

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER APRIL 2017

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 Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

APRIL NAMESDAYS

1	Daria Gonyea Daria Cherkezov	8	Larissa Turaev Larissa Miller
2	Alexandra Mallory	14	Maria Hauf
5	Lydia Miller Linda O'Keefe Lydia Yeramakova Lydia Pervychine		Maria (Michelle) Borscok Masha Timofeev
		28	Anastasia Cherkezof Anastasia Usov

MNOGAYA LETA! MANY YEARS to all of our Parishioners celebrating their Namesday in the month of April.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR UPCOMING WEEKS

FRIDAY MARCH 31st - Vigil Praises of the Mother of God 6pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 1st - Liturgy for the Praises of the Mother of God 8:30am

SUNDAY, APRIL 2nd - Holy Unction 5pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 6th - Vigil for Annunciation 6:30pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 7th - Liturgy for Annunciation 8:30 am

SATURDAY, APRIL 8th - General Church Cleaning for Pascha 9am

MONDAY, APRIL 10th - Visitation of the Myrrh Streaming Icon of the Mother of God, Softener of Evil Hearts 6pm

This is a very brief listing of special services and events. For a complete listing of ALL church services, please see the attached April Monthly Calendar.

Holy Unction - The Mystery of Anointing
HOLY UNCTION
Sunday, April 2nd at 5pm

The Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Unction will be performed on Sunday April 2nd at 5:00 pm. Visiting Clergy, from Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville and surrounding parishes, will be joining us for this very special service (please read explanation by By Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, from his book *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*) We hope that ALL parishioners will attend this very special service. Following the service and anointing a dinner will be held in the Church Hall and everyone is invited to attend.

By Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky

The Essence Of The Mystery.

The Mystery of Unction is a sacred action in which, while the body is anointed with oil, the grace of God which heals infirmities of soul and body is called down upon a sick person (*Orthodox Catechism*, p 65). It is performed by a gathering of presbyters, ideally seven in number; however, it can be performed by a lesser number and even by a single priest.

The Divine Institution Of The Mystery.

Even in Old Testament times oil signified grace, joy, a softening, a bringing to life. Anointment of the sick with oil was done by the Apostles, as we read in the Evangelist Mark (6:13): They "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." The clearest testimony of the Mystery of Unction is to be found in the Apostle James (5:14-15): "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders (presbyters) of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The Apostle speaks here not of a special "gift" of healing; rather he prescribes the sacred action in a definite form, which was to enter into the custom of the Church: the performance of it by the presbyters of the Church, prayers, anointment; and he joins to this, as its consequence, the easing of bodily illness and the forgiveness of sins. One cannot understand the words of the Apostle James about anointment with oil as referring to a usual healing method of those times, since oil, with all its beneficial attributes, is not a means of healing against every disease. The Apostles did not introduce anything of themselves, but they taught only what the Lord Jesus Christ had commanded then, and what the Holy Spirit had inspired in them; and they called themselves not the "institutors" of the Mysteries of God, but only the "stewards" of the Mysteries and the "servants of Christ." Consequently, Unction also, which is commanded here by the Apostle James, has a Divine institution.

In ancient Christian literature one may find indirect testimonies of the Mystery of Unction in St. Irenaeus of Lyons and in Origen. Later there are clear testimonies of it in Sts. Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, who have left prayers for the healing of the infirm which

entered later into the rite of Unction; and likewise in St. Cyril of Alexandria. In the fifth century, Pope Innocent I answered a series of questions concerning the Mystery of Unction, indicating in his answers that: a) it should be performed "upon believers who are sick;" b) it may be performed also by a bishop, since one should not see in the words of the Apostle, "let him call for the presbytery," any prohibition for a bishop to participate in the sacred action; c) this anointment may not be performed "on those undergoing ecclesiastical penance," because it is a "Mystery," and to those who are forbidden the other Mysteries, how can one allow only one? This Mystery is performed on the sick who are capable of receiving it consciously and participating in prayer for themselves: however it may also be performed on children. The place of this sacred action may be either the church or the dwelling where the sick person is. The Mystery of Unction is usually preceded by Confession and is usually concluded with the Mystery of Communion.

The visible side of the Mystery comprises seven anointings of the sick person with oil by the participating priests in order; this is done in the form of a cross on the forehead, the nostrils, the cheeks, the lips, the chest, and both sides of the hands, accompanied by prayers and by the reading of specific passages in the Epistles and the Gospel. During the anointing itself, seven times this prayer is pronounced: "O holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, who didst send Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who healeth every infirmity and delivereth from death: Heal also Thy servant (name)," and so forth. The rite of Unction begins with the singing of troparia and a canon; the final prayer in the rite is a prayer of remission of sins. A whole assembly of servants of the Lord stand before Him on behalf of the sick person, and by the prayer of faith on behalf of the whole Church entreats Him, the Most Merciful One, to grant to the infirm one the remission of transgressions and to purify his conscience from every defilement. There is also kept in mind the fact that a person who has grown weak in body and soul is not always capable of offering the proper confession of his sins. This lightening of the conscience of the one who receives the Mystery of Unction opens the way also for a grace-giving healing of his bodily infirmity through the prayer of faith. There is allowed and sometimes practiced a special rite of Unction, which is performed in church on many persons at the same time, on a special day assigned for this, for the general healing of infirmities of soul and body; but this rite is not precisely identical to the Mystery of Unction (In this rite, usually performed in the evening of Passion Wednesday, as if in preparation for our Lord's death and burial, all present come forward to be anointed by each of the seven (or fewer) priests. The rite is identical to that of the Mystery of Unction, except that if there are many people (and seven priests), the anointings may be performed all together at the end of the service, instead of after each reading of the Gospel, to the accompaniment of a repeated refrain to a special Lenten melody: "Hearken to us, O Lord; hearken to us, O Master; hearken to us, O Holy One.").



FLOWERS FOR GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

The Sisterhood is requesting donations of flowers for Holy Friday and Pascha. Usually on Holy Friday, a donation plate is set near the Plachanitsa to help defray the cost of the roses and other flowers that form the wreath around the Plaschanitsa. The potted plants and other flowers which are located on the steps surrounding the Plaschanitsa are usually donated

by parishioners. These flowers not only adorn the Church on Holy and Great Friday, but throughout Pascha. They do not necessarily have to be white lilies but any flower of your choosing. Not only potted plants, but cut flowers in vases are also wonderful. So please, consider bringing a plant to Church with you on Holy and Great Friday. Anyone wishing to help with the flower arranging for Holy Friday is requested to contact Matushka Anna Duncan. Also, volunteers are needed for a few months (October - December 2017) in the upcoming year. If you are interested, please speak to Matushka Anna. Thank you!

PASCHA CHURCH CLEANING - Saturday, APRIL 8th

On Lazarus Saturday, (APRIL 8th) we will have the General Church Spring Cleaning for Pascha. We ask that everyone meets at the Church at 9:00 am. We hope that some of our agile young men will be able to attend so the Iconostas and high window sills may be dusted and washed and also that the Altar be cleaned. The Church will need a good cleaning **BEFORE** Pascha to prepare it for the Feast of Feasts and a good cleaning **AFTER** Pascha. With the extra services and extra people who will be attending the Holy Week and Pascha services, the church will need some extra attention after Pascha - especially the floor. We hope that we will have a good crowd on Lazarus Saturday so the work will go quickly. We will also need to get the Pussy Willows and Palms ready for Palm Sunday. I know everyone is busy trying to prepare their own homes for Pascha – cleaning, baking Kulich and making Paskha, but we hope you can spare a few hours to prepare the Church as well. Thanks.

BLESSING OF BASKETS ON PASCHA

Baskets will be blessed following the Paschal Divine Liturgy, at approximately 2:30 am. Parishioners should bring their baskets to the Church Hall. After the Basket Blessing parishioners are encouraged to stay at the hall and break the fast. Please bring your own food, drinks, plates, cups, forks, etc. There will NOT be a Sisterhood sponsored “Coffee Hour”. Parishioners are asked to please clean up their tables and help with the general cleaning of the hall, removing trash etc. The tables and chairs may remain in place since we will be using the hall for the Pascha Luncheon & Egg Hunt following the Agape Vespers on Sunday.

AGAPE VESPERS - PASCHA LUNCHEON & EGG HUNT

On Pascha (Sunday, April 16th) at 2pm Agape Vespers will be served at the Church. This is a short and beautiful service and all are encouraged to attend. If you were unable to have your Pascha Basket blessed after the Paschal Liturgy, you can have it blessed after the Agape Vespers. Following the Vespers we will have a "Pot Luck" lunch at the Church Hall and all are welcome. Please bring a dish to **share** and whatever you would like to drink. We ask that people please bring their food in throw away aluminum pans so the clean-up will be fast and easy. We hope that everyone will pitch in and help with the clean up. There will be an egg hunt for the children and parents should bring outdoor clothes for their children to change into after the service. We hope that many parishioners will be able to join us and share in the celebration of the Feast of Feasts.

SYNODAL YOUTH CHOIR WEEKEND

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE - On Bright Saturday, April 22nd, the Synodal Youth Choir will be performing a concert at our Parish. We will be joined that weekend by Bishop Nicholas who will be celebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Saturday and possibly Sunday. On Friday evening, April 21st Vigil will be served at 6:00 pm. On Saturday morning, the Youth Choir will sing the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am. After Liturgy, a luncheon will be held at the Church Hall, the cost of the luncheon will be \$20 per person, to make reservations please contact either Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea or Tasia Fedorov. Proceeds from the luncheon will go to the St Vladimir Youth Association and to our Parish. Following Lunch, at 2pm, the concert will be held at the Community Reformed Church right down the street from our Church. The concert is **FREE** but "Good-will Donations" would be greatly appreciated. We hope that the choir will join us for the remainder of the weekend, singing the Vigil service on Saturday evening and Liturgy on Sunday.

We ask that all of our parishioners attend the services, the luncheon and the concert to show support to the Synodal Youth Choir.

PASSION WEEK (Holy Week)

A Scripture Lectionary of the Parables, Epistles and Gospels

A 79-page spiral bound book is available for sale at the Starosta stand that contains all of the Parables, Readings, Epistles and Gospels that are read during Holy Week. The cost of the book is \$15.00 and all proceeds will go to the Fresco Fund. There is a limited number of books available. This is a great book to have so you can follow with all of the readings that take place during Holy Week. It is suggested that once you purchase the book, please write your name on the cover, so it will not be misplaced. If there is great demand for the book, more copies may be made.

PASCHAL SALE

This year Orthodox Pascha and Western Easter fall on the same day which makes it difficult for us to prepare food and have our usual "Big" Sale. The Sisterhood will be making Kulich and Chocolate Eggs. Order forms were available at the Starosta Stand and also in the Church hall, All orders could have been placed by last Sunday, March 26th.

In addition to the Kulich and Chocolate Eggs we have Stollen for sale. We have Marzipan filled Stollen and Cherry filled Stollen. We have a limited number of stollen available. If anyone is interested in purchasing a Stollen (\$10.00) please contact RaeLynn (Anastasia) Gonyea. Thank you!

LENTEN LECTURE

The Lenten Lecture was held on the Sunday of the Cross, March 19th, following the Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour. The speaker was V. Rev. Protopresbyter Peter Alban Heers who is an instructor of Old and New Testament for the Bachelor of Theology and Certificate in Pastoral Studies programs at Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville. A native of Texas, Fr. Peter studied theology in Greece, receiving his Doctor of Theology degree from Aristotle University in Thessalonica in 2013. Fr. Peter has contributed to Orthodox theological and spiritual works through his translations of the writings of Elder (St.) Paisios the Athonite and a monograph, "The Ecclesiological Renovation of Vatican II: An Orthodox Examination of Rome's Ecumenical Theology Regarding Baptism and the Church." Thank you Fr. Peter for a wonderful lecture which was enjoyed by many.

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES

Church School classes are held EVERY Sunday and we hope ALL of the children of our Parish will participate in the classes. The attendance during the past few weeks has not been very encouraging. Parents are requested to PLEASE bring your children to Church School **every** Sunday. It is vital that we keep our many children active in the life of the Church. It is our responsibility to teach them the foundations of our faith when they are young, so they will have the necessary tools to understand their faith. If you are interested in enrolling your child in Church School, please speak to Mat. Anna for more information. If anyone is interested in teaching Church School as a regular teacher or substitute, they are asked to contact Fr. Alexis. Adult discussion groups also take place during the same time as the Church School classes. Church School classes are held BEFORE Liturgy (8:30 AM) on the first and third Sundays of the month - since we have Sisterhood and Council meetings on those Sundays. On the second, fourth and possibly fifth Sunday of the month, classes are held after Coffee Hours.



THE SOFTENING OF EVIL HEARTS A MYRRH-STREAMING ICON OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

WILL BE VISITING OUR PARISH ON MONDAY, APRIL 10th at 6pm. ALL PARISHIONERS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE SERVICES IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS MYRRH-STREAMING ICON.

(Article from Orthodox Word)

Beginning in the first year of its publication (1965) The Orthodox Word has included several articles on miraculous icons of the Mother of God, such as Joy of All Who Sorrow, Pochaev, Korsun, and Tinos, as an introduction to Orthodox piety relatively unknown and exotic in America. Two of these, the Tikhvin and Kursk "Root" icons, important for their antiquity and role in Russian history, had even appeared on American soil as a result of the upheaval of the Revolution. Myrrh-streaming icons have also appeared in our day, especially in traditionally Orthodox countries, and even manufactured reproductions have not been spurned by the Mother of God as vehicles of her untiring intercession and closeness to God's people. Such manifestations have the ability to evoke contrition and awe in the presence of the divine, driving away the cares of this world. In 1999, at the glorification of Matrona "the Blind" of Moscow, Anastasia Basharinaya, the daughter of Margarita Vorobyeva, both of Bachurino, a village on the outskirts of Moscow, placed a lithographic icon of the Mother of God "Softening of Evil Hearts" on the saint's reliquary. Later this ordinary printed icon, mounted on wood and produced at the Sofrino church goods factory near Moscow, began exuding myrrh in their apartment. In time the miracle began attracting visitors to their home and invitations to various churches. Margarita's husband, Sergei Fomin, a former member of the armed services, has for several years been the full-time guardian and traveling companion of the icon, which is now in demand throughout Russia and abroad. The icon "Softening of Evil Hearts" appeared at an unknown time. It is based on the prophecy of St. Symeon the God-receiver when Mary and Joseph brought the forty-day old Jesus to the Temple, A sword shall pierce through thine own soul (Luke 2:35), which was fulfilled as the Virgin witnessed the calumny against her Son during His earthly ministry, and especially at the time of His sufferings and Crucifixion. The number seven, a significant number in Holy Scripture and patristic literature, denotes the fullness of the Mother of God's sufferings of soul. The flow of myrrh from the icon and its fragrance changes according to circumstances. Activity slows during fast periods, especially the first week of Lent and Passion Week. At other times it has foreboded disasters. In 1999, before the terrorist explosions of several apartment buildings in Moscow in which hundreds of people perished, the Theotokos' face on the icon changed: dark circles appeared under her eyes, and the apartment began to smell of incense. Then on August 12, 2000, the day of the Kursk submarine wreck all the crew members on board perished, tiny bleeding wounds appeared on the icon of the Theotokos. The icon gave off the smell of blood prior to the attack on the Twin Towers in New York City in September 2001. When Margarita asked her priest what the meaning of the miracle was, he responded, "This is not for your merits and not for your sins. Learn how to live from this." "And it teaches us to this day," Sergei surmised. "I was baptized only at twenty-five, and through this wonderworking icon I'm learning to be a believer. I've gone with the icon of the Mother of God to many cities. Everywhere they're happy to see us. We go only where invited.... Each trip for me is like the first time! It's difficult to get used to a miracle." Although the icon has undoubtedly had an impact on its guardian, there have been other miraculous interventions. Fomin witnessed the healing of a woman with a paralyzed right arm at the Trinity church in Ostankino, Moscow. He also reports that various infertile couples have conceived, and those with blood diseases or cancer have improved after praying before the icon. Demon-possessed individuals

violently resist approaching the icon. Parishes and hospitals are common venues for the icon's travels, but not exclusively. Sergei Polyakov, vice-president of the Veterans Association, "Alpha" Special Forces Division, admitted that for the last ten years, Molebens have been served before the icon prior to many counter-terrorism operations, and the missions were completed successfully. At Chelyabinsk, a Moleben was served at the district administration building, and the mayor himself was baptized during the visit. "Churches in honor of this icon have been built in two prisons," said Fomin. "One is in the women's section for underage girls in the Ryazan region, where the juvenile criminals serve their sentences for especially serious crimes, including murder. Our benefactors undertook to build a church there. The girls also helped a lot; they even dug the trench for the foundation under the church building and wrote a song about the icon, 'The Softener of Evil Hearts.' In Yaroslavl, a chapel in honor of this icon has been built in the men's section. In Altai, in the city of Barnaul, they built a chapel in an orphanage." At a visit to the Tolga women's monastery in 2005, the following miracles were recorded: "My daughter," related R., a local parishioner, "had been visiting a sect known as the 'New Generation.' She became angry whenever I told her about the Tolga Monastery and its wonderworking icon. Nonetheless I talked her into visiting the Tolga women's monastery. On her first visit she was indifferent and paid no particular attention to the icons or relics. By the mercy of the Queen of Heaven I managed to get her to come back when the icon 'Softening of Evil Hearts' came. The myrrh-flowing miraculous image shook up my daughter. She slowly came to herself and suddenly said, 'You know, Mama, I'm not baptized.' After this she was baptized and started attending the Orthodox Church. I'm so thankful to the Mother of God for this great miracle, that she returned love and understanding to my daughter." This grateful woman then donated her gold engagement ring for the adornment of the icon. Abbess N. was skeptical at first about the myrrh coming from the icon. When she was anointed, due to her unbelief it left a painful red mark on her forehead that looked like a burn. Repenting, she confessed her sin of unbelief to a priest, after which she was anointed a second time. Not only did the red mark disappear, but her soul was filled with peace and consolation. Sergei added, "I remember how in Yalta a paralyzed youth was brought to this icon, and in the evening he could already walk by himself.... A similar incident occurred in Barnaul. On the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God they brought a four-year-old girl, who had been paralyzed from her birth, to this icon. After she was helped to venerate the icon, the next day she began trying to walk, for the first time in her life." In August 2008, Liza, the one-and-a-half-year-old daughter of Anna Ivanovna Kudratseva, caught herpes of the mouth, which progressed after a misdiagnosis. Finally, after medicines failed to improve her condition, she placed a bead of the myrrh from the icon in Liza's mouth. "For the first time since becoming sick, my daughter fell asleep peacefully. In the morning, when Liza awoke, I could not believe my eyes. There were no more putrid growths, only bloody sores which quickly began to heal. My daughter's temperature over the course of the day went down. Liza started to eat and drink a little.... This happened on the eve of the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Thus, since Liza was getting better we hurried to the church and communed the child with the Holy Mysteries. Our daughter was still weak, but her temperature had become normal, and the main thing was that Liza could calmly eat and drink without discomfort." In January 2009, Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow and All Russia (at that time Metropolitan of Smolensk and locum tenens of the patriarchal throne) invited Sergei and the icon to the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church later that month for the election of the new patriarch. When Kyrill was chosen, the icon began producing myrrh abundantly, a fact reported on national television, for which it gained even greater fame. Kyrill later had the icon accompany him for his first pastoral visit to the Ukraine where, since the fall of the Soviet Union, relations between Russia and the Ukraine, as well as between believers in the two countries have been sensitive. While at the Local Council, Archimandrite Luke of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, invited the icon and its guardian to the United States, where they visited many cities and churches last fall (2009). Sergei Fomin relates his experiences: "At the airport [in New York] we were anxious. How would they greet us? How would the trip go? For an interpreter, we had a Russian woman, Tatiana, who worked with American customs. At the check point one of the workers asked us what we were carrying. After looking at the icon, without saying anything, he turned around and ran off somewhere. He returned with five or six of his colleagues. They started to ask us about everything. I saw that the oldest of the group

was wearing an Orthodox cross around his neck. ‘Do you have any sort of memento I can give my ailing wife Rose-Marie?’ he asked. We had some small icon cards which we gave to him and the others. “When we were getting ready to continue our journey, an American woman approached us, also from customs. She put her hand on the suitcase containing the icon, crossed herself in the Roman Catholic way, and started to pray about something for herself. We asked her, ‘Did we give you a little card?’ ‘No,’ she answered, and at the moment we gave her one she started crying, tears coming out of her eyes—she was so obviously surprised. ‘What happened to her?’ wondered the customs workers, and we understood that our visit would be successful. “In Washington we stayed at the home of a priest. He has things which belonged to José Muñoz-Cortez, including the case of the Montreal Iveron icon. ‘Would you like to try it for your icon?’ offered Matushka Maria Potapova. We looked at it. ‘No, it won’t fit. It’s too small.’ ‘Are you so sure? Try it out...’ And what do you think? It turned out the case was as though tailor-made for our icon. “The icon “Softening of Evil Hearts” was in this case while in Washington. Matushka Maria gave us boards prepared by Brother Joseph (he was an iconographer); someday with God’s help a holy image will be fashioned on these boards... And so, two miraculous icons of the Mother of Light—one taken from the world for a time, and another which has appeared, mystically touching it on American soil. “There was a notable occurrence in Burlingame at the All Saints of Russia parish. On September 28, twelve of the fourteen people who had not accepted the Act of Canonical Communion between the Russian Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate came up to Fr. Stefan Pavlenko. Before this, when the Kursk Root icon had come they had not venerated it, but had only stood by and then quietly departed. But this time they venerated and even came up to Fr. Stefan to be anointed. Fr. Stefan was unspeakably thrilled by this. “In Boston, the head of the Russian Church Abroad Mission in Jerusalem met us, Archimandrite Joseph (in the world Francis McClellan). He was suffering from cancer, and doctors had given him only two months to live. I have to say that in America the icon issued myrrh very little; it was damp, but unfortunately there was not enough of the ‘heavenly dew’ to collect. But when we came to the home of Archimandrite Joseph and he prayed before it, to our amazement the icon came alive. Beads of myrrh formed and even flowed. In such a way did the Mother of God respond to his fervent prayer. Not long ago we learned that Archimandrite Joseph had departed to the Lord [†Dec. 5/18 2009]... I want to say that his radiant visage deeply impressed us. “[In Chicago] Bishop Peter met the icon at the airport. When we passed the icon into his hands, there was an abundant flow of myrrh. One of the local priests, who had been a colonel in the American army before ordination, told us that all his life he had been preparing to go to war with Russia, and now he was praying for her. Such a transformation!” The icon has also been to Australia, Georgia, Germany, Slovakia, Mount Athos, and Cyprus, where there is a new church dedicated to this very icon. In the summer of 2010 it made a return visit to the United States. During this trip, on the eve of the feast of the Prophet Elijah (July 20/August 2), this holy icon arrived at the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, remaining there for the festal Liturgy, which was served in the woods, in a small skete dedicated to the holy Prophet. Donations from grateful believers have allowed the construction of a small church in Bachurino, which opened in 2006. Presently, the Divine Liturgy is served there on Sundays and a Moleben is served before the icon on Tuesdays when it is not traveling.

ANNUAL GENERAL PARISH MEETING

Held Sunday, March 26th

The Annual General Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, March 26th following Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour. Opening prayer. The meeting was called to order by Church Secretary, John Richards. Reports were presented by John Gonyea, (Starosta), Natasha Smelova (Church Treasurer); Reader John (Rick) Schuler (Building Fund/Fresco Fund Treasurer); Alex McClure ,(Sisterhood Treasurer); Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea, (Sisterhood President); Tasia Fedorov, (Church School). After the Committees gave their reports, Natasha Smelova (Church Treasurer) presented the proposed 2017 Budget, which was approved.

A motion was made to increase Church Dues from the present \$20 a month for working members to \$30 a month. The motion was passed. Beginning in January 2018 - Church Dues will be \$30 per month for working members; \$10 a month for Pensioners: \$5 per month for non-working and students. Discussion was held that we have approximately 80 dues paying members of the Parish which is a decrease of the 130 Dues paying members we had approximately 10 years ago. Even though we have less dues paying members, we have more than doubled the size in number of parishioners attending the services. Everyone is encouraged to please pay their church dues. Also, please pledge to the Building Fund, Fresco Fund and Rectory Fund. We receive no financial support from outside of our parish. We need everyone to help support the Church; pay the mortgage, priest salaries, insurance, utilities, etc.

The Church Auditors gave their reports and recommendations to the Church Treasurers. The parish would like to thank everyone for their reports and the support of our parish.

Election of Officers to the Church Council - will remain the same, except for the following changes, indicated in red:

Pastor & President - Prototoriest Alexis Duncan
Assistant Priest - Protopriest Michael Fritz
Deacon - Protodeacon Michael Soloviev

Officers:

Starosta - John Gonyea	Asst Starosta - Alexandr Khrykhtin
Asst Starosta Dimitri Soloviev	Asst. Starosta - Yaroslav Horbaty
Church Treasurer - Natasha Smelova	Building Fund Treasurer - John Schuler
Secretary - John Richards	Sisterhood President - Anastasia Gonyea
Sisterhood Treasurer - Alex McClure	ROCC Manager/Treasurer - Anastasia Gonyea
Bookstore Manager - Tatiana Taylor	Newsletter Editor - Tasia Fedorov

Lay Members:

Subdeacon Marcus Hauf	Reader David Taylor
Margo Beighey	Alexandra Sinkevich
Julianne Bouton	Paul Markessinis
Vladimir Usov	

* Any Lay Member who no longer wishes to be on the Church Council should contact Father Alexis immediately.

Julie Bouton gave a presentation about enlarging our current "Taste of Russia" festival to become a three day event, with booths run by individual families. Having this type of Festival (similar to the Greek Churches in the area) has the potential to raise a lot of money, but will also entail a lot of work and manpower. We would need the support and cooperation of the entire parish for this to work.

Father Alexis addressed the Parish and had the following comments and goals for the upcoming year:

- Church School Director - a professionally trained educator who would organize, plan curriculum for the Parish Church School
- Youth Director - to coordinate and plan monthly events for our youth
- Bookstore Manager - to assist Tatiana Taylor with the managing of the bookstore while she is dealing with her health issues
- Yolka Director - someone to work with our youth throughout the year to put on a spectacular Yolka
- Adult Activity Director - plan monthly activities for our adults to participate.
- Special Committee - Fundraising, Hall usage, etc.

Above all else, Fr. Alexis asked that we all be welcoming to any new faces we may see in our Parish. Invite them to Coffee Hour, introduce them to the Priests, Starosta, the Church Treasurer, Sisterhood President, School Teachers, etc.. Answer any questions they may have about the parish. Be friendly, show them that we are truly a "Church Family" and welcome them to our Church home. Show them an alternative of what daily life offers versus what the Church can offer them.

Closing prayer.