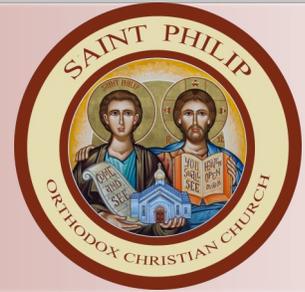


THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church

VOL. 22.02 — FEBRUARY 2021



Mark Your Calendar:

Special Thursday Liturgies

- ✦ Feb 17th for St. Theodore
- ✦ Feb 23rd for St. Polycarp
- ✦ Mar 4th for St. Gerasimos
- ✦ Mar 9th for 40 Martyrs of Sebaste

Lenten Triodion

Publican & Pharisee - February 21

Prodigal Son - February 28

Sunday of Judgment (Meatfare) - Mar 7

Forgiveness Sunday

March 14 - Forgiveness Vespers 1 pm

Great Lent Begins

Monday, March 15 - Clean Monday

Start preparing for the fast now! Plan out your increased prayers, church attendance, confession, fasting, almsgiving, inviting someone to church, etc.

Feast of the Annunciation

Wednesday, March 24

Vespers & Artoklasia 6:30 p.m.
Orthros 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 25

Liturgy 10 am
(fish, wine, oil permitted)

We live Pascha to Pascha!

May 2, 2021

Holy Mysteries

Fr. Dcn. Luke (Jeff) Carpenter was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on Wednesday, February 3, by His Grace Bp THOMAS. Many more blessed years & profitable ministry!

Jonathan Elias Zampino was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on Thursday, January 21.

Baby Herman Jehel was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on Sunday, January 10.

MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!



OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST

is offered to the **Elias Neno and Yvonne Ulrich and families** upon the passing of their mother, **Victoria** in Bethlehem in Palestine, on December 23.

& to **Damien Kovalenko & family** on the recent passing of his mother, **Lydia**.

& to **John Ferguson** on the recent passing of his mother, **Doris**.

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!



A Message from Fr. Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Christ is born, baptized, and ever in our midst!

Here are things I am thankful for, as we are celebrating the Lord's Presentation in the Temple, and fittingly a White Christmas that came with gusto for the close of the Nativity Festal cycle.

Despite the upheaval of society due to the pandemic and the political arena, our church is blessed:

- Fr Dn Luke Carpenter's ordination. What a blessing to work with a humble man and share the joys of ministry and liturgical service with him. The ordination was truly a gift of grace for our parish, especially with Bishop THOMAS's visit.

- We are blessed with wonderful clergy and young men growing in ministry and discerning their calling to serve the Lord.

- We are celebrating more services than ever before, the choir, clergy, ushers, teachers, etc., working with me creatively and with flexibility so as not to lose ground despite the restrictions and distance.

- We have made good progress with the St Nicholas House, which is home to an iconography studio.

- We are planning for a major expansion, to "right size" our temple, kitchen, great room, classrooms, meeting rooms, parking lot, and hopefully add an outdoor chapel/pavilion.

- Our stewardship has stayed strong

thanks to the good efforts of the ministry team and the generosity of our parishioners.

- We have new families, pregnant moms and new babies, engaged couples, catechumens and inquirers.

- We have a renewed effort to support the establishment of a school associated with the parish, including some very generous recent donations.

- We have upgraded our video system to continue to reach out to parishioners who aren't yet ready to come back to church.

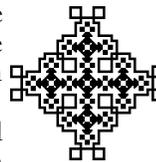
- We are reading and discussing a challenging book on how to remain true to Christ in an increasingly anti-Christian world.

- Our parish has remained strong, generally, in physical and spiritual health, thanks to our strong commitment to repentance, prayer, the sacraments, generosity, hospitality, and ministry.

I realize that I am not a very good priest—lazy, selfish, slow, distracted—and that I have not led our parish as well as I could have through the different stages of the pandemic, however all of this underscores God's great providence and mercy! Glory to Him for His love!!!

Let us be faithful to Him and to each other, despite the challenges and the differences we have about minor issues, so that all together we will glorify His holy name.

In Christ,
+Fr. Noah



NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In February, we are collecting **Paper Products**.



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

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR FAITHFUL GIVERS!

LIVE NOT BY LIES READING GROUP



Our zoom-based discussion of this timely text follows Compline on Wednesday nights, continuing until Great Lent begins. Please get this book and read it carefully and with an eye toward the practical changes we should make in our lives.

Home Blessings

Tis the Season for Home Blessings!
Please text/email either Fr. Noah or Fr. James directly to schedule a date and time to have your home blessed before Lent.

St. Philip Cemetery Notes



Burial privileges at St. Philip Orthodox Cemetery were initially defined in the Guidelines Document prepared by the Cemetery Committee in 2001. Burial privileges in these Guidelines are extended to the following groups of individuals:

1. Members of St Philip Orthodox Church in Souderton, Pennsylvania;
2. The Christian spouse or child of a member of St. Philip Church;
3. Orthodox Christians from outside St. Philip Church authorized by St. Philip Parish Priest after verifying their Orthodox background (e.g. letter from purchaser Parish Priest).
4. The Christian spouse or child of an Orthodox Christian from outside St. Philip previously authorized/verified by St. Philip Parish Priest.
5. A Memory Garden is provided near the large granite cross close to the cemetery entrance for families of St. Philip Orthodox Church who desire to place a flat marker in remembrance of a miscarried child. These half-size plots are not designated for burial purposes.

For those from Hilltown Township and adjacent areas with no other burial options, a Mercy Field has been set aside as stipulated in the final site plan approval from Hilltown Township. A process is being developed by the St. Philip Parish Priest, the local Coroner's office (Montgomery and Bucks?), and the Cemetery Committee to identify candidates for burial in this area.

Plots in St. Philip Cemetery are only to be used for burial of human remains and no cremated remains are permitted. Orthodox Christian "standard burials" are permitted in active areas of the cemetery (Founder's Field). "Standard burials" are burials where vaults, caskets and embalming are used. Orthodox Christian "simple burials" are confined to a specific subsection of the Northern Section of the cemetery. "Simple burials" are where: no vaults are used; only decomposable caskets, shrouds, or baskets are allowed; and, bodies must not be embalmed or chemically preserved. All areas of the cemetery are maintained in the same manner with respect to mowing, lawn care, etc.

Individuals interested in purchasing a burial plot(s) at St. Philip Orthodox Cemetery should contact Fr. Noah, the Church Office or Jim or Doris Eggers (609-680-0907/ jdkceggers@aol.com) from the Cemetery Committee. They will go over burial plot options available, pricing, and cemetery rules and regulations associated with any purchase. Current pricing is \$1,000 for standard/simple plots and \$500 for Memory Garden plots. Payment of plot sales are due in full at time of purchase.

"Making a Defense":

Explorations in Orthodox Apologetics

REALITY AS PERSONAL

As Orthodox, our faith teaches us to revel in mystery—the mystery not of unsolvable logical problems, but rather the mystery of our connectedness to creation, to one another, and especially to God. We intuitively know these things are real, and we know that they are meaningful—and we know their "meaning"—in the relationships themselves, our participation in those relationships and realities that are infinite and irreducible.

By contrast, we often hear from atheists today that the universe is self-evidently chaotic and meaningless. We are told that the universe is essentially an impersonal machine that operates purely on the basis of random laws. Yet we are also asked, by these same atheists, to believe that human consciousness is an aberration from this, and that any suggestion otherwise is ultimately a delusion that contradicts the observable data. So, on the one hand, the universe *must* be a meaningless reality, yet the one thing that might bring that notion into question—the objective reality of human consciousness—is viewed as the (inexplicable) exception to the rule, not as the paradigm by which to view the reality of the universe. In this light, one might reasonably conclude that the root of much of the existential dread of our secular society stems from the perceived contradiction between a "meaningless" universe and our tragically *meaningful* experience of it.

However, I would like to suggest that this way of viewing external reality and our perception of it is in the completely wrong order. What is logically prior to any data we observe is our perception itself. The

only way we know anything is through the personal, self-aware, intentional prism we call "consciousness." In other words, the first reality we know at all is one that is *personal*. In theory of mind, the attempts to reduce the phenomenon of consciousness to purely physical-material causes in order to fit it into the box of philosophical materialism have proven abysmal failures. There is no way to "peel back the layers" of the *material brain* and arrive at the *immaterial consciousness or mind*. Thus, the former can neither eliminate nor explain the latter.

What does this imply concerning what I was talking about before? This means that *everything we know about reality is mediated through the immaterial consciousness/mind of personal, meaningful, and supernatural beings*. The claim that the world is meaningless is therefore self-evidently false, since the claim itself assumes the prism of *meaning exists* which in turn assumes meaningful, personal, and relational beings.

Instead of seeing reality as one big series of meaningless processes bearing meaningful persons along in an act of ultimate absurdity, it is far more reasonable to conclude that the ultimate reality from which our personal existence springs is also personal. It is far more reasonable to conclude that the source of our personhood is none other than He who is the supreme Person, the tri-personal God whose Image we bear; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Our personal reality suffers not an unfortunate existence in an impersonal world, but rather it bears the stamp of the Holy Trinity and participates in the true divine-human Person, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

— by Zach Willits, w/ Sdn. Justin



Did You Know?

- Your gift to the **Camp Scholarship Fund** supports the spiritual formation and education of our youth.
- You can be an **apostle and an evangelist in your daily life**. Ask God to use you for His purposes and then be bold and humble in sharing the peace with God and man that you have!
- During the **Megalynarion** of the Divine Liturgy (usually, "It is truly meet") we can and should be praying in our hearts for our departed beloved. At this time the priest or deacon is reading diptychs (lists) of departed.
- **AncientFaith.com** offers hundreds of talks on dozens of topics. Visit, learn, and grow!



Wisdom From a Bishop

We don't exclude the children from the service, even if they are noisy for a few minutes. We have to learn how to be patient. I feel happy when I see kids in the Church, I feel that the Church is in good shape and a new generation is growing up to take the lead. I need for one of them to become the bishop, or a priest, or a deacon when it comes time for us to depart this life.

+ Metropolitan JOSEPH

