



Our Lady of the Holy Cross Abbey is a Roman Catholic monastery of the Cistercian Order, following the Rule of St Benedict.

“Let nothing therefore be put before the Work of God.”
– Saint Benedict’s Rule for Monasteries Chapter 43

The **Work of God**, also known as the **Divine Office**, is the ancient, liturgical, and communal prayer around which the life of a monastery revolves. At Holy Cross Abbey, then, as in every Cistercian monastery, the monks rise long before dawn for the night Office of Vigils, followed by some hours of silent prayer and *Lectio divina*. The Office of Lauds and the offering of Mass bring an end to the “great silence” and begin the day in praise of God. After the morning’s work and simple noon meal the Meridian provides an hour for rest or reading, followed by Mid-Day Prayer and the afternoon’s work or study. The monks’ day comes to a close with the evening Office of Vespers, a light supper, and a time of quiet before the community’s final prayer together, the Office of Compline. Then, as the monks retire, the silence of the night begins, deepening that stillness they observe throughout the day.

The **Abbey Bookstore** will be open on Tuesday, August 4 and Thursday, August 6, 2026 from 2:15pm until 4:30pm. The bookstore contains books, cards, gift items, honey and fruitcakes.

Holy Cross Abbey is located in Berryville, Virginia, which is

- ◆ 188 miles or a 2-hour and 45 minute drive from **Roanoke VA**
- ◆ 207 miles or a 3-hour drive from **Lewisburg WV**
- ◆ 200 miles or a 3-hour and 15 minute drive from **Pittsburgh PA**
- ◆ 65 miles or a 1-hour and 10 minute drive from **Washington DC**



A GREGORIAN CHANT SCHOLA RETREAT

Singing Gregorian chant is a powerful, holistic and communal experience.

August 3-7, 2026

AD TERTIAM MISSAM.
In Die Nativitatis Domini.

Intr. VII.
P u-er * na- tus est no- bis, et ff- li- us da- tus
est no- bis: cu- jus impé- ri- um su- per hū- me- rum
e- jus: et vo- cá- bi- tur no- men e- jus.
magni const- li- i An- ge- lus. *Ps.* Can- tá- te Dó- mi- no
cánti- cum no- vum: * qui- a mi- ra- bi- li- a fe- cit. Gló-
ri- a Pa- tri. E u o u a e.

Holy Cross Abbey
901 Cool Spring Lane
Berryville, Virginia 22611-2700
Phone: (540) 955-4383

Retreat Host
Fr. James Orthmann
Monk of Holy Cross Abbey

CHANT RETREAT SCHOLA DIRECTOR: DR. HUNTER HENSLEY

Hunter Hensley — Doctor of Musical Arts, UNCG, 1995; Master of Music Education, UKY, 1973; US Army Bandsman, 1969-1972; Bachelor of Music Education, UKY 1969.

Hunter retired in 2013 as Professor of Music at Eastern Kentucky University teaching in Vocal/Choral Studies. His professional involvement as a medieval music performance practice as a cantor for Richard Crocker's Gregorian Chant Archive resulted in invitations to teach and perform at many national and international conferences as a medieval chant and early French chanson specialist. In October 2022, Hunter led the St. Basil's Schola, based in Houston, TX, on a Gregorian chant pilgrimage to Rome and Paris.

SCHOLA SESSIONS - in the Guest House Chapel

Hunter Hensley will introduce another method of melodic phrasing and vocal production for chant. Currently, and for centuries, chant scholars have disagreed on the correct way to sing Gregorian chant: *Laon, St. Gall, or Solesmes*. After studying with several medieval scholars of Gregorian chant, Hunter learned that "perfect" interpretations have been abused for centuries. There are countless academic opinions of how it should be sung. Much of the diction for the way he pronounces the Latin texts is a combination of Liturgical French, German, and Italian Latin. For the Schola classes, he will use the Gregorian Missal in order to avoid the unintended confusion caused by the initial study of those red and black squiggle notes. Hunter will teach the natural flow of the *melismas* (many notes on one syllable) in the melodic phrase. He will teach by example, the flow of sincere, spontaneous song that he imagines to be quiet, monastic prayer. Thus, he will encourage a *soto voce* (very soft) vocal production. After having studied medieval French song with his teachers, he is convinced that local performance practice in the rural monasteries of medieval France would have sounded something like this, without them even trying for perfection. They were praying...



MUSICAL CONCERT— Wednesday at 8pm in the Abbey Chapel

Rodger & Leah Trent will play a program of Celtic and Early Music on a variety of instruments, including harp, organetto, and clavictherium.

In addition to arrangements of Gregorian Chant melodies, the Trents will play music by Michael Praetorius arranged for organetto and clavictherium (a small vertical harpsichord) and music specifically written for the organetto—a hand-pumped portable pipe organ.

Leah is the Music Director at Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, where she plays organ and harp for the Masses and directs the Adult Choir and Handbell Choir. She also teaches harp lessons both privately and in group settings.

GREGORIAN CHANT SCHOLA SCHEDULE

Schedule for Monday August 3, 2026—check in after 3pm;
Dinner at 6:15pm in the Dining Room at Guest House

Schedule for Tuesday—Thursday, August 4-6, 2026

3:30am—**Vigils** in the Abbey Chapel

7:00am—**Lauds** in the Abbey Chapel

7:25am—**Mass** in the Abbey Chapel

6:00am-9:00am—Self-Serve Breakfast in the Dining Room at the Guest House

9:00-11:00am—**Schola Session I**—in Guest House Chapel

12 noon—Lunch in the Dining Room at the Guest House

1:30-3:30pm—**Schola Session II**—in Guest House Chapel

5:30pm—**Vespers** in the Abbey Chapel

6:15pm—Dinner in the Dining Room at the Guest House

7:30pm—**Compline** in the Abbey Chapel

8:00pm (Wednesday only) - Concert in Abbey Chapel

Schedule for Friday August 7, 2026—6-9am-Breakfast in the Dining Room at the Guest House

Check out of rooms by 9:30am, leaving all linens ready for laundering

*Please be aware in advance of the observance of **silence** in the Guest House (at meals and in the hallways) except when attending the Schola sessions.*

There are 12 single rooms available at the Abbey Guest House for those who wish to make reservations for the retreat.

Registration for this retreat will be done through Carol Hensley, the reservations representative at the Abbey Guest House. Her contact information is below:

Reservations by phone is preferable: 540-955-4383

If contacted by email, the reservation will be made by return call.

Carol's email address is: information@hcava.org.

Please visit the Abbey Website, <https://www.virginiatrappists.org/retreat-house/>, for additional details regarding reservations for the Gregorian Chant Schola Retreat in the Abbey Guest House.

The total fee for the Gregorian Chant Schola Retreat sojourn is **\$500.00**. This includes tuition for the Schola Sessions, lodging and meals from Monday evening dinner through Friday morning breakfast.

The tuition for commuter students is \$75 for the week. Commuter students should bring their own lunch.

