

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Volume 15, Issue 8

August 2015

July Council Highlights

- ✘ June's Operating Income was \$13,571.98 and Operating Expenses were \$9,674.95, resulting in a positive balance of \$3,897.03 for the month.
- ✘ There will be no parish council meeting in August.
- ✘ Council will have AVAC engineer come out to explore the feasibility of adding a third A/C unit to the church for the altar area.
- ✘ Discussion ensued about starting a Facebook page for the church.



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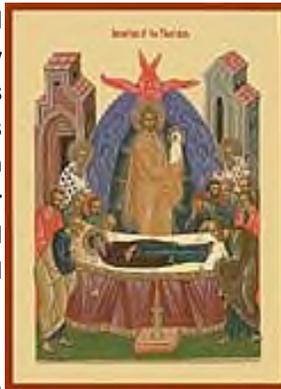
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Two Icons Full of Love

The icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos, celebrated on August 15, shows the Mother of God lying on her deathbed. Jesus Christ, surrounded by angels, tenderly holds her luminous soul which in His glory He has taken to Himself. Her face is serene, and she is surrounded by the apostles.



"Dormition" means "falling asleep." Saint Paul writes in I Thessalonians 4:13: "I do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others do who have no hope."

The icon of the Dormition shows the reason for hope. Death cannot have the final word, because Christ is taking His mother to heaven. The apostles are sad, but not prostrate with grief, because they know the fulfilled promise of the Lord. The angels in the icon show that those heavenly beings will be there for us, too.

The Festal hymns are also encouraging. The troparion and kontakion say that in her falling asleep, the Theotokos does not forsake the world but continues

to pray for us. Just as Christ continues in His love for His mother, she is consistent in her loving concern for the world.

Today we remember the image of Christ "not made by hands." Its title comes from Mark 14:58—"I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands." John's Gospel records that "the temple He was speaking of was His body. After His resurrection His disciples recalled what He had said, and they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:20-1).

There are a few stories of how the image came to be. The one traditionally accepted by many sources is related in the Prologue from Ochrid: Prince Abgar of Edessa in Syria heard of Christ's miracles and healings. He sent a messenger to Palestine imploring Christ to come and heal his leprosy.

Rather than leave Palestine, Christ gave Ananias a cloth on which He had wiped His face,

leaving a perfect impression. When Abgar kissed it, most of the leprosy fell away, and later when he received baptism from the apostle Thaddeus he was completely healed.

Abgar put the cloth in a gold frame and placed it at the entrance of the city of Edessa for people to venerate. Above it he wrote, "O Christ our God, everyone trusting in You shall not be put to shame."

When a grandson of Abgar fell into idolatry, believers hid the image to keep it from destruction. Centuries later, with the city under Persian attack, the Theotokos told the Bishop or Edessa where to find the long-forgotten icon.

He found it and processed around the city with it. The Persian army miraculously retreated.

Once again, the Theotokos did not forsake the world. Once again, the world was given a healing, loving image of Christ, Who is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), the One who heals and loves us all.



Message from Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you know, I recently participated in the 18th All-American Council (AAC) of the Orthodox Church in America, held in Atlanta, Georgia. David Homyak also attended as our parish lay delegate to the AAC and to the diocesan assembly and as the delegate of our FOCA Chapter to the annual convention of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America which was convened at the same location in Atlanta prior to

the convening of the AAC. I'd like to share with you a few highlights of the six days I spent in Atlanta.

The first scheduled event for which I was present was the Saturday evening Vespers hosted by Metropolitan Alexios of the Greek Archdiocese at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral. At the end of Vespers, beautifully sung by members of the FOCA and friends and family and served by clergy of the local Orthodox Clergy Council, His Eminence expressed his words of welcome and emphasized the ongoing need for all Orthodox Christians in America to join together in the common work of proclaiming the Gospel. Vespers was followed by a reception held in the cathedral's fellowship hall.

The entire episcopate of the OCA concelebrated the Divine Liturgy the following morning at which the delegates to the FOCA convention and hundreds of local faithful were also present. That afternoon, the Holy Synod visited the Martin Luther King Center and toured the museum, laid a wreath at Dr. and Mrs. King's grave, and visited the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he was co-pastor, where he preached, and where his funeral took place. We then traveled to Saint John the Wonderworker Church, Atlanta, and were given a presentation on the good work of "Loaves and Fishes," a program sponsored by the parish which provides two meals a

day to the homeless and also assists them in re-uniting them with their families and re-integrating into society.



On Sunday evening, the Holy Synod joined the delegates to the FOCA convention for a formal banquet. It was announced at this banquet that Andrew Romanov, a member of our parish community, was among those selected to be a recipient of an FOCA scholarship—Congratulations, Andrew! A special presentation was also made to His Emi-

nence, Archbishop MICHAEL, rector of Saint Tikhon's Seminary. After several years of successful fundraising, the FOCA presented the seminary with a check in the amount of \$300,000.00 to assist with providing housing for married seminarians. In accepting this generous gift, His Eminence spoke movingly of the importance of supporting seminarians and their families as they prepare to serve the Church and thus participate in expanding the Church's mission.

The annual diocesan assembly of the Diocese of the West was held on Monday morning. Visit the diocesan website (dowoca.org) to read the minutes. On Monday evening, after the Service of Prayer at the Opening of a Sacred Council, His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON offered his opening address, calling the clergy, monastics, and clergy of the OCA to greater dedication in the work of expanding the Church's mission.

On Tuesday morning, the proposed Statute of the Orthodox Church in America was formally presented to the AAC for adoption. After discussion from the floor, the new Statute was adopted with 97% of the assembled delegate voting in favor of the adoption. (<http://oca.org/news/headline-news/aac-delegates-adopt-statute-revision-in-473-15-vote>).

The AAC continued throughout the week with a resolution on financing the work of

the Church on the national level passing with wide support (<http://oca.org/news/headline-news/delegates-pass-finance-resolution-by-vote-of-451-14-17>). At the heart of the Council's time together was the daily celebration of the Divine Liturgy, Vespers, and Akathists to the Sitka Icon of the Mother of God, Saint Anna, and All Saints of North America. The Holy Synod, joined by His Beatitude ONUFRY, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, and other guest bishops, concelebrated the Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning. That evening, Metropolitan ONUFRY addressed the formal closing banquet. His address may be read here: <http://oca.org/news/oca-news/aac-address-of-metropolitan-onufry-greetings-from-archbishop-leo>.

Throughout the week, youth programs were held which enjoyed the participation of about 100 young people from throughout North America. The bishops joined them for breakfast on Thursday morning and participated with them in an exercise aimed at getting to better know some of the saints of our Church.

I encourage you to visit the OCA website (www.oca.org) to read more about the work and activities of the AAC, to see photos, to listen to the sessions, and to view videos on what transpired throughout the week. This wonderful, God-blessed gathering was an expression of the Church in its fullness as bishops, priests, deacons, monastics, and lay faithful gathered together to give thanks to God, to ask His blessing upon the work of our Church, and to discuss and decide how we, as the Orthodox Church in America, can best proclaim the Gospel in this land.

Again, please visit the OCA website to learn more about the work of the All-American Council. It is a model of how we, here at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Phoenix, can also expand the mission—our mission—of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

With love in the Lord,

+Bishop Daniel

A Feast of Divine Beauty

Fr. Steven Kostoff

In several days, we will celebrate the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, a Feast of light and glory celebrated every year on August 6. The account of the Transfiguration can be found in three of the Gospels - Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36. There is also a powerful eyewitness account of the event written by the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:10-19. All of these scriptural accounts deserve a careful and prayerful reading. The transfigured Lord reveals the splendor of a human being fully alive, for Christ reveals to us the perfect image of humanity transfigured by the glory of God. That is why "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light" (Matthew 17:2). The hymnography of the Feast makes this point over and over: "In His own person He showed them the nature of man, arrayed in the original beauty of the image...Thou has made the nature that had grown dark in Adam to shine again as lightning transforming it into the glory and splendor of Thy divinity" (Vespers Aposticha of the Feast). Christ reveals both our origin and our destiny on Mount Tabor. As the "radiance of the Father" (Hebrews 1:3), He is the perfect and natural icon/Image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). As human beings created according to the image and likeness of God, we are actually "images of the Image." What Christ is, by nature, is what we are meant to be by grace—"partakers of the divine nature" (1 Peter 1:4). This is promised and pledged to us in the Age to Come when "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew

13:43), but revealed now in Christ, Who is the incarnate Son of God—a revelation, no doubt, of extraordinary beauty! Thus, the Transfiguration is a Feast of divine beauty. Can anything more splendid possibly be envisioned?

In other words, whatever Christ does or says is what a perfect human being united to God would do or say. He not only reveals God to us, but also humanity. Look at Christ and you are looking at what it means to be truly and genuinely human. He is what Adam was meant to be, but failed to be because of sin. As Christ is without sin, He is the "last (and perfect) Adam." He is also the "man of heaven" because He

"Look at Christ and you are looking at what it means to be truly and genuinely human. He is what Adam was meant to be, but failed to be because of sin."

reveals to us what heaven is like, where we will bear His image (1 Corinthians 15:47-49). All of this was revealed to the disciples on Mount Tabor when, with even more than the dazzling and startling power of an unexpected flash of lightning, Christ was "transfigured before them." In that glorious splendor, the disciples Peter, James and John received a glimpse of the End of Time before it has actually come. That is a good deal to take in at once, so it is no wonder that the disciples "fell on their faces and were filled with awe" (Matthew 17:2,6)! It is simultaneously no wonder that Peter made a suggestion to the Lord—"I will make three booths"—in the hope of prolonging this experience. Through them, and our celebration of the Feast, we receive that same glimpse. The King reveals to us His Kingdom, so that we may be attracted to it and then live for it. In that sense we are future-oriented as Christians.

But if Christ is the perfect human being, then He is such because of His obedience to His heavenly Father. He is always "obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). This is why the Lord came down from the mountain. Neither He nor the disciples were able to linger there. He had yet to accomplish His "exodus" at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). This is clearly an allusion to the Cross and Resurrection. In fact, Christ was "made perfect" because "He learned obedience through what He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Christ was never not obedient to His Father! He always said to His heavenly Father, "not my will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). His authority and glory are firmly grounded in that obedience. The result and consequence of this obedience is expressed by the Apostle Paul by his use of the word "therefore" in the following passage: "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Saint Paul, however, is not finished with drawing out further consequences for us with another "therefore" as he continues, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).

It seems rather clear, "therefore," that we must be obedient to God—like Christ was at all times and in all things—if we are to share in His glory at the End of Time.

Reprinted from the website of the Orthodox Church in America, Reflections in Christ, July 8, 2014, <http://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/the-imitation-of-god-himself>*

Wait on the Lord

Some popular stand-up comedians have recently taken to upbraiding the God of the Old Testament. He is, they complain in their routines, ruthless. He is unpredictable. He is—especially in the case of Moses—distinctly unfair. One comic recently declared, as he strode across the stage with his microphone and cigarette, that it wasn't right that Moses should be kept from entering the Promised Land. After all, he had done many good and courageous things for God.

The Feast of the Transfiguration this week gives us a chance to reflect on this comic's declaration. On the day before the Feast we remember a woman who also can encourage us to think about God's "fairness." She is Saint Nonna, the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian and a woman who knew the efficacy of heartfelt prayer.

Nonna, a dedicated Christian, was married to a pagan man. Her husband's lack of belief was a source of pain for many years, but she kept praying for his enlight-



enment. Though it took a long time, Nonna's husband did become a Christian, and eventually was made bishop of the city of Nazianzus. Nonna was a female deacon. One of the duties of deaconesses was to help and guide Christian women married to pagans. So she may well have been a strong support to other women in her same circumstances. In addition, of course, she was the influential mother of one of the Church's greatest saints.

But Nonna had to wait on the Lord. Her husband's conversion came only after long years of faithful prayer. She had to trust God, and believe that He would choose the right time to turn her husband to the faith.

We Christians have a similar trust in God's intention for His beloved prophet Moses. For us, unlike the comedians who complain of the unfair way God treated him, Moses' story does not end with the Lord's words in Deuteronomy 34:4, when He

tells Moses, "I have let you see it [the Promised Land] with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." At the Feast of the Transfiguration, we will see him again.

Not only will we see Moses, but he will be standing with the Lord in His glory, representing the Law and all those who have died. Moses will show us the eternal life that God intends for all of us.

Nonna in her lifetime never doubted that the Lord would answer her prayers for her husband. Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land, but he was given the great gift of standing before the whole universe in the Lord's transfigured presence. When we are tempted to wonder about God's providence, or His "fairness", we can look to the pious example of Nonna. We can study the icon that shows us the mountaintop appearance of Moses long after his earthly death. They remind us of what it means to wait on the Lord.

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org> ✽

Around SS Peter & Paul

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- August 1 Peter Radjenovich
Barbara Peterson
Joe & Jane Matthews
- 6 Elona Stark
- 8 Yana Molodova
- 9 Dan Perrotto
- 13 Boris & Carrie Niegoda
- 15 William Osolinsky
- 25 Juliana Delsante
- 26 Jim Hanemaayer
- 27 Dennis Tarasevich

Congratulations!
Elisha, son of Anne and Elijah
Ferbrache, was baptized on
Sunday, July 5, 2015.



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:

- Ann Garza
- Larry Gardner
- Ann Carroll
- Protodeacon Alexis
- Vickie Mendez
- Rose Koval
- Rose Kurowski

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Bishop Daniel.

Mnogaya Leta! Many Years!

Bits and Pieces

NEW AIR CONDITIONING UNIT IN HALL

The extreme heat of this year's summer has gained its first church victim— and it wasn't the unit we were expecting. The A/C victim turned out to be the unit that supplies the Cultural Center's kitchen and side pantry/equipment room. The heat damage and faults were extensive enough to warrant not repairing it, especially after 13 years of use. The decision was made to replace it with a more energy efficient unit. Please be cognizant not to leave doors open, especially to the outside. Please close folding pass through counter doors to the kitchen and the pantry room doors as well, as they are zoned separately.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Andrew Romanov, recipient of one of this year's FOCA scholarships. The names of scholarship recipients were announced at the formal banquet during the recent FOCA Annual Convention in Atlanta. Bishop Daniel and David Homyak were present to hear the good news that a member of our local FOCA Chapter is among those honored with a scholarship this year.

BOOK CLUB

Several members of our parish community have indicated their interest in participating in a book club that would meet on a regular basis. An organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Bring your ideas and input!

PARISH COUNCIL

There will be no parish council meeting this month.

CHOIR

Choir practice will start on September 27th. If you want to join the choir and have sung in other choirs before, please come and help sing Vespers on Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 9 a.m. We hear beautiful voices downstairs and want you to be a part of our choir. Don't be shy.

Barbara Harp

TEEN/YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

We have two upcoming service events. The first will be at St. Vincent DePaul on September 5th, it will be from 9:30 AM till 1 PM serving lunch. The second event will be volunteering with the Arizona Special Olympics on September 19th. The official time is TBA for this event, but it will begin sometime in the morning.



If you're interested in either of these events please send me an email (mara.hecht@gmail.com), text, or let me know at Church; both events are open to the entire parish.

Thanks!

Mara Hecht

GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

You are always encouraged to bring guests to our services, whether Orthodox, Christians of the various denominations, non-Christians, as well as those who hold no particular belief. Indeed, bringing guests, especially those who are not part of any other Christian community, is a part of our ongoing outreach and evangelization. However, it is also encouraged to prepare them for their visit by letting them know what to expect. You can help them feel comfortable by explaining to them the Orthodox practice concerning the reception of Holy Communion. It's very simple: The reception of Holy Communion is reserved to those who are baptized and chrismated members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves by fasting, prayer, participation in the divine services, and a timely Confession.

BOOKSTORE

As the fall approaches and our snowbirds return, the bookstore will be restocking its shelves with new titles. If you have a book that has been spiritually helpful and you believe others in our parish would also benefit from it, please drop Katrina a note and she'll try to get it in the inventory.

SUMMER STEWARDSHIP

The life and work of your parish community continues even when you are traveling and away and enjoying your vacation. You are asked to kindly remember this and to maintain—and even increase—your stewardship during the summer months. May the Lord bless your travels and bring you safely home.

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.



MEMORY ETERNAL

CASSANDRA WENZ WAGNER, a member of our parish community, reposed in the Lord on Sunday, July 12 as we were celebrating the Divine Liturgy at which we also prayed for her. May the Lord grant His newly-departed servant CASSANDRA rest with the saints. May her memory be eternal!

JOHN MARK KINNEY, a dear member of our parish community for these past several years, reposed in the Lord suddenly on July 6 in Seattle, Washington. May the Lord Jesus Christ, He Who is the Resurrection and the Life, grant rest with the Saints to His newly-departed servant JOHN MARK. May his memory be eternal! I know you all join me in offering our sincere sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to his dear wife Nina in this sad time. May the Lord Himself be her comfort and strength.

Lisa Formica's mother, Rose, reposed in the Lord on August 1. May the Lord grant memory eternal to His newly-departed servant and grant her rest with the Saints. We extend our prayerful sympathy to Lisa, Eddie, and all the family who mourn her passing. May the Lord Himself be their consolation and their hope.

August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p style="text-align: center;">PARISH BOOK CLUB An organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Bring your ideas and input!</p>						<p>1 Procession of the Lifegiving Cross Beginning of Dormition Fast</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>2 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	3	4	<p>5 Forefeast Transfiguration</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>6 Transfiguration of Our Lord</p> <p>9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Fruit</i></p>	<p>7 Valaam Icon</p>	<p>8 Tolga Icon</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>9 Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	10	<p>11 NO COUNCIL MEETING</p>	12	<p>13 St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Wonderworker of All Russia</p>	<p>14 Forefeast Dormition</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos</p> <p>9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Flowers</i> 5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>16 Feodorovskaya Icon</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	17	18	19	20	21	<p>22 Georgian Icon</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p>						
<p>23 Leavetaking Dormition</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>24 Petrovskaya Icon</p>	25	<p>26 Vladimir Icon</p>	27	<p>28 Ven. Job of Pochaev</p>	<p>29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>30 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	31	<p>1 Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon</p>	<p>2 Kaluga Icon</p>	3	<p>4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush"</p>	<p>5 Arapetskaya and Kiev-Bratsk Icons</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>