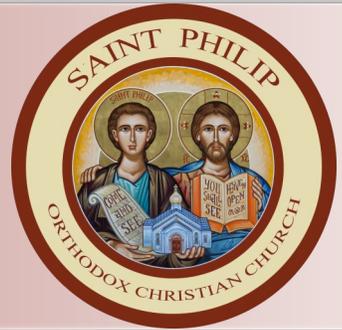


THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church

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NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES!

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.

ST NICHOLAS HOUSE - UPDATE

Glory to God for the Saint Nicholas House! We bought it for the land to prepare for "Phase Three" expansion, but the house itself is a place for expanded ministry, prayer, meetings, and hospitality and retreat. We hope to glorify God and honor St Nicholas with it. The extra storage in the garage is a needed bonus!

Thanks to the many parish council members and parishioners who put in some elbow grease to prepare it for my father's funeral!

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP UPDATES:

To-be-tonsure-reader **Nicholas Morelli** is coordinating the epistle readers, which will primarily be done by readers and subdeacons. Thanks to outgoing-coordinator **Brian Fitzgerald** for his excellence in organization and communication!



Challenge for 2020: "Living the Liturgy"

As much as we go to church to be with family and to have fellowship with Christian friends, the much deeper reason is that **we are seeking to be shaped and formed by the worship of the Church itself**. Our lives are to be fulfilled in the Liturgy, such that they become an extension of the Liturgy—a continual preparation for and a continual response to and sending from the divine worship of the Church.

When we grasp this, we begin to see **how the life of the Christian and the worship of the Church are essentially evangelical**. That is, together they form the proclamation of the Gospel, that people can find and experience the very purpose for which they were created—**communion with the Triune God**.

A Message from Fr. Noah

Dear St. Philip's Family,
Christ is born! Glorify Him!

I thank God for you each day. Our parish is a "priest's dream" in so many ways. I'm especially tender-hearted because of the generous meals and gifts and faithful friendship and prayers that my family experienced during my dad's illness, living with us, and especially at his death and burial. We had lots of babysitting, meals, prayers, emotional support, moving-large-supplies, household fix-it, and even nursing and burial assistance. I am deeply humbled and grateful! I have never felt so weak and yet so strong, so alone and yet so loved, so despairing and yet so hopeful, so sinful and yet so forgiven!

As we are moving into a new year I want to invite you into a deeper life in Christ: in prayer, repentance, in reading Scripture and the saints, in the sacraments and the services, in ministry and generosity, in hospitality and almsgiving, and in missions and evangelism.

Choose one of these areas to dedicate this new year to and discuss it with me or Fr James at your house blessing.

Why not be saints? Why not turn the world upside down? Why not do God's will on earth as it is in heaven?!

Lord, help us!

In Christ,
+Fr. Noah



UPDATING THE Photo Directory

to encourage unity, fellowship, and ministry at St. Philip

Please submit your updated family photo, address, emails, and telephone numbers to: **stphilipphotos20@gmail.com**

You may also submit a printed photo for the directory. We will have a section for Stewards, and another for Friends. See Dale Yeager, Colin Miller, or Sdn David Hyatt with any questions.

Mark Your Calendar:

Bp THOMAS Visit
January 9-14, 2020

March For Life
January 24, 2020

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Saturday, February 1
Vespers & Artoklasia
w/ Candle Blessing, 6 pm

Sunday, February 2
Orthros 8:30 am
Baptismal Liturgy (Jekel) 9:45 am
w/ Chrismation (Zach Willits)

Lenten Triodion

Publican & Pharisee - February 9
Prodigal Son - February 16
Sunday of Judgment (Meatfare) - Feb 23

Forgiveness Sunday

March 1 - Forgiveness Vespers 1 pm

Great Lent Begins

Monday, March 2 - Clean Monday

Lenten Retreat

March 28, 2020

We live Pascha to Pascha!

April 19, 2020

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, January 11 @ 8 am

Breakfast with Bp THOMAS

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.



Ministry Together

w/ Sdn David Hyatt

"Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." (1 Timothy 3:8-9)



God willing, on January 12th, two men from our parish will be tonsured as Readers, two ordained as Subdeacons, and I will be ordained to the Holy Diaconate. Christ, through His Church, chooses men at times to a greater degree of service – not because they are great, but because He is great in mercy and “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:3-4).

The qualifications for a deacon (διάκονος, “servant”) set forth by St. Paul prescribe the character of one who would be chosen for the office. Why? Because he is to be entrusted to a greater degree with the administration of the Mysteries of Christ in His Church under the bishop and priest. And as Jesus said, “to whom much is given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48).

If we look closely, however, these character traits are not exceptional. Reverent or pious, honest, sober, not greedy or content, pure in conscience. Do these not describe all who are of Christ? Shouldn't we all aspire to this way of life? Yet, who among us can say that we live this way all the time?

When considering the extravagant grace and mercy of God, and the invitation to live in the reality of the righteousness of Christ Jesus, St. Paul writes,

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.... but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:13-14)

Join me in making every effort to “forget” the old, sinful self, and “press on” toward the new life, so that together we might serve the glorious Kingdom of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

Gifts for David Hyatt:

In lieu of personal gifts on his ordination, David has asked for help with the purchase of vestments, missionary work, and a trip to Mount Athos. *Please make a donation with a memo "Ordination Gift."*

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST

is extended to Fr. Noah & family upon the repose of his dad, **Michael Bush**, who passed away on December 15. The funeral was held at St. Nicholas House on December 21.



MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

Did You Know?

- 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!**
- Your offering of “classic” olive oil (not virgin or especially not extra-virgin) for the Altar candelabrum is greatly appreciated. You can put your bottles under the icon of St. Thekla on the north/left of the iconostasis with prayer requests.
- Your gift to the **Camp Scholarship Fund** supports the spiritual formation and education of our youth.
- We are blessed a **beautiful choir!** Please consider joining—**women singers are especially needed!**
- 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.
- **Our Library** has a great selection of many topics related to our Holy Faith. We are looking for someone to be our **parish librarian**.

Evangelism Challenge

“Pray for Orthodox Missionaries”

When Christ sent out the Seventy, He sent them to places that He Himself was about to go with these words:

“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

That command to prayer is still relevant today! Salvation is God's great work of re-creation, and He invites us to participate with Him in this work. The vast majority of us will never work as full-time missionaries in other countries, but that does not mean we cannot **partner with God by interceding for His laborers** and asking that more would be called to go.

The call to missions is a difficult path: missionaries serve on the front lines of the kingdom facing opposition and attack of all kinds. But even more than that, the daily reality of a missionary entails a separation from friends, family, and all that is familiar, to work in a foreign country with the task of incarnating Christ to people while speaking a different language and living in a different culture, having setting aside the rights and privileges they have in their home countries to become foreigners for the sake of the Gospel.

Begin the new year by **praying for Orthodox missionaries**, that they would be encouraged, emboldened, and empowered for the good work of spreading the good news to every tongue, tribe, and nation. Visit <http://ocmc.org> to learn more about the missionaries sent out by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, sign up to receive their newsletters, and pray for them as you would for your own family members.

“Making a Defense”:

Explorations in Orthodox Apologetics

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, PART 2

Last month we reflected on the “problem of evil,” focusing on the Orthodox understanding of *free will* as the source of “evil,” and a *privation account* of “evil”—that evil has no “substance,” but is rather the absence of the good.

Let us turn, now, to the relationship between God's providence and the reality of “evil.” How is it that God would allow evil in the world? Does this not suggest either a limitation on God's part or perhaps even a malevolence?

Perhaps a helpful way to enter this conundrum is through one of the prayers during the Anaphora in the Divine Liturgy:

In the same night in which He was betrayed, or rather in which He gave Himself up for the life of the world ...

Which statement is true? Did Judas perpetrate an act of terrible evil against Christ, or did Christ willingly give Himself up? Of course the answer is, *Yes (both) and*.

This reflects the Orthodox understanding of *divine providence* in a nutshell. In His infinite providence and power, God is able both to grant humans true freedom of will (and action)

and to work in and through those evil actions to bring about His good plan, without God Himself being the *cause* of evil.

The 6th century Christian philosopher and saint, Severinus (Boethius), famously discusses this question in Book V of his *Consolation of Philosophy*. There he evokes a distinction between *providence* and *previdencia*. God's knowledge is not bound by time, thus properly speaking, we should not think that God sees or knows things *before* (*pre*) they happen (which might imply that He is either the cause of or a passive victim to our free choices). Rather, as He is eternal, He sees all things *before* (*pro*) Him, i.e., *in front of* Him, such that all time and history is immediately present to Him as one reality.

In other words, we must not think that God's ways are our ways (cf. Rom 11:33ff; Isa 55:8). God is not a really big version of a human being—a “big guy in the sky.” It is precisely because of God's eternal and infinite goodness, knowledge, and power, and because there is nothing *evil in itself* (an evil “substance”), that God is not limited or constrained in His dealings with the world. God's goodness is in all things if we come to know how to receive them rightly, as directed by His loving, Fatherly providence for our salvation and eternal life.

