

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 23 Issue 10

October 2023

September Council Highlights

- ✘ Church ran an operating surplus of \$2,882.83 in July.
- ✘ Church ran an operating deficit of **\$2,850.30** in August.
- ✘ After hosting a successful axe throwing event, the FOCA will host Tailgate Party on Sunday, October 29th.
- ✘ Church exploring new vendors for candles.



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

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

**Archpriest Mikel Bock,
Rector**
907-444-8545
frmikel@sspeterpaulaz.org

**Archpriest David Balmer, Attached
Retired**
frdavidbalmer@sspeterpaulaz.org
480-213-7631

Deacon John Weiss
deaconjohn@sspeterpaulaz.org
Deacon Rodion Pfeiffer
deaconrodion@sspeterpaulaz.org

**Andrew Evans
Council President**
480.948.7929

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

**Stephanie A. Homyak
Church School Director
Newsletter Editor**
602.432.7473
stephanie_homyak@yahoo.com

**Matushka Elizabeth Pfeiffer
Myrrhbearers Altar Society**
flagstaffred@gmail.com

Becoming Little Children



Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. - Proverbs 22:6

The Church honors the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke.

In his Gospel we read that as people bring their little ones to Jesus so that He may touch them, the disciples "sternly" order the people to stop. But Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."

Then He adds words that make us stop and think: "Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it" (Luke 18: 15-17).

How do we become those "little children" to whom the Kingdom is promised? As Joachim Jeremias writes in his "New Testament Theology", the Gospel tells us that it means taking some new attitudes toward things that were well-known in Jesus' time.

First, Jesus models a way of praying that isn't restricted to the communal liturgical prayer offered at three prescribed times of day. Jesus prays alone, sometimes through a whole night, as in Luke 6: 12.

In addition, the prayer He teaches His disciples, known to us as the Lord's Prayer, is an Aramaic prayer, not a Hebrew one. Aramaic is His mother tongue. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus Christ continues to respect and take part in the thrice-daily liturgical prayer, in Hebrew, known to all pious Jews. But here He is giving to those who want to become "little children" the example of something else: offering personal prayer at any time of day, in their own language.

In this same prayer, Jesus instructs the disciples to address God as Abba, or Father. This is a new and huge privilege. Saint Paul emphasizes the point in Romans 8:15-16: "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." To become "little children" we must accept this privilege and put ourselves in God's hands, trusting Him as our loving Father.

When we do so, some things will change. For example, in John 9:2 we see the common

belief that physical disability is a punishment for sin. When the disciples see a man blind from birth, they ask the Lord who sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus answers by giving a new reason for disability: "that God's works might be revealed in him." And in the Beatitudes, He tells His disciples to rejoice when they are reviled, persecuted and falsely accused. The Father who loves them has authority over everything, so they need no longer fear this kind of evil and injustice.

Even the length of our prayers can change. In Matthew 6: 7, the other place in the New Testament where Jesus gives His disciples the Lord's Prayer, He begins by telling them not to "heap up empty phrases" in the belief that they will be "heard because of their many words." Those who are God's "little children" can trust that He knows their needs and hears a short prayer.

Luke 12: 32 gives us this assurance: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Message from Our Rector

The history of the Orthodox Christian Church actually begins in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, with the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles at Pentecost. It says: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). This is the beginning of our church and the evangelizing that took place then, throughout the church's history, and still needs to take place today.

We are still called to preach the good news of the Gospel to everyone in the

community. We come to church to worship Christ and to be able to draw closer to Him. After the Holy Spirit descended, it says that about 3,000 souls were

added to the church. Even adding one person is a great accomplishment! That is one more person adding to the faithful that call to God to help us. In this day

and age where Christianity comes in all different shapes and sizes, and is often looked on as an obstacle or an intrusion to the way "I" want to live. We know, as Orthodox Christians, that our life in Christ is necessary for our soul.

Many people are looking for the Truth of the Gospel, we should always be open to sharing the Gospel with others. We should be sure that we are fulfilling what Christ has commanded us to do—and that is to go out and tell of the good news of the Gospel. We should try during the rest of the year to share that good news with someone and invite them to the church. May the good Lord help us in the building up of His church.

Fr. Mikel



Archbishop Benjamin Visits SS Peter and Paul



Biblical Women: Esther

If ever a Biblical story cried out to be made into a Hollywood movie, it would be the story of Esther. The story has everything that Hollywood values in a movie: rags-to-riches, gorgeous scenery, sex, intrigue, a creepy villain, attempted murder, violence, plot twists, a cast of thousands, and a happy ending. It even centers upon a strong female character, a kind of proto-feminist, someone who is both strong and feminine, vulnerable but courageous. It almost seems too good to be true. Cecil B. DeMille definitely missed his chance with this one

In fact, many scholars wonder if it is completely true, and there are certainly enough details in the story to raise the eyebrows of an historical detective. Consider the following: the text (or the script) says that the king's first queen was named "Vashti", whereas history knows her as "Amestris" (Herodotus' Histories 7.61). The text also says that the king ruled over 127 satrapies, when in fact Persia contained about 20 of them. Also, Esther was chosen from other participants in a beauty pageant, when history informs us that the queen was chosen (unsurprisingly) from one of the seven noble families of Persia. Also, the text dates Mordecai from the exile of 597 B.C., which would make him about 120 years old at the time of the events related in the story.

Other improbabilities abound. Is it really likely that a queen would be chosen without inquiry about her race, immediate family, or past history (2:20)? Or that an

Fr. Lawrence Farley
"The story of Esther contains the promise that God will watch over His Church until the end. God will always preserve His people. The only question for us is: will we show courage in the hour of danger or not?"

order would go out across the empire decreeing that a wife must respect her husband (1:22)? Or that a king would appoint a commission before issuing this order (1:15f), but issue an order for an

empire-wide genocide on the basis of a whim and a bribe? And that one would offer a bribe totaling about two-thirds of the revenue of the empire (3:8-9)? Or that when the king discovered his queen was Jewish, instead of simply rescinding the order, his response would be to issue another order

telling the Jews that they could defend themselves, as if they wouldn't have done that anyway (8:11)? Or that the slaughter of Persians by the Jews totaled 75,000, and that the king would accept this slaughter with equanimity (9:16)? The sum total of such historical errors and improbabilities is why many scholars regard the genre as historical romance (or political satire), and not history—though it might have been inspired by a local and limited Persian pogrom. (Or, as they say in Hollywood, "This story was inspired by true events".)

The point, of course, is not the specific genre or the historicity, but the story itself. In this story, the Jewish heroine Esther finds herself caught up in the king's project of finding himself a new wife to replace Vashti, his old wife whom he demoted and divorced. By royal decree young girls were gathered together from throughout the empire to take part in what was essentially a Persian beauty pageant, and the girl who best pleased the king would be the new queen. At length Esther was chosen as the new queen,

though no one inquired about or knew her Jewish lineage or her personal history.

Esther had been looked after by her uncle Mordecai, who managed to insult and antagonize a high official in the king's court by the name of Haman. Haman was filled with rage at this insult, and so rather than simply dispose of Mordecai, he decided to get rid of him by having all the Jews killed throughout the Persian empire. He suggested this genocidal policy to the king, offering him a bribe of ten thousand talents of silver to seal the deal, and the king immediately agreed to give the order, to be carried out in a year's time. When Mordecai learned of the order, he immediately went into mourning, and asked Esther to convince the king to rescind the order. The problem was that Esther did not have access to the king unbidden, and if she dared to approach unbidden, she might be killed. But she decided to risk her life by approaching the king anyway.

Eventually she approached the king, who agreed to grant her access and not have her killed for her daring approach. After a day or so of feasting and buttering him up, she put before him her plight: she would soon be killed along with her people. Asked who would dare to harm the queen, she accused Haman. Immediately the king had Haman killed by hanging him on the gallows he had constructed for Mordecai.

But the king could still not rescind the order, and so he issued another one: the Jews were allowed to defend themselves, and in response to the attack they slaughtered 75,000 Persians, including Persians in the royal capital. In the end, Mordecai was exalted to a position of authority and the Jews everywhere rejoiced and kept the anniversary of the day as a special feast—the feast of Purim. The story itself is of course more exciting and dramatic

(Continued on page 4)

Biblical Women: Esther

(Continued from page 3)

than this brief summary, and its ten chapters should be read to see why it is a perennial favourite. The *Book of Esther's* difficulty in finding even a late place in the Biblical canon should not be allowed to detract from its dramatic power.

What can we learn from the story's heroine and from the story generally? I suggest three things.

First of all, Esther is an example of loyalty to her people. Given her unforeseen and rapid advancement from unknown exile and immigrant to queen consort, it would have been easy for her to simply forget all about her unknown and politically inconvenient past. She would not have been the first person to ignore and deliberately lose contact with those who knew them before their meteoric rise to fame and influence. Yet despite the risk associated with her being a Jew, she maintained contact with her uncle, and continued to be guided by his advice. She exulted in her newfound status as Esther the Persian, but she never forgot that she was also Hadassah the Jew (2:7). For Esther, her membership in God's people superseded everything else. It dictated her fundamental identity and guided her actions.

Secondly, we see Esther's willingness to do the right thing regardless of the personal cost. She knew that she did not enjoy immediate access to the king, and that approaching him unbidden was against the law. She had not been summoned within the past month (4:11), and so it was unlikely therefore that she would be summoned in the immediate future. Bursting in unannounced might well result not just in loss of privilege and position, but also in loss of her life. Nonetheless, she said, "I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (4:16). Her determined willingness to

sacrifice her position and possibly even her life in the service of her people sets an example of courage for us all.

Finally, the story of Esther reveals that God will protect His chosen people in all circumstances, no matter how dire things become. Though Esther is heroine of the tale, God remains the invisible protagonist behind the scenes. He works through the plots of the ungodly and the courage of the pious to fulfill His will for the protection and survival of His people. The story of Esther is ultimately not about the fate and courage of one woman or about the necessity of piety. In fact, there is very little show of piety found in the narrative: the Name of God is not mentioned, no one is seen praying, even when doom threatens (see 4:1-3). The moral therefore is not, "Piety will be rewarded", but rather, "God's people will survive, since God protects them"—see 6:13, where even Haman's wife and friends seem to know this.

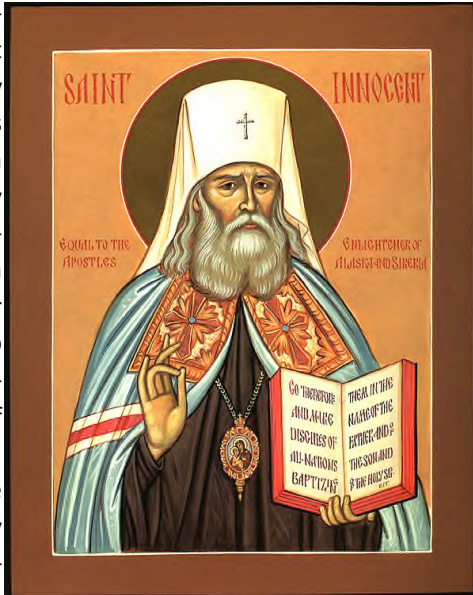
This has relevance for the Church as well, since the Church is the Messianic commonwealth of Israel. No weapon forged against the Church will ultimately prosper (Isaiah 54:17), and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. The Church is the anvil which has worn out many hammers, and it will remain until the Coming of the Lord. The story of Esther contains the promise that God will watch over His Church until the end. God will always preserve His people. The only question for us is: will we show courage in the hour of danger or not? Like Esther, let us resolve to do the right thing no matter what: if we perish, we perish. We must remember who we are and do our duty.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/biblical-women-esther>✠



Glorification of St Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow

Saint Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to America (in the world John Popov-Veniaminov), was born on August 26, 1797 in the village of Anginsk in the Irkutsk diocese, into the family of a sacris-



tan. The boy mastered his studies at an early age and by age seven, he was reading the Epistle in church. In 1806 they sent him to the Irkutsk seminary. In 1814, the new rector thought it proper to change the surnames of some of the students. John Popov received the surname Veniaminov in honor of the deceased Archbishop Benjamin of Irkutsk (+ July 8, 1814). On May 13, 1817 he was ordained deacon for the Irkutsk Annunciation church, and on May 18, 1821, he was ordained priest.

The missionary service of the future Apostle of America and Siberia began with the year 1823. Father John spent 45 years laboring for the enlightenment of the peoples of Kamchatka, the Aleutian Islands, North America, Yakutsk, the Khabarov frontier, performing his apostolic exploit in severe conditions and at great risks to life. Saint Innocent baptized ten thousand people, and built churches, beside which he founded schools and he himself taught the fundamentals of the Christian life. His knowledge of various crafts and arts aided him in his work.

Father John was a remarkable preacher. During the celebration of the Liturgy, memorial services and the all-night Vigil, he incessantly guided his flock. During his

time of endless travels, Father John studied the languages, customs and habits of the peoples, among whom he preached. His work in geography, ethnography and linguistics received worldwide acclaim. He composed an alphabet and grammar for the Aleut language and translated the Catechism, the Gospel and many prayers into that language. One of the finest of his works was the Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven (1833), translated into the various languages of the peoples of Siberia and appearing in more than 40 editions.

Thanks to the toil of Father John, the Yakut people in 1859 first heard the Word of God and divine services in their own native language.

On November 29, 1840, after the death of his wife, Father John was tonsured a monk with the name Innocent by Saint Philaret, the Metropolitan of Moscow, in honor of Saint Innocent of Irkutsk. On December 15, Archimandrite Innocent was consecrated Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kurile and Aleutian Islands. On April 21, 1850 Bishop Innocent was elevated to the rank of archbishop.

By the Providence of God on January 5, 1868, Saint Innocent succeeded Metropolitan Philaret on the Moscow cathedra. Through the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Innocent consolidated the secular missionary efforts of the Russian Church (already in 1839 he had proposed a project for improving the organization of missionary service).

Under the care of Metropolitan Innocent a Missionary Society was created, and the Protection monastery was reorganized for missionary work. In 1870 the Japanese Orthodox Spiritual Mission headed by Archimandrite Nicholas Kasatkin [afterwards Saint Nicholas of Japan, (February 3)] was set up, with whom Saint Innocent had shared much of his own spiritual experience. The guidance by Saint Innocent of the Moscow diocese was also fruitful, by his efforts, the church of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos was built up into the Moscow Spiritual Academy.

Saint Innocent fell asleep in the Lord on March 31, 1879, on Holy Saturday, and was buried at the Holy Spirit Church of the Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra. On October 6, 1977, Saint Innocent was glorified by the Russian Orthodox Church. His memory is celebrated three times during the year: on March 31, the day of his blessed repose, on October 5 (Synaxis of the Moscow Hierarchs), and on October 6, the day of his glorification.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2020/10/06/102884-glorification-of-saint-innocent-metropolitan-of-moscow-enlighten>

“Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God. From this it is evident that it is quite impossible for anyone to pray whose mind and heart are attached to anything carnal - for instance, to money or to honors - or who has in his heart passions such as hatred or envy for others, because passions usually contract the heart, in the same way as God expands it and gives it true freedom.”

— St. John of Kronstadt

Archbishop Benjamin Visits SS Peter and Paul



Around SS Peter & Paul

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- October 2 Walter & Vera Moschowsky
Brian Hix
- 4 Christi Sourk
- 8 Emma Hecht
- 10 John Adams-Clement
- 11 Susan Weiss
- 13 Alexander Gala
- 15 Eugenia (Gina) Mudrenko
- 17 Rosemarie Osolinsky
- 21 Svetlana & Arthur Fleenor
- 25 Olivia Weiss
Brad Christensen
- 30 Anthony Chilbert

**Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!**

Congratulations and Many Years!

To Cassidy and Ferdi van der Kamp on the birth of their daughter, Cornelia Anneke van der Kamp and her call name is 'Nelianne.' Cornelia Anneke was born September 8th at 7:23pm (NL) and weighed in at 9lb, 2oz. Her Saint is St Anne, mother of Mary. May God grant them all Many Blessed Years!



PRAYER LIST

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

*Sandra Hoff
Marie Lobb
Ann Carroll
Elizabeth Michel
Antonia Adams-Clement
John Adams-Clement
Walter Booriakin
Jamie Arango
Tammy Horton*

The suffering people of Ukraine

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, reach out his healing hand and bless these, His servants.

If you know anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Fr. Mikel.

Bits and Pieces

NUT ROLL BAKE The Myrrh Bearers Altar Society will be baking nut, apricot, and poppy seed rolls again this fall. The last day to place your order is October 1st. Please see one of the Myrrhbearers for more information. If you are interested in learning more about the rolls or just love to bake, please speak to Matushka Heather Pfeiffer, who would love to speak to you about various ways you can help. We welcome men, women, and teens who want to get involved. Bakes dates are listed on the calendar and we ask that you let us know if you are interested in helping.

LUNCHEON THANK YOU The luncheon for Archbishop Benjamin was a beautiful success. A large thank you goes to everyone who helped with the luncheon from bring a dish, donating to the cause, helping in the kitchen, clearing tables, washing dishes, taking out the trash, and so much more. Your contributions to the event are greatly appreciated.

FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA (FOCA) meets on the first Sunday of each month following Coffee Hour.

Come join us for the tailgate party on Sunday, October 29th in the church hall. Remember to wear your favorite team shirt and join in the fun. WE look forward to seeing everyone there!

We are collecting books (new or gently used) for the children at Whittier School. Any support would be greatly appreciated.

Happy October birthday to those born in October. Many years!

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER The last quarter of the year is now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2023 church pledges / donations / contributions are in and accounted for in this year. Please consider the church in your year-end financial planning, especially for tax purposes. Year-to-date donation statements will be available in early December.

BOOKSTORE The bookstore has a lovely selection of Akathist Prayers. While you may find canons and akathist prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ and our Most Holy Theotokos in your prayer book, there are also others that can be read that are dedicated to saints or for particular occasions. Stop by and take a look! (If a purchase isn't in your budget right now, you may even be able to do an internet search and find a free PDF version.)

MEMORY ETERNAL! This month marks the seven year anniversary of Protodeacon Alexis' repose in the Lord. Protodeacon Alexis loved our parish community as his own family and his loss has been greatly felt.

The FOCA invites you to our TAILGATE PARTY

Sunday, October 29, 2023
Following Divine Liturgy

Wear your favorite team jersey (any team/sport) and get in the tailgate spirit and join us for the fun!



To the parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul Parish:

I would like to inform you that we, Teresa and I, shall be leaving this parish and the greater Phoenix area. Teresa has accepted a unique opportunity with a company in the Boise, Idaho area. We have already purchased a home and will close on it very soon. Teresa will be departing for Boise in mid October. I will follow her, to Boise, once all of our business has been completed.

We are grateful to the Saints Peter and Paul community, that welcomed us just over 8 years ago. We have enjoyed our communion of worship and fellowship over the years and look forward to the continued friendships that have taken root.

Life is the journey that the good Lord lays at your feet. 8 years ago we never thought we'd end up in Phoenix... and now it's off to Boise. It's meant to be even if we can't comprehend it now. Through our faith we will see, in time, what and why we were called. Our only hope is that we leave this parish in as good or better condition than when we first walked through the front door.

May God continue to bless this parish and its faithful flock.

Nicholas Bock

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.

October 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos Pskov-Protection Icon</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL FOCA MEETING</p>	<p>2 Cyprian & Justina</p> <p>3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday, October 1, 2023 Last day to place orders for nut rolls</p>		<p>4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO CLASS</p>	<p>5 Synaxis of the Hierarchs of Moscow</p>	<p>6 Holy Apostle Thomas St. Innocent of Moscow, Apostle to the Americas</p>	<p>7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:30AM NUT ROLL BAKE</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL MBAS MEETING</p> <p>12:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>9 St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow Holy Apostle James Alphaeus</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6:00pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">October 29th St. John Gala & Auction: Music Under the Stars St. John the Evangelist Church, Tempe, AZ</p>		<p>14</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>15</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2nd Annual GOYA Fall Lock-In Assumption Greek Orthodox Church October 20-21, 2023 For grades 6-12 Sign up at: assumptionaz.org/lockin</p>		<p>18 Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>21 Memorial (Demetrius) Saturday</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>22</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>23 Apostle James, Brother of the Lord</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Tailgate Party Sunday, October 29, 2023 Wear your favorite team jersey!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO CLASS</p>		<p>26 Great Martyr Demetrius</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>28 Repose of Ven. Job of Pochaev</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:30AM NUT ROLL BAKE</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>29</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL TAILGATE PARTY HOSTED BY FOCA</p> <p></p>	<p>30 Zenobius and Zenobia</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>31 Hieromartyr John Kochurov</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>1 Cosmas & Damian</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10:00am Baptism Sean Flom</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>5</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>CHURCH SCHOOL FOCA MEETING</p>	<p>6 St. Paul the Confessor, Archbishop of Constantinople</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>8 Synaxis of Archangel Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for coffee and fellowship.</p>		<p>11</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>