

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 16, Issue 2

February 2016

January Council Highlights

- ✘ December's Operating Income was \$15,457.57 and Operating Expenses were \$10,243.4, resulting in a positive balance of \$5,214.17 for the month of December,
- ✘ The Church's operating funds were in the positive by \$14,871 for 2015.
- ✘ Proposed slate of candidates discussed and presented at Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31, 2016.
- ✘ The Church Council approved getting Wi-Fi in the Church hall.



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Is Anything Not a Gift?

On February 9th the Church remembers the Hieromartyr Peter Damascene, a man who saw God in everything. He took every event as God's gracious gift, including the terrible things that happened to him.

Peter Damascene (meaning "of Damascus") lived in the 12th century, under Islamic rule. He was known as a great reader who loved to gain wisdom and knowledge. Yet he lived in such utter simplicity, with so little interest in worldly possessions, that he never actually owned or wanted to own a book. He borrowed books he wanted to read from friends, and then cheerfully returned them, having no desire to build an impressive library. His reading made him a wise person with much knowledge. Yet he knew that reading, in and of itself, is of limited value. He wrote: "We need knowledge based on experience...if we wish to attain knowledge of God mere reading or listening is not enough." He expanded on this idea of the need for experience in these words: "Man is free to receive the sun's rays or not.



God sends the light of knowledge like rays to all, but He also gives us faith like an eye. The one who wants to receive knowledge through faith, keeps it by his works, and so God gives him more willingness, knowledge and gifts—faith, willingness, knowledge, power—he wanted to thank God for. His conviction that "works" and "experience" are of the utmost important led Saint Peter to brave, dangerous acts. He spoke out and defended the Christian faith powerfully. His words carried the certainty that his extensive reading, done with faith, had given him. His hearers were convinced that he spoke the truth and followed the true God. Saint Peter became a highly respected leader among fellow Christians. But he suffered exile and physical punishment at the hands of the Islamic government, which dealt harshly with those who dared to say that Islam is inferior to Christianity and not the true faith. He paid a great price for his witness to Christ.

Saint Peter Damascene's writings are among the treasures of the Orthodox Church. It is in these writings that he most clearly lays out his belief that everything is a divine gift. Wealth is given so that a person can be merciful to others; poverty is given to engender patience; clumsiness is given for humility; health is given so that a person can help the infirm. Everything, even great difficulty, is a gift, given by God for our salvation. On Saturday of this week we read Luke 21:4, the story of the poor widow who is observed by Christ as she makes her offering to the Temple treasury. He says that with her small gift she has offered more than all the rich people who gave a lot, because she has put in all she had. Saint Peter Damascene would understand an offering like the widow's, one which cost her so much. He would know that she was giving back to God in gratitude for all He had given her. He would recognize her as another person who, like himself, knew that there is not anything that is not a gift.

Reflection Offered by His Grace, Bishop DANIEL, Annual Parish Meeting, Sunday, January 31, 2016

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

As we come together today for our annual parish meeting, I still have fresh in my mind the beautiful festivities of just last Sunday as we celebrated the Divine Liturgy and as you honored me on the occasion



of the first anniversary of my consecration to the Holy Episcopacy. I was deeply touched and am deeply grateful for the many outpourings of love and appreciation that were expressed on that memorable occasion. And I pray that the Lord will continue to make me worthy of such love, trust, and support.

Last Sunday marked the first year anniversary of the beginning of a new phase of my service to Christ's Holy Church. But it also marked the anniversary of a new

beginning for all of us here at Saints Peter and Paul as this parish was singled out to be placed under the archpastoral care of a bishop of the Church. It also



marked a new way of doing things – those things which relate specifically

to a bishop – and, also, since it took place in January it marked the beginning of yet another year of this parish's long history of service to Christ and to Christ's Holy Orthodox Church.

Church's liturgical cycle- the fasting and the feasting and all the days in between- those days through which we are able to remember and to celebrate the history of our salvation and "all those things that

have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the Third Day, the Ascension into Heaven,

and the Second Glorious Coming," as we pray in the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. Our worship Sunday after Sunday, feastday after feastday, season after season, remains the first

and foremost responsibility (and privilege) of any Orthodox Christian community—our liturgical gathering is the highest form of our praise and worship - and the first and foremost blessing given to us as Orthodox Christians.

Reflecting back on this past year we can easily observe that the Lord has continued to gather to observe the ebb and flow of the

Throughout the past year, we have also been blessed by God through His gift to us of many new members. We all know that our numbers here at Saints Peter and Paul Church have increased. This is easily observable. In this we can see, right before our very eyes, that the miracle of Pentecost continues in our own day. As we read in the Second Chapter of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, following the out-



pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church on the Day of Pentecost, the Church continues to grow. Saint Luke

writes words that reflect the Church in our own day and the Church here in our own community: "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47). We see this dynamic in the earliest days of the Church being repeated in our own day, here in our own community.

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Reflections of His Grace, Bishop DANIEL *(cont'd)*

(Continued from page 2)

This growth is easily measured even in the way we accomplish tasks and work on various projects that arise in the course of the year. One example (although not the only, for sure) is seen in our recent celebration of the Nativity Holidays. During the Holy Season just past, people came together as never before to 1) decorate the Temple; and 2) to reach out in love to our



neighbors in the Christmas Outreach program. Not to mention that added assistance the Myrrhbearers Altar Society has received in its projects and the fine work being done through our parish Teen/Young Adult League (T/YAL).

This is certainly a great blessing to us—a blessing which we should pause to reflect upon. But why has the Lord found us worthy to welcome new



members into this corner of His Vineyard here at Saints Peter and Paul Church? Why have we been entrusted with receiving into our midst new brothers and sisters who desire to walk with us as faithful followers of Jesus Christ who profess the ancient and Orthodox Christian faith? Why do people, even one-time visitors from other parishes around the country, respond so enthusiastically and warmly when they're

with us even if only for a Sunday visit? I think there may be many answers to those questions. And many reasons why we have been so blessed, especially throughout this past year. But I remain firm in believing that the reason the Lord has given us this increase is because we, in our own simple way, have remained faithful to the call to be a hospitable, opening, inviting, warm and loving Christian community who loves the



Lord and His Church and whose love is reflected in our prayer together and in all other as-

tude for the many mercies the Lord has shown us.

So today, as we gather again for another annual meeting, I ask that each and every one of us re-commit ourselves to that clear and simple call we have received and the clear and simple work which has been entrusted to

us: 1) to grow in holiness as individuals and to become ever-more faithful members of Christ's Church; 2) to grow in holiness as a parish community, to pray and celebrate together, and to welcome with love and with open, inviting arms those whom the Lord brings to our doorstep; 3) to

recognize the many ways in which we serve one another and to support one another in that very service (we will hear more about this in the reports that are to be given); and 4) to live lives that bear witness to the saving power and presence of Christ in the midst of the world. If

we're faithful in these things, we can be sure that the Lord will continue to be faithful to us. And the mercies of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will continue to be with us all.

Last Sunday, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Archdeacon Kirill read a letter from His Beatitude,



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Reflections of His Grace, Bishop DANIEL (cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

Metropolitan Tikhon greeting me on the occasion of the first anniversary of my episcopal service in the Church. It was a great personal honor to receive



this letter from His Beatitude as well as a humbling reflection about my episcopal service to the Church at large throughout the past year. But the letter not only spoke to me and was not only about me. Included in that letter (just in case you didn't hear it) were words about this parish community- words about each one of you.

His Beatitude wrote: "I would also like to express my gratitude to the faithful parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox



Church for their love and care for their pastor..." I, of course, add my gratitude to his. But I also want to highlight those words as an expression of an important aspect of parish life. That is: no bishop, no priest who stands at the Holy Altar and guides and shepherds the flock entrusted to him is able to do that without the love and care of that very same flock. And I know that full well.

As you've heard me repeat and repeat

not just about the priest or the bishop or about any one individual: it's about each and every one of us doing our part, fulfilling our unique roles, working together, united in a common mission. It's all of us who make our parish what

it is.

Our successes are everyone's successes, our weaknesses and burdens also belong to everyone. Therefore, I once again ask you to remain faithful, to do the work we have been given to do, to carry



throughout my nine-plus years of pastoral service here at Saints Peter and Paul: it's

one another's burdens, and to always keep your eyes fixed on the only goal, the only success of true importance: the Kingdom of Heaven which awaits us.

My prayer continues to be the prayer found in the 80th Psalm, the prayer invoked by every bishop when he celebrates the Divine Liturgy as he blesses



those gathered around him in prayer: "Look down from heaven O God, and behold and visit this Vine which Thy right hand has planted... and establish it!" (Psalm 80:14).

Glory to Jesus Christ!

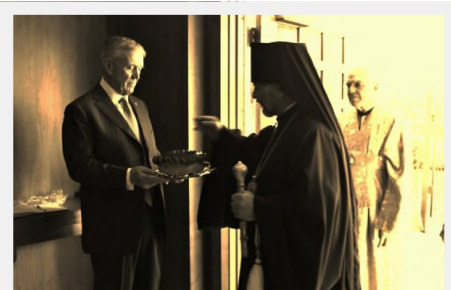
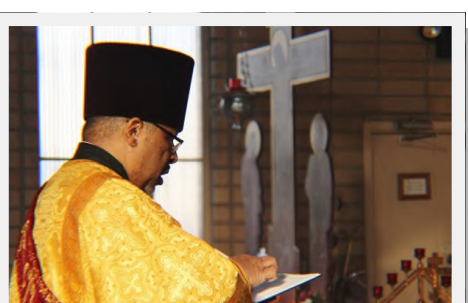
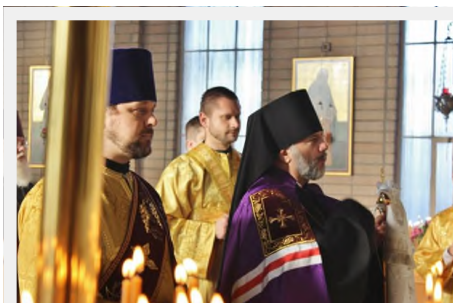
ON THE LIGHTER SIDE CHURCH BULLETIN HUMOR

TEEN/YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

Thank you to everyone who came to play paintball today!! After 2 hours, 3 games, and 500 paintballs it was definitely one of our most fun events! Thank you again to Marty Gala for her donation of the "free admission" vouchers!!



1st Anniversary of Bishop DANIEL's Episcopal Consecration



Dealing with the Devil

On February 24 we read Mark 13: 9-13. Christ adds this promise to His warning: "But These words of Jesus Christ warn the disciples of difficult times to come.

The events He foretells are frightening: "They will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues...And brother will deliver up brother to death and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for My name's sake."

But before telling them all these things, He urges the disciples to "take heed to yourselves," which is also translated as "watch out for yourselves" or "beware." This warning could simply mean that they must prepare for the trouble that is coming.

But it might also mean that they must be ready to face that trouble without letting it overcome them. The devil uses whatever he can to tempt us away from faith, and making us despair when we suffer unjustly for the faith can be one of his weapons. That is why



On this same day we remember a man who did allow the devil's temptation to overcome him. He is the monk Erasmus of the Kiev Caves. He came from a very wealthy family, and decided that the best way to spend his money was to beautify the monastery church with icons and precious relics. He used up his fortune doing this, and continued to live his personal life as a monk without possessions or wealth.

The devil found a way to use Erasmus' generous beautifying of the church against him by making him doubt what he had done. Why, the devil tempted him, didn't you use your money to help the poor? What good is a beautiful church?

Erasmus allowed these evil questions to drive him into despair, which was his real sin. He drifted into an unhealthy, unfruitful way of living.

When he became deathly ill, his monastic

brothers were sure that it was too late for him to repent. But the Mother of God appeared to him as he lay dying. She understood that he had wanted to honor her by making the church beautiful, and she assured him that he would be given time to repent, and would be received into the Kingdom of Heaven.

On February 25 we remember another person who was tempted by the devil: Saint Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople. At the end of a life spent honorably serving God, he was attacked by demons trying to make him despair by accusing him of various sins. But rather than give in, he shouted back at them, "I am not guilty of that sin!" and flailed the air with his arms, driving them off. When he finally died, he was at peace and his face was radiant.

Whatever ways the devil finds to tempt us into despair, it's good to remember the promise of Christ: The person who endures to the end will be saved.



Around SS Peter & Paul

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

- February 5 Mark and Sanna Littell
- Vadim O'Brien
- 9 Katrina Delsante
- Maya Stchur
- 11 Joe Delsante
- Anatoly Bezkorovainy
- 14 Jane Evans
- 20 Sterling Sourk
- 23 Erica Stark
- Matthew Stark



The kids enjoy the movie "Up" while their parents attend the Annual Meeting.

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:

- Protodeacon Alexis
- Ann Garza
- Rose Koval
- Rose Kurowski
- Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek
- Larry Gardner
- Ted Demos
- Ann Carroll

Many years! Mongaya

Bits and Pieces

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful celebration on the occasion of the first anniversary of my Episcopal Consecration. The outpouring of love and support, the kind words, cards, and gifts are all deeply appreciated. May the Lord continue to bless you and yours! With love in Christ,
+Bishop Daniel



FLOWERS

Flowers for the month of January were provided by Susan Weiss and February by Tania Booriakin. Thank you.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY PROCESSION OF ICONS

Youth will participate in the annual procession of icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 20, 2016. Icons will be provided for all youth to carry

in the procession around the church. The children are also welcome to bring their own favorite icon from home to carry in the procession.

ALASKA IN AUGUST?

Escape the Phoenix heat?

Nicholas Bock is organizing a pilgrimage to celebrate the 46th anniversary of the canonization of ST. HERMAN on 9 August 2016.

If you are interested and would like more information please feel free to contact Nicholas via email: nickbock@hotmail.com or phone at 803.493.4502. Please notate your email with Pilgrimage in the subject line.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult Education/Faith Formation classes meet Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. The current series will cover the Scriptural roots of the Divine Liturgy, the history of its development and current liturgical practice. Vladyka Daniel will lead this series. If you've ever wondered about any of the ritual associated with our Sunday celebrations, the "why we do what we do" aspect of Orthodox Worship, this series is for you. Mark your calendars now!

BOOKSTORE

Great Lent is right around the corner! Prepare yourself now by picking up a spiritually edifying book from the bookstore or from our parish library. There truly is a book for every person at any stage of their life, from babies to the newly converted to those of us who have been around awhile.

Be ready to go on March 14th!

FOCA UPDATE

As you may have noticed, the FOCA has not had the monthly birthday cakes the last two months. We've chosen to take on a different project for this year: helping St. Herman's seminarians. The FOCA will be providing 'Starter Kits' to support two soon-to-be graduating seminarians. The kits include a traveling communion set, a hand cross, cuffs, and stole.

To support this project, the FOCA will be sponsoring a luncheon on Sunday, February 21, 2016. The luncheon will feature an egg omelet as the main course. **All funds raised will be used to offset the purchase of the 'Starter Kits' for the seminarians.**

It's pierogi time again! Please see Pat Starkey to place your pierogi order. Pierogi will be made on February 27th. Thank you in advance for supporting our projects.

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.

CULTURAL CENTER A/C

The new 10-ton A/C-Heating unit was installed this past Friday. Many thanks to Andy for being available to be down there during the process. No more A/C worries at least for the church come this summer. The next area of concern is the Cultural Center. The last electric bill for the hall was almost \$800, suggesting a runaway Heat Pump operating there.

Upon checking and reprogramming each of the thermostats, it was discovered that the thermostat in the kid's play room was set to Auto with both doors wide open. So that means that unit has been running, running, and running to keep

that area at a set temperature, especially during the nights. In addition, both doors were wide open to the room, so the unit was working to heat the entire hall!

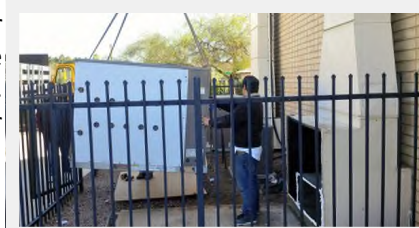
The hall's units have been reprogrammed to come online in timed stages. The first two on the west side of the main room to come on at 6:30am. The other parts of the hall will come on ahead of when there is a perceived need or use



for that room.

The kids' playroom and front entrance way thermostats, which do not have the lock boxes around them have a set locked program, which

cannot be overridden. This also means the 'override' button will not function on those two thermostats.



If you have any questions or concerns, please see Bishop DANIEL, Andy Evans, or David Homyak.

PLEDGE FORMS

February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
	1	2 Meeting of the Lord in the Temple 9:00am Divine Liturgy 6:00pm Book Club	3 St. Simeon 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	4	5 Icons Search of the Lost Rescue of the Drowning	6 5:00pm Vespers	
7 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	8	9 6:00pm Council Mtg	10 Areovindus Icon 11 We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.			12 Iveron Icon	13 5:00pm Vespers
14 Zaccheus Sunday 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting 	15 FOCA PIEROGI WORKSHOP Saturday, February 27 See Pat Starkey to place your order or volunteer to help.	16 6:00pm Book Club	17 Tikhvin Icon at Mt. Athos 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	18	19	20 5:00pm Vespers	
21 Publican and Pharisee 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School FOCA Luncheon to support St. Herman Seminarians	22	23	24 1 st & 2 nd Finding Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	25	26	27 St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn FOCA Pierogi Workshop 5:00pm Vespers	
28 Prodigal Son 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	29 Myrrh Bearers Altar Society Please join us at our next meeting, February 14, 2016 following Fellowship Hour. All are welcome!			3	4	5 5:00pm Vespers	
			7:00pm Adult Ed'n				