

St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church

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February & March 2015

- Sunday, February 1st 16th Sunday of Luke (Publican & Pharisee)
Epistle Reading: Romans 8:28-39
Gospel Reading: Luke 18:10-14
9:30 AM Orthros (Matins)
10:15 AM Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour: Barbara Georgitsis
- Sunday, February 15th Judgment Sunday (Meatfare)
Epistle Reading: I Corinthians 8:8-13, 9:1-2
Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:31-46
9:30 AM Orthros (Matins)
10:15 AM Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour: Ladies Aux.: Go Red for Women's Heart Health
- Sunday, March 1st Sunday of Orthodoxy
Epistle Reading: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40
Gospel Reading: John 1:43-51
9:30 AM Orthros (Matins)
10:15 AM Divine Liturgy
Annual Meeting & Luncheon – Parish Council
- Sunday, March 15th Sunday of the Holy Cross
Epistle Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6
Gospel Reading: Mark 8:34-39; 9:1
9:00 AM Orthros (Matins)/10:15 AM Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour: Lee Lantas & Marge Kanakis

The schedule for Holy Week and Easter will be coming soon.

Two Plates – Not One

Fr. Anthony Coniaris

Someone said one Sunday during the offering, "Here we go again! There's always a plate."

The person was right in one way and wrong in another. There is not one plate-but two! One plate is man's; the offering plate that is passed to us every Sunday. The other plate is God's. And that is the paten, the "diskos", the plate that carries the Precious Body of our Lord during the liturgy. Two plates --- not one!

God gives first. He gives us our body, mind, life, health, talents. On the paten – the plate of God's mercy, He gives us Himself as the Bread of Life, the manna from heaven. He gives forgiveness, strength, courage. He gives victory over sin and death. He gives eternal life. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which he lavished upon us" (Eph.1:7-8). God gives. He lavishes upon us the riches of His grace. That is the meaning of the first plate-the paten.

The second plate which is passed every Sunday - the offering plate - represents our response to the first plate. We are invited to give in gratitude for God's generosity, for His limitless forgiveness and mercy. The emptiness of the offering plate represents the aching needs of the world which we are called upon to assist.

It represents also the great spiritual hunger that exists in the world -- the God-shaped vacuum in every heart that only Christ can fill.

We give, but He gave first. Two plates – not one! However much we give, it will never be more than just a minute fraction of what we receive from Him.

There's always a plate! Indeed there is! Not one but two. First God's, then man's.

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. He comes to us through that first plate, the paten which symbolizes His total giving to us. He comes through the Sacrament of Baptism to bestow upon us the holy kiss of His love, to call us His very own. He comes through the Sacrament of Chrismation to fill us with His presence, to make our bodies temples of His Holy Spirit. He comes through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession to cleanse us of sin, to restore in our souls "the peace of God that passes all understanding." IN every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, "the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free."

Every year at this time as we are invited to renew our weekly stewardship pledge, we are challenged to re-consider prayerfully our weekly gift to Him Who is God's Great Gift to us. It is through our gift that God will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Many of us are careful to set aside funds for our retirement IRAs, 401(k)s, etc. Yet how long will these last? – Ten, maybe twenty years? The question is:

What are we setting aside for our eternal future?

What are we investing in God, in eternity?

How many of us who are quite well-to-do on earth (and most of us Americans are) may end up paupers in heaven?

St. John Chrysostom said once, "A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much. For, what he gives away remains his forever!"

A little girl noticed that after the collection was taken in a certain church, the ushers brought it up to the altar. She whispered to her mother, "Mommy, how do they get the money up to heaven?" The mother replied, "The church doesn't send the money to heaven, but it uses it to bring heaven down to us." That mother could not have given a better answer. For, the purpose of the Church is to get God's heaven into each one of us. "The kingdom of God is within you," said Jesus.

The thought comes to me quite often that there will come a time for each one of us when we shall no longer be able to give. When death comes, our giving will be over. For all eternity God will be doing the giving to us. So, the time for us to give is now. The time for us to love is now. The time for us to share what God has given us is now.

Give as you would if an angel
Awaited your gift at the door.
Give as you would if tomorrow
Found you where giving was over.

Give as you would to the Master
If you met His loving look.
Give as you would of your substance
If His hand your offering took.

For, it is indeed His hand! The tray in which we place our offering every Sunday is not a tray but His hand -- the nail-pierced hand of my Savior "Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Amen.

Annual Meeting/Pot Luck Luncheon 2015

On Sunday, March 1st, the Annual Meeting will be held at the Church Hall following Divine Liturgy. A luncheon sponsored by the Parish Council will be held in the Church Hall prior to the start of the meeting. If you would like to bring a dessert to share it would be appreciated. Please plan to attend. There are some important items to discuss regarding our Church and plans for the future. Everyone's input is important. Also, members of the Parish Council will be elected. We hope to see everyone there!

Go Red for Women's Heart Health

On Sunday, February 15th the Ladies Auxiliary will be celebrating Go Red for Women's Heart Health. We are asking all parishioners to wear red to Church to bring awareness to this cause. Information will be made available about heart health as well as a variety of heart-healthy dishes to share for the pot luck luncheon after the Liturgy. All women of the parish in attendance will receive a special surprise! A second collection will be taken as a donation for the American Heart Association. Thank you for your support.

Stewardship Sunday

The theme for the 2015 Stewardship Program is **From God Every Family in Heaven and on Earth is Named**. When we speak of stewardship and family we must also consider stewardship **of** family. Most often, we stress the importance of stewardship of the great gifts of God's material world, but which of God's gifts is greater than family? Throughout our life's journey, our family will take many forms. Throughout our lives and the roles we assume within the family, we are stewards of love, authority, trust and respect. As Orthodox Christians, we are also stewards of our Church family – those with whom we worship, share fellowship, and serve the community. In the same way that we care for our immediate family, we also care for our Christian brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. Our greatest blessing is our family. As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be stewards of this great gift. If we are faithful to this calling perhaps our Lord will say to us as He did to the faithful steward, "Well done good and faithful servant"(Mt. 25:23).

Come and see the blessings God has bestowed on us. Come see and hear the word of God. Come see, hear, and share our wonderful parish with others. Come and see what the Church can become with your love, support, and faith. The Stewardship 2015 form is enclosed with this bulletin. Please give your 2015 Stewardship commitment your prayerful consideration. We are called to love God with our entire being – out time, talents, and treasury. **Stewardship Sunday will be on March 1, 2015**. Please bring your Stewardship Commitment card to Church to place in the offering basket or mail to the Church at PO Box 428, Newport, NH 03773. Thank you!

Inclement Weather

Now that we are entering the winter months it is important that everyone call the Church answering machine for Church service updates. In case of snowy conditions the answering machine will be updated by 8:30 AM on Sundays. Also, it is fine to call Laura at (603) 863-1384 for updates.

Prayer List

Please use this list to pray for members of our community who are sick or in need of God's care.

Angelo Nestor & Family Athena Tsouknaki Bessie Juris Kiki Coidakis & Family

Donations of Nonperishable Items and Supplies

As the New Year begins, our parish will continue to collect donations of nonperishable items/supplies for the Newport Food Pantry and paper goods, toiletries, dish detergent, gas/phone/food cards for the Turning Points Network. Items can be dropped off in the Church Hall and will periodically be delivered to the organizations. Thank you for your generosity.

2015 Church Calendars

The new calendars for 2015 are available in our Church narthex. Please call if you would like one mailed to you.

Church Bulletin Sponsorship

If anyone is interested in sponsoring the bulletin as part of your stewardship pledge please see Laura. Donations of paper, printing costs, and stamps would be most helpful. It is greatly appreciated!

Congratulations

We would like to extend our congratulations to our beloved summer parishioner, Nicholas Stamos, for his recent surprise award! He and his wife, Helen, attended the AHEPA Christmas party in their home parish of St. Nicholas in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Surrounded by family and friends, Nick was presented an "AWARD OF EXCELLENCE" for "The many years of outstanding service and support to AHEPA CHAPTER #195". He was especially recognized for his speech presentations at the Statue of Demetrios Ypsilanti on the occasions of March 25th and October 28th. Nick stated, "This came as a complete surprise and it humbled me to think that people thank you for service." Nick also extends his and Helen's love to the parishioners of our beloved Parish of St. Vasilios. "We are looking forward to our yearly migration and return to the Land of the Wild Flying Goose and joining you all at St.Vasilios.

Holy Week Books

If you are in need of or would like to order a new Holy Week book please let Laura know.

Hymn of Saint Haralambos February 10

Apolytikion. Fourth Tone.

You are an unshaken pillar of the Church of Christ our God, an ever-resplendent lamp, O Haralambos most wise, which shines throughout the earth; in the contest of martyrdom you have shined on the whole world, and you have dispelled the moonless night of the idols. Now boldly intercede with Christ that we may all be saved.

Thank You

Many thanks to the parishioners at St. Vasilios for supporting the fall Crop Walk by walking, pledging a walker, or donating food. The final tally is in and the event raised just over \$5,000.00 – amazing! Twenty-five percent of those funds and a box of food went right to work helping the hungry right here in our community. Other funds are at work across the country and globe – providing hunger and disaster relief. Faith communities provide such a strong foundation for the event – it would not be successful without your pledges and prayers! We extend our appreciation and we hope to see you at Crop Walk 2015!

May this be a year filled with compassion and community building,
Kerry Rochford-Hague (on behalf of the Crop Walk Planning Committee)

Greetings

To our beloved Brothers and Sisters of St. Vasilios,
We always think so warmly of you in this time of the year on the Feast of St. Vasilios. May the new year bring us all good strength and happiness in the Lord. With love in Christ,
Fr. Peter and Presvytera Anthe Day

In Memory

We would like to extend our sympathy to the family of Stella Nestor, of Claremont, NH, who passed on December 11, 2014 after a long illness. Stella was a former president and member of our Ladies Auxiliary and was also a former member of our Parish Council. She will be greatly missed by all. Please keep her husband, Angelo, and all of her family in your prayers. May her memory be eternal.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday: January 18th Diaper Drive 2015

Along with the early Church Fathers and the tradition of the Church, we uphold the sanctity of human life in the womb. The Greek Orthodox Church's view on the Sanctity of Life can be found at: <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8083>

January 18, 2015, known as "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday," is the national day of commemoration that upholds the sanctity of human life here in the United States. The Dayspring Pregnancy Care Center (Pregnancy Center of the Upper Valley) continues to be the expression of the church – upholding the sacredness of human life in their 33rd year of service to the communities that make up the Greater Upper Valley region. The primary mission of the Ministry is to bring God's love and gospel to those seeking their help. The majority of their clientele live outside of the knowledge of His love; as such, this presents an amazing opportunity for the church. The center is asking if any of our parishioners would consider being mentors (intentional friends) for some of their clients. They would welcome any and all inquiries at either of their locations. The phone number is 603-298-6123. The center offers free pregnancy related services with compassion and respect to those facing an unexpected pregnancy. The center has an ongoing need for providing disposable diapers. **Would you gift one or more packages of disposable diapers (any size) for the local pregnancy center? Please bring them to church during the months of February and March** and we'll deliver them for you. These gifts will help the center continue one of its practical ministries to young families. Please take this opportunity to show loving care.

Attention: Need for Parish Council Members

Our Parish is in need of parishioners to serve on the Parish Council. The most important responsibility of the Parish Council is to assist the Priest in the administration of the ministries of the Parish (GOAA Regulations 29:1A). Some of the principal roles employed by effective Parish Councils include, but are not limited to, planning, developing, organizing, and implementing stewardship programs and various educational ministries of the Church; reporting and communicating to the parishioners the work and ministries of the Church at the Metropolis and Archdiocesan levels; and recruiting and training others for further service. The Parish Council must also abide by Local, State, and Federal statutes applicable to the Parish and by the GOAA Regulations.

In all things, Council members should imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, who "came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). The entire focus of the Parish Council must be to serve the needs of the faithful and to spread the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There is a form being circulated after Liturgy to sign-in if you are interested in being a candidate for the election on March 1st. Please see a member of the current parish council if you have further questions. There is also information found on the Metropolis website at: <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/documents/parish-council.pdf>