



SS. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

9230 Old Bustleton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19115

Church Phone: 215-676-3311

Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari

Rectory Phone: 1-609-385-3757



Church Bulletin ~ January 2009

✠✠✠ Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful ✠✠✠

"Ignorance of Scripture Is Ignorance of Christ"

-- St. Jerome

Here's a simple observation:

Critical decisions affecting the well-being of the Church are taken by people in leadership positions essentially unread in the Holy Scripture.

It seems the greater the degree of scriptural illiteracy, the greater the desire to impose positions foreign to the vision of the Church.

What do we do:

Saint Paul writes to his student, Saint Timothy and says:

As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from who you learned it and how from childhood you have *been acquainted with the sacred writings* which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for: teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Athanasius: For the tokens of truth are more exact as drawn from Scripture than from other sources.

Antony of Egypt: The Scriptures are enough for instruction.

Augustine: Let us search for the Church in the Sacred Scriptures.

Basil the Great: Therefore let God-inspired Scripture decide between us; and on whichever side be found doctrines in harmony with the Word of God, in favor of that side will be cast the vote of truth.

Cyril of Jerusalem: He was buried, and He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor: 15:4). An Apostle has sent us back to the testimony of the Scripture; from the same source we will do well to discover the hope of our salvation.

John Chrysostom: If anything is said without Scripture, the thinking of the hearers limps. But where the testimony proceeds from the divinely given Scripture, it confirms both the speech of the preacher and the soul of the hearer.

Irenaeus: The Apostle at that time first preached the Gospel but later by the will of God, they delivered it to us in the Scriptures that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith.

Jerome: *Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.*

✠✠✠ Special Announcements from Fr. Stephen ✠✠✠

*** *Father Stephen* may be reached at 609-385-3757, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM or by e-mail: ssiniari@covenanthouse.org Please remember that all confessions and consultations on Sunday mornings shall take place from 9 AM to 10 AM before the Divine Liturgy. Thank you.

+++ Events & Announcements +++

Liturgical Schedule - January/February 2009

+ CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & ST BASIL THE GREAT - THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 - *NO SERVICES AT SS PETER & PAUL*

+ THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER - TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 - **Divine Liturgy 9 AM**

+ PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD - MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - **Divine Liturgy 9 AM**

Schedule of Other Services

+ **BIBLE STUDY - EVERY WEDNESDAY - 7 PM - 8:30 PM in the Church Hall** - Bible Study led by *Fr. Dn. Gregory*. The title for the Bible Study is "*Seeking the Treasure of Christ Throughout Scripture*." The study will use the new Orthodox Study Bible of the Old and New Testament as a base. The first topic of discussion will be the meaning of the story of Adam and Eve and the discussions will proceed with a journey through the Hebrew Bible.

+ **SATURDAY VESPERS - 6 PM** - *Please note*: these are Reader's Vespers chanted in the Byzantine style. Also, there is no "entrance" into the sanctuary as is the practice during a Great Vesper service (which precedes a Divine Liturgy).

Church News & Reminders

◇ **ICON PLEDGES** - *Please note*: *The Icons are due back to the Church ASAP. Icon Pledge Sunday is scheduled for February 8, 2009. When returning your Icons, please return them to the Church Store or to the treasurer, James Schaeffer.*

◇ **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2009** - *Please note*: Membership Dues for 2009 have been raised to \$125. *Dues* can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

◇ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** - 1st Monday of each month, 7 PM. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

◇ **SPECIAL SERVICES** - If you are planning to have a special service in the Church, please be considerate and notify either Father Stephen or the Church Committee one week in advance. When you are planning for a Baptism, Wedding, Funeral, or any other Prayer Service in the Church, please speak with Father Stephen in advance to determine if there is any way you can contribute to help the Church in helping others. Thank you. *Please note: if the services of the Church Choir are required, please notify the Choir Director, Christina Murianka, as soon as possible.*

Memorials: Any help in setting up and cleaning up from the families involved is truly appreciated and welcomed by the Ladies Society.

◇ **NO SMOKING/NO CELL PHONES** - Please remember that SS Peter & Paul has a no smoking policy in the building and that ringers on cell phones should be off during the Divine Liturgy.

The Joy of Giving

◇ **CHURCH LIBRARY DONATIONS** - We are greatly in need of monetary donations for buying books to establish our Church Library to help all of us continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Any amount is truly appreciated and can be given to our Treasurer, James Schaeffer, at any time. *May God bless you for your generosity!*

◇ **CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS** - *In December: 73 casseroles were baked by our parishioners and 41 were purchased with money donated by our parishioners for a total of 114 casseroles. Frozen turkeys, toiletries, sheets, towels and various food items were also donated to Saint John's Hospice through the generosity of our parishioners. Thanks to all!* Disposable razors and individual/small tubes of hand lotion are still needed. Please continue to help feed the hungry. Frozen casseroles are collected by Harry Halkedis. A \$10 donation for casseroles can be given at any time. *Thank you!*

◇ **PASTORAL FUND COLLECTION** - Collections for the Pastoral Fund will take place every 3rd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously. "Pastoral Fund" donation envelopes are found in the Church foyer, on the left side of the glass partition, should you wish to donate at another time.

◇ **PASTORAL FUND BOX/POOR BOX** - *Please note*: There are now 2 collection boxes in the back of the church, **the Poor Box AND a Pastoral Fund Box**. *Please donate generously!*

◇ **COLLECTION FOR THE POOR** - A special collection for the poor will be held on the 1st Sunday of every month. Please plan to give generously every month to those whose lives are less fortunate than ours. Donations can also be placed in the **Poor Box** at any time.

◇ **ORTHODOX HERALD COLLECTION** - Collections for the *Orthodox Herald* will take place every 2nd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously.

◇ **DONATIONS OF WINE & OIL** - Altar wine and virgin olive oil for the altar lamps are always needed. The name of the altar wine is **Mavrodaphne of Patras** and it is available at most PA State Stores. Please help make sure that we always have a plentiful supply.

◇ **POP TAB COLLECTION PRGRAM FOR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE** - RJ (and his parents, Debbie & Bob Krimetz) is collecting flip tabs from any aluminum cans to donate to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. *Help by bringing your tabs! Thank you!*

Other Events at SS Peter & Paul



◇ **ICON PLEDGE SUNDAY - February 8, 2009 (Inclement weather date: To Be Announced)** - Immediately following the Divine Liturgy. *This is SS Peter & Paul's single largest fund-raiser of the year* and is integral in funding our operating expenses. *Please make every effort to attend and please bid generously. Absentee bids are gratefully accepted.*

◇ **2009 LITURGICAL SCHEDULE** - The tentative 2009 Liturgical Schedule can be found on the outside back cover of this Bulletin. The Schedule will be included again in the February Bulletin with any final updates and/or revisions.

General Interest

◇ **ANCIENT FAITH RADIO** - **24 hour a day** *Orthodox radio station* providing high quality internet-based Orthodox programming, music, teaching, interviews, features, convert testimonies, conference recordings, and much more! The URL is: <http://ancientfaithradio.com>. There are a whole series of podcasts (audio files). Especially wonderful are those from Fr Thomas Hopko. Listen through your computer or download them into an mp3 player or Ipod: <http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko>

◇ **ALBANIAN FORUM ON THE INTERNET (FORUMI SHQIPTAR)** - Ne gjuhen shqipe: per te dhena informative mbi Kishen Orthodhokse, klikoni "Komuniteti Orthodhoks" ne uebsajten Forumi Shqiptar me poshte: www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186

Miscellaneous

◇ **INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION** - Please call the Church at **215-676-3311** to find out if Divine Liturgy is scheduled for a particular Sunday. Stephen Murianka is most diligent about putting that information on the answering machine.

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE** - Open Sundays at 9:30 AM (1/2 hour before Divine Liturgy)
Items available: Divine Liturgy Books, Icons; Crosses (Baptismal, lapel pins, Georgian style, orthodox); Prayerbooks (Georgian and English); Censors; Unique and different wearing apparel; CDs and cassettes; Religious Books

◇ **WEB PAGE/E-MAILS** - SS Peter & Paul Webpage: <http://homepage.mac.com/aliciaj17/sspeterpaulhome1.html>. New Bulletins can be viewed the Saturday before distribution by 8 PM. If you would like to be kept up-to-date by e-mail or to be removed from our "paper" mailing list, please send me an e-mail at: aliciaj17@mac.com

◇ **ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS** - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please see Alicia or call her at 215-742-0492 or e-mail: aliciaj17@mac.com. *The deadline for the next Bulletin will be Sunday, January 25.* Thank you! *Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday 2/1/09.* Bulletins will be mailed to any Parishioners unable to attend. *Please remember to let Alicia know the names of our members who are ill or in need of prayer so that they can be included in our Bulletins.*

◇ **ThankYou** to all members of the Parish who have helped out or volunteered in any way with their time and efforts, and a very special **thank you** to anyone whose name was inadvertently omitted from the Bulletin.

††† Parishioner's Corner †††



◇ **A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** is wished to the following parishioners and friends who are celebrating **March** Birthdays: Yolanda Barenbaum, Katherine K. Costa, Thimi Daka, Mary Dimitri, Fr Gregory Dudash, Debbie Krimetz, Claire Kutzler, Martha Murianka, Stephen Murianka, Mary Palmerick, Virginia Rubis, Priftesha Margot Siniari, Diana Vesho, Kathryn Vrato, Steven Yarrow

May God grant them all many, many years!

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL GOES GREEN** - To help with conservation efforts, SS Peter & Paul will no longer be buying styrofoam cups in 2009. We will, however, use up whatever cups we have and there will always be paper cups available. **You can help in this effort by bringing in your own cups for coffee or tea!**

◇ **GREGORY VRATO, SR.**, is at the **John Neumann Nursing Home**, Room 726, at the intersection of Haldeman & Tomlinson Road (make a right on Tomlinson and the parking lot is immediately on your right). Visitors are welcome anytime from noon to 8:00 PM.

Please continue to keep Gregory in your prayers. May God grant him good health!

††† Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers †††

Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vreto, Sr., Nina Horowitz, Spiro Costas, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, Angie Kozlowski, James Vesho, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze, Katherine Halkedis, Martha Murianka, Christina Murianka**

*** **God knows the names and ages of all who need His love and mercy...**

††† Holy Days and Name Days in January †††

- † January 1 - Circumcision of Christ; St Basil the Great
- † January 2 - St Seraphim of Sarov
- † January 6 - Theophany of Christ
- † January 7 - Synaxis of St John the Baptist
- † January 10 - St Gregory Bishop of Nyssa; St Theophan the Recluse
- † January 11 - St Theodosius the Great
- † January 12 - St Sava Archbishop of Serbia; Martyr Tatiana of Rome
- † January 14 - St Nina of Georgia, Equal-to-the-Apostles
- † January 17 - St Anthony the Great Founder of Monasticism
- † January 18 - St Athanasius the Great; St Cyril of Alexandria
- † January 19 - St Macarius the Great; St Mark Archbishop of Ephesus
- † January 20 - St Euthymius the Great
- † January 21 - St Maximus Confessor
- † January 23 - Martyr Clement of Ancyra; Martyr Agathangel
- † January 24 - St Xenia of Rome; Blessed Xenia of St Petersburg
- † January 25 - St Gregory the Theologian
- † January 26 - St David of Georgia
- † January 28 - St Ephraim the Syrian; St Isaac the Syrian
- † January 30 - 3 Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom

Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John
(Commemorated January 7)

In the Orthodox Church it is customary, on the day following the Great Feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God, to remember those saints who participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior.

St John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, concludes the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. The holy Prophet John bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh. St John was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan, and he was a witness of the Theophany of the Most Holy Trinity on the day of the Savior's Baptism.

The holy Prophet John was related to the Lord on His mother's side, the son of the Priest Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth. The holy Forerunner, John, was born six months before Christ. The Archangel Gabriel announced his birth in the Temple at Jerusalem, revealing to Zachariah that a son was to be born to him.

Through the prayers offered beforehand, the child was filled with the Holy Spirit. St John prepared himself in the wilds of the desert for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God's people.



At the age of thirty, he came forth preaching repentance. He appeared on the banks of the Jordan, to prepare the people by his preaching to accept the Savior of the world. In church hymnology, St John is called a "bright morning star," whose gleaming outshone the brilliance of all the other stars, announcing the coming dawn of the day of grace, illumined with the light of the spiritual Sun, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having baptized the sinless Lamb of God, St John soon died a martyr's death, beheaded by the sword on orders of King Herod at the request of his daughter Salome. The Transfer of the Right Hand of the holy Forerunner from Antioch to Constantinople (956) and the Miracle of Saint John the Forerunner against the Hagarenes (Moslems) at Chios:

The body of Saint John the Baptist was buried in the Samaritan city of Sebaste. The holy Evangelist Luke, who went preaching Christ in various cities and towns, came to Sebaste, where they gave him the right hand of the holy Prophet John, the very hand with which he had baptized the Savior. The Evangelist Luke took it with him to his native city of Antioch.

When the Moslems seized Antioch centuries later, a deacon named Job brought the holy hand of the Forerunner from Antioch to Chalcedon. From there, on the eve of the Theophany of the Lord, it was transferred to Constantinople (956) and kept thereafter.

In the year 1200, the Russian pilgrim Dobrynya, who later became St Anthony, Archbishop of Novgorod, saw the right hand of the Forerunner in the imperial palace. In the year 1263, during the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders, the emperor Baldwin gave one bone from the wrist of St John the Baptist to Ottonus de Cichon, who then gave it to a Cistercian abbey in France.

The right hand continued to be kept in Constantinople. When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, sacred objects were gathered up at the conqueror's orders and kept under lock in the imperial treasury. In 1484 the right hand of the holy Forerunner was given away by the son of the Moslem sultan Bayazet to the knights of Rhodes to gain their good will. The knights of Rhodes, having established their base on the island of Malta (in the Mediterranean Sea), then transferred the sacred relic they had received to Malta.

When the Russian Tsar Paul I (1796-1801) became Grand Master of the Maltese Order in honor of the holy Prophet John, the right hand of the Baptist, part of the Life-Creating Cross and the Philermos Icon of the Mother of God (from Mt Philermos on the island of Rhodes) were transferred in 1799 from the island of Malta to Russia (because of the Napoleonic threat), to the chapel at Gatchina. In the same year these sacred items were transferred into the church dedicated to the Icon of the Savior Not Made by Hands at the Winter Palace and a special service was composed for this Feast.

~ Reading & Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~

+++ Share the Light Sunday - January 18, 2009 +++

...You have probably heard people say that the Orthodox Church is "the best kept secret" in North America. On Sunday, January 18, 2009, our SCOBA (Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas) hierarchs have scheduled a national event to support the growth of Orthodox media outreach. It's called "Share the Light Sunday," and it's intended to raise awareness and financial support for the Orthodox Christian Network (OCN), a pan-Orthodox media ministry that is also one of the official agencies of SCOBA. As you may already know, OCN uses the power of the radio and the Internet to present our Church to mainstream America -- to reach out to everyone, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, with a message that is engaging, accessible and Christ-centered... *Excerpt from Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropulos' (Executive Director, OCN) Letter*



OCN's most famous program is ***Come Receive the Light***, a nationally syndicated Orthodox radio show that is heard in more than 100 communities. OCN also produces two Internet radio stations, 12 podcasts, online videos — and customized Internet radio stations for local parishes that reach people for Christ 24/7.

Any gift will help to create something truly valuable: an effective media outreach for the Orthodox Church throughout North America.

Visit their website to learn more: www.receive.org or call toll free: **877-273-2348** or send donations to: **Orthodox Christian Network, P.O. Box 4690, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33338**

✠✠✠ Liturgical Schedule ✠✠✠
January - December 2009

- JAN 1** - (Thursday) **CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD; ST. BASIL THE GREAT**
(No Services at SS Peter & Paul**)**
- JAN 6** - (Tuesday) **THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER** Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- FEB 2** - (Monday) **PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- MAR 4, 11, 18, 25 / APR 1** - (Wednesdays) **PRE-SANCTIFIEDS**, 7 PM
- MAR 25** - (Wednesday) **ANNUNCIATION**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- APR 8** - (Wednesday) **PRE-SANCTIFIED 7 PM (last one)**
- APR 11** - **LAZARUS SATURDAY**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- APR 12** - (Sunday) **ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**,
Divine Liturgy & **BLESSING OF PALMS**, 10 AM
- APR 15** - **HOLY WEDNESDAY** (Holy Unction) 7 PM
- APR 16** - **HOLY THURSDAY** (Twelve Passion Gospels) 7 PM
- APR 17** - **HOLY FRIDAY** (Vespers, Taking Down From Cross) 3 PM
Lamentations at Tomb 7 PM
- APR 18** - **HOLY SATURDAY** (Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil) 9 AM
ORTHROS/PASHKAL CANON/LITURGY 11 PM
- APR 19** - **PASCHA SUNDAY** (Agape Vespers; Gospel in many languages) NOON
- MAY 28** - **HOLY ASCENSION THURSDAY**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- JUN 7** - **PENTECOST SUNDAY**, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- JUN 29** - (Monday) **SS PETER & PAUL FEAST DAY**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- JUN ?** - (Saturday/Sunday - *To Be Announced*) **CELEBRATION OF SS PETER & PAUL FEAST DAY** with His Grace Bishop Nikon; Divine Liturgy 9 AM;
Parish Meal after the Divine Liturgy
- AUG 6** - (Thursday) **HOLY TRANSFIGURATION**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- AUG 15** - (Saturday) **DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- SEP 14** - (Monday) **EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- NOV ?** - (Saturday/Sunday - *To Be Announced*) **ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM FEAST DAY** & His Grace Bishop Nikon's visit to our Sister Parish
(No Services at SS Peter & Paul**)**
- DEC 25** - (Friday) **NATIVITY**, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- DEC 31** - (Thursday) **EVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & ST BASIL THE GREAT**, Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St Basil, 6 PM