



THE PARISH PRESS



St. Philip Orthodox Church

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "DON'T GIVE IN"

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

CHRISTMAS CARDS TO THE ST PHILIP'S FAMILY



As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Saviour's birth, we help various Orthodox monastic communities, missionary situations, and charitable services. This is accomplished by asking members to forego sending cards to many within our St. Philip's family, and to send just one card to the entire church community - taking the savings from the cost of cards and postage, and enclosing a contribution which will be distributed among these groups. All cards will be displayed. Cards can be mailed to the Church or placed in the offering basket.



GIVING UPDATES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **November & December**, we are collecting **Turkeys**.

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

FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP

"One Body In Christ"

The Forty Days have come and gone, and we now have 63 pledges for 2019 totaling \$164,784. Your Stewardship - Time, Treasure, Talent - is essential to our parish!

If you haven't done so, please return your pledges and also consider an extra year-end gift to the church. It may bring you a tax benefit, certainly a heavenly reward and it will give these worthy funds/projects a boost:

- + Needy
- + Camp Scholarship
- + Library
- + Pastoral Discretion
- + Property Acquisition
- + Chapel
- + Beatification (Iconography)



A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Glory to Jesus Christ!

In a recent discussion on *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Wednesday night following 6pm Compline, please attend and be blessed!) we addressed the "remembrance of death" - which features prominently in religious and philosophical literature throughout time. Our discussion centered on articulating yet again what makes for a Christian remembrance of death? This is something that has come up with many parishioners, catechumens, and, recently, family members (during my dad's extended illness - thanks for your continued prayers for Michael).

The answer is simple, profound, and beautiful. **It is thankfulness for life.** We don't sit around fearing, lamenting, or cursing death. We are sobered and brought to repentance by the fact of our mortality; yet we rejoice and are given zeal by the great fact of our immortality, which is a gift of God and, with Christ's coming, an invitation to abundant, true, unending life.

If there is so much joy and pleasure in this life (in marriage, family, friendship, study, prayer, success, work, creativity, food, nature, recreation, ministry, generosity, hospitality, etc.) where we see God's love but dimly, how much more joy is awaiting us in all of these elements illumined perfectly with the eternal dawning of infinite light, life, and love!

Maybe it's my old-age creeping up on me, but I'm thankful that this life - as blessed as I am, truly beyond words - is just the beginning of God's bounty.

With that in mind, I would like to correct one of my favorite schoolboy phrases. *Carpe Diem* ("Seize the day") is rightly understood as *Carpe aeternum* ("Seize eternity"). For Jesus Christ, in His incarnation, has seized us for eternity, and offers it to us each moment in prayer, repentance, service, and especially the sacraments.

Lord, thank You for these blessings of quiet, reflection, and repentance! Lord, thank You for blessings already bestowed and blessings yet to come! It is good to be Your guest now and ever; may we be Your guests unto ages of ages. Amen!

In Jesus Christ, our Life,
+Fr. Noah

Mark Your Calendar:

Advent Retreat

Saturday, December 8

with Drs. David & Mary Ford
"The First & Second Comings of Christ"

Bp THOMAS Visit

December 22-25

Nativity of Christ

Sunday, December 23

Sunday School Christmas Program, 12:30 pm

Monday, December 24

Royal Hours 8:45 am, Vespers Liturgy 10 am
Festal Orthros 8:45 pm, Hierarchical Liturgy 10 pm

Tuesday, December 25

Vespers for Synaxis 12 pm

Wednesday, December 26

Orthros for Synaxis 9 am,
Liturgy for Synaxis 10 am



Circumcision & St. Basil - New Year's

Monday, December 31

Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm, Orthros, 7 pm
Talent Show 8 pm, (See Sandy Miller to participate!)

New Year's Prayers 10 pm

Tuesday, January 1

Divine Liturgy 10 am, New Year's Prayers 11:30 am

Theophany

Saturday, January 5

Royal Hours, 8:15 am
Divine Liturgy, 10 am & Great Blessing of Water, 11:15 am

Great Vespers & Artoklasia, 6 pm

Sunday, January 6

Orthros 8:45 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am
Great Blessing of Water, 11:30 am

Outdoor Blessing of Water
@ Lenape Park, 1 pm

Feast of Presentation

February 1-2, 2019

Beginning of Lent

March 11, 2019

We live Pascha to Pascha!

April 28, 2019

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST

to the Dovi family upon the passing of Elizabeth Dovi, who reposed on Nov 28. The funeral will be held here. Details pending.



MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!



Spiritual Warfare:

Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ

“Don’t Give In”

I (Rdr. Justin) recall one book that left a particular impression on me as a child. It was about a young boy who was so taken with a scrumptious, giant, red gumdrop at a local store that he couldn’t resist the urge to steal it—even though the older man who owned the store was his friend. The feelings of guilt and betrayal he experienced, as his conscience confronted him, caused him to repent and return the item, and ask for forgiveness.

That story is but a kind of parable of the story of Adam & Eve in the Garden. They looked, they coveted, they took, they tasted, and they were ashamed in their loss of innocent communion with God. And of course, this is *our* story—both as history and as paradigm.

Rather than see the good things we are surrounded with, receive them in faith, and offer them back to God in thanks and praise, we have the tendency to *grasp*, to *take*, as if we who are made in God’s Image and are continually nourished through the Sacramental Life of the Church somehow *lack something!*

Let us be sober & vigilant in our spiritual warfare, then, and take full stock of the immense “arsenal” at our disposal in and by the power of the Spirit. We *can* say no to temptation, to despair, to Christ-denying thoughts, beliefs, and actions. We are not “fated” to fall; our lapses are not inevitable.

Through the prayers of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, may we persevere in our confession unto the end!



Pray for our Catechumens!

Our Catechumens are Tatiana (Sze), Evan, Tina, and Rebecca. Keep Rebecca especially in prayer as she prepares for Chrismation on Dec 16!

Challenge for 2018:

Keep the Feasts & the Fasts

In Scripture, Holiness almost always seems to involve some combination of reduction & fullness. Those called into fuller experiences of God’s presence and work are usually required to shed things—shoes, clothes, food, physical pleasure, and of course sins and impurities. We could think of Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, St. John the Forerunner, and the people of Israel as a whole at Sinai. And yet, this reducing is the necessary first step in receiving, of entering in to the new reality God is bringing about.

So with us. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews pictures our Life in Christ as an athletic contest, which is also the Father’s means of instructing us unto a partaking of His holiness (cf. Hebrews 12). In order to run this race, we must be ready and willing to *cast off* the sins that so easily beset us.

As we continue through this period of Preparation & Anticipation, let us “clean house” so that our participation in the newness of Christ’s Nativity and Theophany will be unto fullness!



Looking ahead to the Challenge for 2019 —

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

“How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation.”

(Ps 118:97 LXX)

Ministry Reading Group Report

On Saturday, November 17, Fr Noah, Fr James and a group of men from St. Philip’s met for breakfast to begin exploring and discerning the various ways we are called to minister in love in and to Christ’s Church, using the text, *If You Love Me* by Matthew the Poor, as our sounding board. Pray for this group that its continued meetings would bear much fruit!

Holy Mysteries

Basil Muzekari was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on Nov 18.

MAY GOD GRANT HIM MANY YEARS!



“The Meaning of Christmas”

By: Caleb Hyatt

Andrew sat at the family table, ready to feast on the display of food. The cranberry sauce, the eggnog, the pies, the potatoes, the *ham!* All the tempting aromas tickled his nose. He picked up his fork, about to serve himself when a hand smacked his, snapping him out of his dreaming.

“We have yet to pray, Andrew!” said his mother, “It’s His birthday, after all. It should mean something to you.”

What did it mean to Andrew? Well, Christmas was a time for presents, naturally. It was also a celebration, which means food. Family. Isn’t that what Christmas is supposed to be about?

What does the Orthodox Church teach us about Christmas? Discuss this with your family.

Did You Know?

- **The Fast is Continuing** – Let us continue in prayer and preparation to receive the Savior.
- Stay connected with parish life by synching with our calendar on **Google Calendar**. See <https://www.st-philip.net/calendar.html> for instructions on how to add the parish calendar to your own device.
- An Orthodox Christian ought to **come to confession** at least four times per year and as needed.
- Reminder! **Let your Amazon purchases support St Philip's!** Simply click the Amazon Logo in the right panel of every page of our website to begin your shopping. Our commission ranges from 1% to 10%. (Note: This is not Amazon Smile, which pays only 1/2%, so you won't find us on their list.)



- Our **parish website** is rich with resources. Check it out: www.st-philip.net. And if you haven’t already, check out our parish podcast titled **Living Orthodoxy**, produced by Sdn David and Rdr Justin. Included are **discussions** of the liturgical year (e.g., feasts & fasts), weekly **homilies**, and **interviews** from a variety of people. It can be accessed on the parish website (at the bottom of the home page) for **download** / subscription. They welcome your feedback!

