

THE MESSENGER

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH
JANUARY 2012



THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

MARK THE DATES

January 1: Civil New Year; Circumcision of our Lord; St. Basil the Great

January 6: THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD; Blessing of Water; Bless Lake Mead

January 7: Slavonic Liturgy

January 14: Youth "Snow Day" with St. John's Youth

January 15: Installation of the 2012 Parish Council

January 24-31: Father John Away

February 4: Youth Day of Bowling; Vespers

Send email addresses and corrections to: frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

January 2012

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

1 LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: OSBURN NO CHURCH SCHOOL	FAST FREE 2	FAST FREE 3	FAST FREE 4 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS	STRICT FAST NO COFFEE CHAT 5 VESPERAL LITURGY, 6:00 PM BLESSING OF WATER	FAST FREE 6 DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM THEOPHANY LAKE MEAD, 1:00 PM	7 SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10:00 AM HIS GRACE, BISHOP BENJAMIN GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
8 LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DRESKO EPISTLE: HOOD POST-COMM: JARLSON CHURCH SCHOOL	9	10	11 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS	12 COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL	13	14 YOUTH "SNOW DAY", 9:00 AM WITH St. JOHN'S YOUTH GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
15 LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: STRANSKY EPISTLE: DRESKO POST-COMM: SAS CHURCH SCHOOL COUNCIL INSTALLATION	16	17	18 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS	19 COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL	20	21 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
22 LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: SAS EPISTLE: OSBURN POST-COMM: HOOD CHURCH SCHOOL	23	24	FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN JANUARY 24-31		27	28 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
29 LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: JARLSON EPISTLE: SAS POST-COMM: STRANSKY CHURCH SCHOOL ZACCHEAUS	30	31	COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE JAN 1: FANA JAN 8: TEBERH/TEKLE JAN 15: GEBRIEL JAN 22: ZARRET JAN 29: LEMLEM		CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE JAN 1: EDIEN JAN 8: MEDIHIN JAN 15: JAN 22: JAN 29: GOITOM	



The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
5400 Annie Oakley Drive • Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
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JANUARY 2012

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RECTOR

METRICAL RECORDS 2011 (since last annual meeting)

Baptisms 27
Chrismations 3
Weddings 4
Burials 3

THANKS

I would like to thank all the workers, servers, singers, teachers, benefactors and those who support the parish in any way, shape or form. Although I hesitate, a few names must be mentioned.

- All the parish council members, who offer time and talent to help administer our parish, need our thanks. A special thank you needs to be mentioned for Harry Anagnostopoulos, who has done a phenomenal job after taking over Buildings and Grounds. He offers many hours of his own time in putting around the church and buildings and has led us in enhancing the security of the property. Karen Short, our treasurer, also needs to be mentioned. She has also offered many hours, bringing her expertise in QuickBooks to our finances. Our financial records are clean and

easy to understand. This is so different from our struggles with the former software we tried to use.

- Two women who quietly offer many hours of time and talent to the parish are Vera and Mary Jolevski. They maintain, care for, and prepare all the altar vestments. Anytime a color change happens, they are in back, ironing and preparing the vestments, then changing all the colors. Vera, who brings an expertise in tailoring to her church life, makes all the vestment repairs. They also maintain the lamps, making sure the oil is stocked and ready. Mary bakes all the little prosphori that we use for individual commemorations! I am deeply appreciative of their efforts.

- Another woman who does a phenomenal amount of work around the church is Rachel Stransky. Literally every week, she and often her husband John, are cleaning, polishing, and repairing little things here and there. She dusts, straightens, cleans the candle boxes. Take a look at all the brass fixtures around the church and see how they shine — all of that is Ra-

chel's elbow grease. I am humbled by the quiet service that she offers each and every week.

- Jason and Cheryl Basso came to our parish early this year through personal tragedy and have embraced the Faith and the parish. Cheryl is now Orthodox! They both have spearheaded the Feed the Homeless project which we began this summer. Without their efforts, enthusiasm and expertise, we would not have this vital outreach. Their love and concern for those less fortunate is an example for all of us.

- Finally, I would like to thank my wife, who does an amazing amount of work around St. Paul's that most people don't see. She bakes the prosphora offered in the liturgy, and all the litiya loaves used for feastsdays. She helps organize all the choir files and directs the choir when necessary. She and Cathy Wilkalis organize coffee hours and church cleaning (and usually form the choir for weekday feasts!). Her support of my ministry and her love and care for me allow me to do what needs to be done for Christ and His Church.

On behalf of the whole parish,

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

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ATTACHED

Archpriest James Bertolini
Archpriest John Bruchok
Priest Aaron Oliver

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Juliana Dresko

PARISH COUNCIL

Laura Draskovic, Vice-President

Karen Short, Treasurer

Virginia Hood, Secretary

Harold Anagnostopoulos
James Brophy
Alan Buttell
Robert Conductor
Stephen Osburn
Catherine Wilkalis

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Harold Anagnostopoulos
Nikolai Melnikov

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School
Nadine Wood

I want to thank not only those just mentioned, but also all the faithful members of St. Paul's Church, for any and all stewardship offered. None of us do anything for any earthly "glory," but we do pray that God reward every effort with heavenly gifts. We do not have a paid staff for any of the work that needs to be done beyond the pastoral work of my office. Without multitudes of people offering time, talent, and yes, treasure, the day-to-day life at St. Paul's would be meager indeed.

2011

FATHER AARON OLIVER

Father Aaron came back to us after his studies at St. Vladimir's Seminary and was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on July 31, 2011. We believe that this is the very first ordination to the priesthood to take place at the altar of St. Paul's. We are thankful for him and pray that God bless him with a long and fruitful ministry in the Vineyard of the Church.

VANDALISM

Shortly after the wonderful events surrounding Father Aaron's ordination, we were horrified to come to our facilities and find the hall and kitchen destroyed by vandals. The horror gave way to a determined effort to repair the damages and move on with our parish life. While we certainly would not wish these events on anyone, we also are thankful to God for the many blessings that have been bestowed because of the vandalism. First of all, we basically have

a new hall and kitchen. But more importantly, I saw a care, love and concern for our parish that blossomed in so many generous acts of kindness and giving. People donated towards our recovery, parishioners cleaned, polished, tried to buff (!), and in general, did whatever was necessary to help us recover. What a wonderful difference from the strong temptations to apathy that we see in parish life. It took a traumatic event to bring out the best in people. And we thank God for that!

IVERON ICON OF HAWAI'I

While still in the process of rebuilding and refurbishing the hall and kitchen, we were blessed by the visit of the miraculous myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon of the Theotokos of Hawai'i. No one who came to witness this visit will ever forget it. To know that God Himself still visits us and that the love and care of His Mother was in our midst especially at the moment she came was very comforting. The myrrh has helped hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of people, including our own parishioners. I know that I was incredibly humbled by her visit and I pray that everyone else feels the same. Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

STEWARDSHIP

We continue on our course of establishing a strong base of Scripture-based Christian stewardship to ensure the present and future of St. Paul's. We have implemented the pledging system this year and look forward to a growing acceptance and un-

derstanding of the importance of making an annual commitment. Pledging forces each and every one of us to think about, pray about and determine how best to respond to God's blessings and gifts in our lives. Caring for the parish and His Church is the way we care for Him. The pledges that we have received to date are, generally speaking, quite generous. At the writing of this report, we have received 20 pledges, and 14 of them are for more than \$2,000 annual gifts. Two are for \$10,000 each.

The by-laws amendment that we propose today is to help us determine a realistic membership to report to the Church. Our reported adult supporting membership (census) is what our Fair Share Assessment to the Church is based upon. We are billed \$105 for each reported member. When the number is accurate and each reported member is financially supporting the parish, that is a minimal amount. But when the numbers are not accurate and the actual supporting membership is less than the reported membership, the funds come directly out of our budget. That ends now with this amendment. Voting members will be reported as per the direction of the bishop, and part of the requirements to be a voting member will be to make a financial commitment to the parish. This year, keeping closer track of those who come for Confession, we have determined a voting membership for this meeting of 93 people! We were being billed for the assessment on a count of 185!

Cathy Wilkalis gave a wonderful written report on the All-American Council. A great

disappointment I had at the All-American Council was the inability or refusal by the administration of our Church to make changes in the assessment system. They simply proposed a plan on the same \$105 head tax that was supposed to be eliminated by this year in favor of a Scripture-based proportional system.

CONCERNS MOVING FORWARD

There are two major concerns that I have as we move into 2012. The first is the state of our church school and youth work in general. I fear that we are losing our kids. Parents do not seem to have the commitment to raising their children in the faith. We have stagnated a little in our church school, just kind of doing what's always been done. Some of the curriculum is the same curriculum used when I was in church school! We have not followed through on youth activities beyond church school either. We are meeting on Tuesday night to do an assessment of our whole approach to youth work and education. I pledge to make the effort to get our young people more involved and committed, also to be a little more innovative in our approach.

The second concern I have is the fragmentation and separation that seems to be at least a threat to our parish. Our parish is so diverse that every group has a core that they can use to stay with "their own." That is comfortable but doesn't build cohesion. Look around at coffee hour. All the tables are filled with separate groups – never really mingling. All belong to St. Paul's, but it re-

minds me of "equal but separate."

In addition, a renegade Russian priest has been visiting Las Vegas, doing baptisms in homes, catering to ethnocentric desires, and fueling a movement to establish a separate Russian parish. I can't stop that. But St. Paul's was established to be an English-speaking mission to Las Vegas that welcomed everyone. I am confident in saying that we try to do that and we are not going to change our mission to cater to one group or another. But in welcoming everyone, no one gets to keep a "pure" ethnic identity. That's where the gospel comes in — we have to look at Christ, and the mission to our society in which He wants us to engage. We have to check our egos at the door and do what is best for Christ and the Gospel, not our own wants and desires.

I have tried to be a priest to everyone. I do not see color, ethnic background, language or anything else when I engage someone at St. Paul's. I see Christ and Christ alone. I honestly can say that I try to love every single person who comes to St. Paul's, whether they come permanently or just to visit. But a priest can only be a priest when someone lets him be a priest. If anyone expects me to feed his or her ego or lead the charge to make St. Paul's anything other than what it was established to be, you are going to be bitterly disappointed. If you are looking for anything other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified, you are looking in the wrong place, at least on my watch. I will give you anything I have to save you, but I will not give up the Church and this parish. It is past time for us all to come together

and move this parish forward — our society is starving and dying of thirst and we have to feed them.

Finally, in the past year, there are many times when I have fallen short as a father, pastor, preacher, and priest. For this and any possible offense I may have committed against any one of you, I beg your forgiveness. I ask your prayers as we continue to grow together in God's love.

May God continue to bless St. Paul Parish with His goodness and light. May the Lord bless you from Zion and may each of you see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Father John

FEASTDAYS

Please join us for the following festal celebrations during December.

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

January 6

Vesperal Liturgy, 6:00 PM (THUR)

BLESSING OF WATER

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (FRI)

BLESSING LAKE MEAD, 1:00 PM

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

Jan 1: Fana

Jan 8: Teberh Tekle

Jan 15: Janoiul Gebriel

Jan 22: Zarret

Jan 29: LemLem

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

Jan 1: Edien

Jan 8: Medihin

Jan 15:

Jan 22:

Jan 29: Goitom

SCHEDULE CHANGE

As discussed at the annual parish meeting, we will be moving the time for our weekly Saturday evening Vespers from **5:30 PM to 5:00 PM**, beginning on Saturday, January 7th. Please note this permanent change.

FAST FREE

The period between December 25 and January 4 is a *fast-free* period in the Orthodox Church. The Eve of Theophany (January 5) is then a *strict-fast* day.

BLESSING OF WATER

As is customary in the Orthodox Church, we will bless water on the Feast of Theophany. The Great Blessing of Water will take place at the end of the Vesperal Liturgy on January 5th, the eve of the Feast. Feel free to bring a container and take some of the blessed water home.

We will also have the traditional Blessing of Lake Mead on the day of the Feast itself, January 6th, at 1:00 PM. **The location has changed at the request of the Park Service. We will meet at Swim Beach (Boulder Harbor) instead of Hemenway Harbor.** As in times past, the Park Service has graciously waived the entrance fee for us that day, but *you need a copy of the fee waiver with you when you come to the park.*

HOUSE BLESSINGS

Orthodox Christians traditionally have their homes blessed during the feast of Theophany. Father John will begin blessing houses after the liturgy of the feast on January 6th. *A sign-up list is available in the vestibule of the church if you wish to have Father come.* Please make note of any special

requests such time of day and if you would like to plan a meal, etc., around the visit. Father will be contacting everyone for the date and time of your visit the first week of January.

SLAVONIC LITURGY

The monthly Slavonic Liturgy will be held on January 7th, Old Calendar Nativity. His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, will be serving the liturgy. **Confessions begin at 9:00 AM.** Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- 'Tis the season for snow! Let's get our sleds, snow boots, hats and mittens ready! We have been invited to join the youth from St. John's Church for their annual Snow Day on Saturday, January 14th. Everyone will meet at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of Olive Garden at 6850 W. Cheyenne Ave. Please do not forget to bring money for hot chocolate and possibly lunch.
- A youth day of bowling has been scheduled for Saturday, February 4th, at Wildfire Lanes on Sunset Road. We will gather to bowl in the afternoon, ending with Vespers at 5:00 PM. Our brothers and sisters from St. John's have been invited to join us.

Please contact Stephen Osburn (521-6988) or Christina Sas (686-4507) for more information about attending these events.

FATHER AWAY

Father John will be away on personal business January 24-31. In the event of an emergency during Father's absence, please contact Father Aaron at 823-8077.

PLEDGE FORMS PAST DUE

2012 Pledge Forms were due by the end of November. Please take time to prayerfully and seriously consider your commitment to the parish and God's holy Church by making a generous gift to our work. There are also various tasks needing attention for which you can volunteer.

FEED THE HUNGRY

Our next scheduled date is Saturday, February 18th. Join us!

We are asking for assistance in doing this project. If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches, it would be appreciated. **We also have a need for basic toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, etc.** If you have any *travel* size items, leave them in the bin in the church vestibule. **We especially need socks, hats and gloves/mittens.** Thank you!

CHURCH CLEANING

Our schedule for the **weekly** clean-up of the church needs volunteers. The duty is easy, takes two hours at the most, and you can do it at your convenience as Father will provide a key and entry instructions. Please consider offering some time and talent to the Lord in the care of His Church. A sign-up list is available in the church.

COFFEE CHAT

We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM at El Rancho on Pecos and Russell.

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:

Lord, God and Savior of all, we

thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts — time, talent and treasure — which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. *Special needs at this time: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken.* Thank you!

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

• **Baptisms.** A date and time must be requested at least three weeks in advance. In addition, a personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary.

• **Matrimony.** A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.

• **Memorials (Panikhida).** Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should not be served on Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, when all departed have already been remembered in the Liturgy.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS DECEMBER 20, 2011 MEETING

Rector's Report:

- Welcome to Ginny Hood as the new secretary to the council.
- Father John will be away at the end of January (24-31) for a personal trip.
- Bishop Benjamin will be in Las Vegas for a Deans Meeting January 9-11, 2012. This meeting will be held at the retreat center. Bishop Benjamin will serve liturgy at St. Paul's on January 7, 2012, in Church Slavonic.

Vice President: no report.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed reports to council members earlier via e-mail. **We have \$14,160.10 in outstanding bills that have not been paid to date.**

Income for November was \$22,149.82 and expenses were \$17,872.63 for a net surplus of \$4,277.19.

YTD 11/30/11

2011 YTD Inc	\$ 207,315.99
2011 YTD Exp	\$ 214,980.25
Exp over Inc	\$ 7,664.26

Buildings and Grounds:

- Neighbor behind the church was helping himself to our electricity. Harry unplugged the cord and gave the neighbor a few days to get his electric turned on. When Harry returned the extension cord was still plugged in. It was unplugged and the man notified that the police would be called next time we found the cord plugged in.
- He suggested installing be-

hind the church a horseshoe pit or bocci field. This would be a great activity and foster fellowship. Discussion followed.

- Have a service project to clean the church grounds involving the children. There could be a one-hour clean up, which would end with a 60-foot slip and slide and possible pizza. Discussion followed.

Church School: Father John reported regarding the church school meeting held at his house. It was suggested that the teachers follow up on children who are absent by calling their parents at home. A youth group committee was established with Stephen Osburn, Christina Sas and Jason Basso. Discussion followed with Stephen Osburn giving activity ideas.

Charity: Cathy Wilkalis reported that the “feeding of the hungry” was very successful. Over 300 bag lunches were distributed and over a 100 hygiene kits. She feels this is a very cost effective way to help others. Discussion followed.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: no report.

Outreach/Website: Stephen Osburn reported that sermons have been edited and pictures are on the website.

Russian: no report.

Stewardship: Pledge Forms were to be submitted by December 1. Father John reported to date twenty-eight pledges have been received. Twenty-two of twenty-eight have annual pledges over

\$2000.00 each.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: Harry reported the bell tower is usable. The key is located at the candle stand. The rope for the large bell has been repaired. Cathy Wilkalis has a CD on how to ring the bells. Consensus is to stick with the large bell for now.

Wine tasting/Cook-off Fundraiser: Status quo.

Iconography Project: Status quo.

Annual Meeting: Father reported that the council members elected for 2012 and the By-Laws amendments passed at the annual meeting have been approved by His Grace, Bishop Benjamin. Installation of the new council will take place on January 15th.

NEW BUSINESS

Interior Painting: Alan Buttell reported on the interior painting project. Each member received an itemized statement on the cost. The painter would be fulfilling community service by doing it at cost. Discussion followed. Moved and seconded that we accept the budget for painting the interior of the church at no more than \$2000.00 dollars as written. Approved.

Meeting Dates: Father requested that the council move the monthly meeting date back to the third Tuesday of the month as it had been previously. Unanimously agreed to do so.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 6:00 PM.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF JANUARY

Mark Medick
January 6, 1991

George Gavrillov
January 10, 1991

George Menas, Jr.
January 11, 1992

Martha Jean Simmons
January 14, 1993

Mehret Berhanu
January 15, 2009

Natalia Lissenkou
January 17, 2000

George Zonitch
January 19, 2001

Louise (Ljubica) Ford
January 20, 1994

David Vranesh
January 21, 1991

Helen Hoffman
January 21, 2003

Roy Babich
January 22, 1989

Frank Theodore Walko
January 22, 2002

Stana “Stella” Kekich
January 30, 2008