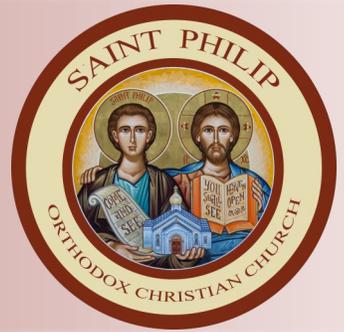


# THE PARISH PRESS

## St. Philip Orthodox Church

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### NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

#### GIVING OPPORTUNITIES!

**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.

#### Winter/Cool-Weather Gear Drive:

Thanks to all who have already contributed to the Winter Clothing drive for St. George the Great Martyr Orthodox Church in Pharr, TX! So far thirty items have been shipped over three shipments. All items have been in excellent condition. **Please continue to donate as able (until Dec 1)!** Father Antonio's parish food pantry and clothing closet serves on average 120 families, about 500 people, who need your help to stock its clothing closet for the needy. Please put new or very nearly new cool weather gear such as jackets, sizes babies to adults, in the marked box in the hallway.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR  
FAITHFUL GIVING & SERVICE!

#### FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP

##### "Fervent in spirit serving the Lord"

"If, [under the Old Covenant] where the getting of wealth was allowed and the enjoyment of it, and the care of it, there was such provision made for the succoring of the poor, **how much more in that Dispensation [of the New Covenant], where we are commanded to surrender all we have?**"

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*

"Set aside part offerings and tithes and first fruits to Christ, the true High Priest, and to His ministers, even tithes of salvation to Him . . . Your fruits and the work of your hands present to him, that you may be blessed; ... and that he may dispense also to those who are in want, to each as is just for him." — From the third-century document "Teaching of the Apostles"

<http://ww1.antiochian.org/node/16719>



### A Message from Fr. Noah

Dear St. Philip's Family, Christ is in our midst!

During this "Forty Days of Growth in Stewardship" we are counting our blessings, discussing our budgets, and softening our hearts to commit to supporting our parish with tithes for 2020. This is all part of the "crown of the year" in which the society mimics the nature in the harvest with thanksgiving. This is stewardship in nature, in culture, in the church, in our homes, and in our hearts. Our gathering, our serving and our tithing are different aspects of stewardship. Within the financial aspect of stewardship we can run into two approaches, **Devotional and Operational.**

First, and foremost, our generosity is a response of thanksgiving and obedience who has given us everything. It is for our spiritual growth, our devotion, that we are asked to give to the parish and above that to the needy. In the devotional view of giving, we give because we have received, we give to demonstrate our thanks, and we give so that we don't become self-satisfied. In giving devotionally we cooperate with God to change our hearts and prepare us to once and for all lay aside all earthly cares such that we are able to take up our abode in Abraham's Bosom.

Secondly, and practically, it is the way the church can operate. It is the for the growth of the church and the salvation of souls that we give of our treasures, not to mention our time and our talent. God's work at St Philip's will not continue without stewardship. In the operational viewing of generosity we give in order to help the church fulfill its mission. In devotional giving, we cooperate with God to change other people's hearts, investing in the Kingdom of heaven, raising the light of the glory of God so that all around us can experience the healing of Christ.

Sometimes these two approaches are seen as exclusive. They are not. In fact, they are co-essential. Devotion and Operation are both critical and mutually supportive in the Christian life. Join me in growing in generosity both devotionally and operationally. Give and live generously, for the glory of God, both for yourselves and for others!

In the Risen Lord Jesus Christ,  
+Fr. Noah

### Mark Your Calendar:

**Information Meeting:**  
**Orthodox School at St. Philip**  
Sunday, Nov 10 after Coffee Hour  
A school at St. Philip is a real possibility. We have the need and we have the talent! Please pray, dream, and join the conversation on Sunday, Nov 10th, following coffee hour.

**St. Philip Feast Day**  
Wednesday, Nov 13

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Thursday, Nov 14  
Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am  
Festal Potluck to follow.

**Nativity Fast Begins**  
Friday, November 15  
Advent Paraklesis most Wed/Fri 7pm during Fast

**Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos**

Wednesday, Nov 20  
Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Thursday, Nov 21  
Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am  
Fasting Potluck to follow

**Thanksgiving Liturgy**  
Thursday, Nov 28, 9 am

**St. Nicholas**  
Thurs, Dec 5 - Vespers & Artoklasia w/  
Youth Choir 7 pm, Youth Activity 8 pm  
Friday, Dec 6 - Orthros 9 am, Liturgy 10 am

**Taylor Kardiotissa Icon Visit**  
Friday evening, December 13

**Feast of the Nativity of Christ**  
Tuesday, December 24

Royal Hours, 9 am  
Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil, 10 am  
Festal Orthros, 9:30 pm  
Divine Liturgy, 11 pm  
Wednesday, December 25  
Vespers for the Synaxis of the Theotokos, 12 pm  
Thursday, December 26  
Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am



**OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST** is extended to Louise Shaheen & family upon the repose of Larry Shaheen, who fell asleep in the Lord on October 21. The funeral was held at St. Philip's on Oct 25.

MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

### Holy Mysteries

**James Patrick**, son of Frank & Monica Chilbert, was baptized into Christ here at St Philip on Oct 27.



MAY GOD GRANT HIM MANY YEARS!

## Ministry Together

w/ Sdn David Hyatt



*"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ..."* (Josh 24:15)

Who do you serve? We all serve someone. In the beginning we were created to serve God, living as His image-bearers in the world, serving as stewards of creation in a way that is fruitful and harmonious, and growing to become gods with God.

But with Adam and Eve we made another choice, inspired by the Deceiver and motivated by pride. The choice was to serve ourselves and try to become gods without God. This choice brought conflict, the degradation of creation, and ultimately idolatry and murder.

Each day we are faced with choices about whom we will serve with the time allotted to us that moment. God or Self? Our passions or the virtues of Christ? Comfort or struggle? You have a choice.

St. Joshua, son of Nun (Navi), was the leader of the nation of Israel after the Holy Prophet Moses died. At the end of his life he addressed the people (Josh 24:14-15), and after reminding them of all God had done for them, he said,

*Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in justice and righteousness. Remove the foreign gods your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord. But if it does not please you to serve the Lord, choose gods for yourselves.... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, because He is holy.*

The choice that Joshua gives the Israelites is striking to me. After all that God has done for His people, they are given the choice to walk away. If not God, then choose your own god to serve because we all serve someone. It really is your choice whom you will serve, to whom you align yourself. May it be true of us each day – as individuals, families and a parish – that we will respond with St. Joshua, "we will serve the Lord."

## Did You Know?

- **The Fast is Coming Up** – Pray and Plan for a Profitable Advent.
- Build Saturday evening **Vespers** into your weekly routine. If you make this investment in the rhythm of prayer you will reap dividends in joy and peace! Confession is available following vespers. Bring a friend or family member.
- **Future St. Nicholas House Update** – We are getting closer to closing on the agreement of sale. We are awaiting the blessing for the Metropolitan.
- Pray for, welcome, and get to know our many **Catechumens**, and learn from them about our newly rededicated "St Boniface Catechetical School."

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**  
**Saturday, November 9 @ 8 am**  
*A time of sharing & encouragement*  
 Discussion Topic: "The Whole Armor of God"

## Parenting Suggestion

From *Parenting Toward the Kingdom* by Philip Mamalakis:  
 "To parent toward the Kingdom requires us to improve the way we interact with our children in every situation and to connect our hearts and homes to Christ and His Church. In this way our children experience the love of God in the home and encounter Christ and His Church in the center of it" (p. 317).



## Evangelism Challenge

"Invite Someone to Church"

In September, the theme for the month was deliberately getting to know your neighbors and coworkers and looking for ways to serve them. In October, the theme was practicing dying to self that Christ may increase in your life. This month follows up on those two themes: invite someone to church.

But not yet.

Think about who you would invite to church. But have you already invited them to your home? Do they know you? Do they feel comfortable around you? Have they had an opportunity to see your faith lived out? Do they know that you are Orthodox? Do they even know what that means? Be aware that a great many people have stopped any form of religious attendance due to past hurts. Be sensitive to those hurts and fears.

It's awkward going to a new church. It's even more awkward when that church is as radically different from standard American religious conventions as the Orthodox Church. But the worst is to go to an Orthodox church without being certain if the person who invited you is a friend. And most people will be hesitant to accept an invitation from a near-stranger or casual acquaintance. So before you invite someone to St. Philip's, make sure that you have first invited them into your home and into your life.

It is nice to go to a parish as warm and friendly as St. Philip's. It is nicer to go with a friend.



## "Making a Defense":

Explorations in Orthodox Apologetics

CREATION, ETERNAL OR CAUSED?

For centuries, scientists have held that the universe is eternal, without beginning. In the early 1900's evidence began to emerge that called this view into question and eventually laid it to rest.

Why is this significant? Well, an eternal universe does not need a creator, and this scenario supports the atheist worldview. The Cosmological Argument (otherwise known as a First Cause argument) is one of the chief philosophical arguments for the existence of God. First Cause Arguments go back to ancient Greek philosophy, which posited that the "first cause" created the universe, while itself being uncaused. This argument states:

1. Everything that has a beginning has a cause.
2. The universe had a beginning.
3. Therefore the universe had a cause.

Premise 1 is the Law of Causality, a fundamental law of science without which science is impossible. Science at its root is a search for causes. To deny the Law of Causality is to deny rationality. Sorry, atheists cannot avoid this.

Premise 2 is our focus here. We will look at a **SURGE** (Turek) of evidence that will show us why science now believes in a beginning of the universe. The **S** in the acronym stands for **Second Law of Thermodynamics** which is an essentially undisputed tenet of modern science

which says that all the energy in the universe is running down, being converted into unusable energy. If the universe is infinite into the past, then it would have fizzled out by now. So no infinity, sorry.

The **E** in **SURGE** stands for **Einstein**, who in 1916, worked out his theory of General Relativity (yes,  $E=mc^2$ ), which predicted that the universe could not be eternal and static, that it had to be in a state of contraction or expansion.

The **U** stands for **Universe Expanding**. In the 20s, Russian mathematician Alexander Friedmann and Belgian astronomer and Catholic priest George Lemaitre separately predicted an expanding universe based on Einstein's work. In the late 1920s Edwin Hubble invited Einstein to the Mt. Wilson Observatory to observe the red doppler shift of galaxies moving away from earth and each other, confirming an expanding nature of the universe.

These discoveries led to the formulation of the Big Bang theory which was based on Lemaitre's "hypothesis of the primeval atom" or "Cosmic Egg." Tracing the expansion in reverse takes us back to a point where the universe was compact, dense, and hot, and then exploded into existence.

The scientific community knew at this point that the static eternal universe was in danger of being dethroned by a changing universe requiring a beginning. Efforts ensued to try to offer alternative explanations, including oscillating universe and steady state theory and time light hypothesis and other models to try and keep God

out of history. These were proved inadequate and later dropped. Additional evidence would cement the Big Bang in Cosmology.

Then came **R**, the **Radiation Afterglow**. In 1965 Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson of Bell Labs in Holmdel, NJ, discovered the remnant heat coming off the universe from the Big Bang. Agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow stated "the Big Bang theory has no competitors."

The **G** stands for **Galaxy seeds** which were variations in the background heat which allowed for galaxy formation, discovered by the COBE (cosmic background explorer) satellite, a project headed by George Smoot, who announced the results in 1992. He announced, "It's like looking at God."

The atheist Stephen Hawking declared this "the most important discovery of the century, if not all time." Separately, in 2003, the COBE findings were fortified by NASA's WMAP satellite.

The state of current scientific understanding coheres with the Cosmological Argument and our Confession: "I believe in One God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Soon, we'll take a look at what scientists have to say about these findings and what kind of cause we are talking about.

Resources:

1. *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, 2004.
2. *Talking with your Kids about God*, by Natasha Crain, 2017.