

# Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 19 Issue 1

January 2019

### Council Highlights

- ✘ December's Operating Income was \$20,862.19 and Operating Expenses were \$13,149.52 resulting in a net operating income of \$7,712.67 for December.
- ✘ Annual Church Meeting will be held Sunday, January 27, 2019 following Divine Liturgy.
- ✘ Parking lot resurfacing contract has been accepted and signed. Warmer temperatures needed before work begins.



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

[www.sspeterpaulaz.org](http://www.sspeterpaulaz.org)  
[www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)

[www.orthodoxfellowship.org](http://www.orthodoxfellowship.org)

*The Right Reverend DANIEL  
 Bishop of Santa Rosa  
 Rector*

480.287.0240 Mobile

[frdaniel@sspeterpaulaz.org](mailto:frdaniel@sspeterpaulaz.org)

*Archpriest David Balmer, Attached  
 Retired*

*Deacon John Weiss*

*Andrew Evans  
 Council President  
 480.948.7929*

*Barbara Harp  
 Choir Director  
 Barbaraharp.2030@gmail.com*

*Stephanie A. Homyak  
 Church School Director  
 Newsletter Editor  
 623.869.0470*

[Stephanie\\_Homyak@yahoo.com](mailto:Stephanie_Homyak@yahoo.com)

*Mike Wagner  
 Web Master*

[Mike@sspeterpaulaz.org](mailto:Mike@sspeterpaulaz.org)

*Barbara Peterson  
 Myrrhbearers Altar Society  
 602.803.0280*

## A Homeless Wanderer Who Found the Kingdom

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 I 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 even 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 he had not had time to make a final confession and to receive 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 others 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 to 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 impending dangers, or to tell them about events to come in their own lives. She once told a young 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" writer 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."

# Message From Our Rector

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *Tempus fugit...* Time flies. Indeed, it's hard to believe that another calendar year has come and gone. Three hundred sixty-five days have past, days that brought joys, successes as well as losses and sorrows. Nonetheless, we entrust this past year to the Lord and look to the year ahead, confident in God's mercy and reliant upon His love for us. The Holy Apostle James reminds us that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17), and so we anticipate another year at Saints Peter and Paul Church that promises to be filled with blessings in whatever form they shall take.

We have recently celebrated the Great Feast of Holy Theophany, recalling that the Lord revealed Himself and that the mystery of the Trinity was made manifest on the banks of the River Jordan. Key to our celebration of that Feast was the remembrance of our own immersion in the waters of Baptism which, like Christ's own Baptism, revealed each one of us to be God's well-favored sons and daughters. We should never underestimate or undervalue the high calling we have received in being called to be God's children and to carry the name of Christ and bear in our very persons the presence of Christ in the world.

The Feast of the Nativity which we celebrated less than a month ago and the Feast of the Theophany remind us that Christ took on our human flesh in the womb of the Most Pure Theotokos, was born as one of us in the cave of Bethle-

hem, and that He revealed Himself to us on the bank of the River Jordan. These feasts remind us that God came to unite Himself to us and that "GOD IS WITH US," remaining ever present in our lives as He continues to work within us through the action of the Holy Spirit. We, in our turn, become His presence in the midst of the world as we seek to sanctify the world through our own lives of holiness, service, and sacrifice.

Throughout the past twelve years of my service here at Saints Peter and Paul Church you have often heard me say, using various words and images, that our hands, feet, mouths, and our entire selves are those of Christ. We speak for Christ; we reach out in love and healing on Christ's behalf; we carry the Good News of the Gospel wherever life takes us, in our daily and regular and occasional and special activities. Let' have that in mind as we begin the New Year. May we see each day, week, month, and season of this year as grace-filled times that provide opportunities for us to proclaim Christ in our own words and deeds.

As we begin this New Year, let us pray for one another as each one of us strives to make 2019 another year in which we reach out to the world in the Name of Christ, living and acting as His very Presence. May the Lord God bless you all with peace, prosperity, good health, and all that is necessary for salvation!

With love in the Lord Who reveals Himself and enlightens the world,

+Bishop Daniel

## VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

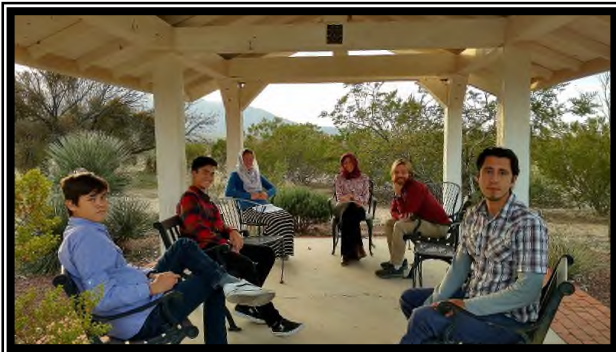




# Youth Ministries at SS Peter and Paul

Elijah Ferbrache other in the Orthodox Faith

Sometimes it seems like Orthodox Christians are really latecomers to the idea of "Youth Ministry." Most non-Orthodox churches in the United States have had some kind of youth group or youth ministry in their congregations for decades. Here at Sts. Pe-



ter and Paul, we have been attempting to create a sustainable youth ministry for the past few years. As most of us know, Mara Hecht (now Contes!) began the work of really creating the "Teen and Young Adult League" (TYAL) a few years ago. Since Mara left for Oregon to begin an exciting new stage of her life, there has been some concern that our burgeoning youth ministry would fizzle out without her leadership. However,



after some prayer and consideration, my wife and I have been leading TYAL with the blessing of Bishop DANIEL since this past September. So, I wanted to write something of a vision for our parish youth ministry while also giving a report on what we have been doing for the past few months.

We essentially have 3 goals for our parish youth activities:

- ✘ Form our youth in the Orthodox Christian faith
- ✘ Create community
- ✘ Encourage youth to mentor each

We are mostly working on the first two goals right now. We regularly hold TYAL activities once a month, alternating

between activities aimed at spiritual formation and activities that are just fun for the sake of

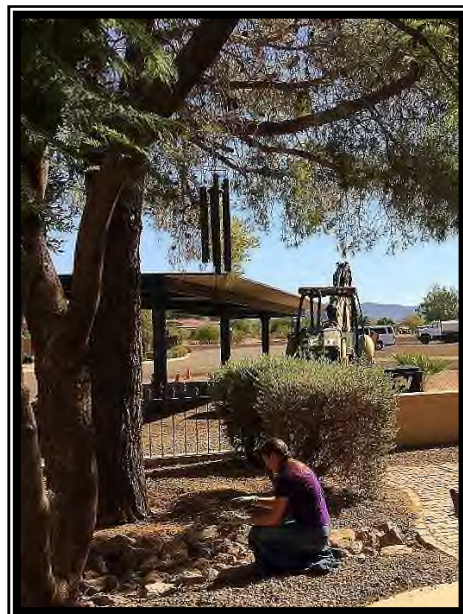
building up relationships within TYAL. We have had two movie nights, a game night, an evening forum with Bishop DANIEL, a service day at Sunshine Acres children's home, and a hike out to the Hieroglyphics trail in the Superstitions Mountains of East Mesa. Both of the movies we watch together were both fun and also spiritually edifying. First we watched *Becoming Truly Human* about a man's journey to the Orthodox

faith through the writings of the Early Church Fathers. Secondly, we watched a documentary on Fr. Roman Braga and Fr. George Calciu who confessed the Orthodox Christian faith while in



the gulag of Pitesti Romania under the Communist regime.

With respect to our second goal, as Orthodox Christians we always strive to live our life in Christ together in community. We pray together, we fast together, and we feast together. Likewise, our youth ministry should be something that we all do together. Youth ministry should not be some kind of cult of personality or further stratification between different "subgroups" within the parish. So,



Anne and I always want to intentionally find ways to include the youth in the larger life of the parish. For example, we have been grateful to work with David Bieber on the Christmas party for the neighborhood children and with Trish Seikman on learning some more music for the Christmas season. Anne and I are always grateful for opportunities to create space for the particular needs of the teens and young adults in our parish while at the same time strengthening the larger parish.

(Continued on page 6)



# December in Pictures at SS Peter and Paul





# A Prayer for Lighting a Candle

Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky

***“Set our hearts on fire with love for You, O Christ our God, so that in its flame we may love You with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Your commandments we may glorify You, the giver of all good gifts.”***

Here is a prayer to fix in your memory and reflect upon each time you light a candle and say a prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ. You are setting a flame before Him which represents the warmth of affection for God. Is it really burning love, or just some gesture your parents taught you to perform upon entering the church? Or

may it be that some resentment in your heart for an unanswered prayer keeps you from complete adoration. It can be that you walk about under an invisible cloud of depression or doubt, or guilt over some sin that you cannot eradicate from your soul.

By the light cast from the candle onto the icon you see in His eyes the gaze into your soul's depths. Do you want to acknowledge what you know is there and which is known to Him as well? Can the Lord recognize His image mirrored from your heart? Or is there a dark spot you prefer to hide from Him, like Adam concealing himself in the bushes of Eden, as though he could keep the Lord from seeing his shameful act?



Do you truly love the Lord with all your heart, and all your mind, or is there something or even somebody more important to you than He? When you pay attention to the prayers you recite, you realize they are challenges put to yourself. They give us pause to meditate on the gap between the person we are and the one we are intended to be.

When asked by people of other faiths if we “still” light candles, we reply, “Of course we do.” We “still” keep the traditions of our honored ancestors in the true faith not because we are antiquarians, but because these customs have never lost their potency as catalysts uniting us with God. Centuries before Princess Diane’s funeral hymn by Elton John, when he

sung about a candle in the wind, Orthodox Christians have known the meaning of standing firm in a hurricane of unbelief holding onto the flame of faith in a world bent on blowing out the light of Christ and celebrating the darkness. Each Pascha night all believers light thin tapers that join the other candles in a glow of light uniting us on earth with the saints, the angels, and the Lord Himself. We all feel their precious presence in our hearts. We know the emotion of filling the blackness of the Church with the illumination from hundreds of candles, to go in search of the living Lord outside in the night’s darkness where an unfriendly world works its will on our feeble attempts to protect the light. We cherish the mutual concern which goes on shar-

ing the flame with one another taking light from light.

Finally we realize that it’s not candles but our souls which God fashioned to hold the spiritual fire of love for Him and for all that He created. Look closely at a true icon and notice that the origin of light comes not from an external source, but from within. Moses returning from Mount Sinai glowed with the same intensity which the three apostles witnessed on the Transfiguration mountain. The candle you place before the Lord is a metaphor of the fire and light within your soul. Your whole life’s purpose is to intensify its warmth and illumination.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/berzonsky/a-prayer-for-lighting-a-candle>\*

*“The candles lit before icons of saints reflect their ardent love for God for Whose sake they gave up everything that man prizes in life, including their very lives, as did the holy apostles, martyrs and others.*

*These candles also mean that these saints are lamps burning for us and providing light for us by their own saintly living, their virtues and their ardent intercession for us before God through their constant prayers by day and night. The burning candles also stand for our ardent zeal and the sincere sacrifice we make out of reverence and gratitude to them for their solicitude on our behalf before God.”*

+ St. John of Kronstadt

# Youth Ministries at SS Peter and Paul

*(Continued from page 3)*

Lastly, our third goal is to foster opportunities for the youth both to be encouraged and to encourage others in their Orthodox faith. This TYAL community needs to grow through an organic building of relationships that will in turn facilitate the growth of structures that will outlive any particular leader, like ourselves. We have been encouraged to hear from our teens



and young adults about what their needs are and we will be working to meet those needs. One of the struggles of our youth program is in

meeting the needs of both the teenagers and the young adults in their 20s and early 30s. To that end, we are

working towards a future in which as our teenagers become young adults, leaders among TYAL participants in their 20s and 30s can organically, encourage and mentor the younger, current teens, so as to build a long-lasting community. Our hope is that together we can raise our children in the Church such that they will not disappear from the life of the Church as they enter college but will instead find life in Christ and be able to encourage

their younger brothers and sister to share in the same life which is also the light of the world.

We beg your prayers for us as leaders and for our teens and young adults that we may flourish, alongside the entire parish family, in humility, hope, faith and love.



## Around Saints Peter & Paul

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- January 1 George Moriarty  
Kaylee Ramany
- 3 John Tanner
- 4 Alexander Dolenko
- 5 Pat Starkey  
Deacon John Weiss
- 6 Walter Booriakin
- 8 John & Lauren Hecht  
David Sourk
- B Bill Weiss
- 12 Victor Zarembo
- 16 Liliya Armstrong
- 17 Mark Littell
- 16 Antonia Adams-Clement
- 19 John Hecht

- 19 George & Nadya Moriarty
- 21 Monya Bock  
Fr. Mihai Arion
- 26 Teddi Brent
- 28 Joe Matthews  
Samuel Melendrez
- 29 John & Carol Yavornitzky

*Many Years!  
Mnogaya Leta!*

### 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:

- Metropolitan Herman
- Patricia Starkey
- Jamie Arango
- Ann Garza
- Rose Kurowski
- Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek
- Anna Michkofsky
- Frank Kulik
- Vickie Kulik
- Marilyn Bezkorovainy

*If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact BISHOP DANIEL.*

# Bits and Pieces

**THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS OUTREACH** for the neighborhood children and their families again illustrated the tremendous generosity of our parish family. It was our 4<sup>th</sup> annual and most successful such event. Forty-five children received gifts (compared to 30 last year) with 43 attending the December 9th party. We also had many adult guests, including a significant number of dads, join us. There was far greater participation this year with our TYAL hosting a popular crafts table for the youth. The older neighborhood children, along with some of our young parishioners, enjoyed outside activities of soccer and a bean bag toss. There was also live Christmas carols beautifully performed by several parishioners. Others joined in a sing-along. Sixteen families in need received substantial food boxes for the holidays. Almost \$2,500 in cash contributions made this, and gifts for each child costing about \$40, possible. An additional 29 gifts purchased by parishioners totaled over \$1,000. As stated above, true generosity at this glorious time of the year. Thanks to all that participated. Next year will be even bigger and better.

**COFFEE HOUR CLEANUP HELP NEEDED** Beginning this month, we will be calling upon 3 to 5 parishioners each week to help clean up the kitchen and hall following coffee hour. Forms have been distributed, and over 40 parishioners have volunteered to help on a rotating basis. We still need additional volunteers, as we believe all able-bodied parishioners who enjoy our social hour should do their share. We anticipate having sufficient volunteers such that each would only need to pitch in once every 3-4 months. If you have not yet signed-up to volunteer, please see David Bieber or Bill Weiss. Volunteer schedules will be posted in the hall near the Food Drive boxes. Check those lists and sign up for a future date.

**THANK YOU** to all of you for your love, support, cards, and gifts during the Holiday Season. Your kind words and sentiments and your many expressions of support are deeply appreciated. God bless you for your thoughtful kindness!

*+Bishop Daniel*

## CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY YEARS!

To Deacon John Weiss as he celebrates the first anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Diaconate. May the Lord bless him and grant him, Matushka Juliana, and their family many blessings as they serve Christ's Holy Church!

**DECORATING OF OUR CHURCH** for Christmas took place on Saturday, December 23rd. About 25 parishioners decorate the church for the Nativity. You will likely agree that the church looked more beautiful than ever for this festive and blessed time of year. Many thanks to all that participated.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who made our 2018 celebration of the Lord's Nativity another beautiful, inspiring, and spiritually-rewarding celebration of the Lord's presence among us. The Divine Services, Holy Supper, music, flowers, decorations, food, etc., etc., were all wonderfully arranged and yet another sign of our parish community's love of God and of neighbor. Blessings to everyone! *+Bishop Daniel*

**DIVINE LITURGY** – The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 24, the Feast of Blessed Xenia of Saint Petersburg. This is also the anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration of His Grace Bishop DANIEL.

**2019 CALENDARS** are available. Thank you to John Blischak and Nick Enoch for once again sponsoring the Church Calendars for our parish community 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** 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. To arrange for having your home blessed, please contact Bishop Daniel, Father David, or Father Mihai.

**BOXES OF CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES** to use in 2019 are available. Please see Dave Homyak in the church office.

**HOLY SUPPER** was attended by close to one hundred parishioners, family and friends. 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.

**THANK YOU** to the Myrrh Bearers Altar Society for 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.

**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.

**STEWARDSHIP/PLEDGES/BUDGET** You will be receiving your 2018 Statement of Contributions shortly for your tax purposes. It's also time to start thinking about your pledge for 2019. Please be generous when filling out your 2019 Pledge Form and return it by the Annual Meeting, January 27, 2019. If you have any questions, please see David Homyak.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Alexander Enoch for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout! Thank you for choosing SS Peter and Paul for your Eagle project.





# January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great	2 Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov Forefeast of Theophany	3	4 Synaxis of the 70 Apostles	5 Eve of Theophany  5:00pm Great Vespers
6 Holy Theophany 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Great Blessing of Water <b>No Church School</b>	7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist	8	9	10 Ven. Gregory of Nyssa  6:00pm Council Meeting	11 Ven. Theodosius the Great	12 Akathist & Milk-Giver Icons Sat. after Theophany  5:00pm Great Vespers
13 Sunday after Theophany 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School MBAS Meeting</b>	14 Leavetaking of Theophany	15	16	17 Ven. Godbearing Anthony the Great	18	19  5:00pm Great Vespers
20 Ven. Euthymius The Great 8:30am Hours 9:00am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy <b>Church School</b>	21 Icon 'Joy and Consolation'	22 Apostle Timothy	23	24 Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg 9:00am Divine Liturgy	25 St. Gregory the Theologian	26  5:00pm Great Vespers
27 New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia Translation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Church School ANNUAL MEETING</b>	28 Venerable Ephraim the Syrian St. Isaac of Syria	29	30 Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs	31	1 Forefeast of the Meeting  6:00pm Vespers	2 Meeting of the Lord 9:00am Divine Liturgy  5:00pm Great Vespers

**HOUSE BLESSINGS**  
To arrange for having your home blessed, please contact Bishop Daniel, Father David, or Father Mihai

We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.

**SS Peter and Paul Annual Meeting**  
Sunday, January 27, 2019  
following fellowship hour.