

# SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 15, Issue 3

March 2015

## Sunday of Orthodoxy



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# The Annunciation

**March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation, the visit of the archangel Gabriel to Mary, proclaiming God's plan that she would give birth to His Son.**

We read the story of the Annunciation on this day, in Luke 1: 24-38. It begins with Gabriel saluting Mary with "Hail," which can be translated as "rejoice." One of the recurring phrases with which Mary is addressed in Orthodox worship is, "Rejoice, O unwedded bride." Origen wrote that a salutation like this is never "addressed to a man; such a special greeting was reserved only for Mary."

Gabriel tells Mary, "The Lord is with you." These words alert us that God is going to do something extraordinary with the person to whom they are addressed. In the Old Testament, Nathan says the words to King David when David plans to build a temple for the Lord (2 Samuel 7:3). In Judges 6: 12 the angel of the Lord comes to encourage Gideon to fight the Midianites, and says, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor" (Judges 6: 12).

Mary is understandably troubled by Gabriel's words, and by

his formal greeting. She is, after all, just a young girl. In answer to her question of how the birth will take place, Gabriel says, "The Holy Spirit will come upon

you." His words tell us that this is a uniquely miraculous birth, far beyond any other, including the birth of John the Baptist which Gabriel also has foretold.

Once again, similar words occur in the Old Testament, describing something important. In Isaiah 32: 15-20 we read about the future transformation of everything in creation, when "the Spirit is [will be] poured upon us from on high."

Luke uses words that tie Christ's birth to the Old Testament, the preparation for His coming, to remind us that God always prepares us for things. But then he makes it clear that this birth, the coming of Christ, is the end and fulfillment of all that preparation. Gabriel says: "...and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house

of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Young Mary stands in the presence of this imposing celestial being. She hears these life-changing words. She knows that Gabriel is waiting for her response. Without equivocation, without any more questions, she calmly says, "Let it be to me according to your word."

Her decision will be costly—Simeon will soon tell her of the sword that is to pierce her soul. But she trusts that agreeing to be "the handmaid of the Lord" is the right thing. A reading for this day, Hebrews 2: 14, tells us that it is indeed the right thing for our salvation: "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he [Christ] himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Mary is the one through whom this deliverance took place.

### Troparion - Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation,  
The revelation of the eternal mystery!  
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin  
As Gabriel announces the coming of Grace.  
Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos:  
Rejoice, O Full of Grace,  
The Lord is with You!



# Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We continue to journey together on the path that will lead us to the end of the Lenten Fast and into the greatest week of the Church year, the week we know as Holy Week. While Holy Week is still a few weeks away, it is important for us to pause even now and reflect upon this annual celebration of our faith, it is already time for us to make plans so that we will be able to participate in the wonderful, solemn, and grace-filled services of Holy Week and Pascha.



While Holy Week has its own special customs and traditions that are often based upon our various ethnic backgrounds, Holy Week is most truly understood as a series of special liturgical celebrations with which the Orthodox Church marks the life-giving days of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

In our liturgical celebrations, in the proclamation of the Scriptures, in the liturgical actions and ceremonies that take place during Holy Week, we ourselves are

brought to Jerusalem, we learn of Judas' plotting and planning, we gather for the Lord's Last Supper and witness His washing the feet of the disciples, we walk to the Garden of Gethsemane and see the Lord betrayed by a kiss. We are brought to that inner courtyard as Peter denies His Lord, to the flogging and crowning with thorns. We re-live the Cross being placed upon the Lord's shoulders as He walked to Calvary. And, yes, we are there when He is placed upon the Cross, as his hands and feet are pierced with nails, as he breathes

His last and gives up His spirit. We then walk with Joseph and Nicodemus as they carry the Lord's Precious Body to the tomb and set the stone over its entrance. We are present, too, when the Myrrhbearing women, "early in the morning of that first day of the week," find the Tomb to be empty.

Of course, as we are present each year, as we commemorate these life-giving moments in a special way, through words and hymns, we celebrate and commemorate a reality we already live and experience each

and every day of the year—the reality of the salvation that has been obtained for us through Christ's death and resurrection.

Through its special, heightened call to prayer, fasting, almsgiving, reflection, special services, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church, the Great Fast (Great Lent) prepares us to enter into those days, hours, and moments in a special way so that, come Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday (really one feast) we are ready to enter spiritually into the Holy City of Jerusalem and walk with the Lord through His last days...days He lived, days He suffered, and days on which he conquered sin... for us and for our salvation.

As we look ahead to Holy Week and Pascha, a few short weeks ahead, let us double our efforts and organize our lives (mark your calendars now!) in order to more fully participate in the Church's services so that, each one of us as individuals and all of us as a parish community, may remember "all those things that have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the Third Day."

With love in the Lord,

+Bishop Daniel

## SS Peter and Paul Pascha Card

Name(s) : \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) to appear on card:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Donation: \$10.00

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

Deadline: April 1, 2015

*Return completed form to Stephanie Homyak*



# Saints From One Age to Another

**April 3 is the feast day of Saint Nicetas the Confessor. He was born in the 8th century in Bithynia (Asia Minor) to a family of dedicated Christians.**

His parents were devoted to one another. Nicetas' mother died when he was only a few days old. After that his father decided to enter a monastery, leaving his son to be raised by his grandmother. So even though his father was alive, Nicetas didn't have the chance to grow up with him at home.

One of the readings for this day is Genesis 49: 33 to 50: 26. These verses tell part of the story of Joseph, the favorite son of his father Jacob. Joseph also was deprived of the chance to be with his father. His jealous brothers sold him into slavery, and he wouldn't see Jacob again for many years. The absence of their fathers is one of several parallels between Nicetas and Joseph.

Nicetas' grandmother saw to it that he finished school, but after that he was determined to become a monk. He went to the monastery at Midikion, and spent the next years in prayer and spiritual effort. He made close friends and became an example of holiness to the other monks. Their admiration was so great that when their abbot Nicephorus died, Nicetas was the unanimous choice to be his successor.

Joseph's circumstances were very different from those in which Nicetas lived. But he too gained the respectful admiration of the people around him by being honorable and taking his work seriously. He was bought by an Egyptian named Potiphar, who recognized his ability and "put him in charge of all that he had."

Joseph refused the efforts of Potiphar's wife "day after day" to seduce him, refus-

ing to betray his master and to "do this great wickedness, and sin against God." The result was that she made false accusations against him, and he was put in jail. But even there, he was so admired that the keeper committed all the prisoners to his care.



Saint Nicetas was also unjustly imprisoned, and persecuted for refusing to betray his faith. He would not support the iconoclasts or the corrupt patriarch appointed by the emperor. In prison, like Joseph he encouraged and kept up the

spirits of other prisoners.

God gave Saint Nicetas wonderful gifts. He healed physical and mental illnesses, and delivered people from danger through his prayers. When he died, people received healing by touching his body.

Joseph was not a miracle worker. But he was given the gift of forgiveness, and the gift of vision to see God's plan for Israel's future. Reunited with his brothers, Joseph told them that though they had meant to do evil to him, God "meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be



#### Troparion - Tone 4

You were a firm pillar and an undaunted guardian of sacred tradition, O Nicetas; you were adorned with holy dispassion and became an illustrious confessor of the Faith.

Accept the prayers of those who cry to you, interceding for them with Christ our God.

kept alive, as they are today."

Saint Nicetas and Saint Joseph show us, through their similar experiences, that God continues to unfold His plan down through the centuries. Now we are the ones who can use His gifts to carry it forward for those people still to come.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web

site, <http://dce.oca.org/page/bulletins/>.

## Imaging and Imagining the Ship of Salvation

Here is a Lenten exercise, something for us to consider.

The Church has sometimes been called the ship of salvation, taking an image from Noah's ark in which God saved His chosen people from the destroying deluge which drowned sin and sinners alike. As we are continuing our sojourn through Great Lent struggling against the storm of temptations, we can consider a photograph with two possible images of the church as a ship. In your mind, which one best represents the church? Why?



The question isn't which one you would prefer to be on, but which best represents what the Church is and what your place on the ship of salvation is.

The above two ships are heading in different directions, that too is something for us to consider in the season of repentance. Repentance means to completely change one's direction in life. It matters whether one is moving toward the Kingdom or moving away from it.

Reprinted from Fr. Ted's Blog, March 5, 2015, <https://frted.wordpress.com/>

# Walk for Missions—Join Us!

**ARIZONA WALK  
FOR MISSIONS**



Save the Date! Saturday, March 28, 2015 is the Arizona Walk for Missions. Sponsored by OCMC and Project Mexico alumni, and supported by The Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Clergy, this event brings together Orthodox faithful to raise awareness and support for Orthodox missions and evangelism. The event takes place each year at beautiful Kiwanis Park in Tempe, AZ. The park is easy to get to from I-10 off the Baseline exit. Supporters will walk 2.5 miles around a scenic lake. Following the walk participants will have a breakfast in the park and enjoy a Poster Session of Orthodox missionary work.



SS Peter and Paul had over 30 people participate in the 2013 Missions Walk

Proceeds from the walk will be split between the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC.org) and Project Mexico/St. Innocent Orphanage (ProjectMexico.org).

Mark the date on your calendar: Saturday, March 28, 2015 in the fifth week of Lent. Participating is easy! Registration begins at Kiwanis Park at 7:00 a.m. Walkers can collect donations from their parishes, friends and families to turn in on the day of the walk. All walkers who collect \$25 will receive a free Mission Walk t-shirt. If you are not familiar with the Christian ministry of Project Mexico or OCMC their websites are great places to start – or come to the Mission Walk to meet Arizona missionaries who have participated in the work of both.



If you would like more information please contact Antonia at [adamsclement@cox.net](mailto:adamsclement@cox.net) or your parish representative.



# 2015 Inter-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 1, 2015

Host Parish: St. George Church

4530 E. Gold Dust Ave., Phoenix (602) 953-1921

## The Second Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2015

Host Parish: Holy Trinity Cathedral

1973 E. Maryland Ave., Phoenix (602) 264-7863



## The Third Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2015

Host Parish: St. Sava Church

4436 E. McKinley Street, Phoenix (602) 275-7360

## The Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2015

Host Parish: St. John the Evangelist Church

916 S. 52nd St., Tempe (480) 427-0630



## The Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 29, 2015

Host Parish: Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church

10030 N 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, Phoenix (602) 867-6025

Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches

More Information at: [WWW.AZORTHODOX.ORG](http://WWW.AZORTHODOX.ORG)

# Where Our Operating Income Comes From

The parish had its annual meeting last month. A request from that meeting was to provide a recap and further explanation about the "Church Operating Income Contributions by Individual" presentation. An analysis was presented illustrating the distribution of the levels of operating income is from the parishioners, to support the operations of the church. That recap indicated approximately 110 parishioners overall attend and support our SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church. For all those who attended the annual meeting, it became known that our church, for 2014, achieved a net operating year-end positive balance of only \$48.87 after operating expenses were all paid. Basically, the church barely reached a breakeven point. Please understand that operating income and expenses do not include those funds designated as either restricted or pass-through(s).

In 2014, our church had almost \$145,000 in operating expenses. Some upcoming expenses were delayed until 2015. Some of these future expenses are related to the repair and maintenance of the cultural center's heat pump units. These repairs must be completed before the onset of this summer's heat in order for them to provide efficient

cooling for you. We have been able to delay the forthcoming work during the winter/spring months, but not for much longer.

For simple math purposes, let's forecast and use the annual parish meeting's approved 2015 expense budget of \$151,250 in this depiction going forward. If one were to take \$151,250 in forecasted operating expenses and divide it by 110 parishioners, the result is \$1,375 per individual parishioner per year. That is what would be needed from each parishioner (not family units) if all things were equal. That would equate to about \$26.45 per week or \$115 per month. But as we all know, all things are not created equal, nor are all people in an equal position in life. However, the church's overall support for its parishioners is pretty equal considering.

Of our 110 parishioners, the analysis/presentation showed that 36% contributed less than \$300 per year in the operating support of our church. The next grouping showed that 29% contributed between \$301 and \$1,000 per year in the operating support of our church. Another 21% contributed between \$1,001 and \$2,000 per year, as this group did its fair share plus. The last grouping of 14% contributed over

\$2,001 per individual per year. As you can surmise, this 14% group subsidized the first two groups that comprises 65% of our parishioners. Frankly, if it were not for 35% of our parishioners, we would not be able to maintain, let alone have our church and all that it provides to us and our lives.

For those who are financially able, please reconsider your supporting contributions to our church. Many have not changed their contribution(s) level for years, even though we all know that expenses have not remained the same, such as water, gas, electricity, overall maintenance, and general upkeep costs. We get no direct financial support from the government or outside agencies. Our church is solely supported by its parishioners. So, in 2015, for those that are able to, please re-budget a little more weekly toward our church, and maybe just pass up 'a' Starbucks, a movie out, a dinner out, or a stop at a fast food place to offset it. For those that are not financially able to, volunteering your help and services are gratefully accepted and received, as they help the church to not incur additional paid for expenses. The church needs and welcomes both types of donations and contributions as stewardship in order to operate.

## Around SS Peter & Paul

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

- March 9 Mara Hecht  
 10 Stephanie Homyak  
 13 Sasha Golowatsch  
 14 Elizabeth Michel  
 17 Mike Wagner  
 Jacob Sieckman  
 19 Christi and David  
 Sourk 22 Ann Michkofsky  
 25 Trish Sieckman  
 29 Tania Booriakin

*Mnogaya Leta!  
 Many Years!*

### CHURCH SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE

Following Liturgy and the Procession of Icons, the church school students remained in church for a lesson on stewardship. With the help of David Sourk, the youth learned how to clean up the candles after services are over. In addition, David showed them how to ring the church bell.



### 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:

Rose Koval  
 Cassandra Wenz Wagner  
 Protodeacon Alexis  
 Ann Garza

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

# Bits and Pieces

## BOOKSTORE

Lenten reading is essential! Stop by the bookstore for suggestions!

If you have recently purchased an icon for the icon wall in the church hall, please stop by the bookstore to make your payment. The following icons were purchased: St. Christopher, St. Macrina, St. Seraphim of Sarov, and The Prophet Elijah.

## MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

Upcoming pre-Lenten and Lenten Memorial Saturdays are March 7, 14, and 21. If you need to update your memorial prayer list or submit a new one, please see Bishop Daniel. All persons whose names are provided are prayed for at the Memorial Services on these Saturdays. It is a thoughtful and prayerful way to remember your loved ones who have fallen asleep. The Memorial Services/Panihidas will be held on each of these Saturdays, before Vespers at 4:30 p.m.

## SUNDAY VESPERS

Again this year, the local Orthodox Clergy Council will sponsor the celebration of Vespers on the Sunday evenings of Great Lent. Please see the complete schedule on page 5.

## TEEN/YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

The Teen/Young Adult League had their first meeting on Friday, March 6, and discussed the various service opportunities that they will be engaging in over the next few months. The group's focus will be spiritual growth, community service, and fun social events such as rock climbing and Top Golf. Please see Mara Hecht for more information.

## PARISH LIBRARY

Our parish library has many resources to assist you in your spiritual journey throughout the Lenten season. Stop by after services and pick a book to read as part of your spiritual exercises. There are over a hundred titles to choose from.



First meeting of the Teen/Young Adult League.

## PRESANCTIFIED LITURGIES

Each Wednesday of Lent, at 6:00, our parish community will celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. As a preparation for participation in this Liturgy or as part of your Lenten study, you might like to review two short articles on this ancient service at the following links:

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-div/liturgy-of-the-presanctified-gifts>

[http://orthodoxwiki.org/Liturgy\\_of\\_the\\_Presanctified\\_Gifts](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Liturgy_of_the_Presanctified_Gifts)

Please also plan on joining us for a simple Lenten meal (soup, salad, bread, & fruit) following these Liturgies every Wednesday during Lent. Sharing in the Church's Lenten cycle of services, being nourished mid-week with the Holy Mysteries, and joining in fellowship with your brothers and sisters will add greatly to your experience of this grace-filled season.

St. John Mission in Tempe will celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts every Friday at 6:00 pm. St. John Mission is located at 916 S 52nd St, Tempe, AZ.

## 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 partici-

pate, please fill out the form at the bottom of page 2 and return it to Stephanie Homyak by April 1, 2015. The suggested minimum donation is \$10.

## BAKING OF EASTER PASCHAS

The Myrrh Bearers will be baking Pascha breads on Tuesday, March 17th; Saturday, March 21st; Tuesday, March 24th, and Saturday, March 28th. If anyone would like to learn or help bake please see Elizabeth Michel.

## 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. It's also a great time to take a look at our bookstore. Katrina can help you find whatever you need!

## SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY PROCESSION



# March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Sunday of Orthodoxy 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b> <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>St. George Church</i>	<b>2</b> <b>3</b> Join us for a light lenten meal and discussion following Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Please contact Barbara Peterson to sign-up to bring soup, fruit, or bread.		<b>4</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <b>Lenten Meal</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <i>St. John Mission, Tempe</i>	<b>7</b> Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
<b>8</b> St Gregory Palamas 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b> <b>MBAS Meeting</b> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>Holy Trinity Cathedral</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 6:00pm Council Mtg	<b>11</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <b>Lenten Meal</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <i>St. John Mission, Tempe</i>	<b>14</b> Memorial Saturday <b>Feodorovskaya Icon</b> 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
<b>15</b> Ven Precious Cross 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>St. Sava Church</i>	<b>16</b> <b>17</b> <b>Teen/Young Adult Community Service</b> May 2 at Andre House 4:30 pm—7:30 pm See Mara Hecht for details.		<b>18</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <b>Lenten Meal</b>	<b>19</b> Our Lady of Tenderness Icon	<b>20</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <i>St. John Mission, Tempe</i>	<b>21</b> Memorial Saturday 4:30pm Panikhida 5:00pm Vespers
<b>22</b> St John Climacus 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b> <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>St. John the Evangelist</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Forefeast Annunciation 6:00pm Vespers of the Annunciation	<b>25</b> Annunciation Most Holy Theotokos 9:00 Divine Liturgy	<b>26</b> Leavetaking Annunciation 6:00pm Great Canon of St Andrew	<b>27</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <i>St. John Mission, Tempe</i>	<b>28</b> Akathist to the Theotokos 7:00 am <b>Walk for Missions</b> <b>Kiwanis Park, Tempe</b> 5:00pm Vespers
<b>29</b> St Mary of Egypt 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b> 6:00 Lenten Vespers <i>Exaltation of the Holy Cross</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Repose of St. Innocent	<b>1</b> 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <b>Lenten Meal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Icon "Unfading Bloom" 6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts <i>St. John Mission, Tempe</i>	<b>4</b> Lazarus Saturday 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Great Vespers <i>Blessings of Branches</i>