

# THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church  
JANUARY 2013



## Theophany of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ January 6

### MARK THE DATES

January 1: Circumcision of the Lord, Liturgy 9:00 AM

January 2: Adult Faith Forum resumes, 6:30 PM

January 5: Eve of Theophany (Strict Fast Day), Liturgy 9:00 AM; BLESSING OF WATER

January 6: THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD; Bless Lake Mead, 1:00 PM

January 7: Synaxis of St. John the Baptist, Liturgy 8:00 AM; HOUSE BLESSINGS BEGIN

January 12: Russian Confessions, 9:00 am; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

January 17: Eritrean Community Service, 8:00 AM

January 19: FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 AM

January 29-February 5: Father John out of town

Send email addresses and corrections to: [frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com](mailto:frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com)

# January 2013

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

	1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>GREETERS</b></p> <p>JAN 6: BROPHY/OSBURN            JAN 13: HARRY/BRITTON            JAN 20: MCAULEY/MURPHY            JAN 27: CAMPBELL/BICA</p>	<p>Fast Free</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            CIRCUMCISION            OF THE LORD            NEW YEAR 2013</p>	<p>Fast Free</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM            ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>Fast Free</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Fast Free</p>	<p>Strict Fast</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY            9:00 AM            BLESSING OF WATER            EVE OF THEOPHANY            GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM            CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            HOURS: HOOD            EPISTLE: YOUTH            POST-COMM: WEEK            NO CHURCH SCHOOL            THEOPHANY • BLESS WATER            BLESS LAKE MEAD, 1:00 PM</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM            SLAVONIC LITURGY            10:00 AM            SHEVCHENKO/BUKIEVA WEDDING            GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM            CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>13</b></p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            HOURS: SAS            EPISTLE: HOOD            POST-COMM: NORVILLE            CHURCH SCHOOL            INSTALLATION OF PARISH COUNCIL</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM            COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>FEEDING THE HOMELESS,            10:30 AM            GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM            CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>20</b></p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            HOURS: HOOD            EPISTLE: STRANSKY            POST-COMM: PARKER            CHURCH SCHOOL            MOROZ-OWENS            WEDDING, 4:00 PM</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM            CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>27</b></p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            HOURS: STRANSKY            EPISTLE: E. SAS            POST-COMM: BROPHY            CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>29</p> <p><b>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 5</b></p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>FEB 1</p>	<p>FEB 2</p> <p>MEETING OF THE LORD            GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM            CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>28</b></p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM            HOURS: STRANSKY            EPISTLE: E. SAS            POST-COMM: BROPHY            CHURCH SCHOOL</p>					



# The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church  
5400 Annie Oakley Drive • Las Vegas, Nevada 89120  
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JANUARY 2013

## Annual Report of the Rector

*Delivered at the Annual  
Parish Meeting held on  
December 2, 2012.*

### **METRICAL RECORDS 2012 (since last annual meeting)**

<b>Baptisms</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Chrismations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Weddings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Burials</b>	<b>3</b>

### **THANKS**

I would like to thank all the council members, workers, servers, singers, teachers, benefactors and those who support the parish in any way, shape or form. On behalf of the whole parish, I want to thank all the faithful members of St. Paul's Parish, 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. I especially want to thank my wife for

her continued support and hard work for both the parish and me.

### **2012 in Review**

#### **Growth**

Over the course of my pastorate here, we have been blessed with an influx of inspired, dedicated people who have either joined the parish from elsewhere or come to and embraced the Orthodox Faith. We see now familiar faces of many, who just a short while ago, had no history whatsoever at St. Paul's or perhaps even the Orthodox Church. We are thankful to God for all those whom He has sent us, and are humbled by the realization that St. Paul's has become a refuge of faith, love and fellowship for those seeking God and His Kingdom.

At the same time, we lament the sad tale of Aaron Oliver. He came from Judaism to Orthodoxy in our parish shortly before my tenure and immediately left for seminary. Upon graduation, he returned to Las Vegas and petitioned for ordination to secure a job as a chaplain with the National Guard. After ordination, his

primary allegiance appeared to be his job and the military. The parish and Orthodox Priesthood were secondary and his position in this parish a mere formality. After a year of struggling to serve, preach and be a priest, he informed the archbishop and me by email that he was being received into the Episcopal Church, a few hours before it happened. What is instructive about this tale is that we all understand that if we don't guard our souls, minds and hearts, the Devil himself will snatch everything away.

### **New Leadership**

We have made a huge transition in leadership. Nadine Wood, after many years of dedicated coordination of our Church School and Fall Festival, in addition to serving on the Parish Council, stepped down from all roles due to work constraints. Mere words cannot express our gratitude to Nadine for her seemingly limitless offering of talents to God and His Church here at St. Paul's. Many Years!

The Church School and Youth coordination has fallen on the shoulders of Christina Sas and

# St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

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## ATTACHED

Archpriest James Bertolini  
Archpriest John Bruchok

## CHOIR DIRECTOR

Juliana Veek

## PARISH COUNCIL

Laura Draskovic, Vice-President

Karen Short, Treasurer

Virginia Hood, Secretary

Harold Anagnostopoulos

James Brophy  
Alan Buttell

Kevin McAuley

Litsa Osburn  
Catherine Wilkalis

## SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds  
Harold Anagnostopoulos  
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach  
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach  
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth

Amy McAuley  
Christina Sas

Amy McAuley. Their youthful enthusiasm and direction has been much appreciated and we look forward to vibrant and exciting growth in the program that continues the work begun by others. Parents, of course, are the key to the equation. If parents don't place importance on learning and practicing the Faith, our teachers and I have no chance of doing so.

In addition to the Church School, the parish council continues to grow and evolve, getting more and more people involved who never experienced parish administration. Also, we hope to resume our fall International Food Festival this year under a mixture of new and old ideas with new coordinators.

## New Parish

For those of you who may not be aware, there is an effort to start a mission parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) in the north part of Las Vegas. This parish is currently meeting monthly with a priest sent from California. It very much remains to be seen if this will be a viable parish, and if so, what effects it may have on St. Paul's. As with all things, we leave it in the hands of God. If He blesses this, they will thrive. If He continues to bless us, we will thrive also. Our parish will never suffer because of the manifestation of God's Grace in another location. God's Kingdom and even Las Vegas are certainly large enough for anything He wills!

## National Transition

The Orthodox Church in America has suffered under great dif-

ficulties over the past decade. Just in my time at St. Paul's we have elected a new Metropolitan twice. Changing pastors in three or four years would be a cause for concern about the stability of both the pastor and the parish. I was hesitant to attend the All-American Council, worried that it was a futile exercise leading to another stopgap measure. But I was surprised and inspired by the one-day council. The liturgy was beautiful, the council itself inspiring with the election of Metropolitan Tikhon. He is a humble, hard-working servant of the Church and Christ and will lead the OCA with prayerful and gentle guidance. God grant him Many Years!

## Icon Project

No one who has been in the church today can help but have the breath taken right out of their bodies at the sight of the new icon of the Pantocrator installed in our dome. This is truly to the glory of God! No one of the many who assisted in this project can fail to be touched, moved and inspired by God allowing us to offer our meager talents to glorify Him! Thanks to all for the help!

The next phase of the icon project will take place as soon as we replenish the Icon Fund, a restricted fund that is used only for the icon project and its attendant expenses. Donations are certainly appreciated, but it must not be funded instead of our normal stewardship to the parish. Any gift must be in addition to our normal support of the parish. God has certainly gifted our iconographer, Vladimir Krassovsky, with exceptional talents!



## Moving Forward

2013 is the 25th anniversary of the founding of our parish. Our parish anniversary will be marked with appropriate celebrations — liturgical and social — and I will leave it up to our Chairperson, Pam Campbell, to speak in detail about the plans. But we must give thanks to God that in the middle of a desert, this flower was planted, has blossomed, grown and in many ways, flourished. A child born in 1988 when the parish was founded could now be raising children of his own, coming into the full measure of adulthood. What children have we raised as a parish? What measure of adulthood have we reached as a parish? I struggle to observe objectively, and I hesitate to speak of the measure of anything for fear of seeming self-serving, but it seems to me that faith, hope, love, fellowship and charity are present in our humble community. They are our children. We need to continue to nurture them to full growth.

The spirit in our parish is very good. Don't get me wrong — we fail in so many ways: we are a little lazy about worship, we are weak in confessing our sins, we still just barely make ends meet, and we are too often quite content to let "someone else" do the work. But, in my opinion, none of those weaknesses are "unto death" in our parish. As a matter of fact, one could argue that we have improved in all those areas.

Despite those weaknesses, we move forward, striving to grow in the Spirit. I see new friendships. Our daily liturgies are followed by a group of us sharing breakfast. Coffee chat on Thursdays is

a friendly group of 2-8 regulars just being together. Coffee hour on Sundays seems like a bustling little bazaar, with groups of friends laughing and enjoying each other's company. I don't leave on Sunday till well after noon, but I am never the last one to leave. We are a family. And that is as it should be, and that is the measure of our adulthood.

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. It seems hardly believable or possible that, God willing, in July I will celebrate the fifth anniversary of my pastorate here. I thank God and the archbishop for their trust in me by allowing me to stand at the head of our parish community. I pray that their trust and that your trust has not been misplaced.

Brothers and sisters, 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 festal celebrations during January.

*Circumcision of the Lord  
St. Basil the Great  
New Year 2013  
January 1*

Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM (TUES)

## EVE OF THEOPHANY

*January 5*

### **Strict Fast Day**

Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM (SAT)

### **Blessing of Water to Follow**

## THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

*January 6*

Great Vespers, 5:00 PM (SAT)

Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM (SUN)

### **Blessing of Water to Follow**

### **Blessing of Lake Mead, 1:00 PM**

*Synaxis of St. John the Baptist*

*January 7*

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (MON)

## FAST FREE

We remain in a fast-free period in the Orthodox Church until January 4<sup>th</sup>. The Eve of Theophany (January 5<sup>th</sup>) is then a strict-fast day in the Church.

## HOUSE BLESSINGS

- Father John will begin the house blessing schedule on January 7. A sign-up list is available in the vestibule of the church. If you want Father to come and bless your house, please sign the list, indicating your preference of time of day and any special request (meal, etc.). **Please include the best phone number by which you may be contacted.** Father will coordinate your visit with you after examining the sign-up list.
- When Father comes, you should have the following ready: a candle, a bowl of holy water, an icon and a list of names (living and departed separate). TVs and radios should be turned off. If you wish to give Father a gift, please set it aside in a separate envelope.

## SLAVONIC LITURGY

The monthly Slavonic Liturgy will be served on the second Saturday of the month, January 12<sup>th</sup>, as usual. Fr. Alexander will be hearing Russian language confessions at 9:00 AM. The liturgy is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM.

Following the liturgy, with the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, the servants of God, *Grygoriy Shevchenko and Ganna Bukieva* will be united in Holy Matrimony.

## INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL

At our annual parish meeting held on December 2, we elected the 2013 Parish Council. They have been confirmed by His Eminence and will be installed at the end of the liturgy on **Sunday, January 13**. Congratulations and Many Years to:

Laura Draskovic, Vice President  
Virginia Hood, Secretary  
Karen Short, Treasurer  
Harry Anagnastopoulos  
James Brophy  
Alan Buttell  
Kevin McAuley  
Litsa Osburn  
Catherine Wilkalis

## FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project date is Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. We gather at 10:30 AM to prepare bag lunches then go down to distribute them to the needy. Join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches, it would be appreciated. **We also have a need for hats and scarves along with basic toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, etc.** If you have any *travel* size items, leave them in the bin in the church vestibule. Thank you!

## FATHER AWAY

Father John will be away from January 29 through February 5. He will be in Connecticut to baptize his grandson Matthew on the weekend of February 2-3 and to visit family. He will check email and voice mail during his absence.

Although the normal weekend services will still be served at St. Paul's, there will be no services for the Meeting of the Lord (February 2). All are encouraged to attend St. John's Church for the feastday.

## 2013 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

We ask for your support of the parish operating budget in the next calendar year. Pledge Forms have been available for you to fill out and make a prayerful and thoughtful gift to God and His Church. **If you have not returned your pledge form, please return it asap to Treasurer Karen Short or Father John to ensure confidentiality of your pledge.** *As a reminder, to be a voting member of our parish you must have a signed Pledge Form on file at the office in addition to your sacramental participation in Confession and Communion at St. Paul's.*

## COFFEE/CLEANING SCHEDULES

The weekly coffee hour and cleaning schedules are no longer going to be printed in the monthly newsletter or calendar. A number of last-minute changes happen in both schedules which makes the monthly newsletter inaccurate and misleading. The weekly bulletin will still have the schedules and they are posted in the church hall.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- 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. Also needed:
- **Coffee Hour** volunteers are needed.
- **Bell-ringer** volunteers are needed.
- **Greeters** are needed.

Please offer some time and talent to the Lord in the care of His Church. Sign-up lists are available in the church.

## ADULT CLASSES

We continue the series of Wednesday evening talks in our Adult Faith Forum: *Theology in Color: Iconography of the Orthodox Church*. We have daily vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by a one-hour discussion. Please join us!

## COFFEE CHAT

**We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM at El Rancho on Pecos and Russell unless otherwise announced. Everyone is invited.**

## 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 18, 2012 MEETING

*Rector's Report:*

- Diocesan Council Meeting, December 19-20. Father out of town.
- Commented on the peaceful and fruitful annual meeting. Minutes were reviewed by parish council and will be presented at next year's an-

nual meeting.

- Father has been informed by Father Michael from the Romanian parish that they hope to be in their own church building by Pascha.
- Father John commented on the health struggles of a few of our parishioners.

*Vice President:* Laura spoke about concerns over the bookstore. Perhaps we need to begin training some others to man the store when Laura is unable.

*Treasurer's Report:* Karen Short distributed reports to council members earlier via e-mail. We are still two months behind in assessments, but they will go down again in 2013. The Rainy Day Fund has \$3,000. The Icon Fund has \$7,000. Income for November was: \$16,221.07, and expenses of \$16,503.93 for a **deficit of \$282.86.**

#### YTD 11/30/12

<b>2012 YTD Inc</b>	\$ 205,709.18
<b>2012 YTD Exp</b>	\$ 196,860.99
<b>Inc over Exp</b>	\$ 8,848.19

*Buildings and Grounds:*

- No real report since annual meeting.
- A Security Assessment of our property was done by Brian Veek and distributed to council members. Will be discussed at next meeting.
- Kevin McAuley will work with Richard Zarret on the lighting of the dome now that the icon is finished.
- Kevin will also look into the refurbishing and protection of the wooden candle boxes.

*Church School/Youth:* No report.

*Charity:* The next Feeding the

Homeless project is scheduled for January 19. A donor has contributed \$200, which will fund the whole project that day. **Hats and scarves are needed.** Status quo on the other charitable outreach projects.

*Eritrean/Ethiopian:* The next Eritrean service will be held on January 17. It remains to be seen when the weekly schedule will begin.

*Outreach/Website:* Status quo.

*Russian:*

The December service went well and the funding of expenses seems to have been resolved.

*Stewardship:*

As of this meeting, 48 pledges have been returned. The pledges include three that are for over \$10,000 each.

#### OLD BUSINESS

*Bell Tower:* no report.

*Cookie Exchange:* The Cookie Exchange for the Christmas holiday, will be held December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*Iconography Project:* Our iconographer is ready for the next phase of the project when we have funding in place.

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:* Everything is in place. In January, we will begin work on the ad book and will ask everyone to solicit ads from their local merchants. This book will be the only fundraiser part of the celebration. The meal tickets will be only what our costs are.

#### NEW BUSINESS

*Annual Meeting:*

The new parish council will be installed on Sunday, January 13.



Harry Anagastopoulos has received a job offer in the Philadelphia area and will most likely be relocating. Once his plans are set, we need to elect a replacement for the one year that remains on Harry's term. Council members are asked to reflect on candidates for discussion at the January meeting.

*Next Meeting:* Tuesday, January 15, 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 Lissenkoug  
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

### ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE THEOPHANY

We shall now say something about the present feast. Many celebrate the feastdays and know their designations, but the cause for which they were established they know not. Thus concerning this, that the present feast is called Theophany—everyone knows; but what this is—Theophany, and whether it be one thing or another, they know not. And this is shameful—every year to celebrate the feastday and not know its reason.

First of all therefore, it is necessary to say that there is not one Theophany, but two: the one actual, which already has occurred, and the second in future, which will happen with glory at the end of the world. About this one and about the other you will hear today from Paul, who in conversing with Titus, speaks thus about the present: "The grace of God hath revealed itself, having saved all mankind, decreeing, that we reject iniquity and worldly desires, and dwell in the present age in prudence and in righteousness and piety"—and about the future: "awaiting the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit 2:11-13). And a prophet speaks thus about this latter: "the sun shalt turn to darkness, and the moon to blood at first, then shalt come the great and illuminating Day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31).

Why is not that day, on which the Lord was born, considered Theopha-

ny—but rather this day on which He was baptised? This present day it is, on which He was baptised and sanctified the nature of water. Because on this day all, having obtained the waters, do carry it home and keep it all year, since today the waters are sanctified; and an obvious phenomenon occurs: these waters in their essence do not spoil with the passage of time, but obtained today, for one whole year and often for two or three years, they remain unharmed and fresh, and afterwards for a long time do not stop being water, just as that obtained from the fountains.

Why then is this day called Theophany? Because Christ made Himself known to all—not then when He was born—but then when He was baptised. Until this time He was not known to the people. And that the people did not know Him, Who He was, listen about this to John the Baptist, who says: "Amidst you standeth, Him Whom ye know not of" (Jn.1:26). And is it surprising that others did not know Him, when even the Baptist did not know Him until that day? "And I—said he—knew Him not: but He that did send me to baptise with water, about This One did tell unto me: over Him that shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, This One it is Who baptiseth in the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 1:33). Thus from this it is evident, that—there are two Theophanies, and why Christ comes at baptism and on whichever baptism He comes, about this it is necessary to say: it is therefore necessary to know both the one and equally the other. And first it is necessary to speak your love about the latter, so that we might learn about the former. There was a Jewish baptism, which cleansed from bodily impurities, but not to remove sins.