

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 2

February 2009

December Council Highlights

- ✘ December's Operating Income was \$16,274.46 and Operating Expenses were \$8,987.67, resulting in \$7,256.79 for the month of December, and a year-to-date positive net income of \$4,558.05.
- ✘ Phase II Parking Lot donations for December were \$28,460, bringing the Y-T-D total to \$42,831.25.
- ✘ Preparations for Annual Meeting discussed and preliminary 2009 Budget approved for presentation to membership.
- ✘ Council approved Alex Homyak's Eagle (Boy Scout) project to repaint the past 'mission' rectory on the church property.

SS Peter and Paul Holds Annual Meeting

SS Peter and Paul held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 18, 2009. Father David opened the meeting with a prayer. After verifying that a quorum was present, Father David welcomed everyone. Father David's report appears separately, starting on page 3. Andy Evans, Council President, reinforced what Father David com-



ments and added that he, too, is very grateful for how this parish is coming together and the relationships that have developed within the parish. If we can continue in this way we can reach the goals that we desire within this parish. Elizabeth Michel presented the report for the Myrrh Bearers Altar Society. She noted that \$1,000 was donated to the parking lot fund from Coffee Hour. Three sets of altar server robes were purchased for \$4,350. Bake sales and raffles earned the MBAS \$4,137. Holy Supper was hosted by the Myrrh Bearers with 100 attending. A Christmas donation of \$1,000 was given to the church. The 2009 events calendar was reviewed and a request for volunteers was made. Elizabeth extended her deepest thanks to all her chairpersons and members of the Myrrh Bearers who made this past year a great success, as well as to our Parish family for their help and support when needed. Father David thanked the Myrrh Bearers for all that they do for the Church. Stephanie Homyak, Sunday school director, reported that there are currently 25 children in the SS Peter & Paul program enrolled in three classes: a pre-K to Kindergarten class, a 1st - 3rd grade class and 4th grade and up. Thanks were extended to Lisa

Formica who joined Marty Gala and Christi Sourk to provide a pool of four teachers as well as parents who volunteer in the classes. On Sunday December 7, 2008 the church school celebrated St. Nicholas Day by presenting a play: "Good Morning, SS Peter & Paul." Charitable projects included the Christmas Stocking Project, IOCC Health Kits, and the ongoing food drive for St. Mary's Food Bank. Father David expressed how grateful we are for the work being done for our children in Sunday School. Harold Homyak spoke of Custodial/Maintenance. The Church is around 40 years old and all requiring more maintenance. Harold referenced the recent stripping and waxing of the Cultural Center floors that Andy Evans recently arranged for and oversaw. He also noted the recent action taken to provide a temporary parking area due to the Phoenix Police ticketing cars parked across the street. Harold thanked all those who have been helping out and requested anyone interested in this ministry contact Father David, Andy Evans, or Harold Homyak.



Father David reported that Sunday School is not to be considered the end of our education, but that education is an on going process until the Lord calls us. Since July, we have had 2 different courses with attendance at around 20-25 attendees. Classes will begin again on Feb. 4, 2009. During Great Lent, we will celebrate the Lit-

urgy of Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm, followed by a light Lenten meal with presentations and questions and answers to further our knowledge of the faith. John Hecht Jr., FOCA president, reported that FOCA Chapter 219 organized 2 events over the last 6 months, including the luncheon during the Bishop's recent visit. Thanks were expressed to all that helped. These events continue to show the true nature of our church: a group of parishioners who constantly go above and beyond to glorify God in our everyday lives, not because we have to—but because we choose to. Katrina Delsante reported that she and Dennis Tarasevich audited the financial statements of SS Peter & Paul as of December 31, 2008 and found all records to be accurate and free from error. It is the belief of the audit team that there continues excellent competence as evident in the timeliness and orderly accounting of the records of the Parish. After distributing copies of the financial report, David Homyak reviewed the report. Total Operating Income was \$125,398 and Restricted Funds totaled \$45,951 with a pass through of \$1,273, for a grand total of \$172,622. Discussion took place. Total Operating Expenses were \$120,840 with Restricted Expenses of \$59,650 and pass through of \$1,291 for a Grand Total of \$181,780. Excess of Operating Income over Operating Expenses is \$4,558 for 2008. Budgeted total income was \$5,269 less than the Actual of \$125,331. On the Expense side, Budgeted Expenses of \$139,824 were \$1,861 more than actual expenses of

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Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We who live in the Valley of the Sun appreciate the great natural beauty which surrounds us- and we give thanks for it. There are those, however, who are a bit skeptical about this corner of the world. There are those, for example, who sarcastically note that we really only have two seasons and two types of weather—warm and sunny, and hot and sunny. This, of course, is not entirely true. However, as Orthodox Christians, we don't regulate our lives based upon the weather, be it good or bad. Rather, our lives are guided by the Church's liturgical seasons—the ebb and flow of fasting and feasting that marks our commemoration of the history of our salvation.

As an example of this, on Sunday, February 1, we already begin to experience the Pre-Lenten Sundays which prepare us for the season of Great Lent which will soon be upon us. In the Orthodox Church, the pre-Lenten “season” lasts four weeks, beginning, in the Slavic practice, with the Sunday of Zacchaeus. This time of preparation then continues with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and on until the Sunday of Forgiveness (the day before the beginning of Great Lent). These weeks of the pre-Lenten season are anticipatory by nature; they begin on Monday and end on Sunday, each week being named for the theme of the upcoming Sunday. The hymns used during the Pre-Lenten and Lenten seasons are taken from



a book called the Triodion.

The weeks of this Pre-Lenten Season, which are all observed this month, are:

- ✘ Zacchaeus Sunday (February 1) is regarded as a pre-Lenten Sunday because of its place in the Slavic lectionary. It is the 11th Sunday before Pascha. Although there are no hymns proper to this Sunday and its only distinguishing feature is the reading of the Gospel concerning Zacchaeus, it invites us to meet the Lord, to welcome him into our homes and hearts as we look to the weeks ahead.
- ✘ Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (February 8): 10th Sunday before Pascha (70 days). The week following this Sunday is a fast-free week, lest we be tempted, like the Pharisee to boast about the fasting we are soon to undertake.
- ✘ Sunday of the Prodigal Son (February 15): 9th Sunday before Pascha (63 days). The Parable of the Prodigal Son, read at the Liturgy on this Sunday, invites us to return to the loving embrace of our Heavenly Father, to seek forgiveness for our past sins, and to set out on a new path. The week following this Sunday is the last week until Pascha during which we may eat meat or meat products.
- ✘ Sunday of the Last Judgment or Meat-Fare Sunday (February 22) is called “Meat Fare”

because on this day we say “Farewell” to meat until the celebration of Holy Pascha: 8th Sunday before Pascha (56 days). The week following this Sunday is called Cheese-Fare Week and is a fast-free week, with the exception that meat and meat products are forbidden, i.e., all dairy products are allowed.

- ✘ Sunday of Forgiveness or Cheese-Fare Sunday (March 1): 7th Sunday before Pascha (49 days). This Sunday is the last day dairy products may be consumed. Throughout Great Lent, fish, wine, and olive oil will be allowed only on certain days.

As we begin these weeks of preparation for Great Lent, we do so in a spirit of prayerful anticipation and with the desire to experience the coming Fast in a way that will assist us in our spiritual journey to Pascha. And we should always remember that we do not undertake this preparation in isolation or as solitary followers of the Lord, but as members of a community that is supportive of all its members.

I invite you to reflect seriously upon the Gospels which will be proclaimed in the weeks to come, to ask the Lord to prepare your heart and soul for the Lenten Fast that will shortly be upon us, and to prayerfully remember and support all our brothers and sisters in our parish family, so that together we may arrive at a bright and joyous celebration of the Lord's Pascha.

With love in the Lord,
Father David

SS Peter and Paul Holds Annual Meeting *cont'd*

\$137,963.

David briefly reviewed the Restricted Fund Balances and pointed out that the total Restricted Funds balance of \$88,959.80 were managed and currently covered by the amount residing in the Cash/Savings and other Accounts.

David Homyak presented the proposed budget for 2009, reviewing each line item. A conservative approach was used throughout the budget development arriving at total projected income of \$123,080 for 2009. He then reviewed the proposed expense budget for 2009 beginning with increasing the Priest's Salary & Benefits by 3% to \$53,390. Other line items of significant amounts were OCA & DOW Assessments of \$16,000; Parish Administration \$11,160; Parish Maintenance \$31,000; Choir \$4,680; Deacon Stipend \$2,480; and others for a total Proposed Budgeted Expense of \$123,080—a balanced budget. A motion was made by Greg

Smith and seconded by Barbara Peterson to accept the budget. Passed. Father thanked both David Homyak and Walter Booriakin for their good work.

Father David reported that he and Andy Evans attended the All American Council. He gave a brief summary of Metropolitan Jonah's background and his time in the DOW. Father David also said that those attending the AAC could see and feel the Holy Spirit at work.

Harold Homyak reported on the parking lot status on behalf of Nick Enoch. As of the end of December 2008 we have \$42,831.25 in our Restricted Fund for the new Parking Lot. The parish is to be commended for its generosity and support during these difficult times. We are currently soliciting courtesy bids from contractors. If anyone knows of any contractors that do this type of work, please feel free to provide the information to Nick Enoch.

The election of Parish Council Members was held.

The continuing and new members are:

President	Andy Evans
Vice President	John Blischak
Treasurer	David Homyak
Financial Secretary	Greg Smith
Recording Secretary	Harold Homyak
5 yr. Trustee	Walter Booriakin
4 yr. Trustee	Jim Baker
3 yr. Trustee	Stephanie Homyak
2 yr Trustee	Michelle Golowatsch
2 yr Trustee	Elizabeth Michel
1 yr Trustee	Nick Enoch
Auditors	Katrina Delsante
	Michael Wagner

Thanks to Charles Sherbow, Rita Mudrenko, and Dennis Tarasevich for their past year's service. Father David thanked everyone for their attendance; we look forward to another blessed year at SS Peter & Paul's Church. The meeting closed with a prayer, *Memory Eternal, and Many Years.*

Rector's Report to Parish at Annual Meeting

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Glory to Jesus Christ!

This annual parish meeting flows from the Divine Liturgy which we have just celebrated this morning. And so, in this meeting, we continue to give thanks to God for all the blessings bestowed upon us during this past year. We also give thanks for the challenges presented to us. We even give thanks for any mistakes we have made and even for those ways in which we might have failed to be the Christian community the Lord calls us to be. For we can see in the challenges that have been presented to us and we can even see in our failings yet further opportunities to grow in holiness—as individuals and as a parish community.

In addition to our worship, which is at the very heart of our parish life and which we celebrate with “Fear in God, Faith, and Love,” there are several areas of our life which I wish to highlight and speak about—briefly; others will be covered in the reports that are to follow.

Hospitality—Each time we hear the Litany of Fervent Supplication, we pray for “this holy house and those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God.” We pray for everyone who enters the doors of our church—and we also reach out to them, beginning at the door of the church, once they reach a pew—there’s nothing wrong with welcoming someone, even a stranger, to sit with you in church. I am pleased to witness the ongoing hospitality offered to anyone who visits us. At the recent All-American Council, I met people who have visited us over the past year or so, including a couple of priests. They noted how welcome they were made to feel during their visit to our Church. It has become a known characteristic of our church community. But this hospitality means much more than simply making people feel welcome; it also means inviting them to share the life of the parish, to assume responsibility for parish life; to share in service and leadership positions. **Social life**—The weekly coffee hour (thankful to all those who week-after-week assure that it takes place, for those who provide for it) and other special social events, such as, the Holy Supper on Christmas Eve, are essential to the life and health of our parish. These events are also important outreach/evangelization moments.

Stewardship—When we speak of Christian stewardship and our obligation to support the work of Christ’s Church, we always begin by acknowledging that anything and everything we have is already God’s. I can never emphasize enough that the members of the parish council are diligent and conscientious in guaranteeing that your stewardship of our parish is responsibly administered—bills are paid and the facilities are properly maintained. That being said, we all realize, from our own personal lives, that costs continue to increase. The Church is not somehow spiritually or mystically free from this reality. And so, as we look at our own personal finances, we must also be responsible in meeting the needs of Christ’s Church. This past year we often ended up in the red—at the end of several months. By God’s Mercy, however, the year ended with a generous Christmas collection and so we were able to end the year on just barely in the black, on a sound but tenuous note. We will hear more about this in the Financial Report.

As I have on several occasions, the parish council is very conscientious in administering the funds given to the parish. But an increase in stewardship would help everyone in the task of funding our work, especially in the face of rising costs. And so, I simply ask you to once again reflect upon the Lord’s goodness and to respond in kind in support of the Church. Be as generous- even more generous- to God as He is to you.

Parking Lot Project—At our semi-annual meeting in July 07, we officially and corporately acknowledged that the original church building that then served as the parish hall for many years had fallen into such a state of disrepair that it would be best to see to its demolition. We also recognized the need to provide for more parking space. At decision was taken to proceed with the demolition project, provided the funds were forthcoming—which they were. And so last Bright Week the old building was demolished. We then heard a report at this past July meeting about going forward with the project and now we are well into the fundraising needed for Phase II, the construction of the new parking lot—In the meanwhile, we have a temporary solution- but one that is only temporary. We will hear a report on the status of this project- both the funds collected and what’s been done to date. I wish to thank all those who have generously contributed to this project- and to those who have yet to give.

GRATITUDE—All we do for the Church we do for the glory of God and not for any personal recognition or earthly reward. However, in closing these brief remarks, I also wish to extend the thanks of the entire parish and my own personal gratitude to those who work so diligently to continue our work as a Christian community. I mention these aspects of our parish life also as a reminder of all the “behind the scenes” work that is accomplished in our parish.

Protodeacon Alexis Washington—whose services at the altar and as a member of this community are deeply appreciated.

The officers and members of the parish council who sacrifice of their time to serve the needs of this community, not just attending meetings, but attending to the business aspects of parish life and giving time above and beyond the requirements of attending the monthly meeting;

The choir which is so dedicated to beautifying the worship of our community and which is something that we continue to be grateful for; those who assist in the Altar by reading and serving;

The altar servers;

The quality newsletter which is prepared for us every month;

The service provided through our bookstore; and our small parish library.

The Myrrhbearers Altar Society—whose members work so diligently and attentively (and with a smile on their faces) in so many areas of our parish life—from providing and caring for the covers and cloths used in the Church (beautiful new servers robes; and more coming) to decorating the church on holy days and the weekly setup of the coffee hour and special events, to its fundraising activities, and so on; the Church school program which educates the young people of our parish;

The FOCA—Fellowship of Orthodox Christians—which supports the work of the Church on many levels, beginning with our own local parish;

The ongoing and demanding attention needed for the beautification and maintenance of our church and parish facilities;

Our Sunday School, its director, teachers, and

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PSALMS: That Lead Us Into Lent

If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last and central. If early in the morning we want songs and hymns, first, last and central is David again. If we are occupied with funeral assemblies . . . or if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last and central. In cities and churches . . . in village and market . . . desert . . . uninhabitable land . . . In monasteries . . . in convents . . . , David is first, last and central. (St. John Chrysostom - On the Psalms)

These words of St. John Chrysostom demonstrate that the Psalms occupy a unique and all-encompassing place in the personal and churchly life of Christians. The Psalms are a record in verse and song of God's mighty acts in the creation and salvation of man and the world. They are a kind of personal prayer book and an instrument which the Christian, as Chrysostom says in another place, is to take up continuously, especially in his struggle against sin and evil: "You will find the book filled with countless blessings . . . much comfort . . . many havens . . . much relief" (Homily XXVIII on Romans).

Psalms are used extensively in the worship of the Church, and their particular placement determines much in the Church's liturgical order. For example, the structures of Vespers and Matins, the principal offices in the Church's daily cycle of worship, are defined by the arrangement of certain appropriately selected Psalms in a permanently fixed order. In the forms of prokeimena, verses with Alleluia, antiphons and special verses chanted at the Little Entrance and the reception of Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy, the Psalms introduce nearly every liturgical reading from the Bible and announce the central theme of almost every feastday of the liturgical year. Our Saviour made the Psalms His own words as He uttered them from the Cross (cf. Psalms 22, 31 and 69), and within the liturgy of the Church they remain that "still small voice" (cf. 1 Kings 19:12) to this day: speaking to us from the tomb on Holy Saturday through the words of Psalm 119, burning within us at the Divine Liturgy "to open our minds to the understanding of the Gospel teaching" through the pre-Gospel Prokeimenon and Alleluia verses (cf. Prayer before the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy and also the conversation on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:45), and proclaiming the saving realities which we enter into and celebrate in each fast

and feast: "Blessed are the people who know the festal shout" (Ps. 89:15).

Thus we begin to see the very special function which the Psalms have in the personal and churchly life of Christians. To those who have "ears to hear," they speak as the voice of Christ Himself, being "first, last and central," and lead them in all that they say and do. They serve as a means to the acquisition of that necessary singularity of vision of which Christ spoke when He said: "If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light" (Matt 6:22). The possessor of such a vision has a mind and heart which are alert to "the one thing needful" (Luke 10:42). He has gained "Wisdom"; He knows the implications of the liturgical exclamation: "Let us attend!"

PSALM 137

Let us now "attend" and attempt to gain "wisdom" from those particular Psalms which are used by the Church to lead us into Great Lent: Psalm 137 and Psalm 69. The first of the two is popularly known by its initial words: "By the waters of Babylon." It is chanted at resurrectional Matins during a brief period of three Sundays immediately prior to the beginning of the Great Fast: from the Sunday of the Prodigal Son through the Sunday which commemorates the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise. The theme of both the period and the Psalm is the same—exile and the longing to return.

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.

On the willows there we hung up our lyres.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you.

If I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

The great wisdom of the Church is shown in the fact that this one selected Psalm, when heard attentively, sets forth all the fundamental purposes and goals of Great Lent: recognition - of a condition of life which can only be described as exile and cursedness; remembrance—of an innocence, an ineffable beauty and goodness which have been squandered; longing—for a lost homeland which remains "above my highest joy," and which the liturgical hymns call the "homeland of my heart's desire."

On the one hand there is Babylon, the city whose noise and incessant bustle are but a veneer covering a paralyzing disharmony, an impotence and dumbness, and on the other there is Jerusalem, the city where all the nations are brought together into a single household of faith, a living temple—Zion—for the living God, to glorify in one voice the joyful presence in their midst of the incarnate Word of God Himself. These are the Biblical symbols of the ultimate choices which face man: *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live* (Deut. 30:19).

A reawakening as from sleep, a coming to oneself and a powerful desire to return to one's true home—these are the simple and self-evident analogues which the Church uses to show us the way to complete the course of the Fast and see the holy day of Pascha. But when he came to himself he said.... I will arise and go to my father... (the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:17-18).

The last verses of Psalm 137 merit particular attention. They are frequently a source of confusion, and some even contend that they are inappropriate for use in the Church.

O daughter of Babylon, you wretched one! Blessed is he who shall requite you for what you have done to us!

Blessed is he who takes your little ones and dashes them against the stone! Alleluia!

The return from exile is not a smooth transition but a long and difficult pilgrimage. It is a life-or-death struggle not merely to overcome the weakness of flesh and blood (a little fasting, some prayer—the things with which we usually associate Lent), but "against the world rulers of

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"How lovely is prayer and how radiant are its works. Prayer is acceptable to God when it is accompanied by good deeds, and it is heard when it rises out of a spirit of forgiveness. Prayer is always answered when it is pure and sincere. Prayer is powerful when it is suffused with God's vigour."



PSALMS: That Lead Us Into Lent *cont'd*

(Continued from page 4)

this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12), i.e., against the wretched daughter of Babylon and all her demonic children—who contend for nothing less than the heavenly place, the divinely created soul of man himself. The warfare in this struggle is daily, and St. Paul instructs the Christians in Ephesus to "take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day... and above all ... the shield of faith, with which you can quench the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:13-16). Great Lent is the occasion for our re-entrance into this pilgrimage and struggle concerning our eternal destiny. It is also the time for the rekindling of faith in the advent of that final day of reckoning, when the daughter of Babylon and all her children ("the fiery darts of the evil one") shall be utterly annihilated ("dashed against the stone! Alleluia!). This day has already dawned in the victorious suffering, death and resurrection of Christ which, as we celebrate Pascha, is the culmination and crown of victory given by God to those who have "completed the course of the Fast." Thus the final verses of the Psalm become comprehensible within the vision of Christian life as pilgrimage, warfare, vigilance, faith and a joyful foretaste within the Church of that decisive victory over sin and death which God has won in Christ.

PSALM 69

The second Psalm used by the Church to lead us into Great Lent is Psalm 69: the Prokeimenon for the Vespers of Forgiveness (Cheesefare Sunday evening). It is chanted just before the lenten vestments, melodies, prostrations and other elements which set the atmosphere and tone of lenten worship are introduced. It is indeed the "festal shout" (in the early centuries of the Church there was a certain interchangeability in the use of the words "feast" and "fast"), the announcement of the beginning of Great Lent itself.

Turn not away thy face from thy child for I am afflicted, hear me, speedily draw near to my soul, and deliver it.

Thy salvation, O God, will encompass me.

Let the poor see and be glad. Seek God, and your soul shall live.

These are the selected verses of Psalm 69

contemporarily used as the Prokeimenon. While reading the verses of the Psalm and meditating on them in solitude, one is struck by the similarity of their themes to the themes of the verses of Psalm 137 noted earlier. There is the prodigal child who is perishing, and the remembrance of the face of the father. There is the affirmation that life itself is found only in the seeking after God.

Something else, something very different, however, is heard when the Psalm is chanted liturgically in the Church - at the end of a long day, at the midpoint of a Sunday evening Vespers, in a church filled with much light and many pensive faces, on the threshold of a long lenten season which all know will surely be filled with innumerable trials and much pettiness and whose outcome in a personal sense remains unknown, and only minutes before plunging into a community rite of forgiveness whose staggering implications yet free gift of overwhelming joy shatter every reduction of Christianity to the "helpful" and the "comfortable." A cry suddenly rings out: "I am afflicted." My plight, my fall and exile from our Father's house is an affliction: something so horrible and pervasive that it touches every aspect of my existence. I have done much more than fail to keep a "church rule" here or there. I am in dire need and misfortune, in grievous trial and suffering; in a state of calamity, persecution, pain and being lost. These are the meanings of affliction. And the affliction is my affliction, for in the uniqueness of my life and its possibilities, no one has sinned such as I have. No one but I can betray the special character of my vocation to serve God as He has created me to be in His plan "for us men and for our salvation."

Five times I join the others in this chant that "I am afflicted"; then the doors of the sanctuary are closed and the lights in the church are dimmed- Great Lent has begun. Then I begin to make the unsettling and discomfoting realization that I am in need of much more than what is presented in the popular "spiritual schedule" for the lenten season: a little fasting, more prayer, some Bible reading, a trip to the confessional, increased Church attendance; perhaps a sacrificial offering or other good deed along the way. Before all this, I need a decisive and speedy deliverance. I am perishing. I need THE SAVIOR. "Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my prayer" (Ps. 130:1). "Turn not away Thy face from Thy

child . . ."

This realization and cry from the depths brings me to recognize further that I must join the ranks of the penitents. I must make a radical and all-encompassing change of mind and heart so that I may acquire the mind "which you have in Christ Jesus" (Philip. 2:5) and be one in Spirit with the Father. In reevaluating my attitude to all that I am and have, I know that I must reenter the holy community of the "poor (who see and be glad", i.e., those who acknowledge that all that they are and all that they have is given to them as free gifts from God and who thereby live in that "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). It is by returning to such a fellowship—the Church—that I break out of the exile and self-imposed isolation which is Babylon. The broken, separated and isolated are delivered by being brought together in the one household of faith. This is the victory of Christ, Who in the Church has gathered together into one "the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52). Thus, the uniquely personal message of the verses from Psalm 69 ultimately points to a profound and repentful return to the fellowship of Church. I will conclude this article with a reference to the one with whom I began: St. John Chrysostom. In yet another place on the previously cited Homily XXVIII in Romans he said: "Let the mouth sing, and the mind be instructed." And further on he adds: "Let us sing the Psalm of good deeds, that we may cast out the sin that is worse than the demon." He is instructing us that the singing of the Psalms, just like any of the other external lenten rituals we may perform, is not enough. In order that they may truly lead us into Lent, the Psalms must go from our mouth to our mind to our heart. They must be translated into deeds, into life itself, a life which finds its fulfillment in that inexhaustible abundance of joy and life which is given to us on that "day without evening of the Kingdom": Pascha.

Reprinted from the web site of the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America, <http://dce.oca.org/resource/262/>. ✕

"Divine care surrounds all human beings all the time, but it is only seen by those who have purified themselves from sins and who have God in mind at every mo-



Rector's Report to Parish at Annual Meeting

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those who assist in any way;

The ongoing development and maintenance of our parish website;

The monthly donation of flowers to beautify the Holy Altar;

Welcoming our guests and visitors;

Providing transportation to church for those who don't drive;

Cleaning the church and attending to the candle desk, and the list goes on and on.

As we express our thanks for those who work with such dedication to improve and further the life of our parish community, I also want to emphasize the need for more involvement. All those who are members of this parish, all those who benefit from its life, all those who enjoy the blessings of being a part of this community have a responsibility to also do their part. For many this means actually doing the work that goes into maintaining parish life; putting in the time, the effort, the labor and sometimes personal expense. For some, especially our more mature members who have already "put in" years of service, it may

mean simply being present with us and praying with us. But everyone- each and every one- has a responsibility. From the youngest child who helps clean up the classroom at the end of Sunday School, to the oldest member who attends church and prays for all of us—each one has something to give to the life of our parish. The Lord expects and requests nothing less than total commitment to Him and to His Church. And each one of us, at the end of the day, has to ask if that's the case in our own life.

Allow me to close these few words highlighting our parish life by repeating the closing words of my January monthly message which were the words of greeting given by the Holy Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:2-6).✠

2009 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



As we consider God's blessings, we are in awe of His immense goodness toward us. The greatest gifts to us are His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior and the constant presence of His Holy Spirit

working in the Church and in our lives.

God endows each of us with personal gifts, talents, and material possessions. Stewardship is acknowledging that God is the source of each gift that has been received and each possession that has been accumulated. It reminds us that these gifts are not our own; that we have a trusteeship over them and not an ownership.

Our Church meets the financial needs of its annual ministries and operating budget through stewardship. Our parishioners are stewards of SS Peter & Paul, and they accept direct responsibility for the financial support and progress of our Church and its mission.

We are asking you to prayerfully consider your commitment to God and His Church as we begin the new year. The financial level at which you arrive should be a spiritual expression of gratitude and love to God for all you have received. Remember, Christ loved us so much that He sacrificed Himself for us. What can we sacrifice for His church?

Around SS Peter & Paul

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Tsegai Habte
February 5
Daniel Tewoldemedhin
February 6
Katrina Delsante
February 9
Segen Zerai
Weirri Michle
February 10
Joe Delsante
February 11
Jim Baker
February 13
Jane Evans
February 14
Sterling Sourk
February 20



**Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!**



THANK YOU

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to thank each and everyone of you for your cards and prayers as I recover from surgery. I can't wait to be back at church so I can thank you all personally.

Bless you all,

Eva Baker

CHURCH FLOWERS

Each Sunday, the Myrrh Bearers make sure that we have flowers for the tetrapod and altar to beautify the church. Thanks to Dorothy Yost and Elizabeth Michel for donating flowers for the month of January. Linda Walters will be donating flowers for the month of February.



PRAYER LIST

"I was sick and you visited me."

Matt 25:36

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Tania Booriakin
Dennis Tarasevich
Rita Mudrenko
Eva Baker
Peg Linderman
Pauline & Dan Vinay
Helen Malecki
Beatrice Washington
Helen Costello
Anna Michkofsky
Stephanie Homyak

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Father David.

Bits and Pieces

BOOKSTORE

Great Lent will shortly be upon us!

"Do not forget prayer - it is the life of the soul."
St. Nikon of Optina

Enact St. Nikon's wise words with either the Pocket Prayer book for Orthodox Christians or the Jordanville Prayer Book which are both back in stock.

"I advise you not to stop reading spiritual books, for it happens sometimes that one line, read at the right time, becomes more dear than a year of publications and remains in your memory for always." St. Anthony of Optina

There are so many spiritual books in both our bookstore and library that can provide spiritual nourishment during our time of fasting. The quotes mentioned above are from a NEW addition to the bookstore - "Living Without Hypocrisy" - Spiritual Counsels of the Holy Elders of Optina, \$19. This marvelous hardcover book contains very short bits of spiritual meditations. It is one of those books that you will never cease to unearth new spiritual gems.

The bookstore also carries daily meditation books to aid us in the blessed pilgrimage to Pascha.

CHURCH ENVELOPES AND CALENDARS

Many thanks to Nick Enoch for sponsoring our 2009 parish calendar and to John Blischak and Michelle Golowatsch for sponsoring the 2009 stewardship envelopes.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult Education Classes will resume on Wednesday, February 11, and continue until the beginning of Great Lent. During Great Lent, short presentations and Question-and-Answer sessions will be held during the Lenten meals which follow the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday evenings.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our older students are studying the Holy Bible in class. Parents, please encourage your child to find and read the Epistle and Gospel readings for each day. They are listed on the 2009 St Tikhon's Lectionary Wall Calendars that are available at the back of the church. Thanks for your support.

NEW SERVERS' ROBES

Thank you to the Myrrhbearers Altar Society for purchasing the beautiful new red robes for those who assist in the Altar. The Myrrhbearers spend many hours hard at work to raise funds to provide what is needed for the Altar in order to beautify our worship. Our parish is deeply grateful for their generosity. New purple and white robes have also been ordered!

STEWARDSHIP/PLEDGES/BUDGET

You will be receiving your 2008 Statement of Contributions in early 2009 for your tax purposes. It is also time to start thinking about your PLEDGE for 2009 to help in the development of the 2009 Budget. Operating and utility expenses have been increasing. Consequently, more income will be required from pledges and other sources. Please be generous when filling out your 2009 Pledge Form. You can pick up your pledge forms in the Church vestibule or office. Please complete and return as soon as possible. Also, be sure to pick up your 2009 box of Contribution Envelopes. If you have any questions please see or contact the Church office.

MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

Fellowship time was enjoyed by members at our annual luncheon at Sam's Cafe at the Biltmore. As a reminder, the election of officers will take place at our yearly meeting, Sunday February 8. Please make an effort to attend. The Valentine raffle will also take place on that Sunday. Our first of 6 Easter bakes will take place on Monday February 16. We will need help in different areas of the baking aspect. Elizabeth or Dorothy will be asking for help so please sign up.

The Cheesefare Sunday luncheon will take place on March 1st following Divine Liturgy. Adults are \$8.00 and Children \$4.00 (children 5 and under free). There will be a special menu for the children. This is a fund raiser and all proceeds will go to the church. Reservation will be needed and taken for this event by the Myrrh Bearers.

Following the Wednesday's Pre-sanctified services, a lenten meal will take place. (Soups, Fruit and bread) There will be a sign up sheet for those Wednesday's. Please see Vi Wasilenko.

WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to take a look at our bookstore.

BUTCHER BLOCK TABLE

Thanks to Rita Mudrenko's husband for the refinishing job done on the wooden table top in the Cultural Center kitchen. The top was sanded down to remove practically all the nicks, gouges, etc. along with the original finish. Then a couple of coats of mineral oil was applied. As the wood absorbs the mineral oil additional coats will need to be reapplied - at least once a week for 4-5 weeks. No covering is required or should be left on the table. Water, with a mild detergent, is all that is needed to clean it (No cleanser, Clorox, ammonia, etc). Depending on usage, a light scraping may be needed once a month. Keeping the wood saturated with mineral oil is the key.

PICTURES FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING



Andy Evans addresses the parish.



Elizabeth Michel gives the Myrrh Bearers' report.



Members listen to Father David's report.

Elizabeth Michel

February 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Zacchaeus Sunday Forefast of the Meeting 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	2 Meeting of Christ in the Temple 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Candles</i>	3	4	5 Icons Search of the Lost Rescue of the Drowning	6	7 5:00pm Great Vespers
We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.						
8 Publican and Pharisee 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Valentine's Day Raffle MBAS Meeting	9 Leavetaking of the Meeting	10 Areovindus Icon	11	12 Iveron Icon	13	14 5:00pm Great Vespers
Adult Education Wednesday, February 11 - beginning of Great Lent Time: 7:00 p.m.						
15 Prodigal Son Dalmatian Icon 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	16 Easter Bake	17 Tikhvin Icon at Mt. Athos	18 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	19	20	21 Memorial Saturday Kozel'shchamskaya Icon 5:00pm Great Vespers
FAST-FREE WEEK						
22 Sunday of Last Judgment Meatfare Sunday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	23 St. Macarius the Great of Egypt	24 1 st & 2 nd Finding Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist	25 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	26	27 St. Raphael Bishop of Brooklyn	28 Departed Righteous Monastics 5:00pm Great Vespers
MEAT FAST						
1 Forgiveness Sunday Cheesefare Sunday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Cheesefare Luncheon Followed by Forgiveness Vespers	2 Beginning of Great Fast 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	3 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	4 6:00pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	5	6 Czestochowa Icon	7 St. Theodore Sat. Icon 'Surety of Sinners' 5:00pm Great Vespers
Cheesefare Sunday Luncheon Sunday, March 1, 2009						

