



### Saint Nicholas Celebration *Continued, from pg.1*

Following the play, St. Nicholas appeared - sharing with us all some of the lesser know aspects of his life and ministry.

Afterward, we enjoyed a wonderful covered dish dinner (and dessert)! At the end of the evening, we also acknowledged that wonderful work of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) particularly their work in support of the refugees of war-torn Syria and Iraq. The IOCC will be the recipient of our national Charity Award, also in the amount of \$2500, for their tireless ministry to all who suffer, especially in that tragic region.



The St. Nicholas exhorts the youth and all present to live a faithful Christian Life!

Thanks to all who made our annual St. Nicholas Celebration a joyous and festive moment of spiritual love and fellowship. Special thanks to the Church children and their teachers for their presentation - and to all of our parish members who make our parish a loving and spiritually vibrant community reflecting the faith of our Holy Father -

Saint Nicholas!



The Cast Takes a Bow!

### Next Lampada Deadline - March 15 Theme: Great Lent



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

Address Correction Requested



# Lampada



December, 2015 Give ear O nations and submit yourselves! God is with us

## Our Parish St. Nicholas Celebration

The parish's annual St. Nicholas Celebration this year was a time of joy for all. Because the Feast actually fell on Sunday this year, we held our parish fellowship on Saturday evening, after the celebration of Great Vespers. This year we were blessed to have several guests in our midst. Fr. Christopher Garcia, pastor of our neighboring Emmanuel Episcopal Church, and his wife Cheryl joined us for both the Vespers and the Celebration Fellowship Meal. In addition, we were specially blessed by the attendance of Mr. Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food bank. At the end of Vespers, in the spirit of St. Nicholas, Mr. McKee received a check in the amount of \$2500, representing the net proceeds from our annual Golf Outing, plus additional funds from our parish Charity Fund.



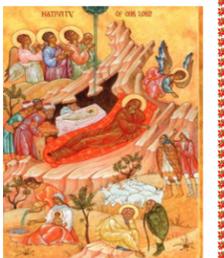
The youth presented a thoughtful play, recalling the persecution of the Orthodox Churches under the Communists, and the gathering of the faithful on the Feast of the Nativity, through the inspiration and faithfulness of those who held firm - in the face of persecution.

*Continued, Back cover*

## Pastoral Letter for the Nativity of Our Lord Permanent Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Hierarchs

*"Fasting heals illnesses, drives away the devil, removes evil thoughts, clears the mind, purifies the body, and raises up a person to the Throne of God"*

(St. Athanasius the Great)



Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers! Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Every year with great joy our Orthodox Church prepares Her faithful for the great feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Holy Hierarch of Christ's Church, St. John

Chrysostom, says: "The day of the Nativity of Christ is the most important of all the feasts, because it is the mother of all feasts. If there was no Nativity, there would be no Resurrection". In accordance with the typicon of the church, the Nativity of Christ is preceded by a forty-day fast, known among our people as "Pyhypinka" ("St. Philip's Fast"). Thus the church typicon regards the Nativity of Christ as a second Pascha, and as the faithful prepare themselves for Pascha by prayer and fasting, so the Nativity Fast is for us Christians a time of preparation for the coming of our Saviour into the world. St. Simeon of Thessalonica writes: "This 40-day fast is similar to the fast of Moses, who fasted 40 days and nights and received the tablets with God's Commandments. We fast 40 days and receive the living Word of God, incarnated from the Virgin, and we commune of His Body". The Holy Nativity Fast in our Orthodox Church begins on the 28th of November, on the day after the commemoration of the Holy Apostle Philip, and so has the name "Pyhypinka" ("Philip's Fast").

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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: Randy Brogan
Vice Chair: George Dilendorf
Treasurer: Chris Harrison
Secretary: Sdcn James Guba
At Large: Susan Murphy

Service Group Leaders

Hospitality: Pani Christine Holet
Liturgy: Troy Hamilton
Charitable Works: Cynthia Patzig
Evangelization: Karen Gavrilovic
Buildings/Grounds: Vladimir Gavrilovic
Library-Bookstore- Stanley Bright
Religious Formation - Basil Finnegan
Parish Ministries
Greeters: Karen Gavrilovic
Liturgical Music - Pani Christine Holet
Web Committee - Karen Bowman
Community Care - Elaine Brogan

Contact Information

Parish Office - 434-973-2500
Phone at Church: (540)-456-6981
Address: 7581 Rockfish Gap Tpk (US 250), Greenwood, VA
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6981, Charlottesville, Va. 22906
Email: info@stnicholasorthodoxchurch.com
Pastor: fr.r.holet@uocusa.net
Web: www.stnicholasorthodoxchurch.org
To reach Fr. Robert - First call the rectory phone: 434-973-2500 and leave a message. If you are unable to reach him at that number, then try the cell phone: 434-987-8170. The cell phone is used only during travel.
Email is checked daily.

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

Table with columns for Date, Day, and Service Details. Includes entries for Sunday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Thursday services, such as 'Twenty-Seventh Sunday After Pentecost' and 'Vigil for New Year'.



Charitable Works Update

At the same time as the world seems to careen towards more violence, distrust, and division, the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ seems to grow brighter and brighter. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He alone can bring peace, forgiveness and love to this broken world.

The complexity of issues associated with the immigration/migrant situation needs a careful and prayerful consideration before our parish actually gets involved with immigrants coming into our area. That is why we decided that in the mean time, as we wait to see how that situation unfolds, we would give our full support to the IOCC efforts in Syria.

In the meantime I thought I would share this prayer that was sent to me after the Paris shootings. It is a prayer that we might learn to forgive our enemies. I needed to be reminded of this; perhaps some of you might too:

Lord Jesus! You commanded us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we may be truly children of our Father in Heaven, who causes the sun to rise on those who are evil and those who are good, and rain to fall on both the righteous and the unrighteous: We beg You - fill our minds and hearts with Your Holy Spirit that we may forgive those who persecute and murder our brothers and sisters as You forgave those who crucified You.

As Your first martyr Stephen prayed to You for his murderers, so we pray for all those who fight in the name of ISIS: enlighten their minds and hearts that they might come to know You, the only true God, and Your love for all humankind made manifest in Your Cross. Lead them to repent of their sins, having defiled themselves with the blood of their many innocent victims and having handed their own souls over to the darkness of the evil one. Do not let them perish. Have mercy on them - forgive them for they do not know You or the Father, and know not what they do.

For blessed is Your holy Name, O Christ our God, and to You do we offer glory, honor and worship, together with Your eternal Father and Your Holy Spirit, the one true and living God, always now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. (By Father Steve Tsichlis)

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that January is the month during which we focus on Right to Life. This year we hope to gather a group from our church to participate in the March for Life in D.C. on January 23rd. We are thinking of spending the night and perhaps visiting churches in the D.C. area the next day to look at various styles of iconography.

Have a blessed Christmas! Remember the poor! Pray for peace!

Cynthia Patzig, Leader

Report from Gulu, cont. from p. 14

The children that you see pictured can easily grow up to pray, think, and do what Constance has accomplished with a small bit of help. Constance is an example of a poorer than most young lady willing to work hard to be less poor. The students pictured also share some of her characteristics.

The goal is for the school to grow into a self-sustaining operation, not reliant on outside donations. While the level of poverty limits the process of self-sustainment without outside help, small targeted donations make the school a reality. I will be sending a small donation this Nativity season, please let me know if you would like to add to the amount. Fr George has asked for the equivalent of \$250. I consider this a modest request that will pay outsize dividends in the coming years.

Troy Hamilton



An Area of Real, Human Need



## Visiting A Monastery?

I first began visiting Orthodox monasteries in 1996 – a long time ago. Prior to that time I had regularly visited an Anglican convent, but I knew nothing about what an Orthodox experience might be like. I had many questions and some trepidation about going. Since that time I have been a guest at monasteries under different jurisdictions in the United States and in Greece and have come to look forward to those visits more than any other trips throughout the year. I still, however, remember my original hesitations and anxieties and so I thought some of you, having the same questions, might like to know a little about what I have learned.

My first question was, “Are lay people welcome?” The answer to that is an unequivocal “Yes!” For monastics, loving hospitality is an integral part of their lives. Of course, some are able because of their circumstances to offer more than others, but each monastery has always offered the fullness of whatever they possessed. Monastic hospitality includes not only provision for physical comfort, but most important the opportunity to participate in their everyday life of prayer. One is truly made a part of their family. Never doubt that you will be held in their prayerful hearts while you are there and when you return home.

My next question was, “What will I do there?” This is definitely a Western question focused on activity (!) It's the wrong question really. It might be better to ask, “How will I 'be' there.” Generally, nothing is asked of you except to attend Liturgy and to participate as much as you are able in their cycle of daily prayer. Lay people arriving at a monastery are often exhausted from the work in the world and first need to rest. Monastics know this and encourage rest. Some monasteries will also allow you to help in their work if you so desire, but that too is never required. I have found, however that working with monastics is a great experience and a wonderful way to get to know them individually. The work varies from monastery to monastery. Among other things, I have peeled potatoes, swept walkways, cleaned naves, stuffed envelopes, pulled weeds, and filled small bottles with holy oil. The focus, however, is not on work but on prayer and developing a stillness in your heart. There is not better place than a monastery to do just that.



Another question I had was, “What do you talk about to a monastic?” (There is of course, no requirement that you do this.) I was afraid they expected deep spiritual conversations from the guests. That was totally untrue. They are the easiest people in the world to talk to about everything: your life and your family, your parish, work, how to think about events in the world, and of course – prayer and your own spiritual life. Generally it is a good idea to ask ahead of time for an appointment in order to speak to one of them, but sometimes these conversations take place spontaneously over lunch in the refectory or walking on the grounds.

“How long should I plan to stay” was another question. That answer, of course, depends upon how much time you have, but for the first visit it is good to spend at least one night but preferably more than that. It takes a good 24 hours to set aside all the cares of the world and to move into the rhythm of the monastery. A day visit will only give you an idea of the physical features of the monastery and an introduction to their life of prayer. Many of the monasteries in the United States welcome married couples and/or children but it is a good idea to check ahead about that since such a visit often requires special living arrangements. Most monasteries also have some limitations on how long a guest can stay. Generally the limit is about five to seven days

The last thing I wondered was, “Why should I go to a monastery? Why not just stay home and set aside more time to pray and read Scripture?” Once you go, you will easily see the difference. A monastery is filled with prayer; because of that, God's grace seems to be refined and focused there – much like the rays of sun when they pass through a prism. That grace flows over into your own soul. A monastery is also a place where you can vividly see the wonders of holy lives – lives given entirely to God. That is an inspiration and an encouragement to continue one's own spiritual struggle more vigorously and seriously.

I would encourage everyone to visit a monastery. It is a wonderful experience and full of blessings. If you have any questions, I will be happy to try to answer them.

Cynthia

### Make a Good Confession this Christmas

- Check the schedule and plan ahead for a suitable date/time. Don't wait until the last minute
- Prepare - through prayer, and a formal examination of conscience
- Learn/know the prayers of confession ahead of time
- Approach with humility and sorrow, depart with joy
- Carry out quickly and faithfully any *epitemia* assigned for your spiritual betterment



### Liturgical Services (cont.)

Saturday, January 2	4:00pm	Great Vespers
Sunday, January 3		<b>Sunday Before Theophany</b> - Holy Prophet Malachi
	8:45am	Matins
	9:30am	Divine Liturgy
Tuesday, January 5		<b>Vigil for The Feast of the Theophany of our Lord</b> Day of Strict Fast
	4:00pm	Vespers / Divine Liturgy of St. Basil Great Sanctification of Water
Wednesday, January 6		<b>Feast of the Theophany of our Lord - Great Feast</b>
	8:00am	Divine Liturgy
Saturday, January 9	4:00pm	Great Vespers
Sunday, January 10		<b>Sunday After Theophany</b> - St. Gregory of Nyssa
	8:45am	Matins
	9:30am	Divine Liturgy
Wednesday, January 13	6:00pm	Intercession Service ( <i>Moleben</i> )
Saturday, January 16	4:00pm	Great Vespers
Sunday, January 17		<b>33rd Sunday After Pentecost</b> - St. Antony the Great
	8:45am	Matins
	9:30am	Divine Liturgy
Wednesday, January 20	6:00pm	Intercession Service ( <i>Moleben</i> )
Saturday, January 23		No Vespers this week
Sunday, January 24		<b>34th Sunday After Pentecost</b> - Ven. Xenia of Rome and her Companions
	8:45am	Matins
	9:30am	Divine Liturgy

### Events and Activities

Buildings and Grounds Svc Group	5:00pm	Thursday, December
Evangelization/Outreach Svc Group	TBA	
Liturgy Service Group	7:00pm	Wednesday, December 13
Hospitality Service Group	TBA	
Charitable Works Service Group	2:30pm	Saturday, January 2
Library-Bookstore Service Group	TBA	
March for Life / Iconography Trip to DC	All Day	Fri/Sat. January 22, 23
<b>Ongoing Events - (Subject to change)</b>		
Financial Peace University	7-8:30pm	Tuesdays (1/5 - 3/2)
Pastor's Office Hours	1pm - 5pm	Thursdays - Weekly
Inquiry into Orthodoxy	After Liturgy	Weekly as needed
Convert Instructions	6:30pm	Tuesdays
Church School	After Liturgy	North Wing

## Many Blessed Years!

### Birthdays

- Daniel Malcolm - December 11
- George Wright - December 16
- Suzanne Mathieu - December 20
- Eileen Opincar - December 23
- Suzanne Lefko - December 31
- Lynn Uzzell - January 5
- Dean Gakos - January 10
- Troyen Hamilton - January 15
- Randall Brogan - January 25
- Maya Alexander - February 3
- Renee Saur - February 4
- Maureen Harrison - February 19
- Gregory Stronko - February 26
- Vera Miller - February 29

### Saints Days

- Suzanne Mathieu - December 15
- Renee Saur - December 16
- Daniel Malcolm - December 17
- Daniel Wright - December 17
- Sarah Wright - December 18
- David Murphy - December 26
- Randall Brogan - January 1
- Basil Finnegan - January 1
- Reuben Malcolm - January 2
- Richard Zubyk - January 17
- Tim Stratos - January 22
- Tetyana Yavorska - January 25
- Gregory Brogan - January 25
- Robert Carter - January 30
- Simeon Gakos - February 3
- Jacob Ritter - February 5
- Ashley Malcolm - February 19

## A Blessed Nativity Season to All!



## Consolidating Parish Discussions and Calendars The Parish Forum and Web Calendar

In October, I created a capability online for us to have ‘discussions’ about parish life and work through the Parish Forum. Take a look at the graphic on this page. There are nine separate ‘Categories’ for discussion, and (just to start) there are now 26 separate ‘Boards’ like bulletin boards, where a variety of things can be posted. Under each board will be ‘threads’, discussing, responding to, and posting important work on the ministries of our church. Can you begin to get an idea of how much could potentially be happening at any time in our parish? And the need to get a handle on it all in a consistent and thoughtful way?

The reason why I created this is simply this - **Without a single place where these discussions can be promoted, exchanged and contained, the work of the parish, in all of its potential, cannot, and will not be accomplished, at least accomplished in a manner worthy of the Church of Jesus Christ.** The good news is this: On any given day there may be a half dozen conversations going on about what needs to be done. Some (not all) of it needs my direct input, often in a timely or even urgent way. Our parishioners are active and engaged in the work and life of the parish in countless ways!

The Forum has the potential (for me, for us all) to pull this all together in one place, rather than in scattershot email blasts, one-on-one chats or notes scribbled on a piece of paper stuck in somebody’s inbox at Church. The parish, as it is now, is like a small business with all of the aspects that need to be run well - from its spiritual mission/purpose/ministry, to its events, facilities, finances and even taxes. From the sublime to the mundane, it has to be managed. (*Try forgetting about the taxes some time...*) I can count, just last week, at least 10 major ‘conversations’ that took place via Email on important parish topics - from Hospitality/scheduling play practice and the Charity presentation at the St. Nicholas celebration, to the installation of signage, dome project and meeting planning for B&G, to the Bookstore’s Christmas sale, the publicity for the Financial Peace University class, and another dozen or so vibrant activities - not to mention prayer needs and personal requests for ministry or help that are also so important.

The need, is always for *coordination* of these things, which at least for now, falls on my plate and we so often, end up scrambling to get things done in a timely way when someone fails to pick up the scribbly note in their Inbox, read their email or recall their promise made at a coffee hour chat. So I need tools to help with coordination, and I need people to learn to use those tools to make it happen, to keep things falling through the cracks. Hence, the Forum.

### How The Forum Works

The Forum has two main sections. The **public side** is at the very top - **General Topics - Public**. Anyone who comes to the site can see this. The Forum in this regard is an interface with the potential to reach out to a broader public presence, allowing for feedback for anyone, unlike a social media site like Facebook where Facebook users will be the only ones typically able to interact. One public ministry set up already is an opportunity for **Prayer Requests** - which can be listed and collated into the parish prayer lists and for our Intercessory Prayer ministry. The potential for the public side is significant.

#### ✳ Controlled access just to parish members

The **private** side of the Forum is accessible **only** to those given permission, which will be, primarily, our parish members who will engage in its active use. Permission is easily obtained by going to the Forum, making the request via email, and an administrator can then give authorization. When you return the email, a profile is created and the logon set up. You can typically set your PC to log you on automatically by remembering your password.

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<b>General Topics - Public</b>
Do You Have a prayer need? List it here
St. Moses the Black Brotherhood
The Ukr. Orthodox Church Strategic Planning Process
Pastor's News - Ministry
Orthodox Stewardship
<b>Parish Discussions</b>
Test for Issues
Parishioner Prayer Requests
Parish Polls - Members only
General Discussion
<b>Parish Board</b>
Web and Communications Committee
Next Parish Board Meeting
Parish Leadership
Parish Budget - 2016
Parish Finances - Current Year
<b>Charitable Works Group</b>
Immigrant Ministry
Intercessory Prayer Ministry
Community Care Ministry
SW Virginia Ministry
<b>Liturgy Group</b>
Music Ministry
Altar Servers Ministry
Reader's Ministry
Prosphora Baking Ministry
Iconography Project
Dome Buildout Project
<b>Hospitality - Kitchen Group</b>
St. Nicholas Feast Day Celebration
Feast Day Meal
Coffee hour Management
<b>Buildings and Grounds Group</b>
Suggestions for Facility Changes - Short term
North Wing - Short Term Changes
Social Hall Suggestions- Short Term
Narthex Suggestions - Short term
Long Term - Parish Facility Planning
HVAC Project
<b>Religions Formation Group</b>
Adult Religious Education
Church School
<b>Evangelization and Outreach Group</b>
Advertising Efforts
Financial Peace University - Jan. 2016
Evangelization
Greeters
<b>Library - Bookstore Group</b>
Library/Bookstore Group Mgmt
Bookstore Management
Library Maintenance



## Hospitality Service Group - Winter Update



**Βίταεμο ! (Vitajemo)! Welcome!**

We would like to thank all of those who participated in any way in our St. Nicholas Weekend celebration. Our Parish welcomed Fr. Christopher and Cheryl Garcia from Emmanuel Episcopal Church for Saturday’s Great Vespers service and the evening program which followed.

This year’s edition was a success on many levels – the service was well attended, the children offered a wonderful reflection on the importance of a village church, the buffet was plentiful, and we had a visit from St. Nicholas, who distributed gift bags to the children in attendance!

~~Even Sunday’s “raid the refrigerator” hospitality hour was tasty...and the children found gold chocolate “coins” in their shoes after Divine Liturgy.~~

We’ve posted to the Forum a request for feedback on the celebration. Please share your thoughts so that we can make our Patronal Feast Day celebration one of the highlights of every year for the members of our Parish family.

The HSG met to discuss plans for 2016. We will be setting the event schedule at our meeting in January – date and time to be announced. A few things to note:

- We will be setting our meeting schedule for monthly meetings
- The schedule will include quarterly Parish gathering opportunities/events
- One weekend each month will be given to each of our Service Groups so that they can share their talents and their group’s activities with all of us
- We will be including frequent (perhaps 1 weekend each month) opportunities for potluck/covered dish coffee hours

The HSG has a presence on the Forum; we will be taking our discussion and planning notes, with our meeting recaps, to that site. If you haven’t already registered, please take the opportunity ASAP. Lots of important things happening!

Have a blessed Nativity and a peaceful end to 2015 –

*HSG members Randy Brogan, Hunter and Stephanie Johnson, and Pani Christine Holst, Coordinator*

### Library /Bookstore News

The Library & Bookstore Service Group is very pleased that Patricia Hardesty has undertaken the task of **cataloging all the publications** in our collection. Once completed, we are hoping to be able to have the catalog on-line. We are also exploring methods to make the library more accessible. As the north wing where the collection is housed is a shared space often used for classes and meetings, it is a challenge to think about how we can make the library’s collection available to the broader parish at peak times like coffee hour. Suggestions and ideas are always welcome!

*Holiday Sale*



In bookstore news, we’ve been pleased to host the second annual **Holiday Sale** table last week and this week at coffee hour. It was fun to gather things for this sale throughout the year and hunt around for good sales on Christmas gift items in July and August. Off-season deals are great! As the parish bookstore does not turn a profit and is not supposed to, those off-season deals translate into an ability to offer nice things to our parish at really friendly prices. This is really one of the essential missions of the parish bookstore: to gather things worth your consideration and offer them at affordable prices. Thanks to all for making this year’s holiday sale a success!

**One last thought:** As you enjoy some much deserved rest and time off during the Nativity season, read a good book!

*Stanley Bright, David Murphy*



### Time for A Road Trip?



There are two reasons why it might make sense to take a road trip to Washington DC in January. (*I would rather it be Hawaii, but you can't win them all.*)

- ◆ **The March For Life** - The annual march in prayerful remembrance of the children aborted as a result of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision will take place on Friday, January 22nd.
- ◆ **Iconography Project** - Previously planned road trip to Washington DC / Maryland churches to view iconography in church settings.

It is proposed that we do both - the same weekend - January 22-23. The plan would be to rent a suitable van to drive to DC on Friday morning early for the March, stay over in a hotel, then visit three churches (or so) on Saturday to view the iconography for the sake of our personal growth and the iconography project planning. Some could conceivably stay over Saturday night and visit other sites of interest like the National Archives and Smithsonian (we have contacts there), Dumbarton Oaks, or other museums or sites of interest.

This would meet a key next step in the Iconography Project - getting real perspectives on existing churches and discussing with those experienced in such projects about the spiritual and practical aspects of undertaking this process.

A committee will discuss this and a topic area is available in the General Section of the Forum - please go there now so we can gauge interest and participation. Ω

### About the March for Life

The March for Life is an annual peaceful rally held in Washington D.C. on the anniversary of legalizing abortion in our nation in the case of Roe versus Wade. It is the biggest pro-life rally in the world.

The Orthodox presence in this event has a long history with representatives from many jurisdictions. Every life is the gift of a God who loves it and wills it to be. No life is an accident. Its value is infinite and meant for eternal life. This call to life is a sign of love; a love we cannot imagine; a love that is revealed in Christ Jesus.

Our participation in the March for Life is an opportunity to be His witness. Verbal arguments will not persuade people as much as the example of those who have a genuine and compassionate respect for life. Orthodox Christians are not only called to oppose the use of abortion, but to show a profound love and gratitude for God's gift of Life.

*Eileen Opincar,  
Right to Life Advocate*



### St Nicholas Orthodox Church Forum

Home Help Search Member Admin Profile Bookmarks Messages

*Continued, from previous page*

#### ✧ Notification by Email or text

You can set up the profile to fit your needs and desires. Post a picture of yourself, use nicknames, and most importantly, set up an auto-notification process whenever certain things happen on the Forum that you would be interested in. So if you are part of the **Hospitality Service Group**, you can get immediate notification of their meetings, discussions, planning and activities - any threads in their area can be set to trigger a notification. You can send messages to select members of the Forum directly from the Forum. Go to the top of the page - **Messages** then **New Message** and simply select your recipients. As you begin to type in their user names, it activates a drop down so you can select the person. Then Send. So if you set up a needed thread and need a response from people you can set up the Thread, then simply send the email from the Forum. BUT, you *don't* need to get *notified by everybody about everything*. I am very reluctant to broadcast emails to the entire parish, because receiving too many of those automatically makes them less important and more like 'spam'. The Forum can target these messages giving you access to anyone in the parish who you may need to message, but only those. Also, if you simply decide to go to the Forum daily, whenever you first open the Main page, you'll see a popup where you can access all of your messages - effectively getting out of Email for almost all of the activity. It's up to you to use it in the way that works for *you*.



#### ✧ A Common place where documents reside, with pertinent discussion and polling

The parish Forum has some other very helpful features. We can upload documents that can be reviewed or take 'snap polls' that can help us get an immediate sense of what the sense of the parish is regarding something. So, we have two ads being used for the **Financial Peace University** radio ad campaign that you can listen to and offer your feedback. You can go to the Forum now, and *vote* on things like ads layouts -and give us critical feedback on our decision making process. This will also be true for general parish preferences like - would you come to another 'Beer and Brats' social after Pascha? Or a Game Night in February? If we don't use something online like this, you'll either be getting lots of Emails or filling out sign up sheets in the narthex right and left (there were three last week)

#### ✧ Opens parish conversations to the broader parish community

The Forum will also serve as a way to *transparency* for normal parish activity planning and decision-making So while you may be a member of the Hospitality Group, you also have a place and a voice in other parish conversations. You might be interested in the discussion thread talking about planning an iconography tour of Washington DC, or have specific recommendations for the parish board regarding the **2016 Budget**. So, you may note that while the proposed Washington DC trip on Jan. 22, 23 is a good idea, that it might conflict with other parish activities or a meeting tentatively planned that no one yet knows about and you can flag that for everyone.

Nevertheless, while our parish discussions will, in general be open to all the parish, that doesn't mean you can't Email me, or someone else about some specific, or sensitive matter that is not needful for the broader audience. But 90% of what we need to communicate can safely and rightly go on the Forum. In some cases, if we have major projects like the iconography project which will be broad-based, and costly, the input from *everyone* will be needed. Even having meetings about such things will not meet the need - hence the value of an online forum. Often, the best planning insights come from outside the immediate service group - hence the value of everyone weighing in. You can easily scan the main page of the forum to see what is 'new' since the last time you visited and quickly skip older things for what is new. But, it also reminds us that if we look at a section of the forum - say Religious Formation / Adult Education, and see that there hasn't been any activity there for a while, that we should see what's not happening or work to make something happen.

#### What Happens Next for the Forum?

Well that's up to you. Obviously, if you are a farmer you need to have a shovel and know how to use it. In the Church today, we need to use the tools available to us to accomplish the Lord's work in the ways that are available to us. As the apostle Paul recognized that Mars Hill was a forum to go to spread his message, so we need our own forums. I have no illusions that, with any technical 'solution', there are more problems created at first. Any of us who had to learn Windows back in the 1990s, or any software 'solutions', remembers this - but now the capabilities have expanded and almost every-

*Continued, next page*

## Please Remember in Your Prayers

Andy and Sue	Robin (special need)
Robbie (spec. need)	Michelle (health)
Natalie (in prison)	Jonathan (cancer)
Jeff and family (cancer - terminal)	Pam (special needs)
Marisa (cancer returned)	Will and family
Julie Rose (health)	Millie (health)
Michelle and Isabel (spec need)	"Doc" (recovery)
Norbert (hospice)	

For the Departed		
Those who died as a result of the shootings in San Bernadino and the perpetrators	Joshua - 39	Gregory - 38
For those who have died in service to our Country - especially:	Phyllis - 45	Jonathan - 33
	Ryan - 26	Quinn - 21
	Jordan - 28	Nathan - 29
	KCey - 21	

### General Intentions

- For newly departed Dcn. David Mascarenas, who served parishes in New Mexico. *Memory eternal.*
- For those in the West who have been afflicted by storms, flooding and others by drought.
- For the sick, the elderly and for those alone or suffering from depression during the holidays.
- For Hunter and Stephanie Johnson, James Fulks and for Mager Karoumbas, who are receiving Convert instructions.
- For those who advocate for the unborn and provide services to pregnant mothers, and for an end to abortion in our land.
- For the Syrian people fleeing war, especially our Christian brethren, and for those who minister to their needs. For the victims of terrorism in our nation and abroad.
- For the Strategic Planning and Stewardship efforts taking place in our Metropolia and the ministries of our bishops.
- For Reader Joseph, for John and Mary, and all who serve as missionaries and those they serve.
- For God's continued blessing and fruitfulness in the holy work being offered to Christ by Frannie, Joe, Debbie, Lois, Charlotte, Gertrude, Junior, Jerry, Randy, Rayburn, Shea and all who serve those in need in SW Virginia.
- For the Churches in our area which serve those in need, especially through the LOVE Inc. ministry.





Parish Forum, Continued, from previous page

body uses online capabilities ubiquitously and continuously. So there are orientation and training needs - but we can do that. We have the technical capability to assist you with most issues that may come up.

The bigger issue is whether or not people will engage - at all. It's disturbing to me when I sense that the answer to that is 'No'. This is true especially for many younger people - many of whom have not even gone to the Forum to request access - despite my frequent requests. I know everyone is busy. But I also know that our people are no different than anyone else when it comes to time management, and many still have time for the stream of miscellaneous social media engagements, but seemingly no time to put this to a test on behalf of the parish.

I will ask for the input from the Parish Board and our service group leaders to determine whether this will be a useful medium for communication or not. If so, it will become normative for all basic parish business. For now, it must be thoroughly tested. Hence I would ask all of our parish members to sign up now, and get involved taking the parish business to the forum, by creating threads and engaging with your groups to use it for your internal communications.

There are two BIG areas where it needs to be tested now -

- **Scheduling for 2016** - Every service group needs to make a tentative plan for the entire year. (meetings, events, projects). We will use the Forum to do the preliminary planning. Once 'finalized' these events will be loaded onto the Main Parish calendar for the year. You can see the full calendar online on our Parish Website - click the [Calendar](#) link. Note also - in 2016, once the service group leaders demonstrate their facility with the Forum, they will be given the capability to update the parish calendar directly as well. For now, the calendar is managed by the pastor.
- **Budgeting** - Each service group annually works on the area of the parish budget appropriate to their area. The goal is to effectively use all of our financial resources, and plan (financially) our projects for the year. The polling features can be especially useful for the budget process. So, each group should set up it's own 'Proposed Project List' for the year, and then a ballpark guess budget for it (we will refine that later - if need be, by bids). Once the project is out there, anybody can and should weigh in on whether it's important and timely for 2016. Can you see the potential here?



The Forum - Getting on Board

So, what you need to do is this: Getting started will take 15 minutes.

1. Go to the Forum and Request an ID if you haven't already.
2. When you get your Login via email - go back to the Forum. You can set your computer to automatically log you in. Access your Profile by clicking the Profile button at the top of the page and update your profile and begin to consider how to set up your notifications.
3. Put a quick access button on your PC or Toolbar Browser to go to the Forum in one click. (Ask if you need to learn how.)
4. Access the 'Practice Area' and try to set up a post. Or respond to someone else's. Have fun with it.
5. Go to the Boards (Service Groups etc.) where you are active in the Parish. Take a look at what's already there.
6. Try sending a test message to all the members of your Service Group.
7. Take a look at other areas of the parish, listen to the Financial Peace Univ. ads. Etc. and get an idea about what's going on behind the scenes.

If you have any technical issues, contact me and I can help you by email, phone, or by remote log-on to your PC. Thanks for your openness to this new aspect of our parish life. If you have any suggestions on how to make our communications stronger across the parish, please let me know Ω

Fr. Robert



SPEAKING TO SECULAR AMERICA

I attended the conference Speaking to Secular America: How the Church is Reaching Out to Secular America at Hellenic College Holy Cross October 28-30, along with Eric Taft. The conference began on Wednesday evening with an address by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. His Eminence spoke of the dangers of secularism and warned of the intolerance of secularism and its lack of respect for the individual person. He contrasted this with Christianity which values the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

Thursday morning began with a discussion by Dr Andrew Walsh, which dealt with understanding the statistics of religious affiliation in America. With religious affiliation becoming more a matter of personal choice, more people are moving away from institutional affiliation, which is reflected in youth choosing not to affiliate. This unaffiliated population is steadily rising, while the number of those who consider themselves Christians is declining, and there is also a large and increasing number of Christians who do not want to be affiliated with any denomination. However, this ability of to make a personal choice about one's religion is benefiting Orthodoxy's conversion rate. Only 20% of Orthodox claim they share their faith with others. The high rate of intermarriage has likely hurt the Orthodox church. Political activism has a



large effect on these changes. In some instances, a cause of people leaving churches is the close connection between political and religious identities.



Fr Theodore Dorrance spoke on "Creating a church That Reaches Out to the Non-Religious". His main point was, that what we have to offer is the witness of our lives becoming holier, and that we need to regain our burning love for Christ and the whole world. Orthodoxy has an opportunity to present others with something more "exotic." It can teach the "spiritual but not religious" who the divine is, and remind them that we are created as worshipping beings. To do this we cannot offer watered down Orthodoxy. To do this he stressed three things:

- Do a better job teaching and preaching so that we are inspired to live our faith, or greatest witness
- Take repentance more seriously, so that we are becoming more holy; we need to
- Pray so that our prayers offer living water to the spiritually hungry, and our liturgical acts touch the heart.

The next talk was by Fr Stephen Freeman, entitled "The God You Don't Believe In: Conversations with a Secular World". Fr Freeman spoke of secularism as the greatest heresy of our time, and as such is our greatest danger and challenge. We need to get over "fitting in", and be who we are. One way to start a conversation: "Tell me about the God you don't believe in, and I'll tell you about the God I do believe in". People need Orthodoxy because it is coming home; it is the road to being fully human, created in the image of God. This was followed by a talk by Dr John Mark Reynolds: "An Orthodox Christian Response to Atheism" which presented a rational argument against atheism.

"Raising Children Who Will Hold on to Their Faith in a Secular Age" was the title of Dr Phillip Mamalakis's talk. This talk was a reminder about the importance of living our faith everywhere, all the time. Children learn not just from what we tell them, but even more so by what they see and experience. We must live our faith and share it with our children; teaching them to know Christ and His love We need to teach them judgement and discernment. We need to help them thrive by acquiring the Holy Spirit. The example we set is very important: how we live our lives, how we relate to our children, how we relate to the church.

All of the talks were very good, were video taped, and links are available online at our Parish Forum, under Adult Religious Education.

Stanley Bright

Please Remember our Friends in Prison

Dorian Lester, serving a life sentence in the Craigsville prison, continues to pray for all at St. Nicholas. He has repeatedly expressed his gratitude for the parish's prayers and thoughts. A recent letter from him reports that he has been given the job as the prison's Chaplain's Assistant/Librarian.

Please keep those imprisoned in your prayers, especially during this Holy Season!

Recently, we received word of an Orthodox woman who is at the Fluvanna Correctional Institute. We'll update on this soon...



### Report From Uganda

Dear Fr. and Troy,

I hope this will find you well. I pray you should have joy in your heart as you look at these pictures here attached. Those you see in the Pictures are the Pupils of St. Anthony the Great Primary School Nwoya whom you are helping. They were giving a warm welcome song to our Pope during his visit in St Nektarios Church Akonyi Bedo Gulu. They sang a very beautiful welcome song to the Pope which has made him to rise up and greet each and every one of them and gave them an Icon. I shed tears when I heard them singing beautifully. Everyone was amazed when they heard them.



May God continue blessing you for the support you are giving for the betterment of this School I really have hope in this School. Greeting and love to everyone in your Church.

Fr. George. Gulu, Northern Uganda

Over the past year or so our parish has given very specific financial help to an Orthodox parish in Gulu, Uganda. I first met Father George and some of his parishioners while taking part in an OCMC two week medical mission to Uganda. The people of Akonyi Bedo outside of Gulu had only recently returned after some years spent in an internal refugee camps. The villagers had fled a regional Civil War led by Joseph Kony and the LRA.

The village was so kind in welcoming us and joyful for what little they had that I promised to come back and visit when I could. I spent Theophany of 2009 in Akonyi Bedo and was able to direct funds raised to several specific projects that Fr George was aware of and able to astutely inform me about while I was there. The overarching vision each time that I have taken or sent money to Fr George in Gulu was to fulfill immediate needs that would have long term benefits. We purchased brick making tools, goats, laundry basket/baptismal fonts, and some tuition money for a few students.

In 2008 a young village girl named Constance volunteered as a translator for medical missionaries from the United States and over the years was given the funds to complete nursing school. She now works at a clinic that serves everyone in the area. During my last visit to Gulu in 2010 while I was deployed to Africa I was able to visit Constance while she was still studying. I asked how she was doing and if she had enough food at school. She said, "Yes, but it's a lot of beans and rice." She jokingly asked if I could help her to study in America.

Obviously going to school in the United States would be amazingly more comfortable than the austere poor school where she was at the time. I told her quite seriously that the only reason I had helped her over the years was because of her devotion to teaching the smaller children Sunday School in Akonyi Bedo and her devotion to Fr George and his family. Her devotion to Christ and the Church shone in her generosity and compassion for others. The difference that she has made in the community will only grow more pronounced in the coming decades. Bringing Constance to the US would be very expensive, but helping her to succeed in Northern Uganda has been affordable. To put a financial perspective to Constance, sending one medical professional from our Church would cost a minimum of \$3,000 just to get there and back again. Making a donation of \$300 would however enable Constance to achieve a specific goal or meet a particular need in her clinic or in her own self-sustenance.



Patriarchal Visit to Gulu

This has been the nature of our Parish participation in Gulu, Uganda (through your donations channeled into the St. Nicholas Charity Fund). We have donated the funds to finish the building of a school, specifically the roof in the picture above. The current need is very practical. The teachers, boys and girls of the school all use the same latrine. This is an example of a practical need that falls above and beyond the meager budget of the school.

Continued, pg. 19



### Income/Expense by Category 1/1/2015 through 11/30/2015

Category	1/1/2015-3/31/2015	4/1/2015-6/30/2015	7/1/2015-9/30/2015	10/1/2015-11/30/2015	OVERALL TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>					
Collection	28,629.44	40,451.67	35,003.31	23,311.96	127,396.38
Interest Inc	46.79	30.98	9.50	0.00	87.27
FROM General	16,700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16,700.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>45,376.23</b>	<b>40,482.65</b>	<b>35,012.81</b>	<b>23,311.96</b>	<b>144,183.65</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Uncategorized	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Advertising Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B&G Op	3,143.66	936.24	1,535.11	822.04	6,437.05
B&G Proj	0.00	0.00	0.00	815.00	815.00
Bookstore Transfer	0.00	0.00	0.00	27.11	27.11
Charity Operating	5,712.54	4,834.63	3,298.07	2,069.24	15,914.48
Comm Op	379.50	403.16	645.74	311.62	1,740.02
Comm Proj	646.00	0.00	33.34	0.00	679.34
Consistory Special Assessment	0.00	504.00	0.00	0.00	504.00
E&O Op	2,023.96	630.00	193.71	1,132.81	3,980.48
E&O Proj	125.00	0.00	0.00	45.01	170.01
Hosp. Op	864.62	861.47	862.57	368.76	2,957.42
Hosp. Proj	717.96	0.00	52.84	0.00	770.80
LG Op	1,211.47	845.46	608.31	444.47	3,109.71
Lib. Op	206.95	0.00	330.37	0.00	537.32
Liturgy Group	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.54	13.54
Mortgage interest	2,949.10	2,987.76	2,961.44	0.00	8,898.30
Mortgage Payment	0.00	0.00	750.92	0.00	750.92
PB Op	22,183.87	16,705.95	23,569.25	11,654.99	74,114.06
Publishing	0.00	0.00	0.00	324.45	324.45
RF Op	0.00	0.00	59.22	0.00	59.22
TO Project	16,700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16,700.00
TO Mortgage Principal	2,288.48	3,995.68	1,525.22	0.00	7,809.38
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>59,153.11</b>	<b>32,704.35</b>	<b>36,426.11</b>	<b>18,029.04</b>	<b>146,312.61</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>-13,776.88</b>	<b>7,778.30</b>	<b>-1,413.30</b>	<b>5,282.92</b>	<b>-2,128.96</b>

Key: Op =Operations, Proj = Projects according to the service groups. So - BG Op means Buildings and Grounds operations. Hosp. Proj. means Hospitality Projects. Categories listed in alphabetical order. There are plans to make important changes to our financial software in the next month or so, to make our reports more clear for all.

### A Few Notes on Finances

There is good news, and some not quite so good news. For one thing, this year our expenses have slightly outrun our income thus far. Overall, however, because of special targeted donations (icon project receipts), we have a very healthy balance of over \$76,000 in our accounts. This will be expended in a timely manner in early 2016, as we are now at a point where we can schedule the 'big project' - the replacement of our entire HVAC system simultaneously with the installation of the dome in our sanctuary.

Once the dome is installed and the scheme of our icon project completed, we can expend the funds allotted to that so that a Pantocrator icon can be installed in the dome. Both projects were approved at parish Meetings

Because we work on a 'cash' basis, we have the advantage of simply delaying most budgeted projects until sufficient funds are available to us. Do consider a special 'year end' contribution as the Lord prompts you, so that we can finish 2016 well and launch 2016 on a sound financial footing. And do participate in the 2016 budget planning process - reflecting the dynamic mission of our parish! Ω

### Account Balances - As of 11/30/2015

Account	11/30/2015 Balance
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Contingency	30,253.51
General	23,954.91
Project	22,390.54
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>76,598.96</b>
<b>Liability Accounts</b>	
Mortgage Principal	-254,262.44
<b>TOTAL Liability Accounts</b>	<b>-254,262.44</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>-177,663.48</b>



### Prospora 101!



We'll be scheduling a class at the Church during the *last half of January*, for parishioners of St. Nicholas Parish. During the class, we'll learn about the history, methods, and technique of this important ministry. We will bake a batch of loaves, which will last approximately 4 weeks. The class will begin *mid-morning on a Saturday*, and will last until the loaves are completed - typically *4 hours* or so. This class is designed to provide hands-on group instruction for existing and new prospora bakers, on the specific baking requirements for St. Nicholas Parish. Upon successful completion, you will be included in the group rotation for prospora baking during the year. The class also allows for discussion about the spiritual purposes of the ministry of baking Prospora - including the types/needs for liturgical breads in the Orthodox Church to a discussion about the saints who have recognized through the ministry of cooking and baking, the blessing of God's gifts to them.

All materials are provided by the Church. If you want an opportunity to explore your talents, and learn with and from others who share your interests, this is for you!

*Pani Matka Christine, Coordinator*

### Parish Stewardship Dedication

During the holiday season, we are called upon to give thanks to God for his many blessings. When we receive His blessings, we do so as stewards of them. A good steward *counts* his or her blessing. And like the leper who was healed by Christ, turns to Him in thanksgiving, thus orienting his life toward Christ in worship and sacred relationship.

Our Parish Stewardship Dedication form is a way of recommitting our lives to the Lord in thanksgiving. It is always a good thing to reflect on God's many blessings - including our Holy Faith, our families, our homes, our work and our friends. We should give an account to the Lord of the stewardship of our gifts, including our personal talents. Have we offered these to God, in thanksgiving.

The Parish serves as steward of what God entrusts to us - not only the financial offerings of the people, but also the riches of the spiritual treasures of the Church. As we receive, again, the Divine Gift of Christ entrusted to the world, and to us the Church, may we respond in turn, dedicating ourselves, each other, and all of our life to Christ our God.

### Making Sense of the Liturgy

The Censer has 12 small bells that represent the 12 Apostles, and 4 chains representing the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). It was common to use bells as a way of notifying people to 'part' - such as when the priest is incensing in the midst of the congregation. Likewise the vestments sometimes had bell - buttons on them (particularly bishops) for this practical purpose.



The *ripidia* are the two circular banners having depicted on them the six-winged angels known as the Seraphim. In the early Church, the banners were smaller and used to fan away insects during the Liturgy. The Seraphim guard the Throne of God, much as the ripidia guard the Altar Table, which is the Throne of God upon the Earth.

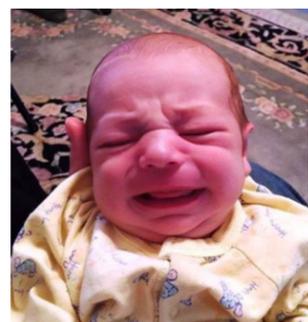
The *Pantocrator* - the icon of Christ usually found in the dome (ceiling) of the church. The word means 'He who holds everything.'

#### *The position of the Priest during Services*

Whenever the priest is facing the Altar, he is representing the people before God (the Altar Table is the Throne of God).

Whenever the priest is facing the people, he is representing God to the people - either blessing them (bestowing God's grace upon them) or proclaiming the Word of God (either by reading from the Gospel or preaching).

*Do you know  
Who this is?*



**John Spyridon !  
Congratulations  
Demetra and Gregory -  
Many blessed years!**



### Serving as Board Chair

In my pre-Orthodox past, I never imagined that I would be very active in a church – much less serve as the Board Chair! I always felt that I was too busy to get involved. I kept telling Elaine “Baby Steps” when she asked about how I could help serve. We have many great examples of diligent service within our parish. Over time, I became more and more involved and developed a better understanding of my personal call to stewardship. So, when I was asked to serve as Board Chair I decided to humbly accept.

I have some very big shoes to fill... In my mind Vladimir was the consummate Board Chair. His passionate leadership of the parish helped guide us through the Master Plan implementation and set us on a sure path to success. As I begin this new chapter on my road of service, I hope to utilize some of the teachings he as shown us through his direction.



The coming year will be a busy one. I believe we will finally get the Heating and Air Conditioning fixed, and completing the Dome Project. But my biggest goal is to serve this parish well and to continue the critical path of parish success.

I look forward to working with all of you and serving this parish to the glory of God. I will have you in my prayers--- please include me in yours.

*Randy Brogan, Board Chair*

### Hierarchs Pastoral Letter - Nativity Fast Continued, from p.1



Venerable Anastasius of Sinai in his writings says that the Nativity Fast is of apostolic origin, and relates the following tradition about the Holy Apostle Philip: “The Holy Apostle Philip, before his martyr death, asked God to punish his tormentors. Because of this it was revealed to him that he himself, as punishment for this request, would not be able to enter paradise until forty days had passed following his death. And so St. Philip entreated the other apostles to fast on his behalf for forty days, and the apostles instructed all the faithful to fast for forty days”. The Nativity Fast for us Christians and for all the faithful of the Church of Christ is a symbol of the prayer and fasting of the old-testament patriarchs and prophets, who with great longing awaited the advent on earth of the Messiah Christ.

The Nativity Fast has at its foundation deep spiritual meaning, because it prepares us Christians for the appearance of God on earth. And in general fasting, as means of spiritual perfection, was known to humanity from the time of the first people who lived on earth. The prohibition to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the earthly paradise of Eden – this was a spiritual foreshadowing of our Christian fasting, where, by means of the taming of the flesh, a person may attain their own spiritual perfection. The Fast is a promise of spiritual growth for a Christian. We can say with confidence that mankind always obtained benefit from fasting and from the most ancient times had consciousness of the fact that a pure fast brings a person great physical and spiritual benefit. In accordance with the teaching of the Church, bodily fasting should absolutely be accompanied by spiritual fasting.

Let us remember that the time of the Nativity Fast which we are now entering is a time of spiritual warfare for each one of us, in which both the soul and the body participate. The soul takes part by way of more zealous prayer, sincere repentance, and the true fulfilment of the Christian virtues. There can be no spiritual fast without the mortification of the flesh. St. Basil the Great writes: “*As much as you deprive the flesh, this is how much you add luster and spiritual health to your soul. For it is not by the increase of physical strength in our bodies, but through the endurance of the soul and patience in difficult circumstances that we gain strength against the unseen enemies*”. As well, a true fast strengthens our health, constrains the flesh, cleanses our soul, and leads us to God. Fasting gives us spiritual wings, by means of which we Christians are victorious over satan's wiles and spiritually rise up to the heavens. The Lord speaks to us through fasting, He teaches us humility and holiness.

May Love to our Lord, Jesus Christ, be an inspiring power, so that this year we might in a proper way observe this Nativity Fast and prepare our souls and hearts to worthily greet the feast of the Nativity of Christ.

*With Archpastoral Blessings,*

- +YURIJ, Metropolitan - UOC of Canada
- +IOAN, Archbishop - UOC in Diaspora
- +ILARION, Bishop - UOC of Canada
- +DANIEL, Bishop - UOC of the USA

- +ANTONY, Metropolitan - UOC of the USA, and the Diaspora
- +JEREMIAH, Archbishop - UOC of Brazil and South America
- +ANDRIY, Bishop - UOC of Canada



### Golf Outing 2015 Report

This summer was one of great weather and beautiful weekends. So when we started to plan for the 2015 Golf Outing, I had great expectations of a family fun night under the stars! However, our good Lord decided that there were others in greater need of the rain. So we had to cancel the outing.

No worries! In its place, we held a Silent Auction for those items that were donated by local businesses and individuals. The auction was held for three weeks and ended on Sunday October 11<sup>th</sup>. The generous bidders of our parish donated over \$400. In addition, we received additional cash contributions from many local businesses. All proceeds going to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.



During our St. Nicholas Feat Day Celebration, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank CEO, Michael McKee was presented a check from our parish with the proceeds from the outing. As a result of our donation, they will be able to provide 10,000 meals to hungry families. Thus, not only are we providing nutritious food for families. We are also providing them with hope this during this Christmas season.

In addition, please make a donation of food to the ongoing Nativity food drive. The baskets are located in the front hall. Sometime after Christmas, we will take the donated food to the food bank. They have offered to give us a tour of their facility in Verona. If you are interested in making the trek, please speak with Cynthia Patzig.

We are planning a late summer 2016 Golf Outing. So, keep your flashlights handy and get ready for some nighttime fun!

Randy Brogan, Golf Outing Coordinator

Note - The Golf Outing serves as an outreach to the broader community, in addition to the opportunity to raise funds for a worthy cause. Our thanks to all who supported this project!

### Annual St. Nicholas Awards - 2016

Over the course of the year, our parish Charity Fund is entrusted with a tithe of 10% of the income received from the donations to our parish. These funds are used throughout the year for a variety of worthy causes - from our financial support for missionary Bill Black to the numerous requests from local, regional charities - from the local Fire Department to IOCC. At the end of the year, the Fund is effectively 'emptied' and what remains (outside of committed funds) are bundled for presentation to a worthy charity. This year, we have had two distinct recipients for the funds.



Because the Blue Ridge Area Food bank was the recipient of the proceeds of our parish Godl outing, additional funds were added and a check in the amount of \$2500 was presented to Mr. Michael McKee, who represented the Food Bank and attended our St. Nicholas Vespers, where the check was presented to him, with thanks for his ministry and that of the staff and volunteers of the Food Bank for being the conduit in the community bringing food to those in need. We also presented an icon of the Nativity of the Lord, in remembrance of the event.

Although Mr. Lou Zagami, from IOCC was not able to attend our Vespers this year, our Charitable Works group had deemed IOCC as a worthy recipient of our special award as well. Hence a check, in the amount of \$2500 will also be sent to IOCC, earmarked for the ever-critical Syrian Relief needs abroad. There are over 1 million refugees in the small country of Jordan alone! IOCC is on the ground in the region providing help to those in need in that region.

Syrian Refugees Surge Into Serbia Seeking Asylum



We extend our prayers and best wishes to the recipients of our St. Nicholas awards this year, with our continued prayers that they will be granted to the Lord an abundance of resources to meet the need of those they serve in love. Ω



### Community Care News

As the year draws to a close at St. Nicholas, we are once again reminded of our many blessings as individuals and as a parish! The biggest blessing is the way parishioners look out for each other and are attentive to each other's needs. In that regard, it makes the work of the Community Care ministry so very easy!

Following the Presentation of the Birthgiver in the Temple Holyday Liturgy on November 21<sup>st</sup>, we were given the opportunity to gather as a parish family and witness the Christening of James Ethan (Jamie) Malcolm. A Community Care



gift basket was presented to the other members of the Malcolm family so they could also receive gifts on this special day for baby Jamie. There were fun children's toys, warm and fuzzy socks for parents and older siblings as well as pretzels and peanuts to munch on! A yummy pancake mix and home-

made cocoa mix rounded out the package, so I think that might mean fun breakfast times at the Malcolm household! Many years to the entire family, godparents Amy Skretta and Dean Gakos and especially the newly baptized servant of God, James Ethan!!

A sympathy card was sent to Fr. Anthony Perkins (*vocation and good friend of our parish*) and his family at the passing of his stepfather in Georgia. Good wishes and congratulations were sent to former parishioner Demetra Perlegas Chedester and her husband Clint (Gregory) on the birth of baby John Spyridon. We can't wait until we all meet that little bundle!

In anticipation of the Nativity season, lovely Christmas cards have been ordered that will be sent to parishioners who may not be able to worship with us on a regular basis as well as dear parish friends spread around the globe. May these greetings in some small way convey our good wishes to them for the Christmas season and the New Year which follows.

May you find it in your heart to pray for the work of the Community Care ministry and all that we do to bring joy and comfort to members of our parish family. Should you look deeper still and find that you would like to be part of our very humbling and fulfilling work, please don't hesitate to contact one of our ministry members.

A beautiful Nativity season and all the best for the coming year to all dear parishioners,

Community Care Ministry members:

Deena Gakos, Pani Christine Holst, David Murphy, Eileen Opincar and Elaine Brogan, coordinator

### News from Out West!



Pani and Fr. Robert had a chance to visit with Carrie Frost at the Strategic Planning Retreat in NJ last month. The family is doing well and had their Thanksgiving with the Siebekings who recently relocated to Spokane and have already had some serious snow! Brian sends his greetings on behalf of all.

By the way, the Siebekings are still selling their lovely townhouse in Old Trail, so if you know of anyone looking to relocate, it may be a great opportunity.

### Holy Supper - Christmas Eve



<http://www.uocyyouth.org/uoccollegemission.html>

Traditional Ukrainian *Sviata vecheria* meal  
Jacques Hnizdovsky Christmas card.

We will again host a Holy Supper on Christmas Eve. Christmas is preceded by forty days of fasting, so this Holy Supper is the last meal of the Fast. Twelve special fasting foods (symbolic of the twelve apostles) are served. The meal begins with the singing of the Christmas Tropar and the lighting of a candle placed in the center of the decorated table to symbolize the star of Bethlehem. Other traditions specific to this day are observed; and all attend the Nativity services later in the evening.

We have in the past assigned dishes for preparation by those who will be joining us for *Sviata vecheria*. Recipes for these special dishes are available, and we ask that you please sign the list in the Hall and provide a contact e-mail so that we can forward information to you. All are welcome, whether you bring a dish or not!

We do ask that you RSVP no later than **Sunday, December 20**. The size of the table is determined by the number of attendees, so please respond promptly!

Hospitality Service Group

### Searching For a Pad?

Samy Safwat is looking for a good tenant for his first floor NEW apartment near Pen Park. It's a really beautiful area with its own bedroom bathroom, wet bar and recreation area, all utilities included. A few minutes from UVA main grounds and downtown. Here's the link <http://charlottesville.craigslist.org/roo/526677789.html>



### Building and Grounds Update

As we enter into the cold weather at the foot of the Blue Ridge mountains and prepare for the cold winds that will be blowing, B&G group members will be busy both maintaining and beautifying our parish home. A few updates and items of note as we enter into the Nativity season:



#### Parking Signs:

Thanks to Karl Bowman (foreman), Randy Brogan (sign maker) and Stanley Bright, Richard Zubyk and Jake Ritter (hole diggers and painters), we now have two beautiful Visitor parking signs and new poles for the signs. This is one small way that we are trying to make our parish more welcoming to the diverse array of visitors we welcome! Please remember if you are an able bodied regular parishioner to consider parking in the grassy area at the back to allow more room for visitors on Sundays.

#### The Dome Project:

We are getting closer to initiating the Dome project. The final engineering drawings have been completed and are being submitted to the county for approvals. Soon, the fiberglass dome will be ordered, with arrival expected in 6 weeks. At that point, Florin Moldovan will lead volunteers in the process of opening a space in the ceiling and constructing the octagonal structure that will hold the dome. As always, we are closely coordinating the timing of the dome project with the upcoming HVAC ductwork.

#### The HVAC Project:

The Parish Board reviewed three bids for the HVAC replacement and selected Clyde Smith as the preferred bidder to complete the work. As the capital outlay for total HVAC replacement is considerable and would draw down the whole parish contingency fund, the Board and B&G are working with the bidder on a phasing approach that would allow the contingency funds to be replaced as phases are installed. Now that the warm weather is behind us, we have a little more breathing room on timing since the whole church has at least emergency heating provisions.

#### Facilities Plan:

As a follow on to the Parish Master Plan, B&G has discussed taking on the major project of developing a Facilities Plan for the parish in the coming year. A Facilities Plan is a physical plan for the site and building that will show potential future expansion and construction projects for the parish for the coming years. While the discussion is still at an early stage, it is anticipated that the plan will be completed in time for draft presentation at the September parish meeting.

As always, if you are interested in this type of ministry, please let me know – we could use some willing hands!

Vladimir Gavrilovic  
Building and Grounds Service Group

#### Greeter's Prayer

*Almighty God, our Help and Refuge, Fountain of wisdom and Tower of strength, who knows that I can do nothing without Thy guidance and help: assist me, I pray Thee, and fill me with Your divine love and compassion that I might truly welcome in Your name all those who come to our parish today. Help me to remember the example of Your servant, Abraham, who in offering all that he had in generous hospitality welcomed You Yourself. Help me to put aside all thoughts of myself and instead take into my heart every visitor, every guest, every stranger so that each person who comes will feel that it is You who are here to greet them. May this service that I offer today be acceptable to You and may it glorify You: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*



#### Holiday Greetings Received!

This week, a note was received from Barbara Vanderpool - extending greetings to our parish on the Feast of St. Nicholas. Barbara and Frank and their two sons relocated from the area to Abingdon, Virginia (near the Tenn. border)

The boys are both teenagers and thankfully all are doing well. Let us remember them in our prayers during this holiday season!



## Evangelization and Outreach - Glad Tidings! Joy to the World! Christ is Born!



One of the nicest things about being part of the E&O team or the Greeter ministry is that it our mission to spread THE Good News, in fact, the BEST news, year round! Lately though, it seems we are literally all about all kinds of other news. In the past two weeks we've put together four newspaper ads (thanks Chris), a news story, and a radio campaign (thanks Father Robert). Check out the Crozet Gazette, the Daily Progress or tune into 107.5 FM, 1260AM to see and hear what we've been up to. It seems like the less time we have to do something, the quicker we get it done. However, since working that way is hard on everyone, here's my best effort to give you all the news you need for the coming months:

**Financial Peace University:** Our parish will be offering this Dave Ramsey course beginning Tuesday, January 5, 2016. Contact Stanley Bright if you want to sign up. We are hoping this will be a great experience for our own parishioners and an outreach ministry to others in the area. We are looking at options for providing childcare at the church for couples who may wish to take the course together. By all accounts, it is especially important for husbands and wives to work though the material together so everyone is on the "same page" by the end of the sessions. If you have recommendations for a responsible babysitter please let Karen Gavrilovic know. We could use several recommendations since the class will run for nine weeks. Note that the babysitter will be compensated and that a background check will be required to meet new rules in effect at the Diocese. (Update - we've had 2 inquiries on the FPU course in the first two days.)

**Check Us Out on the Forum:** Our group is doing its best to give the new church forum a college try. Over the last couple of months we've posted our agendas, minutes, greeters' info and schedule, links to podcasts, links to our recent newspaper ads, FPU information and lots of other discussion on the forum. Right now we would like input on two evangelization opportunities that Father passed along to us. Last month, we even posted our December ad ideas for input. If you don't have time to come to a meeting, or you've been thinking of joining our group, you can follow what we've been doing on the Forum.

**The Perfect Gift:** Still looking for a gift for a friend or neighbor? Invite them to church! According to all the literature, there is no more effective means of outreach than a personal invitation.

Karen Gavrilovic, Leader

OCT 2, 2015 - JAN 10, 2016

Saints and Dragons

Icons from Byzantium to Russia



Chrysler Museum - Tidewater area.

<http://www.chrysler.org/about-the-museum/newsroom/press-release-archive/saints-and-dragons/>

Exhibit Closes Jan. 10th!

**Church Calendars for 2016 Are Available in the Narthex**

The icons depicted are beautiful!

### Can You Help?



The Albemarle location of The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia is finally moving!

**Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, December 16, 17 & 18,** we will be moving from 1420 Greenbrier Place to **1416 Greenbrier Place.**

We're just moving next door, but still need lots of help.

- Can the church have any supplies that we can borrow for our move, specifically **hand-trucks, dollies, ramp, trucks or trailers?**

We are so grateful for the many ways in which you have supported us in the past and are calling on our friends and supporters now in our time of need. We would greatly appreciate any help your church can offer with our move.

If you are able to help or have questions, please contact me or Holly Freeborn at [holly@virginiapregnancy.org](mailto:holly@virginiapregnancy.org) or call the Center at 979-4516.

Thank you!!