

THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
FEBRUARY 2014



The Meeting of our Lord — February 2

MARK THE DATES

January 28-February 7: Father John out of town; Metropolitan Council Meeting

February 2: MEETING OF THE LORD

February 8: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM, Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

February 9: Publican and Pharisee (Lenten Triodion Begins); Blessing of Candles

February 9-15: FAST-FREE WEEK

February 14: Desert Deanery Meeting at St. Paul's, 2:00 PM

February 15: First Annual Desert Deanery Parish Conference at St. Paul's, 10:00 AM

February 17: First Meeting of the St. Paul's Cooking Club, 1:00 PM

February 23: BENEFIT DINNER, Sunset Gardens, 5:30 PM

March 2: FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

March 3: Beginning of Great Lent

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

February 2014

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

GREETERS FEBRUARY 2: CAMPBELL/MASON FEBRUARY 9: OSBURN/CONDUCTOR FEBRUARY 16: MURPHY/JOHNSON FEBRUARY 23: MCAULEY/BRITTON						1
2 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: SAS POST-COMM: BOWMAN CHURCH SCHOOL MEETING OF THE LORD	3	4 WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM	5	6 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT	7	8 RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM NO CONFESSIONS
FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 7 METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING AND PERSONAL						
9 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: YOUTH EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE	FAST FREE 10	11 FAST FREE WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM	FAST FREE 12	13 FAST FREE ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT	FAST FREE 14	15 FAST FREE DESERT DEANERY PARISH WORKSHOP, 10 AM ST. PAUL'S GREAT VESPERS, 4:00 PM CONFESSIONS
16 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BROOKS EPISTLE: PARKER POST-COMM: MASON CHURCH SCHOOL PRODIGAL SON	17	18 WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM	19	20 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	21	22 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
23 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BOWMAN EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: HOOD CHURCH SCHOOL MEATFARE • LAST JUDGMENT BENEFIT DINNER, 5:30 PM	MEAT FAST 24	25 MEAT FAST WOMEN'S READING GROUP, 10:00 AM	MEAT FAST 26	27 MEAT FAST ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	MEAT FAST 28	MAR 1 MEAT FAST GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS



The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
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FEBRUARY 2014

Spring Training

February is one of “those” months. When I lived in the Northeast, it was the dead of winter, with the weight of darkness and snow and cold lying heavy on one’s soul and body. February often was the third consecutive month of cold, snow, sloop and dangerous travel. Even the beautiful white of fresh snow was marred by sand and salt with everything becoming an ugly brownish concoction. It is the shortest month of the year for a reason — we can’t wait to get to March and the promise of spring. February, for a sports fan (and despite the weather), is a desert. The football season is over, baseball hasn’t started yet, and who cares about basketball? (I know, some of you do!)

But the one thing that February always has that bears the promise of spring is the beginning of spring training. Pitchers and catchers report to camps through Florida and Arizona, begin to throw and catch, stretching out their arms. Then the position players report and practice games begin. The athletes are gearing themselves up for the grind of the regular season. One

senses that this spring training is not just for the players, but also for the fans, getting us ready to move from the inactivity of winter and the indoors life out into the sunshine and life renewed.

Most years, February is also spring training in the Church. Most years, this is the month that the Church begins to stretch us and prepare us for the grind of Great Lent. Just like a baseball player would seriously damage himself if he just showed up and started playing full bore, we can’t just show up on the first day of the great spiritual journey and effort of Great Lent and expect to start “playing” without hurting ourselves.

So the Church asks us to begin to stretch our spiritual muscles and minds by giving us the pre-Lenten Sundays as a month-long reflection on the time about to come. The first Sunday of preparation (although unofficial as it is outside the Lenten Triodion, which begins the following week) is *Zacchaeus Sunday*, when the Church gives us the story of the humble tax collector of “short stature,” who desired to see

Christ so much he climbed a tree. The beginning of our training is to foster this same desire to overcome our own “short stature” in our hearts.

Then the Lenten Triodion (the service texts for all services of the pre-Lenten Sundays until Pascha) begins and we hear the story of the *Publican and Pharisee*, when our training is to instill in us the humility of the Publican (tax collector) instead of the boastful pride of the Pharisee. The week following the Publican and Pharisee is always a fast-free week in the Church to remind us not to be legalistic in fasting like the Pharisee.

The *Prodigal Son* is the lesson for the third Sunday of spring training. The image of the son wasting and abusing everything that the father gives him is supposed to jar us into examining the ways we squander the gifts God has given to each of us. But the promise of God’s desire for our return and his loving embrace of the son upon his return gives us the hope to leave behind the awful decisions we have made and return to God and the

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Karen Short, Treasurer

Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

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James Brophy

Alan Buttell

Kevin McAuley

Litsa Osburn

Joseph Wheeler

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds

Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach

Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach

Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth

Amy McAuley

Christina Sas

Fellowship Committee

Church.

The parable of the *Great Judgment* is given to us to teach us that our relationship with God, broken and fallen, can only be restored when we realize that He is in our midst in the "least of these My brethren." The other is where we see Christ and, ultimately, ourselves. Our training continues in developing the compassion and love for others that God demonstrates by sending His Son into the world. Also, as the next step in our training, this is the last day we eat meat until Pascha, as a way to ease into the full rigors of the Fast.

Finally, we arrive on the threshold of Opening Day. Spring training finishes with a call to *forgive*. We hear Jesus remind us that if we cannot forgive each other, we can't expect forgiveness from Him. Then the Church calls us to do exactly that in the beautiful Forgiveness Vespers, at the end of which we fall down before each other begging, and granting, forgiveness. The following morning the full efforts of the Fast begin and we make the first step towards the Feast of Feasts, Pascha.

February is indeed our spring training. Until we develop the desire of Zacchaeus, the humility of the Publican, the longing to return home of the Prodigal Son, the compassion for the Other, even the least of the brethren, and the ability to truly and sincerely forgive each other everything, we are not able to enter onto the great playing field of Lent. At least not without hurting ourselves.

Join me in stretching, reflecting, and preparing for the great

effort to which each of us is about to be called! See you on the playing field.

Father John

FEASTDAYS

In February, we celebrate the following feastsdays. Please join us!

THE MEETING OF OUR LORD

February 2

GREAT VESPERS 5:00 PM (SAT)

SUNDAY LITURGY, 9:00 AM

TRAVELS

Fr. John will be away to attend the Metropolitan Council meeting in New York and some added personal time off from **January 28-February 7**. If you need a priest when Father is away, please call Ginny Hood (526-4428) and she will coordinate an appropriate local response. Father Aurel Sas will be serving for Fr. John the weekend of February 1-2. Please welcome him warmly!

Father John will bless candles on Sunday, February 9 due to his absence on the feastday.

SLAVONIC SERVICE

Father Alexander will be here on February 8. As usual, there will be Russian Confessions at 9:00 AM, followed by the Slavonic Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

FAST FREE PERIOD

The week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (Feb 9-15) is **fast-free**.

DESERT DEANERY

We will be hosting the clergy and some faithful of the parishes of the Desert Deanery on February 14-15. The clergy of the deanery will have their meeting on Friday at 2:00 PM. On Saturday, we will

host the first Desert Deanery Parish Conference. Father John will be the speaker on ***Caring for God's Creation***. We encourage all of our faithful to attend on Saturday — please let Fr. John know if you are coming, as we have to plan for food.

Vespers on Saturday, February 15, will be at **4:00 PM**, ending the conference. Please note the time change for that day only.

ST. PAUL'S COOKING CLUB

The first meeting of the St. Paul's cooking club will take place on Monday, February 17th at 1:00 PM in the church hall. Those who are interested in learning to make different ethnic dishes are welcome to attend. The purpose of the group is to share our culinary knowledge as well as provide dishes for the parish as a fundraiser. At this first gathering, Bea Makunen will teach us how to make lenten Sambusa just in time for Great Lent. Anyone wishing to pre-order some should see Christina Sas, and they will be available for pick-up on February 23rd (Meatfare Sunday). Prices are to be determined.

COFFEE CHAT

We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM. We have gone back to our usual Badger Cafe at the corner of Tropicana and Spencer. **Coffee Chat will not meet until February 20**, due to other commitments.

2014 BENEFIT DINNER

Our annual Benefit Dinner (not held in 2013 because of the 25th anniversary celebration), is scheduled for **February 23, 2014** at the Sunset Gardens. Tickets will be \$100. Dinner,

dancing and a silent auction will benefit the Capital Fund of the parish. Start planning to attend now, and if you have possible silent auction items, please see Pam Campbell or Eve Kagano-vitch. Please use the attached flyer to invite others.

If you would like to attend, but the cost is prohibitive, please see Fr. John or Pam Campbell. Some assistance is available.

CLERGY SURGERIES

Father John will be having outpatient surgery on Friday, February 21st. He hopes to be present but will be unable to serve on the weekend of February 22-23. **Our normal schedule of services will be held.**

Father John Bruchok will be undergoing knee replacement surgery on Tuesday, February 18th. Prayers are appreciated.

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

Forgiveness Sunday this year falls on March 2nd. We will serve Forgiveness Vespers following the liturgy. All parishioners should make every attempt to be present for the special and important rite allowing us to enter into the efforts of Great Lent with mutual forgiveness. Start planning now!

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project date is **Saturday, March 22nd**. 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 (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

READING GROUP

The Women's Reading Group

continues in the church library on Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30 AM. The book is *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives: The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*. For more information, please contact Christine Johnson at 651-233-3551 (voice or text). The book is being read together with discussion.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

We have received a bid on the repair, resealing and re-stripping of our parking lot. We anticipated a bid of \$20K. **The bid came in at \$7,800.** We need to repair the parking lot before the extreme heat comes in. **We still need about \$4,000.**

We have established a goal of **\$60,000** to fund needed projects. We ask everyone to consider a special donation to this fund, above and beyond your normal contributions for the support of the parish.

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!

LENTEN SCHEDULE

Looking ahead, the schedule of pan-Orthodox lenten services has been set. All services are at 6:00 pm.

March 9
Orthodoxy Vespers
St. John the Baptist Church
Fr. Michael Balan, Homilist

March 16
Lenten Vespers
Ss. George and Dimitrii Church
Fr. John Hondros, Homilist

March 23
Lenten Vespers
St. Michael Church
Fr. Aurel Sas, Homilist

March 30
Lenten Vespers
St. Simeon Church
Fr. John Dresko, Homilist

April 6
Holy Unction Service
St. Paul Church
Fr. Matthew Swehla, Homilist

LOOKING AHEAD

Our annual Lenten Retreat has been set for Saturday, April 5, at St. John the Baptist Church. The retreatmaster will be Father John Erickson, retired Dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary and Professor of Church History. His topic will be "Does Christian Marriage have a Future?" Please mark your calendars and join us. More information and registration forms will be coming.

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.

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

• **Baptisms.** A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.

• **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 be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS JANUARY 21, 2014 MEETING

Rector's Report:

Father John welcomed the 2014 parish council members, commending them and encouraging them to be active, pious, live the life of the church, and serve with honesty and integrity.

Father John will be away for personal time and the Metropolitan Council meeting from January 27 to February 7, 2014. Father Aurel Sas will serve the first weekend of February.

The Desert Deanery will meet on Friday and Saturday, February 14-15, 2014. The clergy will meet on February 14 in the afternoon. The first Desert Deanery Parish Conference will meet on February 15, with Father John speaking on "Caring for God's Creation". An estimated 30 – 40 persons from the deanery area will attend. All parish members are also invited to attend. Luncheon will be provided. An ad hoc luncheon committee will

be scheduled. This conference is at no cost to the parish. Housing while at the conference is the responsibility of the individual attendees.

Father John informed the council he will be having surgery on Friday, February 21, 2014. Father Aurel Sas will serve that weekend, although Father John will be present.

St. Paul's benefit Gourmet Dinner will take place on Sunday, February 23, 2014.

Vice President: Ginny will coordinate parish life during Father John's absence.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short informed the council that the church is now totally current on all financial items due to generous donations from a number of parishioners.

Kevin McAuley will look into a request made by Leslie from the roofing company about a payment due.

The chili cook-off on January 18 earned the parish \$450.00 along with a lot of good will and positive feedback from all who attended. Many attendees were from outside the parish.

The parish has paid \$2000.00 to Sunset Gardens for the cost of the Gourmet Dinner fundraiser scheduled for February 23, 2014 and has received \$1000.00 in ticket sales at present time.

Capital Fund: \$3,760.00

Rainy Day: \$4,500.00

Icon Fund: \$7,500.00

Income for December was \$27,387.00, with expenses of \$17,889.80 for a surplus of \$9,497.20.

FINAL 2013

2013 Inc	\$ 211,048.86
2013 Exp	\$ 216,085.51
Exp over Inc	\$ 5,036.65

Buildings and Grounds: Parish hall floor needs to be stripped and waxed. It should be done twice a year. Ginny Hood will look into getting her maintenance man from school to do this job and will get a cost estimate from him.

More volunteer manpower is needed for the many projects to be done around church. Also Kevin requested \$200.00 to pay for the cost of miscellaneous repairs.

Kevin is still working on the pigeon problem in the bell tower. The bell rope has been repaired.

Church School/Youth: There will be a Lenten church school and youth retreat on Saturday, March 29 for our parish youth. The theme will center around the movie of C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Charity: Feeding the Homeless will be Saturday, January 25 at 10:30 AM. We have a starting total of \$285.37 in church funds for this year. Received extra donation of \$125.00 from two parishioners to purchase socks and fruit. Ten loaves of bread was also donated.

Alternatives to our current homeless feeding program were discussed. Cathy Wilkalis will look into some of these as a possible option.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: No report.

Fellowship:

Ethnic Cooking Classes: On Monday, February 17, at 1:00 PM, Bea and Christina will teach a class on the art of making Ethio-

pian/Eritrean sambosa.

A Wine and Chocolates tasting party is planned for May 2014.

Outreach/Website: no report.

Russian: There was an exceptional turn-out for the Russian Yolka held on Saturday, January 11th.

Stewardship: we currently have 38 pledges. Last year we had 43.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: no report.

Mission Request: Father Damian Kuolt picked up the donated candleabras and delivered them to the mission in Poulsbo, WA, after the new mission in Bakersfield could not use them.

Benefit Dinner: All is set. If anyone needs assistance to attend, it is available.

NEW BUSINESS

Directory: Father John e-mailed the first draft of the parish directory to parishioners. Requests for corrections should be submitted to him. Directory information is intended for parishioners only. No hard copies will be given except by special request.

OCA PSPs: The OCA policies and procedures link on sexual misconduct was e-mailed to all parish council members and should have been reviewed by all. Father John is now required to certify to the diocese that all parish council members have read them, understand and will uphold them. After ascertaining that the council members have read, understand and agree with these OCA policies and procedures James Brophy moved and Litsa Osburn seconded that all members of the

parish council can be certified to have read, understand and will uphold the OCA policies and procedures on sexual misconduct.

Lenten Activities: The Pan-Orthodox Lenten Retreat will take place on Saturday, April 5, 2014 at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. Father John Erickson, retired dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary will lead on the theme, "Does Christian Marriage Have a Future?"

St. Paul's will host the Pan-Orthodox Lenten Unction Service on Sunday evening, April 6th.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 18, 2014, 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

THE MEETING OF THE LORD WWW.OCA.ORG

Today the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation's religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration from above, St Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and St Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Simeon took the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "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 all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). St Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was the 84-year-old widow Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. She arrived just when St Simeon met the divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:37-38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous people of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet the Savior in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+

407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the sixth century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. In thanksgiving to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: St Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; St Cosmas Bishop of Maium, St John of Damascus, and St Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and St Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century.

On this day we also commemorate the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy." The Mother of God is depicted without Her Child, with seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar icon, "Of the Seven Swords" (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right.

The icon "Simeon's Prophecy" symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Simeon: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35).