

# SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

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## July Council Highlights

- ✘ June's Operating Income was \$13,609.86 and Operating Expenses were \$11,208.17, resulting in a positive balance of \$2,401.69 for the month.
- ✘ Annual Blessing of Students and Teachers will take place on Sunday, September 10th.
- ✘ Bishop Daniel will deliver a priest starter kit and tablet to recent graduate of St. Herman's Seminary from the FOCA.
- ✘ The Church Council is evaluating the purchase of a defibrillator to have on hand for emergencies.



### SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

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## A Saint Who Was the Mother, Wife, and Aunt of Saints

**On August 5 the Church remembers Saint Nonna, who is often chiefly identified as the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian. She was indeed his mother, but there is much more to know about her.**

Raised in a Christian family, Nonna learned early to love Christ. She was also a dutiful daughter. So when her family arranged an

"advantageous" marriage to a wealthy landowner, Gregory of Arianzus, she obediently accepted him as her husband.

But the marriage was a source of pain to her, because she loved Gregory and worried about his salvation. He was a member of a pagan sect, and a fire worshipper.

Nonna prayed fervently that her husband would come to the true faith. Her son Gregory, in his writings, describes the way in which her prayers were answered. His father, he writes, had a dream in which he was singing the first verse of Psalm 122 (121): "I was glad



when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.' " The dream was so vivid that it made the elder Gregory actually want to go to church. This

was the beginning of his conversion to Christianity.

In the early years of their marriage, St. Nonna concentrated on raising her children as strong Christians,

while also seeing to their education. The brilliance of her son Gregory, both as a theologian and as a philosopher, is the best evidence of her success. His written words about her also show his love and admiration for her: "What time and place of prayer ever eluded her? She was drawn to this each day before anything else, and she had complete faith that her prayers would be answered."

The elder Gregory attended the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea and was baptized there. He was ordained to the priesthood, and later was made Bishop of Nazianzus. Nonna was made a dea-

coness. Both of them gave tireless and loving service to the people around them. Their nephew Amphilocius became Bishop of Iconium, joining them in faithful service.

In her later years, Nonna experienced the greatest loss a mother can have, not once but twice. In the space of two years, her youngest son died, and then her daughter. Though she bore these deaths as God's will, her distress affected her once-vigorous health so that she became weak and had little appetite for food.

Her son Gregory describes a dream which restored his mother's health: "It seemed to her that I...had appeared to her suddenly by night with a basket of the whitest bread. Then I blessed these loaves with the Sign of the Cross, as is my custom, and I gave her to eat, and with this her strength increased." Saint Nonna lived for several more years, spending most of her time praying in church after her husband's death.

In a reading, Saint Paul writes (I Corinthians 3: 9) that "we are God's fellow workers." Saint Nonna, in her many roles, fulfilled that one as well.

# Message from Our Rector

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The month of August is always a month of transitions: summer travel and vacations are coming to an end, students are returning to school, and our work and the organizations in which we are involved are taking up their routine, more active schedules, rush hour traffic is becoming heavier, etc. This is true of parish life as well. In a sense, of course, parish life never changes. Month in and month out, we continually observe our regular cycle of life and worship. However, as we enter the month of August, we do so with the sense that parish programs are about to restart, the attendance at the Divine Services are about to return to the normal level of attendance, and the calendar will once again be filled with various types of parish activities. And it is appropriate that we look to returning to the regular rhythm and routine of our community life in the month in which we celebrate some significant feasts.

We begin the month of August by observing the Dormition Fast, the two-week period (August 1-15) leading up to the celebration of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15<sup>th</sup>. This fast offers us the opportunity for a spiritual focus as we prepare to honor the Holy Theotokos who, at the end of her earthly life, entered the glories of the Kingdom which was proclaimed by her Divine Son. We ask her continued intercession and protection as we prayerfully prepare for her special feast.

About halfway into the Dormition Fast



we celebrate the Great Feast of the Lord's Transfiguration. In this feast we proclaim the Gospel which relates the story of the Lord being transfigured, revealing His glory, on Mount Tabor in the presence of the Holy Apostles Peter, James, and John. This year, August 6 falls on a Sunday, allowing even those who might not be able to participate in a weekday Divine Liturgy to share in the spiritual blessings which this special feast of the Lord brings. On the feast of the Transfiguration the Church blesses the first-fruits of the harvest both as a giving back to the Lord what His and has come from Him (1 Chronicles 29:14) and as a celebration of the promise of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. The Divine Light glimpsed by the Apostles on Mount Tabor will transform all creation to its most perfect flowering and fruitfulness.

In Constantinople and throughout the Greek world grapes were placed on a table in the center of the temple and offered and blessed at the end of the Divine Liturgy and then partaken of by the faithful. In Russia, it became popular to bless apples on this feast. Over time this blessing was extended as other first-fruits were brought to be offered and blessed. The *Trebnik* (*Euchologion* or *Book of Needs*) offers several different prayers, one of which is offered here:

### Prayer for the Blessing of First-Fruits

*O Lord God Jesus Christ, You said to Your disciples: "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." We now humbly beseech*

*You, bless + and sanctify these first-fruits which Your faithful servants have brought into Your temple today. Preserve the life and health of all those who partake of them, those who are present here and those who absent. Grant that these blessed first-fruits be an effective medicine for those who are sick and ailing, and a protection against the assaults of the enemy for those who keep them in their homes. May all those who partake of them enjoy the fullness of Your goodness and blessing. For You, O Christ God, are our true nourishment and the Giver of all that is good, and we send up glory to You, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and with Your all-holy, good, and live-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.*

Also, each year on August 9<sup>th</sup>, we commemorate Saint Herman, or our "American saint," who, although born in Russia, achieved holiness as he worked out his salvation in Russian Alaska. The first of the saints to be glorified in North America, Saint Herman's life and example provides us with a deep insight into how we live our Orthodox faith as Christians in a multi-cultural society. Our temple is blessed with a beautiful icon of Saint Herman as a reminder of his intercession for the Church in this land as well as to reminder of the missionary efforts which brought the Orthodox Faith to North America. May we, as Orthodox Christians in America and heirs to this missionary legacy, continue to share the work of proclaiming the Gospel in this land.

With love in the Lord,

*+Bishop Daniel*

# Fruit of the Transfiguration

Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky

***“Lord, it is good for us to be here.”*** (Matthew 17:4)

The feast of Holy Transfiguration falls near the end of the liturgical year. Only the Dormition of the Theotokos follows, to complete and close the cycle. Why now? The time of the event comes six days following the confession of St. Peter [Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2], or *“about eight days”* [Luke 9:28], although that doesn’t fix the date precisely. Nothing is arbitrary. It comes in the season of fruit harvest. The Orthodox Church greets the feast with the tradition of the blessing of fruit. Here is a natural expression of sacrifice to the Lord of His blessings of rain and sunshine which make it possible to reap a bountiful harvest. We who bring our fruit in plastic bags from the supermarket must use our imagination in order to be truly grateful for the harvest blessings. We have not the same appreciation as if we had brought our grapes and apples from our own vines and trees. It takes a farmer’s daily prayers to feel the reward of his petitions.

At another level, we all can comprehend spiritual fruit brought to fruition through the liturgical year now consummated at the completion. The year begins with the birth of the Holy Mother of God, the young virgin herself the glorious fruit of the promise to Abraham and his children to erase Adam’s rebellion and restore the glory of the people of Israel. Mary is the *“beginning of our salvation”* - the anticipation of a new covenant relationship and the anticipation of the

Messiah, the Son of God who would be the fruit of her virgin womb.

The time is ripe to receive the divine light in Christ through the Holy Spirit for those in some ways capable of



receiving it. Consider the filtration process: From the 5,000 who heard Him offer them the credentials of the blessed from the Sermon on the Mount; to the seventy selected to visit the villages of the Jews and announce His ministry among them [Luke 10:1]; further choosing twelve apostles; and from them but three blessed to experience His Transfiguration atop the mountain, that eternal moment beyond normal time when Moses and Elijah would be brought from the past to appear with the Son of God in a blinding illumination of the Kingdom of God, displaying eternity in a fraction of time. It was a joy that the three disciples did not want to end.

Is it any wonder that so many of our monastic communities have chosen this feast for their own patronal namesake? The revelation of a second Epiphany where all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are involved? Here, the highlight of spiritual progress offers a supernal incentive for all serious Christians to realize and fulfill the precious words of St. Paul: *“One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal...”* [Philippians 3:13].

When the three offer to make three booths and remain in that sublime exalted state, Christ responds that they must descend from the mountain top and return to what was left behind. Such a rare treat was for them a mere aperitif of blessings, enough for them to experience once but never to be forgotten. [II Peter 1:16] He warned them also not to share the experience with anyone until after His resurrection. We can imagine them describing the indescribable to their fellow apostles and the women during those forty days following Christ’s appearance in the Upper Room that first day of His resurrection and until the Ascension. And what of us? We conclude each Divine Liturgy with the proclamation: *“We have seen the true light!”* Have we indeed! Has that been an experience, a proleptic proclamation, or something we just do not understand?

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/berzonsky/fruit-of-the-transfiguration>✘

# Choosing Martyrdom

**On August 26th, we remember Saints Adrian and Natalia, a young married couple living in Nicomedia, part of the Roman Empire, in the early fourth century. Natalia was a Christian; her husband was not.**

Visiting Nicomedia, the fiercely anti-Christian Emperor Maximian promised a reward to anyone willing to inform on Christians. Many people were willing to denounce their neighbors, and twenty-three believers hiding in a cave were informed on, captured, and tortured. Then they were brought before



the Praetor or magistrate so that a scribe could record their names and statements.

Natalia and Adrian had been married for only a little over a year. But Adrian, at the age of 28, already had an important position as governor of the Praetorium. So the tortured Christians were assembled before him, and he watched in astonishment as they not only kept their composure under questioning and threat, but refused to deny their faith.

Finally Adrian felt compelled to challenge the Christians directly. He asked, "What do you hope for from this God of yours; what makes such suffering worthwhile?"

The calm, sure answer came at once. The Christians declared that the rewards God is eager to bestow can hardly be imagined, let alone described.

Adrian's response reflects the day's Epistle reading: "Do not unite yourself with unbelievers; they are not fit mates for you. What has righteousness to do with wickedness? Can light consort with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6: 14). He turned to the scribe and said, "Record my name with the rest. I too am a Christian."

No doubt Natalia had hoped that her husband would embrace the faith, but she would not have chosen these circumstances. Both of them were young, they had just begun a life together, and they were in love. What she did next would surprise many people, because she did not try to preserve her husband's life.

Instead she urged him to martyrdom.

The Emperor, hearing of Adrian's action, said the young aristocrat must have lost his mind. But Natalia visited the prison and encouraged her husband, by now beaten and injured, to persevere to the end without losing heart, and never to doubt that the faith he had found was worth the price. Knowing that his determination might weaken if he saw others suffer, she even asked that her husband be first to be tortured to death.

How many of us believe that there is nothing more important than preserving life, especially the life of young, healthy people with bright futures? Would we give our lives for the faith? Would we urge our spouses, or perhaps our children, to do so? Could we explain to someone why some saints chose martyrdom?

We may never be called to do any of those things. But it's worth considering the next words from 2 Corinthians 6: "Can there be a compact between the temple of God and the idols of the heathen? And the temple of the living God is what we are."

## 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

**Mnogaya Leta! Many Years!**

### Blessing of Students & Teachers

The official beginning of the school year – and our church school program – will be observed on Sunday, September 10th. As is our custom, the school year will begin with the Blessing of Students and Teachers following the Divine Liturgy on September 10th.

### 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  
Rose Kurowski  
Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek  
Anna Michkofsky

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

# Bits and Pieces

## 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.

## 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.



## MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

The MBAS meet the second Sunday of each month following Divine Liturgy. They will have their next meeting on Sunday, September 10, 2017. The MBAS is open to all women in the parish. For more information, please see Barbara Peterson.

## SUMMER A/C REMINDERS

For those who are using the hall's conference rooms and manually resetting the thermostats for their purposes, please

make sure to return the settings of the thermostat back to their original setting of "program on" when you are done with the room. We are finding that the thermostat(s) are being left on and

in the AUTO setting, which means the units will just keep running when no one is around through the week. Normally for a temporary use of those rooms, simply push the white 'override' button in the bottom right hand corner of the control panel, as that will provide 30 minutes of cooling/heating each time the button is pushed for up to 4 hours if needed. Afterward, the thermostat will automatically reset itself back to its original program setting so not to run when no one is around. Also, please close all the doors to all the rooms. Each room or area has its own A/C zoning just for itself. If you leave a door open, that unit will also be trying to cool/heat the hallway or room adjacent/connecting to it. This is especially true for when the main entrance doors are being propped open into the cultural center to which we are just trying to cool/heat the outside. Finally, please make sure to close the folding pass through doors over the kitchen counter, as well as the pantry room doors, as they zoned separately. Thank you

for your assistance!

## BLESSING OF VEHICLES

On Sunday, July 23, the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Elijah (who

ascended as if into heaven in a fiery chariot), the clergy and faithful of SS Peter and Paul Orthodox Church again participated in special prayers and a blessing for our vehicles, as well as other forms of transportation. We are mindful that since we have asked God

to bless our vehicles they should be used for His glory, and we affirm once again that without Him "we can

do nothing" (cf. John 15:5). May God continue to protect each of us in our travels, and grant us grace to imitate His saints.

## CHURCH SCHOOL

Our Church School program will be expanding, as the number

of children in our church has skyrocketed in recent months. We will be introducing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) for our 3-6 year old, with plans to expand this in coming years. CGS is attuned to the developmental and spiritual needs of children, with a focus on helping each child strengthen his or her personal prayer life and participate more deeply in the Divine Liturgy. We will also be adding class for our students in high school.



*Prayer for the Blessing of Vehicles: O Lord our God, Who makes the clouds Thy chariot and Who walks on the wings of the wind, Who has sent to Thy servant, the Prophet Elias, a chariot of fire . . .*



*Bishop Daniel blesses cars and trucks.*

# August 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Procession of the Lifegiving Cross Beginning of Dormition Fast	2	3	4	5 Forefeast Transfiguration  5:00pm Vespers
<b>Church School Parent Meeting</b> <b>Sunday, August 20, 2017</b> Informational meeting for parents regarding a change to our education program for children ages 3-6 which is attuned to the developmental and spiritual needs of the child.						
6 Transfiguration of Our Lord 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Fruit</i>	7 Valaam Icon	8 Tolga Icon  <b>NO COUNCIL MEETING</b>	9 Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America	10	11	12  5:00pm Vespers
13 St. Tikhon of Zadonsk 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	14 Forefeast Dormition  6:00pm Vespers	15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Flowers</i>	16 Feodorovskaya Icon	17	18	19  5:00pm Vespers
20 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School Parent Meeting Ages 3-6</b>	21	22 Georgian Icon	23 Leavetaking Dormition	24 Petrovskaya Icon	25	26 Vladimir Icon  5:00pm Vespers
<b>We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</b>						
27 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	28 Ven. Job of Pochaev	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist  9:00am Divine Liturgy	30	31	1 Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon	2 Kaluga Icon  5:00pm Vespers
3 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush"  <b>LABOR DAY</b>	5	6	7 Forefeast Nativity of the Theotokos  6:00pm Vespers	8 Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy	9 Righteous Parents Joachim & Anna  5:00pm Vespers