SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Volume 14, Issue 9 September 2014

August Council Highlights

- There was no council meeting in August.
- ♣ July Operating Income was \$10,073.59 and July Operating Expenses were 12,264.61 resulting in a deficit of \$2,191.02 for the month of July. Year-todate, we are \$2,771.75 in the red.
- ♣ Prayer Service for students and teachers will be held Sunday, September 7 following Liturgy.
- ★ Fr Daniel will speak of the importance of religious education as well as offer the opportunity to hear ideas and suggestions on Sunday, September 14, 2014.



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Saved for Greater Work

On September 28th the Church honors Saint Chariton the Confessor.

Saints who are given the title "Confessor" rather than "Martyr" are those who witnessed to the faith and often suffered for it, but were

not put to death as the direct result of their witness. Chariton did undergo imprisonment and torture when he boldly professed his faith, but was not martyred. God saved him for greater work.

Born in about 254, Chariton belonged to a well-respected family in the city of Iconium (now Konya, in Turkey) which was also the home of another saint named Thecla, a young woman who for three solid days listened from her window to Saint Paul's preaching on his first missionary journey. She was so convinced by what she heard that she later became a missionary herself, preaching and teaching as a helper to Paul.

Thecla was an example to Chariton. He began to speak publicly and often about his dedication to Jesus Christ. Before

long he was arrested by the governor, and told to stop insulting

the gods by claiming that only the one God of the Christians was real.

But the governor had no success with Chariton, who told him that the pagan gods

were merely prideful demons who had been cast out of heaven into the depths of hell because they hated God and refused to worship Him.

At first the governor tried to talk Chariton out of his beliefs. But Chariton chose to challenge him, trying to make him examine his own beliefs and see their superficiality. Chariton said, "If your gods are truly worthy of worship, you shouldn't be letting me deride them and trying to reason with me. Why don't you defend them, and silence me once and for all?"

He went on, "Do your gods feel with their hands, or speak with their mouths, or see with their eyes? No, they do none of these things. They are dead idols, and they are nothing like the living God, Jesus Christ, and His Father in heaven."

The governor wasn't ready to hear any more, or to test the truth of Chariton's words. He ordered that the outspoken Christian be beaten and put in prison, where he was routinely tortured.

Chariton did not die in prison, and when the harsh measures against Christians were lifted, he was released. Setting out for Jerusalem, he was waylaid by robbers. But once again, though hurt, he didn't lose his life. He gave up his plans to live in a city, and went into the desert.

The later years of Chariton's life were given to the establishment of two monasteries, the first in the wilderness of Pharan and the second near Jericho. Both became well-known for the holiness of the men who came to live in them, learning from the example of Saint Chariton.

We don't know why some saints died as martyrs and others, though tested and made to suffer, did not. But the martyred ones apparently had finished their work. Some, like Saint Chariton, were being saved for greater work still to be accomplished.



Message from Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We're very accustomed to greeting one another with the words "Happy New Year!" only at the beginning of each January. But we should also greet one another with these same words each September 1st, for the first day of September also marks the beginning of a new Church liturgical year. Why September 1? There are various historical reasons that led to this day being designated as the beginning of the year, or, the "Indiction."

A pious tradition has held that the Lord Jesus began his public ministry on this day. We recall the episode recorded in the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. The Lord enters the synagogue in Nazareth, his hometown, and participates in the usual Sabbath worship. At the point in the service when the Scriptures are read, the Lord Jesus is called forward to read from the holy books. He is given the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, opened to the passage that was appointed for that day. And he read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Saint Luke tells us that "all eyes were upon" Jesus as he read these words. Having read the passage and having set aside the book, the Lord then says, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled With love in the Lord, in your hearing" (see Luke 4:18-21).

Pious tradition also tells us that it was during the month of September (or its equivalent on the Hebrew calendar) that the Chosen People entered into the Promised Land after wandering forty years in the desert. Also, it was

customary in biblical times to start the new year at the time of the harvest, the harvest generally being completed in Mediterranean lands at this time of the year. Having brought in the harvest, it seemed a logical and convenient time to give thanks and to celebrate a new beginning.

As we begin a new year this month, we also remember that the church calendar is marked by the celebration of several important events from the history of our salvation. We celebrate the 12 Great Feasts: we observe the 4 Fasts: we center the year on the celebration the culmination of salvation history when we celebrate the Lord's threeday Pascha. Additionally, every day of the Church's year is designated to honor one or more of the saints; many of those dates are the actual dates on which the saints or saints passed from this life into the life of the Kingdom.

We also note that the Church year begins and ends with feasts dedicated to the Mother of God. September 8 marks the date of her nativity; August 15 commemorates her falling asleep. Between these two dates, the Church celebrates the ten other Great Feasts as well as Pascha, the Feast of Feasts. May the prayers of the Mother of God guide and protect us as we enter this new year and bring us to the fulfillment of the salvation which we will remember and celebrate in the year ahead.

Father Daniel

From the Fathers . . .

"As a handful of sand thrown into the ocean, so are the sins of all flesh as compared with the mind of God."

"Just as a strongly flowing fountain is not blocked up by a handful of earth, so the compassion of the Creator is not overcome by the wickedness of his creatures."

"Someone who bears a grudge while he prays is like a person who sows in the sea and expects to reap a harvest."

—St. Isaac The Syrian



"Our wickedness shall not overpower the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God; our dullness shall not overpower God's wisdom, nor our infirmity God's omnípotence."

-St. John of Kronstadt



"He has shown you, O mortal what is good; and what does the LORD require of you? but to do justice, to live kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

-Micah 6:8

The Greatest Conquerer is Conquered

September 14th is the Feast of the Exaltation (or Elevation) of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.

There are two events in history to

which this feast takes us, as Eugen J. Pentiuc writes in his book "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014). The first took place in the year 335, when the church built Constantine by the tradiover tional site of Christ's tomb was

consecrated in Jerusalem. It was named the Church of the Resurrection; it is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The second event occurred in 629. fifteen years after the Persians had sacked and looted the church, taking as part of their spoils a relic of the True Cross. In 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius was able to recover the relic, and to bring it to Constantinople. There he carried it into the great church of Hagia Sophia, and elevated it as a sign of victory.

Father Pentiuc notes that one of the readings for the Great Vespers of the feast is Exodus 15: 22-16: 1. This is the account of Moses leading the people of Israel on from the Red Sea,

after the exodus from Egypt, into the wilderness of Shur. They come, thirsty and tired, to the waters of Marah, only to find that the water is too bitter to drink. As so often, the

> people complain and "murmur against" poor Moses.

He, in turn, cries out to God. The Lord shows him a tree, which he flings into the water. At once the water becomes sweet enough to drink. Soon the people come to Elim

where they encamp under seventy

palm trees, surrounded by twelve buoved by will keep

His statutes, He will spare them the diseases He has used to chastise the arrogant, heedless Egyptians.

Reading this passage reminds us that the Old Testament often prepares us for what happened to Jesus Christ. The tree at Marah is like the wood of the Cross, which sweetens everything bitter because it gives us eternal life. The crucified Christ rises from the

dead, "upon those in the tomb bestowing life."

One of the stikhera for the festal Great Vespers speaks about another tree: "Come, all you nations, let us worship the blessed Tree through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he who by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam is himself ensnared by the Cross." Here the blessed Tree is the cross, but the tree with which Satan beguiled Adam is the tree in the Garden.

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Kontakion - Tone 4

springs and As You were voluntarily raised upon the cross for our sake, Grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God; G o d 's Make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power, promise Granting them victories over their adversaries, that if they By bestowing on them the Invincible trophy, Your weapon of Peace.

From the Fathers ...

Always remember that at the Last Judgement we are judged for loving Him, or failing to love Him, in the least person."

-Archbishop Anastasios of Albania

Psalm 139

it's Father Alexander Schmemann's mov- but also across time and space. I open an ing reflection on Psalm 139 in the context ancient book written more than a thouof asking the question, what does it mean sand years before our era, in a world alto believe in God?

I do not so much arrive consciously, deductively, or rationally at faith in God, but O Lord, rather I find faith within myself; I find it and I am filled with wonder, joy and thanksgiving. I discover it as the mysterious yet so clearly perceptible presence of the One who is everything: peace, joy, tranquillity, light. I can't be the source of this presence, since I find none of that joy, peace, light, tranquillity either within me or in the world around me. Where then do they come from? And so I say the word which expresses all of this, names all of it, and which taken apart from this experience, from the witness of this presence, makes no sense whatsoever: I say the word "God." I would be unable to say this incomprehensible word without this experience, but in pronouncing this word it is as if I liberate this experience, this feeling, from its subjectivity, transience, obscurity; I name Him as the content of this experience. By so doing, I accept this gift, and through a returning movement of my whole being, I surrender to Him my very self.

"I believe in God." And then it becomes apparent that this faith I find in the very depth of my own soul is not just my own personal, inexpressible and ineffable experience, but that in a new way it connects me to people, to life, to the world, that it liberates me from the isolation to which all human beings have been condemned to one degree or another. For if it was joyful to discover faith within myself, within my own soul, within my own consciousness, then it is no less joyful to discover this very same faith, this very same experience in others as well, and not only

This diary entry is longer than usual, but now, here, around me, in people like me, most completely unlike our own, and there I read:

> me, searched you have and known me.

> You know when I sit and when I arise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

> Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.

> You hem me in-behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

> Such knowledge is too wonderful to me, it is high, I cannot attain it.

> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are

> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, and settle on the far side of the sea,

> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand w1ill hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness is not dark to you: are your works, my soul knows that full the night shines like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

how wonderful are your works, my soul knows that full well...

How transcendent to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

When I awake. I am still with you...

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

See if I am on a dangerous way, and lead me in the way everlasting.

This is Psalm 139, a prayer written several thousand years ago. But I read it and am amazed: Lord, this is all exactly how I feel, this is what I have gone through, this is my experience, this is about me and from me, and even these childish words, this stuttering trying to express, "to sing out," something that is beyond words—all of this is mine. And this means that faith has been alive for centuries; it means that millions of people have felt exactly the same way; and the heart overflows with joy when ignited by the abundance of faith in these amazing words: "even the darkness is not dark to you; the night shines like the day." In this light I see the world anew: in spite of all its darkness, it shines for me with its first-created light: truly. "how wonderful well..." I see anew and admit that I am sinful and weak, fearful and enslaved, but I repeat the words of the psalm: "I praise you, because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." Because I have been given this mysterious faculty of inner knowledge,

(Continued on page 5)

Hesitant Hero

September 26th is the feast day of His wonderful deeds which our fathers

named and praised in Hebrews 11.

But Gideon's story is not altogether heroic. He first appears in Judges 6, which begins with a melancholy description. God has delivered faithless Israel into the hands of her enemies. Now, whenever the Israelites

against them and destroy the produce of his family and the townsmen. the land as far as the neighborhood of Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel, and no sheep or ox or ass" (6: 4). The Israelites have cried out to God to deliver them from the Midianites' ravages.

Gideon is humbly beating out wheatdoing it in the wine press to hide it from the Midianites-when the angel of the Lord appears to him and says, "The Lord is Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014), with you, you mighty man of valor."

Gideon isn't feeling valorous. He answers, "Pray, sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all

Gideon, an Old Testament hero who is recounted to us...?" When the angel tells

Gideon that he will be the one to deliver Israel from Midian, Gideon replies doubtfully that he is the least of his small clan.

Yet when the angel asks Gideon to destroy his pagan family's idol and build an altar to the Lord, he readily does so, an indication that there is courage in

plant seed, the Midianites "encamp him. He does it by night, however, fearing

Gideon's hesitation continues. He asks God (named in 6: 36) to produce dew on a fleece, leaving the ground around it dry, as proof that He has chosen Gideon to deliver Israel. Then he asks God to leave the fleece dry while wetting the surrounding ground. Father Eugen Pentiuc writes in "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox that Gideon is "...redundant and almost ridiculous in his request." Even so, God is patiently compassionate: "Instead of being indignant at Gideon's nagging tests,

God responds without hesitation."

As Gideon's confidence grows, God requires him to act with greater faith. He radically reduces the size of Gideon's army (using some tests of His own to determine which soldiers are fit for battle) so that Israel must depend on Him and won't be able to boast that "my own hand has delivered me" (7:2).

God supports His successful warrior, whose stature becomes so great that the men of Israel ask him to become their king, because he has saved them from Midian. But Gideon's faith in God has also increased, and he tells them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you" (8: 23).

But Gideon, like many Biblical heroes, succumbs to temptation, described in 8: 24-27. After he dies, the people again turn to pagan worship, forget God, and fail to show kindness to Gideon's family.

Israel will continue to test God's patience, and Gideon, like all the Old Testament personages listed in Hebrews 11, will have to wait for God to send salvation so that they can be "made perfect.".

Psalm 139 (cont'd)

(Continued from page 4)

because I can recognize what is high and wonderful and glorious, I can therefore desire guidance from on high—and life from on high—I can differentiate between the dangerous way and the eternal way.

Still more is opened to me through this vision of faith: I see that everything in the world speaks of God, reveals God, radiates with His presence: the darkness of night, as much as the sunlight of morning; suffering and sorrow, as much as happiness and joy. And if so many people do not see this, then it is because I-and believers like me—am too weak a witness of faith; it is because from earliest childhood we surround the person with triviality and

lies; we encourage him not to search and not to thirst for the depths, but to desire

instead a petty and illusory success; it is because we rivet his attention to things that are vain and futile. And therefore his mysterious inner faculty of light and love is suffocated and the world is filled with the clinging darkness of unbelief, skepticism and their offspring: selfconceit, hatred and malice.

But God did not leave us alone in this darkness and terrible state of fallenness and betrayal. These words, my weak words about faith would be empty if in conclusion I confessed faith merely in God.

But I also confess faith in that one Person in whom God came into the world, and in

> His coming into the world He comes to each person in order to save him and give him a new birth. "I believe in God." But God--in the fullness of His joy and Sovereignty is revealed in Christ.

> Alexander Schmemann, Celebration of Faith: I Believe, Sermons, Vol 1, St Vladimir's Seminary Press

(1991), 27-31.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, Reflections in Christ, Chancellor's Diaries, Fr. John Jillions, August 24, 2014, http://oca.org/



lust Too Generous

On September 9th the Church celebrates the memory of Saint Kieran of Clonmacnois in Ireland.

Born in 512 in County Roscommon, Kieran was the grandchild of a poet and historian. He liked to think about the meaning of life, and found joy in nature's beauty. His own family lived simply, and he spent much of his childhood herding the family cattle. This gave him a special love of animals and a willingness to be compassionate with all creatures, including other people.

During these same years he was tutored at home by Justus, the same pious Christian who had baptized him, encouraging him to pray and to turn his thoughts often to the wonders of God.

When he got older, Kieran was sent to complete his education at the monastery at Clonard, under the direction of the great Saint Finnian. Here he met fellow students such as Columba, the future enlightener of Scotland. Columba said of his classmate, "He was a lamp, blazing with the light of wisdom."

Having completed his studies with Saint Finnian, Kieran left Clonard and went to a monastery in the Aran Isles. Its abbot was another saint, Enda, who had a vision that he shared with his student. Enda saw a tall tree with a massive trunk. The tree spread its sheltering branches, heavy with fragrant fruit, over the whole land of Ireland. Some of the fruit was carried off by birds to places beyond the island country itself.

Saint Enda told Kieran, "You yourself are the tree in this vision." He said that all of Ireland would find shelter under Kieran's grace, and that many, in Ireland and places past its borders, would be nourished by his prayer and fasting. He directed Kieran to go to the center of the country and to build a church on the banks of a stream.

The monastery of Clonmacnois was established by Kieran and a few other monks on the banks of the River Shannon. This famous Christian center trained priests, scholars and missionaries for a thousand years, even though Kieran died of the plague in 544, just seven months after it opened.

In the time in between Saint Enda's directive and the establishment of Clonmacnois, Kieran visited a smaller island monastery. His stay was brief, because the monks soon asked him to leave. Perhaps they were jealous of his fame, but what they said was that he was giving so much to the poor that there wasn't enough left for them. Kieran was just too generous.

What is generosity? Mother Teresa wrote that if love is to be real it must cost, must hurt, must empty us of self. Saint Basil the Great urged Christians to give "splendidly" to the poor. He said that if you're the target of many beggars you should feel grateful and honored that you don't have to make a nuisance of yourself at other people's doors, but other people come and bother you at your own!"

What would Saint Kieran say if we could ask him, "Is it possible to be just too generous?"

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Around SS Peter & Paul

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

September 1 Adrian Cristian

- 2 Vickie Mendez
- 12 Nick Enoch
- 16 Mary Kelemen
- 17 Luka Radjenovich
- Alexander Enoch
- 20 **Doug Peterson**

Walter & Tania Booriakin

Mongaya Leta! Many Years!

Mark your calendars now!

Metropolitan TIKHON and Archbishop BENJAMIN will preside at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Thursday, October 9, at 8:00 a.m. October 9th is the day on which the Orthodox Church commemorates the Glorification of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow. It is also Metropolitan Tikhon's nameday. This is an historic event for our community—plan on taking a few hours off of work or away from school in order to participate in this special moment.

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:

Ann Garza

Rose Koval

Rose Kurowski

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

Bits and Pieces

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS UPDATE ON THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross will be celebrated with the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, September 14. Please remember that this feast, although on a Sunday this year, is a strict fast day. Vespers of the feast will be celebrated the previous evening at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Romanian Mission, 10030 N 32 Street, Phoenix. We look forward to joining Father Alin Munteanu and the Holy Cross community for the celebration of their patronal feast. **PLEASE NOTE:** Vespers will not be celebrated that evening at Saints Peter and Paul Church.

AIR CONDITIONERS

For those of you who have not yet pledged or donated toward our air conditioning/ heating project, let this serve as a "friendly reminder." Everyone in our parish community has been asked to make a responsible decision concerning what can be contributed to this endeavor. Pledge and donation forms are still available in the entrance to the church. Please complete them and return them soon to Father Daniel or David Homyak, Church Treasurer. Don't let the fact that we have two air conditioners now running and that the church is relatively comfortable during the services fool you! We are half-way there! Your commitment to our parish family is deeply appreciated. Thank you.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE DIOCESEN ASSEMBLY --- THE DIVINE LITURGY

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OCTOBER 7-9, 2014

annual Diocesan Assembly which is being hosted by our parish (October 7-9) was held Wednesday, August 27. Planning continues to go forward with great enthusiasm as we look forward to welcoming clergy and lay delegates from throughout the Diocese of the West. If you haven't yet volunteered to help, please see Fr Daniel.

MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

The Myrrh Bearers will be resuming their meetings starting in September. Our first meeting will take place on Sunday, September 15th following coffee hour. Our meetings are held the second Sunday of the month. New members are always welcome. Please make every effort to attend.

BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL YEAR

The official beginning of the school year - and our church school program - will be observed on Sunday, September 7.

As is our custom, the school year will begin with the Blessing of Students and Teachers following the Divine Liturgy on September 7.

MEETING FOR CHURCH SCHOOL PARENTS. **TEACHERS, AND FRIENDS**

A Planning Committee meeting for the Parents and other interested parishioners are invited to attend a meeting with the Church School teachers and aides on Sunday, September 14, following coffee hour. Fr Daniel will speak of the importance of religious education as well as offer the opportunity to hear ideas and suggestions—and welcome volunteers!

WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cul-



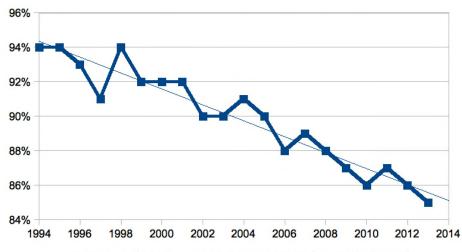
tural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship

BOOKSTORE

Take a quick peek at the bookstore and you'll notice that the egg pendants are back on a permanent

basis! All are handcrafted with love and make very thoughtful gifts.

Decline of Religious Identity



Percentage of Americans who belong to a religion (i.e., not the "nones")

Graph by Corner of Church & State, an RNS blog Source: Gallup

September 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	I Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon	2 Kaluga Icon	3	4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush"		6
	LABOR DAY We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cul Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunda					
						5:00pm Vespers
7 Sunday Before Elevation Forefeast Nativity of Theotokos	8 Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos	9 Afterfeast Nativity Theotokos	10	П	12 Leavetaking Nativity Theotokos	I 3 Saturday before Elevation
8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Students and Teachers	9:00am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Students and Teachers for the Beginning of the Academic Year Sunday, September 7, 2014					
5:00pm Vespers		6:00pm Council Meeting				6:00pm Vespers Holy Cross
14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross	15	16 Icon "The Healer"	17	18	19	20 Saturday after Elevation
8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy MBAS Meeting Meeting for Church School Parents & others	Fr Daniel will speak of the importance of religious education as well as offer the opportunity to hear ideas and suggestions—and welcome volunteers!					
21 Leavetaking Elevation 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	22	23 Conception of St. John the Baptist	24 Holy New Martyrs of Alaska	25 Repose Venerable Sergius of Radonezh	26 Repose of St. John the Theologion 6:00am Divine Liturgy St. John the Theologian, Tempe	27 5:00pm Vespers
28 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	29	30	I Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos	2	3	4
						5:00pm Vespers