

# THE ORTHODOX POST

December 2014

Volume X, Issue 11



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## Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

As any close friend of mine or even any casual and confused person who has ever wandered in past the front door of my apartment will agree, my interior decorating scheme is more a system of warehousing than a thing of beauty. The bookshelves are overburdened for sure, squeezed beyond their capacity to hold, and the walls are crowded, crowded mostly with religious art and icons—some of good quality, many of quite poor artistic appeal. And I am running out of wall space. Yet still I am thrilled to house these things, often salvaging icons from places and individuals who don't know their worth spiritually but probably have a better assessment of their value monetarily than I am willing to admit.

Last month, I acquired another odd addition; it is an image of the Resurrection but just of Christ rising triumphantly, a largish icon cut out in the shape of that single figure and the paint stained a bit by age. Though I can't be entirely certain of its provenance, I believe it has come from the small chapel of a now shuttered convent. As I often do, I took this icon to St. Nicholas and kept it in the altar for a couple weeks before blessing it with holy water in

## President's Message

by Jim Liolin

Give a Special Gift!!!

The Council wishes to thank the Daughters of St. Nicholas for their excellent Flea Market & Bake Sale event last month and to those who helped the Daughters. Giving your support made it a success.

At this time of year, we all reflect on the blessings we have been given this year and throughout our lives. Let's think about giving back, to our families, our friends, those in need, and, especially with the gift of ourselves to God.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Pastor's Message &amp; President's Message</i>	1
<i>Daughters' Corner &amp; Kendi Shqip</i>	2
<i>St. Nicholas Luncheon with Archbishop Nikon</i>	3
<i>Christmas Activities and Services</i>	4
<i>2015 Program Program</i>	5
<i>Men's Club Wine &amp; Cheese Social</i>	6
<i>Sunday School/December Feast Days</i>	7-8
<i>Merchant Ads</i>	9-11
<i>Major Events &amp; Ushers' Sunday Schedule</i>	12

in that rite that our faith prescribes. At the close of these prayers, I leaned in to venerate this image with a kiss, and, as I was taught long ago that respect to Christ and His saints is better shown by reverence than familiarity, I bent to kiss the hand or the feet of the image. But I found that my lips met the icon at the point of the wound, that mark of gash in the Lord's side whence flowed blood and water when He hung on the Cross, and my mind was taken to a conversation of the week before.

It will not, I suspect, come as a surprise that I speak about faith and religion even when I am "off the clock". In the same way that I still ask finance questions of my dad and

**Continued on Page 7**

There are many opportunities this month to come together as a community and pray and celebrate with us. Give of yourselves and join us for the **St. Nicholas Day celebration and luncheon on Dec. 7th**. Come to the children's Christmas pageant and pancake breakfast on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. Pray with us on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

As we end the year, give the special gift of all—yourselves!

Have a Blessed Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

## KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



by A. Llupa

Dhjetor, 2014

Këtë radhë po japim një lutje të ditës se Krishtlindjeve marrë nga “ Udha Orthodokse”, dhe një pjesë nga “Lulet e Verës” e Naimit:

Zemëra

Fuqi' e Perëndisë	E shohëmë në qiej,
Duketë tek kudo,	Në shi e në re,
Se shpirti i gjithësisë	Ndë hën' e nëpër diej
Po është ajo.	Ësht' edhe në dhe.

Ajo është gjithë ç'janë,	Më tepër zemrën tënë
Është në çdo vent	Atë ka për fron,
E duket me çdo anë,	Nuk ja dëgjon zënë,
Një trup e në ment.	Zemrën s'e dëgjon?

## ICON AUCTION

Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> - 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 11th Icon Auction*

## Daughters' Corner

By Linda Foundos

Our annual Flea Market/Bake Sale was a record-breaking success with profits over \$5,000 just selling used items and our delicious baked goods. Our bake table ran out of lakror very early in the day on Sunday, our second day, demand was so high! Our regular customers look forward to it every year. Our heartfelt thanks to all those who worked so hard to make this work out so smoothly and to all those that gathered their items to donate to this cause. It certainly takes a village to manage this event! Thank you everyone!

We wish all of you and your families a very Happy Thanksgiving! Let us all count our blessings and be thankful for each day.

Don't forget to join us for our annual St. Nicholas Luncheon on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> with His Eminence Bishop Nikon too! It is always a joyful event.

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENING

DECEMBER 1, 2014

Saint Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church is pleased to offer a preventive health event. Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will host their affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings on 12/1/2014. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. **In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit [www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners](http://www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners).**

# *St. Nicholas Day Luncheon with Archbishop Nikon*



**Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**  
after Liturgy  
in the Fellowship Hall

Fish Dinner: \$25  
Children Dinner: Free

Come and Help us Celebrate our St. Nicholas Feast Day.  
As Sponsors, The Daughters' will provide Prizes  
to be won through a Raffle!!

**Space is Limited. Tickets will be sold in advance at Coffee Hour  
on Sunday, November 9, 16, 23 and 30.**

**Buy & Reserve Tickets by Contacting:**

**Ilia/Agathia Luka 718-456-6582**

**Robert/Tina Korra 201-338-2002**

**Edi/Oneda Sera 516-280-4876**



**Christmas Pageant  
&  
Pancake Breakfast  
&  
Santa's Visit**

**Sunday  
December 21<sup>st</sup>**



**Wishing You All  
A Blessed  
Christmas Season!!!!**

**Schedule of Christmas Services**

Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

- 10:00 a.m. - Royal Hours
- 5:00 p.m. - Vespers
- 8:00 p.m. - Liturgy

Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

- 10:00 a.m. - Prayers, Nativity of The Lord



## Pledge Program for 2015

Our Annual Pledge Campaign for 2015 is underway. This is a when we in the St. Nicholas Parish Community indicate our expected level of financial support for the next year. We do this by praying and considering our own lives at St. Nicholas; determining the financial giving we expect to make in 2015; indicating it on a Pledge Card; and returning the Pledge Card to church.

Pledge Program letters have been mailed to the St. Nicholas Community. As we look into 2015, we see a need to cover expenses of approximately \$147,000. Last year, almost 100 families made a Pledge. Most pledges were in the \$500 to \$3000 range. We ask you to consider making a generous Pledge. Please consider increasing your Pledge over last year's amount or making a first time Pledge for 2015.

The Pledge Campaign will reach a critical point on Sunday December 7th at our St. Nicholas Day Celebration when all the pledges received to date will be blessed at the end of the liturgy, in a special prayer of joyous thanksgiving. Pledges can be put in the collection basket or mailed to the office as soon as you've filled them out. Please do this as soon as possible.

We appreciate your continued generosity and it is your spiritual, physical, and monetary support that maintains St. Nicholas here for us to gather together as one community.

## 2015 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.

### **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 does the church do with the money we receive?**

A. The Church pays for all our clergy, ministries and programs. Activities include worship, pastoral care, music, youth ministry, all our Sunday school and adult education programs, stewardship and outreach to the wider community. Also the Church pays for the utilities, insurance as well as 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.

## Wine and Cheese Social Event Sponsored by the Men's Club

On Saturday, November 8, 2014 St. Nicholas Albanian Men's Club had a wine and cheese social event and it was another success.

The event was very well attended and fun was had by all. We played some loud games of pool and a few games of cards. In addition there was great singing by Ardi who encouraged everyone to join in. It was an evening of great company, friendly competition, cigars, pizza and laughs.

Please look for the next announcement from the Men's Club announcing another exciting activity and we welcome EVERYONE to join in the excitement.

Thanks to all who attended and helped out from the St. Nicholas Albanian Men's Club.

If you would like to learn more about the Men's Club and our mission or want to become a member please contact Ilia Luka, Tomi Beno or Edi Sera.



## Pastor's Message – Continued from Page 1

inquire on points of pedagogy from my mom and nuisance my friends and other relations with sundry questions when I have need of their expertise, so I have become the de facto authority on matters of religion for my bubble of community. It is a role I am still learning to be okay with because I can attest with some confidence that many or most of those who seek my counsel are far better people than I am. Yet I am thought the expert, so I do what I can. In this conversation of the prior week, a friend of mine was confessing her doubts about the faith with which she had been raised, but what struck me as she described the process of her spiritual life was the guilt that seemed to accompany these changes in mind and heart, the process of growth made uneasy by sentiments of shame. To question seemed to be for her an inherently dubious activity, sinful even, by her own evaluation. Yet to refuse to question was equally untenable, since this act of ignoring is the discomfiting choice of ignorance. A rock and a hard place indeed! Breathing a silent prayer of thanks for the wisdom of our Church's calendar and cycle, I began to narrate to her the events we celebrate on the Sunday directly after Great and Holy Pascha, the Sunday of St. Thomas. For us, this great apostle is more than a doubter; He is also the messenger of a great and unique truth. Despite his qualms and despite his insistence on having this truth catered according to his own specifications, St. Thomas also receives the special blessing of proclaiming an immediate gospel, the good news literally close at his hand: "My Lord and My God!" He cries this out, and we call now his doubt blessed, for the struggle to know God is always a blessed struggle though rarely an easy one.

Leaning over my icon with my lips pressed to that place of pain and triumph, the gaping wound in which those witnesses of the crucifixion saw only death and end but where that doubter found hope and newness, I am reminded that we always seem to meet God here—here at the intersection of pain and victory, loss and life, doubt transfigured and reshaped by the growth of our hope. It is good place to be, standing with the saints slightly confused but ready to believe.

## Sunday School



Our Church School is changing in some exciting ways. Parents, please be sure to take a look at the information below so that your children can take part.

\*Church School will meet on the first Sunday of each month and start at 10am. All children from Kindergarten to 5th Grade are invited.

\*Nursery School will meet on the second and fourth Sundays of each month and start at 10:30am. All children four years old and under are invited to attend.

\*Please be on time so that your kids don't miss out!

For more information, please get in touch with Fr. Nathan or take a look at the bulletin board halfway down the stairs. See you in Sunday School!



**ST. ELEUTHERIUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE** –  
**Commemorated on December 15<sup>th</sup>** (Reading and  
 Icon courtesy of OCA Website)

The Holy Martyr Eleutherius Cubicularius was an illustrious and rich chamberlain [“cubicularius”] at the Byzantine court. With all his courtly privileges, Eleutherius was not beguiled by worldly possessions and honors. Instead, he thought of imperishable and eternal things.

Having accepted holy Baptism, he began daily to glorify God with psalmody and to adorn his life with virtuous

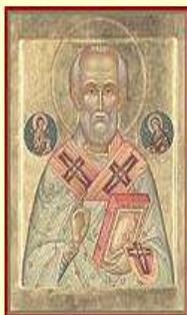
But one of his servants through diabolic promptings, informed against his master to the [then still pagan] emperor. The emperor tried to turn Eleutherius from his faith in Christ, but after the unsuccessful attempts the emperor gave orders to behead him, and to throw his body to be eaten by dogs and vultures. A certain Christian priest took up the saint’s body and buried it.

There is a second commemoration of the martyr on August 4.

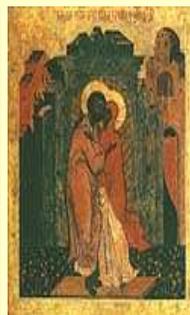
## MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN DECEMBER



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of Syria**  
Dec 04



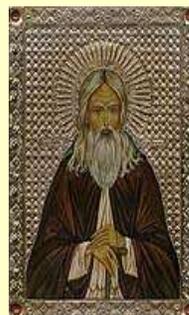
**St. Nicholas**  
Dec 06



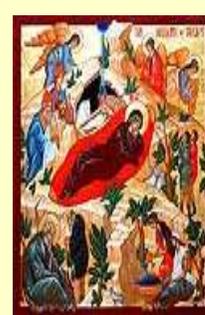
**The Conception  
of The Theotokos**  
Dec 09



**St. Spyridon**  
Dec 12



**St. Herman  
of Alaska**  
Dec 13



**The Nativity of  
our Lord**  
Dec 25



**St. Stephen**  
Dec 27

### ***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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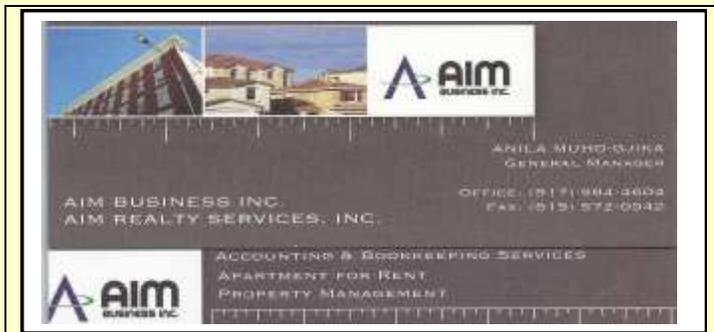
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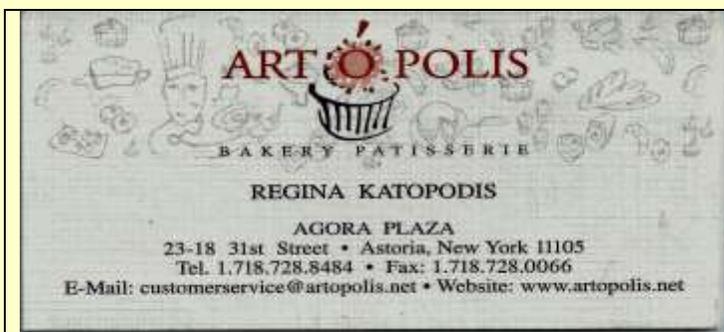
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**Major Church Activities and Events**

Vespers every Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

December 06, 13, 20 and 27

Mon, Dec 01: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.  
 Thurs, Dec 04: Prayers, 11:00 a.m.; St. Barbara  
 Fri, Dec 05: Paraklesis, 7:00 p.m.  
 Sat, Dec 06: Prayers, 10:00 a.m.; St. Nicholas  
 Sun, Dec 07: Archbishop Nikon: Hierarchal Liturgy,  
 10:00 a.m.; St. Nicholas Luncheon  
 Tues, Dec 09: Prayers, 11:00 a.m.; St. Ann  
 Fri, Dec 12: Paraklesis, 7:00 p.m.  
 Sun, Dec 14: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.  
 Fri, Dec 19: Paraklesis, 7:00 p.m.  
 Sun, Dec 21: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Christmas Pageant  
 and Pancake Breakfast to follow  
 Wed, Dec 24: Royal Hours, 10:00 a.m.;  
 Vespers, 5:00 p.m.; Liturgy, 8:00 p.m.  
 Thurs, Dec 25: Prayers, 10:00 a.m.; Nativity of The Lord  
 Sun, Dec 28: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

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

**Dec 07: Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA**

**Dec 14: Ilia LUKA / Bill PETERS**

**Dec 21: Stefan BALTADORI / Izzy TSAMBLAKOS**

**Dec 28: Nasi PAVLLO / Ardian MILE**

**Jan 04: Jim OSWALD / Tomi BENO**

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