SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 23, Issue 9

SPECIAL YOUTH EDITION

September 2023

August Council Highlights

- ★ There was no council meeting in August. The next council meeting is Tuesday, September 12th.
- Archbishop Benjamin to visit September 9th-10th. MBAS to host
- ▼ No Church School on September 3rd and 10th. Classes resume September 17th.



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Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is one of the twelve Great Feasts of the Church. and is celebrated on September 14. It commemo-

rates the finding of the True Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ by Saint Helen, and also celebrates how an instrument of a shameful death ultimately became an instrument of salvation and eternal life. The commemoration and ceremonies of this day are closely parallel to the Feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (third Sunday of Great Lent) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1).

BACKGROUND

The story

The discovery of the Life-Creating Cross occurred in the early 4th century, AD 325. The Emperor Constantine sent his pious elderly mother, Saint Helen, to Jerusalem, with a letter for the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Saint Macarius. She was searching for the site of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Cross of Christ. After a long

investigation, Saint Helen dis- the celebration of the Exaltation covered the precious Cross.

According to tradition, she reached the site by following the scent of sweet basil (Vasilikos, royal, belonging to a King), an

aromatic plant that had grown over the spot where the Cross was bur-

ied. The Cross was found together with the crosses of the two thieves who were crucified with our Lord, and Saint Helen could not tell which of the three crosses was the True Cross of Christ. Patriarch Macarius touched a dying woman with each of the three crosses. Nothing happened with the first two crosses. When he touched her with the third cross, she was healed immediately. Thus, the True Cross of Christ was identified. In another version of the story, a dead man was resurrected when St. Macarius placed the Holy Cross on his body.

Patriarch Macarius climbed on the pulpit and lifted up the Cross. Saint Helen, her court, and the large crowd who had gathered venerated the Cross crying out "Lord have mercy". In this way,

of the Cross was established.

Also commemorated on that day is another historical event that occurred almost three centuries later: in AD 628 another pious Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, defeated the Persians who had captured the Precious Cross and the Patriarch of Jerusalem for fourteen years. After the retake of the Precious Cross, **Emperor Heraclius and Patriarch** Zacharias of Jerusalem had another glorious procession for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The celebration

On the day of the Feast, a special service is held. The Cross, standing on a field of sweet basil sprigs, is taken in solemn procession through the church while the Troparion (hymn) of the Feast is being chanted. The priest then takes the Cross and offers petitions facing the four directions of the compass. This represents the universal nature of the life-giving sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross. The priest raises and lowers the cross, and the people respond by chanting "Lord have mercy". At the end of the

(Continued on page 5)

Message from Our Rector

Greetings to all!

As we come to the end of Summer and we enter into September, the 1st, which is Friday, marks the New Church Year. This is kind of an overlooked commemoration because people tend to look at January 1st more. This can still be an important day for us in our spiritual lives because it is a beginning, and with any beginning we have the ability to start anew.

The Church New Year is a good time to look at ourselves to see what we have done in our church, and ourselves, but it is also a good time to make a commitment for the upcoming Church year. We sometimes make New Year resolutions on Janu-

ary 1st about what we will do for that and attention. And now in September we year and, now, for the church New Year begin the new Church year, and on the 8th we should make our resolutions and commitments to Christ and His Church.

Nativity of the Theotokos. The Nativity of



Throughout the summer there were many activities and events that took our time

begin the new Church year, and on the 8th we have our 1st Great Feast, which is the Nativity of the Theotokos. The Nativity of the Theotokos being the 1st Great Feast of the New Year is the beginning. The Nativity of the Theotokos is celebrated because she would be the woman who would bring forth Christ Who was truly God and truly Man, the Saviour of the world. She made a commitment to God and never wavered in her commitment, and we too must do the same. We should look forward to a New Church Year dedicating our life to Christ and fulfilling His Holy will.

Father Mikel

Nativity (Birth) of the Theotokos

All of us have met or known about special people, men and women who stand out as being good, loving, useful members of the human race. And if we think about how those people became the way they

are, we might say, "They must have had good parents."

So it is with the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. We know that she is a very special person, chosen by God to be the mother of His Son. When we celebrate her nativity, which means birth, we also celebrate her parents,

Joachim and Anna. We are grateful to Mary for being so ready to do God's will. We are grateful to her parents, who raised her to be faithful and obedient to God.

The story of Mary's birth does not appear in the Bible. We know the story from other writings which are not part of the New Testament. These writings are still used by the Church, and they tell us about some of God's people and the things that happened to them.

It is in these writings that we meet Joachim and Anna. They were a loving cou-

ple, faithful to God and devoted to each other. But the long years of their marriage had never brought them a child. They prayed daily for the blessing of a son or daughter, but the years went by

and no child was born.

In the Hebrew society of Joachim and Anna's time, the greatest of all earthly blessings was to have many children. So, as you might guess, not having any children was a very big problem. People looked at a couple with no children as having failed to earn God's

favor. In fact, we are told that one day when Joachim went to worship and make an offering to God, he was turned away because he was not a father, and therefore he was not worthy to make an offering. There was nothing Joachim could do but go slowly and sadly back home.

You can imagine how painful it was for Joachim and Anna to live without children. They watched their friends rejoice when babies were born, laughing and playing with them. They saw others have the joy and pride that comes with watching chil-

dren grow up and start lives of their own.

Yet Joachim and Anna did not blame God. They did not resent their friends' happiness as parents. They patiently waited and prayed, and God did something nobody would expect. When Anna and Joachim were old, He gave them a child. And she was not just any child. She was to have the most wonderful destiny that any human being has ever had: she would be the Theotokos, the Birthgiver, the Mother of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

After reading the story, discuss these questions and points with your child(ren):

- 1. Think of Joachim after being turned away when he tried to make his offering to God. How did he feel? How would any of us feel? What does it feel like not to be part of a group because other group members think you are different from them?
- 2. Joachim and Anna had to wait a very long time to be blessed with a child. Have you ever had to wait a very long time for something you wanted very badly? When?
- 3. Joachim and Anna are honored by the Church for their patience and faith. When do we hear their names?

Reprinted from $https://dce.oca.org/focus/theotokos/10-12/$\frac{1}{2}$

Blessing of Students and Splash Bash

The traditional Blessing of Students and Teachers was held on Sunday, August 20th, marking the beginning of the Church School year. May the Lord bless all who study and all who teach them in the ways of Faith.

The Blessing of Students and Teachers was followed by our first ever Back to Church School Splash Bash. Despite the weather forecast calling for rain, we were blessed to does not mean that the kids stayed dry!

The festivities started with Frisbee Pool Noddle Race, and there was stiff competition between Lydia and Roman. Next was a team competition, Pass the (Wet)



Sponge. Eva suggested a game of Drip have a light cloud cover but no rain. But that Drip Splash, similar to Duck Duck Goose, but with a bucket of water. The slip and slide proved to be popular with all ages, especially for diehard fans-Irina, Bobby and Emma, who didn't want to leave! Thank you to all our parents and teachers for pitching in to make this a success!

















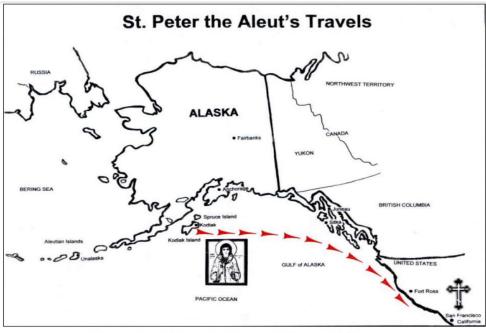




St. Peter the Aleut

HOLY MARTYR OF SAN FRANCISCO COMMEMORATED: SEPTEMBER 24TH

A native of Kodiak Island in Alaska, the child Tchounagnak was given the name Peter at his baptism into the Orthodox Faith by the monks from St. Herman's missionary party. Peter was a fur-hunter. In 1815, a hunting party of fourteen Aleuts, including Peter, were nearing the California shoreline by ship. Back in 1812, the Russian American Trading Company had built Fort Ross, which was located about 50 miles north of San Francisco. They wanted this to be a trading post and a place to raise crops and cattle in the warmer climate. The food and cattle would help support the villages in Alaska. Spain owned California at this time and they were suspicious about what the Russians might do. They were afraid the Russians might attack them and try to take over San Francisco. When Peter's party of young fur hunters came near Fort Ross, they were captured by Spanish sailors and taken to San Francisco for a mock trial. During his captivity. Peter was asked to leave the Orthodox Faith for another religion. He refused! As a result, two of his toes were cut off. Again, Peter was asked to deny his Orthodox Faith and again he refused. Finally, his two hands were cut off. At the age of fifteen, he became the third martyr for the Orthodox Faith in America. When the Spaniards were ready to start on the next Aleut they received word to stop the trial. The story of Peter's martyrdom to the Orthodox faith was told by the other Aleut fur hunters who were finally released. When St. Herman, who was still on Kodiak Island, was told of Peter's death, he turned to his icon and crossed himself and said, "Holy New Martyr Peter, Pray to God for Us!" In 1980, Peter the Aleut was glorified as a saint.



Knowing Our Ones and Tens Place

St. Juvenaly and St. Peter the Aleut

This activity will help sharpen our number place values skills even more. Write the correct number being asked. Then solve the puzzle by placing the words next to their matching numbers below. The answer is the Prokeimenon for the Divine Liturgy for the New Martyrs of Alaska.

Five ones		Two t		Zero ones	Four tens	
Lord =		the =		will =	land =	
Nine tens		Seven	tens	Seven ones	one ten	
has =		are =		of =	in =	
Eight ones		Two o	nes	Nine ones	5 tens	
who=		His =		has =	His =	
Three ones		Three	tens	Eight tens		
shown =		to = _		saints =		
Four ones		Six te	ens	Six ones		
wonder	's =	_ The =	_	all =		
60	-	5		9	3	
	_	20		4		
6		20		4	,	
2 -	0	30	20	80	8	
-	70		10	50	40	

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

(Continued from page 1)

service, the people venerate the cross and receive sprigs of basil from the priest.

The day of the Feast is similar to Holy Friday with a strict fast. The Gospel readings refer to the Lord's Passion.

In anticipation of the Feast of the Holy Cross, it is a tradition to plant sweet basil, sometime during the previous spring, so that by the Feast of the Holy Cross the plant will have enough sprigs to bring over to the church for blessing.

Another tradition with the blessed basil sprigs is to prepare leavening (prozymi) in order to make the prosphoron (see also Preparing the Gifts) and homemade bread.

The Icon



19th century Russian icon, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

In the center of the icon we can see St Macarius, on the pulpit, holding the True Cross of Christ 'with fear and trembling'. ** On the right, and at a lower level, there is the Empress Saint Helen facing the Cross and motioning in petition. A smaller or larger group of clergy and lay people is also shown, depending on the icon. They are all attending the magnificent event. In some variations of the icon, on the left

side, there is also the glorious Church of ADDITIONAL RESOURCES the Resurrection, constructed ten years later. In other variations, on the right side of the icon, we can see the miraculously resurrected man in his bed.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1)

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4)

As Thou wast voluntarily crucified for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.

AUDIO RECORDINGS

- Troparion of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, audio recording by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
- Troparion of the Holy Cross for children (English, Arabic and Greek), music video by Kh. Gigi Baba-Shadid.

Special thanks to Kh. Gigi for granting us permission to embed the video into our webpage.

EXPLORE FURTHER

- The Exaltation of the Cross Exploring the Feasts of the Orthodox Christian Church, video by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
- The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, online article by the Orthodox Church in America.
- The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross, online article by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
- Constantine and Helen equal to the Apostles, Greek Orthodox Church of America.
- Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Greek Orthodox Church of America.

We have prepared printable activities and interactive ideas both the Exaltation and the Veneration of the Holy Cross. We suggest exploring both these pages on our web site, as they contain helpful material that can be used to teach any lesson on the Cross of our Lord. Click HERE to go to our Veneration of the Holy Cross page for more Holy Cross teaching resources.

BASIL PLANTING PROJECT

This is a long-term project we created for the summer, to take the children from the feast of St. Helen in May to the Elevation of the Cross in September. It is, however, a useful resource to explore for any time of the year, whenever one wants to work on the theme of the Holy Cross.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We have prepared printable activities and interactive ideas both the Exaltation and the Veneration of the Holy Cross. We suggest exploring both these pages on our web site, as they contain helpful material that can be used to teach any lesson on the Cross of our Lord. Click HERE to go to our Veneration of the Holy Cross page for more Holy Cross teaching resources.



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Building Community Through Axe Throwing

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) hosted an axe throwing outing on Sunday, August 27th. The entire congregation was invited to test their skill and get "medieval" for some fun, competition, and fellowship.



Following Liturgy and Fellowship Hour, parishioners gathered for an afternoon of fun and fellowship at Lumberjaxes in Tempe to test their axe throwing skill. Participants ranged from 1.5 yrs to the 70s. Matushka Elizabeth had fun honing her axe throwing skills, but little Bobby had to limit his participation to roaming around the facility and looking adorable. Nick Bock was a natural, but don't underestimate Teresa Bock! Not only could she hit the bullseye target, she was able to plant

the axe in the small green circles for extra points. Award for best dressed goes to Luka and Payton, who were probably the first people to throw an axe in a suit (okay, they removed their jackets). Most im proved goes Stephanie Homyak Once the staff gave her some pointers she could not be stopped. Even Fr Mikel and Fr. David got in on the action!



Around SS Peter & Paul

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

September 2 Mary Flynn

- 4 Edward Gala
- 8 Stella Dolotov
- 12 Nick Enoch
- 15 Mary Beth Innes
- 17 Luka Radjenovich
- 19 Alexander Enoch
- 20 Walter & Tania Booriakin Nicholas Alquist

Mongaya Leta!
Many Years!

SAFE TRAVELS

Natalya Delsante is headed to Perugia, Italy for the semester where she will be continuing her coursework in Environmental

Studies. Her weeks abroad will be filled with garden work, excursions across the country, and lots of good food.



PRAYER LIST

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Sandra Hoff Robert Hoff Marie Lobb Ann Carroll Elizabeth Michel Walter Booriakin Jamie Arango Tammy Horton The suffering people of Ukraine

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, reach out his healing hand and bless these, His servants.

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

Bits and Pieces

ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN VISIT As has been previously communicated, His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin will be making an archpastoral visit to Saints Peter and Paul Church on Saturday & Sunday, September 9th-10th. If you haven't already, please mark your calendars now in order to greet and honor the Archbishop.

FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA (FOCA) wishes everyone born in September a very happy and blessed birthday.

FOCA will be hosting our fourth annual tailgate party on Sunday, October 29th, so mark your calendars. We are also collecting new or gently used books for the Christmas project at Whittier school. Our goal is to be able to give every child a book of their own. Any help will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for all our support in our endeavors.

LUNCHEON FOR ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN

The Myrrhbearers are helping to coordinate a luncheon when Archbishop Benjamin visits on September 10th. If you have not already signed up to bring a dish and would like to, please email Mat. Elizabeth at flagstaffred@gmail.com. Note, if you bring a dish, please remember to take your dish home along with any leftovers. Lastly, we will need everyone's help with cleanup after the luncheon. This will include throwing away disposable items, packing up centerpieces, washing dishes, putting away extra items, tidying the kitchen, and taking out the trash.

NUT ROLL BAKE The Myrrh Bearers Altar Society will be baking nut, apricot, and poppy seed rolls again this fall. Preorders are required and will be taken during the month of September. Rolls will be available for pickup starting November 19th. We are also looking for volunteers to help with a bake date. If you are interested in helping with rolling out the dough or baking it, please see Matushka Elizabeth about bake dates.

CHURCH CLEANING A small group gathered for the cleaning of our church parish. The cleaning is in anticipation of the arrival of Archbishop Benjamin in September. Due to the small number of volunteers only the church was cleaned. The group concentrated on cleaning the woodwork (the walls, the pews, Iconostasis and the icon stands), around the windows, vents and the floors (wax removal).



I'd like to thank those who were in attendance: Fr. Mikel, Fr. David, Jeremy, Yuliya, Pam, Alex, and Marty for all the hard work and dedication of time on a Saturday morning.

Nicholas Bock

CHURCH SCHOOL SS Peter and Paul Sunday School program teaches children how to live their Orthodox faith. Children are taught about the Holy Bible and Tradition, which provides a strong Christian foundation for them to go out into the world and share their faith with others and do good works.



Our teachers are dedicated to training your children in the Holy Bible, Orthodox faith, and Tradition. Lessons focus on stories from the Bible, church history, and the fundamentals of Orthodoxy. Classes are arranged by age and meet every Sunday after Holy Communion, except on major feast days. Our Sunday School program seeks to bring children into a deeper personal relationship with Christ and encourages their active participation in the life of the parish.

We are excited to welcome back returning teachers: Lesley Zaremba, Jarrod Zaremba, Lauren Hecht, Susan Weiss, Stephanie Homyak



and Peggy Hecht. We also welcome two new members to our Church School Team: Katrina Delsante and Chris Blaise in our high school class. We are also looking for another volunteer to help in our CGS classroom.

THE FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE LIFE -GIVING CROSS will be celebrated on Thursday, September 14th. Vespers will be on Wednesday, September 13th, at 6:00 p.m. and Divine Liturgy on the 14th at 9:00 a.m. Please remember that this Feast is a strict fast day, although wine and oil are permitted

BOOKSTORE The bookstore has a lovely selection of Akathist Prayers. While you may find canons and akathist prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ and our Most Holy Theotokos in your prayer book, there are also others that can be read that are dedicated to saints or for particular occasions. Stop by and take a look! (If a purchase isn't in your budget right now, you may even be able to do an internet search and find a free PDF version.)

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.

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL	28 Ven. Job of Pochaev	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	30 Afterfeast Be- heading of St. John the Baptist St. Alexander Nevsky	31	I Church New Year Ven. Simeon the Stylite	2
1:00pm FOCA Outing Lumberjaxes Tempe Marketplace	6:00pm Vespers		6:00pm Bible Study			5:00pm Vespers
3	4	5	6	7 Forefeast Nativity	8 NATIVITY OF	9 Saturday before
8:40am Hours	LABOR			of the Theotokos	тне Тнеотокоѕ	Exaltation
9:00am Divine Liturgy	DAY M	MARK YOUR CALENDAR Archbishop Benjamin will visit SS Peter and Paul on September 9 th -10 th			0.40	Righteous Parents Joachim and Anna
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No church school	يمي				211110 21011 8/	
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			CiOOsina Biblio Strudy	6:00pm Vespers		5:00pm Vespers
			6:00pm Bible Study			· ·
10 Sun. Before Exaltation 8:40am Hours	11	12 Leavetaking Nativity Theotokos	Forefeast Exaltation	14 EXALTATION OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS	15	I 6 Saturday after Exaltation
9:00am Divine Liturgy		rvativity Theotokos	Exaitation			Exaltation
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LUNCHEON FOR				2.00am Bivine Licars/		
ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN		6:00pm Council	6:00pm Vespers			
No Church School		Meeting	NO BIBLE STUDY			5:00pm Vespers
17 Sun After Exaltation	18	19	20	21 Leavetaking	22	23 Conception of
8:40am Hours		NUT ROLL	DAKE	Exaltation		St. John the Baptist
9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL		Starts Saturday, September 30th.				
	See M	atushka Elizabeth to				
FOCA MEETING				,		
MBAS MEETING			6:00pm Bible Study			5:00pm Vespers
24 New Martyrs of	25 Venerable	,	27	28 Ven. Chariton,	29	30
Alaska	Sergius of Radonezh	Theologian 8:40am Hours		Confessor		NUT ROLL
8:40am Hours		9:00am Divine Liturgy				BAKE
9:00am Divine Liturgy		2 8/				DAKE
CHURCH SCHOOL						
	6:00pm Vespers		6:00pm Bible Study			5:00pm Vespers
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9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL	We welcon					
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			6:00pm Bible Study			5:00pm Vespers
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