

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 7

July 2009

May Council Highlights

- ✘ May Operating Income was \$9,309.45 and Operating Expenses were \$8,327.27, resulting in a positive position of \$982.18 for the month of May and a year-to-date balance of \$5,578.98.
- ✘ Adult Education classes will be held on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. during the month of July; classes will focus on The Creed.
- ✘ Semi-annual meeting will be held on Sunday, July 26, 2009. The focus of the meeting will be a review of the church's financial status and the parking lot project.
- ✘ Church School certificates were handed out Sunday, June 14, 2009.



Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
 1614 E. Monte Vista Rd.
 Phoenix, AZ 85006
 602.253.9515

www.sspeterpaulaz.org
www.oca.org
www.orthodoxfellowship.org

Archpriest David Brum
 Rector
 602.274.6794 Home
 480.287.0240 Mobile
 Frdbrum@aol.com

Protodeacon Alexis Washington

Andrew Evans
 Council President
 480.948.7929

Stephanie A. Homyak
 Church School Director
 Newsletter Editor
 623.869.0470
 Stephanie_Homyak@yahoo.com

Mike Wagner
 Web Master
 Mike@sspeterpaulaz.org

The Outer Signs are Only to Remind Us of the Inner Things

The words in this article's title were written by the Nun Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth. On Saturday of this week we remember her martyrdom and that of her companion, Nun Barbara. Because Saint Elizabeth was born into Western European royalty and raised as a Protestant, she struggled to explain her conversion to Orthodoxy to her relatives, among them



Queen Victoria. Some of them believed that her Russian husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, had compelled her to convert. Others, apparently, thought that she had been dazzled by the splendor of Orthodox worship. It was to them that she wrote, according to Ludmila Koehler's book "Saint Elizabeth the New Martyr", these words: "You tell me that the outer brilliance of the church charmed me...in that you are mistaken—nothing in the outer signs attracted me. The outer signs are only to remind us of the inner things." Many people do not understand why churches, vestments and sacred vessels should be beautiful. They consider these things to be unnecessary "trappings." Yet God Himself gave instructions for the building of a richly-furnished tabernacle, and vestments for the "glorious adornment" of the priests, in Exodus 25.

Jesus reproved the disciples when they questioned the "waste" of costly oil used by a woman to anoint Him. They complained that it could have been sold for a good deal of money which would help the poor. But He said, in Matthew 26:11, "For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me." The Church understands from this that when we have the privilege of being with the Lord in church, everything from the choir's singing to the well-polished candlestands should be as beautiful as we can make it. Near the end of every Liturgy we ask God to "sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house." But beautiful things are not ends in themselves. They are there to "remind us of the inner things" as Saint Elizabeth wrote. We are not meant to get caught up in beautiful externals, but we are meant always to remember the glory of the Kingdom of God, toward which the beauty of those externals points us. Saint Elizabeth understood that,

and she also understood what Jesus meant by saying, "For you always have the poor with you." Creating beauty in the church doesn't exempt us from taking care of those in need; we are supposed to do both. The women's monastery founded by Saint Elizabeth served some of the most destitute people in Moscow while at the same time holding services in a beautifully-appointed chapel. We should always be able to answer critics of the "fancy trappings" of Orthodox worship by truthfully saying that we do serve and care for our needy sisters and brothers, but that we also make the church a beautiful place so as to "remind" worshippers of the "inner things." Saint Elizabeth shows us how to do both.

Troparion - Tone 4

Emulating the Lord's self-abasement on the earth,
 You gave up royal mansions to serve the poor and disdained,
 Overflowing with compassion for the suffering.
 And taking up a martyr's cross,
 In your meekness
 You perfected the Saviour's image within yourself,
 Therefore, with Barbara, entreat Him to save us all,
 O wise Elizabeth.

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As summer begins in earnest, the desert heat increases, and people begin their vacations, our daily life and work at Saints Peter and Paul Church continues. We continue to gather for prayer as we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. We continue to share the fullness of the Gospel in our daily lives by reaching out to others. And we continue to grow in our Orthodox Faith. During July, for example, participants in our Adult Education Program are studying the history and theology of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and thus come to a better understanding of the Faith preached and proclaimed by the Orthodox Church throughout the ages.

Every day in our personal prayers as well as at every celebration of the Divine Liturgy, we recite this ancient confession of faith, initially formulated by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicea 325) and then added to and confirmed at the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 381).



But the Nicene Creed, as it is most commonly called, is more than a simple prayer to be recited daily as part of a group of other prayers. It is the most widely accepted and used brief statements of the Orthodox Christian Faith. And in other Christian communities, it is also said every Sunday as part of their communal prayer. In addition to our Orthodox Church, it is used by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Methodists, as well as by many other Christian groups. Many groups that do not have a tradition of using it (or any other creedal statement for that matter) in their services nevertheless are committed in varying degrees to the Christian doctrines it teaches.

In a very convenient and succinct (and nonetheless full and complete) way, the Creed outlines for us the basic teaching of the Orthodox Faith and enables us to know and enunciate what it is we believe as Orthodox Christians. The Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils faced the challenge of defining Orthodox Teaching at a time when Orthodoxy was being challenged. They did this in defense of the Truth against the

false teachers and false teachings that were attempting to draw believers away from the truth of the Orthodox Faith. In our own day, we are also challenged and enticed by false teachings that are hidden under the guise of Christianity, by "convenient" religion, and by the allures of the world. It is more important than ever, therefore, to have a full understanding of our Faith and to be able to express our Faith to others. We need to know our Faith in order to defend it. We need to know our Faith in order to share it.

Not everyone may be able to attend our Wednesday evening classes. Nonetheless, everyone can reflect upon the words of the Creed and come to better know and understand the Orthodox Teaching it proclaims. Recite the Creed thoughtfully and prayerfully every day. Invite the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind as to the fullness of its meaning. It is only through knowing the Faith that we can make it a part of our lives and, in turn, share the fullness of the Truth with others.

With love in the Lord,

Father David

Raising No-Compromise Kids

Adapted by Phyllis Meshel Onest

Dedicate each of your children to the Lord.

Although we dedicated our children to God when we had them baptized, it doesn't stop there. It is important to begin each day by bringing each child before the Lord in prayer. Our children are a gift from God and are on loan to us to rear as Orthodox Christians. God is there to lead the way if only we work with Him.

Teach them the ways of Christ as given us in the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church.

This is the "reap what you sow" principle. If we don't put it in, we won't get it back out. Scripture and Tradition form the standards for our lives as Orthodox Christians. Insist that family members play by "God's rules".

Communicate, communicate, communicate!

"Ephesians 6:4 tells us to 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'. *Admonish* means to warn and caution; to reprove mildly; to advise; to inform or remind, by way of a warning. When a loving parent admonishes in a nurturing way, the lasting effect is positive."

Psychologists state that during all our adult lives, our parents' opinions circulate like tape recordings in our minds. Most often the 'experts' mean that this is the cause of many of our dysfunctions. But why can't these 'parental recordings' be a constructive thing?"

Listen to them.

We need to be "sounding boards" for our children. They need us to be available so they can bounce off things that happen at school. This is a perfect time to share your values - values often in opposition to the "world's". The Scriptures teach that we are to be "in the world" but not "of the world".

Support them.

We know that kids seek support somewhere, oftentimes from their peers. The ideal is that they experience affirmations from their parents and family, including god-families. What we want them to know is that regardless of how they are perceived by others, at home they are loved and accepted.

Make knowing Christ and developing His character your family's goals.

We have the life of Christ and the lives of the saints, who succeeded in living as Christ would have wanted, as examples for our children and us. Encourage children to learn the lives of their patron saints so that they have real heroes/heroines to emulate.

Pray, pray, pray!

When we come to God on behalf of our children, something supernatural happens to them and to us. They are protected and we acknowledge our dependence on Him. Our prayers can be done during a specific prayer time or throughout the day as He brings the individual child to mind.

Be an example.

How we conduct our lives at work, at church, and at home are the most effective tools we have to reinforce what we teach. Even though raising no-compromising children is a challenge, it is something we will never regret.

Adapted from an article with the same name by Cynthia Culp Allen that appeared in Focus on the Family magazine, August 1995, p.10.

Reprinted with permission from *Orthodox Family Life*

Cracked Ribs

Very Rev. John Breck

There's nothing particularly serious about cracked ribs, as long as fragments of bone don't attack your lungs or some other vital organ. But they leave you feeling like the apostle Paul: shipwrecked, beaten and lapidated.

I came about mine in a superlatively stupid way. The ceiling-high curtains were open at the top, letting more light than we wanted into the bedroom of our small rented apartment in Montmartre, a stone's throw from the basilica of Sacré Coeur. So I climbed onto a rickety wooden chair, then onto a small desk with a perilously thin top, to close the gap. As the desk started to cave in, I stepped as gingerly as I could back onto the chair, which immediately tipped over. I crashed against the hard wooden corner of the bed, ending up with scrapes on a leg and a foot, and a large hematoma in the middle of my back. The next day confirmed what my wife and I both suspected: cracked ribs. Nothing serious—they'll heal by themselves. In the meantime, any false move (which means nearly any move at all, not to mention a cough, a burp or a laugh), and they ache like kidney stones.

If I were still thirty-five, I could take this without so much moaning and complaining. But I'm twice that now, and the ageing carcass is giving out. The other day I met our daughter-in-law's nonagenarian grandfather for the first time, and all we

talked about for the ten minutes we spent together was how stiff and sore our knees had gotten. Riding the Paris Métro used to be fun, or at least routine. Now it's an adventure, a relentless challenge (as they remind you in the London Underground) to "mind the gap!" Especially since old codgers like me are liable to trip over it or to fall right through. Mind the gap, or you could end up with more than a few cracked ribs.

To anybody who's read this far, I'd like to make a point about all this. It's a plea, really, an appeal for mercy. There's a noticeable graying of Western society, with couples in countries like Italy, France and even Russia producing far too few children to prevent a precipitous decline in population. On the other hand, we're living much longer on average than our forebears did ("too much longer," my mother acidly remarked in her ninety-second year). Which means that there are way more old folks around than there used to be. (It's P.C. nowadays to call them *Seniors*, as if that sounded more "venerable" than "old.")

Which leads me to the appeal.

It's a simple request to all the under-sixty youngsters among us to recognize and appreciate the stresses and strains brought on by advancing age. From short-term memory loss to stiff knees and an awkward shuffle—not to mention serious maladies such as congestive heart disease or Alzheimer's—it's not easy to grow old, even if the gift of grandchildren and a more leisurely pace

can transfigure one's later years. It's not easy to grow old, especially when young people take it for granted you're senile, and pregnant women offer you their seat on the bus.

So although we're not as agile as we used to be, and doing dumb things to produce cracked ribs might occur more often than it used to, we'd still appreciate being regarded and treated as adults. Adults who may need a helping hand now and then, but adults who still cherish warm friendships and good conversation. One of the most difficult aspects of growing old, in fact, is the feeling that you're more or less abandoned by everyone except your wobbly peers (their knees hurt, too).

If the church we attend really is the Body of Christ, then that's the first place we should look around, to rediscover the elderly in our midst, to appreciate their worth as persons of experience and perspective, and to accompany them along the often difficult and painful pathway that leads to their final time on earth. And to do so with genuine love and affection, patience and good will.

After all, if things go well, sooner or later all of us will be joining their ranks.

Reprinted from the "Life in Christ" series, July 2009, Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-life-article.asp?SID=6&ID=177&MONTH=July&YEAR=2009>

Different Centuries and Continents but the Same Goal

This week [July 26] the church celebrates two saints with different life circumstances but a shared determination to serve God's people in a particular way. On Sunday we remember Saint Jacob, Enlightener of the Alaskan Peoples. Saint Clement of Ochrid is remembered on Monday [July 27]. A thousand years earlier, he helped people in Eastern Europe understand their faith by doing some of the same things Saint Jacob would do in North America in the nineteenth century.

Saint Clement was born in 840. He was a disciple of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and took part in their mission to Moravia. Like his great teachers, he wanted the Slavic people to hear the Liturgy and read Scripture in their own language. But serious opposition came in the form of the German missionaries in Moravia, who with the Pope's support insisted that services be in Latin. Clement was imprisoned, ill-treated, and expelled from the country. He reached Bulgaria, and was welcomed as a teacher and a man able to enlighten the people. He opened schools, translated needed texts,

and trained many priests. After being consecrated a bishop, his health failing, he finally retired to a monastery in Ochrid which he had founded. Clement was the first hierarch of Bulgaria to preach, write and serve in the people's own language.

Saint Jacob (Netsvetov) was born in the Aleutian Islands in 1802. He attended seminary in Russia. After graduating, marrying, and being ordained a priest, he urgently wanted to return to Alaska, and did so in 1828.

Once there, Father Jacob faced a huge task, being responsible for an area that spread out over several islands in the Bering Sea. But despite exhaustion and the harsh climate, within six months of his arrival he had recorded over 400 chrismations, plus baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

In 1836, tragedy struck the priest hard. His wife and father died, and the family house was destroyed by fire. But with the support of his bishop, Saint Innocent, he carried on. Like Saint Clement, his chief concern was that people should hear and

understand the Liturgy and Scripture in their own languages. He invented two alphabets, translated, and personally taught his people. Later in life he traveled hundreds of miles to minister to families living along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

Saint Jacob also shared with Saint Clement the experience of being badly treated by those who feared his influence. In 1863 he was the victim of false but ugly accusations, and though he was completely cleared, his already-failing health was further undermined, and he died a year later.

Many of us take for granted having the Bible and worship services in our own language. But two saints we remember this week contended with huge difficulties to achieve that goal. Fortunately for us, they didn't let hardships or fierce opposition deter them. No doubt they rejoice when we honor their work by being faithful in church attendance and the reading of Scripture.

This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Discovering Truth

Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"
(John 14:6)

When we do as the apostles, taking their cue in giving our lives meaning by accepting the invitation of Jesus to *"Follow Me,"* we learn why the early church's first title was The Way (Acts 9:19,24). Learning is a process, not just a goal. We measure our intelligence and wisdom not by a diploma or degree, but by what we've been discovering and assimilating on the pathway through life. We realize that our salvation came through the cross and resurrection of Christ, yet we find ourselves growing in understanding as we follow Him from the incarnation through His ascent and return to the *"right hand of the Father."*

In that way we learn what Truth is; or better put, Who is Truth? He teaches by example the variant meanings of truth. For the Jews, truth is the Law, and to abide by it is to be right with God. You shall honor the Sabbath. No exceptions accepted. And yet we find Him breaking that law. He heals on the Sabbath. Was that wrong? Following Him we remember that He is also the Truth. So Truth transcends Law. As we wend our way through this life, we are trained to be law-abiding citizens of our country and to keep the traditions and rules of the Church; however, we realize that at times, situations in which we find ourselves may create conditions that cause us to reflect on our values and consider what would be the best way to resolve the given situation.

Truth can be understood as reason. The Greek term *aletheia* has this meaning. The proper way to act is to do what is logical. In following Christ we realize that He isn't always rational in the world's understanding of the term. When St. Peter chastises the Lord for dropping hints that His way of redeeming humanity has to do with suffering, rejection and ultimately crucifixion, He rebukes the apostle in strongest terms, calling him Satan, realizing that the evil one is speaking through him. Later, when He announced His intention to go up to Jerusalem, St. Thomas made a similar observation.

Through the centuries, Christians who had acted in accordance with their faith, not their instinct for self-preservation, giving their bodies

to be tortured and put to death for the sake of Christ, have been considered holy martyrs and honored by the Church. We as members of the Way, following the living Way, Jesus Christ, find meaning each hour of the days of our lives as we are challenged by the constant question: What is the right way to reply to another person -- to act in a manner fitting as a Christian? To do what the Lord would have me do?

Truth is that glorious Person whose life, death and resurrection give meaning to the entire world. Like Him we obey the Law and live by the Ten Commandments, but also like Him we find there are situations when we must use our consciences to weigh right and wrong, making the best choice given the circumstances.

And we realize that Life is not limited to this present lifetime, but Christ the Life of the world shows us the meaning of His admonition: *"He who loves his life in this world must lose it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life"* (John 12:25). Following His example, we comprehend the great truth that the present life is but a preparation for what is to come. He will be there at the end, and I will not only be following Him, but He will turn around to face me and greet me, welcoming me as a true follower of Him in this world and beyond.

Reprinted from *"Thoughts in Christ"*, July 5, 2009, *Bulletin 36, Volume XLVI, Orthodox Church in America*, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-thoughts-article.asp?SID=6&ID=356>



REMINDERS

- ☺ As the temperatures start to soar, please do not prop open the doors to the Cultural Center.
- ☺ There is a basketball and several jump ropes for the youth to use during coffee hour. They can be found in the Pre-K/K classroom. Just remember to return them when you are finished using them.
- ☺ If your children are playing in the classrooms, please remember to make sure they clean up when they are done.

CHURCH HUMOR

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means?"

The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy..." the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program.. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The Rite of Betrothal and Crowning Orthodox Christian Marriage—A Mystery

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians (5:25-32), in the passage which is read at the Orthodox Christian ceremony of marriage, gives the true meaning of union between man and women.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...because we are members of His body..." This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the Church. The Orthodox sacrament of marriage declares that marriage has ceased to be simply the satisfaction of a natural human instinct or merely the declaration of a legal contract between two human beings. It is a blessed event which concerns not only the newly married couple, but also Christ Himself, for two of His members are being joined in one within the whole Church which is the Body of Christ. This new dimension is what constitutes the whole difference between an Orthodox Christian marriage and the one which is concluded outside the Church. Today we *truly* see a great mystery blessed by Christ Jesus Himself!

The Rings

The order of marriage is composed in two parts; the Betrothal and the Sacraments of Crowning. The Betrothal, being an entrance rite, is celebrated in the Vestibule of the church.

The rings are blessed by the priest who takes them in his hand and making the sign of the cross over their heads says "The servant of God, <name>, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, <name>, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The rings are placed on the right hand; the right hand being the hand of blessing.

The best man then exchanges the rings three times, taking the bride's ring and placing it on the groom's finger, who in turn returns the ring. The rings are the symbol of the betrothal from the most ancient times. The exchange signifies that in married life, the weaknesses of one partner will be compensated for by the strength of the other, the imperfections of one by the perfection of the other. By themselves, the newly betrothed are incomplete; together that are made perfect. Thus the exchange of the rings gives expression to the fact that the spouses in marriage will constantly be complementing each other. Each will be enriched by the union.

The Candles

The wedding service begins immediately following the Betrothal Service. The bride and groom

are handed candles which they hold throughout the service. The candles are like lamps of the five wise maidens of the Bible, who, because they had enough oil in their lamps, were able to receive the Bridegroom Christ, when He came in the darkness of the night. The candles symbolize the spiritual willingness of the couple to receive Christ, who will bless them through this sacrament.

The Crowning

The office of the crowning, which follows, is the climax of the wedding service. The crowns are signs of the glory and honor with which God crowns them during the sacrament. The groom and the bride are crowned as the king and queen of their own little kingdom, the home, which they rule with wisdom, justice and integrity.

The Common Cup

The rite of crowning is followed by the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel. The Gospel reading describes the marriage at Cana of Galilee which was attended and blessed by Christ, and for which He manifested His first miracle. There He converted water into wine and gave it to the newlyweds. In remembrance of this blessing, wine is given to the couple. This is the "common cup" of life denoting the mutual sharing of joy and sorrow, the token of a life of harmony. The drinking of wine from the common cup serves to impress upon the couple that from that moment on they will share everything in life, joys as well as sorrows, and that they are to "bear one another's burdens." Their joys will be doubled and their sorrows halved because they will be shared.

The Ceremonial Walk

The priest leads the bride and groom in a circle around the Amvon (table) on which are placed the Gospel and the Cross; the one contains the word of God and the other being the symbol of our redemption by Jesus. The husband and wife are taking their first steps as a married couple, and the church, in the person of the priest, leads them in the way they must walk. The way is symbolized by the circle at the center of which are the Gospel and the Cross of our Lord. This expresses the fact that the way of Christian living is a perfect orbit around the center of life, who is Jesus Christ our Lord.

During the ceremonial walk around the Amvon, a hymn is sung to the Holy Martyrs reminding the newly couple of the sacrificial love they are

to have for each other in marriage; a love that seeks not its own but is willing to sacrifice its all for the one loved.

The Blessing

The couple return to their places and the priest, blessing the groom says, "Be thou exalted, O bridegroom, as Abraham, and blessed as Isaac, and increased as Jacob, walking in peace and working in righteousness the commandments of God." And blessing the bride he says, "And thou, O bride, be thou exalted as Sarah, and glad as Rebecca, and do thou increase like unto Rachael, rejoicing in thine own husband, fulfilling the conditions of the law; for so it is well pleasing unto God."

Reprinted from the web page of Holy Ghost Orthodox Church, Ambridge, PA, <http://www.holyghost-oca.org/orthodoxy/practices/wedding.htm> ✕

John 2: 1-11 Wedding at Cana

- 1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.
- 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.
- 3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."
- 4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."
- 5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."
- 6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.
- 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.
- 8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.
- 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.
- 10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"
- 11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

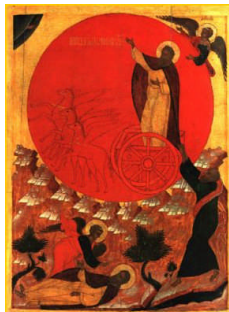
If the Lord is God, Follow Him

On Monday of this week [July 20] we remember the Holy Prophet Elijah. He appears, with no introduction, at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of First Kings (3 Kingdoms in the Orthodox Study Bible.) We see that Elijah certainly is a prophet by the way he speaks God's word, but we also see that he is both the beneficiary and the performer of miracles.

The miracle from which Elijah benefits saves his life. It's a time of famine, and God tells him to go to the brook Cherith that flows into the Jordan, and drink water from the brook. God says, "I shall command the ravens to feed you there."

When the brook dries up, God prepares Elijah to perform a life-giving miracle for someone else, telling him to go to Zarephath, where a widow will take care of him.

Elijah finds the widow, who readily gives him a cup of water. But when he asks for bread, she tells him that she has so little that she and her son will probably soon die. Elijah prophesies that the Lord will furnish her with sufficient flour and oil, and just as he says, "the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry."



But the widow's son dies, and she bitterly confronts Elijah: "You came to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son." God answers Elijah's plea to restore the son's life. With that, the widow is able to say, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

As God's prophet, Elijah does much good, but he must also confront evil. When he meets King Ahab, Elijah reminds the king that he has forsaken the worship of the true God and followed after the false gods, the Baals, of his wife Jezebel.

He has thrown the people into uncertainty, which Elijah challenges: "How long will you be undecided between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal, follow him." Then Elijah shows in spectacular fashion that God triumphs over all false deities.

Victorious, he orders the execution of all 450 of Baal's prophets.

Events like this execution make some see God as brutal, even murderous. But this alien religion of Baal—powerfully patronized by the queen, Jezebel—had moved "into the very

heart of Israel, contaminating and corrupting the people from one end of the Northern Kingdom to the other", writes Norman Podhoretz in his book *The Prophets*. The Old Testament shows us that God protects His people and His truth, sometimes by destroying unrepentant, dangerous and arrogant enemies like the prophets of Baal.

Elijah appears to the disciples at the Transfiguration. He is alive in Christ, as we all will be if we overcome the temptation to be "undecided between two opinions", and follow the Lord because He is God.

Troparion - Tone 4

An angel in the flesh and the cornerstone of the prophets,
the second forerunner of the coming of Christ,
Glorious Elijah sent grace from on high to Elisha,
to dispel diseases and to cleanse lepers.
Therefore, he pours forth healings on those who honor him.

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Around SS Peter & Paul

JULY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Noah Smith
July 6

Wesley Holmes
July 20

David Homyak
July 29

July 1st marks Father David's third anniversary at SS Peter and Paul!

**Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!**



CONGRATULATIONS

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." . . . and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man . . . Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.
Genesis 2:18-24

Congratulations to
Cassandra Wenz and Michael Wagner on
their engagement.

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:

Dorothy Yost
Protodeacon Alexis
Chuck Ullmann
Marie Yevin
Rose & Bill Koval
Joe Kurowski
Peg Linderman
Pauline & Dan Vinay
Beatrice Washington
Anna Michkofsky
Stephanie Homyak

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Father David.

Bits and Pieces

SEMI-ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Our semi-annual parish meeting will take place on Sunday, July 26, 2009, after coffee hour. The main focus of the meeting will be the parking lot project. Please plan to attend.

MYRRHBEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

The Sts Peter & Paul Lenten luncheon was well attended and enjoyed by members of our parish family. Thank you to Jane Evans and Rita Mudrenko who helped chair the event and to those Myrrh Bearer members who prepared a variety of salads (veggies and pastas), the wines, the rolls, the breads, and a beautiful cake. The free will donations to Sts Peter & Paul Church for this event totaled \$1,121.53. Have a great summer and be safe.

Elizabeth Michel

BOOKSTORE UPDATE

Kids bored this summer? Pick up a book for them at the parish bookstore or the Sunday School Library!

The bookstore carries the following titles for our younger parishioners:

The Story of Mary, the Mother of God, \$18

St. Herman of Alaska, \$9

St. Seraphim of Sarov for Children, \$4

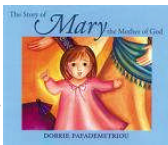
St. Moses of Ethiopia, \$8

A Children's Paradise of Saints, \$14

The Children's Bible Reader, \$15

House of God, \$13

Bless, O Lord, \$15



Coming soon...three new adult titles are on their way for a late July delivery...stayed tuned!

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 look at our bookstore.

NEWSLETTER DONATION

We are in need of 11 x 17 paper for the newsletter. Also, please bring in the used ink cartridges from your printer; we can use these to trade for supplies for the newsletter. Please see Dave or Stephanie Homyak. Thank you!

ADULT EDUCATION



A series of adult education will be held on Wednesday evenings in July. The topic of discussion will be The Creed. Classes will begin at 7:00 p.m. For more information, please speak with Father David.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the Myrrhbearers Altar Society for the wonderful luncheon which they hosted on the occasion of our observance of the Feast of our Heavenly Patrons, Saint Peter and Saint Paul.



BLESSING OF VEHICLES

It is a well-established custom to bless vehicles on the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elijah, July 20th. This practice is based upon Elijah's association with modes of transportation, most specifically the chariot (read 2 Kings 2 and the story of Elijah being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire). Vehicles will be blessed immediately following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 19, 2009.



*We invite you to be with us as we begin our new
life together on the thirty-first day of July
two thousand nine*

at six-thirty in the evening

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

1614 East Monte Vista Road

Phoenix, Arizona

Reception to follow at the Church Cultural

Center

If you are unable to attend,

we ask for your presence in thought and in prayer

Cassandra and Michael

No gifts please

*The favor of a reply is requested
before July 22, 2009*

July 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>FOOD DRIVE Please bring in your nonperishable food donations for St. Mary's Food Bank. Collection boxes are in the church narthex Cultural Center.</p> 			<p>1 7:00pm Adult Education</p>	2	3 Milk-giver Icon at Mt Athos	4 Galatian Icon 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p>5 Relics Ven. Sergius of Radonezh Ven. Athanasius of Mt. Athos 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	6	7 Blachernae Icon	<p>8 Kazan, Sitka-Kazan Icons and others 7:00pm Adult Education</p>	<p>St. Elijah—Blessing of Cars Vehicles will be blessed immediately following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 19, 2009.</p>		<p>11 Rzhetskaya Icon 5:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>12 "Three Hands" Icon 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	13 "Axion Estin" Icon	14 6:00pm Council Mtg	<p>15 Great Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles 7:00pm Adult Education</p>	16	17	18 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p>19 Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils Relics Ven. Seraphim of Sarov 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Cars</p>	20 Holy Prophet Elijah	21 Armatia Icon	22 7:00pm Adult Education	23 Pochaev & Joy of All Who Sorrow Icons	24 Martyrs Boris & Gleb, Passionbearers	25 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p>26 St. Jacob, Enlightener of the People of Alaska 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING</p>	27 Greatmartyr & Healer Panteleimon	28 Hodigitria of Smolensk Icon and others	29 7:00pm Adult Education	30	31 Forefeast Procession of the Lifegiving Cross	1 Procession of the Lifegiving Cross 5:00pm Great Vespers
<p>2 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>3 4 We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p>		<p>5 Forefeast Transfiguration 6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>6 Transfiguration of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ 9:00am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Fruit</p>	7 Valaam Icon	8 Tolga Icon NO VESPERS