

Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 16 Issue 1

January 2016

December Council Highlights

- ✘ November's Operating Income was \$18,430.03 and Operating Expenses were \$11,827.12 resulting in net operating income of \$6,602.91 for November, and a year-to-date positive operating income of \$8,752.83.
- ✘ Annual Church Meeting will be held Sunday, January 31, 2016.
- ✘ Church School Nativity program will be held on Sunday, January 3rd.
- ✘ As per the Council's instruction, the Church liquidated \$3,102.71 worth of Prudential Financial shares and that sum will be placed into the Church's Ally
- ✘ Demand notes.
- ✘ Over \$700 donated for toy and food drive for neighbors in apart-



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A Homeless Wanderer Who Found the Kingdom

On January 24 the Church celebrates the memory of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg. She was born in the 18th century to a noble family, and married a colonel who was a member of the Imperial Chorus. But she is probably best known as a "Fool for Christ."

This term is based on Saint Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4: 10: "We are fools for Christ's sake." The men and women who became "Fools for Christ"

or "Holy Fools" gave up the normal life of family, job and home. They lived in complete dependence on God, and rejected the pursuit of security, status, or the respect of other people.

Xenia's early life followed the conventional path for a young woman of her time. But it changed dramatically when her husband Andrei died suddenly at a lively evening party with his soldier companions. She had loved him dearly and was concerned that there had not been time for him to make a final confession and to re-

ceive the Eucharist before he died. We don't know exactly how her concern influenced her next actions, but we do know that she sold her considerable possessions and gave away the proceeds, began wearing Andrei's military uniform, and called herself by his



name. She gave her house to a friend, stipulating that it must be used to give shelter to those who could not afford to provide shelter for themselves. Her shocked family tried to have her declared mentally incompetent, but the court found her to be of sound mind.

Xenia left Petersburg and set out on an eight-year pilgrimage, going from one monastery to another and seeking spiritual guidance from the elders and holy people she met along the way. When she returned to Petersburg, she lived as an impoverished wanderer through the streets of the city's worst slum.

Out of fear and mistrust, some people treated this strange woman in a tattered military uniform with derision, shouting or spitting at her. But oth-

ers were kind, offering her a bit of food or money out of the little they had. She would always give these gifts to needy people, and became recognized for her own charity as well as the good effect she seemed to have on those around her. They began to ask for her blessing, and welcome her presence.

Xenia, like other holy fools, was given the gift of doing miracles and seeing the future. She was able to save people from coming dangers, and once bluntly told a single woman who hoped to marry, "As you sit here drinking coffee, your future husband is burying his first wife." Some time later, the woman met and married the widower to whom Xenia was referring.

In her chapter on Saint Xenia in the book Encountering Women of Faith, Barbara Harris succinctly describes the gift holy fools give us: "With their eyes turned toward God and through extreme poverty and humility, fools offer us an extraordinary example of a voluntary kenotic [self-emptying] life. ✘"

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 Brother and Sisters in Christ,

This month I will observe the first anniversary of my Consecration to the Episcopacy. It's hard to believe that a year has passed—a year to which you have all been witnesses and in which you have also participated. I am grateful for your continual support and for all you do in serving the Lord here in our parish community.



Instead of a usual "message," I have decided to present a few passages from the address (sometimes referred to as an "acceptance speech") which I gave on the evening before the consecration as part of the official election to this office of service.

Throughout the history of salvation, the Lord has called His people to draw near to Him, to hear His voice, to speak His word, and to serve His people. That constant call, proclaimed in the Scriptures and echoing through the centuries, continues in our own day and has been given to each one of us in Holy Baptism. Each one of us is called to serve the Lord and to build up the Church, each using our own talents and abilities and gifts in their uniqueness and in their variety. As the Holy Apostle Paul reminds us in the twelfth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, we have been given a diversity of gifts for this building up of the Church. "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teach-

ers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and varieties of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28). The Holy Apostle then urges us to desire the best gifts and reminds us that love is the most excellent way in which these gifts are exercised and realized.

And now, this call to serve Christ and to build up His Church is given to me in a new and remarkable way as I am asked to receive episcopal ordination and to serve Christ's Holy Church as a bishop. In responding to this call, voiced by the Holy Synod of Bishops, I have just repeated the words spoken by so many before me: "Inasmuch as the Holy Synod of the Holy Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America has found me worthy of the office and dignity of a bishop, I respond with a grateful heart. I humbly accept and I say nothing to the contrary."

I accept with fear and with a deep sense of my unworthiness at having been called to serve Christ's Holy Church in the Order of Bishops. And I express my gratitude to Almighty God for the many mercies he has shown me throughout my life and I pray that His merciful love will continue to work within me and through me as I take up the yoke that is now being laid upon me.

In the Orthodox Church, we understand the importance that the office and role of bishop has in the Church's life and mission. The Bishop is Shepherd, Teacher, Priest, Successor of the Apos-

les, Overseer, Pastor, Father, Celebrant, Steward, Administrator, Unifier, and Servant. These are but some of the roles ascribed to him in the exercise of the archpastoral ministry. And among the external marks and symbols that express these roles is that a bishop is vested in liturgical vestments distinctive to his office. Among the most distinctive—and most significant—of these vestments is the omophorion, the wide band of fabric that is placed upon the bishop's shoulders. It is often made of very fine fabrics and beautifully decorated and sewn. We should remember, however, that the omophorion that is placed upon the bishop's shoulders was originally and traditionally made of simple wool, and is meant to signify that the bishop takes upon his shoulders the sheep entrusted to his care; he takes the sheep upon his shoulders, in imitation of that Good Shepherd "who lays down his life for his sheep" (John 10:11), the Good Shepherd "who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him" (John 10:14). By symbolizing that sheep that is gathered up and carried on the Good Shepherd's shoulders, the omophorion recalls that the bishop is called to embody the image of Christ Who is the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

I fully realize that as a bishop I am also being called to reflect the image of Christ the Servant, the one who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). And we find this image of Christ as Servant most eloquently expressed when the Lord, gathered with His Holy Apostles and Disciples in that Upper Room on the night before He died, washed their feet.

(Continued on page 3)

Message From Our Rector (*cont'd*)

(Continued from page 2)

There in the Upper Room, facing His Passion and Death, the Lord Jesus Christ, in a last example of loving service, in a last gesture of teaching, as a last testimony, knelt on the floor—He got down on his hands and knees— and humbled Himself before His followers, He who was Lord and Master, He Who had healed the sick and raised the dead and proclaimed the message of God’s saving love in word and in deed, lowered Himself to the floor and went from apostle to apostle and washed their feet. Something that not even the lowliest of slaves wanted to do. The Master of All became the Servant of all.

As we sing at Matins of Great and Holy Thursday... “The Master shows to His disciples an example of humility; **He who wraps the heavens in the clouds** girds Himself with a towel; and **He in whose hands is the life of all things** kneels down to wash the feet of His servants” (Holy Thursday Matins, Fifth Ode of the Canon). The Lord and Master of All, the Savior and Redeemer condescends to perform this self-effacing act as He humbles Himself and provides His apostles and disciples, and us, with an example of service, of what it means to be a servant who serves with humility, who puts himself in the place of the last and the least.

Undergirding, upholding and defining every other role of the bishop, is that of servant, the servant who readily responds to the call and commandment of Christ given on that night in that Upper Room: “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15). I hear these words clearly today and accept them as spoken to me very directly and very personally—as the Lord has done, so I am also to do.

Although I am limited and unworthy, it is my hope, my aspiration, and my prayer that my call to the Office of Bishop and my living out of this call will be based and modeled upon the example of humble service of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Shepherd Who lays down His life for His sheep; the Servant Who serves humbly and Who commands us to do the same.

I wish to thank His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON and the Holy Synod of Bishops for calling me, in the name of the Church, to take up the yoke of Christ as a bishop. And I want to express my special and heartfelt gratitude to His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN, for his trust, confidence, and support in calling me to serve as his Auxiliary Bishop in this God-protected Diocese. And what a blessing it is to be called to episcopal ordination in this City which once was the Episcopal See of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and the Enlightener of North America, the Confessor, and which witnessed the archpastoral labors and is the resting place of the Relics of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco—both archpastors who were Shepherds and Servants in the very image of Christ.

I also wish to express my gratitude to so many, too numerous to name, and to remember with love the people who have accompanied me through life, who have taught me to know, love, and serve the Lord and his Church through their own examples of generous and committed service: Family; Friends; Spiritual Fathers; and Co-workers in the Lord’s Vineyard. Those here and those who have departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

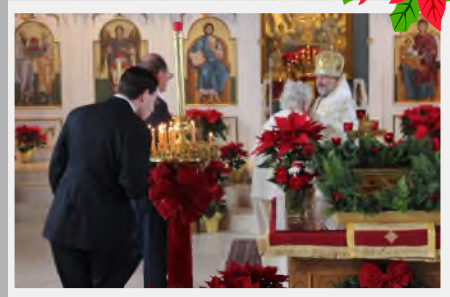
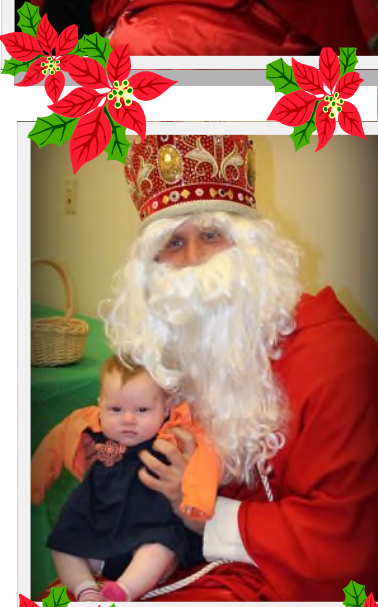
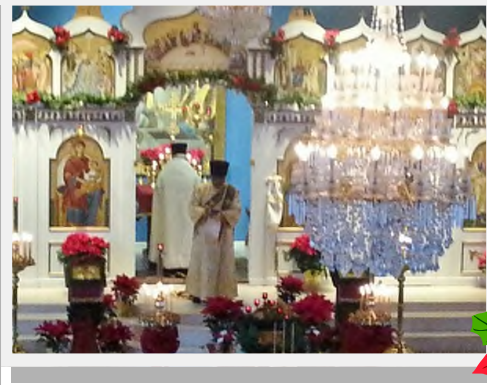
I ask the Mother of God, the most-pure, ever-blessed, Virgin Mary to accept me

under her protecting veil ... and I also ask the prayers of our venerable father Herman of Alaska; of St Tikhon, St Innocent, St Raphael of Brooklyn, St Nikolai of Zhica, St John of Shanghai and San Francisco, who served as Shepherds of the Flock of Christ on this continent ...and of all the Saints who have shone forth in North America. May their example continue to guide and their prayers continue to bless the Church in this Land.

Lastly, I presume to ask each one of you here today for your prayers and your support. As I respond to the call that has been given me and commit myself to serve Christ’s Holy Orthodox Church as a bishop, I am deeply aware that each and every one of us participates uniquely in the one work and common mission of the Church. Each one of us is called to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation in our own unique way. But no one - bishop priest, deacon, monastic, or lay faithful—serves in isolation or on their own. Each one of us relies upon the support of those around us—I rely upon you and will rely upon you for your support and the inspiration your lives give me. Let us, therefore, “...encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Gathered here in this revered, all-venerable Cathedral, encouraged by your faith, surrounded by your love and supported by your prayers, I trust that the Lord will accept my willingness to serve—that the Grace Divine which always heals that which is infirm will, indeed, supply what is lacking. And that the Lord will grant me, unworthy though I am, to be a Servant in His own image and likeness and to be a Shepherd according to his heart (Jeremiah 3:15). **Amen.**

December in Pictures at SS Peter and Paul



Fire in the Desert

Fr. Lawrence Farley

The Sunday before the Great Feast of the Theophany is dedicated to the work of John the Baptist (or Saint John the Forerunner, to give him his liturgical title). To appreciate him fully, we need to place him in his historical context, and realize that he came to Israel as a thunderstorm at the end of a long drought. Or, to vary the metaphor, as a fire in the desert, illumining the darkened hearts of men.

It had been a long time since the voice of prophecy had sounded in Israel. Though holy writing had never ceased (the Book of Sirach, for example, dates from the second century B.C.), no prophet had arisen to proclaim the Word of the Lord since Malachi lifted up his voice in about 430 B.C. Since that time Israel had endured the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the Temple, the rise and internecine strife of the Hasmoneans, and the coming of the Romans, under whose Imperial boot they remained firmly lodged. A modern proverb says, "When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on". By the time of John's birth, Israel had come to the end of its rope. They therefore tied a knot and hung on, and the knot unto which they clung was the Law, with its hope of final Messianic liberation. Hope deferred, the Scriptures tell us, makes the heart sick (Proverbs 13:12), and many had grown discouraged and sick of heart in waiting for the seemingly eternally-deferred hope of redemption. In response Zealots arose in Galilee to use terrorist tactics to force God's hand. Pharisees buried their heads in the Scriptures and debated its details. The common people just waited with heads hung low, and wondered quietly in the wee hours of the night if their God had abandoned them.

Then came the voice of John sounding like a trumpet in the wilderness: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!" In the

darkness that hung over men's hearts in that day, the fire of his words came like a light, and all Israel lifted up their heads, and looked to the desert with new hope. John proclaimed that Messiah was at hand, but that Israel was no more ready to receive redemption than were the godless Gentiles. They must therefore repent, and wash away their sins just like Gentiles did when they were baptized and became Jews. Some questioned John's authority to baptize Jews as if they were Gentiles. Who did John think he was? Was he Elijah, they demanded? Was he Messiah himself? No, none of these. What was he then? A voice—just a voice. A voice crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. Did they object to him baptizing in water? One would soon be among them who would baptize with fire.

John's voice continues to sound telling us to open our eyes. Like Israel in John's day, we remain blind, shrouded in darkness. We need to see with new eyes, and look again at the world around us.

That is, we need first of all to look to our hearts. This is the meaning of repentance—to look first at the darkness within us, and let in the light of God. When the light shines in we will see that God is not simply one part of our life, but life itself. Our modern secular society has banished God from its culture, and relegated religion to a single, hermetically-sealed compartment of life (preferably kept far and at a safe distance from the public square). We are surprised when we learn that in previous centuries (and in Islamic lands today) the awareness of God permeated everything. To live was to walk in the presence of God, dwelling beneath His shadow. Our culture today regards such a life as fanaticism, but for ancient societies (and for John) this was simply normal living. They were not the fanatics. It is we who are mad.

Secondly, we need to look to our neighbor and see him for what he is—that is, as God's gift to us. We often do not see our neighbor. Those around us are two-dimensional, people without names, histories, hopes, or sorrows. Do we know the name of the person who serves us coffee every day at Starbuck's? Do we know the name of the person in the street to whom we give spare change? For most of us, these people are not real, and we hurry past them as if they were phantoms. John the Forerunner reminds us that those whom we meet even casually are people like us, and if we have two coats, we should give the second one to the one who has none (Luke 3:10-11).

Finally, we need to look to the horizon. John bid the people look not the darkness filling the land (which often bore a Roman sword), but to the coming Kingdom of God. We live in a later day than John, and the Lord before whom he ran has already come and established the Kingdom of God like seed in the earth. The horizon to which we look is lit with the light of His Second Coming. The land is still filled with darkness, reported duly by CNN and Fox network and a thousand other shrill voices of despair. Like those who first heard John crying in the wilderness, we look up with hope. The prophetic voice of the Old Covenant ended with Malachi calling them to wait for the day of the Lord that would come burning like a furnace and for the Sun of Righteousness who would arise with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:1-2). The prophetic voice of the New Covenant ends with the voice of Saint John crying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). In both Old Testament and New, the horizon is the place to look to. For at all times it is illumined with the light of redemption and victory.

*Reprinted from the OCA web site, <http://oca.org/reflections/fr-lawrence-farley/fire-in-the-desert>**

The Feast of the Circumcision: A Blessed New Year!

While January 1 marks the beginning of the civil new year—and we wish every blessing of the season to our readers—it also marks the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God's Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:10-14, Leviticus 12:3).

After this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy The-



otokos (Luke 1:31-33, 2:21). The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics (Docetists) taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured (Colossians 2:11-12). Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon

of the Feast was written by St Stephen of the St Sava Monastery (October 28 and July 13).

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world (Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:38-39, 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Philippians 2:9-10). These two events, the Lord's Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11). The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.✠

Around Ss. Peter & Paul

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- January 1 George Moriarty
- 3 John Tanner
- 5 Pat Starkey
- 6 Walter Booriakin
- 16 Ted Demos
- Liliya Armstrong
- 17 Mark Littell
- 19 John Hecht
- George & Nadya Moriarty
- 26 Teddi Brent
- 28 Samuel Melendrez
- 29 John & Carol Yavornitzky

Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

CHRISTMAS ANGELS

More than \$700 was donated for the toy and food drive for our neighbors in the apartment complex to the east of the Church. A party, complete with St. Nicholas and presents, was held December 12, 2015. Thanks to all who helped make this event such a success.



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

Bits and Pieces

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped make our celebration of the Lord's Nativity a beautiful



and meaningful expression of our faith. It takes a lot of people, many hours, and much dedication and love to prepare for the Nativity Feast as well its accompanying celebrations—we are grateful to all who help in any way! Thanks, as well, to all of you for your cards, gifts, and personal greetings throughout the Holy Days of the Nativity. You are all deeply appreciated. Blessings in the New Year!

+Bishop Daniel

2016 CALENDARS

Thank you to John Blischak and Nick Enoch for again providing our parish community with Church Calendars for the New Year. May the Lord bless us each and every day of the coming year and help us grow in love for Him and for one another.

THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

The rich liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church includes a variety of services and blessings. Each year, after the celebration of the Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Water (January 6), it is customary for the priest to visit parishioners' homes, bringing with him the newly blessed Holy Water to sprinkle and thereby bless the home. Bishop Daniel will be available to bless homes throughout the month of January. To arrange to have your house blessed, please speak with Vladyka Daniel.

FROM THE TREASURER

If you would like to have a box of envelopes to use in 2016, please see Dave Homyak in the church office.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Our annual parish meeting will be held

on Sunday, January 31, 2016, after Coffee Hour. The agenda includes approval of our 2016 budget as well as the election of parish officers. Should you wish to be nominated, please see Bishop Daniel or the members of the Executive Board of the Parish Council.

ANNIVERSARY

His Grace, Bishop Daniel will celebrate the first anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration on Sunday, January 24. This occasion will be marked by the celebration of a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the usual time, 9:00 a.m.

HOLY SUPPER

More than one hundred twenty-five parishioners, family/ friends attended Holy Supper. It was a beautiful evening that began with everyone attending Compline before Holy Supper. Thank you all for attending and contributing to this special evening. Thank you to those who donated food and those who helped to set-up and then clean-up after the meal.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult Education/Faith Formation classes will resume on Wednesday, January 13, at 7:00 p.m. The upcoming 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!

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 take a look at what our bookstore has to offer.

MBAS

Many thanks to the Myrrh Bearers Altar Society and all the hard work they put in preparing for the holidays, baking nut, poppy, and apricot rolls, the Christmas bake sale and raffle, beautifying the church, and hosting Holy Supper.

Thanks to everyone (both members and parishioners) who participated in the various MBAS activities during 2015; without you, we would not have been a success.

STEWARDSHIP/PLEDGES/BUDGET



Everyone joins in to sing Christmas carols at the end of

You will be receiving your 2015 Statement of Contributions and 2016 Pledge Form shortly for your tax purposes. It is also time to start thinking about your pledge for 2016. Please be generous when filling out your 2016 Pledge Form. Please complete and return by the Annual Meeting, January 31, 2016. If you have any questions please see David Homyak in the Church office.

January 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ADULT EDUCATION Scriptural Roots and History of the Divine Liturgy Resumes Wednesday, January 13, 2016 7:00 pm					1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 9:00am Divine Liturgy	2 Ven. Seraphim of Sarov Saturday before Theophany 5:00pm Great Vespers
3 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Christmas Program	4 Forefeast of Theophany Synaxis of the 70 Apostles	5 Eve of Theophany 6:00pm Compline	6 Holy Theophany 9:00am Divine Liturgy Great Blessing of Water	7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist	8	9 Saturday after Theophany 5:00pm Great Vespers
10 Sunday after Theophany Ven. Gregory of Nyssa 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Meeting	SS Peter and Paul Annual Meeting Sunday, January 31, 2016 following fellowship hour. Following Fellowship Hour					16 5:00pm Great Vespers
11 Ven. Theodosius the Great	12 6:00pm Council Meeting	13 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	14 Leavetaking Theophany	15	16 5:00pm Great Vespers	
17 Ven. Godbearing Anthony the Great 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	18	19	20 Ven. Euthymius The Great	21 Icon "Joy and Consolation"	22 Apostle Timothy	23 5:00pm Great Vespers
We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.						
24 8:30am Hours 9:00am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Church School FOCA Meeting	25 St. Gregory the Theologian	26	27 Translation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom 7:00pm Adult Ed'n	28 Venerable Ephraim & Isaac of Syria	29	30 Synaxis Three Hierarchs 5:00pm Great Vespers
31 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	1 Forefeast of Meeting 6:00pm Compline	2 Meeting of the Lord in the Temple 9:00am Divine Liturgy	Theophany House Blessing Bishop Daniel will be available to bless homes throughout the month of January. To arrange to have your house blessed, please speak with Bishop Daniel.			6 5:00pm Great Vespers