

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

A Word from Father Rick


**Church is Here to Help Heal
(State of the Parish Address, 12-3-2017)**

Today we will have our *annual parish assembly* meeting to review our programs and ministries, and set the budget for next year. Parish assemblies can be a little anxiety-provoking because we tend to worry about money. Will there be enough to meet the budget? Can we afford this, can we afford that? Certainly, we need to be practical and prudent but most of all we need to be faithful to God. In the world, we are surrounded by so many people and things that influence us to minimize God's role in our life, perhaps even doubt His existence and His great love for us.

Therefore, let us prepare ourselves for our meeting today by focusing on the *Gospel* reading we just heard. In the *14th Sunday of Luke* (18:35-43), the *blind man of Jericho* sat by the road begging (v.35). When he hears a great crowd passing by, he inquires as to what is happening (v.36). They tell the blind man that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by (v.37). The man must have known of Jesus' fame for healing people because he immediately cried out, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (v.38). When some of the people tried to quiet/shush him, the blind man cried out even louder, "*Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (v.39). Jesus heard the blind man's cry and gave orders that he be brought to Him (v.40). Then, Jesus does something interesting. He asks the blind man a question, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" (v.41).

My brothers and sisters, here is the key to our relationship with our parish community, especially as we chart its future course today in the parish assembly meeting. The Church is the Body of Christ! (1Corinthians 12:27) and each one of us is a member of the Body. Thus, *Christ is asking each one of us* today, and every day for that matter, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" In other words, "What do you want Me, the Church, to do for you?" Think about that. The question is meant for us to look deep within ourselves to determine our true motivations for why we are here at St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

When Jesus poses the question to the blind man in the Gospel, how does the man respond? He tells

Jesus, "*Lord, that I may receive my sight.*" (v.41). In other words, "*Lord, I want you to heal me.*" Healing, therapy, curing of illnesses and sicknesses—*that's why we should be here—to receive healing and to give healing*. Now, when we think of illnesses and sicknesses, our mind immediately goes to physical maladies, some are minor like arthritis and some are much more serious like cancer. But *how many of us actually approach Christ* in the Church for physical healing? How many of us ask the priest (who is the living icon of Christ in the parish community) to pray for us and anoint us with the Sacrament of Holy Unction? "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Even more important than physical illnesses are *spiritual illnesses*. The blind man is an image or a symbol of a person whose mind, heart and soul has been blinded by sin and the passions. We may be in relatively good physical health but all of us are touched, to one degree or another, by spiritual illnesses. The *passions* are the good, natural inclinations that have become distorted and perverted within us. They include pride, greed/avarice, anger/wrath, jealousy/envy, lust, gluttony, and sloth/laziness. The passions can cause us to *sin* both in what we say and what we do. Taking the Lord's name in vain, not honoring our parents, taking another life, committing adultery and fornication, stealing, and lying are well known in the Ten Commandments. Gossip, verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse are also very serious.

Do we even take the time to do a *self-examination* to see the *symptoms* of our spiritual illnesses? And if we become aware of them, *what do we do about them?* Do we go to Christ in the Church and ask for forgiveness, partaking in the Sacrament of Confession with the priest? "What do you want Me to do for you?"

When the blind man told Jesus that he wanted to receive his sight, "*Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well'*" (v.42). Our faith, *our deep abiding trust in God, is what brings healing*, for both body and soul. Faith is what enables our community to bring healing to others. People talk all the time about why certain persons are less active, or no longer active in church, or they go to a different parish. I assert

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House Blessings

During the Feast of Theophany, we also celebrate the Agiasmos or Holy Water Blessing service. Remembering Christ's baptism and cleansing of the Jordan River, we ask Him and the Holy Spirit to cleanse and sanctify the water offered to Him. Then the priest takes that water and sprinkles the faithful. Is this not also a re-participation or a renewal of our baptism? To emphasize the reality, strong



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Orthodox tradition at the time of Theophany is for the faithful to invite the priest to their home to bless it with the Holy Water from the Agiasmos. Thereby, the sanctifying waters of the Jordan are brought into each and every home to make holy its structure and inhabitants.

Father Rick is available to come to your home to bless it. The priest's presence does not require complicated planning or preparation. A brief visit to bless your home can be done at any time. The only thing that is needed is a large serving bowl of water, an icon, a candle, incense with charcoal and burner, and a small sprig of fresh basil. Please call or email to schedule a house blessing. It's a great way to start the new year.

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that the main reason, no matter what anyone else says, is because their faith in God has faltered. They might say it's something else but if one really digs deep, this is the primary cause—lack of sufficient trust in our Lord.

The reason I say that is because **it is we who confine or restrict the role of Jesus Christ and the Church in our life**, not the other way around. If we do not even bother to attend Divine Liturgy and other worship services, if we do not come regularly for Holy Unction, Holy Confession and the Holy Eucharist, is it not we ourselves who limit Christ and the Church in our life? You have heard me speak many times about these issues but I do it to raise awareness that these are some of the basic symptoms of spiritual illness.

If we come late and miss most of the Divine Liturgy, but we are here on time for Holy Communion, we've turned the Church into a **drive-through spiritual McDonalds**. If mainly come for Sunday School, we've limited the Church to just that--a **school**. If we mainly come for Greek School, Greek dancing, Festival of Nations and the Greek Festival, we've limited the Church to an **ethnic club**. If we mainly come for fellowship hour or other community gatherings, we've limited the Church to a **social club**. If we mainly come to do Loaves and Fishes or FOCUS, then we've limited the Church to a **social service agency**. If we mainly come do discuss the financials at parish assemblies, then we've limited the Church to a **business**. Sunday School, Greek School, Greek Festival, fellowship, missions and benevolence, are not bad evil things. However, like our good human desires that get distorted to become passions that lead us away from Christ, the same can happen with good ministries and programs of the parish community.

The Church itself, as the Body of Christ, is not limited. For Christ Himself said the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Mt.16:18).

However, **the role that the Church plays in our life, and our role in the life of the Church**, can be limited by us if we are not careful. In addition, if the number of parishioners who impose these limits reaches a critical mass, then the local parish will begin to contract its presence in everyone's life, because it will not have the support necessary to bring healing. The ministries that are near and dear to us will also be put at risk too because everything starts right here at the Holy Altar, the Iero, and radiates outward from here. **Diminishing God's Holy Altar leads to self-destruction of the parish church**. This is the warning given by the Prophet Zephaniah, whom we commemorate today (Dec.3rd). "What do you want Me to do for you?"

After the blind man was healed by Christ, he began to follow Christ, glorifying God. And all the people who witnessed the healing, when they saw it, gave praise to God (v.43). Receiving healing, giving healing, following Christ, glorifying and praising God—**this is what our life should be all about**. There is a reason and a rationale for the order of the Ten Commandments that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses. The first four form the foundation of the other six and the rest of the Law. 1) I am the Lord your God and you shall have no other gods before Me, 2) You shall not make any graven image (in other words, don't worship man-made things), 3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain (in other words, keep God holy, sacred and special in your life), 4) Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. The Sabbath for Christians is Sunday, 'Kyriake' - the Day of the Lord. Is it holy for us? How is it holy? **If our relationship is with God is our first priority**, then our relationships with our family, friends, neighbors and enemies will be healthy and whole. **What do you want Me to do for you? Amen!**

Penelope Andrist, baptized November 19, 2017, with parents Jesse & Christina. Godparent is Joanna Tzenis with husband Dean Natto.



Church Staff and Office Hours

Church Office Hours
M-F 9:00 AM—4:00 PM

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Stephen Arsenault
Bookstore
Email: bookstore@stgeorgegoc.org

Submissions for upcoming issues are due by the 10th of the preceding month.

Registry

Memorials

December 10

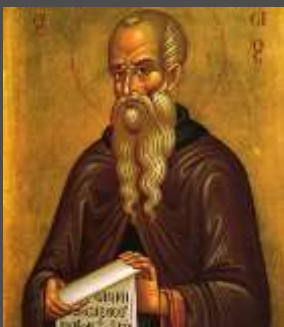
Leesa Dentinger (2 years)

Address Changes

Yeoryia Christoforides & Tim O'Keefe	1311 Delaware Ave SW, Apt S641	Washington, DC 20024
Sophia Pathos	1403 Truax Blvd, #S202	Eau Claire, WI 54703
William Grant	59 Fourth St W, Apt 21D	Saint Paul, MN 55102
Jason Brouzakis	PO Box 1971	Brunswick, GA 31521

Festal Icons Needed

Please donate a Festal Icon (11" x 14") in memory of a loved one. The cost is \$75.00 per icon. The icons are displayed in the church nave and are put out for veneration on the Feast Day of the Saint or event they represent. To donate an icon, fill out a form (found on the revolving bulletin board in the social hall) and return it to the office.



St. Theodosios the Cenobiarchos
January 11



Jesus is Circumcised
January 1



St. Agnes
January 14



Russian Art Exhibit: Oct 14, 2017-March 3, 2018 at The Museum of Russian Art, [5500 Stevens Ave S, Minneapolis](http://www.museumofrussianart.org). "Russian Sacred Art: Connecting Heaven and Earth" explores icons and artifacts of the Russian Orthodox Church. See posting in social hall or vis-

2018 Stewardship Pledges Received: thank you to the following faithful servants who have submitted their stewardship pledge cards for 2018 (as of December 20, 2017). Please join them today!

Ronald & Reva Adkins
George & Christy Antoniou
John & Marina Antoniou
Bob Baffa
John & Alexis Bighley
Tom & Patricia Bombolis
Jeff & Tina Bovis-Fuller
George & Shannon Canas
Evelyn Chamell
Dino & Stephanie Contolatis
Mary Ellis
Rhonda Gilliland
Richard & Sue Gnetz
Eleni Hoffhines
Petko Ivanov
Misael & Lisa Jordan
Jon & Peggy Kennedy
Anne Knocke
James Lake
Tom & Dawn Lampros
Mary Makredes
Jo Ann Mann
Dan & Jackie Matuska
Eric & Dina Negron
Savvas & Katerina Nikolaidis
Benjamin & Sophia Pachito
Chris Panayoton
Isodoros Papaconstantinou
Stella Papaconstantinou
Spero & Lana Payton
John & Sue Poulos, John
Nicholas & Effie Psimos
Steve & Rallou Rice
Ted Roungou
James Theros
Gordon & Sandra Thole
Kostas & Naomi Tsantir
Georgia Tsepelis
Lily Zahariades

it TMORA.org for details, including info on free guided tours.

Social Hall & Kitchen Notice: reminder to committee chairs and group leaders when using the social hall or kitchen for a specific activity, please check with the office in advance to make sure that it isn't already booked (by another group or an outside rental). Reservations must be confirmed by *Father Rick* who manages the official church calendar. Lastly, if your group would like to host social hour on a specific Sunday, please contact *Naomi Tsantir* (612-781-6485) to be added to the fellowship schedule.

Adopt-a-Family Toy Drive: thanks to all who contributed to this annual FOCUS MN initiative.



Stewardship 2018: Theme is "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord and not for men" (Col.3:23). Brochures and pledge cards have been mailed. Three things to do: 1) pray for God's inspiration and guidance, 2) plan-budget stewardship first, 3) give generously and sacrificially, at least three percent (3%) of gross yearly income. We thank you for supporting the ministries of our parish!

Donate Stock: Parishioners may choose to make gifts of stock to St. George GOC. This choice has lasting benefits for both parties. Giving stock held more than 12 months offers a two-fold tax savings: you avoid paying capital-gains tax on the increase in value of

your stock, and you receive a tax deduction for the full fair-market value of the stock on the date of the gift. Subtracting the tax savings from what you originally paid for the stock can result in a gift that costs just pennies on the dollar. You may use a gift of stock as a donation or to fund your annual stewardship. To make a gift of stock to St. George, you will need forms from the church office.

Blessing of Waters: on Friday, January 5, 2018, at 1:00pm at Hidden Falls Park, located at [1313 Hidden Falls Drive](http://www.hiddenfalls.org) in St Paul, the Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergy Association (www.meocca.org), will hold the 2nd annual Theophany/Epiphany Blessing of the Waters service on the Mississippi River. The half-hour service is free and open to the public. The service will end with the local priests immersing a gold cross in the Mississippi River, symbolizing Jesus Christ's baptism in the River Jordan 2,000 years ago.

Parish Council Election Results: Congratulations to the newly elected candidates: *Alexis Bighley, Dino Contolatis, Nanette Gomez, George Mastrogiorgis, Milam Paraschou and James Theros*. Thank you to outgoing parish council members *Bill Clemons, Jon Kennedy and Lily Zahariades* for their dedicated service.

Vasilopita Silent Auction: on Sunday, January 7th sponsored by Philoptochos. All proceeds go to Saint Basil Academy, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in upstate New York. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood. Give generously! Thanks!

Correction: regrettably, the following names were omitted from the Philoptochos 2017 Parish Christmas Card: *Harold & Cecilia Johnson, Jerry & Barbara Bau-man*.



MEOCCA clergy with acolytes.



MEOCCA clergy at Pan-Orthodox Thanksgiving service on Wednesday, November 22, 2017; left to right: Fr. Paul Wesche, Fr. John Magram, Fr. Rick, Dcn. John Cavin, Fr. Jason Houck.

Χρόνια πολλά!

JANUARY NAMEDAYS

January 1: Basil Paraschou, Bill Katsiyiannis, William Theros, Kiki Constantine, Cecelia Johnson, Bess Manesis, Vicky Paraschou, Vassilios Morellas, Bill Clemons; **January 6:** Lily Lampros, Lampros Petanitis, Frank Mortari; **January 7:** Yannis Hourdos, John Poulos, Jo Ann Mann, Joanna Tzenis, John Alexis, John Antoniou, John Peter Boosalis, John Georgolopoulos, John Grant, Jonathan Kanavati, John Kluznik, John Lake, John G. Lambros, John W. Lambros, John Larson, John Manesis, John Simon, John Speros, Jon Maier, Jonathan Paraschou, Yiannis Speros, Jon Kennedy, Ioana Nadra, John Kassar, Joanne Creamer, Jane Trigas; **January 11:** Theo Karvounarakis; **January 14:** Nina Houle, Maud McCullough; **January 17:** Anthony Coniaris, Tony Gouletas; **January 18:** Soula Chouliaris, Athanasios Contolatis, Tom Lampros, Athanasios Poulis, Athanasia Maier; **January 20:** Shannon Canas; **January 21:** Cassie Kapetanakis; **January 25:** Greg Boosalis, Phyllis Afendoulis; **January 28:** Kharissa Maehren.

JANUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Dimitrios & Dimitra Kaniamos, January 7; Lampros & Karen Petanitis, January 23; Michael & Tamara Merkouris, January 28.

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JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Eric Anderson, January 11; Pres. Jane Andrews, January 15; Christy Antoniou, January 6; Evelyn Boosalis, January 3; Eric Chadwick, January 27; William Chadwick, January 27; Chris Christoforides, January 17; Melina Donnelly, January 1, Natalie Donnelly, January 1; Dimitrios Glaros, January 19; Philip Gounaikis, January 6; Don Johnson, January 14; Lisa Jordan, January 3; Amanda Kapetanakis, January 13; Athena Keifer, January 4; Blien Kibrom, January 19; Steven Lambros, January 14; Jo Ann Mann, January 18; Anna Mantoles, January 12; Lerah McCullough, January 16; Gavriel Pappas, January 17; Sotirios Parashos, January 30; Anastasia Pathos, January 24; Danielle Pathos, January 27; Christopher Ploumidis, January 27; Nikola Popov, January 8; Effie Psimos, January 20; Steve Rice, January 22; Katherine Ryan, January 30; Anna Maria Simon, January 2; James Simon, January 23; John Simon, January 27; Samuel Syvertson, January 1; Marietta Theodorou-Lemieux, January 1; Peter Tountas, January 3; Maria Tzenis, January 4; Dakota Wold, January 26; Steve Zeece, January 23.

JANUARY BAPTISMS/CHRISMATIONS

John W. Lambros, Steve Zeece, Christ Rozikes, Nancy Lambros, George Dendias, Stella Lake, Becka Dokos, Sandra Thole, Don Johnson, Marietta Theodorou-Lemieux, January 1; John G. Lambros, January 28; Anastasia Mastrogiorgis, January 29; Angie Cender, January 6; George Eliou, January 21; Aida Abebe, January 20; Kally Fuller, January 14; Kharissa Maehren, January 11; Nicholas Petanitis, January 31; Alexandros McMahan, January 13; Rob Hattling, January 4.

➔ If your name does not appear or it is listed incorrectly, please contact the church office at office@stgeorgegoc.org.



St. George Youth



Photos from Makers' Mall on Saturday, Dec 2, 2017



Letter from the Youth Minister:

Come and see what we can do!

Have you been downstairs to see the youth board? If not, go down after Liturgy this Sunday and see! Here, you will find pictures of all our children's events. This board is constantly updated with our schedule and news from what has been going on around St. George.

Are you ever online? We have a St. George Youth Facebook page that you are welcome to join. Here, we place pictures and news about the on-goings with the youth program!

On December 2nd, our community got together to make craft gifts for those who cannot make it to church on Sundays. It was such a joy to see everyone gathered and putting an effort in to reach out to our community who we don't always see. A HUGE thank you to our volunteers for coordinating the ideas. As many of you are quite aware, I have zero talent when it comes to crafting. I am so overjoyed when we can get together and put our talents together to worship and grow together.

--Dates to keep in mind--

Jan. 6 – Divine Liturgy at St. George @ 9:00 for Theophany

Jan. 12-15 – Pan Orthodox Winter Camp

Jan. 20 – GOYA Tubing/Skiing at Buck Hill @ 12:00pm

I hope everyone had a wonderful blessed Nativity,

Nathaniel Kostick
Youth Minister

John Pitsavas Memorial Scholarship: eligible high school seniors and college students are invited to apply for this scholarship for the 2017-2018 academic year by submitting an essay answering the question: "Why are the number of "Nones" (no religious affiliation) rising in America, and what can we Orthodox Christians do about it?" Deadline is January 15, 2018. See insert or bulletin boards for application and guidelines.

Basketball Tourney Info: February 9-11, 2018 at Holy Trinity GOC in Sioux City, Iowa. Theme is "One Church, One God, One Goal." Hotel is Delta by Marriott, South Sioux City Riverfront. www.greekball.org.

Winter Camp 2018: January 12-15 at Camp St Croix (YMCA) in Hudson WI, a weekend of CHOICES - the choices we make in life and how they reflect our lives in Christ. Register youth for the weekend at <http://stmarysoca.org/youth/saints/index.html>. Early registration cost is \$180.00 per youth until December 20, 2017. Cost is \$220.00 after the deadline. No registrations will be accepted after January 1, 2018. Checks to: St Mary's Saints; mail to Lisa Tucci, [414 17th Ave NE Mpls, MN 55413](mailto:lisa.tucci@stmarysoca.org). For more information, contact Nathaniel.



To aid the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church through fund raising effort

—From the Mission Statement of National Philoptochos

A Blessed New Year to all!

The first of the month of January marks the feast day of Saint Basil, *χρονία πολλά* to all who celebrate their Name Day! We closed out 2017 with a wonderful Advent Luncheon in December, where our keynote speaker, *Becca Tumm*, Project Manager for IOCC, inspired our group with an update on the impactful ministries of IOCC, and how they are making a difference in communities across the US, especially in light of all the natural disasters that have occurred in 2017.

This holy season is a great reminder of the multiplier effect that goodwill generates. With that in mind, as we start 2018, let us resolve to:

- Replace hate with love.
- Replace offence with forgiveness.
- Replace discord with unity.
- Replace error with truth.
- Replace doubt with faith.
- Replace despair with hope.
- Replace darkness with light.

On Sunday, January 7th Philoptochos will be sponsoring the Vasilopita auction. All proceeds are donated to Saint Basil Academy, which is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood. For more information on the Academy please visit their website at: <http://stbasil.goarch.org/>

A heartfelt thank you to all our supporters for your time, prayers and resources, your contributions are greatly appreciated. Your continued support allows us to continue in our mission. If you are interested to learn more about Philoptochos, we warmly invite you to join us at our next meeting, which will be held on Sunday, *February 11th*, following Divine Liturgy.

In Christ's service,
Vicky Paraschou

Videos Updated: Did you know our parish has a YouTube channel? Visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmLF0t0U6p0ZEBTuGwqFLoQ> to see videos of 75th Anniversary, Lenten Lectures, Lenten Retreat and Introduction to Orthodox Christianity.



Philoptochos Advent Luncheon, December 9, 2017.



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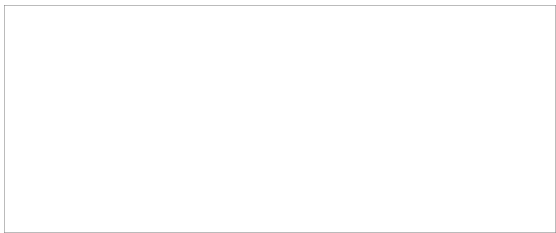
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www.stgeorgegoc.org



Glad Tidings January 2018



WEEKDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Monday, January 1
 St. Basil
 Orthros 9:00 a.m.
 Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Friday, January 5
 Eve of Theophany
 Royal Hours 8:00 a.m.
 Vespers 10:00 a.m.
 Pan-Orthodox Blessing of the Waters
 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 6
 Theophany
 Orthros 8:00 a.m.
 Liturgy w/ Great Agiasmos 9:00 a.m.
 Vespers 5:00 p.m.

Monday, January 22
 St. Timothy
 Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 27
 Translation Relics
 St. John Chrysostom
 Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

REGULAR WEEKLY SERVICES

Holy Confession: By Appointment

Vespers: (Oct. - May) Saturday 5:00 pm

Orthros: Sunday 8:15 am

Sunday School: (Sept. - May)
 following Communion

Divine Liturgy: Sunday 9:30 am



Please see our online calendar and bulletin for latest schedule updates:
<http://stgeorgegoc.org/calendar/>
<http://www.bulletinbuilder.org/stgeorgegoc-saintpaul/current>
 Also visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stgeorgegoc.saintpaul.mn>