a couple points in Lexington. Details are below. If you have any further questions, reach out to Laura Walther for full information. Her number is 859-559-7286.*
 - *1:00 pm - Meet at Fitch’s IGA in Wilmore; travel north on 68 towards Lexington.*
 - *1:15 pm - Regroup at Crosswoods Baptist Church parking lot on the corner of Harrodsburg Rd and Brannon Road; travel east on Brannon Road to 27.*
 - *1:30 pm - Regroup at Faith United Community Church near the corner of Brannon Road and Nicholasville Road; Nicholasville Police will join us and escort us south on 27 to Nicholasville.*
 - *1:45 pm - Arrive at St. Athanasius in time for Paschal Vespers and Paschal picnic as clergy bless cars and bells are rung.*
 - *Feel free to join us at any of the stops!*

Here is a map of our Paschal Parade’s stops:



- 215pm **Paschal Agape Vespers begins**
- 2:45pm **Paschal Picnic Begins**

- *The Paschal Picnic is a giant potluck of favorite Paschal foods. Please bring something to share. But there will be plenty of food regardless. There will also be several egg hunt events for kids of different ages, dancing, and much more. Festivities often last until sundown.*

Bright Week of Pascha—No Fasting!

[*Here*](#) are the ***Paschal Hours*** (which are chanted in church but can also be used at home in place of morning and evening prayers throughout Bright Week!)

April 13/Bright Monday

9am **Bright Liturgy**

April 14/Bright Tuesday

11am **Paschal Matins**

6:30pm **Paschal Vespers** and Festal Meal @ **St. Nina Mission in Berea**

April 15/Bright Wednesday

6:30pm **Paschal Vespers** and *Special Post-Pascha Catechesis & Hangout Time in Hall & Outside (bring food!)*

April 16/Bright Thursday

6pm **Mercer Chapel Paschal Vespers & Dinner**

April 17/Bright Friday **Icon Life-giving Spring**

8am **Paschal Liturgy for Life-giving Spring**

7pm *Men's Night Bright Week Fellowship at Carl's House (444 Herrington Haven, Lancaster)*

April 18/Bright Saturday

330pm **Annual Bright Saturday Pinnacles Hike @ Berea Pinnacles**

630pm **Great Vespers @ St. Nina followed by Pizza Dinner**

6:30pm **Cathedral Vigil for St. Thomas Sunday**

7:30pm **Confessions**