

Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 18 Issue 1

January 2018

December Council Highlights

- ✘ November's Operating Income was \$15,125.79 and Operating Expenses were \$14,518.26 resulting in a net operating income of \$607.53 for November.
- ✘ Annual Church Meeting will be held Sunday, January 28, 2018.
- ✘ Storage shed, complete with locks and lighting, has been assembled on the hall patio and is available for use.



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Resolutions or Repentance

According to the civil calendar, we begin the year of our Lord 2018 on January 1. The year of 2018 is based upon the calculations of a medieval monk who, in attempting to ascertain the exact date of the birth of Christ, missed the year 0 by only a few years. According to contemporary scholars, Jesus was actually born between what we consider to be 6 – 4 B.C. These were the last years of Herod the Great, for according to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Jesus was born toward the very end of Herod's long reign (37 – 4 B.C.). Christians therefore divide the linear stretch of historical time between the era *before* the Incarnation; and the era *after* the Incarnation and the advent of the Son of God into our space-time world. In other words, the years before the Incarnation are treated as something of a "countdown" to the time-altering event of the Incarnation; and the years since are counted forward as we move toward the end of history and the coming Kingdom of God. By entering the world, Christ has transformed

the meaning and goal of historical time.

Recently, there has been a scholarly shift away from this openly Christian approach to history, as the more traditional designations of B.C. and A.D. have been replaced by the more neutral and "ecumenically sensitive" designations of B.C.E. (Before the Common Era), and C.E. (Common Era). Understanding and interpreting history from a decidedly Christian perspective, I would still argue in favor of the more traditional B.C. and A.D.

Although an issue of more than passing interest, that discussion may appear somewhat academic in comparison to the pressing issues of our daily lives as they continue to unfold now in 2018. We will exchange our conventional greetings of "Happy New Year" probably more than once in the next few days. Under closer inspection, there remains something vague about that expression, and perhaps that is for the better. Do we wish for the other person – as well as for ourselves – that nothing will

go (terribly) wrong in the unknown future of the new year? More positively, do we wish that all of our desires and wishes for our lives will be fulfilled in this new year? Or, are we wishing a successful year of the perpetual pursuit of "happiness" (whatever that means) for ourselves and for our friends? At that point we just may be reaching beyond the restrictive boundaries of reality. As Tevye the Dairyman once said, "The more man plans, the harder God laughs." Perhaps the more realistic approach would be to give and receive our "Happy New Year" greetings as neighborly acknowledgement that we are "all in this together," and that we need to mutually encourage and support one another.

We also approach the New Year as a time to commit ourselves to those annual "resolutions" that we realize will make our lives more wholesome, safe, sound, or even sane—if only we can sustain them. A resolution is to dig deep inside and find the resolve necessary to break through those (bad) habits or patterns of living that under-

(Continued on page 3)

Message From Our Rector

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Greetings in the New Year! Recalling that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17), we all look forward to another year at Saints Peter and Paul Church that promises to be filled with heavenly blessings. As we enter the Year of the Lord 2018, may the Lord God bless you all with peace, prosperity, good health, and all that is necessary for salvation!



We have just recently celebrated the joyous Feast of the Lord's Nativity and, as I write these few words, we are preparing to celebrate the Feast of Holy Theophany. Also, still standing in the light of the Lord's Theophany, on Sunday, January 7, we will celebrate the Ordination to the Holy Diaconate of Subdeacon John Weiss. We give thanks to God for his willingness to assume this role of service within the Church, congratulate him, and offer our prayerful support to him, Matushka Grace, and all their family as he begins this ministry within the Church. Many years! In accepting ordination to the Diaconate, he follows in the footsteps of those who have served Christ in the Holy Diaconate through the millenia, beginning with the first seven deacons of whom we are told in the Book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Chapter 6). The role of deacon within the life and ministry of the Church is a special one, based in charity and finding its culmination and ful-

fillment in service to the Church at the Holy Altar. It is a ministry of witness, of service, and of sacrifice.

The life and martyrdom of the Holy Archdeacon and Protomartyr Stephen offers us the example of just how sacrificial this ministry can be.

The Feast of the Nativity which we just celebrated and the Feast of the Theophany which we now celebrate help us remember that Christ took on our human flesh in the womb of the Most Pure Theotokos, was born as one of us in the cave of Bethlehem, and that He revealed Himself to us on the bank of the River Jordan. These feasts remind us that God came to unite Himself to us and that "GOD IS WITH US," remaining ever present in our lives as He continues to work within us through the action of the Holy Spirit. We, in our turn, become His presence in the midst of the world as we seek to sanctify the world through our own lives of holiness, service, and sacrifice.

As we begin this New Year, let us pray for one another as each one of us strives to make 2018 another year in which we reach out to the world in the Name of Christ.

With love in the Lord Who reveals Himself,

+Bishop Daniel

VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS



Resolutions or Repentance

(Continued from page 1)

mine either our effectiveness in daily life; jeopardize our relationships with our loved ones, our friends and our neighbors; or seriously threaten to make us less human than we can and should be. We know that we should eat less, swear less, lust less, get angry less, surf the computer less, play on our iPhones less, watch TV less, and so on. We further know that we need more patience, more self-discipline, more graceful language, more attention to the needs of others, more “quality time” with our families and friends, more forgiving, more loving, and so on. We know, therefore, that we need to change, and we intuitively realize how difficult this is. Bad habits are hard to break. Therefore, we need this annual opportunity of a new beginning and our New Year resolutions to give us a “fighting chance” to *actually* change. We may joke about how quickly we break our resolutions, but beneath the surface of that joking (which covers up our disappointments and rationalizations) we are acknowledging, once again, the struggle of moving beyond and replacing our vices with virtues. May God grant everyone the resolve to maintain these resolutions with care and consistency.

And yet I believe that we can profoundly deepen our experience of the above. For, as a “holiday” is a more-or-less secular and watered-down version of a “holy day;” so a resolution is a more-or-less secular and watered-down version of personal *repentance*. To repent (in Greek, *metanoia*) is to have a “change of mind,” together with a corresponding change in the manner of our living and a re-direction of our lives toward God. The New Year’s resolution of our secularized culture may be a persistent reminder – or the remainder of—a lost Christian worldview that realized the importance of

repentance. “There is something rotten in Denmark,” and an entire industry of self-help and self-reliance therapies – totally divorced from a theistic context—is an open acknowledgement of that reality regardless of how distant it may now be from its religious expression. As members of the Body of Christ living within the grace-filled atmosphere of the Church, we can, in turn, incorporate our resolutions within the ongoing process of repentance, which is nothing less than our vocation as human beings: “God requires us to go on repenting until our last breath” (Saint Isaias of Sketis). Or, as Saint Isaac of Syria teaches, “This life has been given you for repentance. Do not waste it on other things.”

Summarizing and synthesizing the Church’s traditional teaching about repentance, Archbishop Kallistos Ware has formulated a wonderfully open-ended expression of repentance that is both helpful and hopeful: “Correctly understood, repentance is not negative but positive. It means not self-pity or remorse but conversion, the re-centering of our whole life upon the Trinity. It is to look not backward with regret but forward with hope – not downwards at our own shortcomings but upward at God’s love. It is to see, not what we have failed to be, but what by divine grace we can now become; and it is to act upon what we see. In this sense, repentance is not just a single act, an initial step, but a continuing state, an attitude of heart and will that needs to be ceaselessly renewed up to the end of life” [*The Orthodox Way*, p. 113-114].

Hard not to be inspired by such an expressive passage! In the Service of Prayer for the (Civil) New Year, we incorporate into the litanies of the service some of the following special petitions. Thus, in the language of the Church, these petitions

served as an ecclesial form of the resolutions we make to break through some of our dehumanizing behavior, as well as a plea to God to strengthen our better inclinations: “That He will drive away from us all soul-corrupting passions and corrupting habits, and that He will plant in our hearts His divine fear, unto the fulfillment of His statutes, let us pray to the Lord...; That He will renew a right spirit within us, and strengthen us in the Orthodox Faith, and cause us to make haste in the performance of good deeds and the Fulfillment of all His statutes, let us pray to the Lord...; That He will bless the beginning and continuance of this year with the grace of His of His love for mankind, and will grant unto us peaceful times, favorable weather and a sinless life in health and abundance, let us pray to the Lord...”

If you *resolve* to seek and to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind ... and your neighbor as yourself” [Matthew 22:37-38], then I believe that this new year may not be perpetually “happy,” but that it will truly be blessed.”

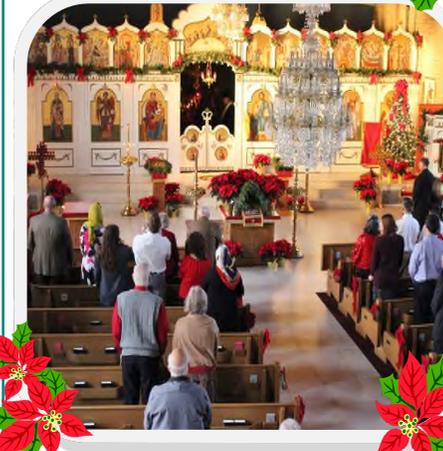
Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/resolutions-or-repentance>*

“The Lord sometimes allows people who are devoted to Him to fall into such dreadful vices; and this is in order to prevent them from falling into a still greater sin—pride.

Your temptation will pass and you will spend the remaining days of your life in humility. Only do not forget your sin.”

— St. Seraphim of Sarov

December in Pictures at SS Peter and Paul



Martyric Ministry

In the old television show “Dragnet,” the announcer began by saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, the story you are about to see is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.” I would like to share some of my pastoral experience and begin by saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, the story you are about to hear is true. The names have been changed to conceal the heroic.” That is, in my experience as a pastor in the Archdiocese of Canada over the past thirty years, I have come across the ministries of priests who have exercised a heroic and unsung ministry and whose heroism in the service of God and their parishes will (probably) never come to light. In their anonymity in this age they will find their reward in the age to come. I would not deprive them of that reward by revealing their names, and so I will leave their identities concealed. But I assure you that, in the words of Sgt. Friday of “Dragnet,” their stories are true.

I know a man in Christ who laboured for decades in a rural parish far from any other Orthodox priest. His rural parish had all the strengths and weaknesses of rural Canadian parishes, including a lack of sufficient appreciation of their pastor. His nearest priestly neighbour was several provinces and time zones away, and yet he laboured long and faithfully to care for the souls committed to this charge with no one with whom to share his burdens and problems, no one from whom he could ask counsel, encouragement, or advice. This meant that his faithful spouse also bore the burden of such pastoral loneliness, as she watched her beloved husband struggle in isolation, and their children grow up in the fishbowl that was their parish, far from the fellowship

of fellow Orthodox children their age. No one knew of such a burden of isolation but God, who watched over His servant labouring in the cold and lonely prairie. The Church, I think, awarded him a gold cross for his long labours—or rather, the right to wear the gold cross. I do not recall if he actually wore the gold cross. But such an award would anyway have been scant reward for the lonely decades of service he offered to God under the vast and empty prairie skies.

I know another man in Christ who laboured in an urban parish, building it up through years and years of energetic and ground-breaking service, only to experience pastoral burn-out from his labours. His burden included health problems from within his own family. He served faithfully in his own parish and sought to lift the burdens of other parishes in adjacent provinces, shining as a light and an example far across his diocese, bringing his community from being a small struggling mission to a major force within the diocese, and an example of success and vigour. He had to leave active ministry after a number of years, exhausted from his martyric labours.

I know yet another man in Christ who laboured for many years at a secular job for the privilege of serving at the altar of his little mission, inadequately reimbursed and often taken for granted by those who received the weekly benefit of his sacramental ministrations, devoted pastoral care, and faithful preaching. His community will probably never make front-page news, but his quiet dedicated service throughout the week and at Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy every weekend has enabled the Lord’s light to shine in a small and isolated corner of the country which otherwise would not know

the witness of Orthodoxy.

I could continue, but the point is that these men, like multitudes of other priests throughout North America, quietly serve Christ with zeal and dedication and in almost complete historical obscurity. The price they pay in terms of health, money, and family will never be accurately counted or known by us in this age, but their reward remains reserved with God in heaven, for their sacrifice is a kind of martyric offering. I would ask therefore that the laity remember before God such men as these, and honour their life’s offering. You will probably never know the names of the men to whom I here refer. Perhaps you might try to honour them by paying honour and gratitude to your own clergy whom you do know—including their wives and family. For the price of ministry is not simply paid by individual clergy, but also by the families who support and love them.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/martyric-ministry>

“One should nourish the soul with the word of God: for the word of God, as St. Gregory the Theologian says, is angelic bread, by which are nourished souls who hunger for God. Most of all, one should occupy oneself with reading the New Testament and the Psalter, which one should do standing up. From this there occurs an enlightenment in the mind, which is in the mind, which is changed by a Divine change.”

— St. Seraphim of Sarov,
Spiritual Instructions

Contributing Out of Poverty

On January 30 we read in Luke 21:1-4 the story of the poor widow who donates two copper coins to the temple treasury. Jesus watches as rich people contribute, and also as she makes her contribution. He then says that "she has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

On this same day we remember the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian (Gregory of Nazianzus) and John Chrysostom. All three men, in various ways, embraced poverty even though they were well-educated and articulate, and could have lived relatively easy lives. Out of their chosen poverty each man made huge contributions to the well-being and building up of the Church.

Like many other Christians, these three scholars and bishops often faced fierce op-

position. Basil, for example, had to contend with the hostility of the Arians, who were determined to supplant the Church's teaching that Christ is the eternal and divine Son of God with their own idea that He was a created being who had not always existed.



The Arians had convinced Valens, the emperor, that they were right in what they believed and taught. Over the years he had exiled many bishops who stood up for the Church's true teachings, or who displeased him in some way. Now it was Basil's turn.

The emperor very much wanted to get rid of such an influential enemy of Arianism as Basil. He and his entourage came to Cappadocia, and he sent an emissary to the bishop's residence in Caesarea to threaten Basil with banishment, physical punishment, and possible death. Basil's answer was fearless and uncompromising:

"If you take away my possessions, you will not enrich yourself, nor will you make me

a pauper. You have no need of my old worn-out clothing, nor of my few books, which are the entirety of my wealth. Exile means nothing to me, since I am not bound to any particular place. The place in which I now dwell is not mine, and any place you send me shall be mine. Better to say: Every place is God's. Where is a place in which I would be neither a stranger nor a sojourner? And who can torture me? I am so weak that the very first blow would render me unconscious. Death would be a kindness to me, for it will bring me all the sooner to God, for Whom I live and labor, and to Whom I would gladly go quickly."

There is a difference between Saint Basil and the poor widow. His poverty was voluntary; hers was probably the result of life circumstances she didn't choose. But the two are the same in putting God before anything else. We may not share his choice or her circumstances, but we can follow both their examples, and "put in (for God's service) all we have."

Around Ss. Peter & Paul

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January 1 George Moriarty
 3 John Tanner
 5 Pat Starkey
 John (Corey) Weiss
 6 Walter Booriakin
 8 John & Lauren Hecht
 16 Liliya Armstrong
 17 Mark Littell
 19 John Hecht
 George & Nadya Moriarty
 26 Teddi Brent
 28 Joe Matthews
 Samuel Melendrez
 29 John & Carol Yavornitzky

CHURCH SCHOOL

Students learn about the Nativity of Christ.



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:

Harold Homyak

Ann Garza

Rose Kurowski

Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek

Anna Michkofsky

Frank Kulik

Vickie Julik

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

Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

Bits and Pieces

CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY YEARS!

To the newly-ordained Deacon John Weiss. May the Lord bless him as he begins this new life of ordained ministry and grant him, Matushka Juliana (Grace), and their family wisdom, strength, health, and many blessings!

THANK YOU

Thank you to all of you for your love, support, cards, and gifts during the Holiday Season. Your kind words and sentiments and your many expressions of support are deeply appreciated. God bless you for your thoughtful kindness!

+Bishop Daniel

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who made our 2017 celebration of the Lord's Nativity another beautiful, inspiring, and spiritually-rewarding celebration of the Lord's presence among us. The Divine Services, Holy Supper, music, decorations, food, etc., etc., were all wonderfully arranged and yet another sign of our parish community's love of God and of neighbor. Blessings to everyone!

+Bishop Daniel

2018 CALENDARS

Thank you to John Blischak and Nick Enoch for again sponsoring the Church Calendars for our parish community for the New Year. May the Lord bless us each and every day of the coming year and help us grow in love for Him and for one another.

THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

The rich liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church includes a variety of services and blessings. Each year, after the celebration of the Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Water (January 6), it is customary for the priest to visit parishioners' homes, bringing with him the newly blessed Holy Water to sprinkle and thereby bless the home. Bishop Daniel will be available to bless homes throughout the month of January. To arrange to have your house blessed, please speak with Vladyka Daniel.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The annual parish meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28th, following the Divine Liturgy.

CHRISTMAS ANGELS

Overall, the event, held on Saturday, December 9th, was again deemed a success by Bishop Daniel, the Apartment Manager, and many Parishioners. The turnout was less than last year, but parishioner support was stronger:

- ✘ 29 children signed up (vs. 38 last year). The age range was again 16 years.
- ✘ 24 attended party (vs. 34)
- ✘ 14 family food boxes were prepared...5 of these families did not show up.
- ✘ Unclaimed presents and food boxes have been taken to the apartment manager for distribution
- ✘ Each box had \$62 -\$86 in food. Again this year more food was given to larger families (e.g., 4-5 kids).
- ✘ About \$1,200 was spent on gifts for the children (vs. \$1,000 last year). The children, on average, got gifts worth about \$40 compared to about \$30 last time. Over \$1340 was spent on food boxes & party items (vs. \$1,200)
- ✘ Total donations collected were \$2,445 compared to \$1,886 last year, about a 30% increase. Additionally, \$500+ was donated for a separate Christmas Outreach program that Mara Hecht administered.
- ✘ We returned \$1,126 to the Treasurer for the additional Christmas Outreach program, and TYAL outreach in general.

Once again, SS Peter and Paul Christmas Outreach event, held on Saturday, December 10th, was deemed a success by Bishop Daniel, the Apartment Manager, and Parishioners.

David Bieber

FROM THE TREASURER

If you would like to have a box of contribution envelopes to use in 2018, please see Dave Homyak in the church office.

HOLY SUPPER

Over one hundred parishioners, family and friends attended Holy Supper. It was a beautiful evening that began with everyone attending Compline before Holy Supper. Thank you all for attending and contributing to this special evening. Thank you to those who donated food and those who helped to set-up and then clean-up after the meal.

MBAS

Many thanks to the Myrrh Bearers Altar Society and all the hard work they put in preparing for the holidays, baking nut, poppy, and apricot rolls, the Christmas bake sale and raffle, beautifying the church, and hosting Holy Supper.

The MBAS will have their first meeting of 2018 on January 14th. We would like to

invite any woman who is interested to join us.

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.

STEWARDSHIP/PLEDGES/BUDGET

You will be receiving your 2017 Statement of Contributions shortly for your tax purposes. It's also time to start thinking about your pledge for 2018. Please be generous when filling out your 2018 Pledge Form and return it by the Annual Meeting, January 28, 2018. If you have any questions, please see David Homyak.

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great	2 Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov Forefeast of Theophany	3 Forefeast of Theophany	4 Forefeast of Theophany Synaxis of the 70 Apostles	5 Eve of Theophany	6 Holy Theophany 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Great Blessing of Water</i> 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p style="text-align: center;">Piroghi Workshop Saturday, January 20, 2018 See Pat Starkey to volunteer or place your order.</p>						
7 Sunday after Theophany Synaxis of St. John the Baptist 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy No Church School Ordination Deacon John Weiss	8	9	10 Ven. Gregory of Nyssa	11 Ven. Theodosius the Great	12 Akathist & Milk-Giver Icons	13 Saturday after Theophany 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p style="text-align: center;">Theophany House Blessing Bishop Daniel will be available to bless homes throughout the month of January. To arrange to have your house blessed, please speak with Bishop Daniel.</p>						
14 Leavetaking Theophany 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting	15	16	17 Ven. Godbearing Anthony the Great	18	19	20 Ven. Euthymius The Great Piroghi Workshop 5:00pm Great Vespers
<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>						
21 Zacchaeus Sunday 8:30am Hours 9:00am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Church School	22 Apostle Timothy	23	24 Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg	25 St. Gregory the Theologian	26	27 Translation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p style="text-align: center;">SS Peter and Paul Annual Meeting Sunday, January 28, 2018 following fellowship hour.</p>						
28 Publican & Pharisee New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia Venerable Ephraim St. Isaac of Syria 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School ANNUAL MEETING	29	30 Synaxis Three Hierarchs	31	1 Forefeast of the Meeting 6:00pm Vespers	2 Meeting of the Lord in the Temple 9:00am Divine Liturgy	3 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p style="text-align: center;">FAST-FREE WEEK</p>						