

THE ORTHODOX POST

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St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church, 181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, New York, NY 11432
Web site: www.stnicholasalbanian.org E-mail: fr.nathan@stnicholasalbanian.org Tel: (718) 380-5684

Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

There is a classic of American folk hymnody, "What Wondrous Love is This", found in multitude arrangements and recorded very many times (one of my favorites is by Anonymous 4, a female a cappella quartet known widely for their work in medieval music; you can take a listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-56RSOKKyo>). The hymn speaks of the souls encounter with God and, more particularly, of the encounter with God's love. Drawing from the great dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus the Pharisee in the third chapter of John's Gospel, this song grapples with how to receive those words well known to most: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." In its austerity—the simple movement of the voices shared and changing—and in its rephrasing of that great gospel theme as question, this hymn is striking. Relentless, it asks what do we do with God's love. What do we do with something so undeserved, so unrepayable?

It is one of Christianity's foremost joys and among its chief challenges that that reciprocity which so informs our interactions elsewhere can have but negligible role here. God brooks no equals: He gives and we take. Indebtedness is something we have all learned and been taught to avoid or, at least, to mitigate. Yet indebtedness is precisely the nature of our relationship with God.

President's Message

By Jim Liolin

Gestures of Stewardship - It is time during this season of giving to recognize that there have been many people who have given their time, talents and treasure for the good of our St. Nicholas Parish. Let me begin with John Jance who has now retired as production coordinator of the Orthodox POST. I believe it is at least 10 years that he has been a major part of spreading the news to the community. I know Bill Peters, the editor, will miss his consistent dedication and enthusiasm.

A special thank you to the Ilia and Agathia Luka Family for their generous donation covering the cost of this year's St. Nicholas luncheon. There were several who stepped up and made calls to parishioners and served at the luncheon. All were needed. A wonderful gesture of stewardship.

The Daughters of St. Nicholas have been tireless in their work for the church with the many fund raising efforts making it possible for

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He offers life and love beyond our capacity to comprehend, inviting us into the sharing of these gifts, and He demands back precisely nothing because there is nothing we can do for Him. And this threatens our stability. It endangers our well-worn senses of self and other, because who can we be when we must acknowledge that need and poverty are our core selves, need and poverty the true selves we must offer into our relationships. What is this wondrous love and how do we live under the shadow of its generosity?

Next month, we'll explore the difference between response and repayment; we'll untangle how one lets us grow to know God's love more while the other binds with struggle in its attempt at equality. For now, we open the year with wonder. We open the year with realization of God's love and gratitude that more months and days stand before us to get to know it.

donations to charities in Albania, Africa and the US

When Father Chrysostom from Nigeria visited our parish he was greeted with open arms. Our parish enabled him to purchase a motor bike to ease his travel to his vast community. Previously he would ride a bicycle for hundreds of miles to serve in several church communities.

We have the Sunday School teachers and assistants helping our very young group develop relationships and love for the church. There are those who are working on the committee for the Beautification of the Church Temple, spending hours meeting contractors and visiting sites with the goal of preparing the Church for the 75th Anniversary in 2018.

There have been many others who have stepped up when asked to help. Without this support we would not be available to continue to serve the community. The Church Council and Father Nathan wish to thank everyone for your generous expression of caring.

Have a Blessed and Healthy New Year!

Coffee List

Dear Ladies,

Here is the schedule for coffee for the next 2 months. If your name is listed, please be sure to put it on your calendar. If you need to change the date, please advise Christina Liolin or Adelina Llupa.

It is very important to remember that on the day you are scheduled for coffee, **please arrive at church by 10 a.m.** so that preparations can be made.

What to bring:

1. Cake for 50-60 people
2. Cookies for the children
3. 1 gallon of milk



January 1	New Year's Day
8	Barbara Papalexis/Barbara Filis
15	Open
22	Adelina Llupa
29	Nasi Pavllo/Marcela Guma
February 5	Rehova Family
12	Open
19	Agathia Luka/Antoneta Mertiri
26	Diana Beno/Beti Tsamblakos
March 1	Linda Foundos/Elizabeth Liolin

ICON AUCTION

Sunday, January 8th - After Liturgy



ICON RETURN

Bring in your Icons
from last year's Icon Auction,
As Soon As Possible!!!

*We need them to prepare for
the January 8th ICON Auction*

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

By Linda Foundos

Our Annual St. Nicholas Luncheon was a great success.

It was well attended; everyone enjoyed a delicious meal and 11 lucky people walked away with raffle prizes. In addition to honoring our Patron Saint, the camaraderie was the best. Everyone enjoys reconnecting and catching up with friends. At this time, the Daughters presented President Jim Liolin with a check to share some of our Flea Market/Bake Sale profit with the church. The Daughters use their funds to support the Sunday school, purchase items needed for our services and Christian charities. We support orphans, the Seminary, the OCA, help feed the hungry in Albania and more. That's why when you support us, you support a host of good causes, and we thank you for that.

The performances of our little ones in our annual Sunday school Christmas pageant was excellent! Joseph, Mary, the angels, the shepherds, the wise men, Christmas carols, etc. were all so joyful! Our Pancake Breakfast following the program with a visit from Santa was great fun. Master Chef, Tina Peters, once again outdid herself. We send our heartfelt thanks to her for her great effort, and also to her helpers. All of your efforts are greatly appreciated!

We are still in need of volunteers to provide meshe for services. Please see Christina Liolin if you would like to help. If you have any news you would like to share, please contact Linda Foundos. **It seems we have gotten shy about sharing news.** I have had feedback from many that they miss keeping up with our community with the Post news. I realize many use Face Book for their news, but that's not quite the same as our intimate community.

WE WISH YOU ALL PEACE, LOVE & HAPPINESS!

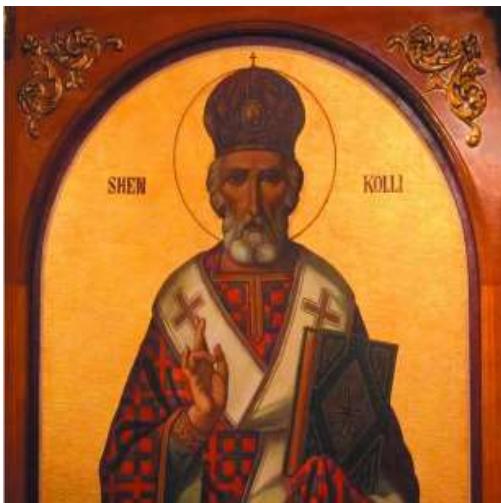
House Blessings



**Make an Appointment with Fr. Nathan
To Visit and Bless Your Home**

**Church: 718-380-5684,
Cell: 208-818-3372**

St. Nicholas Day Celebration



On Sunday, December 11th, the Parish celebrated the Feast Day of our Patron Saint, St. Nicholas.

After Liturgy, a festive luncheon was enjoyed by more than 100 Parishioners.

A good time was had by all!!! Excellent food, good friends and raffle prizes were the major ingredients to the luncheon's success!

The success of this event is due to the hard work of many people. A few of the key people are Ilia & Agathis Luka, Zhani Joanidhi, Mark Paplexis, Linda Foundos, Irma Mile and Tina Korra. THANK YOU!!!!

2017 Pledge Program

PLEDGE CARD			
My total pledge for the year <u>2017</u> is \$ <u>_____</u> .			
I will pay my pledge to St. Nicholas Church (please check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly			
Signature: _____			
Parish Census We are continuously updating our parish database. Please take a few minutes and fill in the information requested below. Please print clearly. Thank you.			
Name: _____	Birthday: _____		
Son(s): _____	Birthday: _____		
Address: _____	Zip Code: _____		
Phone Number: () _____ Email Address(es): _____	Wedding Anniversary: _____		
Other family members in household:			
Name: _____	Birthday: _____	Name: _____	Birthday: _____
Name: _____	Birthday: _____	Name: _____	Birthday: _____

St. Nicholas Needs Your Financial Support!!!

The Pledge Program Campaign for 2017 is well underway. Letters and Pledge Cards have been mailed to both those who made a Pledge for 2016 and those other families who are a part of the St. Nicholas Church Community, but who did not Pledge financial support in 2016.

During the Pledge Program Campaign the Church asks "You", the Parishioner, to tell it how much you will commit to donate to St. Nicholas during next year, 2017.

To serve the Parish Community and operate the Church, it costs more than \$150,000 each year. Currently, only about one-half of this cost is raised by the Pledge. Today, St. Nicholas has about 100 families supporting the Church through the Pledge Program. There are another hundred families who attend Church periodically, but who did not Pledge for 2016. Typical yearly Pledges range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. In 2016, the average pledge per family was \$700.

Together, through this 2017 Pledge Program, we must try to raise more money to support St. Nicholas. Each of us is asked to do the best we can – that is "Increase last year's Pledge amount" or if you did not Pledge for 2016, "Submit the best Pledge you can for 2017". Let's increase our financial support of St. Nicholas!!!

Please turn in your PLEDGE CARD NOW!!!!

Christmas Celebration

On Sunday, December 18th, Parishioners gathered for Liturgy and afterwards watched the Christmas Pageant performed by the children of the Sunday School. A special "Thanks" goes to the Sunday School Teachers for organizing the Christmas Pageant. It started with readings in Albanian, was followed by the play and then the singing of Christmas carols. Next in the Fellowship Hall was our delicious Pancake Breakfast headed up and cooked by Tina Peters. In addition, there was a Visit from Santa with presents for the children. Everyone had a wonderful time. Finally, for the hard work that made these activities possible, a "Thank You" goes to the Daughters of St. Nicholas, especially officers Linda Foundos and Christina Liolin.





Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom - Commemorated on January 30th

(Reading and Icon courtesy of OCA Website)

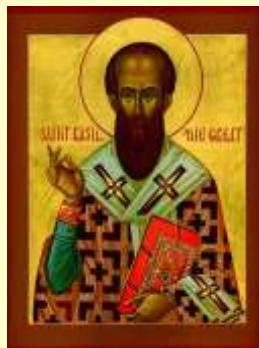
During the eleventh century, disputes raged in Constantinople about which of the three hierarchs was the greatest. Some preferred Saint Basil (January 1), others honored Saint Gregory the Theologian (January 25), while a third group exalted Saint John Chrysostom (November 13).

Dissension among Christians increased. Some called themselves Basilians, others referred to themselves as Gregorians, and others as Johnites.

By the will of God, the three hierarchs appeared to Saint John the Bishop of Euchaita (June 14) in the year 1084, and said that they were equal before God. "There are no divisions among us, and no opposition to one another."

They ordered that the disputes should stop, and that their common commemoration should be celebrated on a single day. Bishop John chose January 30 for their joint Feast, thus ending the controversy and restoring peace.

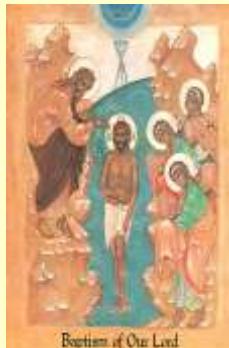
MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN JANUARY



St. Basil



St. Genevieve



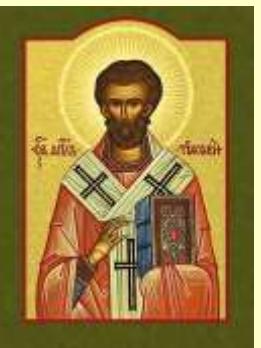
Theophany
of our Lord



John the Baptist



St. Anthony



St. Timothy

the Great

of Paris

of our Lord

the Great

Jan 01

Jan 03

Jan 06

Jan 07

Jan 17

Jan 22

Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church

Please look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

**Tell the Merchant that you are from St, Nicholas Church and
saw their Ad in the Church's Monthly Newsletter!!!**

For New Ads Please Contact – Tomi Beno at (917) 952-9252

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Fri & Sat 6AM-3AM

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Major Church Activities and Events

Sun. Jan 1 —Liturgy, 10am: St. Basil

Thur. Jan 5 —Vesperal Liturgy, 7pm: Theophany

House Blessings Begin

Fri. Jan 6 —Theophany Prayers, 10am

Sat. Jan 7 —Health Prayers, 5pm

Sun. Jan 8 —Liturgy, 10am: ICON Auction

Sat. Jan 14 —Vespers, 5pm

Sun. Jan 15 —Liturgy, 10am

Sat. Jan 21 —Vespers, 5pm

Sun. Jan 22 —Liturgy, 10am

Sat. Jan 28 —Vespers, 5pm

Sun. Jan 29 —Liturgy, 10am

Ushers' Schedule

for Sunday Services

Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kiske

JAN 01 Nasi PAVLLO / Ardian MILE

JAN 08 Jim OSWALD / Tomi BENO

JAN 15 Andrea KUTALI / John JANCE

JAN 22 Robert KORRA / Lou FOUNDOS

JAN 29 Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA

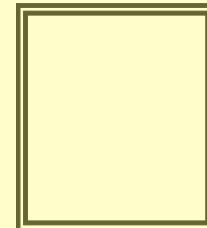
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