“There is more to life than being happy.” How many people agree with that statement? As we begin a new year, I want to draw our attention to this challenging statement – “There is more to life than being happy.” What do you think could be more important than a “happy life?” Or maybe the question should be, how do we understand what a truly happy life is?

Recently, I was listening to a number of TED Talks, and came across a great one from the best-selling author Emily Esfahani Smith. She is a journalist whose TED talk “There’s more to life than being happy” has been seen six million times. In it, she detailed her research in psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy which reveal FOUR PILLARS to a meaningful life. A meaningful life, she highlights, is ultimately more fulfilling than a happy life. In fact, “chasing happiness [or success] often makes people more unhappy.” So, life shouldn’t be about seeking out happiness, Instead, when we strive to make life meaningful, we may discover happiness! So, how do we make life more meaningful? Well, here are her four pillars. In a meaningful life, we discover a life of:

**BELONGING,** or being a part of a community where we are valued, where we are loved, where we feel welcomed, and where we truly value, love, and welcome others.

**PURPOSE,** living life with a greater purpose than one’s own little desires. Breaking away from our egocentric passions and discovering a greater calling beyond ourselves. “Purpose is less about what you WANT than what you GIVE.” The deepest purpose in life is learning to live for others!

**TRANSCENDENCE,** realizing that we can connect with a higher reality, experience a reality greater than ourselves!

**STORY TELLING.** We all have a life story. And yet, what we perceive of our life story can change over time. We may retell the story of our own life. No matter what we’ve done wrong, how we’ve failed, whatever mistakes we’ve made, and whatever challenges we have faced, we can always reimagine and retell our story in a way that gives our life new direction and new mean. We can learn from our past, and recreate our lives in a meaningful and new way!

As I reflected on these four pillars, it became so obvious that our Orthodox Christian faith offers not only a very similar message, but in fact, the Church offers the perfect context to discover and live out these four pillars. And these four pillars are what I want to challenge all of us to reflect on, and strive to cultivate more and more, as we enter into the New Year of 2019.
Sts. Constantine and Helen
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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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FOUR PILLARS TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE

1. BELONGING: We all need to feel a part of a loving community, and first and foremost, the Church is or should be such a loving family. The Church is the Family of God which values anyone and everyone who comes into its embrace. The Church Family is a community that cherishes and respects one another, that is open and welcoming to everyone. Unfortunately, our churches don’t always live up to this pillar so well. We don’t always welcome everyone and make all feel valued and cherished. If this is the case, we then need to remember, WHO IS THE CHURCH? The CHURCH is YOU and ME, each one of us! Don’t look at some bishop, or some priest, but remember each one of us is the church! So, the question isn’t why our churches aren’t such great places of belonging, but how do you and I make our churches better places, the perfect place for everyone to feel welcomed, cherished, and loved. Being filled with God’s grace, how can YOU and I make the church a better place of belonging? This is our first challenge for the New Year, and the first step to making our lives more meaningful! FINDING A CENTERED LIFE we can

2. PURPOSE: This second pillar in a meaningful life centers on breaking away from our egocentric, me-centered worldview. We have to discover a purpose greater than ourselves. How can each one of us, in the little worlds we live in each and every day, bring love, kindness, goodness to others. How can we work at helping others, loving others, serving others in a way that changes their lives? To live a PURPOSE-CENTERED LIFE we can’t focus on what WE WANT, but must learn to focus on WHAT WE CAN GIVE! What is the vision of life we can carry that goes beyond ourselves? Can we get involved in a cause for justice? In a service of love? Can we become vehicles or instruments in God’s hand of bringing his presence and peace and light into a divided, broken, dark world? Jesus clearly stated that “unless we deny ourselves, and take up our crosses” we can never truly follow Him. And we take this path by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, visiting those in prison and sick, caring for the marginalized and needy. Ultimate and lasting purpose in life comes when we learn to live for others!

3. TRANSCENDENCE: The third pillar goes right in line with our faith and the Church. A meaningful life is one that realizes life is not just what we see here on earth. Our secularized society tempts and deceives us to think that life is all about the here and now, a materialistic life whose focus is on what we see and have on this earth. A meaningful life, however, realizes that there is something greater than ourselves. Our finite, earthly lives can connect with eternity. Isn’t that what Christmas is all about? The Infinite Creator of the Universe became a part of His finite creation. God became human so that we humans could connect with God! Living a life of transcendence, connecting with eternity. In the New Year, may we strive to connect with the transcendent each and every day. Live life with an eternal perspective, connected to our eternal God!

4. STORY TELLING. The fourth pillar is a central part of the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus Christ preached throughout his life. What is the story of our life? We all have fallen short of the life that God calls us to. We have all failed, fallen short, missed the mark and sinned. Each of us have some broken-ness in our past. Yet, our failures and shortcomings aren’t the full story in our lives. Christ has come to save the sinner and give new life to those who have died. When we allow Jesus to be at the center of our lives, He changes the story of our life. He meets the thief on the Cross in his last moments of life and changes his life story. He meets a woman married five times and changes her story. He meets the traitorous tax-collector and transforms his story. The fourth pillar of a meaningful life is remembering that we can retell the story of our life. Our life is not over, so no matter where we have fallen and failed, we can start a new chapter in our life story. Let us learn to reimagine our life story in a new way – where our life is full of belonging; where our life is full of purpose and meaning; and where our life is filled with the presence of God.

May the New Year be one where we strive to re-understand what makes life happy by equating it to what makes life meaningful! And we make life meaningful by making it a life with BELONGING found in the Church, with PURPOSE greater than ourselves, with a connection with TRANSCENDENCE, and by reimagining our Life Story, sharing A NEW STORY in our lives!

Wishing you a blessed and joyous New Year filled with God’s grace and peace,

+Luke
As many people go through life they experience a multitude of changes that vary in severity and genuine impact on the person. The mold we are slowly being poured into as we progress throughout our years is just a mere suggestion. To begin to find the truer and deeper meaning of each of us, as individuals, we must carve our own path through the confusing and overgrown forests that we all harbor within.

As I've looked for stability on the ever shifting tectonic plates of life, I seem to have found something these last couple months.

When I think about the Alund’ Entono primary school I worked at in Uganda, and all the people I encountered, the first thing that comes to mind is love. Despite the difficult circumstances the African people are placed in, we are taught not to pity them, but rather, to love them. We cannot solve every problem in Africa, nor anywhere else. What we can do, however, is blanket each person we encounter in astounding and abundant love. Love is always flowing as long as you allow it to pour forth from your heart. As I was speaking with my dear Ugandan friend Agnes, I noticed children constantly calling out to her and running up to her throughout our conversation. I mentioned to her what was so apparent: “These kids really do love you, Agnes.” She had this perplexed look on her face - sort of surprise as if what she said next was so obvious: “Well, it’s because I love them.” People can sense when someone truly loves them, and everyone wants to be loved.

Each day, we woke up to the sound of drums and singing from our next door neighbors, an international dance group. We then walked 30 minutes to our school each morning, and yet our walk usually turned into 45 minutes because we would stop and play with all the children along the way. With 50 percent of Uganda’s population under 15 years old, children fill the streets. Children would then flock around Paraskevi, an Albanian young woman who was a partner with me in our teaching, and me because we were the only “muzungu” (white people) in the area! Each time we walked by, we would hear children yelling, “Look! Look! Muzungu!” Children liked to touch our skin and play with our hair. One girl even asked me where I got my hair since the only way Ugandans have long hair is usually with extensions or wigs. She was shocked to discover (after tugging on it) that my hair just grows naturally off my head!

When we finally arrived at the school each morning, dozens of children would run up and greet us with many hugs and smiles. Each day, we taught lessons in English and art. I had brought six duffle bags full of art supplies, and we did a variety of different arts and crafts projects, including tie dye shirts, bracelets, prayer ropes, thank you cards, and numerous other crafts. The first time we handed out glue sticks, the majority of the students had no idea how to use them or even what they were. After our two months there, Mabel, the beloved director of the school, decided that because of our work she would establish an arts program at Alund’ Entono school for the first time, beginning with the new school year in January. We thank God, and a number of donors, for helping us provide all these crafts, along with helping to transform the perception of the school in the neighborhood by offering a complete playground set, as well as carpeting the kindergarten.

Many of the smiling, happy children we encountered each day have a stomach-wrenching past. One family, which has three boys in Alund’ Entono School - Fahad, Ibrah, and Junior, along with three other siblings - suffered much to get where they are now. Last year, their mother took her four boys, leaving their sisters in boarding school without telling them anything. She ran off to an island to follow a boyfriend. A year later, she returned with her boys hungry, in rags, and a year behind in school. Her boyfriend took everything she had, and left her and her boys on the island alone. Now, a year later, her children are the brightest in the class. In Ibrah’s class, two girls had been going back and forth for the number one spot when he was gone, and when he came back, he swept them out of the water for the top spot. Ian is another smart child in primary 2, one who was found sleeping alone under a car. Joyce, in primary 6, had her foot burned off by her stepmother. Vikki, in primary 3, takes care of her paralyzed father. Despite these difficult and shocking circumstances, all these children were constantly smiling and loving.
Sometimes, it can be very easy to thrust out benevolence to the remote circumference of the far away, rest of the world whom we read about, but don’t actually know. This can often cause the benevolence to become largely imaginary. Before being in Uganda, I saw pictures of the school children and other locals. It was easy for me to view this country as some far away, imaginary, beautiful place with lovely people. But that was the problem. It was an imaginary feeling. Spending these months there led these people to truly become my neighbors, thus my love for them became more real. C.S. Lewis says that “When [humans] have really learned to love their neighbors as themselves, they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbors.”

I saw this love offered in another way through the lives and ministry of Peter and Sharon Georges and their Saint Nicholas Ugandan Children’s Fund, which sponsors around 250 primary, secondary, and university students. The Georges are the ones who invited me to Uganda, helped make all arrangements with the school here, and hosted Paraskevi and me for dinner every evening. They are truly transforming the lives of the children they sponsor!

After leaving Uganda, I went on an OCMC trip to Kenya for a week. I offered three talks at a conference which 600 youth from ages 12-30 attended. Once again, I just interacted with the locals and try to love them. I was on a team with six other Americans, which was the most “wazungu” I had seen in months! In Uganda, I lived in outskirts of the capital city of Kampala, but in Kenya we spent time in the remote areas of Western Kenya. We hiked down into a valley and met some families who truly lived off the land. There were no stores or businesses for miles. It even seemed that some of the children had never seen white people before as some of the babies began to cry when they saw us! The family that we were meeting had prepared a feast for us. When we arrived, we saw a chicken running around outside. By the time we sat down to eat, that same chicken was on our plate.

During all my time in Africa, I felt the spirit of love in such an undeniable way. The simplicity of the environment made it easier to feel God’s presence and appreciate all the blessings He gives to us. This experience continued to expand my mind and heart as I dwelt in the presence of people that seem to have little materialistic items, yet have more love than I can imagine.

Through donation she raised, Theodora helped the Primary School get a new playground set, put carpeting in the kindergarten, and took six bags of arts and crafts supplies. The director of the school has now decided to intro...
As my days in Peru are coming to a close, I wake up each morning feeling more and more emotional. Two weeks ago, I was preparing to say goodbye to my students, friends, host family, and attend Thanksgiving dinner with my family back in the states. Then something struck me. I simply couldn’t leave! I needed a few more weeks here. The next volunteer was expected to come for a few weeks, so my students would go without a teacher if I left, I had met amazing people. There were still places I wanted to explore and restaurants I wanted to try. I really wanted to stay. So, by the grace of God, and of course my parents’ permission, I did just that. After I hung up the phone with my parents, I yelled with excitement, “I’m staying!” as my roommates and I danced around the room in happiness and anticipation of what adventure would come next.

Nine weeks ago, I arrived in Peru and a taxi dropped me off at the house where I would be staying with an elderly Peruvian woman. She welcomed me with open arms, offered me Coca tea, (a plant unique to the 11,000 ft elevation of Cusco), and explained to me in Spanish all the house rules: don’t drink the local water, the shower may be freezing at times, don’t walk home alone at night, etc.

Immediately, I could tell this experience was going to be quite different from my time at St. Innocent Orphanage in Mexico. As long as I arrived on time to the school where I would be teaching and teach English from 8am until 12:30, my days were completely free. In Mexico we followed a very organized, packed schedule. Yet my new freedom came as a beautiful thing because as I explored Cusco and its surrounding area, I discovered it had much more to offer than I ever dreamed.

Days later, I met my three roommates, girls I would be spending most of my time with for the next nine weeks. All three of them were from California also taking Gap Years! We connected right away, as we explored the city together, took weekend trips, went on countless hikes in the beautiful Andes Mountains, and spent hours after dinner laughing with our host mom in Spanish.

The real joy, of course, came from the seventeen girls I was privileged to teach English. I arrived at Casa Acogida bright and early the first day with white board markers in hand and a piece of paper describing the background of this place and the girls living here. Without much preparation or warning, I was thrown into the classroom right away. I learned quickly that the students sitting in front of me did not speak English, besides a few basic words. After introducing myself to the girls and playing a few games, I left my first day eager to plan and create ways to not only teach these girls English, a valuable skill in Peru, but perhaps even more importantly to figure out how to build up their confidence and self-worth.

I understand that in Latin America, and from what I experienced in Peru, women certainly do not have the same roles in society as men. In fact, women are often treated very poorly. Domestic violence and sexual harassment are large issues in Peru today. It’s a little unclear to me as to why these issues are so prevalent, but maybe it can be attributed to the “machismo,” or the aggressive and exaggerated masculine pride that is
so apparent. It unfortunately leaves a lot of pain and cause a great deal of damaged relationships. As I developed relationships with some of the locals, we discussed this issue in great detail and compared societal norms in the United States and Peru. Everyone agreed that this cycle should be broken, but it’s hard to know how.

Even if it is not necessarily violence, the women’s role is usually quite traditional, having quite a few babies and taking care of the house. Walking down the streets of Cusco every day, I saw more babies and small children than I ever have seen in my life. My friends and I would try to count, but when the numbers got to 75 a day, we would lose track and give up. And although I certainly love smiling at babies and playing with them in the streets, I knew these numbers seemed too high.

My students were between the ages of 12 and 17, living at Casa Acogida as a halfway house. Typically, they live here between one and three years, coming from families that could not care for them. Some girls came off the streets when the government brought them to this shelter. So, it is no wonder that a big portion of what I tried to teach and instill in these girls was their value and importance. I was hoping that through education, they would realize there is no limit to what they could do. Some days in the classroom were easier than others, but all in all these girls because like my little sisters. I couldn't keep the smile off my face while I was there. Every day I was supposed to leave at 12:30, but of course I ended up staying so much later spending time with them, playing games, helping with their homework, or answering questions about my life back in the United States.

As expected, I knew it would be hard to leave. Saying goodbye was long and emotional. It was also hard to leave the beautiful city of Cusco. I love the familiar streets I walked every day. I love the markets and small talk with the same elderly women holding their baby goats and llamas. I love haggling with the taxi drivers. I love the parades that happen in the plaza (which seem to be almost every day). And of course, I especially love the incredible people I met. The Lord has blessed me with another beautiful experience, quite different from the one in Mexico, which was in an Orthodox setting. I had so much freedom and needed to make my own choices about how I wanted to spend my days. On Sundays, I would set my own alarm clock to taxi to a church. This experience opened my eyes and my heart yet again, and I thank God.
Early in December, I was once again on a business trip and was blessed to be in Sweden on December 13th. As you may know, December 13th is St. Lucy’s Day (or Saint Lucia, or in Swedish Sankta Lucia). For those of you who are not familiar with St. Lucy (like me before researching her), she was a 3rd century martyr of the ancient church who lived on the island of Sicily in a town called Syracuse. She lived during a time referred to as the Diocletian Persecution, which was the last major persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperors. The persecutions, of course, ended soon after Constantine became emperor of both halves of the Roman Empire in the year 306 and made Christianity the official religion of the empire.

Like many Saints, Lucy has a variety of different stories attributed to her life. She is venerated as a Saint in the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran churches, and it is through the Lutheran church that she became so popular in Sweden, as the predominant form of Christianity in Sweden is Lutheranism. As the story goes, Lucy’s mother Eutychia was very sick and Lucy and her mother made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Agatha in Catania, a town about 50 miles from Syracusa. St. Agatha was an early Christian who had been martyred about 52 years prior to that time. Lucy’s and Eutychia’s intercessions to St. Agatha were so powerful that St. Agatha came to Lucy in a dream to tell her that her mother’s sickness would be cured (it was) and that Lucy would become the glory of Syracusa just as Agatha had become the glory of Catania.

St. Agatha also persuaded Lucy to convince her mother to give their riches (as Eutychia and her late husband were wealthy) to the poor instead of using it as a dowry for Lucy’s betrothed. The riches were distributed and Lucy’s betrothed became upset and denounced her to the local Governor as a Christian where she was summarily tortured and killed, never having renounced her faith.

St. Lucy is depicted in a few different ways in the icons that you can find on the internet, but the one below is important because it ties into both how Sankta Lucia’s day is celebrated in Sweden, and into another story about her life. As you can see in the icon, St. Lucy is holding a wreath (or perhaps a headband) made out of evergreen branches. In many icons and paintings of her she is depicted holding a branch or a wreath. It turns out one of the other stories of her life is that she brought food to persecuted Christians “hiding in the catacombs”. Now, a catacomb, for those of you who do not know, because it’s not really a word that comes up in daily conversation, as in, “Hey, let’s go get a cup of coffee and take a stroll through the catacombs”… is an underground cemetery.

In order to bring as much food as possible into the catacombs she placed upon her head a wreath of woven evergreen branches with candles in the wreath, almost like an advent wreath for those of you who know what that is. In this way, she could light her way into the dark catacombs without having to hold a candle to see, and use both her arms to carry as much food as possible.

In Sweden, St. Lucy is deeply revered. One may wonder why this Saint is so revered in a country where the Saint didn’t even live. Some dismiss the importance of her and suggest that Lucy’s feast day coinciding with the shortest day of the year (with the least daylight) has something to do with it. And let me tell you, there’s not a lot of daylight on December 13th in Sweden! That...
may be true. The Swedish culture in general, and Nordic culture specifically, has a fascination both with the shortest and longest days of the year, and why shouldn’t they, as these days are so extreme in Sweden. At the end of the day, it probably doesn’t matter why the Nordic countries hold Lucia so dearly, but rather that they hold her dear and venerate her, period.

When you experience the celebration of Sankta Lucia in Sweden it is clear that her work in the catacombs is how she is remembered. On that morning of December 13th in our hotel restaurant, where the busy travelers doing their business in Sweden were eager to wolf down their breakfasts and get on their way, we were pleasantly interrupted by a singing, slow procession of young women all dressed in white. And at the head of the procession was none other than Sankta Lucia herself, with her crown of candles. These days, of course, the candles are battery powered electric candles for safety’s sake, but other than that the celebration is how it has been for centuries.

The singers entered and exited singing the Sankta Lucia song (I’m sure you can find a recording of this beautiful song in Swedish on YouTube), and in between the entrance and exit, they serenaded us with a few lovely Christmas songs. It is said that Christianity still smolder in the Swedes. Sure, it may be mixed with pride in Swedish heritage, but the celebration itself is an important event in spreading the word about a revered Saint. I did not even know that the church had a Saint whose first name was Lucy until I happened to visit Sweden on her feast day. Imagine a young person growing up in Sweden and participating in the Sankta Lucia celebration year after year, and then one day asking themselves, “Who is this St. Lucy, and how can I find out more about her?” …and the ember smolders and begins to burn!

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 5:00-7:00 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 6-10 - Webster
Jan 11-12 - Dudley
Jan 13 - Oxford, Charlton, Sutton
Jan 14, 16 - Thompson, Fabyan, Quinebaug
N.Grosvenordale, Pomfret, Woodstock
January 17-20 - Other Areas

The Light - January 2019
EPIPHANY/THEOPHANY
The Feast of “Lights”

The feasts of Christmas and Epiphany were known in the early Church as “The Feast of Lights,” since both feasts revealed Jesus Christ as the Light of 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 of 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, Epiphany or 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 human-kind! We have been enlightened by these holy feasts.

We can understand this idea from this hymn we sing on Epiphany/Theophany 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 and we are enlightened!

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 the month of January, and bring you this blessing. Look on page 7 for the House Blessing Schedule.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world, whoever believes in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall walk in the light of life.” May each of us strive to walk in His light each and every day throughout the New Year!
NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

May we all enter into the New Year with a sound resolution to walk according to the ways of the Lord! Here are some Biblical Resolutions on how to live each day:

ALWAYS BE HONEST
Proverbs 12:22

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
Psalms 34:1-3

BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS
Galatians 6:2

FORGIVE AND FORGET
Micah 7:18

BE KIND AND TENDER HEARTED
Ephesians 4:32

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER
1 Thessalonians 4:18

KEEP YOUR PROMISES
Romans 4:21

BE SUPPORTIVE OF ONE ANOTHER
Acts 20:35

BE TRUE TO EACH OTHER
Revelation 15:3

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER
Deuteronomy 15:11

TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE YOU TREAT YOUR FRIENDS
Matthew 7:12

but most important

LOVE ONE ANOTHER DEEPLY FROM THE HEART
1 Peter 1:22

A PRAYER TO OFFER EVERY DAY

Glory to God who has shown forth the light, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among all.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory.

O Lord King, heavenly God, Father Almighty, O Lord the only begotten son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes away the sins of the world. Have mercy on us, You who take away the sins of the world.

Receive our prayer, You who sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us. For You only are holy, You only are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day will I bless You, and I will praise Your name forever, yes forever, and forever. Grant Lord to keep us this day without sin. Blessed are You O Lord, the God of our Fathers, praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen.

Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Master, grant me understanding of Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Holy One, enlighten me with your commandments.

Your mercy O Lord endures forever and forever. Do not turn away from the work of Your hands.

To you is due glory, honor and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.
Scenes from our three Christmas Skits
Our Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon

Singing Christmas Carols to the Elderly and Shut-ins
PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Happy New Year everyone! On December 9th we had a very nice Christmas party at point breeze with a record breaking crowd! Thank you all for coming and taking part in an enjoyable luncheon. We passed a tray around and voted to donate the money collected to the Philoxenia House and Meals on Wheels. Thank you all who were very generous. We will not meet in January and February. We always take the 2 months off due to the cold weather. We will meet again in March and begin our new year.

We put together 10 Christmas Baskets for the needy for Father Luke. Thank you Sandi for arranging this project. Sandi also arranged for Park n Shop to make 25 mall fruit baskets for our Fr. Luke to bring to all the elderly whom he visited before Christmas. Please don't forget them in our thoughts and prayers not only at Christmas time, but throughout the year. We all need to be visiting these elderly who were so active in our church in years gone by.

In January we will have our Vasilopita Luncheon on January 13, which is sponsored by our Parish Council. Eleni will make the sweet breads for that day. Thank you Eleni!

We had a few deaths in our parish this month. Our sympathies go out to the family of Sandra Thomas. She will be greatly missed especially by her sister Marion who was always there for her.

We would also like to extend our deepest sympathies to Kathy Kunkel and her family in the loss of her mother Marianne. It was quite a shock! She was a lovely lady and during the years she lived in Webster and was a part of our parish family, she was active and always helping us whenever we needed her. She will be greatly missed by all!

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Stay healthy, happy, and safe over the winter months and throughout the 2019 year!

With much love and gratitude,
Evelyn Pappas

SIGN UP FOR PROJECT MEXICO 2019

Our Church reserved 25 SPOTS for next summer’s trip!

July 9-16, 2019

For anyone with questions, or if you are interested in participating in building a home for Project Mexico next summer, contact Fr. Luke.

To reserve a spot, give a $100 deposit by December 20th.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE CHECKKK

Stewardship Update as of Dec 28th. We have 153 who have given to support our church in the year 2018.

PACESETTERS ($1000-$2000) - 22 Stewards
TORCHBEARERS ($2001-$4000) - 12 Stewards
GOOD SHEPHERDS (over $4000) - 5 Stewards
Average Pledge: $826
Kostas/Kristyn Aganis
Dhimitra/Angelo Adamopoulos
Lewis Adamopoulos
Nicholas Adamopoulos
Mary/Adam Ardan
GraceArsenault
Amber Breton
Ethel Angelo
Michael Angelo
Rose Angelo
Gus/Ethel Anifantis
Sophie Apostol
Grace Arsanault
Ann/Al Axtman
Earl/Lorraine Bahl
John/Olga Barakhlis
Mary Baxter
Tony/Nike Beaudry
EricBeland/Rina Sgouritsas
Michael Belanger
Frederika Beno
Rich/Sophia Bethune
Athena Bilis
Arthur/Kathy Bilis
David Bilis
George/Debbby Carabina
Rita Carabina
Ann Chito
Charlie Chito
Michael/Titi Chito
Anton/Nicoleta Cojocaru
Gary/Christina Colello
Bill/Despina Condos
George/Laurie Condos
Barbara Constantine
Chris/Helen Constantine
Donna Cooney
Anna Darlagiannis
Arthur/Sara Darlagiannis
Nick/Athanasia Darlagiannis
Norman/Barbara Desrosiers
LeahDidonato
Maria Dionis
George/Annalisa Dunning
Maria Econome
Mary Fatsi
Stephen/Sophia Foisy
John/Samantha Gatsogiannis
Vasili/Thomai Gatsogiannis
Chris/Joan Geotis
Paul/Mona Geotis
Zachary/Barbara Gianaris
Zachary Gianaris
Robert/Sharon Hayes
Helen Hazatones
Lisa/Dan Healy
Anestis/Evis Jordanoglou
Harry/Tina Jordanoglou
Lou/Rozeta Kamcev
Sappho Kapsounis
Angeliki Karapanos
Maria/John Karastogiannis
George/Helen Kerbici
Said/Bozhena Khozami
Lorraine Kirritis
Rena/Thomas Klebart
Mike Kosozka
Gulapka/Ilija Kostovski
Alexandra Koulax
Gus Koulax
Sandy Kunkel
Scott/Kathy Kunkel
Trish Lareau
Dr. Elena Mackenzie
Jennie Manthos
Dr Laurie Manthos
Leslie Manthos
Olympia Margaritidis
Chris/Alex Massie
Marie McNally
Lorna McWilliam
Diana/Alex Megas
Helen Metropoulos
Demetrios/Hariklia Milios
Celia Milios
Vasilios/Grace Milios
Yanni/Katie Mironidis
Bob Mirandola/Lea Koveas
Del/Marie Monroe
Pauline/Carl Mueller
Neal/Charlotte Neslusan
Victor/Linda Nizamoff
George Nonis
Kosta Panagiotou
Ted/Gloria Panagiotou
Greg/Linsey
Barbara Pappas
Chuck/Misty Pappas
Emanuel Pappas
James Pappas
Sam/Evelyn Pappas
Stephen Pappas
Glykeria Partsalis
Louise/Richard Pavlech
Olga Poloukhine
Chris Bilis Porazzo
Rayne/Elise Purcell
Jared/Stephanie Quill
Deb/Glen Raymond
Dan/Sue Rivelli
Stephanie Robillard
Ron/Sandy Sanderson
Loucia Scafidi
Nick/Mary Seferi
John/Eleni Sgouritsas
Dimitri/Elkapria
Sidopoulos
DorothySosnowski
Tina/James Sullivan
Eleanor Teguis
Ted Theodores
John/Ana Thomas
Alexandra Thomas
Marion Thomas
Phil/Barbara Thomas
Bill Thompson
Steliane/David
Thompson
George/Lynn Tonna
Ted/Betty Tonna
Nick/Lois/Totolos
Fr Luke/Faith Veronis
Niko/Susan Veronis
Edna Vogel
Steve/Kelly Vosnakis
Tasi Vriga
Danielle/David Weiss
Evangline Wilson
Paul/Eleni
Xanthopoulos
Vasiliki Zahariadis
Bill/Helen Zenon
Yuri/Tatyana Zhuk

The Light - January 2019
THANK YOU TO THE 2018 STEWARDS
To all the faithful Church Family members who have given a financial donation towards their 2018 Stewardship Offering as of December 28, 2018

As of Dec 28, 153 Families have given an average $824/year to support our beloved Church and ministries.

If you still haven’t sent in your 2018 offering please still do. We reached out budgeted goal and collected $126,209 through stewardship.
LIVING BREAD LUNCHEON DONORS

The January Thanksgiving Luncheon is donated for the Glory of God from an anonymous donor!

We are looking for Donors to sponsor the “Living Bread Luncheon” for each month in the New Year. We already have donors for March, April and October. You can honor some special person or event, or offer the meal in loving memory of a beloved one.

We serve approximately 80-100 guests each month, as well as deliver meals to the elderly of our parish. A $400 donation will cover the cost of each month expenses for each month.

COME AND SERVE

We always welcome volunteers to come and serve and clean up during our Living Bread Luncheons. Come by 12:15 to serve and 12:45 to clean up!!!

JESUS CHRIST said:

“I am the light of the world”
“I am the Bread of Life”
“I am the Resurrection & the Life”
“I am the way, the truth & the Life”
“I am the Alpha and the Omega”
“Before Abraham was, I AM”

We Need Help for Coffee Fellowship Hour.

Please let the Church Office know if you can help ONCE every EIGHT weeks to bring pastries, donuts, fruit or veggies for our coffee fellowship, or if you want to join a group to serve once a month.

We are also looking for more volunteers to join one of our four groups and help serve the Coffee Fellowship once a month!

+++ + + +

USHERS/GREETERS

Also looking for a few more stewards to join one of our four Greeters and Ushers groups!
HOLY LANDS PILGRIMAGE
Feb 15-24, 2019
Several spots remain. If interested, contact Fr. Luke ASAP for this once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage.

WEEKDAY SERVICES
Jan 7 - 9:30 Liturgy for St John the Baptist
Jan 18 - 9:30 Liturgy for St Athanasios the Great
Jan 25 - 9:30 Liturgy for St Gregory the Theologian
Jan 30 - 9:00 Liturgy for the Three Hierarchs
Saturday Vespers - 6:00pm

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

OUR CHURCH’S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

This year we will be creating a committee to help us celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our beloved Church. Various events will take place throughout the year 2020, with a final celebration at the end of 2020. Our primary goal throughout this year will be to celebrate the fact that our community has offered a place of worship, a spiritual home to us and our forebears for the past 100 years, and how we have also offered a witness of God’s love and Good News to the larger Webster, Central MA and Northeast CT communities.

A secondary goal will be for us to raise at least $100,000 in honor of our church, and an additional $100,000 to help us fulfill several projects for our future. Contact Michael Chito for more information, and to see how you can help get involved!!!
THANK YOU
To Everyone who Offered a Christmas Donation to our Beloved Church
To our Philoptochos, Angelo & Eleftheria Moutoudis, Sandi Kunkel, and all those who helped put together the 30 Christmas Ham baskets we gave out to families in need.

For the Poinsettias:
In memory of my parents and brother Christy from Rita Carabina
In memory of Charles and Loucia Christos from Sam and Evelyn Pappas and Angelo and Demetra Adamopoulos
In memory of Stavros and Evangelia Pappas from Sam and Evelyn, Sakis and Lola, and Olympia
In Loving memory of the Jim and Michael Naum from Anna Naum.
In loving memory of our sister Dina Teguis from her sisters Mary, Roxanne, and Eleanor
In loving memory of our parents Nick and Irene Teguis from their daughters Mary, Roxanne, Eleanor
In loving memory of Charles and Helen Pappas from Sandi Kunkel and Family
In loving memory of Hristos Bilis from Athina Bilis and Family
In loving memory of George Louis Kustas from Nike Beaudry
In loving memory of Demetri and Lorraine Vesho from Barbara and Norman Desrosiers
In loving memory of Van Thomas from Phil and Barbara Thomas
In loving memory of Alexandria Thomas from Phil and Barbara Thomas
Two Front Door Christmas Wreaths offered in loving memory of Van and Alexandria Thomas from their family

Congratulations to Bill and Despina Condos on their 70th Wedding Anniversary.
What a great witness of love and commitment!
“He has crowned them with honor and glory”

VASILOPITA LUNCHEON
SUNDAY, JANUARY 13

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.
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP
SERVING GROUPS

Jan 6 - Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi,
Jan 13 - Kathy Bilis, Sara Darlagiannis, Marie Monroe, Charlotte Neslusan, Stephanie Quill
Jan 20 - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau, Deb Raymond, Vange Wilson, Alexandra Koulax
Jan 27 - Donna Cooney, Leah Didonato, Rena Klebart, Betty Tonna

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP
SUPPLY GROUPS

Jan 6 - Nicoleta Cojocaru, Arthur Darlagiannis, Zach Gianaris, Jared Quill, Nikitas Zagoras
Jan 13 - Arthur Bilis, Chris Geoti, Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau,
Jan 20 - Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi, Bill Thompson,
Jan 27 - Neal Neslusan, Jimmy Karapanos, Tasi Vriga, Tatyana Zhuk, Mike Chito

USHERS & GREETERS
SCHEDULE

Jan 6 - Nicoleta Cojocaru, Arthur Darlagiannis, Zach Gianaris, Jared Quill, Nikitas Zagoras
Jan 13 - Arthur Bilis, Chris Geoti, Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau,
Jan 20 - Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi, Bill Thompson,
Jan 27 - Neal Neslusan, Jimmy Karapanos, Tasi Vriga, Tatyana Zhuk, Mike Chito

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Will Begin
Wednesday, Jan 23 and Thursday Jan 24

Coffee Fellowship Supply
Pastries/Donuts Groups

These groups will bake or bring in pastries/donuts and/or fruit and veggies for our coffee fellowship. We are looking for more volunteers to help!!!

Jan 6 – Lisa Healy, Marie McNally, Despina Condos, Trish Lareau
Jan 13 – Charlotte Neslusan, Evis Jordanoglou, Dolly Sosnowski, Annalisa Dunning
Jan 20 – Lynn Purcell, Rayne Purcell, Sophia Foisy, Kelly Vosnakis
Jan 27 – Titi Chito, Rina Sgouritsas, Lorna McWilliam, Pres. Faith Veronis
Feb 3 – Sandi Kunkel, Evelyn Pappas, Galupka Kostovski, Betty Tonna,
Feb 10 – Kathy Bilis, Marie Monroe, Eleni Sgouritsas, Tina Collelo
Feb 17 – Leah Didonato, Mary Seferi, Olga Poulakhine, Vasiliki Zahariadis
Feb 24 – Sara Darlagiannis, Sissy Darlagiannis, Helen Constantine, Alexandra Koulax

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS

Jan 6 – Kiera MacKenzie
Jan 13 – Lily Mueller
Jan 20 – Helen Dunning
Jan 27 – Panayiota Veronis
Feb 3 – Maia Beaudry
Feb 10 – Zach Beaudry
Remembering Our Church Family

Important Dates in JANUARY:

Try to make a visit, give a call, or express your congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days this month.

**BIRTHDAYS:**

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<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Kara Bilis</td>
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<td>Michael Pappas</td>
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<td>Bill Zenon</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 5</td>
<td>Smaranda Cojocaru</td>
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<td>Neal Neslusan</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 16</td>
<td>Gary Colello</td>
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<td>Christine Porazzo</td>
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<td>Frances Dunning</td>
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<td>Tessa Benoit</td>
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<td>Mike Kokoszka</td>
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<td>Coral Cynthia Rose Breton</td>
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<td>Theodora Veronis</td>
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<td>Loukas Baraklilis</td>
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<td>Maria Jordanoglou</td>
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<td>John Nicholopoulos</td>
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<td>Niko Milios</td>
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<td>George Condos</td>
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<td>Panayiota Veronis</td>
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<td>Sandi Kunkel</td>
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**NAMEDAYS:**

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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>Bill Vasilios Thompson</td>
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<td>Vassy Tanko</td>
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<td>Vasiliki Zaharidis</td>
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<td>Bill Zenon &amp; William Zenon</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>Jonathan Baraklilis</td>
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<td>Smaranda Ioana Cojocaru</td>
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<td>Yanni Mironides</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>Anton Cojocaru</td>
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<td>Arthur Bilis</td>
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<td>Arthur Peterson</td>
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<td>St. Tatiana</td>
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<td>Tatiana Zhuk</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>St Ephraim the Syrian</td>
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<td>Ephraim Dunning</td>
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Jesus said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life”
MEMORY ETERNAL
To our Beloved:
Emmanuel Pappas
John Nicholopoulos
Marianne Naumovski

IS OUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL?
Remember Christ’s Beloved Church in your Estate Planning and Legacy Giving!
Help promote our Church and the Gospel of our Lord even after your death!

COMMIT TO 20 MINUTES WITH GOD EACH DAY
Use Fr. Luke’s Daily Email to help you spend 20 minutes every day connecting with God throughout the new year.
You can sign up to the daily email at the Church’s website www.schwebster.org. On the left column of the main page you will find a place to sign up.

Look for our safe and convenient
at bottom left of Church webpage at www.schwebster.org

Learn your Orthodox Faith from Orthodox podcasts, music, teachings at

www.myocn.net

www.AncientFaith.com
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!
<table>
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<th>Sun</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>A Blessed and Happy New Year to All!</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 Fast Free</td>
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<td>12:30 Living Bread Luncheon 6:00 Vespers</td>
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<td>Keep Christ at the center of New Year</td>
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<td>6 Epiphany</td>
<td>8:30 Matins</td>
<td>7 St John the Baptist</td>
<td>8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11:30 Clergy Luncheon at Church</td>
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<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy with Blessing of Waters</td>
<td>House Blessings Webster</td>
<td>House Blessings in Webster</td>
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<td>House Blessings in Dudley</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins</td>
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<td>18 St Athanasios 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy 19 House Blessings Other Areas</td>
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<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>Vasilopita Luncheon</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins</td>
<td>21 Martin Luther King Day</td>
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<td>25 St Gregory 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
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<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>25 St Gregory 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
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<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
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<td>6:00 Vespers</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Feb 1 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy 12:30 Living Bread Luncheon</td>
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<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>30 Three Hierarch</td>
<td>8: 15 Matins 9:00 Liturgy</td>
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<td>Feb 1 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy 12:30 Living Bread Luncheon</td>
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A Daily Prayer for the New Year

THE SERENITY PRAYER
Reinhold Niebuhr

God grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
 enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is,
 not as I would have it;
 trusting that He will make all things right
 if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
 and supremely happy
 with Him forever in the next.

AMEN.