Get Ready! St. Nicholas Celebration - December 11th

As the Christmas season gets rolling, the world dives headlong into a flurry of activity and busy-ness. In the Orthodox Church we try to focus on stillness during this time - it is a Fast- ing period, where rather than indulging in the pleasures of this life, we deny ourselves these pleasures for a time that we, like Mary, might be spiritually prepared for the Feast.

But the Church has several moments of Brightness during this time - including the Feast of the Entrance of the Godbearer (Nov. 22), the Feast of the Conception of St. Ann (of the Most Holy Godbearer - Dec. 9), but especially of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker on December 6th. This Feast-in-a-Fast is special for us, being the patronal feast of our parish, so we celebrate it specially.

This year we will have a festive (but Lenten!) potluck dinner after the Liturgy on Sunday, December 11th, to allow a special time of fellowship and community celebration of what God has accomplished through the year in our parish. We plan to have a special presentation of our annual St. Nicholas award to the special ministry of the Patriarchal Seminary in Nairobi, through the work of Dr. Bill Black, our OCMC missionary, serving there.

In addition, we’ll have a special remembrance for children from our beloved of St. Nicholas, who can receive a special gift from him which will bring both spiritual meaning and happiness.

Please plan to participate in the liturgical services on Dec. 5th and 6th, and in our parish celebration on December 11th. We have a sign up sheet available for the potluck. Thanks!

Next Lampada Deadline - January 31
Theme: Winter - Preparations for Great Lent

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Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

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Archpastoral Message - We Offer Praise and Thanksgiving

Once again, our nation pauses to celebrate Thanksgiving. Our tables will be spilling over with food and our homes with the spirit of thanksgiving we so often profess but far too often fail to realize. As we gather around our tables to give thanks for the many blessings we have been given, let us also remember those who do not have such abundance.

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the richness of the life that God has given us to live, there is a note of profound reality as well. This is inevitably so, as we remember that the benefits that we enjoy now have been paid for by the willing and unwilling sacrifice of so many. We think of the millions who arrived on this holy ground, and had mercy on our human frailties. For He did not simply will to become embodied, or will merely to appear. For if He willed merely to appear, He was able to effect His divine appearance by some other and higher means as well. But He takes a body of our kind for the stead of all, and offered it to the Father. He does this out of His loving-kindness for the purpose that, firstly, all being held to have longer holding-ground against men, his peers). Secondly, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might turn them again toward rectitude.

And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death He gave it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the Father. He does this out of His loving-kindness for the purpose that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the pain of men might be undone (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord’s body, and had no longer holding-ground against men, his peers). Secondly, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might turn them again toward incorruption, and give them life from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them like straw from the fire.

Continued, page 10

Paradoxically, at a time when we reflect on the richness of the life that God has given us to live, there is a note of profound reality as well. This is inevitably so, as we remember that the benefits that we enjoy now have been paid for by the willing and unwilling sacrifice of so many. We think of the millions who arrived on these shores in shackles to build this nation’s wealth.

Continued, page 12
It always amazes me that even though it sits in the middle of a busy suburban location, the seat of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA in South Bound Brook, NJ, is such a spiritually uplifting place! My visit for the rollout of the UOC of the USA Strategic Plan did not disappoint. The Friday morning Hierarchical Liturgy was led by His Eminence Archbishop Jerome, ruling hierarch of the Eparchy of South America. Even though he had been recently discharged from the hospital, Metropolitan Antony was present and it is always so heartwarming to see how he interacts with the other priests. Following the Liturgy, we moved to the Ukrainian Cultural Center where we had the opportunity to share conversation and meals with Fr. Bob of Sickville, PA as well as Fr. Vasyl and his Pani Matka from Los Angeles, and a retired priest currently attached to the Memorial Church at South Bound Brook.

During the Strategic Plan presentation, two things struck me. One was how humbling and perhaps at times painful this strategic plan was for Metropolitan Antony and Bishop Daniel, yet they listened to everything throughout the whole process and took it all as the wonderful men that they are. Secondly, the fact that we have done our own Master Plan at St. Nicholas about three years ago better prepared us for this process more so than a lot of the other individuals gathered.

Bill Marianes, facilitator of the Plan, posed many interesting questions concerning how we should look at this work in front of us. “Why are you here?” and “What did you do with your church under your watch?” were two of his main questions which he says can be asked by us of the Lord. First and foremost also is individually what we all do to arrive at a “good accounting before the awesome judgment seat of Christ.” He presented a lot of information concerning our changing world and how fast that change comes about. One of the saddest changes presented is the fact that we are losing Orthodox adults who were raised in the Church. Many of the statistics which were representative of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, but probably a lot of the Orthodox world, showed that births, weddings and chrismations are going down, while funeral numbers were rising! Throughout his presentation, Mr. Marianes showed how aspects such as the core values, mission statement, and strategic goals were all based in the scriptures. The UOC of the USA brought 70 individuals, both clergy and laity, together to begin this planning process. It was not lost on those in attendance that this number is similar to the 70 disciples appointed by our Lord to go and preach His Word in “every city and place.” Involvement in whatever aspect of the Strategic Plan affords each of us that opportunity.

Following the formal presentation, we were instructed to select 3 of the 25 Strategic goals which interested us and then rank them 1-3. When lunch was completed, we each attended 2 of the breakout sessions for approximately 1½ hours each. I attended the Adolescent Outreach Program under the Family and Youth goal as well as the Caring Ministry program under the Healthy Parishes goal. Upon completion of these sessions, we returned to the main hall for adoption by acclamation of the UOC strategic plan.

As the plan moves forward, there will be a National Collaborative Website Portal that will contain all of the information that comes together from each of the action plans. This will be available for all of us to view it. There is the full presentation on the UOC of the USA website, where you can see the same slide show presented to us. While it’s not the same as being there (and minus the music!) you can get an idea of where the presentation was going. There is tremendous opportunity for each of us to tap into something which really inspires, moves us, and enables us to work with fellow Orthodox Christians throughout the country. The individuals of St. Nicholas parish have so much to offer since from the time of the parish’s inception, we have been forward thinking and looking to the future. It was also a proud moment when the excellent work of Chris Harrison in the graphic design of the entire Strategic Plan book was acknowledged by everyone present - as well as the translation abilities of Tetyana Antrobus managing to take the original English version into the Ukrainian language.

It proves to be an exciting time upcoming in the life of our Church. Once you have looked at the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan booklet, please feel free to speak with Fr. Robert, myself or any one of the other individuals involved in the Plan thus far, to see where you can participate in one of the Task Forces. It was an amazing experience and one that I don’t think many of us will forget any time soon. I have already been contacted by the Task Force coordinator for the Adolescent Outreach program. I am looking forward to getting to work—won’t you join me?

Elaine Brogan

Hope for the Future

The UOC Sobor and Strategic Plan! October 21, 2016

It always amazes me that even though it sits in the middle of a busy suburban location, the seat of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA in South Bound Brook, NJ, is such a spiritually uplifting place! My visit for the rollout of the UOC of the USA Strategic Plan did not disappoint. The Friday morning Hierarchical Liturgy was led by His Eminence Archbishop Jerome, ruling hierarch of the Eparchy of South America. Even though he had been recently discharged from the hospital, Metropolitan Antony was present and it is always so heartwarming to see how he interacts with the other priests. Following the Liturgy, we moved to the Ukrainian Cultural Center where we had the opportunity to share conversation and meals with Fr. Bob of Sickville, PA as well as Fr. Vasyl and his Pani Matka from Los Angeles, and a retired priest currently attached to the Memorial Church at South Bound Brook.

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Elaine Brogan
Evangelization - Outreach: A Glimpse of the Faith Landscape

In November, our E&O group took a break from our usual meeting format to review two inspiring articles from last year's Speaking to Secular America conference (if you send you a PDF of the articles if you send me an e-mail to rengarland@gmail.com). Most of us realize that as a nation, Americans are drifting away from God. According to the latest Pew Center Study on religion, the fastest growing “spiritual group” are those who have no affiliation with a church, many who describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. These were termed the “Nones.” There are also those who have left the church either physically or mentally checked out – the “Dones.” The author of this particular article noted that some of the “nones” still come to church on Sundays but feel left out or burnt out just “done” with active church service. As the E&O service group, our mission is to invite, welcome and reach out to the “nones” as well as to inspire and re-ignite the “Dones” within our midst and beyond. So we know these people are out there, and in growing numbers. Yes, that’s depressing but, there was inspiration and insight offered as well.

There were some interesting points about individual parishes and the ability to minister to the needs of an active parish as well as newcomers. We as a Parish intuited some of those through our Master Plan process a few years ago. One of the authors suggested that based on his experience in thriving churches, when a Parish reaches 80% of its physical capacity, membership needs to slow down. The same is true when the ratio of parishioner to priest is too high – he suggested about 1 to 100 was the limit. I bet Father Robert might feel that’s pretty high! We set some long term goals in our Parish Master Plan in both of these areas and we are looking at next steps, such as the Facilities Master Plan, expanding mission efforts and considering additional clergy to address these types of issues.

The most inspirational part of the articles, and our group discussion, comes down to both what our faith can offer and how we show our faith. What our world, and the Nones and Dones need, is “a回应 of this from us as Orthodox Christians” as Fr. Theodore Dorrance writes. “We need to become more serious about ‘going out’ with the Gospel, with this beautiful, life-giving message of salvation to our family members, our neighbors, our coworkers and everyone who crosses our path!”

Start this Nativity season by inviting someone to church. Come to our next E&O meeting on Tuesday, November 29, 2016 at 6:30 (after Intercessions services) and join our discussions about our outreach efforts – our usual meeting time is the first Tuesday of each month. But most importantly, ask yourself, as Father Theodore puts it “What am I doing to grow closer to Christ? And What am I doing to bring salvation to those who don’t know it yet?” Father Theodore says to start by loving God with all your heart, mind and soul and loving your neighbor as yourself – the two greatest commandments. That is how we take His light into the world every day.

Kean Gorvelovic, Service Group Leader

Hospitality Group Activities

It has been a very busy few months since Chris Harrison and I became Co-Chairs in September! We had a few great events that really put our newly formed team to task. But, in the end everything worked out fine.

The Service Activity Fair was a great success.

The format of this event really allowed everyone to learn more about our service groups and their activities. It also gave our parishioners the opportunity to mingle and get to know people outside of the circle of friends they usually sit with during coffee hour.

Even though I had a major case of heartburn in the afternoon, the Chili Cook Off was really fun! We had ten participants! Everyone’s Chili was very good. In the end the winner was Hunter Johnson. His Trophy - Chili the snowman and a new Car! I know it was a miniature car, but it was new…

Next up is the St Nicholas Day Celebration on December 11th. It is a Lenten Pot Luck event. Sign-up sheets are in the fellowship hall. Please let us know if you can attend and bring food items to help us celebrate.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has signed up for coffee hour – your support is critical to the success of the Hospitality Group and parish life in general. Our team members include Hunter and Stephanie Johnson, Chris Harrison and Patti Christine. We need a few more members! We meet quarterly and beginning with the next meeting we will have our meetings at a local restaurant. Everyone is welcome!

Randy Brynen, Co-chairman

Liturgical Services (cont.)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Service Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 26</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy - Synaxis of the Godbearer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 27</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy - Feast of St. Stephen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 31</td>
<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>Great Vespers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 1</td>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Matins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 1</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 3</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Vigil of the Theophany of our Lord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, January 5</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Great Vespers - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil followed by Great Consecration of Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, January 6</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Feast of the Theophany of the Lord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, January 7</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy - Nativity of our Lord (Julian Calendar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 8</td>
<td>11:00pm</td>
<td>Great Vespers - New Year Prayer Vigil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 8</td>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Matins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 8</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 10</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Moleben (Intercession service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, January 14</td>
<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>Great Vespers</td>
</tr>
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Ongoing and Special Events Calendar

Evangelization/Outreach Service Group 6:00pm Tuesday, December 29
Charitable Works Service Group 2:30pm Saturday, December 4
Buildings and Grounds Service Group 6:30pm Thursday, December 8
Parish Board Meeting 6:30pm Tuesday, December 13
Work Party - Christmas Prep/Decorating 12:00 - 4:00pm Saturday, December 17
Special Penance Service - Confessions 6:00pm Tuesday, December 20
Parish Right to Life Vigil (at Planned Parenthood) 12:00 Saturday, December 27
Charitable Works Service Group 2:30pm Saturday, January 7
Religious Formation Service Group TBA
Iconography Church Tour TBA
Hospitality Service Group TBA

Note – No parish Christmas Eve Supper this year.

Ongoing Events - (subject to change)

Pastor’s Office Hours - Select Tuesdays - 12pm - 5pm. Call for an appointment

Confessions - Mystery of Holy Penance - After Vespers, Also - see service schedule

Adult Religious Formation Groups - TBA

Inquiry Discussions - Sundays, 11:45am - 12:15pm.

Blessing of Homes - begin on January 7th.
The season of Thanksgiving is always a centering event for me, and truly a chance to recall the multitude of God’s blessings and give thanks. Thanksgiving is at the heart of the stewardship awareness and message of the Church. In my presentations on stewardship, I try to foster an awareness of how God has so abundantly blessed us, with ‘every good and perfect gift which comes from above, the Father of Lights’. The key to stewardship then comes after that, “What do we do about that?”

Most of the time, when it comes to thinking about an answer to that question, we jump in and start doing something! So we make plans, and figure out how we’re going to make it all happen. This borders on the problem of the Rich Fool in the gospels (Lk. 12.13). He receives abundantly from God - and by golly he’s going to take advantage of it, so he tears down his barns and builds bigger ones to ‘steward’ the newfound plenty. But the Lord calls him a ‘fool’. That’s pretty harsh!

So what’s missing? It’s the necessary first step of stewardship - the turning of our mind’s eye and heart back to God - first. Acknowledging Him as the true Source of this goodness and not ourselves - regardless of how hard we may have worked for it. If we truly do this then something else happens, another gift we receive from Him is the gift of Thanksgiving, and feeling this well up within us, and turning back to Him and acknowledging Him and His grace and love for us. Stewardship leads us (back) to an awareness of His many gifts. And if that awareness is failing, perhaps we have not cast our gaze back to Him in acknowledgement of His many gifts. Many, many gifts - beginning with the gift of His divine image in us, eternal life in His Son, our bodies and human life, our capabilities, our relationships - all things.

This return in Thanksgiving was what the Lord pointed out to His disciples when He healed the 10 lepers. But one (and only one) returned to give thanks. Sometimes I’m afraid the Lord’s harshest attitude in this regard isn’t much needed today - even for Christians. Yet the Thanksgiving dynamic is the heart of who we are and it’s why we celebrate the Eucharist (in Greek, Thanksgiving) as the heartbeat of our spiritual and communal life. We don’t typically celebrate the Eucharist itself on Thanksgiving, though that’s fully appropriate, in part because more people can come to the Wed. evening service than a Thursday morning Liturgy. But that’s OK, because the theme of Thanksgiving, for this civil feast, is one that perhaps is better suited for our practical family life - with an end to bring that awareness of God’s goodness in our own homes and as we gather around our own tables, and acknowledge His unique blessings to us, as a family.

As a parish family, this time of the year remains one of thanksgiving, not only for this feast, but also our upcoming parish patronal celebration, where we pause to remember God’s many blessings to us as a parish community and the wonderful people who comprise our community, both those who do so now and are near, as well as those who have moved on from us in time - but not in the Spirit. That occasional return visit to our parish is always a cause to celebrate again that spirit of Thanksgiving for all of our spiritual blessings.

The only thing that remains after our offering of thanks back to God, is to say, “Lord, now what?” If we offer our first portion back to God (in the form of a tithe/proportional gift, our time, energy, etc.), how can we be stewarded well the remainder of what is entrusted to us. Another benefit of making the offering of the first portion, is that its easier to see the second, and third and fourth portion and all the rest - as part of God’s abundance to be well-stewarded by us who have been chosen to do so, by Him! So we’re less likely to spend things on frivolous things or passion-driven worldly pursuits, if we have made that first sacred offering to Him. We realize that the rest is sacred as well.

As I give thanks this year, I will remember you as one of the Lord’s choicest blessings - for which I will offer thanks at this Feast, at the parish Feast, and during this holy season.

Our Bookstore will have a Sale of Nativity items in the Narthex for three Sundays beginning on Nov. 27th.

Joan (aunt) George and Michele (nurses) Joanna (nephew)
Yvon (nephew)
David (nephew), wife Meg and family
John (nephew)
Robert (sister) Yvonne (nurse)
Continue (aunt) Kinos (aunt)
Tigga (aunt)
Charlie (nephew)
For our Parishioners or Special Needs
Margaret (sister) Basil (Thanksgiving)
Tara Tatiana (health) Robbie (mental health)
Fr. Vyssy (fr) Michael
For the Departed
Georgina (nephly departed)
Reita (Kay’s sister)
+ For our departed Parishioners and family members
+ For those who have died in...
The Date of the Celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord

from www.oca.org

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, “Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month.” In another place it also says, “Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which uncease given grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world.” In the second century St Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century St Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of St Matthew. In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official religion in the Roman Empire, we find that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the works of St Ephraim the Syrian, St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Ambrose of Milan, St John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century. St John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient, and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the emperor Theodosius built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nicetas Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Sts John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maum and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and many others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival. During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, called “Theophany” (“Manifestation of God”). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from St John Chrysostom’s sermon on the Nativity of Christ: “it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized.” In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that “Jesus began to be about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services and the feastsdays themselves are the same. The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyful, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

On the day after the Nativity of Christ we celebrate the “Feast of the Most Holy Theotokos, and come together to give her glory and praise. This is the second day of the three day Winter Pachna. Combining the hymns of the Nativity with those celebrating the Mother of God, the Church points to Mary as the one through whom the Incarnation was made possible. His humanity—concretely and historically—is the humanity He received from Mary. His body is, first of all, her body. His life is her life. This feast, the assembly in honor of the Theotokos, is probably the most ancient feast of Mary in the Christian tradition, the very beginning of her veneration by the Church. Six days of post-feast bring the Christmas season to a close on December 31. At the services of all these days, the Church repeats the hymns and songs glorifying Christ’s Incarnation, reminding us that the source and foundation of our salvation is only to be found in the One Who, as God before the ages, came into this world and for our sake was “born as a little Child.”

Treasurer’s Report - November, 2016

Just like in a family, we find that it’s time for a year end assessment and a look ahead to next year. The Parish Board will need the help of all service group leaders as we begin to prepare our Parish Budget. The first steps begin with you and your Service group. By the end of November, I’ll be sending out a spending summary to each service group along with what was budgeted for 2016. Take some time to really consider these numbers. If you spent according to your plans--great. You have an excellent guide for considering how to budget for next year. If you missed the mark—either by overspending or under spending, use this information to take a hard look at why.

But, most important of all, remember you have a higher purpose as group members and group leaders. How is your mission serving when we aspire to do good works in His name. Let’s make those “to dos” – TADAs!

Karen Gavrilovic, Treasurer

A Quick Comment on Financials…

As you can see from the bottom line, our out-of-pocket expenses have exceeded our Income this year, but this is accounted for in the Budget, where we have...
Charitable Works Update

This week, November 21st, we celebrated the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple - the prelude of the good will of God. What a great beginning to the Nativity Fast! As Fr. Hopko wrote in his book, The Winter Pascha, "It is the first celebration of the salvation which comes to the world in Jesus, of which Mary herself is the first and foremost recipient." With a quiet kind of joy we all proceed to the great Feast of the Nativity. How wonderful it is to make this journey once again together as a parish family.

May the true light of Christ shine not only into our own hearts but may it illumine, heal and console all those suffering throughout the world - in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine, India, Haiti, Nepal, Greece, Eritrea, Egypt and so many other countries. And in our own country: those whose lives were devastated by recent floods, those without jobs, the people of Appalachia coal country, those suffering from drug/alcohol addictions, children suffering in unimaginable ways. Please remember them all in your prayers, carry them in your hearts, and when you can, help them in whatever way is possible.

Some of the ways you can actively help is by supporting the work of the Charitable Works Group - either by joining the group or by responding to our various ministries:

- Right now our parish is collecting food for distribution to a local food bank.
- We continue to keep a monthly vigil in front of Planned Parenthood in Charlottesville to help end abortion in our country.
- Our plans for the Syrian Relief fund raising event in the spring are being developed, and we are still involved with our friends in Groundy and the local LOVI INC group.
- We are expanding our outreach in prison ministry on several fronts in both men’s and women’s prisons.

You can learn more about a few of these ministries in the short reports some of our Charitable Works members have written for this issue of the Lampada.

There are no words to thank all of you for your continued support of these many ministries of our Charitable Works service group - but thank you. May God always bless you for your kindness, compassion and generosity.

Cynthia Polzog, Coordinator

Latest News from Syria

We may have not been hearing much about Syria, the Middle East and the world’s refugees lately, due to the news being taken over by the election. Unfortunately that does not mean that their problems no longer exist. In fact, the situation has worsened for those still living in Aleppo, Syria’s largest city. About 250,000 people are still living there. Hospitals are being bombed, forcing babies who need the care of an incubator, to be transferred heroically by their caregivers to the basement of the building for safety. They are trapped and are now without access to medical care. Those who have made it out of Syria may be living in less than adequate conditions in refugee camps in neighboring countries. Christians are being persecuted, and in and out of refugee camps. Humanitarian efforts are coming under deliberate attacks, their efforts ruined, and lives lost. In Iraq, ISIS continues their attempt to eliminate Christians. In Mosul, its 2nd largest city, and once most diverse, there used to be 35,000 Christians. Now, maybe 20 or 30 remain. A CNN interview from Nov. 20, with a priest from Bartella, Iraq, depicts how ISIS would mark Christian homes with the Arabic equivalent for the letter “N” for “Nazarene”, and then ostracize them or inflict unthinkable suffering on them.

There are many more stories like these to share. Please continue to pray for those who are living in these conditions; to keep their faith and to be brought to safety soon. Pray for those who have escaped, to be accepted in their new homes, and to be able to begin a new life, in safety and peace. Lord Have Mercy.

Community Care Update

It’s that time of year when the leaves are falling from the trees, the days are growing shorter and ole’ man winter is fast approaching. In the Community Care ministry, we reach out to parishioners who have experienced a momentous experience in their life or maybe have suffered a little setback where they would appreciate some assistance from their church family.

The September Service Groups Activity Fair was very successful and a lot of information was shared concerning the Community Care ministry. While we don’t have many official meetings, we do meet as part of the monthly Charitable Works meetings. Please consider joining us if you have an interest in caring for your fellow parishioner.

Congratulations to Michael and Elizabeth Allen and big brother James on the birth of Anna Allen. Anna and her mom were recently churched and we look forward to seeing more of them over the coming months. While we typically prepare meals for new families following the birth of their babies, a special situation prevented the Allens from receiving our meals. On behalf of the parish, a gift card was presented to them to purchase foods from a local supermarket that they would enjoy. We anticipate the baptism of Anna on December 5th.

Vonnie Zubky and George Dilendorf have had some recent health issues and parishioners are trying to lighten their load by providing some homemade meals. While Vonnie is on the mend, she has passed the sending of birthday cards off to Deena Gakos. We thank Deena for stepping up and taking care of this gift for our parishioners! Homemade meals and visits have been sent to both George and Vonnie and we hope that before long they will both be back amongst us. (If you would like to provide a meal for a parishioner in need, please contact Elaine at ebrown10bearbrick.net - ed.)

Early in November, we had the opportunity to send birthday wishes along to Father Robert’s mother, Pauline, as she celebrated her 95th birthday. While we don’t see her in church as we used to, it was nice to be able to let her know that she is near and dear to us as she hits this milestone.

Please feel free to contact me (and Father Robert know) should you know of anyone in our parish that might be in need of some help at their home or in need of some meals or home chores to help them during a busy time. Perhaps we can engage some men to the ‘guy stuff’ to help some of our elderly members who may be a bit infirm trying to keep up with their home chores.

The Community Care ministry is here to serve our parishioners and address their needs and concerns. During this time of the Nativity Fast, may we all take the time to look inside ourselves and ask how we can better serve each other?

Blessings to all for the feast of the Nativity and into the New Year!

Elaine Bragon, Ministry Leader

Thanksgiving Pastoral Letter (cont. from p.1)

Our prayer is that more and more of our parishes invite their faithful to gather around the Table of our Lord on this national holiday to give thanks FIRST to God during Divine Liturgy. Though it is not an official ecclesiastical holy day – it is altogether proper to offer gratitude to God that we live in a nation that sets aside such a day for “thanksgiving”.

As you gather on Thanksgiving Day, wherever you are and whomever you gather, we hope you have a great day! We hope you will enjoy the traditions of the day. But be sure to remember that for us – Orthodox Christians, Thanksgiving is more than a Thursday in November. It’s more than enjoying turkey, pumpkin pie and football. It is about giving thanks and being a blessing for those around us.

May you all have safe journeys in your comings and your goings this holiday week and may the Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with all of you this Thanksgiving Day.

With deep gratitude to God for each of you as our spiritual children,

+Anthony, Metropolitan +Daniel, Archbishop-elect
Parish Iconography Study

From the preference survey conducted in August, iconography emerged as one of the top topics of our collective interest. The book Theology of its Lion, by Leonid Ouspensky was selected and four study groups were proposed. Three groups eventually met at St Nicholas church, Waynesboro, and north of Charlottesville. The following is impressions from the leaders of those study groups.

The group that met at the church was a small but lively group of three that enjoyed good conversation and a wide-ranging discussion of iconography. Our own background and interests in iconography gave us a common starting point. Ouspensky's text provided many rich opportunities for further exploration. One great advantage of meeting at the parish was that little “field trips” to the nave of the church to enrich and illustrate the discussion together. It was an enjoyable and beneficial experience for all.

The North of Charlottesville group met four times in October. All of the meetings were well attended. And even though they were said to be out of their group, all appreciated the short term commitment that was required. After a bit of socializing over sustenance, discussion commenced. The thread that ran through the four sessions concerned Ouspensky's rather strict definition of an Orthodox icon and his justification for this definition. While the group found much of Ouspensky's work compelling, the collective experience led the group to believe that his theology of the icon marginalized or excluded much of what the Church has embraced as holy. Despite any criticisms, all agreed that the book helped open our eyes to the glory of God made manifest in every icon.

The Waynesboro group had four meetings, graciously hosted by Amy Skretta. About eight people participated in each discussion, which was facilitated by a different member each week. Discussions were lively and wide-ranging, and some time was made for fellowship before or after the structured part of the evening. People in the group look forward to an opportunity to study together again.

Another study is being discussed for the coming Lenten season. Some initial ideas are spiritual discipline (askrasis), for example. The Way of the Pilgrim or the Ladder of Divine Ascent. Readings from the Fathers of the Church can be hosted by the Church at Home sessions on various subjects; and Bible study. As study of the books of the Bible read in church during Lent are Genesis, Proverbs, Isaiah, the Gospel of Mark and Hebrews would be very timely. We hope to facilitate at least two studies a year on topics of general interest and the home study group idea seemed to work well. Special thanks to contributors to this article: David Murphy, Dan Wright and Patricia Hardesty. Please keep us in your prayers as we labor toward Christ being formed in us all.

Basil Jonagorn, Greensboro

Thanksgiving Pastoral Letter (cont. from p.1)

We are reminded of the peoples who occupied these lands for millennia before the arrival of Europeans, the natives who received these “newcomers” warmly, and then paid for their hospitality by losing everything.

As those native people and first immigrants gave hearty thanks to the Creator for the feast that they were about to share, so must we be sharply attentive and grateful to the source of our food — the first Source, of course, being God, the Almighty Creator — who has always provided the clean water and food we need to survive. Like the pilgrim newcomers, who in order to avoid starvation, became dependent upon the natives and their ability to sustain God's creation to sustain themselves, we must today give thanks to God for those upon whom we depend for our daily nourishment. Never before in human history have so many been so completely dependent on others for food and water. Never before in human history have so many been so completely cut off from the land upon which they ultimately depend for their sustenance.

As Orthodox Christians, we affirm the sacredness of all Creation. Consequently, we must never forget that both our food choices and food production processes have a profound impact on God's beloved Creation. In this season of Thanksgiving, we encourage you to consider the following issues: How does our food get on our table? Where does it come from? Who puts it there? What is the real cost, both short and long term, and who pays the price? And, as importantly, but perhaps less obviously: What is our relationship to the place that feeds us? In the season of abundance, how is that in our country, with its widespread system of food production and distribution, many remain hungry?

In many parishes of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, the pastors and faithful, in particular, many Ukrainian Orthodox League chapters, answer these questions by hosting community Thanksgiving meals or collect food and prepare bountiful baskets for families which are unable to afford such bounty with their own resources. In this manner we become the ones depended upon. What a powerful example of “gratitude in action”. This is the expression of love-charity and compassion taught upon which we are called by Christ our Lord.

Thanksgiving Day brings families together for a festive meal to enjoy one another's company and love. At those family tables a prayer of gratitude to God is raised, properly including God in the joy of the moment.

Continued, Next page

Thanksgiving - A Surgical Experience

By David Jonagorn

...written while recuperating at home, October 2016...

With gratitude to those who prayed for me I would like to offer this reflection for the benefit of all as I am sure it can be applied to other life experiences. The following three texts were in my mind before surgery.

Text 1: Archimandrite Meletios Webber in his book Bread & Water, Wine and Oil—An Orthodox Experience of God under the heading The Present Moment writes, “One noticeable way the mind works is that it rejects the here and now. This combines an undercurrent of negativity or dissatisfaction with a sense that the reality of God's world is not good enough. Indeed, the world is driven by people with no shape or form, so there is nothing to measure. Since defining things through labeling and measuring is the main task of the mind, when it comes to something formulaic, it simply ignores it. The mind prefers to work in the past or future, since these dimensions are both actually constructs of the mind's own working and thus the mind controls them. The present moment, however, is completely outside its control and therefore ignored.”

The mind is the guardian of memories and fantasies, the past and the future respectively. Memories and fantasies come in two (and only two) varieties: good and bad. This means that all desires (related to keeping good memories and creating good fantasies) are rejected by the mind, and thus by its unawareness. All desires (related to avoiding bad memories and bad fantasies) come within the jurisdiction of the mind. Unfortunately, the present moment is the only moment that is, in any sense, real. Indeed, in spiritual terms, the present moment is the only possible occasion in which we can meet God (or anyone else).”

Text 2: Kontakton 8 of the Akathist of Thanksgiving Glory be to God for Everything, written in Russia by Metropolitan Tryphon shortly before his death in 1934 reads:

“Glory be to God for Everything!

Text 3: In The Ancient Faith Prayer Book the prayer Before an Operation reads: O Heavenly Father, Creator and Comforter, who created us in your image and likeness, you know every fiber of my being and have willed me into existence. I implore You, O Lord, to guide the minds and hands of those who will operate on me so that I may be restored to health and well-being. Help me, O Lord, to pray with all my heart, and relieve the burden of concern and anxiety that rests heavily upon me and my family with the knowledge that You are with us, now and always. Help me when I awake from surgery, take me by Your hand, O Lord, and lead me to a life of peace and thanksgiving. Amen.

Reflection: As I lay in the surgical preparation area on the gurney in a paper gown, I tried to keep my mind in the present moment and reciting the Experience of God...
Facilities Master Plan Kick Off

– figuring out what our needs are and quantifying them in terms of
– drawing up alternative plans for meeting the development program – usually on
– assessing the condition of what we have today
– Well and Septic system, Parking and driveway, Landscaping & outdoor amenities, Outdoor lighting & sign-
– the basis of high/medium/low cost of some such simple organizing approach

Basis

On the Blessed Repose of Reed Larson

By Basil Finnegan

On Saturday, September 17, 2016 Reed Eugene Larson fell asleep in the Lord, nine days short of his 94th birthday. At his bedside were his three daughters, my wife Barbara, the eldest Pat and Marcia the youngest. Reed has six granddaughters, three grandsons and thirteen great-grand children. A few years ago he moved to Lynnwood, Washington, 30 minutes north of Seattle, near Pat and her family. Born in Kansas in 1922 the eldest of two children, he grew up on farm during the Great Depression and Faithfully attended the Methodist church in Agra, KS. From humble beginnings he rose to frequent the halls of power in our nation’s capital as a lobbyist championing the rights of people to be able to join a union… but not to coerced to do so in order to hold a job.

His love for Christ motivated him and his wife Jeanne to create a foundation with the specific purpose of funding various Christian missionary endeavors as “bringing people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.” His foundation has contributed to several outreach efforts at here at St. Nicholas like restocking the literature rack and the Southwest ministry to Grundy, Virginia. Since he entered hospice a few weeks ago, Barbara and I have been praying the Lord would grant Reed a blessed repose. In his last moments of this life he had his three daughters at his side reading Psalms and singing hymns. I cannot imagine a more blessed repose.

Our parish extends our condolences to Barbara and Basil - through the donations of the Larson Foundation, our parish efforts of ecumenization and outreach have been supported and fostered - from the production and distribution of print information, as well as support for our recent African Christianity Outreach. We are grateful for the life and witness of the Larson family and for their support in our common effort.

The Fruits of the Spirit - or at least some who survived!

The Night Golfers - or at least some who survived!

News From Around The Parish

The Parish Youth - November 2016

New Episodes - The Path thru Genesis
First Fruits of Christian Living Podcast

Be sure to check out the latest podcast on Fr. Robert’s Ancient Faith series on Orthodox Stewardship in the Old Testament. See http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/firstfruits

Building & Grounds – Facilities Master Plan Kick Off

Do the words “Facilities Master Plan” get you excited? If not, you’re probably very normal. I have to say it doesn’t sound as exciting as parish golf outing or chili cook off! And yet, this is one of the most important things a parish like ours can undertake. A facilities master plan is quite simply a process to develop a master plan for the future growth and disposition of the church’s site, buildings and grounds.

The purpose of the Facilities Master Planning process is to create a guiding document for the existing church facilities and for their enhancement and growth in the future. The process will result in a preferred design concept for a master plan that will meet the long term objectives and program needs of the parish. Realizing that all such planning can bear fruit only as God brings it forth. This plan is an endeavor undertaken by the parish to be faithful stewards of both the mission of the Church and the facilities entrusted to us by the Lord to fulfill that mission. It is anticipated that this process will take close to a year and the final Master Plan will be affirmed and approved by a meeting of the parish and sent for the approval and blessing of the Metropolitan. The day to day development of the Plan will be guided by an Advisory Committee, specially appointed by the Board to include representatives of other service groups from the parish. The work of developing the Master Plan, however, will be done primarily by Building and Grounds group volunteers.

There are 4 basic phases to the master planning process:

1. Assessment – assessing the condition of what we have today
2. Development Program – figuring out what our needs are and quantifying them in terms of building space and outdoor improvements
3. Alternatives – drawing up alternative plans for meeting the development program – usually on the basis of high/medium/low cost of some such simple organizing approach
4. Final Design – taking the “preferred” alternative and developing a master plan and cost estimate

Once the final plan is complete, we will likely enter into a Capital Campaign for financing the approved Facility Master plan over time. The first phase now underway is the Assessment phase and will last through this February. It will involve a series of walk-throughs of the building and grounds with clipboards in hand by B&G volunteers. There are three aspects of the assessment:

- Interior: Windows & Doors, Floors, Interior walls. Lighting, Electrical / HVAC / Plumbing, Kitchen and bathrooms, Electrical system, HVAC system.
- Exterior: Roof, Exterior Walls, Shed and slab.
- Site: Well and Septic system, Parking and driveway, Landscaping & outdoor amenities, Outdoor lighting & signage, Undeveloped portions of site.

The goal of the Assessment phase will be to develop a physical “state of the parish” report that lists the current condition of all the physical assets of the parish and the costs of repair and upgrade to serve the current needs. After that, we will go through a process to understand future needs and develop alternatives that address those needs. From there, the parish will pick a preferred alternative from which to draw up a master plan.

This will be a challenging process, with many tough design decisions and the need for creative thinking for the future. We will need the help of anyone with specialized experience in the engineering, architectural and building fields. We will call upon each of our Service Groups to participate in this process, weighing in on the specific areas in which your Group functions (i.e. Hospitality - Kitchen/social hall, Liturgy - Nave) but we would also welcome anyone who is just interested in the process and would like to follow it. If you think you might be interested, please see me and join us on an interesting journey in the coming months!

Nominees: Gavrilovic, Coordinator