

THE MESSENGER

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



Meeting of the Lord in the Temple February 2

MARK THE DATES

HOUSE BLESSINGS CONTINUE ALL MONTH

January 29-February 5: Father John out of town

February 2: MEETING OF THE LORD

February 9: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

BLESSING OF CANDLES AT VESPERS, 5:00 PM IN LIEU OF FEBRUARY 2

February 19: Parish Council, 6:00 PM

February 24: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (LENTEN TRIODION BEGINS)

February 25-March 2: FAST FREE WEEK

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

February 2013

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

<p>GREETERS</p> <p>FEB 3: McAULEY/MURPHY FEB 10: BROPHY/OSBURN FEB 17: CAMPBELL/BICA FEB 24: BRITTON/KARAS</p>						1	2 MEETING OF THE LORD GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
3 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: SAS EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: NORVILLE CHURCH SCHOOL	4	5	6	7 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	8	9 RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY 10:00 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM BLESSING OF CANDLES CONFESSIONS	
<i>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 5</i>			13	14 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT	15	16 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS	
10 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: NORVILLE POST-COMM: VEEK CHURCH SCHOOL	11	12	13	14 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT	15	16 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS	
17 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: PARKER CHURCH SCHOOL ZACCHEAUS	18	19 BAPTISM, 10:00 AM Parish Council, 6:00 PM	20	21 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	22	23 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS	
24 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: STRANSKY EPISTLE: PLUTA POST-COMM: BROPHY CHURCH SCHOOL PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE PLUTA/CROTHERS WEDDING 5PM	<i>Fast Free</i>	25 <i>Fast Free</i>	26 <i>Fast Free</i>	27 <i>Fast Free</i>	28 <i>Fast Free</i>	<i>Fast Free</i> MAR 1	<i>Fast Free</i> MAR 2 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
			27	28 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM			
			26	27			
			25	26			
			24	25			
			23	24			
			22	23			
			21	22			
			20	21			
			19	20			
			18	19			
			17	18			
			16	17			
			15	16			
			14	15			
			13	14			
			12	13			
			11	12			
			10	11			
			9	10			
			8	9			
			7	8			
			6	7			
			5	6			
			4	5			
			3	4			
			2	3			
			1	2			



The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
5400 Annie Oakley Drive • Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
702.898.4800 • www.lasvegasorthodox.com

FEBRUARY 2013

“What Can Separate Us from the Love of Christ?”

*His Grace, Bishop Michael
Bishop of New York*

I grew up in Binghamton, New York, in a parish where the church was the center of my life. I served as an altar boy and went to the Church School, which was huge! We had a teenage Bible Study group; the church had a basketball team (which I was not very good at). I ran the parish library. We had altar boy practice every Saturday – we sang the Liturgy and learned about serving the services – there were as many as 36 altar boys at a time! So, almost every weekend, I was in church for Saturday Liturgy, Vespers, Matins, and Sunday Liturgy... plus holy days, baptisms, weddings, funerals and everything else that came with life in the Church.

After high school, I went to college nearby and lived at home. I never had the problem of wondering, “What do I do when I’m on my own?” I worked out my class schedule so I could be at the Liturgy during the week when there was one. Church was the place to be.

I loved being in church, and I loved what I was doing in church

– especially serving in the Altar and learning about the Faith. So it was only logical for me to want to become an imitation of my parish priest, Fr. Stephen Dutko of blessed memory, so that I could have, and give, that same kind of experience. I wanted to be like Father Stephen.

And so I did. I went to seminary right after college. I got married and ordained at 22 years old. I was assigned to my first parish, Saints Peter and Paul Church in Homer City, PA, and I was raring to go.

Then it all changed. After 29 days of marriage, my wife and I were in a car accident. She was killed instantly. I was in the hospital – in a coma. I came out months later, confused and bitter, guilt ridden and doubting. I was feeling all those kinds of things that a person would feel in that horrific situation. Why did God let this happen? It had to be somebody’s fault. All the confusion, all the anger, definitely made me think about not being a priest anymore.

However, I couldn’t conceive of not serving at the Altar. I could not conceive of living my life out-

side of that experience that I had had all those years. I just could not imagine that.

So, rather than walk away from the Church, I did what I really needed to do – and what I have counseled so many people, of all ages from the youngest to the oldest, to do when we have these terrible, tragic experiences. And that is to draw closer to Christ in the face of pain and agony and loss. When I did that, it was not just an inner, “me and Jesus” kind of experience. The Lord came to me, and began to heal me through the faces, the words, the embraces, the love of His people: the Church.

My spiritual father was one of them. He was tough on me. He told me, “Your faith just has to kick in.” One of the questions I raised was, “Where was God when all this happened?” And he said, “He was in the same place the day that Debbie died that He was on Great and Holy Friday, when His Son died.” He told me that even though that particular Tuesday when we had the accident might have been a Good Friday to me... still, Good Friday is not the end

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

5400 Annie Oakley Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
702.898.4800
www.lasvegasorthodox.com

RECTOR

Archpriest John J. Dresko
1747 Crystal Downs Ave
Las Vegas, NV 89123
702.485.3810 (Home)
860.833.4921 (Mobile)
frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

ATTACHED

Archpriest James Bertolini
Archpriest John Bruchok

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Juliana Veek

PARISH COUNCIL

Laura Draskovic, Vice-President

Karen Short, Treasurer

Virginia Hood, Secretary

James Brophy
Alan Buttell
Pamela Campbell
Kevin McAuley
Litsa Osburn
Catherine Wilkalis

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Amy McAuley
Christina Sas

of the story... Pascha is. He reminded me that Christ triumphed over death – and I had to believe that my wife was a sharer in that victory and in the Resurrection.

So, I never left the Church. I never walked away from the priesthood. My first parish as a priest became a replica of what I had experienced in my home parish as a young person... and those people who I served as a young widowed priest helped me nurse back to spiritual health – as well as me helping them in their dark moments and in their difficulties. It wasn't just me, as their priest, taking care of them. Guided by God, as His family, we cared for each other.

A famous Christian writer named Tertullian, who lived less than 200 years after Jesus, wrote that "A Christian alone is no Christian." He meant that no one is saved alone... it takes the Church to save a soul. Whenever I look back on that incredibly painful time in my life, I am more and more deeply convinced that I never would have survived – not spiritually, and maybe not literally – without the Church. I do not mean just the Church as a building, although that is the place where we meet and pray and even play together. I mean, the Church as a community; the constant presence of the people of God – my spiritual father, my parishioners, my brother priests and their families, with all of the guidance, the prayers and the love that they have to share.

Even though my hope for you who read this is that you never have to go through what I went through, I pray that somehow,

whenever you do experience difficulties, doubts, and obstacles, by God's grace, your faith will "kick in." I pray that you will seek, and find, the healing and the love that Our Lord offers us in the faces, the embraces, and the prayers of others — the love of Christ Jesus, shown within the community of His Church.

One of my favorite quotes in the Bible is from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in which he asks the question, "What can separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35). And he answers that neither height nor depth... nor life nor death... nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thanks to the Church, I am living proof that this is true.

ocawonder.com

I hope that all who read this are as moved as I was when I read it. I've known Bishop Michael for a long time and knew the "story" but never witnessed the depth of faith behind it that this story imparts. When we gripe and grouse and moan about the things going on in our lives, we would be very wise indeed to remember these words.

Father John

FEASTDAYS

Due to Father John's absence to baptize his grandson, the Feast-day of the Meeting of the Lord will not be served in our parish. The Feast will be served at St. John the Baptist Greek Church and everyone is encouraged to attend services there. There are no other services not normally scheduled in our parish.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

At our annual parish meeting in December, we discussed the need for a fund, outside of the parish operating budget, which could be built up to pay for repairs and replacement of equipment in and on our property. With a generous donation of \$1,000 by a parish family, the parish council established the Capital Improvements Fund with the following projects already on the docket: replacement of the HVAC units for the church, upgraded doors and shutters for the security of the church building, parking lot repair and resealing, and anticipated roof repairs.

We have established a goal of **\$60,000** to fund these projects. The necessary replacement of the HVAC units is scheduled for next month and **we must have \$10,000 by mid-February** as a down payment to begin work. We ask everyone to consider a special donation to this fund, above and beyond your normal contributions for the support of the parish. If the operating budget stays as stable as last year's, the council has decided that any income from the anniversary celebration in May will go to this Fund.

FATHER AWAY

Although at a difficult time, Father John will be away from the parish January 29-February 5 for the baptism of his grandson, Matthew, in Connecticut. Father Aurel Sas will serve Vespers and Liturgy at St. Paul's on February 2-3. There will be **no confessions** heard after Vespers.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord falls on February 2, but we have no services scheduled

that morning. **The traditional blessing of candles will be done after Vespers on February 9**, the Leavetaking of the Feast, after Father returns.

If you have an emergency during Father's absence, please contact Laura Draskovic or try Father's cell phone (remembering the 3-hour time difference!). We will then coordinate any local response necessary. Father will check voice and email while away.

COUNCIL CHANGE

Although just installed, we sadly learned that Harry Anagnostopoulos has taken a job that will mean their very sudden move to the Philadelphia area. We ask God's blessings on both Harry and Diane as they begin this new chapter in their lives and will miss them.

As per our by-laws, the parish council has elected Pamela Campbell to fulfill the eleven months left on Harry's term, and His Eminence has blessed that action.

AIR CONDITIONER AVAILABLE

If someone who might have the need but not the means can use an air conditioner, Fridgidair 10-12,000 BTU, a parishioner has graciously offered it. It can be delivered. If you are interested, please contact Father John confidentially and we will arrange things.

HOUSE BLESSINGS

- Father John will continue the house blessing schedule during February. 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, February 9th, as usual. Fr. Alexander will be hearing Russian language confessions at 9:00 AM. The liturgy is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM.

LENTEN TRIODION/FAST-FREE

The weekly preparation for the beginning of Great Lent begins with the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, February 24. The week following, Feb 25-Mar 2, is **fast-free** in the Orthodox Church.

ERITREAN SERVICES

The Eritrean community members of our parish have, for some time, been having periodic services in their own language. There will now be a regular service in Tigrenya each Thursday unless a change is announced by Father John. The service will begin every Thursday at 8:00 AM.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless

project date is Saturday, March 16th. 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!

2013 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

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.

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 JANUARY 15, 2013 MEETING

Rector's Report:

- Manton: Father John must go to St. John's Monastery. There is a situation there that requires the attention of the Finance Committee. Father will be away Wednesday, January 23rd through Thursday, January 24th.
- Baptism: Father John's grandson will be baptized on Saturday, February 2nd. Father will be out of town from January 29-February 5. Father Sas will serve for Vespers and Liturgy on Saturday and Sunday. There will be no Meeting of the Lord service Saturday morning, but parishioners are welcome to attend services at St. John the Baptist Church.

Vice President: Laura stated that the Russian service went very well and that they have come up with a new system to collect expenses for Father Alexander.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short reported that we are totally current on all our bills and there

is money in the bank. We have finally turned the corner!

Capital Fund: We are in need of opening a restricted fund for future projects. This fund would be outside of the budget. At this time we have a check for \$1000.00 dollars generously given by a parishioner for this fund. Discussion followed.

Father John spoke to Ceda from CB Air Conditioning regarding the A/C units. Ceda would like to begin the project in February. He is requesting half of the cost up front, which is \$10,000.00. The balance would be paid at the end of the project. This will be presented to the parish. Motion to go ahead with the project passed unanimously. Income for December was: \$25,767.77, and expenses of \$16,721.12 for a surplus of \$9,046.65.

YTD 2012

2012 YTD Inc	\$ 231,479.95
2012 YTD Exp	\$ 213,488.02
Inc over Exp	\$ 17,988.93

Buildings and Grounds:

- Extra bars have been placed in all the windows for extra security.
- The bushes around the side church entrance have been cut back. This is also for security reasons.
- Harry received a quote of \$850.00 for double pane glass windows for the two that need to be replaced in the dome.
- Friday will be replace filters, lights ect... at the church.
- Open items; inspection of roof.
- Kevin left a message with Rick regarding dome lighting.
- Harry will turn keys to the

church over to Kevin before leaving.

- For added security rolling shutters were discussed for the north and south church doors and windows. The doors and window have been measured and a bid was given of \$13,062.00. This would cover the 4 windows, 2 doors, controls and motor. Discussion followed.
- It was suggested that the parish be made aware that \$60,000.00 is needed to get the church were it needs to be. Father John will announce a Capital Improvements Fund with a goal of \$60,000.
- Security Assessment: all the recommendations are very good.

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. They also a special old calendar celebration of Christmas at midnight on January 6/7.

Outreach/Website: Stephen Osburn is going to post his reflections on his first semester at St. Vladimir's.

Russian: no report.

Stewardship:

As of this meeting, 48 pledges have been returned. This represents 70 adults.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: no report.

Cookie Exchange: The Cookie Exchange had a profit of \$394.00. Everyone enjoyed it. We will work on better timing for next year.

Iconography Project: no report.

25th Anniversary: Everything is in place. Ad book forms are available in the vestibule and electronically, and we will ask everyone to solicit ads from their local merchants.

Council Replacement: We are sad to announce that Harry and Diane Anagnastopoulos will be relocating to Philadelphia. The council has appointed Pam Campbell to fulfill the remainder of the one-year term.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 19, 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 FEBRUARY

Antonina Stark

February 2, 1994

Amelia Zalo

February 8, 2008

Peter Lazadoff

February 10, 1993

Samuel Berhe Tella

February 13, 1991

Gurii Mirosnicenco

February 13, 2010
Edward Grudzina
February 14, 2010
Mary Maviglia
February 18, 1998
Raicevich Harrison
February 18, 1999
Milica Primaky
February 25, 1995
Fred Leo Bell
February 25, 1996
Christina Hollis
February 26, 1998
Bekure Hailu Fesehaye
February 28, 1992
James Mezilson
February 28, 1998
Maria Jamieson
February 28, 2002
Irene Wadhams
February 28, 2002
Melvin Stokich
February 28, 2003

†**ARCHBISHOP DIMITRI
ON THE MEETING OF THE LORD**

On February 2nd the Church celebrates the great feast of The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. The Gospel lesson for that day relates how the mother of Jesus brought Him to the temple, as was the custom and requirement under the God-given Law of Moses, of Israel (Exodus 13:2, 12; Leviticus 12:2-8). When the righteous Simeon, who received Christ in his arms at the temple, saw the child, he knew immediately that this was the Redeemer promised by all of Israel's prophecies, for the elder was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26-27). Being inspired, he himself uttered prophetic words which form the hymn sung or chanted at the end of every Vespers service: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared

before the face of Thy people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

This particular feast is part of the great celebration that began forty days prior, with the Nativity of Christ (December 25). Eight days later (January 1) we remembered the Circumcision of Christ and then His Baptism (January 6). The commemoration of these events in our Lord's earthly life basically form one feast, the feast of the Incarnation of God the Word.

God literally entered the world, into time and history. He was physically present in the midst of His people, His creatures whom He loves. Our Lord took on human nature in order to reconcile unto Himself, man who had strayed far from the Source of his life.

In taking on the "form of a servant" God, at the same time, in the Person of Christ, fulfilled every requirement of the Law that He Himself had given to His people through Moses. He demonstrated, thereby, that everything that had happened in Israel's history could not be described merely as a succession of unrelated events. Rather this was a history with a definite goal: the salvation of mankind. He identified Himself as the Director of that history and fulfilled its expectation.

When the righteous Simeon took the child into His arms and declared that this indeed was Salvation Incarnate, the "Light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Israel," a new era began; the era of God's presence among His children.

To this day, all of the Church's celebrations, no matter what the event commemorated may be, whether in the life of Christ, of the Theotokos, or of the saints, all are celebrations of Christ and the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of His presence. He initiated this Kingdom and promised its ultimate realization. And now, just as the Old Israel had awaited the beginning of God's Kingdom, the New Israel (the Church) awaits the Second and Glorious Coming of Christ and the fullness of His Kingdom, revealed.

Although all of our celebrations are intimately rooted in the knowledge that we have been called for complete communion with Christ and to live in function of His Kingdom to which we already belong, we still live in a world

that has for the most part rejected what Christ gave it, that is, authentic life "in abundance," life with real purpose and meaning. We Christians, in spite of having accepted what God's intervention in human affairs gave us, slip repeatedly and fall into the great temptation to convert the things of this world into gods. We are constantly attracted by ways of seeking happiness and fulfillment that exclude God. This, of course, always proves to be vain and futile.

So our lives vacillate, back and forth, between the assurance of salvation and indifference, between moments of real joy because we know that God is with us, and moments of boredom because we cannot give ourselves totally over to Him.

Every Christian celebration reaches its climax in the Divine Liturgy for the feast. In this sacred work, when God's people assemble in His name, we actually become participants in the Heavenly Kingdom to come. We are as literally present with Christ in His future Kingdom as the Apostles were with Him at the Last Supper. So the Kingdom is initiated among us and we enjoy it before our time, by anticipation. This is what every Eucharist is; this is what our feasts and celebrations are all about, and that is why the Eucharist is the very center of all of them.

I will emphasize again, however, that although what we have said is true, we continually orient our lives towards everyday pursuits, often living as though we had never experienced this divine reality. That is why repentance and penitential seasons are in order. That is why in approximately one month we will enter the Great Fast or Lent during which time we are exhorted to repent of our sins.

What is important for us Christians is that we have really "seen the True Light, received the Heavenly Spirit, found the true faith" in this experience of the Kingdom of God. The question we must all ask ourselves sincerely, however, is "what are we like when we return into this world after this Heavenly experience?"

To Christ Who willed to be held in the arms of the righteous Simeon for our salvation be glory, honor and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
(oca.org)