

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 5

May 2026

April Council Highlights

- ✘ March's Operating Income was \$29,279.15 and Operating Expenses were \$21,030.29, resulting in monthly net income of \$8,248.86.
- ✘ Project Mexico Pantry Partners drive has been successfully completed and food boxed up.
- ✘ \$360.00 raised for the Desert Deanery's collection for new vestments for Bishop Vasily.



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The Ministry of the Deacon in the Orthodox Church

The following is excerpted from a talk given by Deacon Photios Touloumes to the Toronto Orthodox Conference

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles Lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whosoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whosoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

In the above, the words service, servant, and ministry can be substituted by the words deacon, deaconing, or diaconate. Holy Scripture uses these words in this way. Literally, deacon means servant or waiter. Very early in the Church, as recorded in the Book of Acts, the words deacon and diaconate came to be used as the designation of a specific office, part of the official ministry of the Church. The Book of Acts tells us that, with the expansion of the Church, the Apostles were unable to perform all that was requested of them as travelling ministers of the word. They appointed bishops to preside over the Christian communities so that they might

continue their preaching. Deacons were also chosen from among the faithful to assist in the work of the Church and as co-workers with the bishops.

Originally, seven deacons were chosen and their duties were twofold. First they had the responsibility of gathering the food and other goods which were brought to the Church as offerings, and of distributing these donations as the philanthropy of the entire community to the needy whom the Church supported. It was also their duty to prepare for the Eucharistic gatherings and the common meals in which the whole Church participated. Consequently, the deacon's role was both to extend the Church's charity to those who required it and to lead the people in the liturgical gatherings.

This idea of serving at tables very early influenced their comparison to angels, for just as the angels serve God, deacons serve the heavenly banquet of the holy Church. Consequently the form and design of diaconal vestments reflect not only their comparison to angels, but also the practicality of their service at the altar and their relationship to the bishop. Because of this,

the deacon's stole (orarion), with which he binds himself before approaching the Holy Table at the Anaphora, is often compared to the wings of the angels. So too both the deacon's stole and cuffs are often stamped with the words "Holy, Holy, Holy," the hymn which the angels sing as they surround the throne of God. Seraphic representations are used on all the diaconal vestments to signify the Seraphic ministry at the heavenly Throne. The deacon's sticharion originated from the Dalmatic, a form of tunic with large sleeves that came into use in the second century.

Although it became the informal uniform for high officials and in the West by the fourth century was worn by important bishops, it was adopted as a normal dress by the seven regional deacons of Rome. Significantly, deacons by that time, because of their role as ministers of charity for the Church, had already become superintendents of the whole poor relief system of the city and the estates which formed its endowment; and their duties were becoming administrative and financial rather than reli-

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Message From Our Rector

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

We are now in the Paschal season, which continues until Ascension on May 21. The joyous feast of the Resurrection of Christ is the most important for all Christians. As St. John Chrysostom proclaims in his Paschal homily, "Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness." The joy of the Risen Savior is offered to every person, yet not all know of it, understand it, or choose to receive it.

The way to receive this joy is through humility. Christ teaches us in the Gospel of

Matthew: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Our lives on earth are temporary—we are sojourners—but while we are here, we are called to receive the teachings of Christ and His Apostles, to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and to live according to the fullness of the Orthodox faith. In a time when

many false teachings circulate—especially online—it is all the more important that we learn the true faith, live it faithfully, and share it with others.

Having celebrated the Feast of Feasts, Holy Pascha, we should continue to share its joy with everyone we meet. As we enter the busy summer season—when school ends, travel begins, and schedules fill—we must not forget Christ or all that He has done for us. Let us remain steadfast in prayer, reading the Gospel and Epistle daily, and keeping Christ at the center of our lives, so that we may always be ready to bear witness to Him.

May the Lord guide and strengthen you all!

Fr. Mikel



Bits . . .

CONGRATULATIONS! Dylan represented Arizona at a gymnastics competition in Galveston, Texas this past weekend, earning 8th place All-Around in his division,

along with 5th place in floor exercise and 6th place in vault.

Delilah com-



peted in Utah at the Regional Championships, where she placed 5th in floor exercise and 6th in beam.



SUMMER CAMP Registration is open for St Eugene's Summer Camp June 21-27!

<https://www.steugeneecamp.org/register>

St. Eugene's is an Orthodox Christian Summer camp for youth ages 7-17 in Dunlap, CA, organized by the OCA Diocese of the West. Register by May 10 for \$615 (*after May 10 the registration fee increases to \$700*). Limited grants are available.

ZOOM CATECHUMEN CLASS Fr. Mikel will be offering Zoom catechumen classes on Mondays at 6pm. If you wish to be involved in the Zoom class, please email Fr. Mikel so he can add you to the Zoom invite.

PANTRY PARTNERS UPDATE A big "THANK YOU" to the entire Parish for their overwhelming support and response with so much food! In all, 2,255 lbs of food was donated, for a total of 71 boxes.



NEW SECURITY COMMITTEE AT SAINTS PETER & PAUL SS Peter and Paul is forming a Security Committee dedicated to the safety and well-being of our parish community. The committee will address all matters related to church safety and security, including fire, medical, and other emergency responses.

As a first step, we will be hosting a **Basic Life Support (BLS) training** in the near future — and all parishioners are warmly invited to attend. More details on the date and location will follow soon.

Additional information about specific roles and responsibilities within the Security Committee will be shared in the coming weeks.

If you are interested in attending the BLS training, serving on the committee, or have any safety or security concerns you would like to raise, please contact **Mia Quintanilla** or **Arthur Rhodes**.

We look forward to building a safer, more prepared parish together.

Images of Our Journey to Pascha

Lazarus Saturday



Holy Thursday



Holy Saturday



Palm Sunday

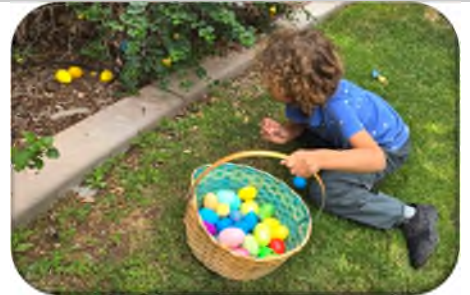


Holy Friday



Images of Our Journey to Pascha

Pascha



Bright Monday



The Ministry of the Deacon in the Orthodox Church

(Continued from page 1)

gious. The deacon's sticharion (robe), moreover, is a longer version of the bishop's sakkos, signifying his relationship to the bishop. The primary function of the deacon as server at the altar is manifest architecturally as well in that the North and South doors leading to the sanctuary are called Deacon's Doors. They are traditionally adorned by icons of the Archdeacons Stephen and Laurence and/or the Archangels Michael and Gabriel dressed in diaconal vestments.

In his ministry of charity, the deacon moved among the people so as to learn their needs and bring these needs to the bishop's attention for solution; and as such is equivalent to a social worker in modern terms. In the third century the Church in Rome supported 1,500 widows and needy, while in fourth-century Alexandria 3,000 needy were fed daily by the Church. Central to the deacon's duties was visiting the sick and the imprisoned, caring for the demoniacs, responsibility for the widows and orphans, instructing the catechumens and preparing them for Holy Baptism, and taking Communion to those who are absent from the Eucharistic gatherings. Eventually the deacons also taught and preached the Holy Gospel. In all these actions he acted on behalf of the bishop (or priest) and the whole Church and was directly responsible to the bishop in all things. Categorically, the deacon is not an independent agent. Because of his dependence upon and close co-operation with the bishop, the deacon is often described as the eyes and ears of the bishop.

The works of charity which the deacon performs are integrally tied to this service as cocolebrant at the altar and emanate therefrom. Having collected the offerings of the faithful, the deacon chose what was necessary for the Liturgy, and prepared those elements necessary for the Holy Communion. All of the offerings were originally collected in the Diaconicon (also called Diaconry), a separate

room outside the church where vestments, holy vessels and food were kept, and where the bread and wine were prepared for the Holy Liturgy. Having completed the preparation of bread and wine for communion, the deacons left the diaconicon at the proper time and, entering the Church, proceeded to the altar where they presented these gifts to the celebrant as an offering of the people. This is the origin of our Great Entrance and the reason why even today the deacon carries the holy paten at the Entrance and announces: "All of us, and all pious and Orthodox Christians, May the Lord God remember in His Kingdom, now and ever and unto ages of ages."

Just as the breads used for the divine service are called *prospora* (which means to offer to), so too the deacon's function is one of *prospherein*, that is of offering to the celebrant the gifts of the people, which will be returned to them as the Body and Blood of Christ after they have been offered up (*anapherein*) at the altar.

Liturgically, it is the deacon's function to bring the people together and unite them in corporate prayer and in their function of fulfilling their role as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. He may not give a blessing, however, since this right belongs solely to the priests and bishops. Rather he leads them in their offerings to the altar—through their material offerings (*prospora*) and in their prayers—so that the celebrant may offer up (*anaphora*) their sacrifice unto God. Indeed, the diaconal function consists primarily of enabling the corporate action of the Eucharist to be fulfilled through the participation of all the members of the Body of Christ in their several functions at their proper time and in their proper order.✠

CONGRATULATIONS!

On April 18, our parish was richly blessed to welcome the servant of God, Michael (Griffin), into the Church through Holy Baptism and Chrismation.

We rejoice together with him, his sponsor Alexander, his fiancé Kate (now wife), and his family and friends. With gratitude, we give thanks to the Lord for calling him to a life of discipleship as a member of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church. May God grant him many years!



SS PETER & PAUL WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The second meeting of the women's book club will take place on Saturday, May 23rd at 3:00pm in the church hall. We will focus on Chapter 4 of the book *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven*.

"Deacons must be dignified: not deceitful, not given to much wine, not greedy, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. So let them be tested first. Then, being irreproachable, let them serve as deacons. Their wives likewise must be venerable: not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of one wife, governing their children and their own houses well. For those who serve well as deacons gain for themselves a good standing, and great authority in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." – 1 Tim 3:8-13.

More Bits . . .

PASCHAL SEASON REFLECTION

Sweet Springtime!

Christ is Risen! Christos Voskrese! Since being in the Paschal season, I've been thinking about a phrase from the Lamentations service:

"O my sweet springtime, O my sweetest Child, where has all Thy beauty gone?"

This year, Pittsburgh was hit with a particularly difficult winter. Both as an Arizonan and someone who works for homeless people, the weight of winter was heavy. The winter cold is much like the summer heat of Phoenix: oppressive and deadly. With this in mind, the relief of the Springtime and Resurrection was immense. Out of the winter has come a lightness. In the clinic, to my dismay, this has manifested as an increased "no show" rate, meaning many patients are now missing their appointments. Although this is slightly annoying as someone who does all the clinic scheduling, I find joy in knowing that the patients are missing because they are en-

joying the sun and comfort of May. The sweetness of Springtime is like taking a heavy bag off after a long day. The white-knuckled winter is followed by a deep breath and decompression. Christ as the Springtime is the most apt image in my life: a new life, joy, and warmth. Though my year of service is coming to a close, I am hoping to bring this cyclical participation in the church with me, as to always relish in the relief of the Resurrection.

Natalya Delsante

AKATHISTS

Sometimes we pray Akathists with a specific need in mind. Here is a useful website of many Akathists tied to many common needs: <https://www.orthodox-mission.org/akathists>.

LOST AND FOUND

The necklace pictured to the right was left at the bookstore a couple of weeks ago. If it belongs to you, please see Katrina Delsante in the bookstore to claim it.



NEW TO THE BOOKSTORE!

That All May Know the Cross in the Breaking of Bread, \$15

This book primarily details the life and struggles of +Metropolitan Herman through the author Martin Paluch's eyes. As a subdeacon, a seminarian and an aide to the metropolitan for 57 years, Martin firsthand encountered the struggles of a saintly person whose love for God inspired many on earth; this book details his long legacy of love. Additionally there is a section that addresses the question, "Who is God?". More familiarly in our parish you know Martin as the brother of our beloved choir director, Barbara Harp.

The bookstore now also carries lovely lace head coverings. They are available in either off-white or black and are the perfect weight for Arizona summers. \$22

As a reminder, service books that were pre-ordered are ready for pickup. \$25.

Around SS Peter & Paul

MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- May 1 JohnHenry Rhodes
 3 Deacon John & Mastushka Julianna
 Delilah Arango
 6 Sandra and Robert Hoff
 7 Archer Towne
 8 Robert Hoff
 Marina Harrelson
 10 Jagger Rhodes
 12 Lydia Osolinsky
 Natalya Keck
 16 David Bieber
 18 Darya Dolenko
 19 Hailee Behnen
 21 Elijah Brawn
 25 Carl & Ashlee Brawn
 27 Marty Gala
 Katrina and Joseph Delsante
 29 Emma Guerrero
 30 Carol Yavornitzky

Many years! Mnogaya leta!

CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY YEARS!

We celebrate the holy union of Ekaterina and Griffin Paler, crowned in the sacred mystery of Holy Matrimony on Sunday, April 19th.

In the presence of God, family, and friends, they have begun their journey as one—joined in love, guided by faith, and strengthened through the grace of the Holy Spirit. May their life together be filled with patience, humility, and unwavering devotion, reflecting Christ's love for His Church.

Many years to the newly crowned servants of God, Ekaterina and Griffin!



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:

*Sue Bieber
 David Bieber
 William Osolinsky
 Anatoly Bezkorovainy
 Jamie Arango
 Ann Carroll
 Antonia Adams-Clement
 Tania Booriakin
 Walter Booriakin
 The Suffering people of
 Ukraine*

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

Bits and Pieces

WELCOME all visitors to SS Peter and Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, enjoy some coffee and fellowship, and visit our bookstore.

THANK YOU to all who made our observance of Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha to be so spiritually rewarding, growth-giving, and joyous. May the Risen Lord grant His light and joy to all who work with such dedication to glorify the Most Holy Trinity through our worship and our community life.

THANK YOU FROM THE MYRRH BEARERS The Myrrh Bearers Altar Society (MBAS) would like to thank everyone who helped with Pascha baking, making soup for presanctified liturgy, helped prepare the palms and pussy willows for the celebration of Palm Sunday, and helped prepare, bring items, and/or cleanup for the Pascha luncheon.

MOTHER'S DAY We wish a very happy Mother's Day to all Mothers, Grandmothers, & Godmothers! May God bless you and your families this Mother's Day.

As is our custom, our Church School students have been busy working on gifts for all the women for Mother's Day. The students will be distributing the gifts at the end of Liturgy on Mother's Day.

PASCHA CARD Thank you to all who participated in this year's Pascha Card. To date, we have raised \$1,700, which will be donated to St. John the Baptist Monastery Building Fund.

FOCA Christ is risen! Sincere thanks to all who prepared the red eggs for Pascha. They are a cherished part of the celebration, rich in meaning and eagerly anticipated each year.

Many years to all who celebrate their birthdays in the month of May—may God grant you many years!

As we honor mothers this month, we prayerfully wish you continued blessings and strength in all that you do.

ELECTRONIC DONATIONS SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church offers several convenient electronic giving options:

1. Zelle (Increasingly Popular Option)

You may contribute using Zelle.

- Use the ID: **Hhomyak@cox.net**.
- Be sure to include your designation (e.g., general fund, candles, Pascha, memorial, etc.) in the **memo field**.

Zelle allows you to clearly specify what your gift is for.

2. Church Website Giving

You may also donate through the church website: **www.sspeterpaulaz.org** Click the **Donations/Donate** button located at the bottom left of the home page.

- You will be redirected to a secure third-party site.
- You may choose your funding source.
- You may set up recurring donations.
- Credit cards are accepted.
- There is a **3% surcharge** for this service.
- **No memo field** for designations; presumed to be for **general church operations**.

The treasurer is able to see who has made each contribution.

3. Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA

For those who qualify and have an IRA, contributions may be made through a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**.

A QCD allows eligible individuals to:

- Donate directly from an IRA to a qualified charity (such as the church).
- Excludes the donated amount from your taxable income.
- Satisfy all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

If you are interested in making a QCD gift, please contact: **David Homyak (Treasurer)** dhomyak@cox.net for more information.

If you have any questions about electronic giving, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for your continued support and generosity during the holy season of Pascha.

Remember that there is **no kneeling or prostrating** all the way up until Kneeling Vespers on the Feast of Pentecost (50 days after Pascha).

JAMES LEGENDRE has been accepted to Suprasl 2026, an international gathering of Orthodox youth, taking place July 28–August 3 at the Monastery of the Annunciation in Suprasl, Poland. The cost is approximately \$2,200. To support James, please mark your check, electronic donation, and/or envelope "Suprasl."

CONGRATULATIONS!

With thanksgiving and joy, we rejoice in the crowning of the servants of God, Raven and Ray DiResto, who were united in the Holy Mystery of Matrimony on Sunday, April 26, 2026.

Surrounded by their loved ones and standing before the Lord, they have entered into a new life together, becoming one in Christ. May their marriage be blessed with steadfast faith, mutual love, and the abiding grace of the Holy Spirit, that their union may bear witness to Christ's love for His Church.

"Lord, crown them with glory and honor." Many years to the newly crowned servants of God, Raven and Ray!



May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>WELCOME!</p> <p>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.</p>				<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>Collections for Project Mexico are on the 1st Sunday of the month. The next collection will be Sunday May 3rd.</p>		
<p>3 Sunday of the Paralytic</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL</p> <p>FOCA MEETING</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:00pm ZOOM Catechumen Class</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 Mid-Pentecost</p> <p>6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith</p>	<p>7 Repose of St Alexis Toth</p>	<p>8 Apostle & Evangelist John the Theologian</p>	<p>9</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>10 Samaritan Woman</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p></p>	<p>11 SS Cyril & Methodius</p> <p>6:00pm ZOOM Catechumen Class</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6:00pm Council Mtg</p>	<p>13 Mid-Pentecost</p> <p>6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith</p>	<p>Sunday, May 10 St Mary of Egypt Monastery will be here to sell their items.</p>		<p>16</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>17 Sunday of the Blindman</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>LAST DAY OF CHURCH SCHOOL</p> <p>MBAS MEETING</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:00pm ZOOM Catechumen Class</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 Leave of Pascha</p> <p>5:30pm Vespers NO CLASS</p>	<p>21 ASCENSION</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>3:00pm Women's Book Club</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>24 Holy Fathers 1st Ecumenical Council</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>25 Third Finding of the Honorable Head of Prophet and Baptist John</p> <p>MEMORIAL DAY</p> <p></p> <p>6:00pm ZOOM Catechumen Class</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith</p>	<p>Mark your calendars . . . SS Peter & Paul Potluck Luncheon Monday, June 29, 2026 following Divine Liturgy</p>		<p>30</p> <p>10:00am BAPTISMS</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>31 PENTECOST</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p><i>Kneeling Vespers</i></p>	<p>1 Holy Spirit Day</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>NO ZOOM CLASS</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>NO CLASS</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>FAST FREE WEEK</p>						