



Thanksgiving Proclamation, cont. from p. 1

They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People.



I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.

And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are

unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln, William H. Seward, Secretary of State

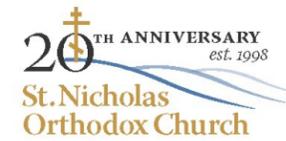
Note: Emphasis Added

Next Lampada Deadline - January 29th



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

Address Correction Requested



Lampada



November, 2018

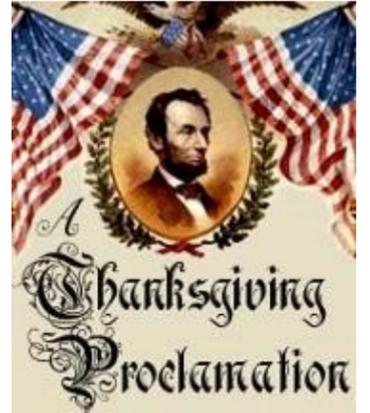
O Lord, You are a Lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Thanksgiving - One Historical Perspective

Washington, D.C. October 3, 1863

By the President of the United States of America. - A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.



Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things.

Continued, p. 16

Combating Pornography Seminar

On Saturday, November 17th, we welcomed Mr. Dan Zeiss and Dr. Chris Buckingham who offered a highly informative program on the psychological dynamics of pornography, sexual addiction and their impactful effects on personal thoughts, family life, society and our spiritual state. Exploring scientific and psychological data from an understanding of our brain processes, we can better learn how pornography effects our thought processes. Spiritual insights from Tradition were offered by Fr. Robert to help us see how our Faith challenges us to a holy way of life of Christian purity wherewe combat the impulses of the flesh through ascetical discipline and regain our clarity of mind and capability of true love in God.



The presenters offered not only theoretical, but practical ways of dealing with such temptation, including inner reflection on our tendencies in our personal lives, as well as the resources available to us in a variety of modes - from psychological/behavioral counseling o technology boundaries and our own Orthodox spiritual treasures afforded us by the Holy Mysteries, patristic counsel and the veneration of the relics the saints, such as St. Moses of the Carpathians.

A summary of these resources will be made available to you, by request.

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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: Stanley Bright
Vice Chair: Greg Stronko
Treasurer: Karen Gavrilovic
Secretary: Karen Bowman
At Large: Amy Skretta
Service Group Leaders
Hospitality: Randy Brogan
Liturgy: Open
Charitable Works: Open
Evangelization: Open
Buildings/ Grounds: Florin Moldovan
Library-Bookstore: Open
Religious Formation: Basil Finnegan
Parish Ministry Coordinators
Church School: Susan Murphy
Greeters: Karen Gavrilovic
Liturgical Music: Pani Christine Holet
Web Communications: Karen Bowman
Community Care: Elaine Brogan
Men's Fellowship: Hunter Johnson
Parish Office - 434-973-2500

Address: 7581 Rockfish Gap Tpk (US 250), Greenwood, VA
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6981, Charlottesville, Va. 22906

Contact Information

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 primarily during travel.

Email is checked daily. Social media is not appropriate for personal communication on parish matters.

Liturgical Services Schedule
Subject to Change - See weekly Bulletin and the Online Calendar for Updates

Table with 3 columns: Date, Day, and Service Details. Includes dates from Sunday, November 18 to Sunday, December 16, with specific service names like 'Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost' and 'Feast of St. Nicholas'.



Library and Bookstore News

Try out TinyCat, our new library catalog interface. You'll find it linked from the parish website, or go directly to it at: https://www.librarycat.org/lib/St_Nicholas_Library

The password for placing holds or checking out books is "myra." Patron records have been created for many of you, but it's easy to make one yourself. If you have questions, please email Patricia Hardesty: patricia.hardesty@gmail.com.

Also, for this Nativity Season we will have a display of good books to read displayed in the narthex, and Nativity-themed card and gifts will be coming to the Bookstore soon!

Patricia Hardesty, Library Coordinator



The Library Home Page - can be accessed from our Parish website

The Origins of the feast of the Nativity of our lord

The Christmas Festival by Dr. Kirsopp Lake

This little book was discovered in a flea market and is actually rather rare as only 500 copies were printed in 1937, recording a lecture by the renowned Harvard professor of New Testament and early Christianity, Rev. Dr. Kirsopp Lake.

The 1930s was a time of immense change in Christian churches, and Lake's contribution was vast in bringing forward ancient biblical, patristic and liturgical texts of early Christianity which help to illuminate the formation of ancient liturgical practices in parallel to what was called, at the time the 'liturgical movement'.

The lecture on the Nativity rightly notes how the ancient Feast of the Theophany (Jan. 6 - NS) included the Nativity of Christ, and this notion of a Theophany serves as a basis of our understanding of the Nativity Feast in the East. In Armenia, the Feasts remain combined. Lake speaks a bit to the efforts of the Church to combat pagan practices embedded in culture- and how the timing of the Feast was helpful for this purpose, and consistent with the greater sense of 'divine timing' manifest in solar movements in the seasons which were also appreciated by the pagans, with a nod to the insights from fathers such as St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Hippolytus of Rome.

The book is a very quick read and useful for a couple reasons. First we can draw upon Lake's wealth of knowledge and research in a short, readable form which can leave one wanting and searching for much more. While there are some aspects of the writing that are invariably influenced by his personal perspective, it does not detract too much from this scholarship. It's a lecture - not a patristic sermon or meditation, but many valuable spiritual insights can be garnered by exploring of the historical roots of the Nativity feast.

The book is available to borrow from the selection of titles on the display in the narthex.





Church Architecture - Narthex *(cont. from previous page)*

Properly, a narthex should prepare us to enter the worship space. The candles, icons and beauty of the space should both welcome worshipers and signal to them the importance of our Orthodox faith and the way we will worship with all of our senses. As we plan for a beautiful new church building, we should start with the careful design of the narthex as it is both a respite from the world outside and a preparation for entry into our own Holy Place – the nave – a space we will write about in future installments – stay tuned!



Great Fennel Plant

Note: Because the Narthex connects the world to the Holy Sanctuary, entering into the narthex is meant to help us to 'shed' the cloak of worldliness to enter into the presence of the Lord in innocence. This is the spiritual meaning of the reception of the catechumens at Baptism in the narthex, as well as the other sacramental movements described above. This movement continues in the Liturgy itself as we are to 'lay aside all earthly cares'. The narthex is a material representation for that spiritual process.

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers - On Building Churches

One day we met on the site where the construction of the new church had begun, and the Elder said, "It is a difficult thing today to build a church. All the demons will rise up." And he told me an anecdote that he had heard in Russia:

"Someone went to hell, but he wanted there to be a church there too so that he could pray. Despite his sinfulness, he loved God and wanted to pray. He began to measure the site in order to lay foundations. A devil asked him what he was doing. He replied: 'I want to build a church so that I can pray.' The devil was uneasy, because it was impossible for a church to be built in hell, and he tried to stop him. He did not manage. He summoned other demons. They could not do anything either. They reported it to their leader. Then many demons gathered and they threw him out of hell, to prevent a church being built."

And he continued: "So we build churches to change hell into Paradise, and if we do not manage to do that, we will succeed in not being accepted by the devil in hell." And he laughed wholeheartedly.



Please Remember in Your Prayers

Josiah (health) Elizabeth (special needs) Becky (Health) Margaret Douglas (surgery) For the intentions of our Men's Fellowship	Fr. John Fr. Nick Alice (special needs) Michele (health) Barbara, Pauline (hospice) Special Intention (legal issue) Special Intention (relationship)	For the Departed	
		+Fr. John Harvey For our fallen veterans For those who seek refuge from persecution especially in the Middle East	For the victims of violence in Ukraine And all of our departed family members and friends whom we have remembered especially during this holiday season

General Intentions

- For the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon Archbishop Daniel and all those involved in the reconciliation of millions of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians to the Church.
- For all veterans of our armed forces, especially those who suffer PTSD and physical afflictions.
- For those who have suffered loss especially those who have lost their homes as a result of the California fires and for all first responders battling to save lives there.
- *Thanksgiving* - for the grace of God revealed in the lives of our parish members over these 20 years. And for the 100 years of God's blessings upon our Metropolia, the UOC of USA.
- For those imprisoned locally, and in our state and nation, especially Dorian, Natalia and Eugene, and Chaplain Joseph, Karen, and all those who serve them.
- For Missionary Sdcn Bill Black, serving in Kenya to be ordained deacon in December(!)



Liturgical Services *(cont. from previous page)*

Tuesday, December 18	8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 12:00n Prayer Vigil at Planned Parenthood 6:00pm Penance Service Confessions for Nativity
Saturday, December 22	4:00pm Great Vespers - Confessions
Sunday, December 23	Thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost - Sunday of the Holy Fathers (Sunday Before Christmas) 8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Monday, December 24	Vigil Eve of the Nativity of our Lord 9:00am Royal Hours 5:00pm Vigil for Nativity - Vespers with Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great <i>followed by</i> 7:00pm Great Compline - Christmas Carols
Tuesday, December 25	Feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ 8:45am Festal Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Wednesday, December 26	Feast of the Synaxis of the Godbearer 8:00am Divine Liturgy
Saturday, December 29	4:00pm Great Vespers
Sunday, December 30	Thirty-first Sunday after Pentecost - Sunday After Nativity (Ss Joseph, James and David) 8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Monday, December 31	Vigil for the New Year - Circumcision of our Lord, Feast of St. Basil the Great 11:00pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Tuesday, January 1	No Moleben this week
Saturday, January 5	4:00pm Vigil of Theophany - Great Vespers with Divine Liturgy of St. Basil <i>followed by</i> Great Consecration of Water
Sunday, January 6	Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, Great Feast 8:45am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Monday, January 7	Feast of the Nativity - Julian Calendar 9:00am Divine Liturgy (Old Slavonic)
Tuesday, January 8	No Moleben this week
Saturday, January 12	4:00pm Great Vespers

Many Blessed Years!

Birthdays

Saints Days

Opportunities for Confession in Preparation for The Nativity:

- † Saturdays after Vespers
- † After Moleben Services incl. Special service on December 18th
- † By Appointment - call for a time

Confession on Sundays is offered only to those with extraordinary needs or those who travel from a distance

By the guidance of the Metropolia: Every Orthodox Christian should avail themselves of the opportunity to be cleansed of sin through the Mystery of Holy Penance in preparation for the Feast, so as to approach Holy Communion in a worthy manner.

Please don't wait til the last minute!



Ongoing and Special Events Calendar

Coffee Hour Provided by Youth		Sunday, November 18
Religious Formation Service Group	6:30pm	Tuesday, November 27
Charitable Works Service Group	3:00pm	Saturday, December 1
Liturgy Service Group (tentative)	6:30pm	Saturday, December 8
Parish Celebration for the Feast of St. Nicholas After Liturgy		Sunday, December 9
Potluck meal, Children's play, visit of St. Nicholas, Charity Award Kickoff of Mortgage Reduction Drive		
Parish Board Meeting	6:30pm	Thursday, December 12
Buildings and Grounds Service Group	6:00pm	Thursday, December 13
Facility Planning Committee		To be announced
Parish Prayer Vigil - Right to Life	12noon	Tuesday, December 18
Parish Cleanup-Decoration for Christmas	2:30pm - 4pm	Saturday, December 22
Religious Formation Service Group		No meeting in December
Evangelization/Outreach Service Group	6:00pm	Tuesday, January 2
Charitable Works Service Group	2:30pm	Saturday, January 5
Buildings and Grounds Service Group	6:00pm	Thursday, October 11
Library Bookstore Service Group		TBA

Nativity Fast Study Series

It's always valuable to spend a little extra time during the fasting seasons to make the effort to explore our spiritual treasures in Orthodoxy a little more thoroughly. This year, during the Nativity Fast we'll do a study series on several topics related to the Feast of the Nativity. The sessions will take place on as follows:

- Wed. Nov 28 7pm - 8pm Origins of the Nativity Feast - East and West
- Wed. Dec. 5 After Vespers Nativity Icon Study
- Wed. Dec. 12 7pm - 8pm On the Incarnation by St. Athanasius

Discussions will take place at church, however we may try to again stream the sessions if there is interest. A signup sheet will be posted in the narthex.

Looking Ahead -- An Artistic Space

Dostoevsky is often quoted in Orthodox circles as saying that, "The world would be saved by beauty." And it's a truism in Orthodoxy that we try to express our highest aspirations using our God-given talent thereby expressing our human dignity.

Our parish is gifted to have parish members and friends with special artistic talents, including those who have displayed their work in public galleries and art shows. In order to allow these folks to share their work with us.

This idea has been percolating for years, but hopefully in the coming months - perhaps January - we can have our social hall suitably configured to allow a suitable display from our talented parishioners. Maybe even offer an Opening Reception / evening wine-cheese event?

If this is a project that interests you and you would like to participate in any way, please contact Barbara Phillips (jeffbarbphillips@gmail.com).



Parish Inherent Weather Policy

The norm for our parish is to always have scheduled services, meetings and events, even in bad weather, unless there are dangerous or problematic conditions, or there is a declared emergency (such as one declared by the state police).



In the winter, we will endeavor to have our parking areas and sidewalks cleared in the event of snow, but caution is always necessary.

If the weather is clearly adverse and if it is deemed wise to cancel services or events, we will do so, ahead of time, via an Email to the parish. Often, it is not known ahead of time, and a decision must be delayed. In that case, if it is necessary to cancel services, we will send out an email by 7am on Sundays and notify local media (radio/tv) which typically run notices. We will also put an announcement



on the parish phone mail - 434-973-2500. There may be occasions where we cancel extra services or activities (coffee hour, church school) but have Liturgy. If it's a weekday and a the weather threatens a meeting, we will again send out an email only to those members engaged in the meeting's activities. The general norm applies - if there is no notification, things are ON.

Please note that conditions in your locale might deem it wise to avoid travel - please be prudent and cautious whenever bad weather arises. If you are unable to attend services - to offer prayers at home and read the scriptures of the day.

Finally - If at any time you have a special need for a pastoral visit at home, regardless of the weather, feel free to Fr. Robert.



Facilities Master Plan Update

Orthodox Church Architecture – The Narthex

By Vladimir Gavrilovic

A quick update on our Facilities Master Plan process... In the past few months, we have come together as a parish to agree on an initial concept for the future – to build a new church temple building with a proper and traditional Orthodox architectural and iconographic schema on our site. Recognizing the complexity of the task, we also recognize that we don't control the timeline for this project. The timing for our effort is truly in God's hands but we will work together as diligently as we can in the hope that we can see a blessed completion someday.

We have not only completed a conceptual planning process but had several meetings with the local government 'powers that be' to ensure that there were no fatal flaws in our plan, and we are now in a process of deeper study and feasibility analysis. This is proceeding on two fronts -one is on the practical side – to continue to analyze feasibility of engineering, regulatory and financial issues with the building out of the plan. The second is on a more spiritual and thoughtful side - to study the traditions of our Orthodox architectural tradition so that we can bring this knowledge to the more detailed planning of the future church building.

On this latter track, I will be presenting a series of brief articles on topics of Orthodox Church Architecture here in the Lampada to raise the collective consciousness on the elements of an Orthodox church building. With our priest's blessing and hopefully his indulgence for any mistakes made by my untrained mind, I will also attempt to explain some of the theological significance of these elements in our liturgical practice.



Churching of Deena and Photini in the Narthex

The Narthex

The narthex is the first part of an Orthodox church one enters. It is somewhat like the entry or lobby of a secular building but it has much theological meaning in the context of an Orthodox church.



Interestingly, the Greek word *Narthex* derives from the name of a plant – the Great Fennel plant that grows in the Mediterranean basin. *Narthex* can also mean 'scourge' (as in the whip used for punishment), as well as container or casket. Sources disagree on whether the architectural feature derives its name from the idea of penitence or containment but the fact remains that the narthex is traditionally the place for catechumens and penitents in the church. It is a place of transition – from the bustle of the world outside to the quiet of the worship space in the nave.

In Orthodox practice, the narthex is the place where a number of services happen. This is a partial list of some of the things we celebrate in the narthex:

- Greeting/Welcoming (including the Bishop)
- Exorcism before the baptism
- Paschal reading
- Lighting of candles
- Churching prayers
- Basket Blessing
- Venerating the icons
- Betrothal before the wedding
- Intercessory Litiya prayers
- Agape Feast (in ancient times)
- In some cases, a place for relics

The overall design of the Orthodox Church is patterned on the ancient Temple of the Old Testament and has elements that are imaged in the Book of Revelation. The narthex corresponds to the open air courtyard of the ancient Jewish temple, where one ceremonially washed and prepared to enter into the holy place in the temple. In many Orthodox churches, it was originally an open porch but has gradually come to be a separate interior part of the church building with doors separating it from the nave. In some monasteries, the narthex opens into a larger space (to the West) that becomes the *trapeza* or eating space for fellowship and other special activities. Our current space is configured somewhat like this.



OCAMPR - The Orthodox Mission of Healing

Our Orthodox Church life is rich with examples of how God heals us - spiritually, physically, psychological and emotionally. That tradition includes the healing process through the Holy Mysteries, repentance and spiritual reorientation, guidance, the intercessions of the saints and veneration of holy relics, etc. But in the best tradition of the the Church, many health care professionals also bring a variety of skills and tools based in scientific methods, to also bring healing. OCAMPR - the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion seeks to bring a type of awareness of all of these two modes of God's healing in our lives. Ruth Garibaldi had an opportunity to attend their annual meeting at our Metropolitan Center on the first week of November.



In early November, the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine , Psychology and Religion (OCAMPR) gathered at our Metropolia Center in South Bound Brook, NJ to provide caregivers in these fields an opportunity for faith development, growth and networking. Our parish was blessed to have Ruth Garibaldi participate in the conference this year, and she will share a bit on her experiences at Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 2.



The theme of the conference was "*Compliance and Resistance: Discerning the Spirit*", exploring the important topics of patient interactions and spiritual engagement in caregiving. The Church has very deep insights on how the dignity of each person is to be respected, while providing needed services, including spiritual support to clients and patients in caregiving situations.

St. Nicholas parish always encourages our faithful to participate in such - to grow our corporate awareness of what's possible, and what we can do in service to Christ. Perhaps there is a conference or ministry area that you would like to explore? It maybe possible to provide a 'scholarship' to assist you in participating. It is our hope that all of these ministries will flourish and that our parishioners will avail themselves of every opportunity to grow in the development of the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to each of us. Ω



Young Adult Mission Trip to Ukraine 2019

Trip Dates
June 1 - 16, 2019

On-line Registration at uocyouth.com
Registration Deadline
January 15

Assistance may be available to parishioners from our charity fund

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS - A GUY'S PERSPECTIVE

Our newly-formed Men's fellowship provides a rich opportunity for the men of our parish ((age 21 and older) to meet in a social context to build stronger relationships of mutual support. In November, a group of 10 men gathered at Fr. Robert's home for food, fellowship and discussion. There was a great *esprit d'corps*, and discussion on many challenges to Orthodox Christian men today. We also talked about the issues of parenthood - summarized in the saying by Carl Jung, 'Men are not born, they're made' - and what that implies for our support for the younger men of the parish.

The Men's Fellowship will meet on the second Monday evening of the month - at one of the homes of the participating gentlemen. The group holds a lot of promise for our future growth. Among the possible activities for the men, in addition to fellowship events could include a skeet shoot, fishing outing, camping outing (maybe with sons), and perhaps a service project. There are lots of possibilities.

Hunter Johnson has agreed to help convene the group - you can reach Hunter at (434) 326-6669 Or email: hmj_mcknight@yahoo.com. Do be sure to contact Hunter to get on the distribution list for the Fellowship, as the communications will need to be maintained internally in the group.



Calling Into Remembrance - in Thanksgiving

When the holidays approach it's a sure sign that another year is coming to a close and with that, at least as I get older, I get somewhat contemplative about the events that have taken place and the people who have made an impact on me, my family and my ministry.

We use the phrase, 'calling to remembrance' a lot in the Liturgy, often in reference to the intercession of the saints, but much more so, the entirety of the ministry of Christ in bringing salvation to the world. This all is the stuff of our Thanksgiving - and the Nativity Feast shows us how God decided to 'kick off' His saving work by becoming human, so that He might be one of us, and bring our own salvation in our very midst.

Another remembrance is perhaps just as important - is the remembrance of what God has done for me, and my life, and my community. Salvation is about *my* salvation and God's intervention in *my* life. This remembrance also leads to thanksgiving, because God's intervention in the world only began with His incarnation, but continued through all of His saving works (Paschal Mystery) and indeed continues to do so in a *personal* way through the sending of the Holy Spirit to us personally. This means that God is forever enmeshed in our life, and He doesn't leave it. He, in a word, allowed Himself to be trapped with us.

So recalling a few of the highlights for me in the parish this year, I'll start with the **20th Anniversary** events that we celebrated - acknowledging God's blessings now for twenty years in our midst. I recall that these events didn't just 'happen' - but required a big effort by our parish leaders to pull together - in event-planning mode. The culminated in



the hierarchical Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan Antony and the festive meal that followed in the Greencroft Club. Recall that this also served as the culmination of another major event, the blessing of the completed dome and Pantocrator and prophet icons that now adorn the Church. To this day, the presence of that icon inspires me to be aware of the presence of the Incarnate Lord and his dominion over my life and every aspect of it - including this parish. We should also recall the festive homecoming Barbecue picnic at the parish in August and the chance to enjoy the return of some old friends in the renovated Parish Shed. It shows just what can be done with a little extra effort and a power washer! The presentation on the Mortgage Reduction Drive by Jake Ritter helped us to see how the possibilities for the future can be increased by good stewardship of the present.

On the broader scene, this has been an extraordinary year for our Metropolia, as we celebrated our 100th year in a big way with the **Centennial Celebration** at our Metropolia Center in NJ. Despite the great loss of the presence of Metropolitan Antony due to the car accident, and Archbishop Daniel fulfilling other important duties internationally at the behest of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the celebration had many wonderful moments for all in attendance.

Speaking of remembering the events of the year, it's impossible to forget the major events abroad in the efforts to reform the Church of Ukraine through the reconciliation of millions of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians to the fullness of Orthodoxy through the efforts of His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew. While this effort is much misunderstood, and often politicized (Putin vs America), its ramifications for the whole of Ukraine, as an answer to decades and even centuries of prayer, cannot be underestimated.

In all of this we search for growth, and progress - but also experience resistance and struggle. It will be that way always as even Christ Himself was resisted - as the account of the Nativity in St. Matthew attests. We must *call to remembrance* what our loving Lord is doing in our lives, and give thanks to Him - even for things not yet completed and fulfilled (like deification!), because our God is faithful in all things. Our Thanksgiving to Him, as in the Eucharist, will always lead us to communion with Him and one another in Him.

Yours in the service of Christ,

Fr. Robert



Reflections on the RAM Health Care Event in Grundy - October 2018

From Sue Mathieu

Remote Area Medical RAM in Grundy VA – It’s 4:43pm on Saturday and I’ve spent almost 12 hours loading food carts and then wheeling them around the RAM clinic so I could hand out sandwiches, fruit bars, cookies, granola bars and water. I’m a very very tired puppy who is more than just a bit sore. Then I see a 5th grade girl in a Harry Potter t-shirt I had given a sandwich to around 9am come dancing down the hall. She is almost floating on air, with a my-cup-is-full-to-overflowing smile wearing a brand new pair of glasses. Glasses that let her see the letters in words and the symbols in math instead of a page of blurry gray clouds. I gave her another sandwich and granola bar while we talked about what’s it like when you get your first glasses and can really really see. Then I gave her another granola bar to take home to her brother and she left with her mom. I’m still tired, but my cup is now filled to overflowing too.

This is what RAM is all about. Oh it looks all very chaotic until you watch it for awhile and realize that there is an excellent triage system at work here. A system that is staffed by volunteers who care and who are using the triage system as a vehicle to carry that care to the folks who need medical services of one sort or another. RAM is a one stop shopping kind of medical event with some social service items thrown in. Teeth can get cleaned, repaired, and even extracted as needed. Eyes can get examined, frames chosen, and glasses made that day on-site. Medical exams with routine medical tests are done, flu shots are given, and some prescriptions can even be filled. And all of this is at no charge with every service delivered by volunteers who are there because they care about their neighbors. There is also a clothing give away with a large selection of winter coats, books for the kids to read and keep, and various legal aid and non-government advocacy group information tables. The various schools whose students were manning many of the medical and dental service areas even had tables with information on their programs. (WOW! Careers that aren’t low paying, part time or tied to the coal mining industry!)

RAM brings more than a day of medical services to an under served location in a fiscally stressed area of Virginia. It brings knowledge, it brings loving care, and it brings hope. It reminds everyone there that we are none of us alone. I saw that all day long from my little food cart, I heard that all day long as I spoke to this or that person. I hope I can do this again next year.

From Barbara Philips

The trip to RAM was a learning experience for me. Although we were told beforehand approximately how many people had come in past years, many from long drives away and spending the night before in cars, seeing them made me appreciate the great medical needs in the area. As the day grew lighter and folks seemed more awake, I found they were easy to talk with and I learned a little about their lives, frustrations and hopes. Many volunteers came from other states and there were quite a few young medical and law school students helping as well which was refreshing to see. We volunteers were spoiled with plenty of delicious home cooked food, coffee at any time and lively music & dancing. It was awe inspiring to see how quickly and efficiently the different medical “departments” set up, took down and packed their equipment into large vans and that they were able to dispense glasses, dentures, and give vaccinations in a relatively short time. As always, I received much more than I gave.

From Cynthia Patzig

October proved to be a significant and busy month for members of the Charitable Works Service Group because some of us participated in the RAM (Remote Area Medical) event held in Grundy Virginia from Friday, October 5th through Sunday, October 7th as well as the Central Virginia Pro Life Banquet held on Saturday, October 20th. For me, both events were amazing!



RAM in Action

Continued, page 7



Mortgage Reduction Drive - 2018

In the past few months, as part of the larger 20th Anniversary activities, the parish has come to a common decision concerning the importance of reducing or eliminating our parish mortgage. While a more thorough presentation was offered at the August picnic, it’s important to rally the resources of our parish members to engage in a dedicated common effort to this goal. Monthly, we pay approximately \$2000 for our mortgage (principal plus interest). Imagine what we could do if we didn’t have that expense! Currently the balance on the mortgage is about \$220,000. It would be much lower if we could have made additional principal payments directly toward the balance, however we were faced with three major projects costing over \$50,000 each in prior years, including:

- Requirements of the Special Use permit just to move in
- A new Roof
- Replacement of the entire HVAC system

This \$150,000 paid toward the mortgage early would have eliminated it!

Nonetheless, early payment of the mortgage *now* has great advantages. A \$1000 donation applied directly to principal, in effect, lops off over \$2000 in accumulated principal and interest over the life of the loan. The earlier the payments the better, as interest gobbles up half of each month’s payment now. When we accelerate payoff, the interest effect is compounded - in our favor. And speaking of interest - the nature of our variable commercial rate requires us to adjust the rate annually, and interest rates are predicted to increase in the coming years - perhaps dramatically. Prepayments get us ‘ahead of the wave’ in the event that interest rates rise significantly.

We will have a celebratory kickoff of the Mortgage Reduction Drive at our St. Nicholas Event in December, and will roll out special informational materials for each family (parish members and friends) to consider how you might be able to support this common effort. We will also invite our past members to participate through a mail solicitation, and you are also encouraged to provide materials to family members and friends, particularly those who have participated actively in our services - as baptismal sponsors, in weddings, family members of college students attending here, etc. It’s an opportunity to not only ‘give back’ but to ‘pay forward’ in such a way that we will, in the future, be in an even stronger position to carry out the many ministries and ways in which God calls us to serve. Ω



Account Balances - As of 11/11/2018
(Includes unrealized gains)
As of 11/11/2018

Account	11/11/2018 Balance
Bank Accounts	
Contingency (370)	15,055.90
General (922)	13,938.28
Project (821)	12,628.75
TOTAL Bank Accounts	41,622.93
Liability Accounts	
Mortgage Principal	-219,687.71
TOTAL Liability Accounts	-219,687.71
Investment Accounts	
CI (729)	10,000.00
TOTAL Investment Accounts	10,000.00
OVERALL TOTAL	-168,064.78

Category	9/1/2018-9/30/2018	10/1/2018-10/31/2018	11/1/2018-11/11/2018	OVERALL TOTAL
INCOME				
Collection	13,496.11	8,947.10	3,564.15	113,408.90
Interest Inc	0.00	14.83	0.00	63.01
Misc income	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,017.20
FROM General (922)	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,853.00
FROM Project (821)	0.00	0.00	3,200.00	13,837.29
TOTAL INCOME	13,496.11	8,961.93	6,864.15	141,179.40
EXPENSES				
Administrative	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B&G Op	303.77	379.54	301.89	4,906.62
B&G Proj	224.55	0.00	0.00	411.99
Charity	0.00	1,779.33	0.00	1,779.33
Charity Operating	927.97	0.00	0.00	9,564.67
Comm Op	368.15	185.53	77.44	2,262.77
E&O Op	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,063.44
Hosp. Op	693.28	248.50	67.39	2,100.21
LG Op	0.00	512.52	0.00	3,065.35
LG Proj	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,330.29
Lib. Op	51.87	0.00	54.90	700.92
Lib. Proj	682.50	0.00	0.00	682.50
Mortgage interest	970.00	933.60	933.60	10,511.97
PB Op	4,565.02	13,580.90	384.00	81,645.18
PB Proj	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,882.55
RF Op	0.00	277.18	0.00	499.18
TO General (922)	0.00	0.00	3,200.00	13,837.29
TO Project (821)	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,853.00
TO Mortgage Principal	1,082.21	3,258.61	1,118.61	14,425.34
TO CD (729)	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	9,869.32	21,155.71	6,137.83	184,522.60
OVERALL TOTAL	3,626.79	-12,193.78	726.32	-43,343.20



Community Care News

As the year winds down, the cold winds blow in over Afton Mountain, and the Nativity Fast begins, there's been a lot happening among our church community. Let's review the last few months!

We welcome two new students that have joined us in worship this year. Julie is a first year student and Dio is pursuing a pediatric residency at the UVA Hospital. While we see Julie on Sundays, Dio often attends St. Nicholas for Saturday evening Vespers when he's not working. Welcome to both of you and it's good to have you with us!!

The end of August found us once again saying goodbye to one of our own. Outgoing board chair Jake Ritter, his wife Kelly, and adorable son Wolfgang have headed back to be near family in California. Jake can telecommute for his job and Kelly is working on the writing of her dissertation as well as taking advantage of a travel opportunity to China for three months of study. There is a possibility that we can see them again in the near future!



A very big thank you to those folks who cooked meals for the Gakos family after the birth of their new daughter, Photini Alise! I'm sure that the food was appreciated by Dean and Deena and we are so happy to have the whole family back with us in church. Little Photini will have quite the armed guards with those three big brothers!!!

After all the hierarchical rearrangements and postponements, it appears that Reader Joseph (Bill) Black will be ordained to the diaconate at the end of the year! Finally, the cards that have been signed by the parishioners can be mailed out! There is a card remaining on a clipboard in the parish hall, should you still like to write a little message to Bill. How wonderful it will be in the future to have him back with us at St. Nicholas to celebrate the Liturgy alongside Fr. Robert!

Congratulations to Barbara and Basil Finnegan on the building and completion of their new home on a piece of land destined to become the Finnegan Family Farm. (say that 5 times!). Rumor has it that Basil will become a "gentleman farmer," not to be confused with Mr. Jefferson. We wish them well with their plantings as well as possible bee keeping. Maybe we need to have a contest to name this farm?

Talk about farming.....and taking the opportunity to have some quality family time!! Now that the harvest is complete, Ashley and Daniel Malcolm along with Reuben, Lydia, and Jamie have taken off in their camper to drive across the country and see the Grand Canyon! Friends on Facebook can see pictures as they motor through Arizona, California, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma and camp out under the stars in many of these locations. We can't wait for the stories they will share with us when they return. Redwoods, Canyons, and Falls, oh my!!

New Address

The Ritters - Jake, Kelly Wolfgang
2 Card Ct. Alamo CA 94507

Send them a Christmas card maybe to let them know we're thinking of them!

An exciting new venture at St. Nicholas parish is the formation of a Men's Club which would include all men post college age and up. There have been 2 preliminary gatherings at church and the first official meeting was held this past Monday at Father Robert and Pani Matka Christine's home. The plan is to have different men in the parish host the meetings and then possibly do some "guy" stuff together as well as have discussions on timely and appropriate topics. Even though I am married to a participant, I wasn't told much about what happened. It's not a secret society or anything, so stop one of the men at coffee hour and maybe you will learn more than I did!

With the approach of December and our parish feast day on the horizon, that can only mean one thing! St. Nicholas, with his mitre and fine vestments should be making an appearance to visit us. I think he only REALLY likes to come if he knows that we are all on our best behavior during the fasting period and the children are especially good at this time of the year. Something to ponder as the fast goes on.....

Thanksto all who has contributed to the taking care of our parish family throughout the year. As we enter the Nativity season, let us not forgot to show grace and kindness to those around us, either among our church members or out in the community. Let us all try to follow the path of our patron saint and show charity and love to others.

The Community Care ministry-Deena Gakos, Pani Matka Christine Holst, David Murphy, Amy Skretta, and Elaine Brogan, group leader

Nativity Fast Charity Collection

The Charitable Works Group will be collecting toilet paper during the Nativity Fast beginning November 14 for Crozet UMC's Food Pantry. They will be picked up December 9. You will find the collection baskets near our "babushka" in the foyer. Thank you!



RAM Ministry, cont. from p.6

Although our parish has been involved in Grundy for a number of years, we have never before been able to take a volunteer group there for the October RAM event. Our good friend in Grundy, Frannie Minton, had encouraged us for many years to experience a RAM weekend.

Now I know why.

Seeing the needs of so many people and the huge response of the RAM team to those needs is incredible. For ample, an elementary school gym was turned into a makeshift office in a matter of hours, all the clients *(this year most 900 persons) were given basic medical evaluations before they were directed to the areas where they received appropriate care, volunteers received lodging as well as several meals free of charge, law school and pharmacy students from Grundy were enlisted to provide all kinds of help, sandwiches, snacks and water were handed out throughout the day to everyone. The most amazing thing, however, is the people who come for care.



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They do actually arrive on Friday evening and wait all night in order to be in line by 3:00 a.m. to get a coveted ticket that allows entry into the clinic. Most wait to get into the dental clinics - people of all ages suffering from serious and painful dental problems.

I was really blessed to be able to wait in line with some of them on Saturday and was able to hear their stories.. One woman had been a well known gospel singer but no longer sang (or smiled) because she had lost her front teeth. Another young man - probably in his 20s - emaciated and missing teeth - was obviously in a lot of pain from abscessed teeth. Being there with them as they waited in line was for me a profound experience of heartbreak, hope, love, and respect for their resilience and faith. Christ is indeed there with the poor and forgotten of our country! In many ways this was a life changing experience for me. (Yes, even at my age you can have life changing experiences..)

SO-----A RAM event is now scheduled to be held in Harrisonburg, VA next March. Volunteers are being recruited. If you have any desire at all to help, please let me know. Would that the whole parish could be involved! Ω

Right to Life Advocacy - 2018 / 2019

The Central Virginia Pro Life Banquet was also unforgettable. Our parish has sponsored a table at this banquet for quite a few years and I think each year has been inspiring. What really struck me this year was the total dedication of so many people to the pro life movement. Many have given up about everything in order to dedicate their lives to ending abortion in this country. For example, the featured speaker spent three years in silent protest before the Supreme Court building in D.C. They are focused and on fire with pursuing this goal, but they are not "fanatics" in the worst sense of that word. They don't advocate violence or use confrontational techniques. They are found doing all sorts of things: volunteering in clinics, mentoring young mothers, speaking to churches, etc. Their pro life stand is not an occasional thing; it is their entire life. I felt very humbled before them.



Our parish continues to hold a silent prayer vigil in front of Planned Parenthood in Charlottesville at noon on the 4th Tuesday of every month (In December, we'll bump it up to the third Tuesday to accommodate Christmas). Please consider joining us, or perhaps if you're at work - dedicate prayer time at noon on the days that we are holding the vigil.

Also keep in mind that in January, 2019 we will once again join the Pro Life March in D.C. If you would like more information about this, please get in touch with anyone in the Charitable Works Service Group. Last year we were able to ride up on the bus with St. Thomas Catholic Church - a very accommodating and caring group of fellow Christians.

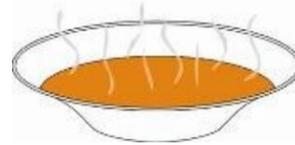
Cynthia



Hospitality - At Your Service!

While the calendar year is coming to an end, there is always something going on in the world of Hospitality. Food to be set up, guests and parishioners to be welcomed and fed, and then the dreaded clean-up before we can head home! Let's check out some of what we've been doing!

On the first Sunday in November, we held our 2nd annual Chili Cook-off contest. While there was no Liturgy that day and the crowd was a little small, we had three entrants for this stellar competition. Elaine Brogan was awarded first place for her chili, eeking out the competition of Hunter Johnson and John Hoyle. Thank you to everyone who voted and participated in the tasting this year. Some very delicious cornbread was made by Ruth Gariboldi and we thank her for that!



Thank you to everyone who has signed up for the remaining coffee hours of November and December. This Sunday, November 18th, the Church School children will be setting up, making the food and cleaning up after coffee hour. We hope that this will inspire some families to take on a coffee hour in the future. The children will be preparing fasting foods so let's support them in this undertaking!

The annual celebration of our patron Saint Nicholas will be held on Sunday, December 9th following Divine Liturgy. Parishioners will be able to sign up for appetizers, entrees, sides, and desserts as well as beverages. Keep in mind that this meal will also be a fasting one. Rounding out this celebration will be a play performance by our children as well as possibly a special visitor! Please contact Randy Brogan should you have any questions.

Thank you to everyone who supports the work of the Hospitality group throughout the year. We look forward to more opportunities to share food and drink together-both through the holidays of 2018 and into the New Year of 2019. Please remember us should you like to get involved with a fun and creative service group at St. Nicholas!

Randy Brogan, Hospitality Group leader

Dobryj vechir, Sviaty vechir. Dobrym l'udiam na zdorovja

"Good evening, Holy evening. To good people for good health!"

Never too early to plan

In many areas of Eastern Europe, more specifically Slovakia, Carpatho-Rus, Ukraine, Poland and Byelorussia, a strict-fast *Holy Supper* or *Svjatyj Vecer* is observed on Christmas Eve. The customs differ from area to area.



The supper on Holy Night differs from other evening meals. Twelve Lenten dishes, symbolic of the twelve Apostles who gathered at the Last Supper, are prepared with a vegetable shortening or cooking oil, omitting all animal fat, milk and milk products because Christmas is preceded by a period of fast which ends on Christmas Day after the midnight or morning church service. Christmas Eve is a strict fast in commemoration of the hardships endured by the God-Bearer Mary en route to Bethlehem.

While the women of the household are busy preparing the multicourse meal (12 to 13 courses, representing the Apostles and Christ), the children are assigned the task of decorating the Christmas tree and searching the night sky for the first star. When the star is sighted, it is a signal that the meal can begin. Throughout the day only light snacking is allowed, so the family eagerly awaits the meal - ideally the family attends Nativity Eve Royal Hours or Vigil Liturgy.

The table is set with the best linens and china, and a sheaf of wheat tied with a ribbon (*didukh*) - a remembrance of the departed, along with a loaf of bread (*kolach*). An extra place is set for departed family members and / or the Christ Child. According to custom, the meal begins after the first star appears in the sky -

[Continued, next page](#)



Nativity Customs, *continued from previous page*

Everyone is standing. The father exclaims the Christmas Greeting: *Christ is Born!* All respond - *Glorify Him!*

One of the children, with pitcher and basin, washes the hands of each of the family members, in order from eldest to youngest. A silver coin may be placed in the basin, then given to the youngest child. After this is complete, the father takes a rope, sprinkles it with holy water and ties it around the legs of the table, symbolizing the ever-lasting bond of the family. The mother sprinkles the family members with holy water so that their souls and minds may be receptive to the meaning of the Feast.



The father then sprinkles the animals of the household with the holy water reminding the family of the animals in the stable when Christ was born. Hay is placed on and under the table in imitation of the manger in Bethlehem. A single candle, placed near the center of the table, is now lit. This reminds us of the appearance of Christ, the Light of the World, who was born this day. The father leads the family in a prayer of gratitude to God for the past year. It includes petitions for health, happiness, long life, salvation and that the family may be united in love forever. The entire family now joins in the singing of the Tropar and Kondak for the Feast from their prayer book.

The father then blesses the food: *Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born in a manger for our sake and salvation, bless this food and drink of Your servants, for You are holy, always, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.* To which the family responds, Amen! The "Christmas Greeting" is again exchanged - then everyone may now be seated.

The father offers a toast - traditionally all partake of the wine, even children. Then he breaks the bread - a symbol of Christ, the Bread of Life. The mother takes a tooth of garlic, dips it in honey and then in salt, and makes the sign of the cross over the forehead of each family member. The honey symbolizes sweetness in life, and the garlic and salt, bitterness and it is taken with a piece of bread. The meal now begins. No one is permitted to skip a dish.

After the dinner is complete, the father reads one of the accounts of Christ's birth from Holy Scripture. Then *kol'day* - traditional carols - are sung. Some presents may be exchanged, but most are left to be opened on Christmas Day. Everyone attends a Christmas church service with the smallest children taking a gift to present at the manger for the needy children of the congregation. In the old days, gifts were not given on Christmas except for candy and other sweets. St. Nicholas Day was the primary gift-giving occasion.

While each family may have their own particular vegan/vegetarian foods to prepare and serve, the service and the rubrics for the meal offer a wonderful opportunity to unify the experience for all of our Parish families during this festive, thanks-giving time of the year. If anyone is interested in trying some of the traditional recipes, the Parish Library and Bookstore have cookbooks available that include recipes and explanations of the traditions of the Ukrainian people. If you have any questions, please ask! *Smachnobo! Good eating!*

Resources You Can Use!

As pastor, I frequently receive access to special resources that might be helpful to our parishioners, particularly those in special life circumstances. I'll make you aware of a few of these that are notable:

For Seniors - Explore Senior Living

Brightview Senior Living (in Staunton) offers a free downloadable booklet that explains in depth about the process of selecting a suitable retirement facility. While most people don't want to think about this topic, having a handle on it upstream before decisions need to be made can be very helpful. They, as well as other senior living centers often offer free presentations on key topics like senior finances, dementia, home care, etc. You can download the **Resource Guide** at: <https://preview.tinyurl.com/ybpyb5zk>

College Student Support for Parents: During my travels I came across a free and excellent guide for the parents of high school students or those beginning college to help navigate the challenges of that particularly important time. The magazine is published regionally, and there's no central Virginia edition, hence you may not have seen it. Much of the content is produced nationally, and some, including advertising, is solicited locally. In the Fall 2018 copy of **College Parent**, there were interesting titles like, "Dear First Time Parents," "Student Credit Cards," "Who Do You Call?" (when there's a need), etc. You can check out collegeparentsmagazine.com for more information. As with the seniors above, folks do a lot better when they're prepared well ahead of time for these challenges.