



Volume 1 No. 1

Newsletter

Of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

Welcome to the launching of our first Church of the Annunciation Newsletter! Considering the many parishioners in our congregation, and the many activities of our church, the need for a newsletter has been apparent for some time. It seems appropriate that this first newsletter coincides with the beginning of the Church New Year, September 1st.

You will be seeing a new issue every two months. In every issue, there will be an instructive article from one of the clergy who serve at our church or, perhaps, a “guest” author by a clergy member of another church. Also included in most issues will be articles on what is happening at our church: ministries, missions, feasts and fasts, updates on church business, and events.

It is my hope that this newsletter will keep you informed about our parish as well as the Orthodox faith and that it will be a well-used publication that is beneficial in building our communications with each other.

Father Matthew

Harvest Festival

This year we will have our first church Harvest Festival on Saturday, September 19th. It will be a great day for us to celebrate and share our thankfulness to God for all the He has given to us. Our beautiful field beside the church will be transformed into creative spaces for storytelling, music-making, crafts, games and a delicious “farm-to-table” meal.

The Harvest Festival Committee invites everyone to get involved so that this can be a shared time for all. There are many small (and large) tasks to be done that will make this a memorable day.

Our talents do not have to be professional offerings. If you haven’t gotten that trombone out in several years, shine it up and ask a few Annunciation friends over to practice a jazz piece for performing during the music section. Or perhaps there’s a singing quartet just waiting to be formed? You haven’t made a homemade pie in years? Get out Grandma’s recipe and practice for the next few weeks before you enter your best pie in the contest! Are you a closet storyteller to your kids but would never dream of doing it through a microphone? Or maybe you would just like to do some simple tasks helping out where you can? Come and join the fun and share your talents!

Below is the schedule for the day and a list of the committee members. Please contact any of us if you would like to help and get involved.

2:00	Arrival
2:15-4:30	Arts & Crafts booths, talents, games on the green & Tea House
4:30-5:00	Dancing
5:00	Dinner sit down



- 5:45-6:00** Pie Contest Winners announced
- 6:30-7:00** Storytelling
- 7:00** Vespers
- 8:00** Possible campfire and shadow play

Organizer: M. Molly Shaw
 Kitchen Chicken Preparation and Dining
 Layout: Mary Catherine Albanese
 Music: Susan Judy
 Decorations: Maria Elliot
 Games: Gail Cramer
 Storytelling: M. Connie Shank
 Pie Contest: M. Connie Shank
 Crafts: Anne Peugh
 Tea House Organizer: Seraphima Green

The church will be providing platters of chicken to serve at our sit down meal. Please be generous in your offerings of side dishes which include salads, casseroles, cheeses and breads and desserts. If you need to refrigerate your items, please consider bringing an ice chest; we are hopeful to keep the kitchen off limits for the festival, just to assure that we have plenty of time to enjoy the activities outside. There's a special treat for the afternoon from Fr. Matthew's and Bruce's annual Alaska fishing trip: Boris and Fr. Matthew will be grilling salmon for us to enjoy during the activities!

We Need...

- Someone to organize the table set up in the morning and take down in the afternoon
- Someone who would be willing to prepare the campfire
- A golf cart
- Camping canopies to donate for the day (please let one of the committee members know)
- Everyone to help with clean-up for Vespers
- Donations of pumpkins and mums (fall flowers)

Please contact M. Molly if you are able to help

Bring your talents forward and let's build a memory for our community!

-M. Molly Shaw

Youth Alaska Mission Trip

June 22-30, 2015 marked our high school youth group's third Missions Trip to Kodiak and Spruce Islands, Alaska! The eight youth who served on this trip were John Jensen, Anastacia and Daria Kakorin, Peter Olson, Brandon and Ksenia Riddle, Cassian Storm, and Elliot Vallejos. The three chaperones that led the trip were Fr. Dn. John Jensen and Christopher and Bethany Banke.

While in Kodiak, we served the community by unpacking and moving desks, dressers, and bunk beds from a large shipping container that had been donated by the OCMC and Rutgers University. This provided furniture for St. Herman Seminary and multiple non-profit organizations throughout the community.



We also performed maintenance and cleaning tasks at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, which was especially needed after the vandalism that occurred at the church just two weeks prior to our arrival. In addition, our team cleaned, cleared out, and organized the sizeable Seminary basement, as well as thoroughly deep cleaned all the singles dorm rooms.

Yet, the highlight of our service work in Alaska was when our team traveled to Spruce Island and performed maintenance on Sts. Sergius and Herman of Valaam Chapel. The Chapel needed moss scraped off the roof, the trail around the church cleared, and the porch swept. While on Spruce Island, Fr. Innocent Dresdow guided our team on the St. Herman pilgrimage, and spoke to us about the life and works of St. Herman. Our pilgrimage included visiting Monk's Lagoon, St. Herman's fresh water spring, The Meeting of Our Lord Chapel, and Fr. Gerasim's cell and chapel.

We were also blessed to be able to go on a total of four boat outings this trip, one of which was to St. Nilus Island where we visited with the four sisters of St. Nilus Skete. They graciously taught us about their way of monastic life in the Gulf of Alaska and, especially, the importance of a life of simplicity and prayer.

The youth mentioned many things that really impacted them on the trip, from setting foot onto Monk's Lagoon, to going gill-net fishing for the first time ever, to visiting St. Nilus Skete and talking with the sisters, to the lessons of why maintaining a healthy community is important. Overall, we all learned more about, and participated in, the life and works of our beloved North American Saint, Apa Herman. -
Christopher Banke

Feasts and Fasts

In every issue of this newsletter, you will be provided information on the upcoming important events of the Church year with a small explanation of each.

Church New Year (September 1)

This is the beginning of the ecclesiastical calendar that includes the twelve great feasts of the year as well as the times of fasting and other significant services of the Church. "The new Church year is a time of review...taking stock, remembering with thankfulness, and then preparing for the new routine. Some people may find it useful to make their 'New Year's resolutions' now, rather than in January. And this is an excellent time to plan on coming to confession," (Donna Farley, *Seasons of Grace: Reflections on the Orthodox Church Year*). Two of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church Year fall in September. None of the twelve fall in October.

The Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept. 8)

There are three major feasts in the Church honoring the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity, which is always kept on September 8. The divine meaning of this event -- "for us men and for our salvation" -- is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary's birth, of Mary herself and her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world. For the "Vessel of



Light,” the “Book of the Word of Life,” the “Door of the Orient,” the “Throne of Wisdom,” is being prepared on earth by God himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.

The Exaltation (or Raising Up) of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (Sept. 14):

This feast is celebrated each year on September 14th. This is the day we liturgically commemorate and venerate the Cross that will be placed in the middle of the church toward the end of Great Vespers on Saturday evening. The feast will then have a full “octave” for its celebration, thus making it an eight-day Feast which serves to stress the importance of the Cross in the life of the Church and in our personal lives.

This feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by St. Helen, mother of the emperor Constantine, in 326 A.D. The feast is an opportunity (outside of the observances of Holy Week) to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of the world.

Hospitality Committee

We all enjoy having a brunch together downstairs after Sunday services. Here is your opportunity to serve! There is still a need for volunteers to prepare coffee and small meals each Sunday after Liturgy. The commitment is only two Sundays a year. All the ingredients for coffee and tea are supplied by the church.

If you need help with ideas for what foods to serve, we can help you with that. Also, if you are interested in helping to provide a meal but don't know who to ask to help you with it, we can connect you with one or two other people who would like to help as well. If there is a problem financially in providing a small meal, the church

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will reimburse you up to \$50.00, so please keep your receipts and give them to Connie, the church secretary. If you are interested in helping, please contact **Karen Barton** at **503-317-8121**

Fall Retreat Information

The Monastery of St. John of San Francisco

The Monastery of St. John will be hosting a couple of retreats very soon, and we invite you to make a pilgrimage to visit St. John's and hear some edifying Christian teaching. The first retreat will be given by John Burnett, and is titled "What's the Story in Mark?" Read more here:

<http://johnbburnett.com/workshops/2015/8/16/whats-the-story-in-mark>

The dates for this retreat are September 25–27, 2015. See a short YouTube

Promo video here:

<https://youtu.be/TJ1WobAlFjc>

A little later on we have a retreat hosted by one of our monks, Fr. Cosmas, on the 12-step program and its application to Orthodox spiritual life. This is an open retreat, but is designed for anyone who is engaged in the 12 steps in a regular 12-step fellowship to deal with addiction issues. Discussions will focus on bringing life in the Orthodox Church and life in the 12 steps closer together so that they reinforce each other. The dates for the 12-step retreat are October 9-11, 2015.

Each of these retreats will begin with an opening session on Friday, and continue through the weekend with a closing session Sunday afternoon. Church services, meals, and accommodations are provided by the monks. Cost for each retreat is \$125 per person, or \$200 for a couple. We ask registrants to provide an initial nonrefundable deposit of \$40



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to reserve a place. For inquiries: (530) 474-5964 or 21770 Ponderosa Way, Mantion, CA, 96059.

God's Love for Us

Let us be convinced beyond a doubt of this unfailing truth: God cares indefatigably for a monk and for every Orthodox Christian who surrenders himself heart and soul to the service of God and to the will of God. He keeps him, builds and trains his soul, and prepares him for a blessed eternity.

All the sorrows and sufferings caused us by people never come to us except with God's permission for our essential good. If these sorrows and troubles were not absolutely necessary for us, God would never allow them. They are indispensable, in order that we may have occasion to forgive our neighbors and so receive forgiveness of our own sins. They are indispensable, in order that we may discern the Providence of God watching over us and acquire a living faith in God.

Such a living faith makes its appearance in us when we learn from numerous experiments that it is the all-powerful hand of God that always delivers us from our troubles and difficult circumstances, and not our skill or ingenuity. They are indispensable in order that we may acquire love for our enemies, for it is love that finally purifies the heart of the poison of malice and makes it capable of loving God and of receiving that special, abundant grace from God.

- Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, *The Arena*

Tours with Michael

Fully escorted "Heritage Tours," specializing in sacred travel sights, will be offered in 2016 by Tours with Michael. These spiritually uplifting and professionally organized tours will include the Holy Land, Greece, and Russia.

The 11-day Holy Land tours will be offered at two separate times: May 11-21 and June 8-18. These 11-day tours will allow the traveler to experience the Bible miracles and living scripture in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Gethsemane, Sea of Galilee, Jacob's Well, Mount Tabor, The Beatitudes and more.

The 13-day tour of Greece will take the traveler to Europe's oldest city, Athens, with the ancient Acropolis and the magical Meteora. Venerate St. Demetrios and Paisios in Thessaloniki and visit the wondrous Island of Santorini.

Travelers on the 13-day tour of Russia will explore the beauty of a colorful and fascinating culture. Included on this tour are Red Square, The Kremlin and a Moscow River cruise. Travelers on this tour will experience the grace of St. Petersburg while seeing the famous Cathedrals, Museums, Palaces and Icons.

All tours will include international and domestic airfares, cruises, ferry trips, accommodations (double occupancy) in 4 and 5 star hotels, expert tour guides, luxury coach transportation, admissions, entertainment and meals per detailed itinerary. For tour prices and more tour information, go to www.tourswithmichael.com or call 503-888-6117 or 503-919-4501.



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Recipe

Editor's Note: In every issue we will include an easy recipe that can be used for Fast Days or Fish and Oil days on the fasting calendar.

Tasty Refried Beans

Mix together in a pot on your stove:

1 can vegetarian refried beans

1-1/2 cups salsa

1 4-oz. can mild, diced green chilies

6 green onions, diced

2 or 3 corn tortillas cut into bite-sized pieces
(Note: Sprouted grain corn tortillas, found in the freezer section, are a healthier form of the usual unfrozen corn tortillas.)

Stir all ingredients together and heat on the stove, stirring occasionally, until hot. Enjoy this for lunch or dinner with a side salad and fruit.

If you have submissions for the newsletter, please e-mail them to Gail Cramer
neptic123@yahoo.com