

THE ORTHODOX POST

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Pastor's Message

By Father David Fox

Dear Friends,

This past year, we have been working hard trying to fix up our home. At the same time, we have been discussing ways to add class space for our children. This passage struck my heart.

Shall We Not Build the House of The Lord?

In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Zehozadak the high priest as follows, 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "This people says: The time has not yet come to rebuild the temple of Yahweh"'.

'Is this a time for you to live in your paneled houses, when this House lies in ruins? So now, Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "Think carefully about your behavior. You have sown much and harvested little; you eat but never have enough, drink but never have your fill, put on clothes but

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feel no warmth. The wage-earner gets his wages only to put them in a bag with a hole in it", Yahweh Sabaoth says thus, "Think carefully about your behavior. Go up into the hills, fetch timber and rebuild the House; and I shall take pleasure in it and manifest my glory there - Yahweh says. The abundance you expected proved to be little. When you brought the harvest in, I blasted it. And why? - Yahweh Sabaoth declares. Because while my House lies in ruins, each of you is busy with his own house. That is why the sky has withheld the rain and the earth withheld its yield. I have called down drought on land and hills, on grain, on new wine, on olive oil and on all the produce of the ground, on humans and animals and all your labors".

Please see *Pastor's Message* on page 4

President's Message

By Bill Peters

We have had a busy Spring! As a Church Community, we have had special celebrations for Mothers' Day, our Spring Dance and Bishop Nikon's Visit. These activities were followed by a very successful Church Picnic, the Parish Council Swearing-In Ceremony and Graduation Services which recognized the achievements of our Sunday School and other parish students. Many of our youth

are off to middle school, high school and college. They have accomplished much and we are very proud of them all.

July and August are full of vacations and summer fun. Summer is a fun time, but not a vacation from Church. We must continue to keep Church in our hearts and attend services as much as possible.

In September, a new Church Year begins! It will be very busy.

Please see *President's Message* on page 4

Parish Council Swearing-In Ceremony

On Sunday, June 25th, Fr. David conducted the swearing-in and oath taking ceremony for the new Parish Council. This Council with the Parish Priest, Fr. David Fox will be caring for the administrative, custodial and spiritual needs of the St. Nicholas Church Community for the next year.

The Parish Council consists of: Bill Peters (President), Petrika Troja (Vice President), Lou Foundos (Treasurer), Nick Papajorgji (Secretary), and Council Members: Christina Liolin, Jim Liolin, Roland Llupa, Ilia Luka and Mark Papalexis.



Members missing from photo:
Roland Llupa, Ilia Luka and
Nick Papajorgji

Archdiocese Awards to Parishioners for Service to the Church

On May 21st, Bishop Nikon while visiting St. Nicholas Church presented Archdiocese Awards to six parishioners for service over the years to the St. Nicholas Community. Three Daughters of St. Nicholas – Christina Liolin, Linda Foundos and Tina Peters were recognized for their devoted and exemplary service to the Church.

In addition, Jim Liolin, Lou Foundos and Bill Peters were recognized for their service to the St. Nicholas Church Community and were bestowed The Herald of St. Constantine and St. Helena award and medal.



Sunday School Graduation Ceremonies

On June 11th, the Feast of Pentecost, the St. Nicholas community celebrated the graduation of the children of the Sunday School. Many things were highlighted, especially the four Sunday School classes: k-2 taught by Prifteresha Kerri Fox, the Elementary School Age Group taught by Alexandra Liolin, the Jr.-Sr. High School Youth Group led by Carlos and Maria Matute, and the Albanian class taught once a month by Adelina Llupa. Art created by the children can be seen decorating the walls of the steps going downstairs to Fellowship Hall. Each of these classes averaged 4-8 children-youth in attendance. Additionally, we added a nursery, with a carpet and toys for little children. Also, two additional teachers joined the staff: Jim Oswald and Tina Peters. Next year, another gifted teacher, Grace Holinski, will join us. Supplementing the teachers with help for special activities are Barbara Duggan and Joanne Heiser. This has made the team teaching concept successful, giving continuity to our program.

This year we used new curricula, mixing the best from the Greek Archdiocese and OCEC, a joint OCA-Antiochian publishing house. Also, the Sunday School made cookies and went Christmas caroling to one of our shut in members, Georgina Ligor, who was overwhelmed with gratitude (she tried to force food on us...) Finally, this year's Christmas Pageant was a true gift. As a priest and a father, I am so thankful to all the teachers, Barbara, Alexandra, Jim, Tina, Carlos, Maria, Adelina, Prifteresha Kerri, and to their assistants, Alba, Iris and Joanne.

Parents, we have great teachers and great curricula: Please bring your children.

We only have a few minutes each week to try to teach our children the one thing needful: to know God.

May God bless your work and Many Years to our Children!!!

+Fr. David



Pastor's Message from page 1

Haggai, the messenger of Yahweh, then passed on Yahweh's message to the people, 'I am with you - declares Yahweh'. And Yahweh roused the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel governor of Judah, the spirit of Joshua son of Zehozadak the high priest and the spirit of the entire remnant of the people; they came and set to work in the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth, their God.

- Old Testament, Prophet Haggai, Chapter 1

Pray for me,
+ Fr. David

President's Message from page 1

For the Sunday School - a pool party, registration, parent-teacher meetings and the beginning of classes are planned. We have a very talented and devoted team of teachers and assistants. All parents with Sunday School age children should enroll them and bring them to Sunday School. We owe our children the chance to have a good religious education.

September also brings our Semi-Annual Parish General Meeting. At this time, we review the activities of our Church and our Archdiocese, both spiritual and non-spiritual. All the needs of the Church including its finances are addressed. In addition, we discuss the future activities and directions of the St. Nicholas Church Community. In September we begin the planning and implementation of fund raising events to help support our Church. First among these is our Golf Outing!!!

For a successful Church, participation by our Parishioners in all St. Nicholas activities is important.

JOIN US, IT WILL BE VERY REWARDING!!!

Church Picnic "A GREAT SUCCESS"

More than 200 parishioners, family and friends attended the Annual Picnic held at Hempstead Lake State Park on Sunday, June 18th. A wonderful time was had by all. Highlights included the delicious barbeque food, good fellowship, the soccer games and the TV Raffle drawing.

Community News

By Linda Foundos

- Congratulations to Alba Topallaj on her graduation from Stuyvesant High School. In the Fall, she will be attending the University of Pennsylvania.
- Congratulations to Nicole Filis on her high school graduation. We wish her all the best at Maris College this fall in Poughkeepsie, New York.
- Our wishes for a speedy recovery to Peter Panajoti who recently underwent heart surgery. As "they" say, "one day at a time." Our thoughts and prayers are with you and Helen too.
- Get well wishes to Viola Kallinikos who recently underwent surgery. All the best to you.
- Our deepest sympathies to the Beno family on the passing of Thoma Beno, father of Dhimiter Beno, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc. At 95 years of age, he leaves behind a very large, beautiful family who will dearly miss him. May his memory be eternal.
- Our deepest sympathies to the Kondili family on the passing of Lena Kondili's mother, Evgjeni Beqari, born in 1919 in Albania. She was a devoted mother, a wonderful grandmother and a person very well-respected by all. May her memory be eternal.
- Recently, there was a six month memorial service for Simona Grabocka, the daughter of Pavli & Rolanda Grabocka. She is deeply loved and missed by so many. May her memory be eternal. Our prayers go out to the entire Grabocka family.
- We have been blessed with many Baptisms recently and several more are planned for the summer. We will acknowledge them in the September issue of The Orthodox Post

THE WINNER OF THE

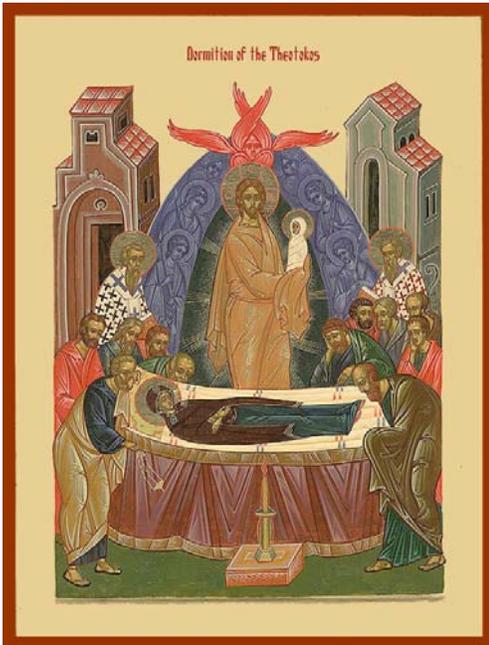
40' SONY LCD TV

at the June 18th Church PICNIC was

The Boss of Nasi Pavlo

This Month's Major Feast Days

The Dormition (Falling-asleep or Assumption) of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary - August 15



After the Ascension of the Lord, the Mother of God remained in the care of the Apostle John the Theologian, and during his journeys She lived at the home of his parents, near the Mount of Olives. She was a source of consolation and edification both for the Apostles and for all the believers. Conversing with them, She told them about miraculous events: the Annunciation, the seedless and undefiled Conception of Christ born of Her, about His early childhood, and about His earthly life. Like the Apostles, She helped plant and strengthen the Christian Church by Her presence, Her discourse and Her prayers.

The reverence of the Apostles for the Most Holy Virgin was extraordinary. Many of the newly-enlightened in the Faith even came from faraway lands to Jerusalem, to see and to hear the All-Pure Mother of God. During the persecution initiated by King Herod against the young Church of Christ, the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus in the year 43. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with St Lazarus, the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Holy Mount Athos. The respect of ancient Christians for the Mother of God was so great that they preserved what they could about Her life, what they could take note of concerning Her sayings and deeds. All Her days She was concerned with fasting: She slept only when necessary, and even then, when Her body was at rest, She was still alert in spirit, repeating in Her dreams what She had read, or the implementation of proposed intentions, or those planned yet anew.

At the time of Her blessed Falling Asleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary was again at Jerusalem. Day and night She spent her time in prayer. In one such visit to Golgotha, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Her and announced Her approaching departure from this life to eternal life. In pledge of this, the Archangel gave Her a palm branch. With these heavenly tidings the Mother of God returned to Bethlehem with the three girls attending Her (Sepphora, Abigail, and Jael). She summoned Joseph of Arimathea and other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin prayed also that the Lord would have the Apostle John come to Her. The Holy Spirit transported him from Ephesus, setting him in that very place where the Mother of God lay. After the prayer, the Most Holy Virgin offered incense, and John heard a voice from Heaven, closing Her prayer with the word "Amen." The Mother of God took it that the voice meant the speedy arrival of the Apostles and the Disciples and the holy Bodiless Powers. Going in to the Mother of God, they beheld Her lying upon the bed, and filled with spiritual joy. The Disciples greeted Her, and then they told her how they had been carried miraculously from their places of preaching. The Most Holy Virgin Mary glorified God, because He had heard Her prayer and fulfilled Her heart's desire, and She began speaking about Her imminent end.

Then came the third hour (9 A.M.), when the Dormition of the Mother of God was to occur. A number of candles were burning. The holy Disciples surrounded her beautifully adorned bed, offering praise to God. She prayed in anticipation of Her demise and of the arrival of Her longed-for Son and Lord. Suddenly, the inexpressible Light of Divine Glory shone forth, before which the blazing candles paled in comparison. All who it saw took fright. Descending from Heaven was Christ, the King of Glory, surrounded by hosts of Angels and Archangels and other Heavenly Powers, together with the souls of the Forefathers and the Prophets, who had prophesied in ages past concerning the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate of His Handmaiden" (Luke 1:46-48) and, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him, and the Lord bid Her enter into Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God. Then began a joyous angelic song. Accompanying the pure soul of the God-betrothed and with reverent awe for the Queen of Heaven, the angels exclaimed: "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women! For lo, the Queen, God's Maiden comes, lift up the gates, and with the Ever-Existing One, take up the Mother of Light; for through Her salvation has come to all the human race. It is impossible to gaze upon Her, and it is impossible to render Her due honor" The Heavenly gates were raised, and meeting the soul of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Cherubim and the Seraphim glorified Her with joy. The face of the Mother of God was radiant with the glory of Divine virginity, and from Her body there came a sweet fragrance.

Bewailing their separation from the Mother of God, the Apostles prepared to bury Her all-pure body. The holy Apostles carried the funeral bier upon their shoulders, and upon it lay the body of the Ever-Virgin Mary. St John the Theologian went at the head with the resplendent palm-branch from Paradise. The other saints and a multitude of the faithful accompanied the funeral bier with candles and censers, singing sacred songs.

For three days they did not depart from the place of burial, praying and chanting Psalms. Through the wise providence of God, the Apostle Thomas was not to be present at the burial of the Mother of God. Arriving late on the third day at Gethsemane, he lay down at the tomb and with bitter tears asked that he might be permitted to look once more upon the Mother of God and bid her farewell. The Apostles out of heartfelt pity for him decided to open the grave and permit him the comfort of venerating the holy relics of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Having opened the grave, they found in it only the grave wrappings and were thus convinced of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven.

On the evening of the same day, when the Apostles had gathered at a house to strengthen themselves with food, the Mother of God appeared to them and said: "Rejoice! I am with you all the days of your lives." This so gladdened the Apostles that they took a portion of the bread, set aside at the meal in memory of the Savior ("the Lord's Portion"), and they exclaimed: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us".

The most-pure body of the Mother of God was buried in the family tomb. Christians honored the sepulchre of the Mother of God, and they built a church on this spot. Within the church was preserved the precious funeral cloth, which covered Her all-pure and fragrant body.

Major Church Activities and Events

Tues, July 11: Parish Council Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sun, Aug 6: Transfiguration
Tues, Aug 15: The Dormition of Theotokos
Liturgy at 9:30 am
Thurs, Aug 31: Parish Council Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sun, Sept 10: Church School Pool Party
Sun, Sept 17: Church School Registration &
Meetings with Parents and
Teachers

Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services

July 09: Bill Peters / Nick Papajorgji
July 16: Petrika Troja / Ilia Luka
July 23: Xhoxhi Coka / Nasi Pavllo
July 30: Ardian Mile / Thoma Beno
Aug 6: Lou Foundos / Robert Kora
Aug 13: Roland Lupa / Edi Sera
Aug 20: Bill Peters / Nick Papjorgji
Aug 27: Petrika Troja / Ilia Luka
Sept 3: Xhoxhi Coka / Nasi Pavllo

Please Note:

**Divine Liturgy will begin
at 9:30 a.m.
for July & August**

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church
181-14 Midland Parkway
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