A NEW YEAR FULL OF HOPE

A New Year with new beginnings, new hopes, new dreams, and new resolutions!

Usually the beginning of a new year is a time of reflection and hope. Of course, we pause to think about the past year and thank Almighty God for the innumerable ways He blessed us - with our family and loved ones, our faith and Church, our health and well-being, our work and opportunities of life, and even for our challenges and struggles. It is through these difficult times that we learn to rely on our Lord and see how He walks with us and helps us become stronger people.

The New Year is also a time for hopeful expectation. Christmas reminded us how God acted in history in the most unique way. Our Lord has not forgotten us, but in fact, has come to walk with us throughout life. The name which the angels gave Jesus was “Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” If we remember this fact that “God is with us,” then we can face each day of 2015 with hopeful expectation! Everything is possible!

With reflection and expectation also comes the need for preparation. What must we do to face the New Year in a truly Christian manner? How can we live life in a manner that will glorify God and fulfill His desire for us?

For many, a way of preparation is through making resolutions. To make the proper resolutions, however, we must ask ourselves a few questions.

Where do we want to be at the end of 2015? When we think of success for the New Year, what do we think of? What are concrete goals we can make? Goals not only related to our physical well-being or professional life, but more importantly goals related to our spiritual lives and our relationships with others.

Of course, goals are not enough. They are a first step. The next essential step is to think about how will we reach our goal? From a spiritual perspective, I have several suggestions.

First, a good or bad year depends on the choices we make. Choices not only on how to live, but also on what attitude we hold! Will we
The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our **WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE.** We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are under the jurisdiction of

- His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
- His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America
- His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

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A NEW YEAR FULL OF HOPE

Continued from Front Cover

face every unexpected event in the New Year choosing to believe that God is with us, watching over us, and seeing us through, no matter what? There is a beautiful prayer on the back page which we can try to pray every morning, which says, “In any unforeseen events, help me remember that all things are under Your care.” If we choose this attitude, our New Year will be filled with optimism and hope!

A second suggestion is to live in the present, live each moment to the fullest with God at your side. Too many people remain paralyzed by their past history - whether from guilt, pain, disappointment, bad choices or sorrow. Or many others focus only on the future, anxious and worried about what may happen.

As Christians, we know that God is ready to forgive us for our past, and He tells us not to worry about the future. The time we should focus is on the present. If we live each moment in the presence of God, we can enjoy and discover His abundant peace and joy through the people we meet and the events we experience.

A third suggestion is to always be ready for the unexpected. Each day holds a surprise. Let us wake up each day making the sign of the Cross and asking ourselves, “What will God do for us today? Who will He bring into our lives? How can I be ready for it?”

Finally, the art of living is to constantly express gratitude for what God has given us, leaving behind our complaints about what we don’t have. God has given each one of us unique and precious blessings, if we have the eyes to see them. Let us pray that our spiritual eyes may be opened, and we may begin to see the wonders of 2015 that God has prepared for us!

With deep love and gratitude to our Lord Jesus, for another new year,

+ Fr. Luke

HOUSE BLESSINGS

In memory of Christ’s Baptism on the Feast of Epiphany, when Jesus sanctified all the waters of the world, the Orthodox Church follows an ancient tradition of holding the SERVICE OF THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS on January 6. The Church asks God’s blessing to come upon the water, which we then share with all believers. Through this water the grace of God comes upon us!

Following the service, the priest blesses all the believers in the Church with the holy water and offers them a bottle to take home and drink each day, or whenever they feel a special need for God’s grace. The Church also has the beautiful tradition of the priest taking the holy water into the homes of all believers and blesses their home. Through this ritual we ask for God’s blessings to come upon the household for the new year.

I am looking forward to visiting all the homes of parishioners from January 6 - 22. The following schedule gives an idea of when I will try to visit your area. I will visit the elderly and shut-ins during the morning hours. For those of you who work, I will come between 5:00-8:00 pm. If you have a specific time that you want me to visit, call me (774-230-6985).

If you are not home when I visit your house, I will leave a Church calendar and a bottle of Holy Water at your door. If you want me to return to your home for a blessing, please call me so that we can arrange another time.

HOUSE BLESSING SCHEDULE

Jan 6-8 - Webster
Jan 9-10 - Dudley/Charlton
Jan 11 - Oxford, Auburn, Sutton
Jan 12 - Thompson, Fabyan, N.Grosvenordale, Quinebaug
Jan 14 - Putnam, Danielson, Woodstock
January 16 - 18 - Other Areas
Around this time of year, many people start thinking about ways they can change for the better. While New Year’s resolutions are not particularly a feature of the Orthodox faith, change certainly is, and resolving to change based on times and seasons is certainly part of our liturgical tradition. So adapting the cultural custom of New Year’s resolutions to become a better Orthodox Christian seems like a great idea. Anyway, here are some suggestions for Orthodox Christians resolving to change for the better in the New Year.

1. **GET SERIOUS ABOUT COMING TO CHURCH (MORE).** While many who read this are probably regular Sunday attenders at church, it is statistically true that only 26% of Orthodox Christians in America come to church weekly. If you’re not coming to church weekly, why not? There may be some good reasons out there, but most of those 74% almost certainly do not have good reasons. If you’re not serious about coming to church weekly, it’s time to get serious. This is eternal life we’re talking about!

And if you’re already coming to church weekly, **consider adding at least one service per month.** Most parishes have Saturday Vespers and a Wednesday Paraclesis Service. Your priest and other parishioners are there praying, including praying for you. Join them!

2. **COME TO CHURCH ON TIME.**

It’s kind of a joke that Orthodox people are always late to church. But why is that? **We too often accept the excuse that we function on “Greek time,”** but even Greeks seem to be able to adapt to show up to nearly everything else on time. Why can we show up on time for work, sporting events, movies, doctor’s appointments, etc., but reserve our tardiness for an encounter with the King of Kings?

What you show up on time for tells the world what you find important. It’s what you find indispensable. And when you show up late to church, it also tells your fellow parishioners that you don’t consider church very important. And it also communicates it to your kids. Come to Church ten minutes early! That will show that you are serious.

3. **TITHE. GIVE 10% OF YOUR INCOME.** Nothing says you’re serious like giving 10% of your income to something. Giving 10% to God sounds crazy to a lot of people, but the reality is that it’s actually normal for many Christians. You are probably spending a lot more just on cable TV. Or Internet access. Or your smartphone. Or eating out. Or coffee. Or a lot of other things. The most important thing about pledging and tithing is not about meeting parish budgets. **It’s about worship. Your heart is where your treasure is (Matt. 6:21).**

4. **PRAY AT HOME.** Even if all you do is say the Trisaghion Prayers and the “Our Father” when you wake up and go to bed (saying it three times a day is the most ancient known prayer rule), you will notice a change in how you think and feel about your faith. It will become more present for you.

If you don’t practice your faith at home, you can forget about it mattering in the long run, either for you or your kids.

5. **MEMORIZE A PSALM.** Memorizing Scripture is a great thing for many reasons, but psalms are especially powerful, because they are all prayers. Pick your favorite one to memorize, like Psalm 50 (“Have mercy on me, O God…”). But there are plenty to choose from. Pick a short one or a long one. Just make it your own. Try praying it every day.

6. **INVITE SOMEONE TO CHURCH.** Did you know that 82% of people who don’t come to church regularly say that they would possibly come if invited? Yet only 2% of church members ever invite anyone to church?

If your parish is struggling, don’t you think it’s time you invited someone to church? Think of at least one...
person you know who isn’t in church. Make him or her a spiritual priority this year. Pray every day for that person. And when the time is right, invite them to Church!

And when you make the invitation, don’t say, “You should come to church with me sometime.” “Sometime” is no time. Say, “We’re celebrating the Divine Liturgy this Sunday at 9:30am at my church. Can I pick you up and bring you with me?”

7. READ THE BIBLE EVERY DAY.

Try to read the Church’s Daily Bible Readings (you can find those in this monthly bulletin on page 19, or in Fr. Luke’s daily email). Or try to read the entire New Testament, or even the entire Bible, in a year. Make Holy Scriptures a part of your daily nutrition!

8. READ A SPIRITUAL BOOK. There are few things that get us into another story, another way of looking at life, like a good book. And a good spiritual book can help to retrain your mind to become like the mind of Christ. Most of us do not have the mind of Christ. We have the mind of something else. Our minds are filled with distractions, necessities and the cares of this world. Reading something that is good and true and beautiful that can come from a good spiritual book can help to change all that.

9. ATTEND A WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY OR ADULT EDUCATION CLASS. It’s actually kind of crazy how uneducated many Orthodox people are in their own faith. Don’t sell yourself short. You are probably pretty smart about many things. Why don’t you use that same effort to get smart about your faith?

10. VOLUNTEER. Do something in your parish or in your community that benefits other people without giving you any kind of material gain. And do it without expecting recognition. Your recognition will come from God in His Kingdom.

11. GO TO CONFESSION. There are lots of Orthodox Christians who go to confession only once a year—or maybe even never. Like people who never go to the doctor, what that means is that you think everything is perfectly fine and you need no help. Literally, it means that you do not think you need the gift of forgiveness that comes in the sacrament of absolution.

12. VISIT A MONASTERY. You won’t believe how amazing monastic visits are until you go on one. There are few things that underline for us how much is really possible in the Christian life like visiting people who are actually making a go at being 24/7/365 Christians. And don’t you think that people who practice prayer that much might know a thing or two about it?

Monasteries aren’t just for monks and nuns. They’re for all Christians. They are not only spiritual havens but also spiritual powerhouses. And don’t just visit once and say you did it. Develop a relationship. Maybe if you’re really blessed, one of your kids will join a monastery and pray for you a whole lot. I hope one of mine does.

13. SING ALONG AT CHURCH. The choir and chanters are there to lead you in prayer, not to entertain you or pray instead of you. Yes, it is possible to pray with them silently, but there are few things more spiritually invigorating than singing your prayers. Participate fully in the worship of the Church! So if you’re able to sing, sing aloud with the choir.

14. ENCOURAGE YOUR PRIEST AND ONE ANOTHER. Your priest, and the rest of your church, are human beings just like you are. And while no one should live for praise, you can help one another by seeing their hard work and appreciating them. Your job isn’t to tell others that they shouldn’t want praise. Your job is to love them. And saying encouraging things to them is part of that love. You don’t have to shower others with compliments. Just tell them that what he’s doing matters to you.

There is nothing better for a parish’s health than an encouraged priest and parishioners. If the priest feels like what he’s doing matters, he will love doing it. And he will also strive to get better at it, too. So even if you do feel like he needs to improve, the best way to help him do that is to inspire him, not to complain at him.
SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

St. Basil lived and worked in the fourth century, when the Church was just starting to work hand in glove with the Roman state. The new relationship took some getting used to: before this, the Christians tried to avoid the State and its police whenever they could, since the coming of the Roman soldiers was often a prelude to Christian martyrdom. Now the Roman State was everywhere inclined to favor the Christians, and even fund their endeavors.

Many career-minded Christians got used to this new relationship soon enough, and began working enthusiastically with the State, taking abundant care not to rock the new boat. Basil of Caesarea, however, was not among them. He never minded rocking the boat if he thought the boat needed rocking. And during the Arian heretical controversy in the fourth century, it needed plenty of rocking.

One day, for example, as the new Bishop of Caesarea, St Basil strove against the popular and State-sponsored Arian heresy. In his exchange of words with the Emperor’s prefect, Modestus, Basil spoke so boldly and bluntly that it left the prefect stammering in astonishment. The prefect had summoned Basil to a tribunal, and insisted that Basil fall in line with the rest of the more pliant bishops and accept the Imperial interpretation of the faith (i.e. Arianism).

“Everyone else has yielded, and you alone refuse to accept the religion commanded by the King!”

“It is not the will of my King,” replied Basil, “I cannot worship anything that has been created, since I myself am created by God.”

“Do you know what I can do to you? Don’t you fear my power?” asked Modestus. “There are many things I can do to you! I can confiscate your possessions, banish you, torture you, put you to death!”

“Is that all?” Basil responded. “None of these things trouble me! You cannot confiscate my possessions, for I have none. Banishment, exile—what are these to me? Everywhere on God’s earth I am at home. Torture cannot touch me, for I have no longer a body to torture. As for death, it is welcome to me, for it will bring me sooner into His blessed Presence.”

The prefect was taken aback. “No one has ever addressed me in such a manner until now.”

“No doubt,” St Basil replied. “Probably you have never met a proper Bishop until now.”

St Basil lived his whole life with that same indomitable courage. When he was first elected bishop of Caesarea, he was ill and living on his nerves alone. At the time of the election, his detractors said that he should not be chosen as their bishop, because he was so weak and his health so precarious. His friend and supporter asked in return whether they wanted a bishop or a gladiator. As it turned out, they got both.

He was also a man of self-sacrifice and compassion, who worked at his facility feeding the poor with his own hands. “If you are reduced to your last loaf of bread and a beggar appears at your door, then take that loaf and lift your hands to heaven, ‘Lord, I have but this one loaf; hungers lies in wait for me, but I revere your commandments more than all other things.’ If you say this, then the bread you gave in that hour of poverty will be changed for an abundant harvest.” Basil loved the poor. He was a proper bishop.

Now more than ever we need proper bishops. The threat of Arianism is long gone, but the deadly threat of worldliness and moral compromise with the secular age remains. St. Basil also remains, not just as our intercessor in heaven, but as an abiding example for us who still labour on earth. Now is the time for plain speaking and courageous confrontation. Now is the time to unite compassion for the poor and ascetic holiness and daring defiance of the world’s standards in one potent and powerful package. Now is the time for St. Basil the Great.

Fr. Lawrence Farley of OCN wrote this article.
THEOPHANY - The Feast of Lights
And The Blessing of the Waters (Jan 6)

The feasts of Christmas and Epiphany were known in the early Church as “The Feast of Lights,” since both feasts revealed Jesus Christ to the world. Our Lord is the true light that enlightens the entire world!

Christ’s entrance into the world is a new beginning for all people. No longer do people have to live in the darkness of ignorance, in the darkness of fear, in the darkness hatred, in the darkness of evil and sin, and even in the darkness of death. The true light of God has been revealed, and now those who choose to enter into that light, who allow the light of Christ to shine brightly within their hearts and minds, may see the world from an entirely new and fresh perspective!

The light of Christ lifts us up from our fallen, distorted nature – our tendency to hate, to be jealous, to be proud and arrogant, to be self-centered, to be unkind, unforgiving and unloving. The light of Christ shows us the path to an abundant life of godly peace and joy, divine love and mercy, contagious compassion and kindness, and ultimate meaning and purpose.

At Christmas, God takes on human flesh and reveals himself as the perfect God-man, fully divine yet fully human. Simultaneously, at the Baptism of our Lord, Theophany, God again reveals Himself to the world as the Holy Trinity – God the Father speaking from the cloud, God the Son in Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove. Both events help the world come to a clearer and better understanding of who God is, and how He has dramatically entered into our world to help humankind!

We can understand this idea from this hymn we sing on January 6: “You appeared to the world today, and Your light, O Lord, has left its mark upon us. With fuller understanding we sing to You, “You came, O unapproachable Light, and made yourself known to us!”

In memory of Christ’s baptism, when He sanctified all the waters of the world, the Orthodox Church follows an ancient tradition of holding the SERVICE OF THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS on January 6. The Church asks God’s blessing to come upon the water, which we then share with all believers. Through this water the grace of God comes upon us!

In preparation for this special blessing, Orthodox Christians hold January 5 as a strict fast day. Our fasting is a tool which, when properly used, helps us focus more clearly on God and prepares us to enter into the celebration of the feast in a more intimate manner.

Following the service, the priest blesses all the believers in the Church with the holy water and offers them a bottle to take home and drink each day, or whenever they feel a special need for God’s grace. The Church also has the beautiful tradition of the priest taking the holy water into the homes of all believers and blesses their home. Through this ritual we ask for God’s blessings to come upon the household for the new year. Fr. Luke will come into all the homes of our Church Family throughout
Orthodox Christians around the world recently watched as Pope Francis visited The Ecumenical Patriarchate for the Feast of St. Andrew on November 30, 2014. The same Pope of Rome who washed the feet of an Orthodox Christian in 2013 stood out again for his humility by asking Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his blessing. While many serious issues continue to separate both Churches, Orthodox Christians can learn much from Pope Francis.

Pope Francis is a shepherd who knows how to shake up his flock, much as the first Apostles upset the ancient world. He is also a spiritual father who knows the value of having difficult conversations, and such conversations are often needed in the life of the Church.

In a bold evangelical speech on December 22, 2014, Pope Francis sent tremors through the Christian world by speaking about 15 spiritual ailments that afflict the Church. These ailments afflict all Christians in some form or another. Each of us can evaluate our lives and our role as leaders in light of these 15 ailments and begin a process of genuine renewal and service to others. “The Church, like any body, is exposed to sickness, malfunction and infirmity… I would like to mention some of these illnesses that we encounter [as Christians]. They are illnesses and temptations that weaken our service to the Lord.”

1) “The sickness of considering oneself ‘immortal’, ‘immune’ or ‘indispensable’, neglecting the necessary and habitual controls. A Christian that is not self-critical, that does not stay up-to-date, that does not seek to better itself, is an ailing Christian. … It is the sickness of the rich fool who thinks he will live for all eternity, and of those who transform themselves into masters and believe themselves superior to others, rather than at their service”.

2) “Martha-ism, or excessive industriousness; the sickness of those who immerse themselves in work, inevitably neglecting ‘the better part’ of sitting at Jesus’ feet. Jesus required his disciples to rest a little, as neglecting the necessary rest leads to stress and agitation. Rest, once one who has brought his or her mission to a close, is a necessary duty and must be taken seriously: in spending a little time with relatives and respecting the holidays as a time for spiritual and physical replenishment, it is necessary to learn the teaching of Ecclesiastes, that ‘there is a time for everything’.”

3) “The sickness of mental and spiritual hardening: that of those who, along the way, lose their inner serenity, vivacity and boldness and conceal themselves behind paper, becoming working machines rather than people of God. … It is dangerous to lose the human sensibility necessary to be able to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice! It is the sickness of those who lose those sentiments that were present in Jesus Christ”.

4) “The ailment of excessive planning and functionalism: this is when we plan everything in detail and believe that, by perfect planning things effectively progress, thus becoming a sort of accountant. … One falls prey to this sickness because it is easier and more convenient to settle into static and unchanging positions. Indeed, the Church shows herself to be faithful to the Holy Spirit to the extent that she does not seek to regulate or domesticate it. The Spirit is freshness, imagination and innovation”

5) “Sickness of poor unity and coordination develops when the communion between members is lost, and the body loses its harmonious functionality and its temperance, becoming an orchestra of cacophony because the members do not collaborate and do not work with a spirit of communion or as a team.”

6) “Spiritual Alzheimer’s disease, or rather forgetfulness of the history of Salvation, of the personal history with the Lord, of the ‘first love’: this is a progressive
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decline of spiritual faculties, that over a period of time causes serious handicaps, making one incapable of carrying out certain activities autonomously, living in a state of absolute dependence on one’s own often imaginary views. We see this in those who have lost their recollection of their encounter with the Lord … in those who build walls around themselves and who increasingly transform into slaves to the idols they have sculpted with their own hands”.

7) “The ailment of rivalry and vainglory: when appearances, the color of one’s robes, insignia and honors become the most important aim in life. … It is the disorder that leads us to become false men and women, living a false ‘mysticism’ and a false ‘quietism’.”

8) “Existential schizophrenia: the sickness of those who live a double life, fruit of the hypocrisy typical of the mediocre and the progressive spiritual emptiness that cannot be filled by degrees or academic honors. This ailment particularly afflicts those who, abandoning pastoral service, limit themselves to bureaucratic matters, thus losing contact with reality and with real people. They create a parallel world of their own, where they set aside everything they teach with severity to others and live a hidden, often dissolute life.”

9) “Chatter, grumbling and gossip: this is a serious illness that begins simply, often just in the form of having a chat, and takes people over, turning them into sowers of discord, like Satan, and in many cases cold-blooded murderers of the reputations of their colleagues and brethren. It is the sickness of the cowardly who, not having the courage to speak directly to the people involved, instead speak behind their backs”.

10) “The sickness of defying leaders is typical of those who court their superiors, with the hope of receiving their benevolence. They are victims of careerism and opportunism, honoring people rather than God. They are people who experience service thinking only of what they might obtain and not of what they should give. They are mean, unhappy and inspired only by their fatal selfishness.”

11) “The disease of indifference towards others arises when each person thinks only of himself, and loses the sincerity and warmth of personal relationships. When the most expert does not put his knowledge to the service of less expert colleagues; when out of jealousy … one experiences joy in seeing another person fall instead of lifting him up or encouraging him.”

12) “The illness of the funeral face: or rather, that of the gruff and the grim, those who believe that in order to be serious it is necessary to paint their faces with melancholy and severity, and to treat others – especially those they consider inferior – with rigidity, hardness and arrogance. In reality, theatrical severity and sterile pessimism are often symptoms of fear and insecurity.”

13) “The disease of accumulation: when the Christian seeks to fill an existential emptiness of the heart by accumulating material goods, not out of necessity but simply to feel secure. … Accumulation only burdens and inexorably slows down our progress.”

14) “The ailment of closed circles: when belonging to a group becomes stronger than belonging to the Body and, in some situations, to Christ Himself. This sickness too may start from good intentions but, as time passes, enslaves members and becomes a ‘cancer’ that threatens the harmony of the Body and causes a great deal of harm – scandals – especially to our littlest brothers.”

15) The “disease of worldly profit and exhibitionism: when the apostle transforms his service into power, and his power into goods to obtain worldly profits or more power. This is the disease of those who seek insatiably to multiply their power and are therefore capable of slandering, defaming and discrediting others, even in newspapers and magazines, naturally in order to brag and to show they are more capable than others.”

“We are therefore required, at this Christmas time and in all the time of our service and our existence – to live ‘speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love’.”
Bring in the Blessing of the New Year and
Come to our annual

**Vasilopita Luncheon**

11:15 am, Sunday, Jan. 11th
following the Divine Liturgy

(Come to our Last Big Event before
Our Hall and Kitchen will be Renovated!!!)

**THE VASILOPITA TRADITION**

THE TRADITION OF THE “VASILOPITA,” which means the sweet “bread of Basil” commenced in the fourth century, when Saint Basil the Great, a bishop in Cappadocia of Caesarea (Asia Minor) in the last half of the 4th century, wanted to distribute money anonymously to the poor in his Diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he arranged to place gold coins. Thus the needy families, in cutting the bread to nourish themselves, were pleasantly surprised to find gold coins. St. Basil is considered as one of the greatest philanthropists in Church history, who was also the first person ever to establish an orphanage for children, and is the founder of the modern day hospital.

The Vasilopita tradition has been carried on until today, where special sweet bread is prepared both in Orthodox homes and in the Church community. Sweets are added to the bread which symbolize the sweetness and joy of life everlasting, as well as the hope that the New Year will be filled with the sweetness of life, health, and happiness for all who participate in the Vasilopita observance.
Thank God for our new “Nativity of Christ” Icon given in Loving Memory of Leon and Olga Buchka.

Leon Buchka left a $5000 donation to our Church in his will, and we thank him for remembering our beloved Church.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

In honor of St. Nicholas on his feastday of December 6th, our youth visited two nursing homes and several parishioners who can’t get out of their homes, bringing them the Christmas Spirit.

Two weeks later, our Choir went around caroling for four hours to a number of parishioners homes to bring Christmas Joy. Thank You to all who went out!!!
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Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon

A Visit with Saint Nicholas
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE
OFFERING A VIBRANT HOUSE OF FAITH AND WORSHIP FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

ARCHANGELS ($100,000)
- Charlie and Helen Pappas

ANGELS ($50,000)
- In Honor of their parents Despina and Bill from the Condos Children (George, Lisa, Maria, Ann)
- Emmanuel James Pappas
- Olga Pappas
- Sam and Evelyn Pappas

PRINCIPALITIES ($45,000)
- Sandi and Gerry Kunkel
- Stavros and Evangelia Pappas
- Mary Fatsi, Eleanor Teguis, Dina Teguis

GOOD SHEPHERDS: ($25,000-30,000)
- Michael and Titi Chito
- Van Thomas

TORCH BEARERS: ($11,000-15,000)
- Fr Luke and Pres. Faith Veronis

BENEFACTORS: ($6000 – $10,000)

PATRONS: ($3000 - $5999)

SUPPORTERS: ($1000-$2900)
- Kiku Andersen

FRIENDS: (Up to $999)
- John & Samantha Gatsogiannis
- Susan Emerson Hill
- Kaiden and Hanna Kunkel
- Zinos and Angeliki Mavodanes

THREE PHASE PROJECT

PHASE 1
Hall and Kitchen Renovation
Drywall and Paint Church Interior Walls

PHASE 2
1000 sf Expansion: Three Classrooms/Storage Room/Handicap Bathroom
Front Hallway Entrance
Five Stain Glass Windows in Church: (Naming at $20,000 each)
Church Sound System (Naming at $20,000)

PHASE 3
Parking Lot Resurfacing: Naming Opportunity at $30,000
Additional 20 parking space on right side of Church: $25,000
Bell Tower Restoration
Church Brick Sealing

FUNDRAISING GOAL: $700,000
TOTAL CASH AND PLEDGED: $509,520

WE ARE SEEKING THREE YEAR DONATIONS & PLEDGES
In addition to one’s annual stewardship offering, which supports our operational budget, we are hoping that EVERY MEMBER of our Church Family will participate in this renovation/building project at whatever level they feel comfortable:
PARISH COUNCIL

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015! I hope you all had a joyous Christmas! A few items I’d like to mention for the start of our New Year!

Many thanks to Helen Pappas and Del Monroe for their service to the Church Council for the last four years. We will miss you both! Congratulations to our new Church Council members Anestis Jordanoglou and Nick Seferi. As I mentioned in a short council meeting on Sunday, I am so thankful for our council members. Regardless of whether we agree or disagree with each other, we are respectful of the other’s opinions and do not let our emotions get the best of us. Thank you again for being such a great team!

I recently watched the movie “God’s Not Dead”. If you haven’t seen it, I recommend it. The movie is about a college student who defends the existence of God. Very good movie and one that all ages should watch.

The building renovations will begin this month and, as exciting as it is, I urge you all to please avoid going into the Church hall until we have the OK from the builder. Construction zones can be dangerous and we would not want anyone hurt. Thank you to Evelyn Pappas, Fr Luke, and those that have participated in helping with the plans and getting this project going!

New Year’s Resolutions……or as I say…. my New Year’s GOALS ! My husband and I started a list of things we want to accomplish this year. He has a list, I have a list, and we have a list that we share. Lists are good…they are a reminder to work on the things that are important to us. It’s easy to forget, even the important things, can sometimes go by the wayside. So, start your lists…. Thank God to whoever invented the yellow sticky notes!

Best wishes to all who are celebrating a special event during January. Prayers to those that are experiencing challenging times in their life.

Wishing you all a healthy and happy 2015!

With love,
Lisa Healy
Parish Council President

Philoptochos News

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas. Spaghetti Supper totals finally came in and we made $3000 profit. We want to thank everyone for a great fundraiser. The Bakeless Bake Sale is winding down and the Christmas card went well. Our next meeting will not be until March, 2015. We always skip January and February due to the weather.

Much is going on with the renovation of our kitchen and hall. The Ladies have been busy cleaning out the kitchen cabinets and hall. Demolition will begin mid January. Hopefully it will be completed by our next meeting in March. Thanks to all who have donated to our renovation, and for those who have not please consider a donation. No donation is too small for this project.

We have had a wonderful year. We have done very well in our fundraisers and have donated to many worthy causes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have worked and donated throughout the year. Also I want to thank all who have helped and supported me. Our Ladies work very hard for our church, but we also have fun working together! Our Christmas dinner at Point Breeze proved that with an excellent attendance.

Wishing everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

With much love,
Evelyn Pappas
Philoptochos President
THANK YOU
To all those who helped our Church Family give 35 Christmas Presents to the Giving Tree for needy children; for the 10 Christmas Presents we bought for residents of Holy Trinity Nursing Home, and for the 20 Ham Christmas baskets and gift cards we gave to 25 other families!

Thank You to All Who Made Special Donations for Christmas!

The Boxwood Altar Trees - For the Glory of God from Betty Vriga
Outdoor Wreath - For the Glory of God from Alex, Chris, Tristan Massie
Outdoor Wreath - In loving Memory of my daughter Christine - Irene Moutzouris
In loving memory Arthur and Tess Pappas from Betty and Ted Tonna
For the Glory of God from Alexandra Xanthopoulos
In loving memory of my parents from Rita Carabina
In loving memory of our parents from Gloria and Aristotle Panagiotou
In loving memory of Charles and Loucia Christos from Sam and Evelyn Pappas
In loving memory of Evangelia Pappas from Sam and Evelyn Pappas
In loving memory of Blaga, Jim and Michael Naum
In loving memory of my parents Thumia & Dumnica Vriga from Louise Pavlech
In loving memory of Vasil Angelo from his wife Pauline
In loving memory of Bruce Condos from Despina & Bill Condos
In loving memory of my sister Maraly Quillia from Marie and Del Monroe
For the glory of God from Norman and Barbara Desrosiers
In loving memory of Alex and Virginia Pappas from Sandi and Gerry Kunke
In loving memory of MM Louis Bregou from Sandi and Gerry Kunkel
In loving memory of our parents from Harry and Tina Jordanoglou
In loving memory of Maria and Aryrie Patras from Pauline Mueller
The Light—January 2015

**Weekday Services**

**Weekday Divine Liturgy (9:30 am)**
- Jan 1 - St Basil the Great (10am)
- Jan 6 - Holy Epiphany
- Jan 7 - St John the Baptist
- Jan 17 - St Anthony the Great
- Jan 25 - St Gregory the Theologian
- Jan 30 - The Three Hierarchs

**Paraclesis Service & Holy Oil for Healing**
- 6:30pm Wednesday January 21 and 28

**Saturday Vespers (5:30pm)**
- Saturday Evening
  - January 3, 24, 31

**Congratulations**

To Alexandra Biondo on her 40 day churching, and to her parents Constantina and Jasmina

To Gregory John Panu III on his 40 day churching, and to his parents Greg and Jasmina

AXIA! She is worthy!

Congratulations to Kiku Andersen for becoming Orthodox and entering fully into our Church Family!

Congratulations to our 2015 Parish Council

President: Lisa Healy
Vice President: Sandi Kunkel
Secretary: Mary Papageorge
2nd Secretary: Deborah Raymond
Treasurers: Cynthia Johnson, Nick Popiak

Members:
- Victor Apostolou
- Leah Didonato
- Chris Geotis
- Anestis Jordanoglou
- Lorna McWilliam
- Garry Ross
- Nicholas Seferi

Congratulations to our 2015 Parish Council

President: Lisa Healy
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- Lorna McWilliam
- Garry Ross
- Nicholas Seferi
CHRISTMAS CARD
We apologize for not including in our Christmas Card:
“In loving memory of my mother Pauline Subotich from Marianne Naumovski.”

EARLY RISERS
BIBLE STUDY
6:30 am - 7:30 am
Every Saturday
Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

WEDNESDAY MORNING
BIBLE STUDY
10:30-11:45
Wednesdays Jan 14, 21, 28

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:
Jan 4 - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Stephanie Quill, Betty Tonna, Kiku Andersen
Jan 11 - Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi

Most likely, we will not have coffee fellowship during the renovations of our Church Hall and Kitchen.

Jan 18 – Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah DiDonato, Bill Anthopoulos, Jaime Ross

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS
Jan 4 - Theodora Veronis
(2 Corinthians 9:6-11 - page 93)
Jan 11 - Maria Mironidis
(2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 - page 95)
Jan 18 - Olivia Neslusan
(Ephesians 5:8-19)
Jan 25 - Smaranda Cojocaru
(Colossians 3:1-11)
Feb 1 - Maia Beaudry
(Hebrews 11:9-40)
Feb 8 - Panayiota Veronis
(Hebrews 1:1-12)
Feb 15 - Lily Mueller
(Galatians 4:4-7)
Feb 22 - Hanna Kunkel
(Galatians 1:11-19)

USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE
Jan 4
Chris Constantine, Barbara Gianaris, Deb Raymond, Dan Rivelli, Alex Seferi

Jan 11
Arthur Bilis, Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatsogianis, Trish Laurea

Jan 18
Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Zach Gianaris, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi

Jan 25
Neal Neslusan, Betty Vriga, Leah Didonato, Gus Koulax, Cindy Johnson, Jared Quill
## Remembering Our Church Family

### Important Dates in JANUARY:

Make a visit, give a call, express your congratulations to members of our Church Family who celebrate special days during this month.

### BIRTHDAYS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Kara Bilis</td>
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<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Michael Pappas</td>
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<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Stavros Pappas</td>
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<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Eva Apostolou</td>
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<td>Jan 3</td>
<td>Garry Ross</td>
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<td>Jan 3</td>
<td>Mary Papageorge</td>
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<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>George Papageorge</td>
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<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Petru Cojocaru</td>
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<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Evelyn Aperges</td>
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<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Gloria Panagiotou</td>
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<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>Mia Beaudry</td>
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<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Olivia Neslusan</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Ava Darligiannis</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
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<td>Dora Stathis</td>
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<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Tony Beaudry</td>
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<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Theodora Veronis</td>
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<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Maria Jordanoglou</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>John Nicholopoulos</td>
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<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Niko Milios</td>
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<td>George Condos</td>
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<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Panayioti Veronis</td>
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<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Sandi Kunkel</td>
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<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Tom Baxter</td>
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<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>St Basil the Great</td>
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<td>Bill Anthopoulos</td>
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<td>Vasilios Gatsogiannis</td>
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<td>Bessie Vasiliki Gritzner</td>
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<td>Bill Kiritsis</td>
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<td>Vasilios Siozopoulos</td>
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<td>Vassy Tanko</td>
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<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>Epiphany - “Ta Fota”</td>
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<td>Faith Fotini Veronis</td>
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<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>St John The Baptist</td>
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<td>John Baraklilis</td>
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<td>Smaranda Ioana Cojocaru</td>
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<td>John Grzyb</td>
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<td>John Johnson</td>
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<td>Yanni Mironides</td>
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<td>Yianni Moutoudis</td>
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<td>John Panagiotou</td>
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<td>John Sgouritsas</td>
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<td>John Thomas</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>St. Anthony the Great</td>
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<td>Tony Beaudry</td>
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<td>Anton Cojocaru</td>
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<td>Tony Carabina</td>
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<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>St Athanasios</td>
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<td>Arthur Bilis</td>
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<td>Arthur Darligiannis</td>
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<td>Athanasisa Darligiannis</td>
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<td>Ava Athanasisa Darligiannis</td>
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<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>St. Tatiana</td>
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<td>Tatiana Zhuk</td>
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CONTRIBUTION vs COMMITMENT

A growing problem facing our world and the Church today is the increasing number of people who have given up commitment to become contributors. Contributions are much easier than commitments. The average person on the job contributes whatever is necessary to keep his paycheck coming in. He is not committed to his company. In most cases he does not even like his job. It is only a boring way to make money.

Most Churches have the same problem. Members contribute enough time, effort and money to be recognized as a member and to soothe their own conscience. They are not committed to the Church or to the Lord. They will contribute to just about anything as long as it does not cost them anything but they will sacrifice nothing, especially themselves.

Jesus succeeded in His mission because He was committed to the task before Him. He was willing to give up everything, even His life, for the cause He believed in. No one really succeeds in life until he reaches the point that he is willing to lay down his life. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone."

If your life as a Christian has not been as meaningful as you would like for it to be, you might check your total Stewardship Commitment. If your life is only a series of small contributions, that could be your problem. Paul says that we are to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice."

The difference in a contribution and total commitment is usually the difference in failure and success. "Here, Lord, I give myself to You, that is all I can do." That is all You can do, but you must do that much.

Does your Stewardship Commitment reflect a contribution or a commitment? "Let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God?"

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND TALENTS!

THANK YOU

To Anna Thomas & Grace Milios for making the Prosforo (Holy Bread) that is used each week during the Divine Liturgy!

We’ve collected $105,000 in Stewardship donations as of Nov 30th. Please help us reach our 2014 stewardship goal!

We still have 50 STEWARDS who have NOT GIVEN anything towards their 2014 stewardship offering! Please consider given in January for 2014!

Thus far we have 20 Pacesetters ($1000-$1900), 6 Torchbearers ($2000-$4400) & 5 Good Shepherds ($4500 & up)

THANK YOU!!!
HOLY SCRIPTURE RELATED TO EPIPHANY

“When Jesus had been baptized, he came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach and to say “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:16-17

DAILY BIBLE READINGS
December

*Jan 1 Colossians 2:8-12, Luke 2:20-21, 40-52
Jan 2 Hebrews 5:4-10, John 3:1-15
Jan 3 Timothy 3:13-16; 4:1-5, Matt 3:1-6

Jan 4 Timothy 4:5-8, Mark 1:1-8
*Jan 6 Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7, Matt 3:13-17
Jan 7 Acts 19:1-8, John 1:29-34
Jan 8 Romans 6:3-11, John 3:22-33
Jan 9 II Timothy 2:1-10, Mark 1:9-15
Jan 10 Ephesians 6:10-17, Matt 4:1-11

Jan 11 Ephesians 4:7-13, Matt 4:12-17

Jan 19 Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2, Matt 22:2-14
Jan 21 Philippians 1:12-20, Luke 12:8-12
Jan 22 Timothy 1:3-8 Matt 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30

Jan 26 I Peter 2:21-25; 3:1-9, Mark 12:13-17
Jan 27 Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2 John 10:9-16
Jan 29 Hebrews 10:32-38 Mark 9:33-41
Jan 30 Hebrews 13:7-16, Matt 5:14-19
Jan 31 I Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8, Matt 10:1, 5-8
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!

If you would like to place an ad and support our monthly bulletin, please contact Fr. Luke or the Church Office.

$200/year or $20/month.
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<th>Sun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>5 Strict Fast Day for Epiphany</td>
<td>6 HOLY EPHPHANY 8:45 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy with Blessing of the Waters House Blessings Webster</td>
<td>7 St John the Baptist 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy 11:30 Clergy Luncheon at Church House Blessings in Webster</td>
<td>1 St Basil HAPPY NEW YEAR! 9:15 Matins 10:00 Liturgy</td>
<td>2 St Seraphim</td>
<td>3 6:30am Bible Study 5:15 Vespers</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Vasilopitica Luncheon Home Blessings Oxford, Auburn, Sutton</td>
<td>12 House Blessings in Thompson, Fabyan, N.Grosvenordale</td>
<td>13 Church Renvoations BEGIN!!</td>
<td>14 10:00 Bible Study House Blessings in Webster Putnam, Danielson, Woodstock</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10 6:30am Bible Study</td>
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<td>18 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>19 8:30 Martin Luther King Breakfast</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Paraclesis Service and Anointing Oil</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>16 House Blessings in Other Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Paraclesis Service and Anointing Oil</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>30 Three Hierarchs 8:30 Matins 9:15 Liturgy 31 6:30am Bible Study 5:30 Vespers</td>
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A DAILY PRAYER
FOR THE NEW YEAR

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace.
Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will.
In every hour of the day reveal your will to me.
Bless my dealings with all who surround me.
Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day
with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Your will governs all.
In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings.
In unforeseen events, let me not forget
that all things are under Your care.
Teach me to act firmly and wisely,
without embittering and embarrassing others.
Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day
with all that it shall bring.
Direct my will according to Your will.
Teach me to pray.
Pray Yourself within me.
Transform my life into a living prayer to you. Amen.

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow