



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 ~ December 2008

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Which Child is Teaching Me?

Because God loves us
He wants to be with us here on earth
and to have us with Him forever in Heaven.

But God will never force us.
He comes to us, everyday,
not in great glory or power,
but in the weakness of a little child.

Accepting or ignoring
this offer of God's love
is for us to consider,
day by day,
moment by moment,....
incident by incident,
in every situation, good and bad...

One question for me to consider
before the day and hour of
my final breath in this world
before my eyes close
for the last time:

Have I ever sought to understand
and really embrace
the "grown-up" version
of the Orthodox Christian Faith,
or...

If I were honest with myself,
would I have to admit
that what I've chosen to respond
to and not take seriously
is the "baby" version?
Have I ignored God's offering
of love and Heaven based on
my understanding and opinions
from when I was a child?

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And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people;

for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child;

and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

-- Luke 2:8-20

### **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 - December 2008/January 2009**

**ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S FEASTDAY & HIS GRACE BISHOP NIKON'S VISIT TO OUR SISTER PARISH - DECEMBER 20 - 21 - NO SERVICES AT SS PETER & PAUL**

**NATIVITY OF CHRIST - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25TH - Divine Liturgy 10 AM**

**EVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & ST BASIL THE GREAT - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31 - Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St Basil, 6 PM**

**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**

#### **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 - 7 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**

**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!*

**ICON PLEDGES** - Due by end end of December 2008 and can be paid at any time to our treasurer, James Schaeffer. **Please note:** when returning your Icons, please return them to the Church Store. You will be given a receipt for all Icons returned. **All icons are to be returned as soon as possible.**

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** - The 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!*

**PASTORAL FUND/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!*

**CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS** - **In November:** 11 casseroles and 6 frozen turkeys (through the generosity of Virginia Daka) were delivered. 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!*

**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.

**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.

**POP TAB COLLECTION PROGRAM 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 in your tabs! Thank you*

## **Ladies Society News**

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR - Sunday, December 7**, after Divine Liturgy. Donations of new, **unused** items for the raffle are welcomed. Monetary donations are also welcomed. *Please help with your time, donations, or special talents! Thank you!*

## **General Interest**

**ADVENT WOMEN'S RETREAT AT ST STEPHEN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL** (8598 Verree Rd, Phila, PA) - **Saturday, December 13, 9:00 AM to 3:15 PM**

**Speaker:** *Matushka Olga Atty* (St Michael's Orthodox Church, Louisville, KY)

**Registration Fee:** \$10 (Youth & Students Free)

**Reservations/Questions:** *Fr Victor Gorodenchuk* at 215-745-3232 or dean@ststephenscathedral.org

**Schedule:** 9:00 AM: Divine Liturgy; 10:30 AM: Registration & Continental Breakfast; 11:30 AM-1:15 PM: 1st Session; 1:30 PM-2:15 PM: Lunch; 2:30 PM-3:15 PM: 2nd Session & Questions & Answers

**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>**

**ALBANIAN FORUM ON THE INTERNET (FORUMI SHQIPTAR)** - has a section on: Komuniteti Orthodhoks. It has extensive offerings on Orthodoxy in the Albanian language. They are divided into many themes, i.e. "The Birth of Christ," "The Church is One," a catechism and includes Fr. Thomas Hopko's entire Rainbow series.

Ne gjuhen shqipe: per te dhena informative mbi Kishen Orthodhokse, klikoni "Komuniteti Orthodhoks" ne uebsajten Forumi Shqiptar me poshte:

Theurlis: **[www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186](http://www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186)**

## **Miscellaneous**

**SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE** - Open every Sunday at 9:30 AM (one half hour before Divine Liturgy) and after Divine Liturgy until 1:30 PM

*Items available:* 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](mailto: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](mailto:aliciaj17@mac.com). *The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, **January 4**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **1/11/09**.* 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.*

**Thank You** 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 **December** Birthdays: Dn Perry Angelos, Donna Bacon, Zurab Bareladze, Marge Costa, Christina Murianka, Tatyana Nilova, John Palmerick, Edna Quirias, Eurania (Elaine) Quirias, Hope Vrato

*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!*

**ADDITIONS & CHANGES TO THE SS PETER & PAUL PARISH DIRECTORY** - Please be sure to make these corrections in your Parish Directory:

**Edna & Andrew Quirias** Different Phone #: 610-853-1874; **Fr Stephen Siniari** Phone #: 609-385-3757; **Viktor Skuratovskiy** Different E-mail: victorus35@comcast.net; **Andi Steffa** Phone #: 215-674-1527

**SS PETER & PAUL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD** - If you wish to have your name included in the Community Christmas Card, please see Jim Bachelor ASAP. This is a great opportunity to support your Parish! *The donation is **\$10** and the deadline is **Sunday, December 7**.*

**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!*

## **A Short Note from Matushka Irene Rachko**

*I enjoy getting the bulletin and it brought many wonderful memories when I noted your Christmas Bazaar on 12/7.*

*I remember the first bazaar, when Fr. John and I were there, when we moved into the new Church Building.*

*We enjoyed coming there for 10 years, when we lived in Bethlehem. You all were so wonderful to us. It was such a joy for us to be part of your moving process into your new Church and to see the wonderful progress you have had over the years.*

*God Bless All of You!*

*Matushka Irene Rachko*

## **Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth Elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada**

PITTSBURGH, PA [OCA Communications] -- On Wednesday, November 12, 2008, His Grace, Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth was elected Archbishop of Washington and New York and Metropolitan of All America and Canada at the 15th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America.

Metropolitan Jonah will be installed by the OCA's Holy Synod of Bishops at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC, on December 28, 2008.

May the Lord bless His Beatitude, Jonah, newly-elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada with many years of fruitful service in His Holy Vineyard.

### **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 December**

- |             |                                                             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 4  | - GreatMartyr Barbara                                       |
| December 5  | - Ven Sabbas the Sanctified                                 |
| December 6  | - St Nicholas Archbishop of Myra WonderWorker               |
| December 9  | - Conception of Holy Theotokos by Righteous Anna            |
| December 10 | - Martyr Menas; Bl John, Bl Stephen & Bl Angelina of Serbia |
| December 12 | - St Spyridon the WonderWorker                              |
| December 13 | - Ven Herman of Alaska                                      |

- December 15 - Holy Martyr Eleutherius
- December 17 - Holy Prophet Daniel & 3 Holy Youths
- December 22 - GreatMartyr Anastasia
- December 24 - Eve of Nativity; Nun Martyr Eugenia
- December 25 - Nativity of Christ
- December 26 - Synaxis of The Most Holy Theotokos
- December 27 - St Stephen Protomartyr
- December 30 - Virgin Martyr Anysia

***The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God***  
*(Commemorated December 9)*



St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married St Joachim (September 9), who was a native of Galilee.

For a long time St Anna was childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be the parents of a daughter, Who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of Her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless, as St Ambrose of Milan teaches in Chapter Two of his Commentary on Luke. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in Her mortality, and in being subject to temptation, although She committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, She would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from Her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt.

The Conception of the Virgin Mary by St Anna took place at Jerusalem. The many icons depicting the Conception by St Anna show the Most Holy Theotokos trampling the serpent underfoot.

"In the icon Sts Joachim and Anna are usually depicted with hands folded in prayer; their eyes are also directed upward and they contemplate the Mother of God, Who stands in the air with outstretched hands; under Her feet is an orb encircled by a serpent (symbolizing the devil), which strives to conquer all the universe by its power."

There are also icons in which St Anna holds the Most Holy Virgin on her left arm as an infant. On St Anna's face is a look of reverence. A large ancient icon, painted on canvas, is located in the village of Minkovetsa in the Dubensk district of Volhynia diocese. From ancient times this Feast was especially venerated by pregnant women in Russia.

~ Reading Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~  
 Icon Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Webpage



## **Liturgical Schedule** *(Tentative)*

### **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 WA-**  
**TER** 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**, Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St Basil, **6 PM**