



East West Encounter - Syrian Relief Project



This year's East- West event, co-hosted with St. Thomas Aquinas church, was held at St. Nicholas on Friday, July 14 - the focus was on the ongoing Syrian Refugee crisis. At this event we were blessed to have a speaker, Dr. Vasilea Digidiki, with first-hand knowledge of the crisis as it was affecting Greece and in particular the island of Lesbos where many refugees make landfall after a harrowing journey by sea. The event began with a prayer service followed by fellowship time and light refreshments. We had an overflow crowd of over 80 people for Dr. Digidiki's presentation starting in the meeting hall and overflowing into the narthex. Her presentation was poignant and among other things related the scale of the crisis. After her presentation. Mr. Lou Zagami, from IOCC, spoke on behalf of the IOCC and charities in general. Being an East/West event we had two charities which people could donate to if they wished. The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

The event by all accounts was a success with a big thank you to all those from St. Nicholas and St. Thomas Aquinas who helped to make the event a reality. Finally, though, the presentation was on the plight of refugees leaving Syria and other countries along with them, please keep those still in Syria and other places such as Iraq in your prayers.

Note: For further study, Dr. Digidiki has kindly sent for our library a bound copy of her paper on Human Trafficking titled, *New Report: Emergency Within an Emergency, Exploitation of Migrant Children in Greece.* When a final total received for the event is made available to us, we will publish it in the bulletin.

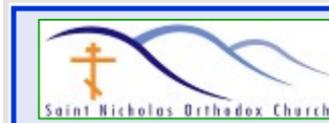


Next Lampada Deadline - October 17 Themes: Anniversary Preparations



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 6981
Charlottesville Virginia 22906

Address Correction Requested



Lampada



August, 2017

O Lord, You are a Lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Summer Ministry Activities!

The summer season presented us several opportunities to offer special events in ministry to others, near and far. First, we had a nice turnout of adults and kids to represent the parish marching in the Crozet Fourth of July Parade. This annual event is amazingly well attended by thousands locally, and our parade team provided visibility of our parish to a whole lot of people who probably never knew anything about our parish community.



Two weeks later, we held our second annual East West Encounter, focusing on the crisis of Syrian and Middle Eastern refugees as they try to reach safety and freedom on the Greek island of Lesbos, which serves as a gateway to Europe and the West. Our guest



speaker, Dr. Vasilea Digidiki, visiting scholar at Harvard University, spoke a powerful and passionate message about the plight of the refugees, the outreach of local populations and Churches, and need to address the global issues that are fueling the crisis.

In mid-July a number of parishioners made the annual mission trip to Grundy in southwest Virginia in support of the ministries serving locally in that region *You will find additional information on these activities inside the pages and the back cover of this newsletter.*

On the Dormition of the Theotokos

Excerpt from Homily III by St. John of Damascus



Lovers are wont to speak of what they love, and to let their fancy run on it by day and night. Let no one therefore blame me, if I add a third tribute to the Mother of God, on her triumphant departure. I am not profiting her, but myself and you who are here present, putting before you a spiritual seasoning and refreshment in keeping with this holy night. We are suffering, as you see, from scarcity of eatables. Therefore I am extemporising a repast, which, if not very costly nor worthy of the occasion, will certainly be sufficient to still hunger. She does not need our praise. It is we who need her glory. How indeed can glory be glorified, or the source of light be enlightened? We are weaving a crown for ourselves in

the doing. "I live," the Lord says, "and I will glorify those who glorify Me." Wine is truly pleasant to drink, and bread to eat. The one rejoices, the other strengthens the heart of man.

But what is sweeter than the Mother of my God? She has taken my mind captive, and held my tongue in bondage. I think of her by day and night. She, the Mother of the Word, supplies my words. The fruit of sterility makes sterile minds fruitful. We keep today the feast of her blessed and divine transit from this world. Let us then climb up the mystical mountain, where beyond the reach of worldly things, passing through the obscurity of storm, we stand in the divine light and may give praise to Almighty power. How does He, who dwells in the splendour of His glory, descend into the Virgin's womb without leaving the bosom of the Father? How is He conceived in the flesh, and does He

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A Parish of the Eastern Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

His Eminence Metropolitan +Antony Presiding Hierarch

Parish Leaders

V. Rev. Robert Holet, Pastor

Leadership Board

Chair: Jacob Ritter

Vice Chair: TBA

Treasurer: Karen Gavrilovic

Secretary: Sdcn James Guba

At Large: Susan Murphy

Service Group Leaders

Hospitality: Randy Brogan, Chris Harrison

Liturgy: Troy Hamilton

Charitable Works: Cynthia Patzig

Evangelization: Karen Gavrilovic

Buildings/Grounds: Mager Koromhas

Library-Bookstore: Stanley Bright

Religious Formation: Basil Finnegan

Parish Ministry Coordinators

Greeters: Karen Gavrilovic

Liturgical Music: Pani Christine Holet

Web Communications: Karen Bowman

Community Care: Elaine Brogan

Contact Information

Parish Office - 434-973-2500

Address: 7581 Rockfish Gap Tpk (US 250), Greenwood, VA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6981, Charlottesville, Va. 22906

Email: info@stnicholasorthodoxchurch.com

Pastor: fr.r.rolet@uocusa.net

Web: www.33-AD.org

To reach Fr. Robert:

First call the rectory phone: 434-973-2500 and leave a message. If you are unable to reach him at that number, then try the cell phone: 434-987-8170. The cell phone is used only during travel.

Email is checked daily.

Liturgical Services Schedule

Subject to Change - See the Online Calendar for Updates

Table with columns for date and service details. Includes entries for Sunday, August 13 through Friday, September 8, detailing various liturgical services and feasts.



Evangelization & Outreach Update

While E&O planned to take an extended Spring Break from formal meetings the last few months we still managed to play an active role in a couple of recent Parish activities. We were "on the scene" to help meet and greet and "behind the scene" to help with publicizing the very successful Syrian Refugee event held on July 14th.



Thanks to the efforts of Ashley Malcolm and several E&O service group members and parishioners, St. Nicholas was well represented in Crozet's annual Fourth of July parade (with guest appearances from Uncle Sam and Wonder Woman). Despite the heat, we had a wonderful time! This was a great opportunity to make our presence known in our own backyard.

Recent studies about church growth in Orthodox parishes have shown that establishing a local community presence is a key element of successful outreach and growing healthy parishes.

In the coming year we hope to focus more on local activities such as these. If you know of any events that you think might be suitable for parish participation, please let me know. We are also already planning for next year's parade. More decorations, more candy, more flyers and if we are lucky, perhaps an appearance by St. Nicholas himself!

Karen Gavrilovic, Coordinator

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Table with four columns listing names and special needs for prayer, such as Demetra and Gregory (special need), Jonathan Laurie (Scott, Benjamin, Nicholas), Fr. Bazyl, and Robert (hospital).

General Intentions

- List of general intentions for prayer, including: For those travelling on vacations and for the Wrights and Alexanders as they depart to their new destinations; For those who are suffering as refugees throughout the Middle East and Africa; Those suffering from a mine and flood disaster in Russia; God's continued blessing and fruitfulness in the holy work being offered to Christ by Frannie, Joe, Debbie, Lois, Charlotte, Gertrude, Junior, Jerry, Randy, Rayburn, Shea and all who serve those in need in SW Virginia.





Six Month Financial Report - Through June 2017

Financial report table with columns: INCOME, Bud. 2016, Actual 2016, Percent, Bud. 2017, to 6/30/2017, Percent. Includes sections for Operating Budget, Bank Accounts, Mortgage Principal, and Project Budget.

Treasurer's Notes

While there will be a full report on our budget at the semi-annual parish meeting, our mid-year check in looks very good. See the six month summary included in this Lampada. We are generally on track with projections for both income and expenditures. This would be a great time for service group leaders to check on your service group budgets as well to see if you need any need for adjustments. I'll be sending you detailed spending reports this month.

Bank Accounts

Table with 2 columns: Account Name, Amount. Includes Contingency (\$24,987.97), General (\$17,090.88), Project (\$15,670.93), and TOTAL (\$57,748.98).

Mortgage Principal

Balance \$237,493.27

As of: August 8, 2017

Craft Items Available?

As Richard and Vonnie Zubyk are making some changes on the homefront, Vonnie may be making some of her treasury of craft items available for anyone who shares a love for such things. As you may know, Vonnie has a splendid gift for crafts and sewing - ask her about it, or better, invite her to show you some of these special items she has fashioned!

Also, if you have need of a gas log fire set, this may also be available.

Please contact the Zubyks at:

zubyk7@hotmail.com

Thanks



Liturgical Services (cont.)

Table of liturgical services with columns: Date, Time, Service Name. Includes dates from Saturday, September 9 to Sunday, October 1, with services like Great Vespers, Sunday Matins, and various feast days.

Many Blessed Years!

Birthdays

We will update our database shortly so please include your birthday and names day. This information is not distributed electronically.

Saints Days

Ongoing and Special Events Calendar

Calendar table with columns: Event Name, Time, Date. Includes events like Parish Right to Life Vigil, Religious Formation Service Group, Charitable Works Service Group, etc.



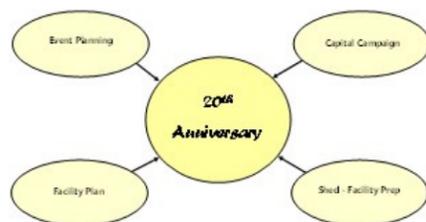
Pastor's Message

A New Season of Service

I used to think that summer was a 'down' time as people head to the exits for vacation, but as you can see from page 1, we've developed several summer ministries that have taken center stage of late, notably the East-West Encounter, and the Southwest Virginia ministry week, and this year for the first time, the Crozet parade. So, it's been rather busy, and with the need to re-tool our Church School and set things up for the fall, plus the usual events ongoing, it really hasn't meant much down time. But that's OK, because the Church is here to serve - and this will be an important focus and call this ecclesiastical year (which begins Sept. 1), as we plan the special events relating to our 20th Anniversary.

At the August Board meeting, those present discussed a number of important items related to these efforts. First, we've scheduled the Fall semi-annual meeting for September 10th, where we will elect new members to the board. Per our constitution, a slate of candidates is being prepared for submission to the meeting. We'll hear a brief update on the dome iconography project. The new board will gear up for the planning and implementation of the two major 20th Anniversary events in 2018, the Metropolitan's visit and **Hierarchical Liturgy** and celebration on April 22nd and the **Parish Homecoming** on August 19th.

As discussed at the last parish meeting, milestone events offer special opportunities. It is hoped that the Homecoming will serve as a special opportunity for as many people as possible to travel from a distance to participate, and see old friends - in an informal cookout atmosphere. Talk has it, that maybe we can set a goal to use the current shed space as the site of said cookout, which would be a big project for Buildings and Grounds, but it would solve a real need! You can weigh in on this idea by going to the topic on the parish forum here: <http://stnicholaschurchforu.freeforums.net/board/66/current-parish>



At the Spring meeting we also proposed the establishment of a new Capital Campaign - a one-time effort to raise funds for special projects, particularly building projects that require special, larger sums. At the moment, we don't have a plan in place for needed future building projects, but a Facility Plan is being developed by the Buildings and Grounds Service Group to assess and direct our parish efforts toward needed facility improvements. As we lay the groundwork for the Campaign, we will need several pieces to come together:

- ☛ Focus of the Capital Campaign
- ☛ Resources of the campaign - structure, planning, execution
- ☛ Communications and publicity

These efforts need to coalesce in April, with a kickoff at the Anniversary Liturgy, with more details revealed (and maybe formally launched?) at the Homecoming event in August.

However, there's a lot of ground to cover between now and then. Later this month, our Parish Board will be sending out a link to an online survey to assess from the parish a sense of which of three areas should be the focus of our Campaign: Facilities development, Mission (ministries), or Financial (i.e. pay off mortgage). We ask that you respond promptly to it, so we can use the results as part of our discussion at the September parish meeting. Also, as part of the publicity event, and the Capital Campaign, we will be sending out a 'Save the Date' mailing for these events to any/all members, past members and friends of the parish - so we will ask the parish members to help us with the mailing list and contacts. I'm sure there will be past members who will come in for this event, and perhaps personally support the Capital Campaign.

So, this September meeting will be important so we can not only organize the Anniversary events themselves, begin to set up the capital campaign, and discuss the new and exciting projects that are before us. And yes, there will be the ongoing efforts of the parish to minister, meet and serve. While the new parish board will take a key leadership role, it will truly be an 'all hands on deck' effort that, if successful, will really bring us to a different 'place' in terms of our dedication to Christ and His Church, and the rededication of our parish in the next 20 years and beyond.

May God bless and direct our efforts to His glory,

Fr. Robert



Looking Forward to Church School

Of all holy works, the education of children is the most holy (St. Theophan the Recluse)

Summer is slowly winding down; we hope you and your families have had some time to recharge for the upcoming school year. We're preparing for church school! This year's group may be a bit smaller, with some of our families having moved away. Please be sure to register your child(en) for church school so that we can update our roster to coordinate our classrooms. See Deena Gakos if you did not receive a registration form.

We have three classrooms so far, with Ashley and Daniel Malcolm leading one, and Deena Gakos and Greg Stronko will each be teaching a group. This year you may see the older children involved in the Liturgy, assisting in roles appropriate for their age. We are hoping to work with the children on learning prayers and church hymns, and your ears may be delighted by their music in the near future.



Church at Home

While there is church school for our children, it is of utmost importance to continue the practice at home! Children learn quickly by watching their parents and observing their habits.

Here are just a few *resources for families* that can be found at Ancientfaith.com -

- ✦ *Be the Bee* – Finding God in Everything, Everyday: a video podcast for youth and young adults
- ✦ *Under the Grapevine* - has readings, lives of the Saints, feasts days, etc read by Dr. Chrissi Hart.
- ✦ *Let Us Attend* – Weekly Gospel Readings; one is for younger children and one is geared toward older children
- ✦ *The Ascetic Lives of Mothers* – This podcast is for moms and dads alike; great parenting topics, relating them to Orthodoxy. Her book of prayers is wonderful resource too.
- ✦ *Orthodoxmotherhood.com* – Our very own Sarah Wright has a wonderful blog with many resources, as well her E-book, *Seasons of the Faith*, which you can find the link for on the home page of her blog.
- ✦ *Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Christian Principles of Child Rearing* by Philip Mamalakis, PhD.

Note that while Be the Bee as a theme will be discontinued by the Greek Archdiocese, their Youth Ministry team is replacing it with a new theme.

Also, Bonnie and Fr. Dcn William Opyoke's youth journal!

Our hope is to have some parent discussions throughout the year to encourage us all along the way. There will be opportunities for you and your children to participate in service projects in our surrounding communities, dates and locations still TBD. If you have an idea for a service project for our church school, or if you feel able to assist church school in any way, please contact Deena Gakos, Deenamkgakos@gmail.com. We are looking forward to another great year of learning with your children.

Deena Gakos,
Church School Coordinator

News from the World of Hospitality!

A big thank you to all those folks that have stepped up and helped out in setting up and cleaning the hall after coffee hours. Summer is a time when a lot of people are traveling and oftentimes, the work crew can be pretty thin. That being said, we need to start thinking about sign-ups for Fall coffee hours. Pull out those warm soups and yummy comfort food recipes and sign up on the hospitality bulletin board!

As a way of saying goodbye to summer and welcome back to our Sunday School children and UVA college students, we are planning a fun picnic and movie under the stars for **Saturday, September 23rd**. There will be early Vespers, followed by food, games, and the movie at dusk. Please stay tuned and watch for sign-ups for food, setting up the picnic and movie, as well as the ever popular clean-up. Suggestions are definitely welcome for a family friendly movie, so let Randy or Chris know if you have any ideas!

As always, please feel free to contact us with any ideas/suggestions/recommendations to make our parish social times pleasant and fun for all!!



NEWS FROM THE PARISH KEEPER OF THE BOOKS (Bookstore that is)

A number of new items are now available in the parish bookstore. All of them are priced so as to be as affordable as possible, i.e. cheaper than Amazon in most cases! Some new titles include:

The Illumined Heart by Frederica Mathews-Green. A little book that explores why contemporary Christians are so indistinguishable from their neighbors and why the early Christians were anything but invisible. "Breathtakingly countercultural," says Rod Dreher (author of The Benedict Option)

Welcome to the Orthodox Church, also by Frederica Mathews-Green. This has become my favorite book to introduce friends to the Orthodox Church. Her relaxed style of writing, coupled with her knowledge of the Church's history and theology, make it almost mandatory reading for the average layman.

Journey to the Kingdom: An Insiders Look at the Liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church. If you want to understand our faith and what it teaches and why, look closely at the worship we offer on Sunday morning.

A Short Trip to the Edge by Scott Cairns. A nationally known Orthodox poet who teaches at the University of Missouri, Cairns felt the need to go deeper in his prayer life. As a result, he made a pilgrimage to Mount Athos and the resulting little book is mesmerizing to anyone interested in the interior life and the holy mountain.

Mary as the Early Christians Knew Her. A book with three very ancient documents that the early Christians referred to when discussing the Theotokos. The texts "offer a window into her centrality to Christian faith in new and sometimes startling ways." Do you have a Protestant friend who wonders about our devotion to the Panagia? This is the book.

Steps to Transformation by Fr. Meletios Webber. Addictions and struggles with the passions are rampant in our culture. In fact, dealing with the passions is part of our spiritual journey as Orthodox Christians. Fr Webber, a recovering member of a 12 step program, shows how the 12 Steps can dovetail with classic Orthodox theology and become a viable tool for our growth in Christ. Forward by Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia

Finally, I've saved perhaps the best for last! Of all the CD's in my sacred music collection this is my favorite. Sacred Treasures vol III contains Slavic chant from Russia that is as hauntingly numinous as it gets. I bought a few used ones on Amazon (its 5 stars, by the way) to make this affordable for any budget, so please give it a listen. All copies are guaranteed to play perfectly.

John Hoyle, Bookstore Coordinator

On Decorum Continued, from prev. page

Much more so do we honor the self-sacrifice of our Creator. His humbling of Himself (humility-another virtue) to take the form of a man and even die a humiliating death on the cross for all of us, and our posterity. This is the greatest virtue ever demonstrated in the history of mankind. And we honor it in sacred time and space; most notably, the Divine Liturgy, for about an hour and a half, usually once per week on Sundays, as have Christians for more than two millennia.

There are many more sacred objects in the Church far more sacred to us than the objects sacred to our country. The Sanctuary itself is a sacred space. While services are going on it is a sacred time. There is a sacred table, the altar, which no one but an ordained deacon, priest, or consecrated bishop is to touch. There is a sacred receptacle, the chalice. Again, never to be touched by anyone but an ordained clergyman with the exception of the pious faithful kissing it after receiving communion. There are also profane receptacles in our church building. There are coffee cups, food bowls, and trashcans. We treat them differently than we do the chalice, because the chalice is sacred. To do otherwise would be profaning the sacred. It would be blasphemous, for instance, to drink coffee out of the holy chalice. It would be a lack of decorum. There is no faith without decorum in the recognition of the sacred. Neither is there civilization.

TO BE CONTINUED....



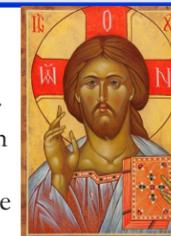
Library Improvements!

Since new shelving has been added to the Library, we have been able to reshelve the collection in a new configuration. A guide to the new shelf organization is posted on the wall in the Library. Please feel free to browse and check out some books.

Since most of our collection is now cataloged online, you can also "browse" our books or search for specific titles in LibraryThing at: http://www.librarything.com/catalog/St_Nicholas_Library



Iconography Update



Mr. Michael Kapeluck, the iconographer, anticipates beginning the iconography project on November 1st. The work will include the icon of Christ the Pantocrator, in a dominant position in the dome, with a ring of text beneath it. The eight panels below will each include icons of two prophets - totaling 16. While we had considered another tradition which sometimes including an icon of the Godbearer in the orans posture, opposite of St. John the Baptist (or other New Testament prophets), it is better to stay consistent with the more common practice, which points to how Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies proclaimed through the lives of the Old Testament saints. We can select among these Old Testament prophets including: Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Zephaniah, Micah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Elisha, Obadiah, Joel, Nahum, Haggai, Samuel, Solomon and Habbakuk.

MUSICAL NOTES



Thanks to all of those who have contributed to this effort during 2017! Our Parish life has been brightened because of your willingness to offer your gifts in service to God in His Church.

With the new Church Year come new faces and new voices! We would like to include some of the following initiatives for the new Church Year. The time requirements vary, as does the expectation for attendance and preparation. See if any of these resonate with you, and contact me if you're interested in participating:

*Liturgical Reading – chanting to include Old Testament, Epistle, and texts of the Liturgical Calendar/services.

*Ensemble – 2+ voice parts singing para-Liturgical hymns and occasional Liturgical ensemble offerings during various services

*NOTE: For the efforts listed above, practice time will be required at times other than Sunday. While we have tried in the past to schedule meetings around the service schedule, to allow those who come to the services to limit trips to the Church, arrangements, locations and schedules will be determined based upon those who are participating.

AND FOOD MAY BE INCLUDED. JUST SAYIN'....

*Youth Music Ministry – working with youth to teach Church music, including responses, hymns and prayers of the Church as part of the educational program for the Church School youth (for children old enough to participate unassisted by parent).

The Church Year begins in SEPTEMBER. If you are interested in participating in any of these efforts, please let me know by September 1.

Pani Matka Christine

Introduction to Orthodoxy - Convert Instructions

We will commence a series of Convert Instructions to begin this month. Meeting bi-weekly, these instructions will be set at a time that is convenient to the participants, allowing a full discussion of many dimensions of the Faith in a thorough way. There are 17 sessions in all, and these are spread over the course of six months or so - to allow accommodation of schedules where necessary. You are invited to participate in these instructions in one of three distinct ways:

First - as a person interested in being received into the Church, going through the series, doing the readings, and spiritual disciplines

Second - as a person who is already Orthodox, who would like to receive a 'refresher' on certain basic elements of the faith.

Third - as a discussion leader or teacher, supporting the process under the guidance of the pastor.

Contact Fr. Robert to indicate your interest, and your schedule requirements for the series.



Community Care Update!

The number 8 can mean a lot of things. In 8 years there can be 3 occurrences of the Olympic Games, there can be 2 terms of an American president, but there is also a lot of meaning in the Bible. Biblically, eight represents a new order or creation, Abraham had 8 sons, and there were 8 people saved from the Flood in Noah's Ark. For our purposes, we are looking at the 8 years that both the Alexander and Wright families have been in our midst.

It was the summer of 2009 and Sarah, Dan, and baby Andrew (Wright) came to St. Nicholas a few weeks before Laura and Bryan (Alexander) found us. Both Dan and Laura were pursuing PhDs at the University of Virginia, while Sarah was beginning as a middle school English teacher in Greene County and Bryan accepted a position as a pharmacist in the University Hospital. Over these 8 years a lot has happened. In addition to baby Andrew, the Wrights added Elizabeth (Ella) and George to their family and the Alexanders welcomed Maya and Benjamin. During that time, all 4 of these young people have been involved and contributed their talents in various areas of parish life.

Dan has been a member of the Library and Bookstore group, while also assisting Father Robert as an altar server. Sarah has used her talents to develop, coordinate as well as teach in our Sunday School program. She has also been involved in chanting and serving as one of our readers. While Laura was not 'officially' a member of our congregation, she often participated in church activities with her family as well as recently, helping to develop the Syrian refugee video series that was shown during Great Lent. She was a gracious hostess for some social events as well as planning some ladies' nights out! Bryan has served as the Group Leader of the Liturgy group, a reader and chanter in church (as well as scheduling us and keeping us in line—especially during Holy Week), and most recently as the Vice-Chair of the Parish Board. And the children, their curiosity and pure joy has been infectious and oftentimes put a smile on many in the congregation!

Continued, next page

For Nana

John Gavrilovic June 24, 2017

Note: This short essay is a reflection by John Gavrilovic on the legacy of his grandmother, +Vera

It is quiet on the slopes of Fruska Gora, in the green of the grass and beneath the leaves of the plum trees. Once she walked here, seeing the beauty of God's creation, and now she is here again. The years have not diminished her sense of wonder; it came to her in her youth and has stayed with her after death, that innocence that the world could not drive out. In her years she saw the darkness of the world many times and never faltered, nothing in her life could destroy her faith, for she built her life out of her faith. Her works were subtle, layered and never ending, it didn't make sense for her to be limited to one medium, when the glory of God showed itself in so many different forms. The soul may wander after death, life's meaning and life's ends are too great for death to swallow them up. What power death holds over creation is a shadow of the creator's power over death, and the works he ordains will continue past death.



Zhiveli!

Jovan is not alone in his apartment yet he feels that he is. She wants to help him, she speaks and he is startled, not believing that he can hear her voice, not thinking about the memorial prayers. She is there also, praying for Jovan. His head is bent low over his desk, his whole body unwilling to stand aright. The rays of the setting sun pass through the window at his side and he closes his eyes, lost in his own mind. The door of the cabinet above the desk is open by the slightest margin, inside is an unfinished icon made by her. By some force it comes loose, and lands on the desk with a clattering thud. Before Jovan had seen only a reminder of the past, but now it is something else. She could not complete it before the feast, in truth she had doubted she could ever complete it. Christ Transfigured and robed in light, the divine present in the world, what could man conceive and create when tasked with this? Now, she saw the icon complete. She saw everything complete. For she was with the Lord, and at the sight of him all imperfection disappeared like darkness before the rising sun. Ω

On a personal note....

The Gavrilovic family thanks you all for your support for us during a very difficult time. We truly felt your prayers, love and concern. We were touched by your many gestures of kindness...from sitting and chanting vigil, to hospital and home visits, supportive calls and text messages, prayers, fellowship, food, cards, memorial donations, and the lovely meal following Vera's funeral. All of it meant so very much to us. We appreciate you lifting us up as we grieve and for the love you have shown and continue to show for our beloved Vera. May her memory be eternal!



ON DECORUM IN CHURCH (Part I)

By Fr. George Hill

Note: The matter of our behaviors in the presence of God are a constant theme in both the bible and Church practice. It is imperative that we foster a deep and abiding awareness of God in our lives, particularly at our Church services. This will be a theme of sorts in the coming months in the parish.

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14-15)

First Century BC Roman Statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote a series of long letters to his son (also named Marcus) which have been studied throughout the history of Western Civilization. Published with the title *De Officiis* (On Duties), the book is a list of instructions to his son, and future generations, on the ethical duties of a good citizen. One of the first lectures he gives is on decorum, which he describes as "becomingness."

Cicero reminds us of a principle which is not just a hallmark of Western Civilization, but is a necessary indicator of any civilization, or of any civilized people. Decorum is a Latin word for which the English word is the exact same. The Greeks call this word *πρέπον*. It is recognized throughout Western culture as the virtue of *order*, with the corresponding vice of *chaos*. Indeed the Holy Trinity is the archetype of decorum and order, and out of chaos (*ex nihilo*), the Lord fashioned order. (Genesis 1) Chaos is nothingness; order is somethingness.



An ordered universe is evidence in itself of an ordered Creator. While the universe itself reflects the divine and ordered nature of its Creator, it is in human beings (who bear the image of their Creator) that the image of order is demonstrated in *our ethical behavior*, our decorum. Human beings, by virtue of bearing the image of their Creator, and Christians especially, in being Christ-bearers recognize the necessity of proper decorum.

The Church and Orthodox Christians, are the standard bearers of decorum. Decorum (or as Cicero describes it himself as becomingness) is revealed in time and space. Time, space, people, objects, every created thing, has a level of decorum to which any Christ-bearer responds, and indeed, any civilized society. Western Civilization, and most profoundly, Christianity, has appropriated the obvious in the delineation of different aspects of creation between the sacred and the profane. It is widely understood among Orthodox Christianity that all Creation is sacred. However, decorum recognizes a certain distinction in the sacredness and profane-ness of different aspects of Creation. For instance, an altar is different from an outhouse, a church is different from a barn, and a playground is different from a sanctuary. The former are sacred. The latter are profane. **(Ed. Note - this distinction is being terribly blurred in our age!)**

We see this juxtaposition throughout ordered society. We go to a ball game to have a good time and enjoy ourselves, drink a beer, hang out with our friends, and cheer rowdily for our team to win an arbitrary game. The game is played in the dirt with players that chew and spit, slide in the dirt, and sometimes fight with one another. However, at the beginning of the game, everyone is silent, stands, gentlemen remove their hats, and we all stand solemnly for a sacred moment while our Nation's National Anthem is played. At a parade, when the National Colors go by, we put down our cotton candy or our beer, place our hand over our hearts, and render honors to a cloth symbol of our solidarity as a Nation. This is another sacred time and place, and we treat it so. The rest of the ballgame or parade is profane. The profane is not bad or evil necessarily, but it is not sacred and we do not treat it just as we do the sacred. If we treated them the same, there would be nothing sacred, nothing special. Likewise, when society refuses to recognize the difference in the sacred and profane, nothing is profane, because there is nothing sacred, and civilized society ceases to exist. There are sacred music and profane. There is sacred art and profane. You get the picture.

Western Civilization, since the time of the ancient Greeks, has understood another primary binary: virtue and vice. We have always considered self-sacrifice for the greater good as virtuous. Self-absorption, or selfishness, has always been considered vice. Virtue is sacred. This is why many consider our own American flag as a sacred symbol. The red stripes on the flag represent the bloodshed in selfless sacrifice by patriots who have given the last full measure for the rest of us and for our posterity. Self-sacrifice, perhaps being the highest virtue of our society (indeed Christ Himself says "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friend", is also recognized as the most sacred. Therefore we honor it as sacred for a limited amount of space and time.

Continued, next page



Parish Mission Trip to Grundy – 2017



As many of you know, our 2017 trip to Grundy was very different because at the last minute there were no work projects for our parish work crew: Tim Srtatos, Dean Gakos, Ben Mills, and Karl Bowman. (In the future we hope to establish more community contacts in Grundy for building projects so that we can avoid this kind of situation.) Nevertheless, those who had committed to serving a community supper to our partners in Grundy (Elysa Mills, Barbara Phillips, Catherine Hoyle, Cynthia Patzig, and Father Robert) decided to go ahead with that part of the 2017 plan. In the few days that we were in Grundy, several new ministry partnerships may have opened up for us and, as usual, the community dinner was a great experience for everyone who attended--especially for all of us from St. Nicholas.

Altogether there were about 15 at the dinner. We began with a short Orthodox moleben service (Orthodox, Pentecostals, Catholics and Presbyterians joining in the prayer service was an amazing experience) followed by supper and then a time for our friends to update us about their ministries. Some really good things are happening in Grundy: the Back Pack Blessing program, Boys and Girls Club, and RAM are all growing. Our friend, Lois, who ran the Gift of Love clothes closet for many years, has now refocused her energies on providing shoes – especially to children. There is also a developing plan for encouraging new business opportunities in the area.



The Boys and Girls Club in Buchanan County is headed by a young man who is doing incredible things. He has now taken the program into all the elementary schools in the county as well as into the middle school. He has no permanent space but has convinced the county to allow him to run his program in the schools

themselves. His programs include the standard homework assistance but now offer all kinds of supplemental educational challenges for the kids as well - including a robotics class.. In addition, he is able to provide transportation for the kids back to their homes in the evenings. This is all funded by grants and donations which he applies for continually. He started the Boys and Girls program himself and is now so busy that he is looking for someone to help him.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Mountain Mission School in Grundy which has been in existence since the 1920s. It provides care and education for about 200 at risk children from 15 different countries including Rwanda, Ethiopia, Thailand, Kenya, Senegal, Liberia and the U.S. Since its founding, it has served more than 20,000 children. More than 90% of their students go on to college.

It accepts no government funding so is able to offer a Christian based environment and education. Here is how they describe themselves: “Mountain Mission School is a unique, international children’s mission in the heart of Appalachia, harboring kids from across the U.S. and across the globe. Most MMS kids have lost at least one parent. Almost all are rescued from impoverished, high-risk environments. Like any other children, they have hopes and dreams...that you can help us to kindle.” We hope to explore ways in which we might be able to do just that.

Our commitment to Grundy and Buchanan County is as strong as ever. If you are interested in joining us in this amazing relationship, please contact me or any member of the Charitable Works Service Group. With deep gratitude for all of you in your faithful support of our efforts and in particular to those who have been so much a part of this ministry: thank you!

Small Parish Conference *Cont., from prior page*

The Greeters ministry was discussed. Simple reminders were offered like, smile at people and engage them in the “liturgy after the Liturgy”, i.e., coffee hour. The idea exists in many parishes that three or four Greeters have been assigned and that everyone else does not have to engage with newcomers. Those in the age group 18-25 generally do not desire to be greeted so discernment is needed.

Catechumens bring others more so than Orthodox who have crossed over the line of commitment. A brief delineation of the current generations was presented with that group’s defining moments and peculiarities.

A number of other details were presented and it is difficult to summarize in this brief report. Should anyone have any questions about the event, please do not hesitate to ask. I would be happy to share what I can recall. I do have a notebook full of handouts. Ω



Community Care *Continued from previous page*

So what does the near future hold for both families? The Wrights will be heading up to the Boston area, where Dan will be pursuing a Masters in Divinity at Holy Cross Seminary in hopes of one day serving the church as a priest. Sarah has accepted a position teaching 4th grade at Park Street School, a private Christian school in downtown Boston. Andrew and Ella are still trying to iron out their schooling for next year, but George seems to have the coolest gig--attending Theophany School, an Orthodox preschool!!

While the Wrights will head north, the Alexander family is going west! Bryan has accepted a pharmacist position with the CHI Health System (Creighton University). Laura will be an assistant professor of Religion and Human Rights at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. This position also includes an appointment that allows Laura to combine her doctoral research and teaching with building university/community relationships that support education and advocacy around human rights issues. Benjamin will be chillin’ and learnin’ at daycare, while Maya begins her academic career in kindergarten!

It has been our blessing and joy to have the Alexander and Wright families as part of our St. Nicholas family. May this “new order” that they find in their lives bring them much joy and satisfaction. As others who have gone before them, the love and support of the St. Nicholas parish will always be with them!

Other Important Community Care Notes

- ◆ A big thank you to everyone that assisted the Gavrilovic family prior, during, and after the repose of their wife, mother, and grandmother +Vera. The assistance during the viewing at the church as well as the post-funeral mercy meal was very much appreciated.
- ◆ Thank you to everyone who assisted at the Christening of Wolfgang Ritter with the coffee hour setup and cleanup afterward.
- ◆ We are always looking for parishioners that would like to help and assist with the life events of our parish family. Please contact any members of the ministry group should you feel so inclined to serve in this capacity.

Thanks and blessings to all, in Christ,

The Community Care Ministry Group:

incl. Deena Gakos, Pani Matka Christine Holst, David Murphy, Eileen Opincar, and Elaine Brogan

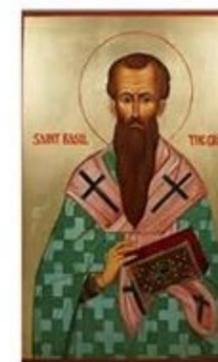
Thinking about Visiting a Monastery?

Have you ever thought you would like to visit a monastery? If so, how about going up as a parish group to Transfiguration Monastery in Elwood City, PA? (Right outside of Pittsburgh) maybe sometime in the fall? This is a beautiful women’s monastery that welcomes guests of all jurisdictions and even those who are not Orthodox. It is also the monastery where Father Thomas Hopko served as a spiritual father after his retirement from St. Vladimir’s seminary. There is limited space for couples and men but both are certainly welcome when space permits. If you are interested, please let Cynthia know as soon as possible and will contact the monastery.



**VIRGINIA CHAPTER
BROTHERHOOD OF
ST. MOSES THE BLACK**

The Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black is a fellowship of Orthodox Christians who are committed to multi-racial, pan-Orthodox fellowship, and study of the ancient African roots of our faith.



**Compline & Canon Prayers for
Racial Reconciliation
Friday, August 25th
@ 7:00 pm
St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church
1520 Todds Lane
Hampton, VA 23666**



Contact: John Gresham, Jr
804-514-2563, johngrejr@yahoo.com

VA BSMB Website:
desertfathersdispatch.org



Facilities Master Plan

Wait on the Lord: Be courageous, and strengthen your heart, And wait on the Lord. - Psalms 26:14
Plans are nothing; planning is everything - Dwight D. Eisenhower

The Lord calls us to patience and patience has certainly been important in the slow development of the Facility Plan for the parish of St. Nicholas. After a long hiatus over the spring and part of the summer in the development of the plan, I hope to revive this effort in the coming weeks and – Lord willing – engage the parish in a planning process this fall. With the falling asleep of my dear departed mother this spring and the changes that brought to our family, my focus has been taken away from this process but I hope to rekindle the flame and get back into it.

Here's where we are in the process – in late winter, we completed the Assessment phase. This was a close look at the state of the building and grounds of St. Nicholas that culminated in a detailed write up of the state of repair and needed improvements. Of course, this was only an assessment of what it would take to bring the building and grounds back to a state of good repair – not a look at future expansion and growth potential. That is supposed to be the next step. Stage 2 is the creation of the Future Development Program, followed by stage 3; Alternatives and stage 4; Final Design. This next stage of the development program will require the input of all the Service Groups as to what their anticipated future needs are and how these needs could be accommodated through reconfiguration or expansion of the building.

As I ponder the work that will be needed on the Facilities Plan, not to mention once the plan is complete, the work it will take to repair and grow our parish in the future, I must admit I am humbled. However, as I look at the Orthodox churches of Pennsylvania or Ohio built a hundred or more years ago and still standing that were founded by men and women with probably less material means and leisure time than we have today and I am humbled even more. Somehow, these families of modest means but rich faith built churches that were so solid and beautiful and still stand as a testament to their priorities and their purpose. These churches are the one thing standing long after these families have died that can serve as a testament to what was important in their lives. Their houses have been sold, their possessions dispersed but their churches still stand to tell future generations something about how these generations lived and what they valued. Inevitably, it makes me wonder what our generation of Orthodox Christians here in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains will have to tell our story a hundred years from now. And yet, the Lord does not live in houses made by men but in our hearts and souls. Therefore, it's good to remember what General Eisenhower said – “plans are nothing; planning is every thing.” Whether we achieve a great and beautiful building in our lifetimes is not nearly as important as the process we will take in the effort to do so. By directing our hearts and minds to the work of planning and building for something that is bigger than us and more important than our day to day lives, we will take some critical steps towards working out our salvation on earth.

We all have demands on our time and our resources, some more than others. I definitely feel those demands myself and yet I will keep persevering in this planning process and make what humble offering of my time and energy that I have towards this important and blessed work. Sometimes I know I won't be giving it my all but I will do what I can and I hope that you can join in and be part of something that is bigger than any one of us. So, as the summer winds down and turns into fall, stay tuned for updates, requests and questions that will invite you to join in a process of holy master planning!

Vladimir Gavrilovic, Building & Grounds Service Group co-leader

Dormition Homily, cont. from p.1

spontaneously suffer, and suffer unto death, in that material body, gaining immortality through corruptibility? (And, again, ascending to the Father, He drew His Mother, according to the flesh, to His own Father, assuming into the heavenly country her who was heaven on earth. Today the living ladder, through whom the Most High descended and was seen on earth, and conversed with men, was assumed into heaven by death. To-day the heavenly table, she, who contained the bread of life, the fire of the Godhead, without knowing man, was assumed from earth to heaven, and the gates of heaven opened wide to receive the gate of God from the East.

Today the living city of God is transferred from the earthly to the heavenly Jerusalem, and she, who, conceived her first-born and only Son, the first-born of all creation, the only begotten of the Father, rests in the Church of the first-born: the true and living Ark of the Lord is taken to the peace of her Son. The gates of heaven open to receive the receptacle of God, who, bringing forth the tree of life, destroyed Eve's disobedience and Adam's penalty of death. And Christ, the cause of all life, receives the chosen mirror, the mountain from which the stone without hands filled the whole earth! **Ω**

it makes me wonder what our generation of Orthodox Christians here in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains will leave



Small Parish Forum - Pittsburgh, 2017

by T. Basil Finnegan



In mid-July I traveled to Pittsburgh to attend the annual Small Parish Forum hosted by the OCA Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. The theme of this year's forum was titled *Building a Bright Parish Future by Becoming a Community of Engagement*. A number of similar forums have been held annually by the OCA to develop and strengthen the churches, most of which are small. The main presenter, a lay leader named Joe Kormos, has stated since the conference that he thought it was the best one to date. There were about 65 people most of who were from the OCA. One third were clergy and included Archbishop Melchisedek (Pleska) of Pittsburgh, Bishop Paul (Gassios) of Chicago, priests, deacons, two nuns and one igumen. One priest was from ROCOR, two laymen were from the UOCofCanada. I was the only attendee from the UOCofUSA. Many came from Pennsylvania, others hailed from Florida, Ohio, Kentucky West Virginia, Michigan, Missouri,

New Jersey, New York, and Indiana.

Some of the stories told by the participants were inspiring. All were hopeful, even one tale of a near death experience of the entire parish. We were reminded that parishes can and sometimes do die. I was put in mind of the responsibility each of us has for the health of the parish, not just the pastor. One parishioner was so delighted to report that after several years with no priest they finally got a full-time pastor and things were beginning to turn around for them. Another recounted that his parish has 18 members, 11 of whom are on the parish board more in attendance on Sunday, but with an 11 member board, several of whom are “gatekeepers” which means nothing happens in the parish without the consent of these long-time parishioners.



Some of the group exercises were on topics we at St Nicholas have already developed, e.g., Vision and Mission Statements. However, we should not forget that we have all participated in creating our strategic plan. One suggested application was to “hold the board accountable” to parish-developed goals, e.g., asking how a particular board decision will support/advance/align with the stated goals and

values of the parish as embodied in our strategic plan. One item that should be discussed at St Nicholas is how our strategic plan is in harmony, or not, with the document titled *Strategic Plan for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its Parishes*.

The most extensive workshop was paring down a list of principles for becoming a small Orthodox Parish with a bright future. The premise for the principles that follow is **Small is OK. Really.** Parishes don't have to be big to live a life in Christ. A clinic is not a major hospital but both minister to the infirm. Contenders that rose to the top are (in no particular order) **Parish is a Living Organism, Cultivate Love and an Active Spiritual Life, Build Fellowship, Don't Cater to Youth** (offered by a young attendee), **Replenishing is Imperative** (parishioners do repose and relocate), **Effort Pays Off, Take Risks,** and **Church is for Everyone.** Regarding this last principle, OCA studies have found that parishes who perceive themselves as friendly but are not making new disciples may really just be friendly to each other and not necessarily to visitors.

Under miscellany, a survey of 194 Orthodox converts found: 60% were male, almost entirely Caucasian, 20% Roman Catholic, 34% Protestant, 9% Episcopal, 8% non-Christian, and most found Orthodoxy on their own, i.e., not invited to Church by a parishioner. The number one difficulty reported by converts was the ethnic qualities of a parish by 41%, i.e., language other than English and customs other than American, followed by veneration of the Theotokos 27%, complexity/unfamiliarity with Liturgy 25%, and icons 18%. As a convert parish, we don't have the challenging of dealing with ethnicity as hindrance. On the from previous hand, even a parrot can be taught to say *Ispola Eti Despota*.



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