

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2016

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad www.albanyrocor.org

Rector: Protopriest Fr. Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest: Fr. Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

PLEASE NOTE: HOURS AND LITURGY BEGIN AT 9:00 AM Summer Hours

MAY NAMESDAYS

I apologize to all those people celebrating their Namesdays in May who were not listed in the Newsletter. I didn't turn the page on my Master List so I forgot quite a few people, myself included. Mnogaya Leta (Many Years) - a little late.

JUNE NAMESDAYS

3	Elena Kristie	6	Vincent Parella
	Elena Pervychine	20	Zina Borscok
	Eleanora Yarowski	23	Antonina Fritz

Many Years! Mnagaya Leta to all those celebrating in June.

NO MORE COFFEE HOURS FOR THE SUMMER COFFEE HOURS WILL RESUME IN SEPTEMBER

Thank you to EVERYONE who participates in the Parish Coffee Hours. From preparing the food, to setting up the hall and cleaning the hall afterwards. If you are interested in becoming a Coffee Hour Hostess – please speak to Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea so she can add you to the Schedule for September. If you don't feel you can take on the responsibility of hosting an entire Coffee Hour, but would like to help by providing a dessert, side dish, or the drinks, please speak to the Coffee Hour hostess directly. Any and all help would be greatly appreciated. Once again - THANK YOU to EVERYONE!

PARISH PICNIC

Just another Reminder!! Parish Picnic is **Sunday, September 18th** following the Divine Liturgy. The picnic will be held at Cook Park, as it has been in the past. Mark your calendars and more information will be available as the time draws near. We are hoping the Young Adults of the Parish will take over the Picnic - to give the "older folks" a day of fun and relaxation.

TIKHAVIN TRIP



Father Alexis, Deacon Father Michael and Tasia Fedorov will be traveling to Tikhin, Russia on June 21st and returning on July 16th. During this time if anyone needs the services of a priest, they are requested to contact Father Michael Fritz.

We are hoping to purchase new Banners for the Church. If anyone is interested in making a donation towards the purchase of these banners, it would be greatly appreciated. Donations may be given to Fr. Alexis. Thank you.

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP AND FLOWER PLANTING

On Saturday, **June 11th** we are planning another Cemetery Clean-up at Jordanville. If you can attend, please make sure to bring your gardening tools. Chain saws, Gas powered weedwackers, shovels, rakes, etc. We will try to clean-up the graves of past parishioners who may not have family to take care of their graves. If you are interested, you are requested to contact Tasia Fedorov so she can get an idea as to how many people will be going. Thank you!

CHURCH E-MAIL (Google Groups)

It was discussed and decided at the Church Council meeting that any “news” posted on the Parish Group e-mail must be approved by either Father Alexis Duncan, Father Michael Fritz or Church Starosta John Gonyea. The purpose of the Church e-mail is to advise the parish of any “Church” News, changes in services, and other Church related announcements. Parishioners are encouraged to e-mail each other individually and not through the”Group e-mail”. If you feel the need to reply to an e-mail that you have received, please do not hit “REPLY TO ALL” when your response is intended for only 1 or 2 people. Church School teachers are encouraged to set up their own “Group e-mails” to target their students and parents. We hope that everyone will follow this new policy, if you have any questions, please speak to Father Alexis.

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

In order to keep our Church Beautiful and Clean, a cleaning schedule is being developed so this task does not fall on only a few people. If you are interested in cleaning the Church - this goes for men too, it is not ONLY a woman's job. To be truthful, it would be nice if men helped clean the Altar area at least once a month, so the dirt doesn't accumulate. We would like to thank Monia Welsh, Lydia Fedorov Miller and anyone else who helped clean the church in the past. Maria Hauf is working on a schedule for church cleaning. The Church needs to be cleaned weekly and Maria Hauf is more than willing to go over what has to be done. If you are able to volunteer for a month (clean 4 times) or for a couple of weeks, or are willing to be a "Substitute" cleaner, please contact Maria at 253-9286 as soon as possible.

The current schedule is as follows:

MAY	Maria Hauf, Maria Andrushkevich & Nina
JUNE	<i>Available</i>
JULY	<i>First two weeks available</i> Last 2 weeks - Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea
AUGUST	First 2 weeks - Natasha Smelova Last 2 weeks - Anastasia (RaeLynn Gonyea)
SEPTEMBER	Lydia Miller (3 week General Cleaning for Parish Feastday)
OCTOBER	Lydia Miller
NOVEMBER	<i>Available</i>
DECEMBER	<i>Available</i>
JAN 2017	M. Cecelia Soloviev & Alex McClure
FEB 2017	M. Cecelia Soloviev & Alex McClure
MARCH 2017	M. Cecelia Soloviev & Alex McClure

CHURCH FRESCOES

Father Theodore will be returning in October to work on the Frescoes in our Church. At the present time, we have about \$4000 in the Fresco Account. It is estimated that we will need another \$10,000 to pay Father Theodore. If you would like to make a donation to the Fresco Fund, please contact Reader John (Rick) Schuler. All donations would be greatly appreciated for the beautification of our Church. What a perfect way to remember someone's birthday or anniversary - make a donation to the Church Fresco fund and the gift will be remembered every time you come to Church.

CHURCH SCHOOL GRADUATION



Church School classes have ended for the year. We would like to thank Father Alexis, Father Michael, and the teachers: John (Rick) Schuler, Tasia Fedorov, Mat. Anna Duncan, Jonathan Barker. Junia Dragon and Emily Soloviev. But most importantly, we would like to thank all of our students for their hard work. Church School, Graduation will be held on SUNDAY, JUNE 5th following the Divine Liturgy. Parents are requested to please have their children in Church that Sunday.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

- Please keep Father Wsevolod in your prayers, and if you would like to visit him or send him a card - that would be wonderful.
- Margo and Bill (John) Beighey, as they are recovering.
- Also, Phillip Rudko who will be having surgery in the near future.
- Please keep Father Alexis, Deacon Father Michael and Tasia Fedorov in your prayers as they are traveling in Russia.

Please, if you know of anyone who is I need of prayers: sick, in the hospital, traveling, etc. Please let me know so I can put it in the Newsletter.

PALM SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR THE HOLY LAND

Thank you everyone for your generous donations to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. This mission is essential in the effort to maintain sites in the Holy Land that are under the jurisdiction of ROCOR. They can only continue their work with God's help and support from parishes outside of the Holy Land. Thank you for your support of this very important mission.

BALLROOM DANCING LESSONS



Ever want to dance like Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers? Or not make a fool of yourself at weddings, but actually dance like you know what you are doing?? Here is the solution - Beginner Ballroom Lessons - Learn Foxtrot, Swing, Cha-Cha, Rumba, Tango and English Waltz in a weekly hour-long lesson from Fred Astaire certified instructor Nikolai Roschko. Tuesday nights at 7pm at the Church Hall. \$10 a person, \$15 a couple . If you are interested talk to Nick and we will set up lessons for the summer. What a great night out - and fun too.



Спасибо Мама

You are known by a lot of names at our church: Тётя Наташа, Choir Director, but most of all to me Mama:

We all give you our most heartfelt and sincerest thank you for everything that you have done for our parish choir.

The choir owes everything we have to you. You have done incredible things with the choir in our parish. I have fond memories of singing in the choir in the old Schenectady church. Although I was very young at the time, I still remember when it was just you along with some other babushki – just a few people at most.

You stepped in out of necessity, because we didn't have anybody else to lead. After more than twenty years of direction – and from countless hours of labor and care, you have brought the choir to where we are today. Every single service, be it Liturgy or Vigil, you can look around and see that the choir has grown- not just in size; but in talent, in dedication, in commitment, but above all in a desire to serve God and sing His praise. You see singers who are focused in prayer; you see smiles and laughter; you see lifelong friends who grew up in the choir, singing side by side. You see old faces and new, young faces and old, family and friends; all singing with the same common purpose. You look in the Church and see parishioners deep in prayer, listening to the beautiful hymns, immersing themselves in the Divine Services.

You have brought out the best in all of us – and for that, we are forever grateful. I know I am speaking for not only myself, but for the entire choir when I say this: we owe everything to you. All of my musical talent comes from you, everything I know about singing and conducting come from your nurturing help and instruction. But, most of all, you taught us how to serve the Church, how to truly pray as a choir, and how to use our God-given talents to do exactly that - serve God.

As one Russian saying goes: "Love is work." Twenty years of hard work, loving care and labor take their toll on anybody. Now that you have decided to retire, we will strive to continue forward in your footsteps, and through love and hard work continue to serve God in the way that you taught each and every one of us.

Once more I want to say thank you. I can only hope that I can do half the job you did. May God grant you many more blessed years, not only as a loving teacher, wife and mother, but as a cherished member of our choir!

Love,
Nikhon
with the rest of the Choir

FROM FATHER ALEXIS:

When coming to either Confession or Holy Communion, we should say our baptismal name loud enough for the priest to hear us. This is the traditional way we approach the Mysteries. Even though the priest knows us very well we become involved in our conscious participation of receiving the Holy Mysteries and present ourselves before the Lord. Also, when receiving Holy Communion, we should always open our mouths widely so the communion spoon may easily impart the Mysteries and not accidentally drip from our lips. Then we close our mouth on the spoon for the same reason. We must teach our children to do the same.

During the Divine Services we must remember that we are in the very presence of the God of the universe; an awesome and exalted moment. Therefore we should always refrain from needless conversation and movement. It is fine to light candles and do the things that are necessary, but at times, the sacred and solemn moments of the service demand our complete attention. We must always be mindful that everyone around us is trying their best to pay attention and say their prayers. If we or our children distract them then their efforts are especially burdensome. At all times, there should be silence in the Temple of God, but especially we must preserve silence at certain important moments. There should be no talking, candle sales or movement during the six psalms at Vigil, even in the Holy Altar or in the choir, during the Epistle and Gospel, all Liturgical Entrances, between the Creed and the Hymn to the Mother of God (The Eucharistic Canon) and the "Our Father". During Communion, we should stand quietly in line without conversation. Obviously, during the sermon at the end of the service we should be attentive the sermon and the After Communion Prayers.

Why is it that in Orthodox churches men stand on the right and women on the left? Since ancient times this practice has been the mark of worship. Men stand on the right facing the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ, in imitation of Him, and women on the left facing the Most Holy Mother of God, their supreme example of faithfulness. As we sing in the Cherubic Hymn, "Let us now lay aside all earthly care". When men and women stand together, "earthly cares" are sure to become a part of our conversation or thoughts. We separate ourselves so we may pay one hundred percent of our attention to prayer and not be distracted. This good order reminds us that in Christ there is no earthly attachment when we pray. For these reasons, among many others, women and girls always cover their heads in imitation of the Most Holy Mother of God and men must dress modestly and with respect. In church we should always wear our very best clothing as befits a visit to the House of God.

It is so very important to arrive on time for the services. Can we imagine that for a moment it would be appropriate for our children to consistently arrive late for school or that we could possibly not be fired for always being late for work? Is not the worship of Almighty God far, far more important than school or work? We know that children MUST be in school early and sometimes students are on the bus by 7:30 am? We walk out the door for work no later than 8:00 am. And yet services start at 9:30 and we have many excuses as to why we can not make it so early! The respect we show to God is indicative of our spiritual wellbeing. As the Psalmist St. David sings, "I was GLAD when they said unto me 'Let us go into the House of the Lord!'" We, nor our children may not receive Holy Communion if we arrive late for services.

Just a reminder that the cry room is not just a place to "hang out" during services, nor is it a play room. It is a place for crying babies and small children who temporarily need a short break.

Let us not congregate in the entrance to the church near the candle desk. This is not an appropriate place to stand during services. It should be used only for purchasing candles and prosphora or removing outer clothing and preparing to enter the church.

Why do we use incense during the services? In the Old Testament we see that God commanded the use of incense and the Holy Scriptures are filled with images of incense. The smoke of the incense rising heavenward is a symbol of prayer. In the book of the Revelation we see that incense rising before the Throne of God represents the prayers of the saints. All of our senses; sight, hearing, smell, touch and so forth were created by God to enrich our spiritual life. These senses are all addressed in Orthodox worship. Therefore, when we hear bells, or beautiful singing we are reminded of the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. With our sight we see the beautiful vestments, the icons, the adornment of the church and know that we stand in a unique and holy place. With our touch we venerate the sacred icons and relics. With our taste we “taste and see that the Lord is good”. With our smell we sense the nearness of prayer and the certainty of God’s grace. The beauty of God’s House is recreated no where else on earth!

Why do we have a dome in the center of the church? Even the architecture of the church reveals the truth of the Kingdom of Heaven. The church is usually constructed based on a square. The square represents solidity and something that encompasses all of Creation. Upon this square rests the dome. If we look inside the dome we see the arrangement of the Kingdom of Heaven. The pillars that support the dome have icons of the saints. They are the foundation of our Faith. Upon the pillars are triangular areas known as pendentives. They join the square form to the round form. Upon these pendentives are portrayed the four evangelists, Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John since they are the support of the entire Gospel message of salvation. Then at the very highest part of the church we see a large icon of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Ruler of the entire universe. This round half of a sphere represents that universe. The Lord rules and guides the universe and with his outstretched hands He hold His Gospel and raises His hand in blessing for His flock. So, when we enter the church we see our salvation and the Lord calling us from the world with all its problems into His perfect Kingdom!

Why do we as Orthodox Christians always wear our cross around our neck? The Cross for us is not jewelry but an indispensable part of our baptismal attire. It is unthinkable not to wear our holy cross. It is our protection against danger and the temptations of the enemy. It is a constant reminder that we are the children of God. St. Paul says that we must “glory” in the Cross. Parents always make sure their children wear their cross, even (and especially) when swimming or playing. The cross is not vanity or adornment but our personal faith. Therefore it usually is not worn over clothing as a decoration, but under our clothing, next to our heart. Let us never, for any reason take off our protection and comfort!

When we enter into the house of a pious Christian the first thing we should see is a large array of icons and crosses. Vladika Metropolitan Vitaly related how as a child his first recollections were sleeping in the house of his babushka. He said the room where he slept had a very large icon of the Lord praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. When he would wake at night he was always comforted by seeing that icon with a lamapada burning before it. Therefore he always advised families to have a very, very large icon in the home where the family could say their prayers together. How important it is that the family pray together! Children are taught by example, not by words. What sweetness and purity we see when children join their parents in prayer every morning and every evening.

