

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 19 Issue 3

March 2019

February Council Highlights

- ✘ January's Operating Income was \$12,733.13 and Operating Expenses were \$12,909.13, resulting in a negative balance of **\$176.00** for the month of January.
- ✘ The procurement of shades for the hall and its offices is underway.
- ✘ Parish hosting Pan-Orthodox Lenten vespers service on March 24th.
- ✘ Parking lot to be repaved after Pascha.



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Saint Benedict of Nursia

The Church remembers Saint Benedict, the founder of monasticism in the Western Church. Benedict and his twin sister Scholastica were born to prominent parents and had many advantages. Though their birthplace was Nursia, a small town near Spoleto, they spent much of their childhood in the city of Rome.



Our best source for information about Benedict is the account by Saint Gregory Dialogos, who wrote about many Italian abbeys and who is also credited with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Gregory tells us that Benedict, in his late teens, left his home to seek a place less crowded and boisterous, more serene and natural, than the big city. He knew he was giving up a life many would consider desirable. Gregory writes: "He was in the world and was free to enjoy the advantages the world offers, but drew back his foot which he had...already set forth in the world."

After some time, Benedict real-

ized he wanted to do more than avoid the excesses of the city. He wished to become poor and work hard, depending only on God. He found a remote ravine with a deep, craggy cave. There, except for occasional visits from a monk who lived nearby, he spent three years in almost complete solitude.

Benedict didn't remain solitary. He had matured and grown spiritually during his time in the cave, and his holy way of life became known. When the abbot of an area monastery died, the brothers begged Benedict to take his place. He hesitated, knowing that their monastic rule was more relaxed than his, but finally acquiesced. It only led to disagreements about his rigorous way of life. One monk was so incensed, or perhaps so jealous, that he attempted to poison the new abbot. Benedict sorrowfully returned to his cave.

But other monks had heard of Benedict's increasingly frequent miracles, admired his monastic efforts, and wanted to follow him. He oversaw the

building of twelve monasteries, each housing twelve monks, to accommodate these men. The monasteries grew and served the people around them by opening schools and welcoming travelers. The monks' life was communal (no solitary hermits) and they balanced prayer with the physical labor that Benedict considered essential to the Christian life.

In about the year 529, Benedict moved from the thriving monasteries in the ravine to Monte Cassino, a much more accessible place. He established new monastic communities, and developed the "Rule" which still governs Benedictine monasteries.

Benedict's gentle, moderate and compassionate character is reflected in his description of what an abbot should do: "Let him hate sin and love the brethren. Even in his correction, let him act with prudence and not go too far, lest while he seeks too eagerly to scrape off the rust, the vessel is smashed. Let him keep his own frailty ever before his eyes, and remember that the bruised reed must not be broken."

Benedict died in 543, and was buried with another revered monastic: his beloved sister, Scholastica.

Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Open to me the doors of repentance O Giver of Life; for my spirit rises early to pray towards Thy Holy Temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled. But in Thy Compassion purify me by the loving kindness of Thy Mercy.

In a few short days the "Doors of Repentance" will be opened for us so that we may enter into the special season of grace, the 40-day period of the Church's year, which is known as **Great Lent** or the **Great Fast**. Indeed, it is repentance, and fasting and abstinence which are the hallmarks of our observance of this grace-filled season. While we dedicate more time to prayer and study of the Holy Scriptures, participate more fully in Church's services, and reach out in charity to those in need, it is fasting of which we are most conscious in our day-to-day of life. But fasting from the foods (i.e. limiting the amount we eat and drink) and abstinence from many types of food (i.e. not consuming any animal products and foregoing alcoholic beverages) is not an exercise we perform for its own sake. Rather, the fasting discipline to which the Church calls us is intended not only as a form of penance and self-denial, but to help us focus on our spiritual lives so that we might grow in holiness as we prepare to renew within us the Paschal Mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Saint John Chrysostom speaks about the importance fasting in one of his most memorable sermons. He emphasizes that fasting is not just about

eating and drinking less or abstaining from certain foods. He states, "I have said these things, not that we may disparage fasting, but that we may honor fasting; for the honor of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from



sinful practices; since he who limits his fasting only to an abstinence from meats, is one who especially disparages it. Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works! *Is it said by what kind of works? If you see a poor man, take pity on him! If you see an enemy, be reconciled to him! If you see a friend gaining honor, envy him not! If you see a handsome woman, pass her by! For let not the mouth alone fast, but also the eye, and the ear, and the feet, and the hands, and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being pure from loose living and avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing from running to the unlawful spectacles. Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves rudely upon handsome countenances, or to busy themselves with strange beauties."* Saint John Chrysostom, the preacher with the "golden mouth," counsels us to not only embrace fasting, but, as we embrace it, to look beyond the spiritual practice of fasting and realize that, if our fasting is to have any merit, if it is to make any difference in our lives, it must have an impact on all the areas of our life.

We are only at the beginning of the Fast and the weeks ahead can become more challenging and more te-

dious with each passing day- but, despite frustration or even boredom with the fast, we strive to remain faithful to it nonetheless. So, as we strive to be faithful to the Church's discipline, let's also reflect upon the impact that our daily and Lenten fasting has in our daily lives. If we are more loving, if we are caring for those around us, if we reach out to those in need, if we are curbing our tongues, if we are less tempted by the world and its enticements, we will see the fast at work within us.

The Lenten journey we are about to begin can be difficult. But we do not begin this journey alone. Indeed, we are surrounded by our fellow-strugglers, our brothers and sisters in Christ who are walking the same Lenten path we are walking. This year, those who walk this path with us are greater in number as we welcome Father Thomas Frisby and the clergy and faithful of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church. They will be worshipping with us, praying, fasting, and repenting with us throughout the Holy Days of Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha and until they are able to locate a new place to call home. We are blessed by their presence and participation in our parish and in our common life. May that mutual support encourage us in our commons effort so that together we may arrive at the bright and joyous day of Pascha.

With love in the Lord,

+Bishop Daniel

Great Lent and Fasting in the Age of “the Screen”

Fr. Steven Kostoff
“Enlighten me through prayers and fasting” [Forgiveness Vespers].

Within the context of Great Lent and our ascetical effort during this season, commonly called fasting, I would like to raise the issue of not only fasting from certain foods and drink—the most basic aspect of asceticism because of our sheer dependence on food and drink—but also of “fasting” from the amount of time we spend daily before a variety of screens: television, computer, tablets, movie, smart phones, etc.

This raises the issue of “Orthodoxy and technology,” a fascinating issue and one that should generate a good deal of theological/spiritual reflection when we think for a moment of our overwhelming dependency in the contemporary world on technology. We may be able to live without technology, but we would hardly be able to function without it. However, my goal is much more modest, as I will explain momentarily.

Without entering into a philosophical/theological discussion about technology, we can at least state that Orthodoxy is in no way anti-technological. Although some Orthodox bishops, priests, and monastics may awaken visions of the Amish, there is no real similarity in worldview when it comes to technology. You may just contact any one of those Orthodox persons through their computers and smart phones—but not the Amish! Or you would be impressed by the web sites and overall computer sophistication of both Orthodox seminaries and monasteries. This is to state the obvious.

The Church has never moved to suppress technology or, for that matter, any progress in all of the sciences. This is a crucial aspect of our human capacity to think and create, setting us apart from the rest of the animal world. Yet, one more issue una-

voidably related to this is that of the abuse of technology, when it is severed from any clear moral and ethical restraint. Our thinkers and theologians are struggling to keep up with the exponential and seemingly daily moral/ethical challenges that arise out of the obsessive desire to keep pushing forward the frontier of technological progress.

Avoiding these “heavier” issues in this reflection, I would just like to address the more modest issue of our fasting during Great Lent—or, of expanding our understanding of fasting to now include the time spent before our various screens as already mentioned above. It is, after all, Great Lent. Some modest changes in lifestyle or the environments that we create in our homes is an important factor in the overall lenten effort.

With the ubiquitous screen, the questions arise: Outside of our professional obligations and responsibilities, just how attracted, attached, obsessed or, as extreme as this may sound, “addicted” are we to them? How much of that precious commodity of time do we spend in front of screens that could at best be described as distraction, amusement, entertainment, “killing time,” etc.? Can we break through the cycles of surfing, shopping, game-playing, facebooking and blogging that devour huge amounts of our time? And can we show some restraint for the sake of relationships and more serious pursuits which I hope would attract us during Great Lent especially?

To formulate the challenge before us, I would like to turn to an essay written by one of the members of the parish I serve named Emily. She recently wrote an essay titled “Less is More.” The opening paragraph shows that we are of the same mind in formulating the issues before us:

“In the modern world, nearly every direction one turns, surrounding people appear

preoccupied by their own little worlds of music, video games, social networking, or the internet. They appear oblivious to anyone or anything, save the technologies that hold their undivided attention. Nearly gone are the days where families would gather together to read, create, play, or converse with each other. The turn of the century bears witness to a rapid-paced world which observes a degeneration in communication and relationships among individuals. Though many remain unaware, this shift brings with it startling changes, affecting present and future generations alike.”

Well-stated and to the point! And something to think about in a season of restraint and re-prioritizing. Emily mentions reading, playing, creating and conversing. Are our families and friendships suffering deficiencies in those time-honored activities that are based on mental agility, socializing skills and the deepening of loving relationships? Is it dinner and then off to the screen? Have we mastered the “art of distraction?”

If so, can we possibly be surprised if we find it difficult to pray effectively—that is, with some concentration and focus? There is a possible alternative approach: Superfluous time spent before the screen can now be redirected and spent renewing those activities that are either intellectually stimulating (a good book or creative project) or conducive to personal interaction (game playing); or, on a deeper level, “face-to-face” communion (conversing)? Emily writes further:

“Because people do not communicate in person, words and meanings can get misconstrued all too easily. One cannot observe facial expressions or hear tones of voice through the internet, both of which allow the listener to garner a well-rounded impression of what the speaker intends to express.... Nothing compares to

(Continued on page 4)

Great Lent and Fasting in the Age of “the Screen”

(Continued from page 3)

quality time given to a person, where one really listens and focuses on getting to know his friends. Human beings are so complex that one cannot get to know anyone very deeply in a diminutive span of time.”

Can you imagine a Facebook entry that states, “In observing Great Lent, this site will be inactive until April 16, the day I celebrate the Resurrection of Christ?!”

What about the screen of the smart phone? This is a wonderful tool for communication that has even been “life-saving,” as we all know of some such stories. You may have to be a modern-day Luddite to argue against the positive use of the cell/smart phone. The important call, the encouraging call, the “where-in-the-world is my child?” call, even the “emergency” call are not what needs to occupy us at the moment.

But here also other questions arise: Beyond all of that, has the smart phone become an extension of our very being? Does it seem to be permanently glued to our ears and/or attached to our hands? Are we lost without it? Do we call and chat in order to... call and chat? (What happened to the spiritual gift of silence?) After all, just a few years ago, we did live

without cell or smart phones.

There are styles, colors, sizes, and an endless array of features that turn the smart phone into either a status symbol or a toy—primarily for adults, of course. (Though, at what age now are children equipped with their own phones?). Texting and twittering are producing a certain type of “illiteracy” that is making a wince-creating wreck of the English language, as in “I luv U.” Grammar, spelling, and compound sentences are treated as intrusive. The menus are astonishing for their complexity. The internet is now on your smart phone! And it is also a ready-made camera: Quick! There’s little Johnny running in the years.... How adorable!

Is it possible or even meaningful to show any restraint when living in an age of the screen? If not, then we may be facing the following downward trajectory that can quickly spiral out of control: Attractions become attachments; attachments become obsessions; and obsessions become addictions. Or, as the holy Fathers teach, we become the playthings of our “passions.” We are no longer in control, but under control of our impulses.

As asceticism is not puritanism, so restraint is not repression. All of our ascetical lenten efforts are ultimately directed to our free-

dom and liberation—to some degree at least—from the myriad dependencies that occupy our bodies and souls. To fast from meat but then to sit in front of the computer for hours surfing, shopping, game-playing, facebooking and blogging somehow points to a disconnect with the overall goal of Great Lent as a “school of repentance” or “journey toward Pascha.”

Professionally and vocationally, we may be living in the age of the screen. I know that I am. I enjoy and try and make something positive of a “cyberspace ministry,” in fact. The irony of writing this meditation on the computer and then launching it out into cyberspace so you will have one more thing to read is not lost on me.

But the challenge remains to retain a degree of freedom from the technological web that can bind us so tightly. Redirecting a lot of our energy—and time!—to prayer, almsgiving and fasting, the reading of the Scriptures and the lenten liturgical services of the Church can create in us the joy of liberation from those very bonds.

Challenges and choices abound! And this is a crucial aspect of our human capacity to think and create, setting us apart from the rest of the animal world.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/great-lent-and-fasting-in-the-age-of-the-screen>*

SS Peter and Paul Pascha Card

Name(s) : _____

Name(s) to appear on card:

Mailing Address:

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

Deadline: April 14, 2019

Return completed form to Stephanie or David Homyak



2019 Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers

Please join our Brothers & Sisters at the host parishes for these
Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers Services

All Vespers Services Begin at 6:00 PM



The Sunday of Orthodoxy

March 17, 2019

Host Parish: Holy Trinity Cathedral

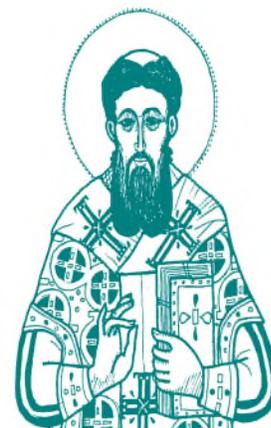
1973 E. Maryland Ave Phoenix, AZ 85016 (602) 264-4863

The Second Sunday of Lent

March 24, 2019

Host Parish: SS Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

1614 E. Monte Vista Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85006 (602) 253-9515



The Third Sunday of Lent

March 31, 2019

Host Parish: St. Nikolas Serbian Orthodox Church

11640 N 16th Pl, Phoenix, AZ 85020 (602) 943-0941

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

April 7, 2019

Host Parish: St. Ignatius of Antioch Orthodox Church

5515 E. Redmont Circle, AZ 85215 (480) 892-6224



The Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 14, 2019

Host Parish: St. John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church

3749 W. Behrend Dr. Glendale, AZ 85308 (623) 582-3150

Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches

More Information at: WWW.AZORTHODOX.ORG

First Week of Great Lent - 2019

Sunday March 10	Forgiveness Sunday, Divine Liturgy, 9:00 a.m. Rite of Forgiveness following Fellowship Hour
Monday March 11	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday March 12	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday March 13	Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper & Presentation following Liturgy
Thursday March 14	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, 6:00 p.m.
Friday March 15	Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6:00 p.m.
Saturday March 16	Memorial Saturday, Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, March 17	Sunday of Orthodoxy, Divine Liturgy, 9:00 a.m. Procession of the Holy Icons at conclusion of the Liturgy Orthodoxy Vespers, 6:00 p.m. Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Around SS Peter & Paul

MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

March 7	Lauren Hecht
10	Stephanie Homyak
11	Nicholas Bock
12	Elizabeth McDonald Sophie Behnen
14	Elizabeth Michel
17	Mike Wagner
19	Christi and David Sourk
22	Ann Michkofsky
29	Tania Booriakin Judy Bushko

Many Years!

PARISH PASCHA CARD

Instead of sending individual Pascha greetings, why not list your name(s) on a beautifully designed Orthodox Pascha card and support SS Peter and Paul at the same time? If you would like to participate, please fill out the form at the bottom of page 4 and return it to Stephanie Homyak by April 14, 2019. Proceeds will be used to help send our youth to All Saints Camp.

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:

Metropolitan Herman
Patricia Starkey
Jamie Arango
Ann Garza
Rose Kurowski
Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek
Anna Michkofsky
Frank Kulik
Vickie Kulik
Olga Bahleda

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

Bits and Pieces

PRESANCFIED LITURGY

Every Wednesday and Friday evening of Great Lent at 6:00 p.m. Please note that we are adding the Friday Presanctified Liturgy to this year's Lenten Schedule in order to have a more robust, full, and fulfilling period of preparation for Holy Pascha.

Our Wednesday evening Liturgies will be followed by a Lenten meal and a brief presentation or period of discussion. Please see Heather Pfeiffer to participate in providing the Lenten meal. Our menu is simple: soup, salad, bread, and fruit. Think of providing one of these to share at some point during the Fast.

CONFESSIONS

As we begin our Lenten Journey, we have our minds focused on being prepared to celebrate the Lord's triumph over sin and death through His glorious Resurrection. Our celebration of Christ's Paschal Victory has greater spiritual meaning and brings more joy when we have received the Lord's forgiveness through the Mystery of Repentance. **CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE EVERY SERVICE AND BY APPOINTMENT.** Please plan on making your Easter Confession in a timely manner and to avoid the "rush" so that your confession may be made peacefully and prayerfully.

PAN ORTHODOX VESPERS, MARCH 24

On Sunday, March 24, our parish will have the joy and honor of welcoming our brothers and sisters from throughout the Valley as we gather for Vespers on the Eve of the Feast of the Annunciation. As with the other Sunday Evening Vespers, the service will begin at 6:00 p.m. As is our custom, following the Vespers Service we will welcome our guests to join us for a pot-luck Lenten meal. In order to assist with providing food, set-up, and clean-up for the meal, please see Heather Pfeiffer.

MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

We are seeking 2-3 volunteers each week during Lent to host the meal following Presanctified Liturgy by bringing Lenten soup, bread, and fruit. If you would like to host a meal on a Wednesday or would like to volunteer to help with cleanup please see Heather Pfeiffer or the Myrrh Bearers to sign up or learn more. Lenten soup recipes are available if you need help figuring out what to bring.

The Myrrh Bearers Alter Society is also coordinating the Lenten meal following Pan Orthodox Vespers on March 24th. We are seeking volunteers to help with donations of food for the meal and setup and cleanup of the hall. For the meal we asking for donations of prepared Lenten appetizers, entrées, and desserts to be brought to the church in the morning or before Vespers in large pot-luck quantities. Before the meal, we need help setting up tables and chairs, decorating the tables, and preparing and placing items on the buffet tables. After the meal, we need help cleaning tables, returning extra tables and chairs to the shed, washing dishes, and taking out the trash.

Please see Heather Pfeiffer or other Myrrh Bearers in the hall to sign up to bring an item or to help with setup or cleanup.

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY PROCESSION

Youth will participate in the annual procession of icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 17, 2019. Icons will be provided for all youth to carry in the procession around the church. Children are also welcome to bring their own favorite icon from home to carry in the procession.

SUNDAY PAN ORTHODOX VESPERS

Again this year, the local Orthodox Clergy Council will sponsor the celebration of Vespers on the Sunday evenings of Great Lent. Saints Peter and Paul will be hosting Pan Orthodox Vespers on Sunday, March 24, 2019. See the complete schedule on page 5.

BLINI LUNCHEON

THANK YOU to the Russian members of our parish community who hosted a lovely blini luncheon on Sunday, February 24, 2019. The luncheon consisted of savor and sweet blini.

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Monday, March 25, we celebrate the Great Feast of the Annunciation. On this feast, we recall the announcement made by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in Nazareth that she had been chosen by God to be the Mother of the promised Savior (Luke 1:26-38). The Divine Liturgy of the Feast will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m.

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.

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

As we approach and enter the season of the Great Lenten Fast, beginning our journey to Holy Pascha, we pause to remember and pray for our loved ones who have gone before us in hope of the Resurrection. See Vladyka DANIEL to provide a list of names you would like commemorated or if you otherwise need to update your current list. Please check the calendar for dates.

PASCHA FLOWERS

Everyone is invited to participate in beautifying our church for the celebration of Holy Week and Pascha by donating towards the purchase of flowers. Please consider making a donation to help cover this shared expense. Remember, the beautification of the Lord's Tomb on Holy Friday and the Church on Holy Pascha is dependent upon your generosity.

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p align="center">ALL SAINTS CAMP</p> <p align="center">Register your child(ren) by March 17 to take advantage of early registration pricing. http://www.allsaintscamparizona.org/registration.</p>				1	2 Memorial Saturday 5:00pm Vespers
3 Sunday of Last Judgment Meatfare Sunday 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School FOCA Meeting	4 Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession of Icons Sunday, March 17, 2018 Following Divine Liturgy	5 	6 Czestochowa Icon	7 Surety of Sinners Icon	8 Kurst Root Icon	9 Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste 5:00pm Vespers
10 Forgiveness Sunday Cheesefare Sunday 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Rite of Forgiveness Following Fellowship Hour Church School MBAS Meeting	11 6:00pm Canon of St Andrew of Crete	12 6:00pm Canon of St Andrew of Crete	13 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	14 Feodorovskaya Icon	15 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts	16 Memorial Saturday 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers
17 Sunday of Orthodoxy 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Procession of Icons</i> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>Holy Trinity Cathedral</i>	18 Join us for a light lenten meal and discussion following Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Please contact Heather Pfeiffer to sign-up to bring soup, fruit, or bread.	19	20 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	21	22 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified	23 5:00pm Vespers
24 St Gregory Palamas Forefeast Annunciation 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church</i>	25 Annunciation Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy	26 Leavetaking Annunciation	27 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	28	29 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts	30 5:00pm Vespers
31 Veneration of the Precious Cross 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>St Nikolas Serbian Orthodox Church</i>	1	2	3 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts Lenten Meal	4	5 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts	6 Memorial Saturday 5:00pm Vespers