



THE PARISH PRESS



St. Philip Orthodox Church

FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS OF THE AMERICAN SAINTS: FIND SOLITUDE

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING UPDATES

The **Sunday School** collected 139 boxed and canned items for Manna on Main Street to distribute to needy families for Thanksgiving! Many thanks to all! **MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION:** In December, we are focusing on our **Christmas Giving Tree**, but feel free to bring in other items for the bin in the narthex as well.



THE FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP has been a success. Thanks for returning your pledge. God bless you and all our faithful stewards!

May God bless all our faithful givers!



CHRISTMAS CARDS TO THE ST PHILIP'S FAMILY

As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Saviour's birth, it has become the custom of our parish to help various Orthodox monastic communities, missionary situations and charitable services. This is accomplished by asking members to forego sending cards to many within our St. Philip's family, and to send just one card to the entire church community; taking the savings from the cost of cards and postage, and enclosing a contribution which will be distributed among these groups. All cards will be displayed. Cards can be mailed to the Church or placed in the offering basket.

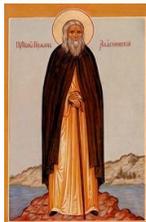


A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
I think that many of us consider this fasting period to be an inconvenience, but I'd like to challenge you all to consider it a refuge, a joy, and a blessing. It is a refuge from the materialism, self-centeredness, and instant-demand attitude of the world. It is a joy because it teaches us to take joy in the abiding realities of life, rather than the transitory and imperfect pleasures of the world. It is a blessing in that it gives us the blessing of obedience to Christ and solidarity with the entire church. Let us redeem this time, not let it slip through our fingers, by prayer, fasting, almsgiving, confession, and reading the scriptures.

Your Servant in Christ,

+ Fr. Noah



Walking in the Steps of the American Saints FIND SOLITUDE

Let this little glimpse into the life of St Herman of Alaska, commemorated on December 13, inspire you in finding solitude:

Some pilgrims went to Spruce Island to visit Elder Herman. They approached the chapel and were surprised to hear a multitude of sweet voices singing harmoniously. They opened the door into the little chapel, and there Father Herman stood alone reading, chanting half aloud. It was angels of God who sang praises to the Lord with him. Later, they asked him: "How do you live alone in the forest, Father Herman? Don't you become bored?" He replied: "No! I am not alone there! God is there, as God is everywhere. Holy Angels are there. How can one become bored with them?"

Mark Your Calendar:

Matushka Olga Sewing Club

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Learn or teach, work on your own project or on projects for those in need. All welcome.

Book Study led by Fr James

Wednesdays, following Akathist through December 19

Nativity Fast continues until Dec 25.

Advent Paraklesis

Mondays & Fridays in the fast, 7 p.m.

Services for Saint Nicholas:

Wednesday, December 5

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7:00 p.m. (followed by youth activity)

Thursday, December 6

Matins 9 a.m., Liturgy 10 a.m.

Christmas Program

Rehearsal: Saturday, Dec 22, 4 p.m.

Program: Sunday, Dec 23

Services for Christmas

Monday, Dec 24

Royal Hours 9 a.m.

Vesperal Divine Liturgy 10 a.m.

Matins 7 p.m., Divine Liturgy 8 p.m.

Tuesday, December 25

Vespers 12 Noon

Wednesday, Dec 26 (*Synaxis of the Theotokos*)

Matins 9 a.m., Liturgy 10 a.m.

Services for Circumcision & St Basil

Monday, December 31

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 p.m.

Followed by fellowship & talent show

Tuesday, January 1

Matins 9 a.m., Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Services for Theophany

Saturday, January 5 - *Strict Fast Day*

Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water 10 a.m.,

Vespers & Artoklasia 6 p.m.

Sunday, January 6

Matins 9 a.m., Liturgy, 10 a.m.

- Great Blessing of Water

Sunday, January 13

Outdoor Blessing of Water,

1 p.m. - Lake Lenape Park



CHALLENGE FOR 2012: Celebrate the Great Feasts!

Nativity of our Lord, December 25

CHALLENGE FOR 2013: Show up before Liturgy to sing the Great Doxology!

Did You Know?

- **Holly Vergara**, teaching in Japan, writes that she attends the nearby Orthodox Church in Nagoya and recently also attended a baptism. Holly hopes to return to the U.S. and be here for Pascha, 2013.



- **Elisa McGraw**, a former member of St Philip's, will be married to Jeremy Pry here at St Philip's on Saturday, December 29, at 10:30 a.m. A cake reception follows. **All are invited!** If you plan to attend, please visit <http://wedding.jeremypry.com/the-wedding/> to **RSVP by Dec 15.** (If you do not have internet access, call Vicki McGraw at 610-458-9053.)
- The Sunday School will sing **Christmas Carols at Elm Terrace Nursing Home** on Sunday December 16th at 3 p.m. Please talk to Kh. Elizabeth about participating.
- Join the church community for a **New Year's Eve Talent Show** following the 7 p.m. Vespers and Artoklasia for the feast of the Circumcision of Christ on Monday, December 31st. Speak to Sandy Miller if you would like to display some talent.
- During the **Nativity Fast** (Nov 15-Dec 24) we should be fasting, attending more church services, praying more, giving more alms, reading a spiritual book, and limiting our "screen time." Also, plan to make your confession early on.
- The **Altar Boys**, under the direction of **Abay Tadesse**, are very numerous, and the altar is overcrowded. Probably beginning in January, we will try breaking them into two teams that will serve every other Sunday.
- The **St. Nina Prayer Network** continues to pray for any special requests. Please speak to Celia Marie with a desire to join or with a prayer request.
- Your **attendance** at the services, your **participation** in the ministries, your **pledge**, and your **prayers** are important to the life of our parish.
- Have your checked out the **saintly biographies** available in narthex in the mobile library?
- **People's lives have been changed** by being invited and brought to church.
- It is a good idea to **plan ahead for the end of your life.** Where will your body be laid to rest? Do you have a will, including a portion to the church? Are your wishes regarding extreme-medical measures known by your family?
- **Proverbs** – The righteous gives and does not hold back. (Proverbs 21:26)
- The kingdom of heaven is not a reward for works, but a **gift of grace** prepared by the Master for His faithful servants. Are you a faithful servant?
- If you spend less money on gifts, entertainment, food, etc., you'll have more to give in **alms, special projects, and stewardship.**
- **Brushing your teeth** before Divine Liturgy is a courtesy to those with whom you will be praying. If are preparing to receive Holy Communion, be sure not to swallow!
- **Email ListServe** – Are you missing important information about the parish? Send an email (from the account where you want to **receive St. Philip emails**) to stphilip-request@comcor.net with the word **subscribe** in the subject or message. You will receive an email confirmation and instructions from the server.



Ask Abouna

Previous Question: Father James, how did you become Orthodox and become a priest?

Answer: I was baptized and confirmed as an Episcopalian. (If any of you know the Main Line at all, these took place at the Church of the Good Shepherd on Lancaster Pike in Rosemont.) I tried to be a faithful Episcopalian well into the 1970's, but more and more I felt the church was drifting away from its Catholic and Apostolic roots. Even more shocking to me was the unchecked rise in heresy on the part of bishops (the very heirs of the Apostolic office!), first with Bishop Pike's denial of the Trinity and, later, Bishop Spong's denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ. Neither of these bishops came under any disciplinary measures and, along with the ordination of women, toleration of abortion and homosexuality, abandonment of their beautiful Book of Common Prayer, the church in a very short time seemed to have become something very different from the church of the Oxford Movement, T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis.

When I moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1994 I decided to attend an Orthodox church. I was first introduced to Orthodoxy when I studied Russian as an undergraduate. One of my friends from Indiana University used to take some of his friends to Orthodox services in and around Bloomington, Indiana--he went on to St. Vladimir's Seminary and has been a priest in the OCA for over thirty years. But it wasn't until I finally concluded that the Episcopal Church was never going to "return" that I seriously looked at alternatives. The Roman Catholic Church, particularly after Vatican II, has never appealed to me, either doctrinally or liturgically.



When I then entered an Orthodox church (St. Anthony's Antiochian Church) in this frame of mind in 1994, it seemed a perfect fit. In retrospect I wondered why I took so long in choosing this, the true church, one that has been faithful to the Gospel and the apostolic faith, faithful to the teachings of the Councils and the Fathers of the Church, and one that has preserved its beautiful and ancient liturgies and music.

After I was chrismated in 1995, I spent some years familiarizing myself with the spiritual and liturgical life of the church. I entered the St Stephen's course of study in 1998 and, as I studied and lived the Orthodox life more and more, felt drawn more and more to ordained ministry. In 2001 I was ordained a deacon and, after I retired from teaching at Oklahoma State University in 2003, was ordained to the priesthood and was sent to pastor a mission in Rapid City, SD, and a parish in Gillette, WY. I moved to Gillette in 2005 to pastor that church exclusively, which I did until my retirement in 2012. As many of you know I moved back to Southeastern Pennsylvania to be nearer my family and also to be a part of the St. Philip's family, a spiritual family that has made me feel very welcome and loved. God is great!

New Question: Fr Boniface, how is the mission in Delaware doing?

