



# THE PARISH PRESS

## St. Philip Orthodox Church



**BABY STEPS TO HOLINESS - SAY THE JESUS PRAYER CONSTANTLY**

### NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

#### **A NEW FACE? A NEW FAMILY?**

We have many Visitors-Inquirers-Catechumens-Parishioners-Stewards who are new to our dear church community. Greet Them. Invite them to Sit with You at our Agape Meal of Coffee Hour. Get to Know Them. Invite Them to Dinner. Pray for Them.

#### **MIRACULOUS ICON**

It was a joy and blessing for us to host Fr. Mark and the Taylor Kardiotissa Mother of God Icon. I am praying for healing of body and soul through God's grace in this beautiful reminder of Christ's presence with His Mother. If you weren't able to attend and would like to be anointed, please ask me after Vespers.



#### **STEWARDSHIP**

Your faithful fulfillment of your pledge of a tithe and offerings is important to the upkeep and ministry of our church. Please consider a year-end additional offering toward one of our special funds. (Consult your tax advisor for potential tax benefits.)

#### **GIVING UPDATES**

**MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION:** Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **January**, we are collecting **Oral Care Products**.



**NON-PERISHABLE FOOD COLLECTION:** We continue to collect non-perishables of all kinds for the food pantries as well.

**NEWSPAPERS:** Salfid Rescue Kennel, our neighbor on Clearview Road, is always in need of old newspapers. Look for the box in the hallway.

**MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR FAITHFUL GIVERS!**

### **A Message from Fr Noah**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After a Gabremariam's funeral recently, I received one of the most simple but meaningful compliments. "Father, thanks for your sermon. Your reminded us of eternity." I had preached quite a long sermon out of love for the deceased and his beloved who were gathered to sing him prayerfully away into God's sole care. But, I don't think that he was criticizing the length of my sermon. Thank God!!!

It is with eternity in mind that I am approaching the new calendar year. It is upon us in the midst of the celebrations of the two great epiphanies of God, in Christ's Birth and Baptism. God has brought eternity into the world of time by Christ's birth and manifestation in the Jordan. Jesus Christ, in His Body the Church, invites us to transform the years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds of our life into an encounter with eternity.

How is this done? By prayer (Pray without ceasing!) we can stay connected to God's grace. By repentance we can constantly fix the eye of our heart upon the Lord. By almsgiving (financial, emotional, mental) we can share God's love with everyone in our life.

As this new year dawns, I invite you to commit yourself to a renewed sense of eternity, to brief days of your life, and God's call to you to be a saint. And may we join, after Many Years!, the Saints and Angels and our beloved departed in Christ in the eternal brightness of God's countenance.

By God's grace,

+ Fr. Noah

### **Mark Your Calendar:**

#### Services for Theophany

**Tuesday, January 5 - Strict Fast Day**

Royal Hours 10 am

Vespers 6 pm

Great Blessing of Water

**Wednesday, January 6**

Matins 9 am, Liturgy, 10 am

Great Blessing of Water

**Sunday, January 10**

Outdoor Blessing of Water,

1 p.m. - Lake Lenape Park



#### Introduction to Orthodoxy II

*Living the Faith*

(Catechumens, Inquirers, & Refresher)

Saturdays at 4:15 p.m., Jan 9 - Feb 27

#### St Gabriel the Confessor

*Saturday, January 16, 7 pm*

Presented by Niko Chocheli

#### Orthodox Thought and Culture

January 24 following Liturgy.

#### Services for Presentation of our Lord

*Monday, February 1*

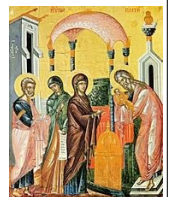
Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Candle blessing

*Tuesday, February 2*

Matins 9 am, Liturgy 10 am

Candle blessing



#### Bible Study

*The Resurrection in the Old Testament*

Presented by Subdn. Benjamin Daniel

Saturdays at 4:45, March 5 - April 16

- Publican & Pharisee: February 21
- Prodigal Son: February 28
- Meatfare: March 6
- Cheesefare: March 13
- Lent begins: March 14
- Palm Sunday: April 24
- Pascha: May 1, 2016

#### Parish Life Conference

June 29 - July 3

At the Antiochian Village  
WWSTL

#### **ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE**

Summer Camp registration has begun!

Visit [www.avcamp.org](http://www.avcamp.org). Scholarships are available. (Your contributions to the scholarship fund are appreciated!)

**Did You Know?**

- During the **Megalynarion** of the Divine Liturgy (usually, "It is truly meet") we can and should be praying in our hearts for our departed beloved. At this time the priest or deacon is reading diptychs (lists) of departed.
- **Great Vespers** is a beautiful, peaceful service that prepares our hearts for the Divine Liturgy through its theologically rich hymns. It is a great service to bring someone to for the first time.
- **Coffee hour** is a vital ministry of hospitality. Please help us keep this tradition of fellowship strong in our parish. Remember, it doesn't have to be a meal; just a refreshing snack is sufficient.
- Our parish **website** is rich with resources. Check it out: [www.st-philip.net](http://www.st-philip.net). Our site receives an average of about 110 visitors per day, from all over the world!
- You can be an **apostle and an evangelist** in your daily life. Ask God to use you for His purposes and then be bold and humble in sharing the peace with God and man that you have!
- **God loves you!**

**Baby Steps to Holiness**

**January: Say the Jesus Prayer Constantly**

We all want peace and joy. These are elusive goals until we discover and use the key!

The key is right in front of us: "pray without ceasing!" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

As a child or a young man, I might have thought of this as boring. But now, when I am on top of it, it is a source of great joy and peace for me. If God is with us, who can be against us? If we are clinging to heavenly joy, how can we be sour?



How do I start? Ask for God's help, consciously remember His presence and love, and then under your breath, say: "Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," or another form of the Jesus Prayer. Whenever you notice that you've stopped saying the prayer, just start again!

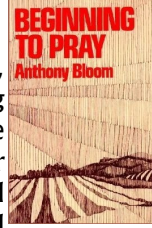
It will start as a struggle, develop into a habit, and flourish as an eternal joy!

If you are truly trying to pray, you will need help. Ask Fr Noah, Fr James, or Fr Boniface.

**Book Recommendation**

**Beginning to Pray**

by Anthony Bloom



This is a very lively, personable, and inspiring introduction to prayer. The book begins with the chapter "The Absence of God" and then unfolds the path to find Him. Anyone wanting to draw near to God will benefit from reading this contemporary classic.

**Missions Minute**

As Jewish Christianity originated at Jerusalem, so **gentile Christianity started at Antioch**, then the leading center of the Hellenistic East, with Peter and Paul as its apostles. From Antioch it spread to the various cities and provinces of Syria, among the Hellenistic Syrians as well as among the Hellenistic Jews who, as a result of the great rebellions against the Romans in AD 70 and 130, were driven out from Jerusalem and Palestine into Syria.



**Everyday Evangelist**

*"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (Jn 20:21)*

Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. *Acts 8:4*

**OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST**

is offered to **Zewdie Beye** and all the family of **Gabremariam Tsadik**, who reposed in the Lord on December 7. The funeral was held at St Philip's on December 12, with burial in St Philip's Cemetery.

**MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

**Challenge for 2016:  
Pray Without Ceasing  
(1 Thessalonians 5)**

This prescription from St. Paul to the Christians in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:17) is just as important for us today. Always Keep God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and all the saints and angels and your family and parish before your mind's eye. Truly remember God and remember to constantly ask and thank Him for his help, guidance, protection, blessing, and love. Let's do this together with the Jesus Prayer: "Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me."

**Ask Abouna**

**Previous Question:** Why are house blessings such an important part of our life in Christ's Church?

**Answer:** The annual house blessing by the priest is an ancient and venerable practice. It is a joy and also a duty of the clergy and parishioners. But, it is much more than that. It is an opportunity for our homes and families to be taken back from our laziness and evil influences and reclaimed for God.

Our homes are mini-churches, the Micro-Ecclesia, and the arena of our spiritual warfare. If don't feel desperate to invite God's holiness into our lives, to save us from slow slipping away from God, then we aren't really living the Christian life of struggle, repentance, prayer, ministry, and spiritual growth.

Schedule your home blessing in the narthex.

We are grateful to be,  
Your Humble Servants In Christ,  
+ Fr. Noah

**New Question:** What is the new Center for Orthodox Thought and Culture at Eastern University?

**On the Use of Holy Water**

One should have at home enough Theophany water so that it will last the whole year, and make use of it at every need: in cases of illness, leaving on a journey, whenever one is upset, students when going to examinations. They do well who daily, before eating any kind of food, drink a little Holy Water. It strengthens the powers of the soul--if it is done, of course, with prayer and reverence, and one does not merely expect from it a mechanical result.

- St. John Maximovitch

**Wisdom  
From a Bishop**

We don't exclude the children from the service, even if they are noisy for a few minutes. We have to learn how to be patient. I feel happy when I see kids in the Church, I feel that the Church is in good shape and a new generation is growing up to take the lead. I need for one of them to become the bishop, or a priest, or a deacon when it comes time for us to depart this life.

+ Metropolitan JOSEPH