

August Notes: ... Sunday the 6th is *Theodore Bell's* birthday ... Monday the 14th is *Marie Bell's* birthday ... the 15th is the *Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos*, with *Divine Liturgy* at 7:00 AM; it is also the name day of *Mara Bell, Marie Bell, and Miray Elkedwani* ... Thursday the 17th is *Jon Douglas's* Birthday ... *Father Alexander & Matushka Maria* celebrate their wedding anniversary on Friday the 18th ... Tuesday the 22nd is *Don Kemper's* birthday, *Greg Teter's* birthday, and *Magdy Elkedwani & Nevine Sharobim's* wedding anniversary ... and *Magdy* celebrates his name day (St Macarius the Great) on the 25th ... Monday the 28th is *Jennifer Harrison's* birthday and *Christopher Kemper's* name day (Venerable Moses the Black) ... and the 29th is *Adrian Backus's* birthday and name day (St Adrian, Martyr of Nicomedia), as well as *Don Kemper's* name day (St John, Baptist & Forerunner)!

O Master, Lord our God, Who commandest everyone to bring as an offering Thine own of Thine own, and grantest unto them in return Thine eternal good things, Who didst favorably accept the offering of the widow which was according to her ability: Do Thou now also accept the things offered by Thy servants and count us worthy to lay up the same in Thine eternal treasury. Grant unto us an abundant harvest of Thy worldly good things, together with all things that are profitable unto us. Bless, O Lord, this new fruit of the vine, which, through the wholesomeness of the air, and through showers of rain and temperate weather, Thou art well-pleased should attain to ripeness at this time. For Holy art Thou, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen



AUGUST 2017

The "Three Feasts of the Savior" in August

After a relatively quiet month of July, the Church calls us back to the remembrance of the holy things, to what is truly important in our life – our salvation. The Holy Orthodox Church celebrates three feasts of the Savior this month – on the 1st of August, the “Procession of the Holy Cross”; on the 6th, the Transfiguration of our Lord and on the 16th, the Translation of the “Image-Not-Made-With-Hands”. These feasts frame the “summer Pascha” – the Dormition (falling asleep) of the Mother of God, which is celebrated on August 15th after a 14-day fast.

Seeing before us the Holy Cross, through which the Life made Life possible for us, we are brought to see the radiance and splendor of God as Peter, James, and John experienced on Mount Tabor. Finally, we place the Mother of Life reverently in the tomb in Gethsemane, only to see her Son and God receive not only her spirit but her body into Heaven. This is a compact description of our own journey, what we call “salvation”. When we accept Christ as God, are baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity and chrismated, we become a new person. We take up our cross and follow His commandments with joy. He transfigures us by uniting us with Himself in the Holy Eucharist. We “work out our salvation in fear and trembling” as we live each day according to His teachings, looking for “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come”. Simply put, the Mother of God, a human just like us except without personal sin, is our never fading example of God’s love for us and what salvation is “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior!” (Luke 1:46-47).

Concerning the “Icon-not-made-with Hands”, Eusebius, an early Church historian, reports that at the time when the Savior was preaching, King Abgar ruled in Edessa. Abgar was stricken all over his body with leprosy. Reports of the great miracles worked by the Lord spread throughout Syria (Matthew 4:24) and reached even Abgar. Without even having seen Christ, Abgar believed in Him as the Son of God. He wrote a letter requesting Him to come

and heal him. He sent with this letter to Palestine his own portrait-painter Ananias, and commissioned him to paint a likeness of the Divine Teacher.

Ananias arrived in Jerusalem and saw the Lord surrounded by people. He was not able to get close to Him because of the large throng of people listening to the preaching of the Savior. Ananias stood on a high rock and attempted to paint the portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ from afar, but this effort was not successful. The Savior saw him, called to him by name and gave him a short letter for Abgar in which He praised the faith of this ruler. He also promised to send His disciple to heal him of his leprosy and guide him to salvation. Then the Lord asked that water and a cloth be brought to Him. He washed His Face, drying it with the cloth, and His Divine Countenance was imprinted upon it.

Ananias took the cloth and the letter of the Savior back to Edessa. Reverently, Abgar pressed the holy object to his face and received a partial healing. Only a small trace of the terrible affliction remained until the arrival of the disciple promised by the Lord. He was St Thaddeus, Apostle of the Seventy, who preached the Gospel and baptized Abgar and all the people of Edessa. Abgar put the Holy Napkin in a gold frame adorned with pearls, and placed it in a niche over the city gates. On the gateway above the icon he inscribed the words, “O Christ God, let no one who hopes on Thee be put to shame.”

For many years the inhabitants kept a pious custom to bow down before the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands, when they went forth from the gates. But one of the great-grandsons of Abgar, who later ruled Edessa, fell into idolatry. He planned to take down the icon from the city wall. In a vision, the Lord ordered the Bishop of Edessa to hide His icon. The bishop, coming by night with his clergy, lit a lampada before it and walled it up with a board and with bricks.

Many years passed, and the people forgot about it. But in the year 545, when the Persian emperor Chozroes I besieged Edessa and the position of the city seemed hopeless, the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to Bishop Eulabius and instructed him to remove the icon from the sealed niche, and the city would be saved from the enemy.

Having opened the niche, the bishop found the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands: in front of it was burning the lampada, and upon the board closing in the niche, a copy of the icon was reproduced. After a church procession with the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands had made the circuit of the city walls, the Persian army withdrew.

During the time of the Iconoclast heresy, those who defended the veneration of icons, when having their blood spilt for holy icons, reverently sang the Troparion to the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands. In proof of the validity of the veneration of icons, Pope Gregory II (715-731) sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor, in which he pointed out the healing of King Abgar and the

sojourn of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands at Edessa as a commonly known fact. In 944, the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos (912-959) wanted to transfer the icon to the Constantinople, and he paid a ransom for it to the emir of the city. With great reverence the Icon of the Savior Not-Made-by-Hands and the letter which He had written to Abgar were brought to Constantinople by clergy. On August 16, the icon of the Savior was solemnly placed in the Tharossa church of the Most Holy Theotokos.

According to another tradition, the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was transported around 1362 to Genoa, Italy, where it is preserved in a monastery in honor of the Apostle Bartholomew. It is known that the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands repeatedly gave from itself exact imprints. One of these, named “On Ceramic” was imprinted when Ananias hid the icon in a wall on his way to Edessa. In the sixth century, St Mary Syncletike received healing from the image on ceramic. The Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was also put on the standards of the Russian army, safely defending them from the enemy. In the Orthodox Church, the Troparion is said upon entering the temple, especially when venerating the icon of our Lord:

*We venerate Thy most-pure image, O good One
And ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh
And deliver Thy creatures from the bondage of the enemy.
Therefore, with thanksgiving we cry aloud to Thee:
Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Savior,
For Thou didst come to save the world.*

~ from *The Enlightener*, Saints Peter & Paul Church, Syracuse, New York

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(unaudited)

	June Actual	June Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	\$ 3,241.69	\$ 4,197.50	\$ 26,476.07	\$ 24,185.00
Expenses	\$ 3,542.52	\$ 3,261.64	\$ 22,775.95	\$ 24,039.84
Building Fund (<i>Net of Rent Reserves</i>):	\$ 18,490.51			