

February Notes: on Thursday, February 1 at 6:30 PM there will be a **Great Vespers with Litya** for the **Meeting of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ**, followed by **Divine Liturgy** the next morning, February 2, at 7:00 AM ... we'll have **Church School** on Sunday the 4th ... on Monday the 5th **Andrew Zhang** celebrates his birthday ... on Saturday the 10th there will be **Choir Practice** at 4:00 PM, followed by **Great Vespers & Confession** at 5:30 PM ...

Parish Council will be on Sunday the 11th ... after the Liturgy on Sunday the 18th we will serve the first anniversary **pannikhida** for our dear **Jacque Kemper**, followed by **Forgiveness Vespers** ... we will serve **Great Compline with the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete** on Wednesday evening the 21st at 6:30 PM ... Tuesday the 20th is **Nikolas Bell's** birthday ... on Friday the 23rd there will be a **Presanctified Liturgy** at 6:30 PM followed by a **lenten potluck** ... we'll have **Church School** on Sunday the 25th ... and Wednesday the 28th is the name day for both **Kyra Harrison** and **Kyra Newsome** (St Kyra of Syria).

Again we pray for mercy upon us and upon this Thy parish community. Help us to establish a place worthy of Thy worship, and to build a Temple to Thy glory. Guide our steps in the acquisition of property, and send to us, O Lord, benefactors, architects, iconographers, builders, carpenters, and skilled workers. Grant us favor with local authorities and with neighbors; provide the means, and make the impossible possible through Thine own great benefaction, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.



FEBRUARY 2018

Be Prepared!

All grace comes from Christ and is shared out in the Church. When we participate in the liturgical life and receive the Sacraments we affirm that Christ keeps His word and bestows grace on the Church to build it up. The normal spiritual life has frequent contact with Christ in the Sacraments, such as Confession and Communion which are channels of grace. In Confession we receive Christ Who said go and sin no more. In the Eucharist we receive the full humanity and divinity of Him Who resurrected and ascended.

We cannot enter into the Kingdom without it and will die spiritually, as the Lord teaches us in John 6. The Eucharist is the medicine of immortality and the antidote to death. Christ thus said *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. It is a problem that too many receive Communion lightly. We need to approach the chalice more seriously. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*, the Apostle Paul tells us. There can be physical illness from receiving Communion without proper preparation—it's not just a nice ritual but rather the divine banquet, and the Host is the King of Heaven Who feeds us with Himself.

The founders of the Meteora monasteries were not priests, and thus were dependent upon priests to come to them. The first time a priest came they all received Holy Communion and after the Divine Liturgy they said to one another, "We have the same Blood in our veins now. By this we are true brothers." This is how we all should think about the Eucharist. We are more closely united to one another through the Eucharist than we are to our own children. A husband and wife become one as they receive the Eucharist together, not through the legal procedure. Weddings should thus be in the context of the Divine Liturgy, whether in it, or following after it.

Receiving Communion isn't a right but a gift. It involves preparation, thought, repentance, confession, and so on. We should receive as often as possible, but in a state of preparation! It is very important to attend Vespers or Vigil on Saturday night, and we shouldn't receive Holy Communion if we don't. Earlier on Saturday we should already be preparing for Saturday night and Sunday morning, with a sense of approaching the Lord as a beggar—when He comes to me, will my house be clean? What do I especially need help with? He can give me the power that I need to deal with all of it.

At the moment of receiving Christ we can and should tell Him what we need. He is ours at that moment. The whole Liturgy should be a pouring out of ourselves in preparation. Many saints used to prepare for Communion from Wednesday through Saturday, and offer thanksgiving to God from Sunday through Tuesday. We have little divine energy in our lives if we don't do this, and otherwise we might as well not receive, and it might even be dangerous.

The holy Bishop Nektary Kontzevitch exhorted: “be not quick to spill out the grace you’ve received.” After having received Communion don’t go out and chatter in the parish hall, but reflect on the grace given to you. When you fall in love you don’t run from that person, and likewise, you’ve just received Christ, His Blood is literally in your veins, so stay and spend some time with Him. Take at least ten minutes for thanksgiving (St. John Maximovitch would take three hours). Pray, don’t talk, don’t rush out.

This idea of preparation correlates with people arriving to Liturgy just on time, or even late—it demonstrates a lack of preparation. Of course there can be unforeseen circumstances, but I’m speaking generally. You arrive to work on time to please your earthly boss—what about He Who has power over life and death? There may be times when you shouldn’t receive if it’s your fault that you didn’t properly prepare. We need discernment though—maybe you didn’t prepare because of a stressful even in your family—then you need Communion.

The Lord expects a tithe of our time as well as our treasure and talent—we should spend more time in prayer at home and in Church. When Christ said *could you not watch with Me for a while*, this has to do with keeping vigil both at home and in Church and the spiritual practice of nepsis, that is, of watchfulness. The energies of God enter our hearts through Communion and ascetic practices prepare the soil of our hearts to receive. The Son of God enters into our world through the window of the Mysteries.

~ excerpted from a series of talks on Orthodox Spirituality by Fr. Alexey Young (now Hieroschemamonk Ambrose)

Charity of the Month



Founded in 1992, St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery is a women's monastic community of the Diocese of the West of the Orthodox Church in America, under the omophorion of His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin. In the recent fires in southern California, the monastery had to be evacuated. After several days, they received welcome – and remarkable – news.

“At last, to our enormous relief, we received word through a CHP officer that all the buildings on the monastery property were standing. Somewhat later, however, we learned that our main lavender field had burned, as well as vegetation along the creek banks to the south and the hillside to the north of our property. Upon viewing the devastation later, we found that the fire had come right up to the icon of the Protection of the Mother of God, which stands at the head of our infant cemetery, and stopped there. Not one of the small crosses marking the graves was touched!”



useful links

Does the Vatican have the ancient Jerusalem temple menorah?:
<http://www.nationalreview.com/node/455182/print>

The 50 countries where it’s most dangerous to follow Jesus:
<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/WWL2018-BookletNew.pdf>

The Greek Orthodox Archbishop Who Walked With Martin Luther King:
<http://usa.greekreporter.com/2018/01/15/the-greek-orthodox-archbishop-who-walked-with-martin-luther-king/>

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(unaudited)

	Dec. Actual	Dec. Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	5,554.06	4,197.50	49,833.06	48,870.00
Total Expense	3,763.42	3,869.64	45,054.89	47,792.68
Cash Flow	363.06	(964.14)	2,154.33	88.60
Building Fund (Net of Rent Reserves)			21,817.51	