

THE ORTHODOX POST

December 2011

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Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

Some weeks ago I listened to the story of a linguistic anthropologist who had struggled greatly in her attempt to find a voice amid the culture she had gone to observe. Being very skilled at languages and language acquisition, she found this endeavor a particularly depressing surprise and even contemplated abandoning her inquiry to return home. The culture she was there to document was comprised of small tribes and families who wandered throughout a vast and rugged land gathering food and tending to the needs of their grazing flocks. It was not following them or understanding them or learning the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of their tongue that so frustrated the young scholar. Instead, it was that she could employ it so poorly. The native peoples viewed her as little more than an idiot. Their language, you see, has a distinctive feature hard for us in the West to understand. Their livelihood depends heavily on being able to navigate the local terrain, and their speech reflects this. Thus, all indications of a spatial nature are made with reference to cardinal directions. Rather than saying something like, "Could you please grab that pot by the fire and pass it to me," they might say something closer to, "Could you please grab the pot that is north, northeast of the cooking fire and pass it to the south where I am standing." Even indoors, these directions would be used, and lacking any sense of direction, the researcher found this maddening, debilitating even. She struggled in confusion, battling a sense of persistent helplessness until finally, she related, something just "clicked". Having spent so long among these people striving to

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acquire the discipline of their perspective, she found, at last, that somehow she always knew where north was and south and east and west. With tremendous effort and patience, she had become, in this way, like them. Her studies met with success after she learned to locate herself in their world.

This story resonated with me because I had experienced something similar but on a much more minute scale. I have lived in cities, and I have driven cars, but until last autumn, I had not owned a car while living in a city. Those of you who know Ridgewood, know that parking is always an issue. This was (and likely ever shall be) a struggle for me. I remember, though, that in my early days in the neighborhood, there was one morning, one episode, of utter panic. I could not remember where I had parked

Continued on Page 5

President's Message

by Bill Peters

Hope everyone had a happy and blessed Thanksgiving Holiday!!!

As we approach the end of the year, our schedules get busier and busier with church activities as well as holiday and family matters.

We begin December with the celebration of our patron saint, St. Nicholas. First, a Prayer Service will be held on St. Nicholas Day, Tuesday, December 6th at 5pm. Then on Sunday, December 11th, our annual Luncheon will be held in honor of St. Nicholas. This is a time for many of us to gather, share a meal together and honor our Church's Patron Saint. Also, on this day, we will acknowledge the donors to the Building Expansion Project with a special wall plaque listing their names. Tickets to the Luncheon are limited, so buy yours as soon as possible. More information is provided on the flyer on page 3.

The following Sunday, December 18th, our Church School children will perform the Christmas Pageant. This will be followed by our traditional Christmas Pancake Breakfast and a Visit from Santa. Plan on attending these joyous activities!!!

This time of year is also important because we launch our Pledge Program for 2012. Letters and pledge cards have been mailed to Parishioners asking them to make a financial pledge to the Church for the next year. This pledge which is paid during 2012 provides much needed money to operate the Church and serve our Parishioners. Please make the best pledge that you can and submit your Pledge Card to Church as soon as possible. For more information, see the article on page 4.

As you know, this year Christmas Day is on a Sunday. Christmas Services will be held on Saturday, Christmas Eve at 7pm and on Sunday, Christmas Day at 10am. Attending church services is an important part of celebrating Christmas. Please attend as many of these services as you can.

Looking ahead to January, plan on attending the Theophany Services on Sunday, January 8th and the Icon Auction that follows the Liturgy. If you have church Icons from last year, please return them as soon as possible in December.

WISHING YOU ALL:

**A JOYOUS & BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR!!!!**

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

by Linda Foundos

We hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving feast with your family and friends. What a joyful holiday and time to reflect on just how thankful we are, or should be. It's that time to count your blessings and look forward with hope and optimism.

It's time once again to honor our patron Saint Nicholas with our annual luncheon celebration. A wonderful meal is being prepared for you. Please join us on Sunday, December 11th.

Our Church School youth are preparing for their annual Christmas pageant on Sunday, December 18th. Please plan to join us then too for services, the pageant and our delicious Pancake Breakfast with Santa!

We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. May the spirit and joy of Christmas stay with us throughout the year.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PANCAKE BREAKFAST SANTA'S VISIT

Sunday, December 18th



COMMUNITY NEWS

Please contact Linda Foundos, ggsutter@aol.com or 516-671-8071, with any news to share.....birth, special anniversary, vacation, major accomplishment or academic honor, new house, new job, etc.

KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



by A. Llupa

Dhjetor, 2011

Këtë muaj po japim një pjesë nga Ungjilli i Lukës dhe, një pjesë për Skënderbeun nga Naimi.

....Shpallja e Lindjes së Jezusit

Në muajin e gjashtë të barrës së Elisabetës, Perëndia e dërgoi Engjëllin Gavriel në Nazaret, në Galile te një virgjreshë me emrin Mari. Ajo ishte e fejuar me një njeri të quajtur Jozef, që ishte nga fisi i mbretit David. Engjëlli erdhi tek Maria dhe i tha "Të përshendes Mari! Zoti është me ty; Ai të ka zgjedhur për gjëra të mëdha!" Maria u trëmb nga kjo përshëndetje dhe u mendua për kuptimin e saj. Engjëlli vazhdoi: "Mos ki frikë, Mari sepse Perëndia të ka zgjedhur që të lindësh Mesinë! Ti do të mbetesh shtatzëne dhe do të lindësh një djalë. Do t'ia vësh emrin Jezus. Ai do të jetë i madh dhe do të quhet Bir i të Lartit (Perëndi). Zoti Perëndi do t'ia japë mbretërinë e Davidit, stërgjyshit të tij. Ai do të sundojë përgjithmonë mbi pasardhësit e Jaakovit. Sundimi i tij do të jetë i pafund."

Maria e pyeti Engjëllin: "Si do të ndodhë kjo? Unë jam akoma e virgjër!" Ai u përgjigj: "Shpirti i Zotit do të zbresë mbi ty dhe fuqia e tij do t'a realizojë këtë. Për këtë arsye ky fëmijë që do ta lindësh, do të quhet i shenjtë, Biri i Perëndisë. Edhe Elisabeta, kushërira jote, pret t'i lindë djalë -me gjithë moshën e saj të thyer. Ajo është tashmë në muajin e gjashtë të barrës, megjithatë njerzit thoshin për atë se s'mund të lindë fëmijë. S'ka asgjë të pamundur për Perëndinë." "Unë jam plotësisht në dorë të Zotit. Le të ndodhë kështu si the." Pastaj Engjëlli u largua nga ajo....

Skënderbeut i Shtiret i Jati në Endërr...

Qysh mund të lësh Shqipërinë
Në kurth e në të këqia
E të vuash për Turqinë?
C'të mirë pe nga Turqia?

S'të vjen keq për shqiptarët
e për Shqipërin' e mjerë?
E s'të merr, biro, të qarët?
Që humbi liri e nderë?



St. Nicholas Day Luncheon

Sunday, December 11th
after Liturgy
in the Fellowship Hall

Complete fish dinner: \$20
Children dinner: Free

Please come and help us celebrate our St. Nicholas Feast Day. Let us together worship, share a meal and enjoy each other's friendship.

Tickets will be sold in advance at coffee hour on Sunday, November 20 & 27 and Sunday, December 4.

Also, tickets can be purchased by contacting Agathia Luka, Ilia Luka, Linda Foundos, Tomi Beno or Lou Foundos.

Space is limited.

Please plan to buy your tickets in advance.

There will also be prizes to be won at our raffle!!



Pledge Program for 2012

Pledge Program letters have been mailed to parishioners. As we look into planning for 2012 we begin, once again, with you. We appreciate your continued generosity and it is with your spiritual, physical, and monetary support that maintains St. Nicholas here for us to gather together as one community.

Pledging is the financial commitment each of us makes to pay for all that we do. Giving from our own abundance, sustains the work and mission of the church in ways that benefit us directly, benefit other members of our church and our community. We also reap the spiritual benefits of a life founded on generosity and giving, in gratitude for all that we have received. Nothing is possible without that first commitment from each of you, and we urge you to think about all that St. Nicholas means in your life as you make your Pledge.

We ask you to consider increasing your Pledge over last year's amount. If you can't, at least meet last year's amount. The Pledges you make and fulfill cover only about one-half of the costs to operate the Church and serve parishioners. Your generous Pledge will help close that gap. If you need a Pledge Card, get one at Church.

Please complete your Pledge Card and return it to the church office by December 1st. Your help will enable the Parish Council to determine the 2012 budget.

As always, St. Nicholas appreciates all your generosity.

2012 Pledge Program - Questions and Answers

Q. Does my pledge really matter?

A. Absolutely! Your pledge is a vital sign of your commitment to the church. Like individuals, the church cannot make a budget without knowing what its income will be. More profoundly, your pledge – as an act of giving back to God – is a tangible sign of your gratitude in response to God's grace.

Q. But I always put an offering in the plate. Isn't that the same thing?

A. Plate offerings are always welcome, but they're widely variable, and the church needs to plan. Without a Pledge Card, Pledge Envelop, and related member account, you will not get credit for your donations. Further, since 2007, cash contributions are not considered tax deductible without a receipt.

Q. What is proportional and intentional giving?

A. The Church asks us to recognize the Biblical tithe, 10% of our income, as a standard to which to aspire in our giving. Few people, however, are likely to start tithing all at once. Realistically, most of us may not be in a place to tithe and the 10% standard can seem out of reach. Proportional and intentional giving refers to the private process each of us makes to prayerfully designate some percentage of our income to the church. As we each grow in our spiritual journey we will likely find our percentage increasing, even if we start at one or two percent. When we no longer give to the church whatever we have left over after all of our other expenses – but take a percentage of our income off the top from the beginning for the church – we are being intentional and proportional in our giving.

Q. If I have a very modest income, wouldn't a proportional pledge be too small to make a difference?

A. No pledge amount is too small to make a difference in the parish if it makes a difference to you and the way you live your life.

Q. There are many worthy charities to which I make gifts. How should St. Nicholas factor in?

A. We appreciate that so many of St. Nicholas members support a variety of worthy causes. But consider these two points: As an organization the parish is a small entity. Our parish is almost entirely dependent on the generosity and support of its members both past and present. We do not receive grants from outside sources like many charities. Without the support of all its members the St. Nicholas would not exist. Secondly, and more profoundly, stewardship is not about philanthropy and fund-raising. Stewardship for Christians is about the spiritual journey of giving back what we already acknowledge to be God's grace, given to us abundantly and freely, in our lives.

Q. What is our total operating budget?

A. The church's total 2012 Budget to operate the church is about \$130,000. However, only about one-half of that needed money comes from pledges from our parish members through our Pledge Program. The other half of the needed money comes from several major fundraisers, candle sales, interest on stocks and bonds, rental of church space, open donations, gifts, etc. Our goal is to increase the Pledges each year so a greater share of the budget money needed to operate the church is raised through our Pledge Program.

Q. What does the church do with the money we receive?

A. The Church pays for all our ministries and programs. That includes worship, pastoral care, music, youth ministry, all our Sunday school and adult education programs, stewardship and outreach to the wider community. It also pays for utilities, insurance and building and grounds maintenance. This is the time when we, as a community, review our commitments to staff, and to programs to sustain and further develop these ministries for a new year. Without pledges we are unable to make these commitments.

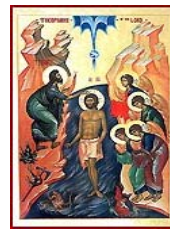
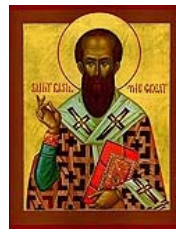
PASTOR'S MESSAGE (continued from Page 1)

the car! I retraced steps in my imagination but to no avail, for these were confused remembrances of prior days and previous spots. I wandered a few blocks on foot, I prayed, and, to the great relief of my fast beating heart, stumbled across the big, white Chevy. After that day, I no longer had trouble with this issue. Somehow, I think my mind finds it easier and less effort just to remember this rather than to risk forgetting and the dread, high pulse, and nag of worry that must accompany such a lapse. Or maybe once was just enough to make me pay attention. These days, I need only close my eyes to see in my mind where the car is, my route there and back, the landmarks of trees and houses.

In the midst of the Nativity Fast, our "Little Lent", we are in need of some encouragement. Weren't the forty days last spring, guiding us to Pascha, enough? Why does the Church or God do this to us again? Discipline. Many have written on the health benefits of lessening our appetites, putting aside the meat and cheese that so many of us love too much. The fasts of the Church, however, are not diets meant to provide to Christians good muscle tone. The fasts are an act of discipline and learning. In them, we practice knowing God by redefining the borders of our world. This we do by imposing something foreign, reciting afresh what we don't, can't, or shouldn't do for this given period. Most of us eat thoughtlessly, finding consumption natural. Naturally, then, our food becomes a good location to remember God during this season. Like breathing and the beating of our hearts, eating and drinking are necessary, inevitable for our survival. So with fasting our prayers become inevitable; our memory of God natural. Like a new and exotic tongue, we strive towards fluency in this discourse struggling to locate ourselves in a world we do not always recognize from past experiences. Taxing our memory to bear things of importance, we harness our bodies to this task of recalling ourselves as Christ's servants. In truth, fasting is a discipline of memory not body. It is not our bodies that are forgetful but our minds. We seek not negation of that which is corporal. Instead, we look forward to that "click" when we know God with ease. We search for that day when we will always know how and where to find Him, confident that He is there.

ICON AUCTION

Sunday, January 8th - After Liturgy



*Come and Bid in the Auction
or Make a Donation
in Honor of Your Favorite ICONS*

ICON RETURN

**Bring in your Icons
from last year's Icon Auction,
as soon as possible!!!**

**We need them to prepare for
the next Icon Auction.**

Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church to be Published in The Orthodox Post

Starting in January, advertisements (Ads) promoting businesses will be displayed in The Orthodox Post on a monthly basis. These Ads will help to financially support our St. Nicholas Church. Therefore, we ask that Parishioners support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

To help this advertising Program get off to a good start, we ask you to identify merchants that would be willing to place an Ad in The Orthodox Post. It is hoped that income from these Ads will cover the cost of publishing and distributing the Post which runs about \$3,000 per year.

The standard Ad will be the size of a business card. Larger Ads, the size of 2 or more standard size Ads, are also available. Ads will be placed in each monthly issue of the Post for a whole year. The cost of the standard size Ad for the whole year is only \$200. The larger Ads will cost proportionally more, based on the space used. Distribution of Ads in the Post will be by mailings, emails and access to the St. Nicholas web site on the Internet.

Once you have identified a merchant who might be willing to place an Ad, **please contact Tomi Beno (917 952-9252)**. He will provide you with additional information and the Ad form.

COMMUNITY NEWS

by Linda Foundos

- Our deepest sympathies to Joanne Heiser and her family on the passing of her father Strates Patelis. He leaves behind his lovely wife, Aphrodite, of 64 years, their daughters Joanne and Frances, 2 granddaughters Christina & Melissa and extended family and friends. Strates has left everyone with nothing but love and wonderful memories.
- Happy “special” birthday to Tom Strazinski who is delighted that he now qualifies for Medicare! He enjoys & appreciates the senior discount prices! We wish him many, many more happy & healthy years!
- It was like watching a wildlife show on TV as Daniel Oswald struggled to reel in his 35-pound red fish in Florida with his grandfather, Al Foundos and cousin Peter Borzuku! Christina Foundos enjoyed a “girls’ day out” with Joan Foundos, shopping, lunching & chatting. Daniel & Christina spent a few days visiting their grandparents in Naples, Florida enjoying jet skiing and an air boat trip through the Everglades where they came upon a 14 foot alligator! The sunshine beaches were great too!
- It was a very special Thanksgiving celebration for Genti Qipo and his parents Irma & Andon. They flew to London, England to spend the holiday with their brother/son who is working there. What a memorable holiday!
- Kudos to Ediona Sera for being accepted to Cornell University! Her parents, Oneda & Edi Sera, and sister Christiana are so proud of her as are we all. As well as her studies there, Ediona will be a member of the fencing team. We are sure that she will shine at everything she does. What a wonderful opportunity. All the best to you and your family.
- Aidan James Mario Kehoe was a “model” child as he was baptized on November 12th. He made his parents Alexandra & Michael Kehoe, grandparents Christina & James Liolin and Patsy Kehoe very happy & proud. Elizabeth Liolin & Peter Kehoe are Aidan’s sponsors. Michael’s mom, Patsy, flew in from Ireland for the special, blessed day. May God bless them all.
- Phil, Jana, Andrew & Nicholas Foundos enjoyed a fun-filled week in Cancun with the Melville Volunteer Fire Department. Phil has generously given of his time for the past several years to serve with the Fire Department. He has found it challenging, full-filling, and personally rewarding and has enjoyed the camaraderie of the other volunteers and their families. The multitudes of people that they serve and have helped are very appreciative and thankful. Very nice, Phil!

Looking Ahead . . .

- We look forward to seeing all of you for our St. Nicholas celebration on **Sunday, December 11th**, services with a delicious luncheon to follow.
- We look forward to having you join us on **Sunday, December 18th** for our annual Pancake Breakfast following services and our Church School Christmas Pageant.



The Repose of the Venerable Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America – Commemorated on December 13th

A spiritual mission was organized in 1793, made up of monks of the Valaam Monastery. They were sent to preach the Word of God to the native inhabitants of northwestern America, who only ten years before had come under the sovereignty of Russia. St Herman was among the members of this Mission. St Herman came from a family of merchants of Serpukhov, a city of the Moscow Diocese. He had a great zeal for piety from youth, and at sixteen he entered monastic life. (This was in 1772, if we assume that Herman was born in 1756, although sometimes 1760 is given as the date of his birth).

MIRACULOUS HEALING OF ST. HERMAN

The following incident happened to Father Herman at the St Sergius Hermitage. An abscess appeared on the right side of his throat under his chin. The swelling grew rapidly, disfiguring his face. It became difficult for him to swallow, and the odor was unbearable. In this critical condition Father Herman awaited death. He did not appeal to a physician of this world, but locking his cell he fell before an icon of the Queen of Heaven, he prayed with fervent tears, asking Her that he might be healed. He prayed the whole night. Then he took a wet towel and with it wiped the face of the Most Holy Mother, and with this towel he covered the swelling. He continued to pray with tears until he fell asleep on the floor from sheer exhaustion. In a dream he saw the Virgin Mary healing him.

When Herman awoke in the morning, he found to his great surprise that he was fully healed. The swelling had disappeared; even though the abscess had not broken through, leaving behind but a small mark as though a reminder of the miracle. Physicians to whom this healing was described did not believe it, arguing that it was necessary for the abscess to have either broken through of its own accord or to have been cut open. But the words of the physicians were the words of human experience; for where the grace of God operates there the order of nature is overcome. Such occurrences serve to humble human reason under the strong hand of God's Mercv.

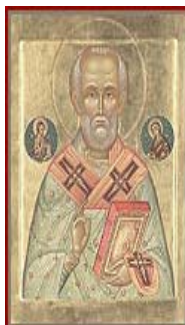
THE FIRST MISSION TO AMERICA

In the second half of the 18th century the borders of Holy Russia expanded to the north. In those years Russian merchants discovered the Aleutian Islands which formed in the Pacific Ocean a chain from the eastern shores of Kamchatka to the western shores of North America. With the opening of these islands there was revealed the sacred necessity to illumine with the light of the Gospel the native inhabitants. With the blessing of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Gabriel gave to the Elder Nazarius the task of selecting capable persons from the brethren of Valaam for this holy endeavor. Ten men were selected, and among them was Father Herman. The chosen men left Valaam for the place of their great appointment in 1793. As a result of the holy zeal of the preachers the light of the evangelic sermon quickly poured out among the sons of Russia, and several thousand pagans accepted Christianity. A school for the education of newly-baptized children was organized, and a church was built at the place where the missionaries lived. But by the inscrutable providence of God the general progress of the mission was unsatisfactory. After five years of very productive labor, Archimandrite Joasaph, who had just been elevated to the rank of bishop, was drowned with his party. (This occurred in the Pacific Ocean between Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands. The ship, Phoenix, one of the first sea-going ships built in Alaska, sailed from Okhotsk carrying the first Bishop for the American Mission and his party. The Phoenix was caught in one of the many storms which periodically sweep the northern Pacific, and the ship and all hands perished together with Bishop Joasaph and his party.) Before this the zealous Hieromonk Juvenal was granted the martyr's crown. The others died one after another until in the end only Father Herman remained. The Lord permitted him to labor longer than any of his brethren in the apostolic task of enlightening the Aleutians.

MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN DECEMBER



St. Barbara
Dec 04



St. Nicholas
Dec 06



The Conception of the Theotokos
Dec 09



St. Spyridon the Wonderworker
Dec 12



The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior
Dec 25



St. Stephen
Dec 27

Major Church Activities and Events

Sat, Dec 03: Adult Study, 4:00 p.m.; Vespers, 5:00 p.m.

Sun, Dec 04: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

Mon, Dec 05: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Tues, Dec 06: Prayers for St. Nicholas, 5:00 p.m.

Sat, Dec 10: Adult Study, 4:00 p.m.; Vespers, 5:00 p.m.

Sun, Dec 11: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; St. Nicholas Day Luncheon in Fellowship Hall following Liturgy

Tues, Dec 13: Prayers for St. Herman, 5:00 p.m.

Sat, Dec 17: Adult Study, 4:00 p.m.; Vespers, 5:00 p.m.

Sun, Dec 18: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Christmas Pageant, Pancake Breakfast and Santa's Visit

Sat Dec. 24: Christmas Vespers, 7:00 p.m.

Sun, Dec 25: Christmas Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

Sun, Jan 01: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; St. Basil the Great

Sun, Jan 08: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Feast of the Theophany of our Lord Icon Auction following Liturgy

**Ushers' Schedule
for Sunday Services**
Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kishe

Dec 04: Ken Gjika / Izzy Tsamblakos

Dec 11: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile

Dec 18: Ilir Fundo / Stefan Baltadori

Dec 25: Petrika Troja / Nasi Pavllo

Jan 01: Andrea Kutali / John Jance

Jan 08: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra

*We're on the Web!**Visit us at:*www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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Jamaica Estates, New York 11432



Customer Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code