

Anniversary Edition of the Lampada

Our next Lampada is planned to be a special edition dedicated to the 20th Anniversary of St. Nicholas Parish. What is envisioned is a celebratory edition, recalling the people, the stories and the faithfulness of He Who has sanctified, inspired and moved us toward His Kingdom. Toward that end I would ask for some additional assistance in producing the next edition. If you can assist with layout, artwork or any of the following see below:

Pictures - while some are available, if you have any that particularly meaningful or timely please send them along with a caption or explanation.

Personal Stories - these could speak to the experiences of people and our parish life. This can come not only from current members but others who have been central to our parish life - these need not come just from leaders or long time active members, but others as well, including students.

Youth - It would be wonderful to get a 'snapshot' of how our youth have been an essential part of parish life

Meaningful Reflections - Given the many gifted and creative writers in our parish perhaps you can pen something that speaks to the meaning of this event.

Timeline and Events - Summary of the parish history across the decades (maybe 1500 words and a chart of events)

Ministries - Charitable Efforts - large and small, ongoing and one-time efforts that embody the Spirit of St. Nicholas

Financial Stewardship - summary of how we have been blessed by sacred offerings of God's people.

Can you help? If so then:

- 1) Notify Fr. Robert (fr.r.holet@uocusa.net) of what you can or would like do - no later than Sat. March 10th. Be creative!
- 2) We will discuss your contribution - with a goal of completing it by April 1st (to avoid the busy Paschal season.)

We hope to do a broad circulation of this Anniversary edition in the coming months - to past members and friends of the parishes. Let's make this a truly special edition and keepsake for years to come.

Next Lampada Deadline - April 10th Themes: 20th Anniversary Celebration



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

Address Correction Requested



Great Lent, 2018

Lampada

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



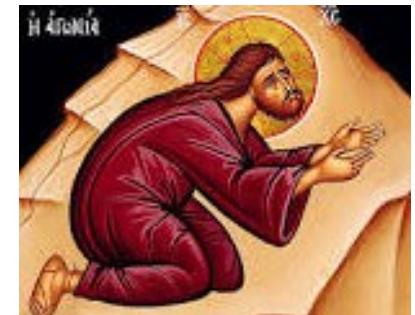
Great Lent Epistle

Permanent Conference of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Beyond the Borders of Ukraine

To: The Reverend Presbyters, The Honorable Diaconate in Christ, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of our Ukrainian Orthodox communities Beyond the borders of our ancestral homeland, Ukraine

Beloved-in-Christ!

We, Orthodox Christian faithful, cry out to our heavenly Father with the heartfelt plea, "My compassionate Lord, call me back to Eden!" at Vespers on the eve of the Sunday commemorating Adam's expulsion from Paradise. We stand together on the threshold of the Holy & Great Fast, preparing to depart on our forty-day sojourn; our collective gaze is trained on the horizon and on the dawn of the New Day, illuminated by the brilliant light of the empty tomb of the New Adam; the light which signifies a promise kept through the act of great sacrificial love, which affords us the possibility of *our return to Eden!*



In these present days, we find ourselves amid a world saturated with the temptation of pride and conscious, deliberate overconsumption for self-satisfaction and the acquisition of material excess. It is becoming – at a frighteningly rapid rate – ever more devoid of acknowledgement of both God's law, on the one hand, and the reality of sin, on the other. The deception of the godless idea which attempts to convince us that we can embrace all things that bring

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Springtime Events and Special Parish Activities



With the arrival of Great Lent, we know that this begins a special season in the Church and things get rather busy. Rolling into the preparations for Holy Week and Pascha will be a specially important semi-annual Parish Meeting (Sunday, March 25) where we will address the usual items like approving an annual budget. But we will also be introducing a process to develop our New Facility Master Plan. With the occasion of the 20th Anniversary forthcoming, the parish board will be outlining several major initiatives such as a plan to eliminate the parish debt (in 5 years), the Metropolitan's visit on Saturday, April 21st and the parish homecoming on Saturday, August 18th.

These are exciting events that will have an impact not only on our parish life today, but for years to come. We can allow this time of Great Lent to be a time of prayer and discernment about these things - not only as to whether we should do them, and how we should go

about the process, but also how each one of us can personally participate in some aspect of this work - using the blessed gifts and talents that we each have, to apply them diligently, faithfully and prayerfully to the task at hand without being 'driven' by such things.

Doing so we will find God's presence in our works - as we pray at Matins during the Lenten season, *"May He prosper the works of our hands for us, may He prosper the works of our hands."*

You will find articles about each of these items in this issue of the Lampada, with an array of other, important news notes and reports from our service groups.

May this time of Great Lent indeed be a blessed time for all in our community!

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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: Dean Gakos

Treasurer: Karen Gavrilovic

Secretary: Karen Bowman

At Large: Greg Stronko

Service Group Leaders

Hospitality: Randy Brogan, Chris Harrison

Liturgy: Open

Charitable Works: Open

Evangelization: Open

Buildings/Grounds: Mager Koromhas

Library-Bookstore: Stanley Bright

Religious Formation: Basil Finnegan

Parish Ministry Coordinators

Church School: Deena Gakos

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.holet@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. Social media is not appropriate for personal communication on parish matters.

Liturgical Services Schedule

Subject to Change - See the Online Calendar for Updates

Sunday, February 25	First Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of Orthodoxy
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
	6:00pm Vespers for Sunday of Orthodoxy <i>at St. Andrew Church, Ashland Va.</i>
Tuesday, February 27	12noon Right to Life Vigil - Moleben <i>at Planned Parenthood</i>
Wednesday, February 28	6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 2	6:00pm Lenten Vespers <i>for the Departed</i>
Saturday, March 3	8:00am Divine Liturgy (<i>Faithful departed</i>) 4:00pm Great Vespers
Sunday, March 4	Second Sunday of Great Lent - St. Gregory Palamas
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
	6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
	6:00pm Lenten Vespers <i>for the Departed</i>
Wednesday, March 7	TBA
	4:00pm Great Vespers
Friday, March 9	Third Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of the Holy Cross
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
	6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
	6:00pm Lenten Vespers <i>for the Departed</i>
Saturday, March 10	8:00am Divine Liturgy (<i>Faithful departed</i>) 4:00pm Great Vespers
Sunday, March 11	Fourth Sunday of Great Lent - St. John Climacus
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
	6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
	8:00pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
Wednesday, March 14	6:00pm Akathist Hymn
Friday, March 16	4:00pm Great Vespers - Annunciation
Saturday, March 17	
Sunday, March 18	
Wednesday, March 21	
Friday, March 23	
Saturday, March 24	
Sunday, March 25	

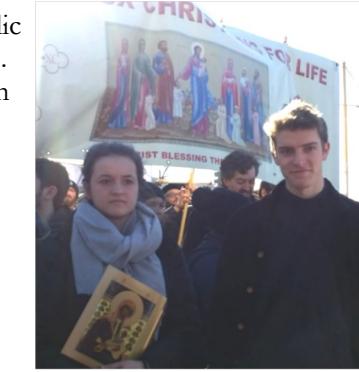
Fifth Sunday of Great Lent - Feast of the

March for Life, *cont. from prev. page*

were exuberant young people, mostly from Catholic schools who had come from many different states. There were also families who had brought children of all ages from babies to high school kids. Signs and banners were everywhere. It was an amazing sight. It was a long, slow march but the weather was perfect, and I was so glad to be there.

Abortion rights advocates have recently become much more aggressive and are trying to influence states to rescind some recent prolife laws.

The prolife effort continues to need help in many ways to insure the right to life of the unborn child. Some things that you can do (in addition to planning to go to DC with us next January) are: 1) become involved in the pregnancy centers in Charlottesville and Harrisonburg as trained counsellors, 2) participate in fund drives for these pro life centers such as the AVA baby bottle campaign, 3) sign up to attend one of the prolife banquets in either Charlottesville or Harrisonburg (our parish always reserves a table), 4) Commit to participating in the silent vigil outside of Planned Parenthood on the 4th Tuesday of every month, 5) write your congressman to support prolife positions, 6) talk to your kids about this issue when they are old enough to understand. Finally, and most important: please pray regularly that the terrible scourge of abortion in the U.S. and in the world will be eliminated.



Young Orthodox adults on the march.

Remembering the Faithful Departed during Great Lent

On three Saturdays during Great Lent we have a special remembrance for the Orthodox departed - praying for them by name at our services. In our parish, we have a Memorial Litiya at the end of Friday evening vespers, at which time we pray for each person on the lists submitted by our parishioners. We also will offer prayers for immediate family members who are not Orthodox - as so many of our parish families converted to the Holy Faith.

These names are collected and submitted on the database form - and we update this information annually on a sign up sheet that is placed in the narthex.

Please be sure to submit your names - and attend these services - for their repose.

Memory eternal!

Cynthia Petrig

Please Remember in Your Prayers

For Helen (*surgery*)
Lydia (*recovery at home*)
June (*hospital*)
Virginia (*hospice*)
Special Needs (Golossonov family)
Glen (*continued recovery*)
Karen (*health*)

Aida (*health-recovery*)
George and Stephanita
Fr. Basil, , Fr. Bazyl
Bruce
Kirby and Brent, and families.
Kathleen and Amanda
Ruth (*faith journey*)

The seventeen who died in the school shooting in Florida and all who grieve their passing
For all refugees who have died seeking refuge from persecution
For the victims of the violence in Ukraine and the Middle East

For the Departed

For those who have died preserving our freedom : soldiers and first responders
And all of our departed family members and friends whom we remember especially during the Saturdays of the Departed during Great Lent

General Intentions

- For those grieving the loss of loved ones in the school shootings in Florida this week.
- For all OCMC missionaries and those they serve.
- For Mrs. Lydia Homick, Elaine's mom, recuperating at home and for Karen Gavrilovic's father, Glen, for continued strengthening of his health.
- For healing of the City of Charlottesville and our region and nation of the civil strife.
- For Dorian, Natalia, Eugene and all who are imprisoned, and their families.
- God's continued blessing and fruitfulness in the holy work offered to Christ by Frannie, Joe, Debbie, Lois, Gertrude, Junior, Jerry, Randy, Rayburn, Shea, Taylor, and all who serve those in need in SW Va.
- For those suffering the effects of the many natural disasters around the world.
- For an end to abortion in our land.
- For a holy completion of the Great Fast for all in our parish.





Recent Happenings in our Community



There's always something going on in our parish!

In January, we celebrated the baptism of the newest member of the Hamilton family - Matthew and now the newest member of our parish family.

In February, we bid farewell to Missionary and now Grandfather, Bill Black, who returned to Kenya to continue his OCMC missionary activities with OCMC. Bill's last weekend with us was Sunday, February 4th, which coincided with our parish's second 'Souper Bowl' Sunday charity soup lunch - held this year in support of the Soup Kitchens in Ukraine served by the St. Andrew Society and supported by our Metropolia.



We offer special thanks to our Hospitality group members who have a 'lot on their plate' especially with our Lenten Potluck, Leader's Retreat, Paschal meal, Beer and Brats social and the Bishop's visit in the next two months!

Let's support these efforts in the coming weeks in whatever ways possible!.



March for Life, cont. from prev. page

with sinners; with those who repent, rejoice...

Be a partaker in the sufferings of all men, but keep your body distant from all. Rebuke no man, revile no man, not even those who live very wickedly.

Spread your cloak over the man who is falling and cover him.

My Brothers and Sisters, let us be pro-life and thus not oppose Christ's dying for the life of the whole world. Let us be pro-life and be against anything that injures life, against any violence, under any circumstances. Let us be pro-life and understand the kinship of all people and even of all other creatures and all things. Let us be pro-life and unable to endure the injury done to any creature.

May we be all this to the glory of our Almighty God, revealed in Trinity at the rive Jordan, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

On January 19th several members of our parish joined the Pro Life March in D.C. which annually commemorates the deadly Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision. For those who went, it was a wonderful and remarkable day. Father Robert, Pani, and Cynthia rode up on a bus with pro-life supporters from local Catholic Churches while Patricia Hardesty also joined a Catholic group going to D.C. from Staunton. When we arrived in front of the old Smithsonian building on the Capital Mall, there were already so many buses and people that we were never able to meet up with each other – nor find the Orthodox ProLife group led by Metropolitan Herman. We worked our way over to the stage where opening prayers and various speakers were scheduled before the march actually began. The program opened with a beautiful, very Orthodox prayer given by Metropolitan Herman (above). The speakers who followed were amazing – giving witness of wonderful consequences of choosing life for an unborn child even when doing so involved risks and/or hardships. One powerful part of a witness was to see the beautiful four year old girl whose parents had been told that they should end that pregnancy because the child had too many medical problems to survive. They trusted God and there in front of us was a lovely chatterbox of a little girl!

The March itself was massive – many thousands marching to the Supreme Court building. Most of those who marched



Check out the Pro-Life info in the Narthex

Liturgical Services (cont. from previous page)

Annunciation, St. Mary of Egypt

Wednesday, March 28	8:45am	Matins
	9:30am	Divine Liturgy
Friday, March 30	6:00pm	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
Saturday, March 31	6:00pm	Vespers for Lazarus Saturday
	8:00am	Divine Liturgy - Lazarus Saturday
	4:00pm	Great Vespers - Palm Sunday

-Beginning of the Great and Holy Week -

Sunday, April 1

Palm (Flowery) Sunday

8:45am	Matins
9:30am	Divine Liturgy

Monday, April 2

Great and Holy Monday

6:00pm	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (2 hrs)
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Tuesday, April 3

Great and Holy Tuesday

7:00pm	Bridegroom Matins (1.75 hrs)
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Wednesday, April 4

Great and Holy Wednesday - The Anointing

6:00pm	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (1.75 hrs)
7:45pm	Service of Holy Anointing (1.5 hrs)

Thursday, April 5

Great and Holy Thursday - The Mystical Supper

5:00pm	Vespers - Liturgy of St. Basil (2.5 hrs)
7:30pm	Matins for Great and Holy Friday - Reading of Passion Gospels (2 hrs)

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY - THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD

8:00am	Royal Hours for Great Friday (2 hrs)
6:00pm	Great Vespers with Procession of the Holy Shroud (1.5 hrs)
9:00pm	Jerusalem Matins (2.5 hrs) followed by All Night Vigil at Tomb

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY - DESCENT OF OUR LORD INTO HADES

12:00n	Paschal Vigil: Vespers - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil (2.5 hrs)
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HOLY PASCHA - THE FEAST OF FEASTS: THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

11:45pm	Midnight Office
12:00mn	Procession - Resurrection Matins
	Divine Liturgy of Pascha (2 hrs) followed by Blessing of Paschal Foods/Fellowship Meal
9:30am	Paschal Vespers (not Divine Liturgy)
9:00am	Divine Liturgy - Bright Monday
4:00pm	Great Vespers for Thomas Sunday



**Many
Blessed
Years!**

Birthdays

- April 27

Saints Days

Confessions for Great Lent

* After Lenten Services - including Saturday Vespers

* Anytime - By Appointment

Please do not wait until Holy Week to make your Confession - rather confess your sins, and allow the time of Great Lent to be a time of healing of your soul as you struggle against the tendencies and temptations you may experience.

Continued, next page



Liturgical Services (cont. from previous page)

Sunday, April 15	Second Sunday of Pascha - Thomas Sunday	On Sunday, February 25th, we anticipate the arrival of Michael Kapeluck, who will be in town to complete the execution of the Pantocrator icon in the dome of our parish nave, and install the icons of the prophets which have been completed in his studio in Pittsburgh.
	8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy	 Holy Prophet Elisha
Tuesday, April 17	6:00pm Moleben	
Saturday, April 21	Parish Twentieth Anniversary Celebration	
	9:30pm Hierarchical Divine Liturgy - <i>to be celebrated by His Eminence Met. Antony</i> 12:30pm Fellowship Brunch - Greencroft Club <i>No Vespers this day</i>	
Sunday, April 22	Third Sunday of Pascha - The Holy Myrrbearers	The work is anticipated to take a little less than a week, so it will be necessary to make accommodations in the church for those days, for the Lenten services. On Wed. Feb. 28th, during our Lenten meal following the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, we'll ask Michael to offer a few remarks and answer questions on the icons.
	8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy	If he is able to complete the work by Saturday, March 3rd, we will need some help to remove the scaffold from the nave.

Ongoing and Special Events Calendar

--- Podcast Study Group Schedules to be announced ---		
Parish Prayer Vigil - Right to Life	12noon	Tuesday, February 27
Religious Formation Service Group	6:30pm	Tuesday, February 27
Parish Leaders' Meeting	TBA	A Saturday in March
Charitable Works Service Group	4:00pm	Saturday, March 3
Evangelization/Outreach Service Group	6:00pm	Tuesday, March 6
Parish Board Meeting	6:45pm	Tuesday, March 8
Buildings and Grounds Service Group	6:00pm	Thursday, March 8
Library Bookstore Service Group	2:30pm	Saturday, March 17
Liturgy Service Group	2:30pm	Saturday, March 17
Parish Prayer Vigil - Right to Life	12noon	Tuesday, March 27
Religious Formation Service Group	6:30pm	Tuesday, March 27
Work Party - Preparation for Holy Week	10am - 3pm	Saturday, March 31
Charitable Works Service Group	TBA	
Evangelization-Outreach Service Group	TBA	
Deadline - Anniversary Edition of Lampada		Thursday, April 12
Parish Board Meeting	6:00pm	Thursday, April 12
Buildings and Grounds Meeting	6:00pm	Thursday, April 12
Beer-Brats Bright Week Social	6-9pm	Friday, April 13
Parish Anniversary Preparation Day		Friday, April 20
Parish 20th Anniversary Celebration		Saturday, April 21
Parish Prayer Vigil - Right to Life	12noon	Tuesday, April 24
Religious Formation Service Group	6:30pm	Tuesday, April 24
<i>Looking ahead...</i>		
Mother's Day		Sunday May 6
UVA Graduation Celebration	After Vespers	Saturday, May 19
Mission Trip to SW Virginia		TBA
East-West Encounter		Friday, July 13
UOC 100th Anniversary (At Met. Center in NJ)		Saturday, July 28
Parish Homecoming		Saturday, August 18

Iconography Project Update!

On Sunday, February 25th, we anticipate the arrival of Michael Kapeluck, who will be in town to complete the execution of the Pantocrator icon in the dome of our parish nave, and install the icons of the prophets which have been completed in his studio in Pittsburgh.



Holy Prophet Elisha

The work is anticipated to take a little less than a week, so it will be necessary to make accommodations in the church for those days, for the Lenten services. On Wed. Feb. 28th, during our Lenten meal following the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, we'll ask Michael to offer a few remarks and answer questions on the icons.

If he is able to complete the work by Saturday, March 3rd, we will need some help to remove the scaffold from the nave.

If everything is completed, we hope to have His Eminence, Met. Antony, bless the icon in the course of his visit to the parish in April.

Please pray for Michael as this crowning effort takes place, during this most sacred season - that these icons might be forever a witness of the faith of the Church in Christ as announced by the prophets, giving witness to His abiding presence among us, and instill in us a longing for His return in Glory.

Charitable Works Update

The Charitable Works group began the year with the group leader, Cynthia Patzig, stepping down. Cynthia will still be active in the group though more as a guide for new leadership and working on specific projects as opposed to managing all of it. With that all said, the charitable works group will be trying something different with a rotating leadership so that a few people can try on the position and learn better what it entails. Hopefully this will encourage new ideas and actions. The first rotation is being headed by Gregory Stronko.

Along with the change in leadership we are re-assessing the projects which we have been working on in the past such as: Pro-life, Community Care, Prison Ministry, Food Ministry, Refugees, IOCC-East/West event, LOVE Inc., Southwest VA, Collection for specific purposes, etc... We will likely keep doing all or most of the projects listed however we are looking to be more targeted in some of them since things have changed over time and a new approach may be appropriate. For example, in Southwest VA, our parish has had a positive effect on the community and there are signs that things are beginning a turn around to the degree that we will likely be changing our ministry. We would like to be more selective and target needs which may be different than before.

Another area of need which was put on the spotlight again this year is the pro-life cause. Several members of our parish went to the Right to Life march in Washington DC (see Cynthia Patzig's piece on the march). With the Right to Life march over for this year, we are looking at what can be done to follow up. Currently there are the baby bottles in the narthex and we will, Lord willing, bring forward some other ways in which the parish can become engaged in the pro-life effort.

Well, that is some of what the charitable works group is doing and planning. If you have any suggestions or input feel free to share!

Greg Stronko, Interim Leader

March For Life - Jan. 2018 - OCA Metropolitan Tikhon's Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we know that all things and all people of all times share a kinship, a oneness that even surpasses our understanding. They all have one life and one life only, flowing through everything that breathes and everything that exists. When You came into the world, You did not just become human, but You also took on this one life and clothed Yourself with it, making it Your seamless tunic.



As life is one, all violence of any kind is of the same essence, the tearing of the one tunic. The tearing of the tunic will take many forms, abortion, execution, war, racism, genocide, oppression, slavery, hatred of any kind but the essence of all is one and the same. All such acts are only symptoms of one and the same illness, "the sin of the world," of which we are all part, which is self-love.

It is tempting to place blame for death only on some, but to be pro-life means to understand that violence is not the sin of some, but of all, that all violence of all time is the sin of all.

The truth is that every human being is Your image and everyone's life finds infinite value in You, regardless of one's sins.

Lord, You show us that life has only one source and only one victory: self-sacrificial love. Help us to be self-sacrificial love for all and we will conquer death. As the great Syrian saint, Saint Isaac, said:

Be persecuted, but persecute not. Be crucified, but crucify not. Be wronged, but wrong not.

Be slandered, but slander not. Have clemency, not zeal, with respect to evil.

Lay hold of goodness, not justice. Justice does not belong to the Christian way of life, and there is no mention of it in Christ's teaching.

Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; for this is the sign of limpид purity. Suffer with the sick, and mourn

MARCH FOR LIFE
2018 THEME
01.19.2018

LOVE SAVES LIVES
FOR LIFE





Building & Grounds Update – Facilities Master Plan

I wrote in the August *Lampada* article of the idea of “holy master planning” and after rereading that article I felt a bit embarrassed to have used such a lofty phrase. However, perhaps what we are doing in our Facility Master Plan will one day be seen as holy, at least in hindsight. It will depend of course more on our spirit and intent than our results as to whether it was truly holy or not. If we can do this in the right spirit, God will honor it – as Saint John Chrysostom reminds us, God both honors the work and praises the intent.

So, as we are deep in the Lenten season, it is a good time to rededicate ourselves to this work and trust that this season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving will indeed bring forth the right spirit to our efforts to plan for the long-term future of our blessed parish. Look for an announcement in the coming days (if it hasn't already come out by the time this goes to press) about the parish meeting on March 25th. In addition to the normal parish business meeting, we will have a special session on the master plan in which we will kick off a series of parish-wide planning sessions, as well as share the results of a survey you will be taking leading up to the meeting. The purpose of this introductory meeting will be to build some optimism, ownership and opportunity at the start of the process and to ensure that the planning process is truly participatory, inclusive and collaborative. We want everyone in the parish to feel they are part of this process and to share in the success of the outcome. This should not be a plan developed in isolation by a committee but should really be something that everyone, from the kids to the old folks in the parish, has a hand in.

To that end, we will have a series of three parish-wide work sessions during evenings in the spring. They will focus on the three big questions in any planning process:

1) Where are we?

2) Where do we want to be?

3) How do we get there?

Each work session will involve *you* in the process. Each meeting will have brief background presentations, first on what we have learned about our building and grounds, then on possible alternatives for the future, and finally on a draft master plan. But each meeting will also have a participatory aspect, with exercises where you will be asked to weigh in, share your thoughts and to evaluate our options for the future. We will rely both on what experts can tell us, but also on the “wisdom of the group,” which in this case will be our engaged parishioners, to guide us forward. Our goal is to have a plan that gives us a clear direction for the future of our building and grounds by the end of the summer, so that we can launch a capital campaign in concert with our parish’s 20th anniversary and start realizing our vision as we enter our third decade!

So, coming back to the idea of what is a “holy master plan,” we must have a right and true spirit, not only as we launch this, but in every step we take in the process. And part of the right spirit in this process will undoubtedly be a measure of holy patience as we go. There may be twists and turns that we can’t plan for and timelines that stretch sometimes beyond our control, but we must keep our eyes on the road and be patient with the journey. If we do this together and with patience, perseverance and humility, we will get there with God’s good grace. Please join in!

Vladimir Gavrilovic, Building & Grounds Service Group

Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers

Sunday, Feb. 28th - 6pm

St Andrews Orthodox Church - Ashland, Virginia
Fellowship meal to follow.



The three work sessions and what we will cover

WHERE ARE WE?	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?	HOW DO WE GET THERE?
Introductory presentation	Service Group Needs	Present Final Plan
Review Concept Alternatives	Review Refined Alternatives	Create Building Committee
Decide on a Direction	Decide on a Final Plan	Implementation Discussion

Work Party - Preparations for Holy Week!

We will have a parish Work Party on Lazarus Saturday, (March 31st) to thoroughly clean the church and make things ready for Holy Week, Pascha, and the 100th Anniversary celebration.



Please set aside some time between 9:30am and 3:30pm to help with the work projects - typically indoor and outdoor cleanup. Our Buildings and Grounds group will supervise the event. If you can help with the lunch, please contact Randy Brogan.

Pastor's Message

State of the Communion Address

This year, President Trump carried out his presidential duty, giving an address to congress on the State of the Union. While the ‘union’ aspect of our nation seems somewhat wobbly, and while this event is often little more than a time political for tossing political footballs before the Super Bowl, it is hoped that our nation will experience a sense of unity, hope and trust. In the end, such things are never found in the political stadium, but in our Orthodox Christian experience we do experience these things - unity, hope and trust - in God, and in one another. Christ accomplishes through the chalice that which is impossible by any other means (discourse/debate, compulsion or force) - the true union and communion of people with one another, which happens in Him. The Fathers of the Apostolic Age put it in these terms, expressed here in the ‘Apostolic Constitutions’:

O Lord Almighty, everlasting God, gather together Your Church from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom, as this grain was once scattered, and is now become one loaf.



The Church remembers that, as the grains of wheat were ground and combined into one loaf, so the Church experiences a unity and communion with Christ and one another through His sacrificial passion, Death and Resurrection.

So, as is custom, I like to take a few moments to draw forth a few salient memories of the past year, recalling the efforts of our parish members through our Leadership, Service Groups and Ministries, all of which serve as central organizing forces to draw us together not only in the liturgical experience of Christ, but in many other ways, especially service.

Parish Board - Leadership

Our parish leadership board, headed by Jake Ritter, with the capable assistance of Karen Gavrilovic, Dean Gakos, Karen Bowman and Greg Stronko, has faithfully carried out its essential work in quiet, unassuming yet essential ways. Without oversight and execution by our leaders, our parish simply could not exist or continue - whether it's the necessary tasks of financial management and budgeting to pay bills, or those longer term and visionary efforts that are essential to help us define who we are, but what we will do, corporately. In this regard the board has been faced with the challenge of organizing not only the parish 20th Anniversary this year, but also longer term financial goals (paying off the mortgage?, capital campaign?) and guidance for an overall facility plan that will take as much as a decade or more to implement.

Hospitality Service Group

When I think of hospitality, I often think of Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus, and while we know that the Lord corrected Martha for her ‘busyness with much serving’, her desire to provide for the necessities of life for her guests was exemplary. Our hospitality ministry is headed by two guys, Randy Brogan and Chris Harrison - who provide not only for the planning and execution of the special events we've come to know and love (like Beer and Brats, parish picnics and the like), but really that ongoing (yes-I'll call it what it is - a grind) of Sunday by Sunday provision of food and drink for the hungry and thirsty masses as they exit the Liturgy during the sacred ritual we call ‘Coffee Hour’. This includes special provision and care for the hungry little ones who often have special needs. Again, the challenge so often is one of organization and getting help from others to do their part - including the setup and cleanup chores - sometimes left to the one or two faithful ones who remain til the end of the event. Our thanks to all who provide hospitality as a ministry, including Pani Christine and the Johnsons, in the spirit of Martha - and yes, sometimes it's a little less than perfect when the coffee doesn't come on. But it still brings comfort to God's people. Last year Hospitality teamed with other groups to participate in the Souper Bowl Sunday fundraiser for the first time, and the much needed support for the East-West Encounter. If there's something going on, like work party, people are going to be fed, and as the scripture says, “All ate and were satisfied...” - a sign of the Kingdom of God.

Charitable Works

Over the years, our charitable works ministry has ebbed and flowed, given not only the talents, but also the interests of those involved. We've formed regular and ongoing activities like our Right to Life projects: including support of the March for Life, the Ava Care Baby bottles, our prayer vigil on the fourth Tuesday at Planned Parenthood to ever keep life issues before us. The Southwest Virginia ministry, based in Grundy, has continued in a varying array of service activities, and perhaps as much as anything, the relationships that have formed over the years through this effort, as led by Cynthia Patzig, have deeply enriched our parish spiritually, not just those who have participated in the activities them-

Continued, next page



Pastor's Message *Continued from previous page*

selves. Last year's East West outreach drew an overflow crowd of 100 or so, to learn about the plight of refugees, particularly those migrating to Europe from Syria through the Greek island of Lesvos. The beautiful icon in the church presented to us from our presenter Dr. Vasilea Digidiki, and her husband, Hector, will remain both a spiritual inspiration and a call to continued concern and prayer for refugees in need.

The parish continues to support many different ministries locally (like LOVE Inc.), regionally (SW Va.), nationally (UOC of USA charities) and internationally (IOCC, OCMC). While much of the funding for this comes from our parish tithe to charity, make no mistake - it is the engagement of our Charitable Works service group that constantly serves as the 'conscience' of the parish to reach out to others in need, as commanded by the Master (Mt. 25).

While we have not formulated any plans for an East-West event this summer, we may build on the existing cooperative relationships we have with those at St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church, who share the same desire to support pro-life causes.

Liturgy

It is in the Liturgy that the Church gains Her identity; we celebrate the Holy Mysteries that not only initiate us into our relationship with Christ, but also sustain it. With the assistance of Troy Hamilton, we've tried to make some progress on a number of liturgical fronts. Pani Christine has been working with a new group of Readers to solidify our worship, and continues to help others learn the, at times difficult, congregational chant of our tradition. Subdeacon James Guba has served faithfully to keep the altar affairs in order and we will anticipate installing a new crop of altar servers shortly. Others, like our teams of Prosphora bakers keep our liturgical services supplied with the essentials of this ministry.

This year, perhaps we will indeed be able to incorporate some new (youthful) assistants in the liturgical services - having our youth carry out special tasks as participants in the worship of the Church to God. Our liturgy group will be stretched again (as always) with the anticipated visit of the hierarch, and perhaps other clergy in the mix, in our anniversary event in April.

Buildings and Grounds

It seems like B&G always does 'high visibility' stuff, on behalf of the parish as a whole. Our recent upgrade of the HVAC is the kind of thing that takes a lot of planning and effort on many fronts. Last year's dome installation was another example of something that will make a big impact in the way we carry out our Sunday worship. And yes, accomplishment of accomplishments, the shed was cleaned out in a major way last year, and as anyone who's ever had to clean out decades of junk, this is never a small endeavor. This year, Mager Koromhas has stepped up to be a Mager Force (sorry - couldn't resist) in organizing our Buildings and Grounds efforts. And let's never underestimate the sacrificial efforts of people like Tim, Florin, Stanley and many others.

As Mager was able to step up, this enabled Vladimir Gavrilovic to step back from the active leadership of this group, given the enormous challenges of last year. But Vladimir has been working on what he does so well - planning - in this case bringing together a process for the parish to address the BIG time Buildings and Grounds needs that we will try to address by formulating a Facility Master Plan for the years to come.

Library - Bookstore

Very soon, we'll have an 'Open House' in the library that will serve as a reintroduction to the parish of this ministry - featuring the new online card catalog that the group has been working on for some time, courtesy of the expertise of Patricia Hardesty. The group has been laboring to input all of our books, and soon we'll have a real good idea of what we have, and can then ask the question - 'What do we need and how do we acquire such?' I can tell you it was a personal blessing to me to be able to go into the library to find a title I needed to complete a presentation I was working on last month. Better things are on the horizon - for both the library and bookstore. Thanks to Stanley Bright for co-ordinating this effort this year.

Outreach - Evangelization

Sometimes I think the work of this group is some of the most important that we do - if for no other reason, than because we always have an exodus of families from the parish, we have to do outreach to bring new people in! But more to the point, as Christ has blessed us with this 'communion' in the Spirit mentioned above it is incumbent upon us to invite others into this communion with Him. *This is our very purpose.* To this end, Karen Gavrilovic has been a mainstay



Parish Music Ministry Notes

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Make a Joyful Noise to God, ALL the Earth! – Liturgical Music Ministry

Greetings from the midst of Great Lent's increased Church activity! From Clean Week's opportunities to participate every day to the remaining weeks' reassuring regularity of services, this time offers us a ready-made template to get our spiritual houses in order. I look forward (pouting the whole time, mind you) to having "someone else" tell me where I need to be and when. By the end of the 40 days, the trips have become routine - and post-Pascha is much like I remember post-concert times in my earlier days; I am always grateful(!), but somewhat at a loss as to what to do with all the free time....

What does all of this have to do with Liturgical Music? Well, the music of the Lenten Season is different from that of the normal Church services. The services themselves are different – some only offered during Great Lent. For those who tire of the routine, Great Lent makes available to us a rich collection of more meditative melodies. The services themselves include longer, more elaborate prayers (as in the St. Basil Anaphora) and are intended to be sung in a more serious spirit than those of the remainder of the Church Year. But serious does not always mean slow.

Energy. Our Liturgy includes the same Antiphons during Great Lent as at other times. So how do we sing these same words differently, to reflect the sobriety of this time? Well - *every* Sunday is a celebration of the Resurrection. We are thankful, joyful and humbled by the opportunity to join the ranks of angels in their *never-ending* song. We are so blessed to have in this Country the opportunity to attend church and practice our Faith in peace! When I become weary of the discipline, I remind myself of this gift, and somehow God visits, comforts and provides strength and energy to do my own personal spiritual work. I am thankful that I am never alone; and that thankfulness lifts my spirit and allows me to celebrate the [Liturgy/Vespers] with joy.

The singing of the services is the work of the whole body; congregational singing is our way of worship. Enter into this time of the Great Fast with the intent to *really* participate in the work of the people; pick one special service (Presanctified Liturgy, Vespers, Saturday services) and offer your best efforts to join in. If you need help or are unsure, find someone in the congregation and stand nearby. Two voices are always better than one....

God loves a cheerful singer!

With prayers for miracles during this climb,

Pani Matka Christine Holst, Musical Director

UOC 100th Anniversary Celebration in NJ
July 27, 28

Our Metropolia will be celebrating its 100th anniversary at the Metropolitan Center in South Bound Brook, NJ on Saturday, July 29th with a glorious hierarchical Divine Liturgy (outdoors) followed by a gala banquet. There will be educational and historical programs, as well as cultural displays. Perhaps it would be especially nice to have a good representation with a group of parishioners attending. If you can assist with making arrangements for such an event, please contact Fr. Robert.





Lenten Pastoral Letter, cont. from p.1

us pleasure and satisfaction “so long as no one gets hurt,” is nothing other than a dangerous restating of the serpent’s temptation of Adam and Eve to break their covenant with God by partaking of fruit not created to nourish them, and to acquire knowledge not meant for their comprehension. The result of this initial betrayal of God’s commandments did not limit the “hurt” to Adam and Eve *only*, but tainted *all of humanity* with the corruption of sin; for all of us – the fatal consequence of a personal act of betrayal, based on belief in the lie of the evil one that, “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4).

We, God’s faithful, need to be vigilant in our daily lives, lest we, too, be tempted to fall for aggressive, secular, atheistic “enlightenment” which is *not enlightenment at all!* It is, rather, only a symptom of the growing distance between the Lord and His creation and the dangerous comfort with this distance humanity appears to display. Today, arguably, more than ever in the history of our world, the warning of the Psalm to “put not your trust in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation,” rings loud and clear.



And so, once again, our precious Mother, the Holy Church, gathers her children, the faithful members of the Body of Christ, into the protective embrace of the Holy and Great Fast. We will enter the spiritual springtime of renewal, refreshing the image of Christ in us by hearing and declaring the unshakeable truths of the Orthodox Christian Faith (1st Sunday). We shall be reminded that this life and its temporary, corruptible pleasures are not our goal, rather it is eternal, joyous communion with God in His Divine Energy (2nd Sunday). We will be witnesses to the victory of sacrificial, selfless love which brings light, life and hope, conquering darkness, death, and despair (3rd Sunday). We will be encouraged to struggle and battle in spiritual warfare, to ascend the ladder of virtues which reaches up to the Heavenly Kingdom (4th Sunday) Finally, we will be comforted by God’s offer to forgive all our sins – as small or as great as they may be – and we will be inspired to repent, reject the temptations of the world, overcome the passions of the flesh, and flee to our desert where there is peace and where we can hear the call to return to communion with Christ and to Paradise (5th Sunday)!

And so, our dear ones, as we prepare to embark on our Lenten sojourn, let us be of good courage and turn our efforts away from satisfying the wants of the flesh and toward good deeds, to recognizing Christ in one-another – especially in those who are in need of our compassion – and let us commit our spiritual efforts toward receiving God’s grace. Let us not be distracted by the cynicism and empty promises of the godless, but let us stand together confidently as members of the Body of Christ, the New Israel; let us liken ourselves to Old Israel as they took their first steps in freedom from bondage, and begin our Lenten journey with the joy-filled words of the Holy Church:

Let us begin the all-holy season of fasting with joy; let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God: with the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer, the strength of good courage and the purity of holiness! So, clothed in garments of light, let us hasten to the holy resurrection on the third day, that shines on the world with the glory of eternal life!

We, your spiritual fathers, hierarchs, and constant intercessors, bid each one of you a blessed Lenten sojourn, to the glory of God and for our salvation and eternal life!

With love in Christ, the Lord,

+Yurij - Metropolitan Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+Antony - Metropolitan - Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora

+Jeremiah - Archbishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Diocese of Brazil and Church South America

+Daniel - Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Western Europe Eparchy

+Hilarion - Bishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+Andriy - Bishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

Do You Receive the Email Updates from our Metropolis?

There is much that is happening in the Church today both in America and around the world. The Ukr. Orthodox Church of the USA’s Consistory Office of Public Relations sends out periodic emails with information and links to important information - far more than we can ever hope to include in our print publications. Please get in the loop and request inclusion on the list service by sending an Email to: ConsistoryOPR@aol.com

There are other helpful communication modes available as well such as the Strategic Plan Work Group, Youth Ministry, and other ministries that you can also join - send

Pastor’s Annual Report (cont. from previous page)

in this effort, by keeping us up with simple tasks - like providing information via media, and electronic formats, to planning things like the East West event whose founding purpose was to be outreach - sharing the faith of the Eastern Church with people who had no idea about it. Again, events like East West take a lot of planning - from communications to invitations to coordinating internal efforts, and making sure we have enough parking. Karen also serves on our parish board and works with our greeters (another essential bridge to new people), so we’re looking for some additional help to support these efforts.

Lately, we’ve had several other ideas germinating for 2018 - including local discussion groups using the movie **Becoming Truly Human**, to engage people in a faith dialogue and introduce Orthodoxy, to possible outreach events where we’ve never outreached - like Lake Monticello and Wintergreen. And the fields of social media remain ‘white with the harvest’ in terms of communicating the Gospel with many many people. Our thanks to Karen Bowman and Mark Bonds for keeping up with these modes of electronic outreach, including the website, and for Jake Ritter’s efforts to (finally?) get the Internet available at church.

Religious Formation

Our efforts in religious formation of adults have been anchored by Basil Finnegan for a number of years now as Basil has a deep love for the faith and desire to grow in the knowledge of the Faith. Last fall we offered the Jesus Christ in the Temple series, utilizing the skills of Rdr John Hoyle and David Murphy to assist with the presentations, which have actually posted to the Internet on YouTube and available via a link on the website. Hopefully this can be a model for future educational endeavors - especially because our parish is so spread out geographically that Internet solutions may indeed be helpful. Along these lines, a program of local discussion groups, using Ancient Faith podcasts as discussion materials will soon be announced.

Our **Church School**, has been capably led by Deena Gakos - no small task given her need to care for the tribe of her own ever Sunday - but Deena has done an outstanding job of rounding up parents to help provide support for them in their education of the children in the Faith. Our thanks to Deena and the Church School teachers - Greg Stronko and Ashley Malcolm and their helpers, for their ongoing efforts and the special efforts like the St. Nicholas presentation which is always a hit.

Additional Ministries

Our Community Care ministry is a shining light, providing love and care for our own parish families with needs. This is particularly true in times of special need - like new baby arrivals, but also care for families when they face end-of life needs. Having someone to coordinate the ‘Mercy Meal’ after a funeral or care for something that ‘pops up’ is a blessing to us all. And care is reflected in members sending cards and greetings of love - during the holidays and for special occasions like birthdays of our members. Sometimes the small things make a big difference.

Notably, last year, as the time of the passing to eternal life of Vera Gavrilovic was at hand, several of our members gathered to support the family not only in the usual means, but also in the actual preparation of her body for burial, anointing her with oils and providing prayers and support. Those who participated in this more traditional mode of burial preparation, from an Orthodox standpoint, found this to be an important spiritual ministry, in imitation of the Holy Myrrbearers. It would be worthwhile to consider formally organizing such a ministry, to provide a rich support for families facing such a crisis. There are others who have expressed interest in providing ministries of care - including prison ministry, visitation of nursing homes, and the like. While individuals can and do provide such important ministries, organizing and blessing such a ministry makes it far more committed and reliable especially in times of need.

It’s impossible to sum up the entire year’s life or work of a parish in a short space like this. And, importantly, this list does not include the ongoing prayers, visitations, sacramental ministries and special events (including baby arrivals and funerals) in the lives of people and families of our parish that extend to us all. (*Elaine usually gives a summary of this in her Lampada Community Care report!*)

What is clear is that over the twenty years of our parish’s life, the loving ministry to Christ and His Body of our parish members - through sacrificial efforts of love through leadership, service groups and other established ministries - is part of the very heartbeat of the parish community, bringing the life of God and love to us all. We look forward to the ways in which the Lord will enrich and enliven our parish in 2018.





Parish Treasurer's Report

Year End - 2017

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH	Proposed	Actual	
YEAR END 2017	Bud. 2017	12/31/2017	Percent
INCOME			
Collection	133,200.00	158,575.16	119%
Candles	2,700.00	3,998.78	148%
Charity	0.00	3,935.50	
Other	0.00	15,991.00	
Project - Iconography	0.00	5,425.00	
Interest Inc	75.00	73.94	99%
TOTAL INCOME	135,975.00	187,999.38	138%
OPERATING BUDGET			
Building & Grounds	6,375.00	4,737.70	74%
Electricity	3,200.00	2,536.80	79%
Exterior Maintenance	2,500.00	2,155.64	86%
Interior Maintenance	600.00	0.00	0%
Miscellaneous	75.00	45.26	60%
Charity	13,320.00	21,052.11	158%
Communications	2,700.00	2,532.61	94%
Conference & Training	0.00	0.00	
Internet, Web Services	1,500.00	1,057.33	70%
Misc	0.00	0.00	
Telephone	1,200.00	1,475.28	123%
Evangelization & Outreach	2,260.00	1,394.59	62%
Advertising	1,600.00	1,170.00	73%
Conference & Training	200.00	0.00	0%
Miscellaneous	85.00	83.35	98%
Printing & Publications	50.00	47.80	96%
Supplies	50.00	0.00	0%
Event Support	275.00	93.44	34%
Hospitality	2,650.00	2,125.19	80%
Coffee Hour Food	1,600.00	1,632.85	102%
Event Food	600.00	266.98	44%
Event Supplies	100.00	136.40	136%
Kitchen Supplies	100.00	88.96	89%
Miscellaneous	250.00	0.00	0%
Liturgy Group	3,950.00	3,893.96	99%
Candles	1,800.00	1,976.68	124%
Conference & Training	0.00	0.00	
Flowers/Palms	200.00	206.13	103%
Miscellaneous	100.00	360.75	361%
Publications & Subscriptions	300.00	0.00	0%

Financial Summary

By Karen Garibovia, Treasurer

The Parish Board will spend time this month and next working with service groups to prepare a 2018 budget to be presented to the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Parish on March 25th. As we look forward, it is also time to look back (and save time at the upcoming meeting) at spending and income for the last year. See the table above for a year end summary of both income and expenses by service group area. Thanks be to God, and through your faithful stewardship, our income covered our expenses in 2017. A quick look at the percentage column shows that collections were higher than expected and expenses were almost right on target. Part of the reason we exceeded our operating budget (by just 1% overall) is because we contributed more to our charitable works fund than we budgeted since income was higher than expected. The Board was also able to build up our Contingency Fund (intended for emergencies and unexpected expenses) toward the target level.

Account Balances - As of 2/20/2018

Contingency Fund	\$ 25,011.70
General Fund	22,430.49
Project Fund	19,082.11
Total	66,524.30
Mortgage Principal	(\$232,020.25)

Continued, next page

Transitions

Throughout our lives we all go through a series of transitions. Some are great like getting married or having children. Some are more difficult like losing a loved one or suffering an injury. In both instances your church is there for support and guidance.

Over the last year our family has had some difficult transitions. Through a company restructure I lost my job as a Sales and Marketing Manager and Elaine's mother (Baba) fell and broke her leg. Handling both simultaneously has been extremely difficult. Our faith, prayer and the support of our family and friends, especially the parishioners of St. Nicholas, has enabled us to work through these life events.

The Liturgy and fellowship on Sundays has truly helped us "get through" it – whatever it is. I can't tell you how many times a member of the church has asked us how the job search is going and how is Baba? Many people have also helped us by bringing food, performing tasks or calling just to talk. But more importantly, they have indicated that they are praying for us. The prayers have helped sustain us through these times.

Fortunately, things are starting to get somewhat better. Baba is recovering from her injury. Her leg has healed, and she can now start her rehabilitation program. I have found a new career as a Mortgage Loan Office at CBM Mortgage. I have passed the NMLS exam and am starting my training program. A shameless plug...if you or someone you know need a loan or plan to buy or sell a house, please send them my way. [Ed..note - shared with the pastor's blessing!]

Our heartfelt appreciation to everyone!

*But more importantly,
they have indicated that
they are praying for us*

The Brogans

Hospitality Group in Action

Below are the upcoming events that our group is planning for in the coming weeks and months. We will have sign up sheets for most of these events or may task some parish members for assistance. If you see an event that you really want to be a part of please contact Randy Brogan or Pani Christine

Our group meets once per quarter and the exact day will be detailed in the bulletin. Our current members are: Randy Brogan (assisted by Greg Brogan), Chris Harrison (assisted by Sam Harrison), Pani Christine, Hunter and Stephanie Johnson. We're looking for some additional support for these hospitality efforts that serve as the backbone of so many of our parish community life. Topics we are working on:

- Bishop's Visit 4/21/18 Saturday - **Location: Greencroft Club**
- Lenten Pot Luck Meals (Wednesday Nights)
- Work Party - Lunch (March 31)
- Paschal Meal prep
- Holy Week supplies
- Beer and Brat night
- Chili Cook Off
- 20th Anniversary Celebration
- Long Term Kitchen Needs



Any help you can provide for these events is much appreciated, and don't forget to sign up for Coffee Hour – sign up sheets are in the fellowship hall. Thank you to all that participate.

Randy Brogan, Leader



Thank God for the Babas

By Vladimir Garilovic

A *baba* in most Slavic languages means an old lady. It also means grandmother. However, the word *baba* has so many layers of meaning that could never be conveyed in either of these English words. Next to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother, I believe that the *babas* are the saviors of our world. Without the *babas* I don't know how we would have preserved our Orthodox faith anywhere, except perhaps on Mount Athos, which is one place in the world where they are provided no entry!



Who was it that first went to Christ's tomb when the apostles were cowering for fear of the Jews? It was the *babas*. At least some of them must have been old enough to be *babas*! Ever since then, the *babas* in any society have had a unique role as genetic carriers of the faith. Look into the lives of so many men who became saints and you will inevitably find their mother or grandmother who first gave them the precious deposit of faith. Saint Helen for Constantine, Macrina for Basil, Anthusa for John Chrysostom, Monica for Augustine and Olga for Saint Vladimir – they all fed their sons the truth of Holy Orthodoxy “through their mother’s milk” as the saying goes. Clearly God gave a special place to these holy women as the genetic carriers of Orthodoxy through the holy DNA of their souls.

Babas also held a unique position in societies that were hostile to Christianity. Perhaps one of the reasons that the women could come to Jesus’ tomb before the men is that they had a type of immunity derived from their marginal place in the male-dominated society of the time. They were neither a threat, nor an economic benefit to that society so it was safe for them to enter into these kinds of risky situations. Their testimony of the empty tomb finally spurred Peter to venture out at that dangerous time and, risking arrest, to see for himself.

In Soviet Russia in the 1930’s, the state would often post police near churches during holy days to turn back the young productive members of society from going to the services. But the *babas* they would ignore, so that during the most difficult years the services were attended only by ranks of *babas* in black with the only male being the lone priest or deacon. In Yugoslavia in my youth, although communism had softened considerably from those times, I still remember the churches being attended mostly by *babas*, occasionally with small grandchildren like myself in tow. As soon as the children became “of age,” however, it was considered time to get them away from their grandmother’s apron strings and into the “real world” of science, Marxism and education to eventually become a cog in the wheels of a planned economy.

Meanwhile, the *babas* faithfully attended the churches, lit the candles, fasted, remembered the saints’ days and the sacraments. Most of all, however, they prayed and prayed our ailing societies back to health. They insisted that the children be baptized, that the couples have a church wedding and that the dead be buried with the proper prayers before God. They were our consciences, our memory keepers, our intercessors and our saviors. As they buried their sons and grandsons through persecutions and wars, they never lost their faith in God’s redeeming grace. They never turned away, never fell into despair but like Job always trusted in God’s ultimate victory for us.

Our society may have difficult days ahead – we have certainly had them in the past. But we should never fear the world’s demons as long as God gives us *babas* to help us. They are our everyday saints, the angels we greet without notice in our lives and the unfailing vessels of God’s mercy and grace. Let us therefore thank God for the *babas*. As we go through the bright sadness of Lent this year, let us remember sometimes to thank God for the *babas* he has given us in our lives. And for the *babas* who were there in their lives, and on and on, in an unbroken chain all the way back to those brave women filled with the holy Spirit who gathered the myrrh and spices to bring to the tomb so many generations ago. May God give you a blessed Lent!

The Charitable Works Service Group is now collecting non-perishable foods and, specially this season - *paper towels* -during the Great Lent for Crozet UMC’s Food Pantry. You will find the collection baskets near our “babushka” in the foyer. Thank you!



Stewardship Dedication - 2018

Annually in the Fall, I encourage our parish members and friends to consider the blessings the Lord has bestowed upon us all, and give thanks, and make a response of a commitment through a sacred offerings of our first fruits in the forthcoming year - based on a percentage (a tithe is 10%). This is a written commitment freely offered by families on the Stewardship Dedication forms. What is important is the dedication of our first fruits as a percentage of income to be received in 2018. We cannot know what we will be in position to offer because that is **totally based on what God will provide for us and our families**. Last year, some of our families have experienced financial setbacks - so, if you offer a percentage and the amount you receive from the Lord drops, what is offered decreases. It’s a test of trusting God. Likewise, when God blesses a family with abundance, if the offering is based upon a percentage, that family is in a position to offer a larger amount.

To summarize the Stewardship dedications:

Total Stewardship Dedications - 9 families (26% of total) Average Dedication Percentage - 8.9%

Consistent with the data of those who research such things, many who made our stewardship commitment (to God) are often those who are financially not well off. Yet, their hearts turn first to God, and to the Church. This has always been the experience of the Church and from that monetary offering of the first fruits proceeds a generosity of heart, often manifest in a prayerful and caring attitude, a willingness to serve. This is the foundation of faith-in-action which the parish relies on - the sacrificial offerings of God’s people that provide support moreover in a spiritual realm, than even financially.

For each committed-steward we give special thanks. Unfortunately, the percentage of such families is small - and while we’ve been blessed financially in 2017. I’m supposing that some families simply forgot to fill out the form or return it. Other deeply committed families who were strongly engaged in service and support to our parish have departed in recent years due to employment or other reasons. *But, I can’t help but be concerned that the foundation of spiritual and financial commitment in the essential ongoing way necessary to sustain the parish is weaker than we might imagine.*

May God continue to bless, in a special way, those who have grounded their lives in the love and service of the Church, which continues to support our very existence as a parish and inspire each one of us to consecrating ourselves, each other and all of our life to Christ our God. ☩

Financial Summary, cont. from prev. page

Contributions to our Project Funds were also up and will be used to fund the remaining work on the current phase of our Iconography project. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the Parish this year through time, talent or treasure!

Service group leaders and members, please take a look at how well your operating fund and project fund projections matched reality as you plan for next year. If you did not use your project funds in 2017, ask yourselves what steps you need to take to get projects going and ensure that there is both a need and desire to undertake a project. As Father Robert advised in a recent e-mail to service group leaders: “the key with the projects is – WHY do we want to do something? What’s the driving force and benefit? If there’s a good Why – then it will gain support. We don’t do things just because we ‘did it last year’.

Looking ahead to next year, we know we will have some one-time special expenses related to our 20th anniversary events and work on our Facilities Master Plan. Because of rising interest rates, our mortgage reset and will increase by approximately \$300 a month – that is an annual operating budget increase of \$3,600 that will have to be addressed in our 2018 budget.

As we prepare the budget for next year, and as we enter this Paschal season, please pray for discernment for your Parish Leaders as we prepare for the “Martha” work ahead! ☻

Fr. Robert



Church School Events

Our school year is quickly moving along! In December the church school students gathered at the church for a special cleanup of our school area. The students did a wonderful job with their St. Nicholas Day performance. As we enter the Lenten season, we will take input from the students on ideas for a service project to complete together this spring.

Special Centennial Curriculum:

The UOC Youth Ministry has had a couple of special programs for us to include in our lessons, one pertaining to the Centennial Celebration in July. Some of our classes have started learning about the history of the UOC and have learned about Metropolitan Antony's life. Our oldest class will have a chance to compile a tri-fold poster board that shows St. Nicholas parish's history. If anyone is interested in assisting the older students with this project, please let us know! We could use some help from our parishioners who have been here from the beginning to tell the story of our church from past to present to our students! Copies of photos would be appreciated as well. This project will need to be completed in June so that the board can be transported to the Metropolia Center for display at the celebration. The guidelines are:

- Collecting photographs (make copies of the original) that depict all aspects of current and past Church events (openings, dinners, fundraisers, youth activities, lock-ins, organizations, etc.)
- Conducting oral history and transcribe the notes
- Reading about the history of the parish from published anniversary books
- Conducting research in local newspapers and social media
- Interviewing the parish priest



Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide with this special project for the Centennial Celebration! Also, if you have any information on the history of the UOC, our church, or anything that might help the students understand the importance of the Centennial Celebration, please let us know, we would love to have a guest speaker!

Here's a sample of what we have been learning:

We recently restructured our current classes since the move of the Golosanov family. We will miss having Lydia, Madeline and Alex in our classes! All of our students are wonderful to work with and bring energy and new ideas with them each week!

Youngest class- Deena's class worked through the Champions of the Faith curriculum from the UOC youth ministry, and is focusing now on feast days as they present and other important stories from the Gospel. For example, we learned about Theophany and what happens when Fr. Robert comes to do a house blessing. Yesterday we discussed "Forgiveness" and the start of Great Lent in the coming weeks we will be helping each other come up with ways that we can be involved during Lent and our journey to Pascha!

Middle class- Ashley's class has been using the Gospel readings to learn more about God with us, loving Him and loving others. They spend time sharing about their weeks, getting to know one another and have a chance to discuss any challenges the students may have faced that week, and learn to pray for each other.

Oldest class- Greg's Students continue to work through the UOC curriculum "Champions of the Faith". They are also beginning to collect information on our church's history for the Centennial!

Readings from Under the Grapevine : A favorite Lenten activity for our family is to listen to *Readings from Under the Grapevine*, by Dr. Chrissi Hart on Ancient Faith Radio. There are excellent stories for the children, leading up to Pascha. Look at the current episodes as well as the ones from past years. Taking time out to sit and listen to these readings has been a great way for our boys to realize that we are in a special period.

Reminders:

First, look for information regarding a **youth service project** that the children will be completing together in the spring. It is not too early to begin thinking about summer plans! **Sign up begins in February for the UOC Camping**

Programs! There is a "Mommy/Daddy and me" camping opportunity for the younger children as well as programs for our older campers. The Antiochian Village also hosts a weekend for families annually on Memorial Day weekend. Our family went last year and will be returning this year! If you need information on these programs, take a look :

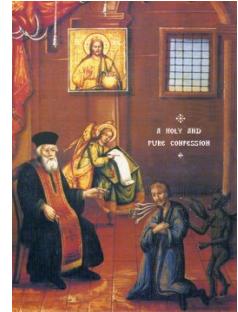
<http://www.uocyouth.org/UOCCP.html> <https://avcamp.org/>

Deena Gakos, Coordinator

Suggestions for Confession - First Confession for Children...

Pastor's note - While this is written from the perspective of a child's first confession, it is appropriate for the children of God of all ages. Parents should clip/save this for reference if they have young children.

Great Lent is the time of the year when we all focus on repentance from our sins, and at some point, children are led to participate in this process by learning how to make their First Confession. It's really important that children learn this process well - because, frankly, it's daunting, and knowing the form and shape of the process helps set a framework for addressing the real issues of thought, attitude and behavior of young Christians. Done well, a child learns a true 'life skill' and the importance of honesty with God and others, and experiences God's forgiveness through the Church. Done poorly (or not done at all) leads to fear, denial of personal sin, estrangement from the Church, and even from God. It is a bridge that must be crossed - a type of a right of passage.



So, when is a child ready for considering First Confession? You know it when you see it. The child is growing older, learning to take on responsibilities in life (and all that entails), and is developing a real sense of inner right and wrong (not just - it's right because some mommy said so). A child that *knows* that he has done wrong is one who is in need of learning how to confess that he has done so. For some children that may happen very early (5 years). Others, for whatever reason, develop this awareness only later, sometimes much later. A child that never develops may eventually suffer develop maladaptive behaviors and mental illness - never developing a true perspective of themselves in the midst of others (and God). By the way, societal forces today often try to relieve children (and adults) of taking responsibility for their actions - essentially saying for everything 'it's not your fault'. In confession, we answer the voice in our heart that says, 'No, it is my fault.' and the voice of conscience cannot be assuaged. This, must be balanced however, with certain other tendencies - again it's very individual - for some children (or adults) to be overly accusatory of themselves, obliterating any healthy sense of self and, ironically, keeping such people from making real progress in their lives against the forces of sin, temptation and the passions.

The child needs to be able to read the prayers (even if the big words are not fully understood) and an examination of Conscience. Note that every child must learn that the Christian Faith and our relationship with God is something for which we are responsible stewards, and our confession is a way of taking responsibility for it. The youth or young adult that does not learn that he or she has a responsibility to God for what has been entrusted to him or her, will always drift away from the Church because it's not deemed to be something that carries enough importance in life that they have to be responsible for it (like all important things).

The process of First Confession is simple - an informal sit down class with the children and parents is scheduled on a Sunday during Lent after Church school, and confession is explained a little bit and a simple book is given to parents to take home to use to work with the child. The form of Confession used in our parish is that one found in the Ukrainian prayer book, and children should learn that form as it is simple, but hits all the important notes. The essential instructions involve things like:

- † What is sin? Why is sin bad? How is my relationship with God and others harmed by sin?
- † What happens to me when I sin? How do my sins effect others? How does God view me after I sin?
- † What sins are 'deadly' and lead us far away from God?
- † What do I need to do about my sins? (ask forgiveness of God, make amends/restitution, resolve not to sin again)
- † How do I prepare for Confession? What prayers are said? What is an examination of conscience?
- † Practical things about Confession - what happens, why, what I have to do, how often I should go to Confession (what are the penitential seasons) What is an '*epitemia*' (prescribed action or penance) and why is it given?
- † What are the fruits or blessings of Confession? Giving thanks to God after Confession and receiving Holy Communion.

If at all possible, the child should memorize the two prayers at Confession in the Ukrainian format. This eases anxiety by giving the child 'his part' to say to start, and conclude. The concluding prayer request, "For these and all the others sins which I cannot remember..." serves as a helpful signal that eases the flow of the exchange in Confession. After a couple of sessions, when the children have been prepared at home, a time is scheduled during Holy Week for the children to receive their First Confession. As a 'right of passage' children who have received their First Confession should begin to participate more fully in the other disciplines of adult Orthodox life - such as the Eucharistic fast (and fasting in general), saying the preparatory prayers before receiving Holy Communion, making financial offerings to the church in small but personal ways, participating in service in the Church (like work party, charity projects, etc.)

First Confession can begin not only a process of spiritual purification that will continue throughout one's lifetime, but also serve as a gateway to spiritual maturity in other modes of spiritual praxis in our lives. Ω