



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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What Are We Sent Out to Do?

by Fr. John

Our liturgical year involves the circular pattern of seasons and fixed dates: always some days moveable and some days the same. So, we measure time in weeks that come before and after Pascha (the date of which changes from year to year) and note holidays like Christmas, certain other feasts of Christ, and all of the commemorations of the Virgin Mary and saints on the same day each year.



One can conclude that this pattern of mobility and consistency provides us with both inspiration and stability for one purpose: so that we might learn to do God's will, becoming "instruments of the Spirit," as is proclaimed on the feast of All Saints, celebrated on the week after Pentecost.

The day after the Sunday of All Saints we begin a fasting period that ends on the Feast of SS Peter and Paul (and so this period is called the "Saints Peter and Paul Fast"). Because Pascha fell early this year the period was rather long – lasting from June 4 to June 29). It may seem mostly like an inconvenience, unless one recognizes the value that praying and fasting seem to have in the Scriptures, especially when one is trying to figure out what to do. Here are some passages:

Ezra 8:23

So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

Nehemiah 1:4

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Daniel 9:3

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Luke 2:37

Anna was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

Acts 13:3

So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:23

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Before each Divine Liturgy, as I am preparing the bread and wine, there is a process of remembrance that takes place. We begin by identifying Jesus as the “Lamb of God” – a large piece of bread is designated in honor of Him and a smaller one for the Virgin Mary. Then the ranks of saints are organized by 9 separate pieces. Each time I mention: “the holy glorious and all-praised Apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the other holy apostles,” I always imagine that we are, or at least, can or should be among “all the other apostles,” all those who have been prepared through “prayer and fasting” to learn what they should be doing, to know what they are being “sent out” to do (which is what being an apostle literally means).

But how can we know what this might specifically mean for us?

Here perhaps the following words from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans (chapter 12) can be of some help:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

²Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

⁴For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

¹⁰love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

¹¹Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.

¹²Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.

¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

So, now having really concluded the annual cycle of the Paschal Season with the Feast of Pentecost and been prepared for the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit by the examples of of SS Peter and Paul and the other apostles, let's consider how we can become "instruments of the Spirit" each day of the year.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **SUNDAY, JULY 1: INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING.**
- **SUNDAY, JULY 8: LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROJECTS**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IN JULY.**
- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING WILL NOT MEET IN JULY.**
- **THURSDAY, JULY 19: PARISH COUNCIL MEETING at 7 PM.**
- **SUNDAY, JULY 29: CHURCH PICNIC AT CHARTWELL SWIM CLUB.** See info below.

HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS CONFERENCE: Fr John will be attending the **Annual Statewide Conference for Hospice Volunteers on Saturday, July 14, 2018**, at Rutgers University-Piscataway (sponsored by the *Home Care and Hospice Association of NJ*).

He will also be presenting two "break out classes" on the topic:

"The Very Thought of You: Understanding and Sharing the Lives of Those We Care For."

Great Vespers will be cancelled that day.

ICON PLAN COMMITTEE: See Fr. John if you are interested in participating in a Committee that will explore and develop an iconographic plan for the outside and interior of our church.

CHURCH PICNIC: *SUNDAY JULY 29 from 1:00-6:00*

at the **Chartwell Swim Club, 136 Paragon Ave., Marlton, NJ.**

Tickets are: \$35.00 for adults / children under 18 are free.

Meal includes: Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, BBQ Chicken, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, Lemonade & Water, Watermelon.

(Rain Date: Sunday August 26).

Please respond to the "Sign Up Genius" email or talk to Jessica Siragusa for more information.

ST. HELENA'S GUILD: The Guild **will not** be meeting in July, but please set aside the following dates for Fall Festival preparation:

*August 17 & 18 - Pierogies Sessions
Sept 14 & 15 - Stuffed Cabbage Sessions
Sept 18 - Borscht Session*

THE INREACH/OUTREACH COMMITTEE will be sponsoring during the *Dormition Fast* (from July 29-August 19) a collection of new baby items to benefit the *Helpers of God's Precious Infants*.

WOMAN2WOMAN ACTIVITIES:

- **Tuesday, July 10:** Special luncheon road trip to *Peddler's Village, PA*. What could be better than eating and shopping? We'll meet at the Skuby's at 11:30 and caravan to a popular Peddler's Village restaurant. Please RSVP by **Sunday, July 8** so that cars and reservations can be arranged.
- **Wednesday, July 18, 6:00 p.m.:** Dinner at *Prospector's Restaurant* (followed by their usual Wednesday night line dancing for those interested). Please RSVP as soon as possible, as we will need a group reservation.
- **Thursday, July 26, 12:00 noon:** Regular monthly ladies' luncheon, at *Marco's Restaurant* (Indian Springs Country Club), Marlton. Please RSVP by Tuesday, July 24.

Contact: **Genie Skuby** at 856 802 1664 or skubydoo81@comcast.net

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: **Thursday, June 2, 2018 by Phyllis Prichard.**

Treasurer's Report- The Report separated income and restricted funds. It was noted that the OCA assessment is current through June, however, we are still short two monthly payments, but are in discussion with the Diocese over the months. Mark noted that a \$3,000 deposit has been paid to the concrete contractor, Brunetti, for the ramp repair project. St. Helena's Guild has donated \$3,000 towards this project.

The account balances for **June** are as follows:

General Fund \$23,942.03, **Memorial Fund** \$49,671.13,
Capital Improvement Fund \$48,937.51, **Food Coupon Fund** \$6,808.12,
Choir Fund \$4,039.48, **Father's Supplemental Checking** \$470.60,
Fundraising Account \$1,623.94

The **Mortgage Balance** as of 6/19/18 was \$83,989.07

Servant Keeper- Michelle is working on downloading version 8.

Open Items:

- **Investment options for parish accounts status-Mark/Greg-** Greg is just waiting for signatures.
- **Parish By-Laws- Father John/Mark-** We have received the Diocesan review of our By-Laws. Fr. John and Mark will present this to the Council at our next Meeting.
- **Exterior siding/concrete ramp project status-Mark-** Brunetti was given the \$3,000 deposit and will get back to Mark next week with a start date.
- **Parking lot sealing/repairs-** pavement job has begun, but we will hold off completion until the ramp project is done.
- **Iconographic plan status-Father John/Mark-** Fr. John reviewed the recent discussion he had with the iconographer, Seraphim O'Keefe about the icon of the "Encounter with Jesus on the Way to Emmaus" that he proposes to be placed in the area towards the church entrance. He had also sent the Council a preliminary study of an icon plan that had been prepared by Deacon Evan Freeman. An Icon Plan Committee is being established to continue this conversation and make recommendations.
- **Adult Education-Father John/ Ed-** Ed is looking at dates in September/October for a Bible Study.
- **Exterior lighting-**Phyllis will give Mark the contact info for the electrician, "Thor."
- **Landscaping plan-**Father John has been in discussion with the Landscaping Committee on the area near the front doors of the church. This should be completed shortly.

Old Business

- **Custodial cleaning services-**Tom Gibbons has accepted the position. Pay will remain the same. There is no need at this time to pursue other quotes.
- **Parish directory-**Completed and distributed, copies are in the vestibule.
- **Fall festival-**(September 22nd) - first meeting was held on June 10th. Next meeting will be held in July. Val Olesnovich will Co-Chair the event. The Festival Committee decided the time will be 11-8pm and if any food is left over it will be sold to Parishioners on Sunday. There was more discussion on signage, music and vendors for the festival.

New Business/Parish Committee Updates

- **In-reach/outreach-**Diana Pasca reported: The Committee's regular activities continue: monthly food preparation for the Community Luncheon, Mt. Holly; weekly pickup of food from Wawa's (Rt 70) and delivery to the Community Luncheon; a discussion at the last Meeting considered starting a Book Club that would begin this fall, more information and a sign-up to determine interest will be circulated in July; during the Dormition Fast (August 1-15) a collection of newborn baby items will take place for the *Helpers of God's Precious Infants*.
- **St. Helena's Guild-**The Guild met on June 3rd. As of the end of April there was a balance of \$19,977.51. Of that amount, \$4,140. is in reserve, with \$15,837.51 working funds. The Guild voted to donate \$250.00 to Covenant House, earmarked to the Camden location. The Paschal donation will be \$3,000, earmarked for the ramp repairs. Food prep sessions: August 17/18 Pierogi session, September 7/8 stuffed cabbage, September 18th borscht. Fall holiday bazaar will be November 10th. Regarding the festival, help with the flyers etc the same as last year.
- **Youth Activities-**Church picnic-July 29th.

- **Stewardship Pledges**- Mark Skuby will follow up.
- **Women 2 Women-Father John/Mark**- Fr. John will discuss with the Woman2Woman Group the possibility of offering a regular Akathist Service.
- **New social hall tables**- The Council agreed to replace the old brown tables in the social hall.
- **Graduation**-The Church will give each 2018 graduates in the Church \$100.00 along with an Orthodox Bible. (3) Graduates: Jacob Kupersmith, Lauren Mosser, and Alexandra Plachuta. Phyllis Pritchard made a motion to accept. Joe Pritchard seconded.
- **Golf Outing**-The Church will sponsor a hole for \$100.00. Joe Pritchard made a motion to accept. Ed Siecienski seconded.
- **Covenant House**-Phyllis talked about Sleep Out opportunities. More information to come.
- **Several pews require some maintenance**: this will be reviewed.

Upcoming Events

- **All-American Council**- St. Louis, July 23-27 (Fr. John and Mark will attend)
- **Church Picnic**- July 29th
- **Baptism of Charlotte Skuby/Chassen**- Mark and Genie’s granddaughter will take place at our church on August 25th at 11am with a reception following in the social hall. All are invited.
- **Diocesan Youth Day - Aladdin Show**-August 22nd
- **Golf Outing**-Last Friday in September
- **Pierogi session**-August 17th/18th
- **Stuffed cabbage session**- September 7th/8th
- **Borscht session**-September 18th
- **Paul Denko’s wedding**- July 15, 2018.

Next Meeting- The next Council meeting - **Thursday, July 19th**

COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENTS:

July 2 Team Diana P. & Tanya M. / July 9 Team Maric C. & Anna Marie P.
 July 16 Team Liz G. & Alexandra L. / July 23 Team Ann P. & Carol Ann C.
 July 30 Team Lessie L. & Ellie K. / August 6* Team Kathie P. & Andrea B.

* Denotes Fasting Period

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Coming Up This Summer: “*The Nine Songs – 2017-2018 Youth Sermons*” booklet with youth activity photos. Each family will receive one copy – additional ones can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – JULY, 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|--|--------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 <i>Community Luncheon – 9 AM</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i> |
| 8 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i> | 9 | 10 <i>Woman2Woman to Peddlar's Village</i> | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 <i>NO Great Vespers:</i> |
| 15 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i> <i>Wedding of Paul Denko & Patricia Haaf – 1:00</i> | 16 | 17 | 18 <i>Woman2Woman Dinner at Prospector's Restaurant 6:00</i> | 19 <i>Parish Council Meeting – 7 PM</i> | 20 | 21 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i> |
| 22 <i>DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00</i> | 23 <i>Fr. John and Mark Skuby at the All-American Council in St. Louis (7/23-27)</i> | 24 | 25 | 26 <i>Woman2Woman Lunch at Marco's Restaurant (Noon)</i> | 27 | 28 <i>NO Great Vespers:</i> |
| 29 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—9:00</i> <i>Church Picnic at Chartwell Swim Club (1:00-6:00)</i> <i>Collection of new baby items</i> | 30 | 31 | 1 August | 2 | 3 | 4 <i>NO Great Vespers:</i> |

