

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 11

November 2015

October Council Highlights

- ✘ September Operating Income was \$12,935.01 and Operating Expenses were \$9,891.68 resulting in a positive income of \$3,043.33 for the month.
- ✘ All of the faucets in the hall bathrooms have been replaced with ADA-compliant lever faucets at a cost of approximately \$1,200.
- ✘ Plans are underway to reseal the cracks in the parking lot on the east side of the church.
- ✘ Please fill out the Parishioner Registration form for Bishop Daniel's records.

Fostering Stewardship in Our Youth



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In what is quickly becoming an annual tradition, the Church School youth work to beautify the church grounds.

Message from Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Each year, with the beginning of November and the coming of our beautiful, cooler, Arizona weather, I'm reminded of just how quickly time seems to pass. This past year, quickly heading to its conclusion, is yet another example of the old adage that says "time flies." Very shortly (on November 15th), we'll enter again into the Nativity Fast that leads us to the celebration of the Lord's Nativity and then, before you know it, to the beginning of yet another calendar year. And within that time frame there's the Thanksgiving Holiday, end-of-the-year planning, travel, shopping, baking and cooking, and so on... It all comes upon us so quickly that it seems we don't have enough time in any given day to accomplish everything we'd like to accomplish. And, all too often, in the midst of the joyful holidays, we end



up off-kilter, tired, frustrated, and maybe a little angry or even sad. Nonetheless, even the mere acknowledgment of this fact offers us the opportunity to slow down a bit, to calm our lives and our selves, and to focus on those things which are truly important in our lives.

The month ahead of us, hopefully less hectic than the month that follows, can provide us with the opportunity to place everything into its proper perspective.

As an example of putting things into their properly ordered place—on November 21st we celebrate the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple. This feast, which commemorates the dedication to God with which the Theotokos lived her life—even from her tender years—can remind us that we, too, regardless of our state in life or how busy we might seem to be, are called to place the Lord at the very center of our lives, to live in His presence,

and to constantly recall that our lives are meant to be lives of service to God, His Church, and the world in which we live. This Feast, sometimes called the "Feast of the Presentation," is a particularly beautiful one and is celebrated just when we need it—before the holiday season begins. It is my yearly hope and prayer that our observance of this special feast will assist us in the weeks that follow, hectic and busy as they can become. Mark your calendars now in order to participate in the Vespers and Divine Liturgy as a way to help you prepare for the weeks ahead.

As always, please be assured of my special prayers for you and all your loved ones, especially as we travel during the upcoming holiday season and as we gather with family and friends to celebrate God's many blessing. May all the activities of the weeks ahead provide us with many opportunities and occasions to pause and thank God for all His many blessings.

With love in the Lord,

+Bishop Daniel

SS Peter & Paul Parish Nativity Card

I would like to be included in the SS Peter and Paul Parish Nativity card.

Name(s) to appear on card: _____

Mailing Address

Suggested Minimum Donation: \$10.00

Amount of Donation: \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other _____

Deadline: December 13, 2015

Return completed form to Stephanie Homyak.



“Facing Forward” Pt 4: Help Us With Stewardship!

Parishes often ask for help with “stewardship.” No surprise. Budgets are tight. The economy is scary. Many parishes are in numerical decline and feel “squeezed.”

Taking action to build stewardship—which in the parlance of most parishes means “increasing income through more and larger donations, offerings and pledges”—is a difficult task. Stewardship programs involve hard work. In many cases they do not produce incremental income immediately. And in some cases, these efforts produce undesirable side effects. And it is not uncommon to find that there are those people who may misinterpret the motivation for the request and effort.

Often the root cause of the problem can be that too many of us have an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of Christian stewardship—incorrectly equating “stewardship” only with money. Often the way stewardship discussions are handled in parishes contributes to this misconception. Consequently, any discussion of what stewardship means in the Orthodox Christian context necessarily begins with a summary of good parish practices that can help plant a “stewardly mindset” in the parish.

The first—and never-ending—step in strengthening stewardship in the parish is to help the community understand that stewardship involves making a fundamental commitment to work with God in every aspect of our lives. At the risk of over simplifying an important and very rich subject, let us consider the following key points.

Stewards and sojourners. A steward is one who carefully and responsibly manages entrusted resources or delegated authority on behalf of the interests of another—the Master.

A steward in the ancient world was an individual who acted in the master’s name and managed, or “stewarded,” the master’s affairs. But he wasn’t the master. To this day, the term “stewardship” basically means the careful, responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care... for greatest output/return... for a purpose. It refers to delegated authority to be practiced on behalf of the interests of another. Christian stewardship, then, is working with God to responsibly manage all of our God-given resources—our time, our talent and our treasure. It is about the way we live in relationship to God and the world. Stewardship is a complete lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as Creator and Owner of all.

Likewise, each and every person made in the image and likeness of God is placed on this earth as a tenant—or, in the words of Saint Paul, a “sojourner.” As sojourners, it is incumbent upon us to return what is not ours to its rightful Owner, in a condition at least as good as we received it, if not better. Hence, as we pray in the Divine Liturgy, we offer to God that which is His—“Thine own of Thine own, we offer to Thee on behalf of all and for all”—as stewards and sojourners who recognize that apart from His many gifts, we have nothing that we can truly call “our own.”

Time, talent and treasure. We recognize that giving belongs to God’s very being. When we give freely and generously, we act as God acts. We are shar-

ing in the work of God. Often the breadth of this giving back is thought of in terms of *time, talent and treasure*. These are good elements on which to focus, but true Christian stewardship is even broader—a commitment of our entire life.

As Christians we acknowledge God as Creator and Owner of all and that none of our words, actions, powers or properties are our own, to do with as we please. We receive them from God. We possess them – but they are not really ours. The resources we enjoy – and from which we give – are ours only by derivation. All blessings flow from God. Since God is Creator and Owner, when we give to the Church and others, we are only *gratefully, joyfully* giving back to God that which already belongs to Him. We’re not the owners – we’re the borrowers.

We are accountable for our parish. Ultimately, we will be called to give an account for the use of the gifts, resources and talents given to us by God. Unlike the “one talent steward” who, having been given a talent by the Master buried it in the ground and did nothing with it, we need to willingly make a return to God for His investment in each of us.

One of the most important gifts entrusted to our care is our parish itself—not only parish facilities and resources, but care of the clergy, of one another, and of the parish’s mission, ministry and purpose. The purpose of a parish is to proclaim Christ through worship and praise, through word and deed. Our parish has been entrusted to us—not to keep or merely “maintain,” but to care for, to minister from, to strengthen and expand, and to pass on to future generations. We are responsible!

(Continued on page 5)

Today Let Heaven Above Greatly Rejoice

Fr. Steven Kostoff essential is missing from our lives?

November 21 marks the commemoration of the Great Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. The festal cycle of the Church *sanctifies* time. By this we mean that the tedious flow of time is imbued with sacred content as we celebrate the events of the past now made present through liturgical worship. Notice how often we hear the word “today” in the hymns of the Feast:

“Today let us, the faithful dance for joy”

“Today the living Temple of the holy glory of Christ our God, she who alone among women is pure and blessed ...”

“Today the Theotokos, the Temple that is to hold God is led into the temple of the Lord ...” (Vespers of the Feast)

Again, we do not merely commemorate the past, but we make the past present. We *actualize* the event being celebrated so that we are also participating in it. We, *today*, rejoice as we greet the Mother of God as she enters the temple “in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.” Can all - or any - of this possibly change the “tone” of how we live this day? Is it at all possible that an awareness of this joyous Feast can bring some illumination or sense of divine grace into the seemingly unchanging flow of daily life? Are we able to envision our lives as belonging to a greater whole: the life of the Church that is moving toward the final revelation of God’s Kingdom in all of its fullness? Do such questions even make any sense as we are scrambling to just get through the day intact and in one piece, hopefully avoiding any serious mishaps or calamities? If not, can we at least acknowledge that “something”

I believe that there a few things that we could do on a practical level that will bring the life of the Church, and its particular rhythms, into our domestic lives. As we know, each particular Feast has a main hymn called the *troparion*. This troparion captures the over-all meaning and theological content of the Feast in a somewhat poetic fashion. As the years go by, and as we celebrate the Feasts annually, you may notice that you have memorized these troparia, or at least recognize them when they are sung in church. For the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, the festal troparion is the following:

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.

The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.

Let us rejoice and sing to her: Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator’s dispensation!

A great Feast Day of the Church is never a one-day affair. There is the “afterfeast” and then, finally, the “leavetaking” of the Feast. So this particular Feast extends from today, November 21, until Monday, November 25. A good practice, therefore, would be to include the troparion of the Feast in our daily prayer until the leavetaking. That can be very effective when parents pray together with their children before bed time, as an example. Perhaps even more importantly within a family meal setting, would be to sing or simply say or chant the troparion together before sitting down to share that meal. The troparion would replace

the usual prayer that we use, presumably the Our Father. All of this can be especially effective with children as it will introduce them to the rhythm of Church life and its commemoration of the great events in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Do you have any Orthodox literature in the home that would narrate and then perhaps explain the events and their meaning of the Great Feast Days? Reading this together as a family can also be very effective. A short Church School session need not be the only time that our children are introduced to the life of the Church. The home, as we recall, has been called a “little Church” by none other than Saint John Chrysostom. Orthodox Christianity is meant to be a way of life, as expressed here by Father Pavel Florensky, who writes that “the Orthodox taste, the Orthodox temper, is felt but is not subject to arithmetical calculation. Orthodoxy is shown, not proved. That is why there is only one way to understand Orthodoxy: through direct experience ... to become Orthodox, it is necessary to immerse oneself all at once into the very element of Orthodoxy, to begin living in an Orthodox way. There is no other way” (*The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*).

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, Reflections in Christ, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/today-let-heaven-above-greatly-rejoice>*

Choir

If you are interesting in joining the choir, see please
Barbara Harp.

Young Adults In, Or Out of, the Church

A few years ago, a book called "Soul Searching" investigated the spiritual lives of teenagers. It found that religion can be important to teens, but it also determined that many of them adhere to what it called "moralistic therapeutic deism." This can be defined as a belief in a kind, loving God who is not connected to any particular faith tradition, and who is there largely to help in solving personal problems.

"Souls in Transition" is author Christian Smith's follow-up to the earlier book, and it gives valuable insights into the lives of those he terms "emerging adults" between the ages of 18 and 23. Emerging adults marry relatively late, may spend several years in higher education, and rarely stay for decades at the same job because of the unreliable global economy. Many are unaffiliated with any institution, and have no commitment to a worshipping community.

So which, if any, of these emerging adults might make or keep a commitment to faith? Smith answers that it is those who, as teenagers, had examples of older people who practiced their faith. There are other factors (such as prayer, reading of Scripture, multiple religious experiences and

the absence of strong doubts in the teen years) but the example of practiced faith is the strongest indicator of future commitment. Teens who have had no such example are unlikely to develop their spiritual lives as emerging adults, and will probably follow the societal trend of indifference, and sometimes hostility, to faith.

Smith rejects the idea that parents (or adult caretakers) become less significant in their children's lives during the teen years. In fact, parents' perception that their children don't want them to promote or "impose" religious beliefs, and their resulting fear of doing so, leaves the teens "floating in a directionless murk to figure out completely on their own some of life's most basic questions concerning reality, truth, goodness, value, morality and identity." It isn't that these children don't want their parents' involvement, Smith says. It's rather that they want it on "renegotiated" terms that "take seriously their growing maturity and desired independence."

Not only teens, but also the emerging adults who

are the subject of this book benefit from the counsel, mentoring and simple presence of caring older people. Smith calls on the churches in America to recognize the unsettled and often disconnected years of emerging adulthood as a fairly new phenomenon in our fast-changing culture. Churches should create ways to reach out to emerging adults, just as they have created ways to reach out to other groups such as the elderly and families with young children.

But it really begins in the teen years, and well before. Children need relationships with adult faith models. Smith, being interviewed about "Souls in Transition," put it this way: "The most important factor is parents. For better or worse, parents are tremendously important in shaping their children's faith trajectories. That's the story that came out in "Soul Searching."



Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. - Proverbs 22:6

“Facing Forward” Pt 4: Help us With Stewardship!

(Continued from page 3)

It should be the joyful responsibility of all parishioners—and not just the clergy—to become invested in the work of the parish. Responsibly supporting the parish means that we each return a meaningful portion of the resources—time, talent and treasure, given to us by God—back to God through the parish to support the costs associated with doing God's work.

When each of us is gone, our future generations will be what remain of us and our parish. Let us leave for them a parish prepared to do Christ's work in the world and one which, in every aspect, can be found to be in better condition

than we received it. This would seem to be an important and pleasant task.

A free-will action. Stewardship, finally, is a “free-will action” that demonstrates trust in God and a love for His Holy House and People and all His creation. Tithes need to be joyful, unconstrained, proportional and authentic—a free-will offering willingly and gratefully made from the heart, given from the first portion of God's blessings. Authentic stewardship is neither grudgingly offered or compulsory, but rather confident and trusting.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, Reflections in Christ, <http://oca.org/reflections/joseph-kormos/facing-forward-part->

From the Fathers . . .

"...those called by Christ's name should order their lives. They should persevere in prayers and supplications and, in imitation of the angels, have their eyes lifted up to the Master above the heavens, praising and blessing Him with irreproachable conduct, and waiting for His mystical Coming.

As the Psalmist says to Him, 'I will sing and will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me?' (Ps. 101:2)."

St. Gregory Palamas
The Homilies Vol. 1

Be Sure Not to Do the Wrong Work

November 8 is a day when the Church commemorates angels—not only the Archangel Michael, who is named, but "all the other bodiless powers" as well.

Among these other celestial beings is the Archangel Jehudiel, who like the others has a special role in God's plan. Jehudiel is known as the angel of work. In particular, he watches over those who work for God's glory, encouraging them, strengthening them and giving them wisdom.



On this same day and the previous day, we read Colossians 2:13 to 3:3. In these verses Saint Paul writes about angels, but he is not describing the kind of benevolent care that Jehudiel and the others have for us. He is concerned that some people misunderstand what angels are, and give them a kind of respect that should be offered only to God.

Paul's worry is that false teachers are exerting great influence over the Colossian Christians. These teachers seem out-

wardly to be following the Gospel's warnings against self-indulgence, by "promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body" (2:23). But such teaching is empty and even harmful, Paul says, because it doesn't come from Christ. It is the result of someone being "puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind" (2:18) and pretending to have some kind of supernatural knowledge. It only has the "appearance of wisdom."

"What's wrong with you, Colossians?" Paul seems to be asking. He reminds them that when they learned to worship Jesus Christ as the true God, they were freed from the old, oppressive belief that "elemental spirits" ruled their lives and must be placated. Why, he asks, are they now willing to listen to these teachers who ask them to return to the worship of angels? Why do they agree to submit to unnecessary regulations: "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (2:21)?

All the regulations imposed by these

teachers are a lot of work. Their followers must know what things to avoid, what things to do regularly, and what are the best ways to keep from being "disqualified" by their teachers. Paul encourages the Colossians to forget all that, because it is the wrong work. He suggests that they do some other things: Hold fast to Christ who is the Head, and seek and set their minds on the things that are above rather than those that are on earth (2: 19, 3:1-2). Yes, these things are also work, but they are the right kind, because they lead to salvation. They are the kind of work that the Archangel Jehudiel can support and assist.

People who believe that angels rule the universe are misguided, Paul firmly says. It's true that we cannot understand everything about life or the world, because our "life is hid with Christ in God" (2: 3). But Christ is our life, and when He appears and is manifested in glory, "then you also will appear with Him in glory" (3:4).

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

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

November 11	Fr. David Balmer Teresa & Nicholas Bock
12	Marie Lobb Teresa Bock
13	Marty and Joe Gala Andrew J Evans
16	Bishop Daniel
17	Susan Bieber Paul Hudson Greg von Schottenstein
19	Nancy Tarasevich
20	Sylvia & Alan Burns
22	Frank & Pam Bolton
24	Nick Kossob
27	Will Osolinsky

Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

The last two months of the year are now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2015 church pledges/donations/contributions are in and accounted for in this year. Please consider the church in your year-end financial planning, especially for tax purposes. Year-to-date donation statements will be available later this month. Please be sure to turn in your donations for 2015 prior to December 31st. Money received after then will be attributed to 2016.

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:

Protodeacon Alexis
Ann Garza
Rose Koval
Rose Kurowski
Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek
Larry Gardner
Ted Demos
Ann Carroll
Vickie Mendez
Anna Michkofsky

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

Bits and Pieces

NEW OCA STATUTE EFFECTIVE NOV. 1

The new *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, adopted by delegates to the 18th All-American Council in July 2015, becomes effective November 1.

The new *Statute* is available on the OCA web site in sections, as well as in PDF and Word formats for downloading.

As detailed in the *Statute's* Article XIV, dioceses, parishes, monasteries, institutions, offices, and organizations of the Church shall review their governing documents and administrative practices and conform them to the Statute by December 31, 2017. The Diocesan hierarchs will be working with the parishes, monasteries and institu-

tions under their omophoria in the review process as necessary.

Questions may be addressed to the Commission on Canons and Statute at canonsstatutes@oca.org.

His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa chairs the Commission, while Archpriest Alexander Rentel serves as Secretary. Archpriest John Erickson and Priest Ioan Cozma serve as Commission members.

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

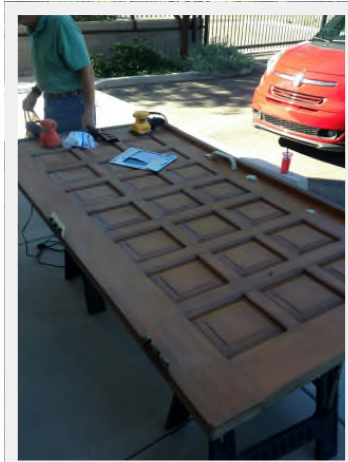
November 21 is the Great Feast of the Theotokos in the Temple. Vespers will be served on Friday, November 20, at 6:00 p.m. The Divine Liturgy of the Feast will be celebrated on Saturday, November 21, at 9:00 a.m.

NATIVITY FAST

On November 15 each year, we enter into the period of preparation for the celebration of Christ's Nativity which we call the *Nativity Fast*. The Nativity Fast enables us to focus on the true meaning of the feast we celebrate and the holiday customs we observe. Check your church calendars in order to see what is and what isn't allowed as part of this special fast. Take the fast seriously. Enter into with sincerity. Embrace the challenge. The spiritual fruits arising from keeping the fast will enrich your celebration of the Lord's Nativity.

VOUNTEERS TACKLE CHURCH DOORS

David Bieber, John Hecht, and Frank Bolton started work sanding and re-
varnishing the front doors to our church



on Saturday, October 31st. The work will be completed over the course of the next few weeks. Please contact David Bieber if you are able to help out with this stewardship project.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Each year, as a nation, we pause on the fourth Thursday

in November to observe the Thanksgiving Day holiday. Far from being simply the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, Thanksgiving Day reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God. As we hear at each Divine Liturgy, in the Prayer before the Amvon: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...* (James 1:17). The perfect way for us to give thanks to God at this time of the year is to reach out to those in need. As throughout the rest of the year, all canned and dry goods which are brought to our church are shared with those in need—all of whom, regardless of where they live, are our neighbors.

ROLL BAKE

AS the holidays quickly approach, the roll bakes continue in earnest. The days we will be baking are as follows:

- Tuesday, November 3
- Tuesday, November 10
- Saturday, November 14
- Saturday, November 28

We need your help! If you are interested in helping us please see either Elizabeth Michel or Barbara Peterson. Your order can be given to Elena Kerr. The cut off for ordering is November 8th.

BOOKSTORE

If you would like to special order icons for the holidays please do so soon before we hit a time crunch.

Arriving shortly to the bookstore are Christmas cards and 2016 Pocket Calendars. There will be a limited supply of both, so don't delay! Pocket calendars are \$4.00 each.



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, enjoy some coffee and fellowship, and check out our parish bookstore.

FOCA

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) held its first meeting of the new church year. Plans are underway establish a joint-service project between FOCA and the Teen/Young Adult League in November.

John Hecht is exploring the possibility of gift wrapping at a mall as our community service project for December. In addition to raising money, this would be a wonderful opportunity to create community awareness for our church, the OCA, and the FOCA.

We invite everyone to learn more about the FOCA. Join us at our next meeting, November 15th in the conference room after Coffee Hour!



November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Choir Rehearsal	Parish Christmas Card To have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card, please complete the forms on page 2. Extra forms will be available in the narthex or Bookstore counter. Deadline is December 13, 2015					7 NUT ROLL BAKE 5:00pm Great Vespers
8 Synaxis of Archangel Michael and the Others 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting	9	10 7:00pm Book Club 6:00pm Council Meeting	11	12	13 St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople	14 Holy Apostle Philip NUT ROLL BAKE Retreat Holy Trinity Church 9:00 am-4:00 pm 5:00pm Great Vespers
15 BEGINNING OF NATIVITY FAST 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School FOCA Meeting	16 Holy Apostle & Evangelist Matthew	17 7:00pm Book Club	18	19	20 Forefeast of the Entry 6:00pm Vespers	21 Entrance of the Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Great Vespers
22 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Choir Rehearsal	23	24	25 Leavetaking of Entry	26 THANKSGIVING 	27 Znameniye Icons: Kursk-Root & Others	28 NUT ROLL BAKE 5:00pm Great Vespers
29 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	30 St. Andrew	1 7:00pm Book Club	2 	BOOK CLUB All are invited to attend the biweekly meetings of our Book Club, held the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m.		5 5:00pm Great Vespers