



THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church



SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "CHOOSE LIFE"

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING UPDATES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **January**, we are collecting **Oral Care Products**.

NON-PERISHABLE FOOD COLLECTION: We continue to collect non-perishables of all kinds for the food pantries.

FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

"One Body In Christ"

We now have 88 pledges totaling \$252,160 for 2019. Glory to God!

Your Faithfulness in Tithing, Hospitality, and Ministry are essential to keeping our church strong, warm, and effective!

We should all be striving towards 10% Tithe, Co-Hosting Coffee Hour twice each year, and helping with least one regular parish ministry. The least we can do in response to God's generosity toward us!

Future St Nicholas House - Update

Two Different Matching Grants have been offered. Thanks to God and to our generous parishioners we are well on our way toward fulfilling them but we can't do it without your prayers. An appraiser will be evaluating the property to give us a starting point for the negotiation of a selling price. Thanks for your generosity, prayers, and support!



Holy Mysteries

Baby Nathaniel, son of Addisu Samuel and Haymanot Menkiras, was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on Dec 1.

Maria (Rebecca) Jekel was Chrismated on Dec 16 at St. Philip.

MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!

A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Christ is Baptized! Let us be illumined with Him!

A new civil year is upon us! How can we make this year as blessed and joyous as possible?

I have a hope and a prayer and a little plan to try to "speak less, speak life." By God's grace I hope to talk less and make my words bring only God's love, light, and life! Please pray for me for this. I hope you have a spiritual resolution to bring God's grace into your life.

As we head into this new year, let me share a few new developments in our parish to be aware of:

+ **St. Nicholas House** & the new **"Ushers" ministry** — See the separate article on both of these signs of growth in our parish for which I'm thankful!

+ **Fr James** — He will be setting aside more time to assist me and minister to the parish, including increased availability for confessions (and I commend him to you as a wise confessor and a generous spiritual father), visitations, and other pastoral duties.

+ Most of us have met **Fr Dennis Rhodes**, newly retired to Souderton from his OCA parish ministry in Philly and Connecticut. He has no pastoral duties with our parish but his presence has been a blessing for us, as the other retired priests whose assistance and love and prayers we appreciate!

+ **Subdeacon David** — He will be working half-time as my "pastoral assistant," to assist with liturgical services, to support and develop ministries, and to do other projects as needed. Ministry coordinators, David will be in touch with you regarding your needs. I have the goal that each member of our parish will exercise their "royal priesthood" by having a regular ministry in our parish.

+ **Office Transition** — Fr Herman has started full-time at St. Andrew in Lewes, DE. Kh. Vera will be wrapping up her work here shortly after Pascha and is in full-swing of training, finishing projects, and preparing for a smooth transition for Celia-Marie in the office and Justin on the publications.

+ **Our website** has gotten a new facelift and its re-organization is underway! Thanks to all who participated in our communications survey!

In Jesus Christ, our Life,
+Fr. Noah

Mark Your Calendar

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Friday, February 1

Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm,
Orthros 7 pm

Saturday, February 2

Divine Liturgy w/Candle blessing 10 am
Festal Potluck after Liturgy

Lenten Triodion

Publican & Pharisee - February 17

Prodigal Son - February 24

Sunday of Judgment (Meatfare) - Mar 3

Forgiveness Sunday,

Mar 10 - Forgiveness Vespers 1 pm

Great Lent Begins

Monday, March 11 - Clean Monday

Lenten Retreat

March 30, 2019

We live Pascha to Pascha!

April 28, 2019



Home Blessings

Tis the Season for Home Blessings!

Sign up sheet is in the Narthex with

the availabilities of both Fr. Noah and Fr. James. Please text/email them to confirm a date and time.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, January 19, 8-10 am

Breakfast at church..
"Cultivating Peace"

Did You Know?

- New Ministry – **Ushers** – providing structure and security with sincere hospitality for all who worship here, at the direction of Fr Noah. This is being developed by David H and Steve K who are looking for kind, assertive, prayerful, and sacrificial parishioners to staff 8 teams to serve every two months. There will be training and support.
- You can offer **Altar Candles** in thanksgiving to and for the glory of God. A sign-up sheet is on the Ministries bulletin board.
- As we enter the New Year, we are in need of **Coffee Hour Sponsors**. Enlist the help of a friend, and sign up! Keep it simple. **Finger foods foster fellowship!**
- Stay connected with parish life by synching with our calendar on **Google Calendar**. See <https://www.st-philip.net/calendar.html> for instructions on how to add the parish calendar to your own device.

Spiritual Warfare:

Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ

“Choose Life”

Much more than a slogan, this is God’s message to humanity and his chosen people from the beginning and throughout all time:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you today life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life! ... (Deut 30.19)

Israel’s choice—the second generation after the exodus, that is, their parents having *died in the wilderness*—is the same as that given to Adam & Eve: Two trees, one choice (Gen 2-3). You choose, Life or Death?

The irony for us, however, is that choosing life now requires choosing to die—*daily*—in and with Christ, being crucified to the world so that our lives can be raised unto life, in Christ who is Life (Jn 14.6).

How do we choose life in our ...?

- + Words: *Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a protecting door about my lips (Ps 140.3)*
- + Thoughts: *Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth (Col 3.2)*
- + Actions: *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from all evil (Prov 3.7)*
- + Decisions: *Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God (Ps 142.10)*

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

“How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation.” (Ps 118:97)

What is Scripture?

Icon, Sacrament, Script

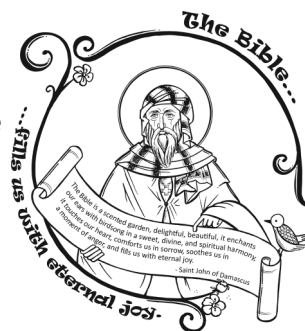
As we begin our Scriptural memorization plan for this year and into the future, it is important to reflect on what Scripture in fact is for us as Orthodox Christians, and thus what it means for us to “read” and “interpret” Scripture.

The Latin-based word “*scripture*,” just as the Greek word *γραφῆ* (*graphē*), can denote any “representation by means of lines,” such as a drawing, painting, writing, and in a religious context, sacred writings. Indeed, the Church Fathers’ preferred term for Scripture is “the divine Scripture[s]” (ἡ θεῖα Γραφή)—a collection of written representations about God, by God, from God, which we are to meditate on, love, and imitate, as the Psalmist says above.

Icon—St. Irenaeus, the 2nd century Bishop of Lyons, famously described Scripture as a mosaic with each part—each Testament, each book, each word & syllable—comprising one tile or set of tiles that contribute to the whole portrait of Christ the King. It is the “Rule of Faith” that gives us as Orthodox the pattern to assemble this Image rightly, and not end up with the image of a fox (as the heretics).

Sacrament—Similar to Icon, saying that Scripture is a Sacrament emphasizes two things: first, that the words (*logoi*) of Scripture participate in and are a medium for Personal encounter with the Logos, the Word, Christ Himself; and second, that this encounter is a means of deifying grace whereby Christ instructs us and heals us according to His own Image.

Script—Scripture is a record of the drama of salvation history, but the true meaning of Scripture is in how we as the Church, by the power of the Spirit, embody the Biblical story in our personal and corporate life now. And that’s the hard part—faithfully playing our role in the ongoing drama of Scripture. But we must first read to know the script!



St. Philip Ministry Highlights

w/ Sdn David Hyatt

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
1 Peter 4:10

As a part of my responsibilities as the Pastoral Assistant, Fr. Noah has asked me to encourage, support and help to better organize the various ministries in which many of you are serving. I am delighted to serve alongside of you in this way!

When I was in seminary, almost 20 years ago, I had a professor who had a unique saying about being a Christian who ministers/serves. He said, “**Your choosing is your calling.**” What did he mean? His point was that if you

are one of the “chosen” by Christ, a Christian, then you are also automatically “called” to serve Him!



In 1 Peter 4:7-11, the Apostle gave instructions in light of “the end of all things” to be “*serious and watchful in your prayers,*” with “*fervent love... hospitality...without grumbling.*” Sounds wonderful, right? But St. Peter didn’t stop with prayerful, loving hospitality. He continues,

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

So, what is the “gift” that you are called to put to use to the glory of God? Perhaps you know and are already putting it to good use, if so, I hope to encourage and support you in your continued ministry. If you are not sure, I’d love to visit with you to explore how you might put your “gift” to use within the parish.

Fr. Noah has given us a goal of “every steward has a ministry.” Let’s work together toward this goal to the glory of God, for the building up of our church and the salvation of our souls!