



Parish Life in Pictures



Not yet Pani, the food's not blessed yet...



These children are with it!

Our parish life has many special moments. In a liturgical church we do things in a rhythm, again and again, yet each time they role around, they have special, deepening meaning. Our celebration of Holy Pascha doesn't change much from year to year. Yet when we come to the end of Holy Week, and sing, 'Christ is risen' there is an undeniable spiritual joy that lifts our hearts, even when the rest of life may not be so uplifting.

And we celebrate social events the same way. Our Beer and Brats social is now four years old and every year we get a great opportunity to allow the Paschal joy to 'spill over' into a simple yet joyful and special meal and fellowship time for us and our guests.

And we continue to try to serve the Lord during the celebratory season. At the last Church school session of the year, the youth assembled health kits which will be distributed by IOCC and Church World Service, to people in need around the world who have suffered from civil unrest, natural disaster or other tragedies.

Which of these events is important? Essential? All of them of course! May God bless all of our parishioners and our common activities.



Next Lampada Deadline - August 13 Theme: Fall, Back to School

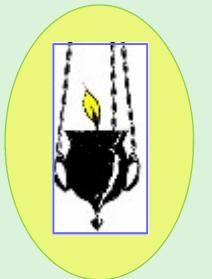


St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 6981
Charlottesville Virginia 22906

Lampada

June, 2019

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



Sermon on the Feast of Pentecost

By St. John Chrysostom

Let us spiritually extol the grace of the Holy Spirit in spiritual hymns, since spiritual grace has on this day shown upon us from heaven. Though our words are too weak to express adequately the greatness of this grace, we shall praise its power and activity to the extent of our abilities; for the Holy Spirit probes all things, even the depths of divinity.

We are celebrating the day of Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, the day of the hope of perfection, the end of expectation, the longing for salvation, the fulfillment of prayer and the image of patience. Today the Spirit Who acted to scatter the nations in the time of Heber has formed tongues of fire among the Apostles. His action of old led to the confusion of the nations, in order to restrain the will of man from its brazenness and consequent chastisement; on this occasion, however, amidst fiery tongues, the deeds wrought by the activity of the Holy Spirit served to preserve us as recipients of preaching, in fulfillment of the will of God.

In the beginning the Spirit of God moved over the water, and later, in the time of Christ, the same Holy Spirit of God rested upon him. Then He moved, and now He rested, as being one in essence, equal in honor, ever-existent and unoriginate together with the Father and the Son.

He Who by the flight of a dove over the waters of the Flood heralded fair weather to Noah, the same Holy Spirit, by the sight of a dove at the waters of the Jordan, showed the world the Sonship of Him Who was baptized. Moreover, the Lord had a terrifying answer for those who dared to utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:



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From the Assembly of Bishops - On Marriage and Sexuality

As our fallen world celebrates 'Pride' month, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of Truth. In fulfillment of the exhortation of our hierarchs item #4 below, I offer the following for your consideration. See p. 4 for more information.

To our Orthodox Faithful

1. We, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, representing millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States of America, Canada and Central America, express our deep concern over recent actions on the part of our respective governments and certain societal trends concerning the status of marriage in our countries, in particular the legalization of same-sex unions.

2. The Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, firmly grounded in Holy Scripture, two millennia of Church Tradition, and Canon Law, holds that the sacrament of marriage consists in the union of a man and a woman, and that authentic marriage reflects the sacred unity that exists between Christ and His Bride, the Church.

3. Persons with homosexual orientation are to be cared for with the same mercy and love that is bestowed on all of humanity by our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Church is a spiritual hospital, where we all are called to find the healing of our fallen humanity through Jesus Christ, who assumed human nature in order to restore it. All of us struggle with various passions, and it is only within the Church that we find the means of overcoming these passions with the assistance of God's grace. Acting upon any sexual attraction outside of sacramental marriage, whether the attraction is heterosexual or homosexual, alienates us from God.

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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: Cynthia Patzig/others

Evangelization: Open

Buildings/Grounds: Florin Moldovan

Library-Bookstore: Patricia Hardesty

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

Sunday, June 16

Pentecost - Trinity Sunday - The Descent of the Holy Spirit, Great Feast of Our Lord

8:45am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy

No Fasting this week.

Pentecost Monday

8:00am Divine Liturgy
6:00pm Moleben (*Intercession Service*)
7:00pm Great Vespers

Monday, June 17

Pentecost Monday

8:00am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, June 18

6:00pm Moleben (*Intercession Service*)

Saturday, June 22

7:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday, June 23

First Sunday After Pentecost - Sunday of All Saints

8:45am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy
12n Moleben - Vigil at Planned Parenthood

Tuesday, June 25

6:00pm Great Vespers - Feast of Ss Peter and Paul

Friday, June 28

Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

8:00am Divine Liturgy
7:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday, June 30

Second Sunday After Pentecost - All Saints of America and Rus-Ukraine, Synaxis of the Holy Apostles

8:45am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy
6:00pm Moleben (*Intercession Service*)

Tuesday, July 2

TBA Great Vespers

Saturday, July 6

Third Sunday After Pentecost - Sunday of All Saints

8:45am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy
6:00pm Moleben (*Intercession Service*)

Wednesday, July 10

7:00pm Great Vespers

Saturday, July 13

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost - Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

9:00am Holy Baptism - Zadie Johnson
9:30am Divine Liturgy
6:00pm Moleben (*Intercession Service*)

Tuesday, July 16

7:00pm Great Vespers



4th Annual East-West Encounter

Annually our parish reaches out to non-Orthodox Christians to explore the rich common history that we shared for over a millennium, the reasons for our differences, and what we can do to foster unity. It is held in mid-July, as a solemn commemoration of the Great Schism of 1054, with a hope that the Lord will bring a restoration of the unity of the Churches of the East and West. This year's event will be held on Monday, July 22, from 6 - 8:30pm, hosted for the first time by St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church in Charlottesville.



- ◆ Vespers (in the Latin tradition)

- ◆ Joint Fellowship - social engagement and refreshment

- ◆ Formal Program - titled, *Preserving Christian Marriage and Family Life in a Toxic Culture*, followed by remarks and a Q & A / discussion period. The topic will be presented by UVA Professor, Dr. Brad Wilcox.

Our parish will help to provide refreshments - if you would like to support the effort, Pani Christine will be coordinating things from our end.

You'll find the evening to be an educational and enriching opportunity to meet some new friends, and to share your perspective as an Orthodox Christian with those of the Western Christian tradition. Please pray it be so!

Traveling 'Priests' - Be Cautious

Unfortunately, there are many people who use religion for their personal gain or manipulate the weak through their religiosity. From the personal experience of local pastors, there is a man claiming to be a priest walking the streets of Charlottesville, who has a long history of alleged emotional instability, having abandoned his family, and fraud. Just because someone 'looks' like a clergyman, it means nothing. Be cautious. Our only recognized priests in the US are those under the jurisdictions of the Churches of the Assembly of Bishops. If you have questions - ask the pastor.

Please Remember in Your Prayers

For the Living	For the Departed
Irelee (special need) Andy (hearing) Jack (cancer) Andy (hearing) Fr. Nick (surgery, ministry)	Kerry and family (hospitalization) Dan (Special Intention) Caron and Mabel (cancer) Dennis (Special need) John (hospitalized)

General Intentions

- For Fr. Paisius McGrath who is suffering from a medical condition, and for Fr. Anthony Perkins who is relocating to Georgia to fulfill special assignments and needs there.
- For the Ministry of LOVE Inc and other church-based ministries who serve those in need in our community.
- For Subdeacon Joseph Black, once again a grandfather, and for his daughter Caroline, and her newborn daughter Annelise May. We also pray for his ministry in the mission field in Kenya.
- 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 Karl and Tim as they travel to SW Va later this month, and for Frannie, Joe, Debbie, Lois, Gertrude, Junior, Jerry, Randy, Rayburn, Shea, Taylor, and all who serve those in need in SW Va.





Revisiting Syria

Two years ago our East-West Event focused on the plight of Syrian refugees on the Greek island of Lesvos. Our guest speaker, Dr. Vasilea Digidiki and her husband Hector spoke to us passionately about the situation there. She shared a few thoughts recently about the situation today:

It is so wonderful connecting again! We have missed our time we spent with you and the people of your church. Many times Hector and I recall that wonderful weekend in Charlottesville. From our side we have some very exciting news to share: last July we were blessed to have a son! Our life has changed and we have found a new meaning. Along with the new responsibility of being parents, I can say that our work goes very well. We keep working on the migration crisis and the nexus with human trafficking. We actually have recently expanded our research to include the plight of migrants in Libya, Nigeria, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Bangladesh and Mexico as well.



Thank you so much for thinking of the people of Lesvos and the refugee population stranded there. Yes, I have been to Lesvos and observed the situation and I'm very sad to say that the situation shows little improvement. The only difference is that the media do not talk about the crisis anymore. I'll be back again in August to visit the camps as we are planning to start a new project in Lesvos raising awareness about human trafficking and violence among young women and girls.



This is a link to one piece that I wrote recently describing the situation in Lesvos, in Greece. (Please find the piece here: <https://fxb.harvard.edu/2018/03/20/two-years-on-time-to-reconsider-eu-refugee-and-migration-management-policy/>) Within the next month, I'll be publishing two more pieces about the plight of migrant children trapped in Libya and I'd love to send them to you to include them in your library as a resource to everyone who is interested... In the meantime, I'd like to share with you some photos of our little Theseas!!

We send you all our love and both Hector and I would love to connect again! Warm regards,

Vasileia

We were blessed to come to meet Vasilea and Hector, and were touched by their passion for the refugees not only in Lesvos, but around the world. Let's be mindful of them as they continue to reach out to those in Lesvos. Perhaps our Charitable Works Group can find another opportunity for us to extend the love of Christ to others through them. Ω

Why Do We Do This?

I frequently ask myself why two or three (yes only two or three) gather at Planned Parenthood once a month to pray. What good could it possibly do? Who cares - lately there haven't even been any cars there at our fourth Tuesday hour?



In May, I got a glimpse of perhaps why. A lovely young lady came from the parking lot, and stood next to us, then sat down on the sidewalk while we prayed our Moleben. When we finished she stood up and asked what we were doing, mentioning that she had seen us there several times when driving by the clinic. She raised her concerns that Planned Parenthood was providing a needed service and she was rather well versed on their 'reasons' for their abortion services. But she was very open, and wanted sincerely to know why we opposed them.

We talked about how a simple ultrasound reveals that an unborn child is indeed, a child worthy of the *right to life* and agreed that the needs of mothers do need to be met. She affirmed that no one wants an abortion, and I noted that nearby was a clinic offering free services to help a mother carry her child safely to term.

Praying and listening, it gave me hope that many, including especially caring young people like Irene, can be shown a different way to deal with unexpected pregnancies, than the 'final solution' provided by Planned Parenthood.

A small answer to prayer. A great need for prayer. Only prayer can change a human heart.

Fr. Robert

Greeting Ministry

Summer is here and that means our parishioners go traveling and we look forward to welcoming guests visiting our area. As coordinator of the Greeter Ministry, I'd like to ask members of our Parish to *take special notice of how you are greeted as you travel this summer.* Please let me know if you have experiences that make you feel particularly welcome so that we may consider how to improve our ministry. One immediate "improvement" to our ministry is that Matthias Hoyle has joined the greeter team! He'll be a great addition and particularly helpful to college students and their families who are new to the area.

Karen Garibovic, Coordinator

Liturgical Services (cont. from previous page)

Sunday, July 21	Fifth Sunday After Pentecost - Holy Prophet Ezekiel
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Tuesday, July 23	12n Moleben - Vigil at Planned Parenthood
Saturday, July 27	7:00pm Great Vespers
Sunday, July 28	Sixth Sunday After Pentecost - Holy Apostles Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Tuesday, July 30	6:00pm Moleben (<i>Intercession Service</i>)
Thursday, August 1	Beginning of the Dormition Fast
Saturday, August 3	7:00pm Great Vespers
Sunday, August 4	Seventh Sunday After Pentecost - (Holy Martyrs) Seven Sleepers of Ephesus
	8:45am Matins
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Monday, August 5	TBA Great Vespers - Feast of the Transfiguration
Tuesday, August 6	Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord 8:00am Divine Liturgy

Special Events and Activities

Note - Additional Service Group meetings to be announced in the Bulletin

Tuesday, June 25	6:00pm Religious Formation Service Group
Tuesday, July 2	6:45pm Evangelization - Outreach Service Group
Saturday, July 6	TBA Charitable Works Service Group
Sunday, July 7	after Liturgy Inquiry Discussions (<i>tentative</i>)
Wednesday, July 10	6:00pm Parish Board Meeting
Thursday, July 11	6:30pm Buildings and Grounds Service Group
Monday, July 22	6:00pm East-West Encounter at St. Thomas RC Church, Charlottesville
Tuesday, July 23	12n Right to Life Vigil - <i>at Planned Parenthood</i>
Tuesday, July 23	6:00pm Religious Formation Meeting
Tuesday, August 3	6:30pm Evangelization - Outreach Service Group

Future Events To Be Announced

- Prosphora Baking Session
- Church School Planning Session
- Youth - Family Day with Natalie Kapeluck Nixon (Metropolia Youth Director)
- Orthodox Reality - Book Discussion Series

Mary
Blessed
Years!

Birthdays

Saints Days

Dormition Fast August 1-14

We will collect food and deodorant for the Crozet Food Bank with pickup scheduled for Sunday, August 11th. Place your items in the narthex in the basket by the Babushka Thanks!





Pastor's Reflection

Facing the Challenges of Sexuality in our Post-Modern World

Despite the din of conversation about illicit sexual lifestyles in our culture, the voice of the Church, and Christians, is strangely silent. This grave challenge is a confrontation of the Christian world view about our humanity, including sexuality, and the forces of our fallen culture that exults and celebrates the very fallen dimensions of our human state. At first, for this article, I thought I would address homosexuality and transgenderism in a summary way, the Church's teaching on the subject, or perhaps the cultural forces that got us to where we are now - where the traditional view, and even legal standards of behavior for our society, have utterly collapsed. The seismic shift in what it means to live a 'moral' life has made that which was unthinkable, and unspeakable, now 'moral' and even 'desirable'. Alas, a full explanation of these topics in any depth is impossible here, so I will point you to several resources and practical suggestions that will be helpful.



Resources to Understand the Orthodox Faith Perspective

It's no surprise that if you Google 'Orthodox Christian' and 'homosexuality', you'll first run into a couple of advocacy groups who claim to be Orthodox, for homosexuality. Finding *Authentic* Orthodox teaching takes a bit more effort but here are two web pages that I can suggest you review:

- * Fr. Thomas Hopko - <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles2/HopkoHomosexuality.php>

Fr. Hopko, as always, takes no prisoners in his forthright discussion of the Church's teachings and positions on this subject. A more thorough treatment can be found in his book, *Christian Faith and Same Sex Attraction*.

You can hear a lecture on Ancient Faith here: https://www.ancientfaith.com/specials/hopko_lectures/spiritual_practice_orthodox_christian_faith_and_homosexual_attraction

- * St. John ROC Church - DC <https://stjohndc.org/en/orthodoxy-foundation/christian-understanding-homosexuality> This link has a thorough study of the subject of homosexuality including a review of the scriptures, Church canons and spiritual practices over the centuries. Even a summary review of this article can leave no one with an illusion that homosexual behaviors are in any way permissible for Christians.

Situating the Discussion in our Culture

From the founding of our nation, homosexual acts (called sodomy from the story of the fall of Sodom) were illegal, and deemed immoral and harmful to our societal matrix. What happened? One resource that can help us with the 'big picture' is the book we read last year, Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*. This article summarizes some of his thought on recent developments and danger to our culture: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/lgbt-ideology-abolishes-man/> While Dreher sees some things through a political lens, he asserts the importance of the Church protecting its integrity and internal life..

How Do We Address this Issue in our Lives?

This is where things get *really* difficult - when we encounter others who have a very different belief structure, life experience and 'desires'. This rarely used to be an issue because sexual matters were deemed private, and kept that way. But the societal forces now are imposing homosexuality and transgenderism as 'normal' and 'moral' in our culture which everyone must 'accept'. Just recently, one parishioner mentioned how the public library had a youth reading program that listed homosexual orientation and acceptance as part of the *required* reading of a program. Public schools have for a long time first presented this perspective, then advocated for it, and now make it very difficult for students and parents to hold the traditional stance on this topic. Even more difficult, is when we have colleagues, friends and even family members who 'come out' as homosexual, and expect us (like everybody else) to congratulate them on their 'courage'. The real courage emerges if or when a person respectfully stands against this overwhelming tide of post-modern culture. So what are some of the things that we can do to enable us to walk the narrow Christian path that is faithful to our Christian life, respectful and helpful to others? Here are a few thoughts:

A Biblical Example in Our Prayers

This interesting question and exchange is from a column, "Ask Father Vasiliy," that is offered by Fr. Vasiliy Vasilevich is the pastor of Saints Boris and Gleb and Vladimir and Olga Orthodox Church of Sydney, Australia.

Dear Fr. Vasiliy,

What is all this business about a harlot in our pre-Communion prayers? I've heard the reference many, many times, but it has started to bother me lately. I thought the text was clear that it was Mary of Bethany that anoints the Lord's feet with the expensive, fragrant oil from the alabaster box. What is going on here?! Mary was no harlot!

Sincerely,

Confused Connie in Connecticut

Dear Confused,

This is a very fair question, and the situation as described in the gospels is not terribly clear cut. But we can get a good sense of things after looking in some detail at what we find in all four gospels.

First off, the story of the woman with the alabaster box (or at least Jesus being anointed with fragrant oil by a woman during or after a meal) appears in all four gospels. We find it in *Mt 26:6, Mk 14:3, Lk 7:36, and Jn 12:1*. But things begin to get muddy quickly in that we don't have our handy approach of 'Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell it this way that mostly jives with one another, but John tells it this other way or not at all.' Instead, Matthew and Mark tell it as being in Bethany on Holy Wednesday and as an anointing for his burial, it being on his head, as being just before Judas goes out to betray him, and includes the bit about always having the poor with you. John follows the contours of that account closely for the most part. He does also mention Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and has it just before Palm Sunday, and the episode appears to be shortly after Lazarus was raised from the dead. John says clearly that it was Mary and that she put the oil on his feet and wiped it with her hair.

Luke relates a vastly different scene. It is earlier in Jesus's public ministry, the setting is in the home of a Pharisee named Simon, there is no mention of Bethany at all, and the woman is clearly referenced as 'a sinner.' I think it is safe to say that she was a harlot, even though the word is not used directly. The implication is clear enough. She is not named, though I believe that there is a strain in the tradition that understands her to be Mary Magdalene. The text can support that suggestion as it could certainly be that she came to anoint him and worship him in this way because Christ had very shortly before cast the seven demons out of her as mentioned in Luke 8:2. At any rate, the woman anoints his feet with the oil after washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair. There is no mention of an anointing for his burial at all as it is a much earlier setting. Neither is there the teaching about always having the poor with you. The scene as described by Luke is, however, the occasion for a powerful teaching on forgiveness.

So that is a pretty good journey down into the weeds of these accounts, so to speak. But, in surveying things in conclusion, my sense of the situation is that the mention of the harlot in the pre-Communion prayers is a direct reference to the story as we have it in *Luke 7:36-50*. And because the setting is so different and some of the elements vary significantly-- especially the teaching Jesus gives that is the upshot of the whole episode-- I have no difficulty assuming that both stories happened independently: one as Luke tells it, and another much later on as the other three gospels tell it. This is one way of avoiding the need to harmonize the two stories, which is a mighty good thing because I don't think it can be done. As you rightly pointed out, we have no textual hints at all that Mary of Bethany was a harlot. That would be a significant hitch in the giddy-up in attempting to make all four accounts tell the same episode! Some Patristic commentators have offered that perhaps there are three occasions here instead of two. Personally, I am happy enough with two but certainly will not argue with three. Regardless, I think we can safely say that there is more than one. (This is starting to remind me of Monty Python and the Holy Hand-Grenade of Antioch...do you remember that one?)

I hope this is helpful. Good question! Your priest should be thankful to have such a thoughtful and attentive parishioner.

Fr. Vasiliy



Prosphora Baking Session

There's been some interest lately in having another prosphora baking session, to help parish members learn how they can participate in providing the bread that is offered at the Divine Liturgy.



Pani Christine will be holding a session within the next month - if you would like to participate, please contact her as soon as possible so as to set a suitable date.



Charitable Works - Trusting in the Lord

Love, INC Banquet

Love, INC's ministry attempts to not only meet the needs of individuals and families, but especially to help them find a relationship with Christ and life skills that will give them a true 'new start' in every aspect of their life. We may offer a version of the Redemptive Compassion study series among our Charitable Works participants to see how these principles align with our Orthodox faith. If you would like to support the ministry of Love, INC financially, simply make a check out either to Love, Inc or the parish and it will be forwarded to them. (*Annually, we support Love, INC with a \$1000 donation from our Charity Fund.*)

Our parish was represented by a group of parishioners at the annual Love, INC fundraising banquet in Charlottesville in early June. Joining Fr. Robert were John Hoyle, Sue Mathieu, Barbara Philips, Karen Bowman, Cynthia Patzig and her friend, Catherine Murry. The delightful buffet was followed by testimonies of participants of the Transformation and Redemptive Compassion outreach ministry, and the keynote address by Ruth Graham. .

Ruth is the third child of Billy and Ruth Graham and has an inspiring story to tell of her own life struggles and her ultimate victory over them through faith in Christ. What I was expecting to hear was a more detailed account of those struggles (which included divorces, family struggles with alcohol and drug abuse, etc.) and although she mentioned some of these events, her focus was rather almost entirely on the overcoming of fear and "fretting" through trusting the Lord in all things. She began her talk by pointing out that there is much in the world today that can make us afraid (for example: wars, terrifying weather patterns, shootings, diseases, the economy, politics.) Then she turned our attention to Psalm 37: "Do not fret because of evildoers...cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm...." The psalm continues: "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him...Depart from evil and do good...." So, in short, she dealt with the fears we all have and the only answer: to turn to God and to trust Him in all things so that we can go on with our lives doing good and not drowning in our own fretting and anxieties. It was a serious (yet sometimes humorous) and thought-provoking talk.

As we left to go home, I reflected on some of my own fears over time, and I thought also that maybe I was learning to trust the Lord in all things. (Well – most things.) I think, however, that God wanted to test that idea.. As I drove home, I received a phone call from our youngest son who three years ago had total and permanent hearing loss in one ear. He called to tell me he was now experiencing some hearing loss in his good ear. He had gone to the ear doctor and was taking large doses of a cortisone drug in hopes of preventing further damage. My fear as a mother immediately kicked into action. If there is anything that undermines my faith and trust it is knowing one of my kids or grandchildren are in danger or suffering. I imagined all kinds of scenarios: total loss of hearing, having to give up his law practice, losing his main source of income. The list of fears was getting pretty long by the time I got home. Then I remembered to read Psalm 37. After praying and reading the psalm, my fearful thoughts stopped, and I was able to return to trusting God. As the apostles said, "To whom else shall we go?"

Grundy – Southwest Virginia

Ruth Graham's talk also made me think about Grundy. It is a place of both fear and trust. There are many fears there – as is true everywhere. But in Grundy the fears are pretty primary: fear of the mines closing and being laid off, fear of devastating illness caused by work in the mines, fear of not having food for your kids, and even fear of not knowing how one can support a drug habit that has taken over your whole life. The faith that we see there, however, shines through all of that darkness. We know some incredible people in Grundy – our ministry partners. (The parish has met some of them.) They and their ministries are sustained by faith and an unshakeable trust in God's provision and goodness. His love and protection seem to be ever before them; their faith overflows into all that they do.

That is one of the main reasons we continue our relationship with them. They are a living example to us who are blessed to know them of what a life of living faith in the midst of hardships looks like. Harmon Baptist Church has asked for some help rehabilitating a home in Grundy, and Tim Stratos and Karl Bowman are hoping to go down to assist in the work. We also plan to send volunteers to help at the next RAM event in early October and may send another work group at the same time. If it is possible, think about joining us. Come and see!

Cynthia Patzig, Coordinator



Pray for Wisdom, Understanding and Moral Courage: As we celebrate Pentecost, we pray that the Spirit of Truth will fill us with our faith, hope, love, truth, wisdom and all of the gifts necessary to live a Christian life before God and in relationship with others. Such a spiritual orientation is absolutely essential in matters such as this.

Learn the Orthodox Church's Teaching: Embrace the sacred truth in Scripture and Tradition as your own, and allow it to teach and challenge you to embrace the teaching of the Faith as others have for 2000 years and suffered and died for it. While you don't have to memorize canons, it's important to understand that they reflect how the Church has *always* understood her truly counter-cultural ancient apostolic message about human life, relationship and sexuality.

Acknowledge and Confess Your Sins in Humility: Without this, self-righteousness will reign in our hearts, blinding us of the needed sensitivity to sin in our own life, and afflicting others with misplaced zeal. When we see people living in a fallen lifestyle (e.g. living or advocating for homosexuality as a lifestyle) it should lead us to seek God's *grace and forgiveness* for them and for us. When we know our own sins well and confess them, we are far less likely to judge others.

Engage Others in Openness, Humility and Love: Perhaps our best example of this is how Jesus spoke to the Samaritan Woman, who was living a polluted life of sexual disarray and moral failure - and deep down, she knew it. But Jesus does not speak to her in judgment (He could have), but rather He spoke with gentle, but strong words - challenging her to see beyond the way of life that buries her in her fallenness - and leading her to taste the 'living waters' of spiritual life. It is only in the Spirit that any of us can be saved from our sins. This is particularly true in matters of sexuality which are so deeply embedded inwardly. No one knows the inner experience of another person - we must not judge. For example, it is known that exposure to homosexuality at an early age (or worse, sexual abuse) can result in a dysfunctional personal view of relationship, intimacy and sexuality. True understanding emerges from honest (and sometimes difficult) dialogue and respect. We are to show respect to others, even if they do not show the same to us.

Be Patient: Discussions about deeply personal matters can never be forced, it requires much prayer and waiting. As with the prodigal son, sexual temptations can grip the hearts and minds of people for a long time. When speaking about deeply felt things like relationships, people can be understandably defensive. Persevere in peace. Don't 'go for conversion' juggling in some sort of combative stance. Only God can accomplish this in the heart - and when it comes to a person (in His time). The Spirit of Grace and Truth is the Living Font and neither you nor I make it flow.

Sin is Often Overcome Only Through Time, and Struggle: I recently read an article on Christianity Today about the 'conversion' of a British man in prison who struggled mightily against anger and violence. Despite his conversion, it took decades for these passions to be quieted in his soul. Again, our own long-term struggle gives us perspective.

Pray Some More: in intercession for those who so struggle. The countless stories of conversion, from St. Paul to abortion clinic directors of our day, gives us encouragement and aligns us with God's will.

Get Support: Find others with whom you can confide your concerns and find support when confronting such issues when we face them - especially in our families. Ask them to pray for the situation in confidence. Beware of those 'friends' who like those friends of Job provide 'answers' but no wisdom or truth. Your Church and pastor are always available for prayer and support in times of need. The pastor can also refer you to counselors trained in dealing with certain challenges like same-sex attraction should the need arise.

Be prepared to Suffer: As Dreher asserts, Christians will likely be persecuted, politically, in America in the foreseeable future, for holding positions such as an opposition to sexual practices like homosexuality and transgenderism. If you oppose these things publicly, or in social media, you may be called a bigot and a 'homophobe'.

For Parents

This is a very dangerous age in which we live, and our children must not only be protected, but taught and morally strengthened as they mature in their Christian lives. With the bombardment of culture, social media, pornography and amoral 'messaging', consider the following:

Pray for Them and With Them: This is a given; but while we would all recognize the need for prayer if a child was subjected to a serious disease, it is just as important to pray that they not be afflicted by falsehood, abuse, mockery or damaging life experiences. Pray with them, to ask Jesus to help them to be pure in His eyes.

Notice: Semi-Annual Meeting

The Parish Board has tentatively set the Fall Parish Meeting for Sunday, August 25th after the Divine Liturgy. It will be an important meeting to include the following possible agenda items:

- Election of two Board Members
- Selection of Two Sobor Delegates
- Report on Parish Mortgage Reduction Drive
- Reports on Service Group Activities

Please save the date for this important meeting.



Protect Them - from pornography, sexually explicit reading or media, or relationships that give rise to adolescent (and even younger) temptations to sexual thoughts. Homosexual pornography is especially damaging to the psyche. Be specially careful about their relationships with others - especially those who come close to them and gain their trust. The abuse by trusted mentors can be one of the most damaging of all. Fathers have a special role in this formation - as traditionally, trustworthy men were to be the *guardians* of their children.

Emphasize Beauty - as the sign of the presence of God in His creation and particularly the inner beauty of each child as the image of God, as illumined with the eternal love of God through baptism and Christian life of purity. The widespread occurrence of 'body image' issues, especially with girls, is a sign that this awareness has not been fully formed. It can be healed by an awakening to the true beauty of the human person, which prompts a youth to protect that spiritual beauty.

Understand Child Development: While there's a lot of misinformation and psychological mumbo jumbo (excuses) for behaviors, there is insight that can be gleaned from some psychological studies, including how inner drives are formed internally, including sexual drives. Certain behaviors that may be viewed as 'play' by very young children may be sinful for those who are older.

Oppose False Gender Identification: We are who God made us to be - and that is confirmed undeniably in our DNA. The 'fluid genderism' of our age is a falsehood which must be combatted by our sacred understanding that it is God who has fashioned us male and female - and the environmental forces (and promptings of the Evil One), may suggest otherwise in one's mind. St. John Chrysostom famously decried the displays of effeminate males in his day. The Church must oppose these forces to lead its flock to holiness. Most children and youths will outgrow such things, thanks to biology, but because of societal forces there is a temptation to encourage these thoughts, feelings and practices to their destruction.

Exercise Love and Patience: as children grow and mature they will have their failings. If you establish a loving relationship, they may be able to come to you, as a parent, with their problems. Sometimes they can't. It's essential that they know you love them - *no matter what* - as Christ loves us - *no matter what*. Keep communication channels open.

Teach Them to Confess Their Sins: Holy Confession relieves and heals our inner selves of the stains that can be seemingly beyond cleansing, especially embedded thoughts and behavior patterns. It's why Christ has come into the world, and only He can forgive us our sexual sins. And He will.

Be Firm and Consistent yet Loving in Discipline: The requirement of a parent to discipline a child is not based on the child's understanding or approval of the parent's position. This essential submission of a child to a parent (*Eph. 6:1f*) will ultimately soften the heart to allow grace to bless the child in countless ways in the future. Failing that leads only to anger, bitterness, disappointment, etc. and rebellion against God. Many sinful behaviors are a result (even primarily?) of inner struggle and rebellion. This is a particularly difficult issue for pre-teens and teens as their self identity and desire for freedom emerges. Sexuality is a symbol of adult freedom. However, true (inner) freedom must be discovered - arising only through our obedience to God and ironically, *freedom from sin* including sexual sin.

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May the Holy Spirit not only lead us to truth in these areas of human sexuality, but also equip us to stand firm and give witness to that Truth in an environment that is increasingly hostile to us, and to the saving message of Christ. Ω

### **Spiritual Growth - For this Summer and Beyond**

The Religious Formation Service Group would like to recommend the following Ancient Faith resources for your edification.. Consider taking recordings on your vacation or doing some reading during your down time:

- ✖ *The Whole Counsel of God* - Bible study podcast and blog by Fr Stephen De Young
- ✖ *Search the Scriptures Live* - Bible study call-in and recorded podcasts by Dr Jeannie Constantinou
- ✖ *Orthodoxy Live* - all-topic call-in podcast by Fr Evan Armetas
- ✖ *A Light So Lovely* - creating Christian culture blog by Dn Nicholas Kotar.



If you have a favorite program that you think would be beneficial to the parish, please let me know. Also, please consider supporting Ancient Faith Ministry that hosts these and other fine programs. In the coming months, we hope to initiate a study of Dr. Vigen Guroin's book, *The Orthodox Reality*. Stay tuned. Your fellow servant,

T. Basil Finnegan, Coordinator

### **Caring Thoughts from Community Care**

This spring was filled with so many happy occasions in the parish!

While we were not there in body, we joined the Gakos family in spirit as they baptized their daughter Photini Alise at the chapel at Antiochian Village over Memorial Day weekend. The village is a very special place to Deena and Dean , where they met as teenagers, and they wanted at least one of their children baptized there. How special that it's their little princess!! We are so thrilled to now have Photini truly in communion with all her church family here at St. Nicholas!!



We had three graduates that we honored for their academic achievement as well as involvement in the faith. While Oliver Filutowski (*see his letter and picture on p. 13*) completed his studies at the UVA Medical School and was not here for his graduation, we had a Lenten celebration for him at coffee hour as well as presented him with an icon of St. Nicholas. There is a card that will be in the social hall for the next week or so that we will send to him prior to the start of his residency in Tampa. In mid- May, we honored Elena Gavrilovic and Elise Sweigart who graduated from VCU in Richmond and Eastern University in St. David's, PA, respectively. Elena will remain in Richmond and Elise has departed to Phoenix, AZ to begin teaching math. We wish them well in their future endeavors!!

Now that things are settling down for the summer, it might be a good time to look for ways to take care of our own, the members of our church community, specifically the women of our community. That being said, we are considering having "**A Wine for the Women**" afternoon where we can hang out and enjoy each other's company. Stay tuned to the parish bulletin for date and location.

Have a wonderful summer and stay safe out there!

*Community Care ministry group-Deena Gakos, Pani Martha Christine Holot, David Murphy, Cynthia Patsig, and Elaine Brogan, group leader*

### **Hospitality at Your Service!**

Hospitality has been busy with a variety of evens over the past few months. As always, there was a happy and joyous turnout for the Paschal meal following the Resurrection Liturgy as well as the Beer and Brats evening on Bright Friday. Beer and Brats seemed to have one of its better crowds and there was even an Easter egg hunt for the children. Thank you to all that contributed to make these two dinners such a success, especially those who hung around for clean up!

The gentlemen of the parish honored the Mother/Grandmothers/Spiritual Mothers of the parish at coffee hour on Mother's Day with a meal that they put together. Thank you to all of the guys that helped out. We can only hope there will be something as wonderful for us guys on Father's Day!!

We know that there is a lot of travel and activity amongst our parishioners over the summer. For those of us still in town, we are considering some fun events. Among them are a BBB night-barbeque, beer and bluegrass. The idea of an outdoor movie has come up again so we will try to make that a reality this year! Please keep on the look out for emails from Father as well as weekly announcements in the parish bulletin.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

*Hospitality Ministry group with Ruth, Stephanie, Pani Christine, Hunter and Randy*

**Pastor's Note:** The Hospitality Service Group coordinates the Coffee Hour every week, but relies on a weekly team of volunteers to sign up to help provide just a little something extra for the Sunday, and with setup and cleanup. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board next to the Kitchen - so please sign up for a weekend. It's not as if you have to cook a big meal or provide special treats - but by working with a person from the hospitality service group it provides every parish member and friend of our parish who attends our services, to participate in the extension of hospitality to all.



## Treasurer's Report - January 1 to June 10, 2019

| INCOME                   | JAN              | FEB              | MAR              | APR              | MAY              | JUN             | YTD              |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Collection               | 9,823.10         | 6,131.10         | 11,928.10        | 10,352.00        | 6,057.10         | 8,478.00        | 52,769.40        |
| Candles                  | 240.09           | 318.41           | 302.00           | 446.81           | 180.00           | 80.00           | 1,567.31         |
| Charity                  | 0.00             | 127.26           | 30.00            | 60.00            | 0.00             | 0.00            | 217.26           |
| Collection Mortgage      | 3,890.00         | 245.00           | 1,116.00         | 480.00           | 200.00           | 200.00          | 6,131.00         |
| Other                    | 75.00            | 0.00             | 3,100.00         | 100.00           | 0.00             | 0.00            | 3,275.00         |
| TOTAL Collection         | 14,028.19        | 6,821.77         | 16,476.10        | 11,438.81        | 6,437.10         | 8,758.00        | 63,959.97        |
| Interest Inc             | 0.59             | 0.53             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 1.12             |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>14,028.78</b> | <b>6,822.30</b>  | <b>16,476.10</b> | <b>11,438.81</b> | <b>6,437.10</b>  | <b>8,758.00</b> | <b>63,961.09</b> |
| EXPENSES                 | JAN              | FEB              | MAR              | APR              | MAY              | JUN             | YTD              |
| B&G Op                   |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Electricity              | 366.31           | 399.46           | 328.12           | 344.18           | 0.00             | 193.41          | 1,631.48         |
| Exterior Maintenance     | 105.00           | 0.00             | 105.00           | 0.00             | 168.95           | 150.00          | 528.95           |
| Miscellaneous            | 36.46            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 36.46            |
| TOTAL B&G Op             | 507.77           | 399.46           | 433.12           | 344.18           | 168.95           | 343.41          | 2,196.89         |
| Charity Operating        | 40.40            | 1,184.57         | 131.11           | 1,322.80         | 1,195.20         | 605.71          | 4,961.79         |
| Comm Op                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Internet, Web Hosting    | 0.00             | 28.98            | 95.12            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 124.10           |
| Telephone                | 78.41            | 283.89           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 90.49            | 84.57           | 537.36           |
| TOTAL Comm Op            | 78.41            | 312.87           | 95.12            | 0.00             | 90.49            | 84.57           | 661.46           |
| E&O Op                   |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Event Support            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 25.47           | 25.47            |
| TOTAL E&O Op             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 25.47           | 25.47            |
| E&O Proj                 |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Hosp. Op                 |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Coffee Hour Food         | 201.20           | 0.00             | 143.45           | 42.48            | 4.58             | 0.00            | 391.71           |
| Event Food               | 0.00             | 272.99           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 113.77           | 0.00            | 386.76           |
| Kitchen Supplies         | 25.00            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 25.00            |
| Miscellaneous            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 32.28            | 79.79            | 0.00            | 112.07           |
| TOTAL Hosp. Op           | 226.20           | 272.99           | 143.45           | 74.76            | 198.14           | 0.00            | 915.54           |
| TOTAL LG Op              | 0.00             | 0.00             | 555.74           | 485.50           | 57.28            | 511.75          | 1,610.27         |
| Lib. Op                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Acquisitions             | 0.00             | 55.66            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 55.66            |
| Supplies                 | 119.02           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 119.02           |
| TOTAL Lib. Op            | 119.02           | 55.66            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 174.68           |
| Mortgage interest        | 1,070.24         | 1,037.90         | 929.16           | 1,023.45         | 977.31           | 1,005.59        | 6,043.65         |
| PB Op                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Compensation             | 4,540.00         | 4,540.00         | 4,540.00         | 4,540.00         | 4,540.00         | 4,540.00        | 27,240.00        |
| Compensation Sub. Clergy | 0.00             | 0.00             | 200.00           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 200.00           |
| Consistory Assessment    | 2,201.38         | 0.00             | 0.00             | 1,013.89         | 0.00             | 0.00            | 3,215.27         |
| Insurance                | 0.00             | 417.00           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 434.00          | 851.00           |
| Miscellaneous            | 0.00             | 106.00           | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 106.00           |
| Office Supplies          | 73.18            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 55.00            | 0.00            | 128.18           |
| Retirement Contribution  | 2,446.00         | 0.00             | 0.00             | 2,446.00         | 0.00             | 0.00            | 4,892.00         |
| TOTAL PB Op              | 9,260.56         | 5,063.00         | 4,740.00         | 7,999.89         | 4,595.00         | 4,974.00        | 36,632.45        |
| RF Op                    |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Church School            | 0.00             | 28.84            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 28.84            |
| TOTAL RF Op              | 0.00             | 28.84            | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00            | 28.84            |
| Telephone                | 0.00             | 0.00             | 77.80            | 79.19            | 0.00             | 0.00            | 156.99           |
| Utilities                |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                 |                  |
| Telephone                | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 94.53            | 0.00             | 94.53           | 189.06           |
| TOTAL Utilities          | 0.00             | 0.00             | 0.00             | 94.53            | 0.00             | 94.53           | 189.06           |
| TO Mortgage Principal    | 3,517.86         | 2,360.20         | 1,118.94         | 2,385.65         | 1,070.79         | 1,822.51        | 12,275.95        |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>    | <b>14,820.46</b> | <b>10,985.95</b> | <b>8,706.44</b>  | <b>13,809.95</b> | <b>8,353.16</b>  | <b>9,467.54</b> | <b>66,143.50</b> |
| <b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>     | <b>-791.68</b>   | <b>-4,163.65</b> | <b>7,769.66</b>  | <b>-2,371.14</b> | <b>-1,916.06</b> | <b>-709.54</b>  | <b>-2,182.41</b> |

**Account Balances** (June 10, 2019)

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Asset Accounts     |                |
| Contingency Fund   | \$15,065.90    |
| General Fund       | \$14,377.09    |
| Project Funds      | \$4,634.24     |
| CD (Contingency)   | \$10,000.00    |
| Total Accounts     | \$44,976.92    |
| Liability Accounts |                |
| Mortgage Principal | (\$192,908.25) |
| Total (Net)        | (\$148,731.33) |

finances that is spiritual, not material, and places the entirety of material blessings - home, job, possessions, investments, under His divine authority. It's best to do this on a percentage basis - where we entrust the first x% of our income to the Lord. While it may seem like a lot to us today, the biblical tithe was such an offering, commanded by God to the Hebrew people, of the first 10% of one's income received to the Lord, as entrusted to Him through the hands of the Levitical priests, and served as their sole source of compensation. A restoration of this idea of placing all of our life under the divine Providence of God and cultivating an awareness of that, is a spiritually and financially (!) freeing exercise. Ω

**Stewardship Notes**

This is a brief summary, as presented to the board, of our finances year to date. You can see how the income and expenses ebb and flow from month to month, but in the end, average out fairly consistently.

A small church always experiences peaks and valleys in funding, but more so if people base their offerings on an 'as available' basis - i.e. 'if we have money left this month (or hit the lottery), we'll make a donation'. Of course, a stewardship approach to making our offerings is different. In such as scenario, we offer to the Lord the first portion of what He provides to us, trusting in Him that all of our needs for the month (and for our lives) will be met out of His abundant care and provision for us. It is (then) the 'first check' that we write, in thanksgiving for what He has provided for us, and we calculate this based on what we have received - not trying to predict our income, or expenses or anything else. This sets a basis for our home

**Farewell Greeting From Our Brother-in-Christ, Oliver**

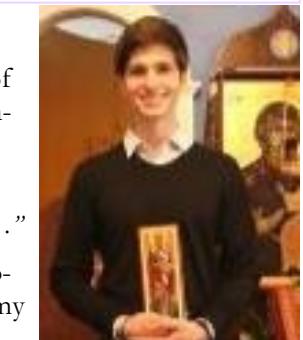
Note: Oliver attended our parish for four years during his time in Med School at UVA. Having successfully completed his degree he has begun a residency in Tampa, and has a long term goal of joining his father's eye care practice in Florida.

*Christ is Risen! Христос воскрес!*

On Great and Holy Pascha, we joyful chanted "Come Receive the Light." Then, with the rising of the Son of Righteousness, we exulted in the warmth and delight of Bright Week. Each day, we encountered hymns of the Resurrection, which I found myself reading intoned as they would be by each of you at St. Nicholas:

*"By Your Precious Cross, O Christ..."; "Christ was led as a sheep to the slaughter..." "We glorify Your Resurrection..."*

I give thanks to you, my Brothers and Sisters, and to God for the privilege of attending St. Nicholas. It is teeming with spiritual life and a thirst for deeper communion with God. Far away from my family, you welcomed me with warmth and love as a member of your own. For these last four years, I had a home, and of all the wonderful blessings of Virginia, this was the greatest.

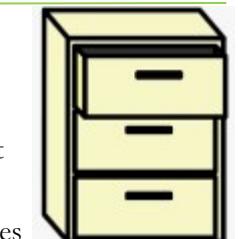


The fond memories of St. Nicholas will remain with me forever. With every, "Glory to Jesus Christ," and each "God grant you many years," all of you, Fr. Robert, Pani Christine, and all parishioners, will come to mind. As Christ taught and then sent his disciples out into the world, each of you, through words and actions, have taught and now send me out to a new stage of life. Perhaps this indwelling of Christ's teachings and the immense love between Him and His disciples is about what He spoke at His Great Commission when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the ages of ages."

As Christ assured His disciples of His unceasing Presence, we, being One Body, can rejoice in this as well: that Christ, you, and I are now and always will be together, both in this life and in the ages to come. Amen.

With Deep Gratitude and Love in Our Risen Lord - Your Brother in Christ,

*Oliver "Elias" Flintowski*

**Music Cabinets? What's in the Cabinets?**

A significant part of the Liturgical Services Ministry at our Parish is ensuring that we have service texts available for those who wish to actively participate in the services. It is my hope that many fall into that category – we practice congregational singing in our Parish, and **all** voices are beloved by Our God!

We have two labeled cabinets in the North Wing devoted to service materials. In general, we have copies of the service books or booklets for the various services – including Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John, Matins, Vespers, Molebens and Akathists for various intentions. We also have service books for readers and chant leaders to use for reference, and sacramental service texts. Because the High Holy Days of Nativity/Theophany and Great Lent/Pascha span several weeks each, one of the cabinets is designated specifically to those periods. Their reference books, service books and propers sheets (troparia, kontakia) do not change from year to year, and so can be printed and stored. Propers for fixed feasts (those whose dates do not change from year to year) are also stored by date.

We will assemble new service books (*beginning with the Vespers book as Father Robert mentioned last week*) to replace our well-loved copies. But for the variable parts of our services (i.e. Vespers, Divine Liturgy), where do those sheets come from?

The weekly service texts for Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy outside of the fixed feasts cannot be kept, as the daily commemorations change each year (you can look at a Calendar to see what I mean). Those sheets are generated and printed weekly and are discarded after the services are completed. These propers sheets are great educational tools in the daily commemorations; Vespers texts especially tell the "stories" of the particular Saint or event. Please feel free to take them with you for use in your own personal prayer life, or to help to teach others!

*Pani Martha Christine, Music Director*

*Note. It would be good to train some new people in preparing the weekly vespers and liturgy texts. Would you like to help? Contact Fr. Robert or Pani and come to the next Liturgy Group meeting to get training on the equipment*



## **Building & Grounds Service Group**

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"; Matthew 18:20.

Glory to Jesus Christ,

As most of the Building and Grounds (B&G) Group's accomplishments are/or should be evident, I have decided against using this opportunity to list all the things the B&G has done in the recent past. But rather, being inspired by the Scripture verse above, I wanted to focus on a more (in my humble opinion) important subject – that of sharing a little bit more about us, the B&G Group as a whole. The information to follow may seem redundant to many, especially to the "long timers". However, one would think that it could serve as a friendly reminder to all, while it could be informative to the newer members, parish friends and visitors.

The B&G Service Group meets at **6:00 PM, on the second Thursday of every month**. The meeting format alternates, with one "Working" meeting followed by a "Discussions/Planning" meeting. The idea is to *plan one month and execute the next*. In addition to the regular meetings, there will occasionally be other working meetings to address specific needs; i.e. the installation of additional lighting for the Art Display event; or, church clean-up days for major holidays. The meetings are open to all interested.

While the "official" B&G "membership" varies, it is normally comprised of parish members of a wide variety of backgrounds and interests, such as: tradesman – i.e. electrician; handyman/handywomen; former financial advisors; engineers; students; registered nurses or retired nurses, artists, former building inspectors/plans reviewers; etc. Of course, one's background and professional experience is not a requisite for becoming involved with the B&G. As with any other volunteer-based groups, some projects may take longer than others to achieve completion (none will be mentioned... yeah, yeah you know which one I am talking about...). However, many times the journey is more important than the end result. While digging holes, or nailing stuff together, we learn about each other's wishes, struggles, hopes and dreams. We build relationships and improve upon the existing ones while doing our very best to maintain the Lord's house in working order.

With the risk of sounding like a recruiting ad, we are always looking for new folks to join our group. As stated above we don't always dig trenches, we also sit down to discuss and plan things, as well as gathering offsite for one of our "Discussion" meetings to enjoy dinner and fellowship. Though, you may think otherwise, you do posses special skills that will aid the B&G Service Group in its mission.

Should the above spark an interest in becoming an "official" B&G member and wish to learn more about it, please contact myself, one of the other members, or try to attend one of our meetings. Likewise, if there's anything you know of that needs our attention, please let us know.

In conclusion, I wanted to take a quick moment and personally thank each and every one of the B&G members for their continued efforts and dedication, they do not go unnoticed. Thank you and may God bless you for all of your hard work.

In Christ,

*Florin Moldovan, Building and Grounds Service Group*

## **On Marriage and Sexuality, cont. from p.1**

4. We exhort the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church to bear witness to the timeless teachings of Christ by striving for purity and holiness in their own lives, by instructing their families and communities in the precepts of the Holy Gospel, and by placing their trust in our Lord, who "has overcome the world." (John 16:33)

5. Finally, we encourage our faithful to approach their parish priest or spiritual father with any questions or concerns about this statement and its practical repercussions in their daily lives. Ω



## **Inquiry Discussions - Begin July 7**

St. Nicholas parish routinely offers a series of informal discussion series after Divine Liturgy, which gives those who are new to Orthodoxy a chance to exchange some basic information and most importantly, ask questions about anything and everything about Orthodoxy. We do this after Liturgy, and a chance to get a cup of coffee, then convene in the North Wing to view a short video, then spend another 15 minutes or so, asking questions. This initial inquiry allows us to get to know each other a little better, and if desired, allow inquirers the opportunity to consider their own faith path. If you have any questions about Orthodoxy or would like to get more information about the Inquiry process, feel free to contact Fr. Robert or one of our greeters.



## **St. John Chrysostom - Pentecost Homily, continued from p.1**

"Whoever speaks blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

David, declaring his desire for this Holy Spirit, prayed to God, saying: "Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." As is well known, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit entered into him, wherefore David said, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

This same Holy Spirit sanctified the prophets, instructed the apostles and empowered the martyrs. This same Holy Spirit consecrated Isaiah, taught Ezekiel and revealed the resurrection of the dead. As he says, "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord." This same Holy Spirit chose Jeremiah from his mother's womb, and raised up Daniel to deliver Susanna. As it is written, "God raised up by the Holy Spirit a young youth, whose name was Daniel."

David so loved the presence of this same Holy Spirit that he prayed to God, saving, "Thy Holy Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness." This same Holy Spirit of God came to dwell in the holy Virgin Mary, embracing her with the communion of the Divine Word at the good pleasure of the Father, and making her the Theotokos. Elizabeth, being filled with this same Holy Spirit, understood that the Lord had come to her by means of the Virgin; wherefore she said, "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Zachariah, the father of John, was filled with the same Holy Spirit, whereby he declared that the son born to him would be the prophet and forerunner of the King Who was to come. John himself was also filled with the same Holy Spirit; the eyes of his intellect were given light, and he beheld the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit hovering over Him Who was being bap-tized, Him Who baptized with the Spirit and fire.

By the action of the same Holy Spirit, the Lord Himself, when He was giving His Apostles His teaching in detail and strength-en-ing their minds for the time of His Passion, said to them: "If I go not away, the Com-forter will not come unto you." Moreover, revealing to them the Spirit's consubstantial power, He said: "When the Holy Spirit is come, Which proceeds from the Father, He will guide you into all truth."

The holy Apostles waited expectantly for the coming of the power of this same Holy Spirit; they waited together to be clothed with power from on high, according to the commandment of the Lord, Who had said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high; for, behold, I shall send the promise of My Father upon you." And, as it is written, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, all the holy Apostles were assembled with one accord in one place, and the Paraclete was sent to them under the appearance of tongues of fire."

Having received the abundant promise of the Father and the Holy Spirit, they were strengthened, and they manifested Him Who was sent to them, His grace and His power. The martyr and protodeacon Stephen, filled with the same Holy Spirit, Whom he received by the laying-on of hands of the Apostles, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he saw the doors of heaven opened and the Only-begotten Son and Word of God standing in the flesh at the right hand of the power of God. Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Paul became the preacher of divine mysteries. As Ananias said to him: "The Lord, even the Savior, hath sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And Paul afterwards said with assurance: "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The same Holy Spirit came to Cornelius and those that were to be baptized with him, and each of them spoke in his own tongue and magnified God. This same Holy Spirit came upon the Ethiopian eunuch after he went down into the water [of baptism], and he was filled with joy, and he went on his way rejoicing. This is the same Holy Spirit Who preached by the prophets, Who gave understanding to the apostles, Who spoke to men. He was given to them by the Lord, and all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist Him. For, as the Lord said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you."

This Holy Spirit also ordains priests, consecrates churches, purifies altars, perfects sacrifices and cleanses people of their sins. This Holy Spirit abides with the godly, refines the righteous and guides kings. This same Holy Spirit preserved the soul of Simeon, lengthening the time of his life and re-versing the rules of death, until the day when he beheld Him Who is the Redeemer of life and death; for it had been promised unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

**To Be Continued**

## **OCAMPR Conference - November 7-9**

This year's conference of the **Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion** will take place from Nov. 7 - 9 in Chicago. OCAMPR serves the Church by providing a special window for professionals in these health care, medical and related fields to find sound spiritual support, fellowship and content as they serve others in their life work. The theme this year will be ***Isolation, Violence, Hope and Communion***, with the Keynote address by Met. Irenej of the Serbian Church. From the topics listed, it should be a powerful opportunity to probe with spiritual depth these things through the ministry of some very gifted and experienced care practitioners.



Last year, Ruth Garibaldi attended the conference and found it quite edifying. If there are people interested in going, contact Ruth and perhaps a ride to Chicago could be shared. See Ruth for more details. A more detailed summary of the workshops and speakers will be placed on the bulletin board.