

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER APRIL 2018

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 Cherkezov Anastasia Usov
		30	Alexander Kristie

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

I apologize for the lateness of this months Newsletter.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR UPCOMING WEEKS

APRIL 15 th	Brotherhood Coffee Hour Church School & Adult Discussion Group Sisterhood Meeting
APRIL 17 th	Radonitsa - Holy Trinity Monastery 11am
APRIL 22 nd	Coffee Hour - Miller Families Church Council Meeting
APRIL 29 th	Church School & Adult Discussion Group Coffee Hour - N. Smelova, O. Usova, V. Alieyva

EVERY SATURDAY EVENING - VIGIL 5pm

EVERY SUNDAY - HOURS FOLLOWED BY LITURGY - 9:30am



FLOWERS FOR GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY AND PASCHA

Thank you to our Flower Committee for a fantastic job on the flowers for the Plaschanitsa and for Pascha. Thank you to everyone who brought flowers to Church or donated towards the purchase of flowers. The church looked beautiful adorned with so many beautiful flowers. A special thank you to Matushka Anna - for coordinating the flowers.. Thank you!

PASCHA CHURCH CLEANING - Saturday, MARCH 31st

Thank you everyone who came to clean the Church on Lazarus Saturday, March 31st. There was much work to be done, especially since Father Theodore and his helpers just completed the work on the Frescoes just a few days before. THANK YOU to everyone, who made the work go quickly. The Church was bright, clean and fresh for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha. The church will need a good cleaning AFTER Pascha as well. If anyone has some extra time and would like to help scrape the wax off the floor - that would be extremely helpful. Please contact Maria Hauf - 518-253-9286, for more information.

CHURCH CLEANING

Interested in Cleaning the Church?? We need volunteers for the months of April-August. If you can clean the Church during this time, please contact Maria Hauf. She will be able to give you instructions. If the Church is cleaned every week, it is much easier to keep it looking great. We have a beautiful church and are blessed with many young adults to help with this task. We also need men to clean the Altar. Please support the Church and help keep it clean. Thank you.!

NEW ANALOY COVERS

Thank you Mat. Cecelia Soloviev and Barbara Nikiforov for sewing the beautiful Analoy covers. What a difference the new covers made in enhancing the beauty of our church. Thank you for your diligence, hard work and expertise in sewing. GREAT JOB!

NEW TABLE FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD

Thank you Oleg Popov for building the beautiful new table for the commemoration of the dead. How wonderful it is to have a beautiful table that does not have to be covered with fabric. Beautiful!

AGAPE VESPERS - PASCHA LUNCHEON & EGG HUNT

On Pascha (Sunday, April 8th) at 1pm Agape Vespers were served at the Church. We had a nice crowd this year, and a beautiful choir.

Following the Vespers we had a Fundraising BBQ lunch - all you can eat BBQ of chicken, pulled pork, hot dogs, sausages, hamburger, Cole Slaw, Mac & Cheese, Tossed Salad and many desserts for ONLY \$15.00 a person. We had about 100 people in attendance - what a great way to share Pascha - with friends and family - without all of the work of having guest to your home. THANK YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU Brian Farley and Dimitri Soloviev (and Emily Soloviev too), for all of your hard work in coordinating the event, purchasing the food, setting up the hall, cooking all of the DELICIOUS food and the clean-up. GREAT JOB EVERYONE. Not only was it a fun-filled day - we raised money for the Church.

Speaking for myself, this BBQ fundraiser was an awesome event. By the time Holy Saturday comes, I am exhausted from the services of Holy Week. Knowing that I did NOT have to cook for a houseful of people, I was able to take a nap on Holy Saturday after Liturgy. I think the last time that was possible was when I was about 10 years old! After Pascha service and breaking of the fast, I was able to go home and sleep again before the Agape Vespers - WOW. First Pascha in years that I felt rested and was able to enjoy the day. Thank you Everyone.

Thank you Matushka Anna and your helpers for organizing the Egg Hunt for the children. I know they had a great time. The weather could have cooperated a little and the temps could have been warmer - BUT it wasn't raining - so for that - and all other things - we should give thanks to God.

CHURCH SCHOOL and ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Dates for Church School and Adult Discussion Group for the remainder of the year are as follows:

APRIL 15th; APRIL 29th; MAY 13th, MAY 20th

Parents are requested to have their children to the Church Hall by 8:55 so the classes may begin promptly at 9:00 am. It is SO VITAL that our children be educated in the foundations of our faith. They need to have an understanding of the Church services, of the Saints, of the church Feasts. If we educated our children, they will develop a love for the Church that we pray will continue with them for all of their lives. The teachers work hard and spend countless hours preparing for their class - please bring your children so the teachers time is not in vain. Thank you!

ANNUAL GENERAL PARISH MEETING

Held Sunday, March 4th

The Annual General Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, March 4th 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 m(Sisterhood Treasurer); Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea, (Sisterhood President); Tasia Fedorov, (Church School). After the Committees gave their reports, Natasha Smelova (Church Treasurer) presented the proposed 2018 Budget, which was approved.

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.

Fundraising Committee of Julie Boutin and Svetlana Timofeeva was established

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 - Anastasia Gonyea
Bookstore Manager - Tatiana Taylor	Newsletter Editor - Tasia Fedorov

** Anastasia Gonyea resigned as ROCC (Church Hall) Manager - if anyone is interested, they should contact Fr. Alexis immediately.

Lay Members:

Reader David Taylor	Vladimir Usov
Margo Beighey	Matushka Cecelia Soloviev
Julianne Bouton	Paul Markessinis

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.



NEW BABY

CONGRATULATIONS and GOD BLESS: **Kira Faith Nikiforov** born March 13th, 10.6 lbs, 22 1/2 inches long! God Bless her Parents Stacy and Dimitri Nikiforov and her big sisters, Nadia, Ella and Julia, and her grandparents and great-grandparents. Mnogaya Leta dear little Kira and the entire family.



CANON FUNERAL HOME

Cannon Funeral Home is Now Open at their New Location! at 2020 Central Avenue, Albany.

John Cannon has taken care of many funerals from our parish, and with his new location being so close to our Church, it is very convenient. John is familiar with our Church practices, is very professional and

respectful, and has dealt with Holy Trinity Monastery on several occasions, so he knows what to expect For further information please visit www.cannonfuneral.com or call 518.869.1005.

SPRING CLEANING and WANT TO RID YOURSELF OF EXTRA FURNITURE?

We have a parishioner who is moving and is looking for livingroom furniture which is in good shape. She is also looking for household plants and a treadmill. If anyone has some of these items and would like to clean-out their home and also help someone at the same time, please contact Margarita at margarita.todorova1988@gmail.com. Thank you!

RADONITSA - TUESDAY. APRIL 17th

Father Alexis is inviting all of our Parishioners to join him at the Holy Trinity Monastery Cemetery on **Tuesday, April 17th at 11:00am for the celebration of Radonitsa. We will have a picnic lunch after serving a Paschal Panikhida and visiting the graves. Please bring food and drinks to share. Let's pray the weather cooperates and we have a sunny, warmer day. Bring your Commemoration Book or Commemoration Slip to Jordanville, so Father Alexis can commemorate.**

What is a Radonitsa?

"On this day, the Tuesday of St. Thomas week, according to the order instituted by our Holy Fathers, we call to remembrance, in Paschal joy, all those who have died from the beginning of the ages in faith and in the hope of resurrection and life eternal.

"Having previously celebrated the radiant feast of Christ's glorious Resurrection, the faithful commemorate the dead today with the pious intent to share the great joy of this Pascha feast with those who have departed this life in the hope of their own resurrection. This is the same blessed joy with which the dead heard our Lord announce His victory over death when He descended into Hades, thus leading forth by the hand the righteous souls of the Old Covenant into Paradise. This is the same unhopd-for joy the Holy Myrrhbearing Women experienced when discovering the empty tomb and the undisturbed grave clothes. In addition, this is the same bright joy the Holy Apostles encountered in the Upper Room where Christ appeared though the doors were closed. In short, this feast is a kindred joy, to celebrate the luminous Resurrection with our Orthodox forefathers who have fallen asleep.

"There is evidence of the commemoration of the dead today in the writings of the Church Fathers. St. John Chrysostom mentions the commemoration of the dead performed on Tuesday of St. Thomas week in his "Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross."

"Today, the faithful departed are remembered in Divine Liturgies, 'koliva' is prepared and blessed in the churches in memory of those who have fallen asleep, and the Orthodox graves in cemeteries are blessed by the priests and visited by the faithful. On this day alms are given to the poor. Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the great spiritual joy this jubilant commemoration bears, it is called in the Slavonic tongue, 'Radonitsa,' or Day of Rejoicing."

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS DURING BRIGHT WEEK AND THE PASCHAL SEASON

WHAT IS BRIGHT WEEK?

Bright week begins with the Sunday of Pascha, and comes to a close on Bright Saturday, at Vespers. One may actually argue that Bright week comes to a close before the ninth hour (which precedes vespers), since the royal doors and deacons doors, which have been wide open all week, are closed. This is a sad and significant moment. Just like our forefathers Adam and Eve, we cannot remain in paradise in this life, because of our sins. Ours is a life of struggle against our passions, which hold us back from full realization of paradise in this life. The fasting typicon for Bright week is easy to remember - do not fast!. All foods are permitted until the second Wednesday after Pascha, which is a regular fast day, with wine and olive oil allowed.

WHAT ARE THE NORMAL MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS DURING BRIGHT WEEK?

The Paschal Hours are appointed for morning and evening prayers, and all the simple daily services, such as the hours, small Compline, and the Midnight Office.

The Paschal Hours (Usually sung)

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life. (*Thrice*)

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We worship Thy Cross, O Christ, and Thy holy Resurrection we hymn and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know none other beside Thee, we call upon Thy name. O come, all ye faithful, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection, for behold, through the Cross joy hath come to all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, we hymn His Resurrection; for, having endured crucifixion, He hath destroyed death by death. (*Thrice*)

The Hypakoe, Eighth Tone, once: Forestalling the dawn, the women came with Mary, and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, and heard from the angel: Why seek ye among the dead, as though He were mortal, Him Who liveth in everlasting light? Behold the grave-clothes. Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen and hath slain death. For He is the Son of God Who saveth mankind.

Kontakion, Eighth Tone, once: Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice! and giving peace unto Thine apostles: Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

Troparia, Eighth Tone, once: In the grave bodily, but in hades with Thy soul as God; in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

How life-giving, how much more beautiful than Paradise, and truly more resplendent than any royal palace was Thy tomb shown to be, O Christ, the source of our resurrection.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O sanctified and divine tabernacle of the Most High, rejoice! For through thee, O Theotokos, joy is given to them that cry: Blessed art thou among women, O all-spotless Lady.

Lord, have mercy. (*Forty times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify

What very common prayer do we NOT say during Bright week until Pentecost?

The prayer to the Holy Spirit, "O Heavenly King", said in almost every Orthodox prayer service is NOT said from Paschal matins (the first service of the Pentecostarion), which begins at midnight on the Sunday of Pascha, until the Vespers service for Pentecost. Anywhere this prayer occurs it is omitted, and until Ascension Thursday, is substituted with the Paschal troparion (Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life), sung three times. We are like the Apostles during this period, "waiting" for the Holy Spirit to come, and the absence of this prayer makes a strong statement of our profound need for the Holy Spirit.

What feast is celebrated Bright Friday?



The Feast of the Life Giving Spring is celebrated Bright Friday. This icon has a wonderful and comforting appearance. Depicted is an enormous stone chalice, standing in a wide reservoir, filled with water. Above the chalice, holding in Her arms the Preeternal Infant and wearing a crown, hovers the Most Holy Virgin.

To the reservoir filled with life-giving water have streamed those who thirst. The unfortunate and life-weary drink of the water and become strong and invigorated. What a wonderful sign ...

It was the 5th century. At that time, in Constantinople, near the so-called "Golden Gates," there was a grove filled with cypress and plane trees, long since dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos. Within the grove there was a spring, likewise long renowned as a source of miracles. Gradually, the site became overgrown with shrubbery, and the water receded into the mud. Only from the dampness of the earth could one deduce the existence of the spring.

Once upon a time, the warrior Leo Marcellus passed the site, where he met a helpless traveler, a blind man who had lost his way and could not find his way out. Leo helped him get out onto the path, and led the man, weakened by exhaustion, into the shade to rest, while he himself went off in search of water to refresh the blind one. Then he suddenly heard a voice say: "Leo, do not search far off for water. It is close by." Leo, amazed by the mysterious voice, began to look around, but could find no water. As he stood, sad and pensive, the same voice again addressed him: "King Leo! Go into the shade of the grove, draw of the water which you will find there, and give it to the one who thirsts. Place the mud which you find in the spring upon his eyes. Then you will learn who I am, who it is that for so long has blessed this site. Soon I will help you to erect here a church bearing My name, and all who come here and with faith call upon My name will have their prayers answered, and will be completely healed of their sicknesses.

As soon as Leo, hurriedly reaching the appointed place, had taken mud from the spring and placed it on the eyes of the blind man and had given him some of the water to drink, the blind man immediately regained his sight. Without a guide, he went into Constantinople, glorifying the grace of the Theotokos.

This occurred during the reign of Emperor Marcian (391-457).

Emperor Marcian was succeeded by Leo Marceilus (457-473). He remembered the appearance of the Theotokos, and ordered that the spring be cleaned of the ooze; earthworks were built to isolate the stream of that spring from other nearby springs, and the water was confined in a large circular

stone pool, above which was built a church dedicated to the Theotokos.

Emperor Leo called this spring the "Life-giving Spring", for there was revealed the miraculous grace of the Theotokos.

One hundred years after Marcian, reigned the emperor Justinian the Great (527-565), a man greatly devoted to the Orthodox faith. For a long time he suffered from edema, finding no help from doctors, and already considering himself condemned to death. One midnight he heard a voice saying: "You, O king, cannot return to health unless you drink from My spring." The king did not know of which spring the voice spoke, and he fell into despair. Then, during the day, the Theotokos appeared to him, and said: "Arise, O king, go to My spring, and drink of it, and you will be healthy, as you were before." The sick man acted according to the Lady's will. He found the spring, drank of its water, and soon regained his health. Near the church built by Leo, the grateful emperor erected a new magnificent church, where later was founded a populous monastery.

In the 15th Century, the Imperial City fell into the hands of the Muslims. The famous Church of the Life-giving Spring was destroyed, and its building materials were used to construct the mosque of Sultan Bayazet. The church site was covered with earth and crushed stone, so that the very foundations of the church disappeared from sight. The beautiful surrounding areas were turned into a Muslim cemetery. A Turkish sentinel, placed at the ruins of the church, forbade Christians not only to gather at the site, but even to approach there.

Little by little, the strictness of this ban eased, and Christians were permitted to build a small church there. However, in 1821, it was destroyed as well, and the spring itself was filled in. Once again Christians cleaned up the ruins, reopened the spring, and once again drew water from it. Even upon these shards of the former magnificent holy structure, the Theotokos, as before, granted hearings through Her grace. Later, among the broken pieces in one of the windows was found, already half-rotted away through time and dampness, a panel on which were recorded 10 miracles which occurred at the Life-giving Spring during the period 1824-1829.

During the reign of Sultan Mahmoud, the Orthodox received a measure of freedom to conduct religious services. They used it to erect, for the third time, a church above the Life-giving Spring. In 1835, with great pomp, the Ecumenical Patriarch Constantine, celebrating with 20 bishops and an enormous flood of the faithful, consecrated the church which stands to this day. Nearby was built a hospital and alms-house. Even the Muslims spoke with great respect of the Life-giving Spring, and of the Theotokos, Who through it pours out Her grace-filled power. "Great among women Holy Mary" is how they refer to the Most Holy Virgin. The water from the Life-giving Spring they call the "water of Holy Mary."

It is impossible to recount all of the miracles flowing from the Life-giving Spring and bringing grace to kings, to patriarchs, to noted as well as ordinary people. The power of grace acts to this day through the water of the spring. That power is personally experienced not only by Orthodox, but by Catholics, Armenians, and even by the Turks.

