

# THE MESSENGER

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH  
FEBRUARY 2015



## Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise

### MARK THE DATES

February 1-7: FAST FREE WEEK

February 2: MEETING OF THE LORD, Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM

February 8: ANNUAL FUNDRAISER DINNER and SILENT AUCTION, 5:30 PM

February 9-13: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, New York; Father John out of town

February 14: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

February 17: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

February 21: FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 AM

February 22: FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS, Maslenitza

February 23: **BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT**

March 1: Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers, 6:00 PM; St. Paul's

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

# FEBRUARY 2015

## ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH • LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: YOUTH EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: YOUTH CHURCH SCHOOL PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE	FAST FREE DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM BLESSING OF CANDLES MEETING OF THE LORD	FAST FREE	FAST FREE DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM	FAST FREE ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	FAST FREE	FAST FREE GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
FAST FREE DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: BROOKS POST-COMM: PARKER CHURCH SCHOOL PRODIGAL SON MELODY WEDDING, 1:00 PM BENEFIT DINNER, 5:30 PM	9 METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING, FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, FEBRUARY 9-13	10	11	12 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT	13	14 RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9:00 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10:00 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL
15 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: STRANSKY EPISTLE: HUFFMAN POST-COMM: DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL MEATFARE - LAST JUDGMENT	16 MEAT FAST	17 MEAT FAST	18 MEAT FAST DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM	19 MEAT FAST ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	20 MEAT FAST	21 MEAT FAST FEEDING THE HOMELESS 10:30 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL
22 MEAT FAST DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DEMKO EPISTLE: RIGGS POST-COMM: FORGIVENESS VESPERS MASLENITZA NO CHURCH SCHOOL	23 GREAT LENT BEGINS COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM	24 COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM	25 COMFESSIONS, 5:30 PM LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 6:30 PM	26 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT COMPLINE WITH KANON OF ST. ANDREW, 6:30 PM	27 LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS, 8:00 AM	28 OUTDOOR CLEAN-UP, 8:30 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mar 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HUFFMAN EPISTLE: PARKER POST-COMM: WHEELER CHURCH SCHOOL ORTHODOXY VESPERS, 6:00 PM (St. Paul)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GREETERS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">FEBRUARY 1: OSBURN/WHEELER FEBRUARY 8: CAMPBELL/CHONG FEBRUARY 15: MCAULEY/MASON FEBRUARY 22: MURPHY/CONDUCTOR</p>						



# The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

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## FEBRUARY 2015

### PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

*Fr. Thomas Hopko*

To confess properly we must prepare ourselves. And the preparation for confession has just one proper goal: that we would see ourselves as we really are in the eyes of God so that we could confess our sins with the sincere desire to be forgiven.

#### **Self-examination**

To confess our sins we must know what they are. And to know what they are we must examine our lives: what we think, what we say, and what we do.

The great problem here for many of us is that we do not have proper measure by which to judge ourselves. We judge by what we think are true standards but which are in fact far from Christianity as heaven is from earth.

For example, we judge ourselves by our own idea of the normal human person: "We are normal, average, like other, not worse ..."

Or we judge by the standards, which our society pro-

vides: "We are upright citizens, law abiding, hard working, thrifty ..."

Or we judge by some churchly practices, which have, in themselves and by themselves, no genuine Christian value at all: We go to Church on Sunday, do not eat meat on Wednesday and Friday, say prayers, do not dance during lent ..."

Or, finally, we judge by Old Testament standards which are very good, but not all on the level of life to which Christians are called: "We do not steal, lie, murder, commit adultery ..."

The real point here is that self-examination must be a deep and serious look at ourselves with honesty and courage and the desire really to see. But it also must be a judgement made by strictly Christian standards: the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

#### **Study of the Lord's teachings**

Before we can make a self-study, we must make a study of the Gospel and the New Testament as whole. How can we

judge ourselves according to strictly Christians standards when we do not really know, or take seriously, what these standards are? In preparing for confession, therefore, we should really spend more time looking at Christ than looking at ourselves. For it is certainly true to say that we can see ourselves more clearly by looking intensely at Christ for a short time than by hours of personal introspection.

Christians should know the Gospel and the teaching of the New Testament. In preparation for confession the Fathers of the Church give us some particular scriptural passages, which can help us to see what we are in respect to what we should be.

a. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, 7; Luke 6)

b. The Last Chapters of St. Paul's Letters to Romans (Romans 12, 13, 14)

c. The 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13)

d. The First Letter of St. John (1 John)

Of course these sections do



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## RECTOR

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CHOIR DIRECTOR  
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## PARISH COUNCIL

Virginia Hood, Vice-President

Karen Short, Treasurer

Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

James Brophy  
Alan Buttell  
Kevin McAuley  
Karen Murphy  
Litsa Osburn  
Joseph Wheeler

## SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds  
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach  
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach  
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth  
Amy McAuley  
Stephan Tanksley

Fellowship Committee

not exhaust the totality of Christian life, but they are invaluable in self-examination. If we read them carefully, with attention and in application to our own attitudes and actions we will have more than sufficient opportunity to judge ourselves by the standards on which Christians are to be judged. Altogether they do not add up to more than 13 pages in a normal sized Bible.

## Prayer and fasting

In addition to our self-analysis in the light of the Christian ideals, we must prepare for confession by prayer and fasting. Both of these disciplines are necessary for us to clarify our vision, to gain mastery over our thoughts and to put us in living contact with God who will Himself inspire us to see those things in actual fact which are well pleasing to Himself.

In prayer books there are prayers before confession which we can read, together with the “penitential psalms” if we wish to read them (Psalms 32, 37, 51, 102, 130, 143). These prayers may be read privately, and possibly even more effectively in common with other repenting Christians. It certainly would not be sad if we could recover in our churches the communal character of repentance before the Lord – that we all who are “members one of another” are also sinners before God and each other – and in this way recapture the “public” character of confession at least through our common devotion.

If this is not practically done as a whole congregation, it certainly can be done on evenings of confession, in church or with

family and friends. In general, it is sad that families do not confess and receive communion as families more often.

## Setting right our life

The final step in preparation for confession is the “setting right” of whatever sins are still in our power to set right. This means, for example, that we cannot confess theft without returning what we have stolen; or hatred, without forgiving our enemy; or anger, without apologizing to the one we have offended.

To do this is clearly stated as a strict requirement for repentance by Christ Himself when he tells us that if we are at the altar offering our gift and we remember that our brother has something against us, we must go and be reconciled with our brother before we can offer our gift (Matthew 5:23).

Even here, however, we must be careful not to sin more by making a “display” of our setting things right, by using our supposed “Christian piety” as an occasion for vainglory or boasting or showing-off. Therefore, even our action of setting our life in order should be done with discretion; quietly, secretly, even silently if our actions will speak louder and more convincingly than our words – but in any case these things must be done before confession, or most certainly before Holy Communion.

On this point too it should be very clear that no amount of fasting and prayer can replace the necessary actions of true repentance in confession. Thus, the person who insists that he/she be allowed to Communion on the grounds that he/she has

“read all the prayers and fasted for a week” even though he/she still refuses to be reconciled to his brother/sister must come to know that these ritual acts mean nothing, absolutely nothing, in detachment from real Christian life.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 John 20-21)

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

### FEASTDAYS

During February, we celebrate the following feastdays. Please join us!

### MEETING OF OUR LORD February 2

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (MON)  
BLESSING OF CANDLES

### FAST FREE

The week after the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (Feb 1-7) is a **fast-free** period.

### BENEFIT DINNER

Our annual Silent Auction Dinner will be held on Sunday, February 8 at Sunset Gardens. Silent Auction will begin at 5:30, with dinner served at 6:30. Dancing will follow. Tickets are \$100 and available from Pam Campbell. This is the only major

fundraiser our parish holds during the year. Please invite friends of St. Paul's and any family and friends that might be willing to support our efforts.

### SLAVONIC SERVICE

Father Alexander will be here on the second Saturday of the month, February 14<sup>th</sup>, as usual. Russian Confessions begin at 9:00 AM, with Slavonic Liturgy scheduled for 10:00 AM.

### METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Father John will be away February 9-13, attending the Metropolitan Council in New York. If you have an emergency during this time, you may contact Matushka Liz (860-983-1083), who will coordinate a response.

### FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project date is **February 21<sup>st</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 (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

### FORGIVENESS VESPERS

We will celebrate the Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness following liturgy on Sunday, February 22. This moving and very important service in which we ask one another for forgiveness inaugurates our Great Lenten Fast, which begins in earnest the next day. **Every** parishioner needs to make **every** effort to be present that morning.

### LENTEN CONFESSIONS

Great Lent begins on Monday, February 23. All Orthodox Chris-

tians of confessing age make the journey to the Sacrament of Confession during Great Lent. Father will be available on the Wednesdays of Lent, 5:30-6:15 PM (before Presanctified Liturgy), after Vespers on Saturday evenings and by appointment. **Confessions will be heard in cases of special need by appointment only after the Eve of Palm Sunday (April 4)**. Please do not wait until the last moment.

### COOKS NEEDED!

We need volunteers to sign up for the following:

The normal soup and bread repast after Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays during Lent.

The reception following Orthodoxy Vespers on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The pot-luck lenten luncheon for His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin and our newly-ordained deacon, Stephen Osburn, on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Sign-up lists are available for all in the church hall.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Our normal Sunday Lenten Vespers sponsored by each of the parishes in the valley will be held once again, all beginning at 6:00 PM. *St. Paul's will be hosting Orthodoxy Vespers on March 1<sup>st</sup>*.

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, will be visiting St. Paul's the weekend of March 14-15, when he will ordain our parish son, Stephen Osburn, to the Holy Diaconate.

His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa, will be the speaker at our annual lenten retreat on March 21<sup>st</sup>, at St. John the

Baptist Church. See the flyer attached to this newsletter.

#### ADULT FAITH FORUM

The Adult Faith Forum continues with discussion/bible study about the Orthodox teachings on contemporary issues. We are focusing right now on the Sermon on the Mount. Once again, we will have Wednesday evening Daily Vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by class. *Once Lent starts, classes are suspended until April 22.*

#### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

We have established a goal of \$60,000 to fund needed projects to maintain and repair our aging infrastructure. 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!

#### ORTHODOX VENDORS

We have established a list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishioners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning  
Cedomir Blagojevic  
(702) 493-0295

Dolphin Court Salon & Day Spa  
7581 W. Lake Mead Blvd.  
(702) 946-6000

Nina Grozav, Realtor  
bnv7777@gmail.com  
(702) 521-0208  
speaks Russian and Romanian

Kyklos Café (Greek food)  
Galleria Mall  
Sophocles Frangakis  
(702) 450-1515

XpressPro (auto repair)  
3190 E. Sunset Rd.  
Bruce & Svetlana Balasky  
(702) 815-0444

#### 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 20, 2015 MEETING

The parish council met briefly after the annual meeting and determined anything that needed to be discussed was already covered at the annual meeting.

*Rector's Report:* Welcomed Karen Murphy as the newest member to the Parish Council. Council meetings will continue to take place at 6:00 PM – no time changes to accommodate work schedules necessary.

Bishop-elect Daniel will be consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Benjamin. He is a gifted canon lawyer. He will be visiting Las Vegas March 21 to be the speaker at the Lenten retreat to be held at St. John the Baptist Church March 21.

The Chrismation of Jonathan Baker will take place this Sunday, January 25.

Father John will be away for 4 days starting January 27. This will not affect any weekend services but Wednesday vespers, adult class and Thursday coffee chat will be cancelled.

Father John will be attending the Metropolitan Council in New York February 9–13.

Archbishop Benjamin will be at St. Paul's March 14 and 15 and will ordain Stephen Os-



burn to the Holy Diaconate on March 15.

Reminded all that Great Lent starts February 23, 2015.

*Vice President's Report:* Reported that there is difficulty meeting the OCA mandated requirement of having a second adult present in each church school class on Sundays. Volunteers who serve as the second adult are sometimes not available when required. Father John said he felt the "letter of the law" would be observed if the classroom door remained open and other adults are in the immediate vicinity outside. This would not hold true if a class was being held in a back room. Father John will address these concerns with the individuals involved.

Observed that it nice to see a lot of new faces in church especially young people and in the choir.

*Treasurer's Report:* Karen Short reported on our financials as of the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$10,069.33  
Rainy Day: \$9,257.35  
Icon Fund: \$15,773.44

Income for December was \$20,460.44, with expenses of \$16,350.62 for a surplus of \$4,109.82.

FINAL 2014 (Jan-Dec)

2014 Inc	\$ 237,595.83
2014 Exp	\$ 214,177.17
Inc over Exp	\$ 23,418.66

Karen reports all parish finances including accounts payable are totally current.

#### COMMITTEES

*Building and Grounds:* Kevin reported that the church HVAC

system was not delivering heat. Inspection showed that all the Freon had been stolen from each unit. No damage to units, but incurred expense to replace Freon. Kevin plans to install a security fence around the 4 units to prevent future thefts. Alan Buttell suggested reporting it to police and insurance company as a theft and making a claim.

Informed council that clean-up of back property will require a tractor and dumpster rental at approximately \$400 and \$350 respectively. Kevin and Alan stated they can get community service individuals to help gratis. First Saturday of Lent, February 28, was designated for this project. Council approved by consensus.

Reported that the bell tower construction permit has been extended. A general contractor had to be selected to pull the permit since Kevin was not permitted to do so. Kevin and Alan will contact the contractor. Repair of leaking roof above church school classroom is required. Kevin got bid from roofer for \$640. Consensus of council approved this bid.

Pigeons continue to be a problem in bell tower and roof.

Waxing and polishing of parish hall floors has been accomplished.

Landscaping contract - nothing to report - status quo.

*Charity:* Next feeding of the homeless will be on Saturday, February 21, at 10:30 AM. We will try to schedule people to volunteer and get firm commitments. Lack of participation may jeopardize this project.

*IOCC:* no report.

*Church School/Youth:* see Vice President's report.

*Eritrean/Ethiopian:* they had a wonderful old calendar Nativity/Theophany celebration.

*Fellowship:* Annual Chili Cook-off is Saturday January 24 after Vespers. There are 12 chili chefs. Beer, wine to be offered for sale and there is a door prize. Admission \$5.00.

*Outreach/website:* no report.

*Russian:* The Russian community held a Yolka party on January 3. A large number of people attended including many persons not otherwise connected to St. Paul's.

*Stewardship:* A few pledges are still coming in. To date there is a total of about \$125,000 in pledges.

#### OLD BUSINESS

*Annual Meeting:* Fr John commented that the meeting went very well, with the treasurer's report especially being thorough and inspiring. He noted that we have become stable financially, and have good people as additions to the parish.

*Bell Tower:* see Buildings and Grounds.

*Benefit Dinner:* Fr. John reminded all that this will take place on February 8. Tickets still available through Pam Campbell. Price is \$100 per person; if someone cannot afford this, but wants to attend, they should see Fr. John or Pam.

#### NEW BUSINESS

*Iconography:* Vladimir (Vova) Krassovsky, our iconographer,

is planning a schematic of completion for the iconography. Sanctuary will be finished after Pascha. Enough money is available for immediate plans. Future plans include completing the dome with prophets, and the walls with evangelists, various saints, and feast days of Christ.

*Mortgage:* The current mortgage on the church building is a 10 year adjustable mortgage that comes due in October 2016 with a balloon payment of about \$375,000. Another bank refinance is not feasible since there are no financial institutions in Las Vegas that will finance a church mortgage, especially without a personal guarantor. Fr. John discussed 2 options:

1. Conduct a capital campaign to try to raise the \$400K from parishioners. Father believes this is not feasible for our parish right now since many are still learning the principles of stewardship.

2. Do a bonding program with Share Financial Services, Inc. They coordinate the sale of bonds and the church uses the bond to finance their needs. Bonds are scheduled at a fixed interest rate and are invested at different rates. \$400K would be amortized on a 25 year schedule for the parish. This would free us from the bank mortgage.

We would go from \$3600/mo. to \$3000 /mo. payments. Since we are financially able to continue to pay the \$3600 per month this would allow us to pay off earlier. There is a fixed interest rate for the term of the bond at compounded and simple interest. The church is able to call the bonds early. Cashing

out early requires a 5% fee.

Bonds are eligible retirement accounts. During the 40 years the company has been in business there have only been four foreclosures. They have never had a church that wanted to succeed be in default.

For more information about the bond program go to their website at [www.churchbonds.net](http://www.churchbonds.net). Discussion and questions by parish council members followed. A motion was made by Alan Buttell, seconded by Virginia Hood, to proceed with the Share Financial Services plan. Council members agreed unanimously.

We will call an extraordinary Parish Meeting so the representative can present the prospectus and necessary information on the plan; date TBA.

*Addendum:* After the meeting adjourned but with quorum still present, Fr. John proposed using church funds to pay for the airfare of Steven Osburn to return to Las Vegas for his Diaconal ordination. This will cost approximately \$600 for him and his wife. Alan Buttell moved and Joe Wheeler seconded approval. Council members present approved unanimously.

*Next Council Meeting:  
Tuesday, February 17, 2015.*

## 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