

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2010

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church 518 869-3932

A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad www.albanyrocor.org

Mitered Protopriest Wsevolod Drobot Protopriest Father Michael Fritz

Protodeacon Michael Soloviev Subdeacon Andrei Podymow

THE SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND MEETINGS FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday Vigils: 6:00 p.m. Vigils of Feasts: 6:30 p.m.

Sundays & Feasts: 9:30 a.m., Hours; 9:50 a.m., the Divine Liturgy

- 7 Meatfare Sunday **Russian Dance Ensemble**, 2 p.m., see page 2
- 14 Meeting of our Lord Forgiveness Sunday
- 21 Sunday of Orthodoxy **Lenten Lecture after Coffee Hour**
- 28 **Church Council Meeting; also Dessert & Discussion after Coffee Hour**

The location of each gathering will be announced.

FEBRUARY NAMES' DAYS May God grant them all many years!

- 3 Maxim Schuler Maxim Bradley Eugene Fitzpatrick
- 6 Xenia Drobot
- 9 Gregory Soloviev Gregoriy Cherkezov
- 14 Bridget Taylor Brigid Henry
- 18 Agafia Fedorov
- 23 Maksim Krykhtkin Paula Markesinnis

COFFEE HOUR TEAMS FOR FEBRUARY (* indicates a Lenten coffee hour)

February 7 RaeLynn Gonyea, Paula Markesinnis, Tania Scott, Vas Murn

February 14 **Blini** Teams of Irina Khrytkin, Tasia Fedorov, Cecelia Soloviev

*February 21 Irina Khrytkin, Lyudmila Kapustina, Tanya Kosovskij

*February 28 Margo Beighey, Nina Vepritskaya, Nadja Jernakoff

(If you are unable to host on your assigned date,
it is your responsibility to switch dates with another group.)

CHOIR OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOR PALM SUNDAY

Father Wsevolod especially, and all the parishioners, enjoy having the youth of our parish sing the Liturgy for Palm Sunday, which is very early this year—**March 28**. Please plan to have all children in the parish participate, (even if you think their singing is not pitch perfect): We will do the best we can! Choir practices will start the First Sunday of Great Lent, following a quick coffee hour lunch. That date is **February 21**, with rehearsals each subsequent Sunday. Please make sure your children attend, because it is very hard to work if children are missing. Choir Director Natasha Schuler recommends that children as young as 7 participate, and that the oldest be high school age youth. Please contact Natasha with questions and concerns at 346-4350 or rickschuler@verizon.net.

NATIVITY MORTGAGE FUND APPEAL

With God's help, five years ago after decades of effort we raised enough money for a down payment to build our new church dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God. For many years parishioners have pledged money on a regular basis to help meet our mortgage. Now that we have begun to fund beautiful frescoes for the interior, it is very important that we keep up with our mortgage payments of over \$5000 per month. Thus, the Parish Council makes this Nativity appeal for our mortgage fund. If you would like to pledge a weekly, monthly, or annual amount for this fund, please speak to Reader John (Rick) Schuler in church, or call him at 346-4350. Any amount pledged on a regular basis, no matter how large or small, is truly appreciated. If you are unable to make a regular pledge now, please still consider making a donation. God willing, we have been able to make all of our mortgage payments, even though a number of our families have moved away; but we have been blessed to have many new families join us, so now is a good time to renew our appeal. God bless you for your generosity.

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FROM A PRE-SCHOOL SOURCE

Fellow-parishioner Jean (Helene) Henry shared the following vignette with your editor, who found it instructional and, therefore, passes it along.

“I had been painting, and Patrick came to tell me that a quart can had tipped over in the hall. I had not secured the lid tightly enough; so the paint leaked onto the floor. We concluded that it must have been one of the cats. While I was coming back from a trip to the sink in attempting to clean up the mess, I saw four-year-old Bobby with his foot deliberately planted in the air over the paint puddle, trying to decide if he was going to take the plunge. I yelled, ‘STOP!’ He immediately stopped, and left when I told him to. A few minutes later he came back and apologized. I said, ‘Why? Are you the one who tipped the can over?’ He said, ‘No. I am the one who almost stepped in it.’ I told him that I forgave him, and asked him, ‘You won’t do it again, right?’ He said, ‘I don’t know.’

“What could I say? That seemed like genuine humility, self-knowledge, and honesty. In reality, how can any of us ever promise never to do something? We can hope that we wouldn’t do something bad, and ask God for help, but we should never trust ourselves too much, and get smug and self-righteous. Bobby’s simple answer caused that whole reflection.”

RUSSIAN NATIONAL DANCE ENSEMBLE

This choreographic ensemble, Varen'ka, hails from Tula, Russia. The dances are directed by Sergey Kuznetsov and performed in beautifully detailed, elaborate costumes with bright colors and patterns. So please stay on Sunday, February 7 at 2 p.m. in our church hall after coffee hour.

February 2010, page 2

PLEASE HELP OUR PARISH RAISE NEEDED FUNDS!

The Russian Winter Festival is set for Saturday, February 13 at the Albany Armory from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. with potential as a *major money-maker* for us. Please call Tasia Fedorov at 459-1253 to volunteer at our table.

VEGETABLE COBBLER (for a crock pot) Lenten or non-Lenten

1 tbsp. oil 3 leeks, thinly sliced 4 stalks celery, thinly sliced
4 carrots, thinly sliced 3 cloves garlic, minced 1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cracked peppercorns 2 tsp. dried thyme leaves 1 tbsp. flour
1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup (To keep it dairy free, substitute soy creamer, but add salt to taste.)
1 cup vegetable stock (Maybe Knorr vegetable cubes reconstituted)
8 oz. chopped Portobello mushrooms (or corn, if your kids prefer)
½ cup cream (or soy creamer) 1 cup frozen peas

TOPPING

1 ½ cups flour 1 tbsp. baking powder 1 tsp. salt
½ cup milk or soy milk 1 egg or powdered egg replacer

In a large pot or saucepan, sautee leeks, celery and carrots until softened. Add garlic, peppercorn, salt, and thyme, stirring for 1 minute. Sprinkle 1 tbsp. flour over all and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Stir in cream of mushroom soup until smooth and thick. Stir in 1 cup of vegetable broth and stir until smooth. Add mushrooms (or corn); transfer to slow cooker.

Cook covered on 'low' for 8 hours. Toward end of cooking time, turn heat to 'high'. Add (soy?) cream, peas (and dill to taste?). Adjust seasonings.

TOPPING In bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Add egg (or egg replacer) and (soy) milk to make a lumpy dough. When vegetable mixture is bubbling, drop batter in dollops over the top. Place a tea towel over top of the stoneware. Cover and cook on high 30 to 40 minutes until batter in center of dumplings is done. Alternatively, you may make simple biscuits and spoon vegetable cobbler over the top of them.

(adapted from In Community, St. John AOC cathedral, Eagle River AK)

...AND SPEAKING OF FOOD...

Our gifted iconographer Father Fyodor is back, this time with his son John, so that they may work together. Members of our parish family are urged to invite them home for dinner or to bring a meal or dessert for them to enjoy at our Church Hall. Our Lord's words preserved in Luke 14:12 do not lack for applicability here: Father Fyodor and John are not in a position to invite you back or otherwise to return culinary favors.

THE KLIROS FLOOR

Men of the parish did a great job of flooring the kliros. The choir already appreciates the finishing touch underfoot; but, if you are not among our parish choristers, go up and have an admiring look yourself!

PLEASE PRAY FOR ALL THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF HAITI

Some of our parishioners know of the small, dedicated ROCOR mission in Haiti. Fr. Gregoire Legoute and Fr. Jean Chenier-Dumail are alive, though earlier reported missing. They and their families stay outdoors for fear of further tremors. The Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Port-au-Prince suffered damage, yet stands with its roof intact; but its school was destroyed--and no news of its parishioners yet. The Fund for Assistance to ROCOR began supporting the mission after the hurricanes of 2008. This is much worse. Checks may be sent to: Fund for Assistance/Haiti, c/o Synod of Bishops, 75 East 93rd Street, New York NY 10128. The fund has collected \$50,000 so far. \$16,000 has been disbursed to the suffering through trusted clergy on the ground there. Please continue your support. None of the moneys contributed go to administrative costs or overhead, and Fund Executive Director Archpriest Viktor Potapov promises a full accounting "when the dust settles and we catch our breath." Lord, have mercy!

MEMORY ETERNAL

Fr. Rodion Aragon, the only ROCOR priest in Costa Rica, died January 12 of stomach cancer. He became a priest in January 2009. Costa Rica's large Russian population is in the process of building a church in the Pskov style. He is survived by his wife, Matushka Elena, and son, Arsenii.

TUMMIES FULL OF DELICIOUSNESS, AND MORE SISTERHOOD NEWS

...but first the stuff has to be made; and here's the Sisterhood's schedule:

Vareniki: February 2, 9, 23, March 2. Close-up person needed at 6 p.m.

Golubtsy: March 8 at about 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., two people needed for p.m.

March 10 at 1 p.m. for 30 minutes. March 15 in the evening.

Kulitch and/or Babka: the week of March 15 for 3 or 4 days.

On January 15 the Sisters met at The Olde Shaker Inn for a dinner and drinks. A good time was had by all.

The Sisterhood is beginning work for the Paschal Sale. Please contact Margo Beighey if you can work. We need EVERYONE'S help!

Coffee Hour hostesses no longer need to clean the Church Hall floor or bathrooms; but please be sure that the kitchen checklist has been done.

Yolka was held on Sunday, January 17. The talent was amazing, the play superb, and the food fantastic. Big thank you's to all who cooked, baked, set up and cleaned up. And special thanks to Alexandra McClure for taking charge of our children and their talents.

Be on the lookout for requests to help clean the church floor for the summer. We'll be asking parishioners to help clean the floor only for the months of July and August. This can be done quickly with the steamer, but we shall need it done at least twice in each month. Please contact Rae Lynn (Anastasia) Gonyea if you are willing to help.

February 2010, page 4

THE VISIT OF THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the holy head of the universal teacher and great hierarch Saint John Chrysostom from Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral will be brought to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign at the Synod of Bishops in New York on February 6 to February 12, 2010. A bus trip is being organized from Albany for vigil services on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6. The bus will leave our church parking lot promptly at 1:30 p.m. in order to obtain a place to stand in the cathedral—one hopes, and it will return at about 1:30 a.m.

The price will be determined by the number of passengers; e.g., if thirty persons take the bus, the cost will be \$40 each; if forty, then \$30.

Those interested in going should contact Tasia Fedorov AS SOON AS POSSIBLE by telephone 459-1253 or by e-mail at tasbf@aol.com.

February 2010, page 5

PARISH POLICY WITH REGARD TO REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

At the Church Council meeting on January 24, thoughtful discussion was given to how requests for special services should be handled, including moliebens, pannyhidas, baptisms, and weddings. Below is the policy that was carefully developed. Bear in mind that courtesy demands that as much notice should be given as possible in respect for the schedules of our clergy and for the needs of our fellow parishioners.

Insofar as possible, all requests for such services should be made through the Starosta. The Starosta (i.e., the Warden) is John Gonyea (695-6865). It is preferable to speak to him at church, because the clergy will ordinarily be present then. When he receives the request, he will forward it to the appropriate priest, usually determined by which language, whether Russian or English, is more

comfortable for those making the request. The Starosta will also notify the other priest to avoid any conflicts in schedule.

As to weddings, rules of the Synod require that notice of it be made at the Divine Liturgy for three Sundays prior. Exceptions are rarely permitted, and then only with the approval of the bishop. Furthermore, there are times and seasons when Orthodox weddings may not be performed.

Requests for baptisms and weddings are best avoided during weeks of multiple services: Nativity weeks, first week of Lent, Pascha, etc.

Typically the need for a baptism or a molieben can be anticipated, so everyone is asked to have the courtesy to inform the Starosta as far in advance as practicable; however, in the event that the date has not been firmly established but is only tentative—as, for example, when the schedule of vital family members who wish to attend is uncertain—it will be most helpful to alert the Starosta to the available possibilities.

It is in the case of Pannyhidas that the most flexibility may be required, as when a loved one has reposed in another country and attempts are being made to coordinate services here with those abroad. Every effort will be made to accommodate such compassionate requests.

ABOUT NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

First, the deadline for submission of items is Thursday, February 25. Please submit articles by e-mail or in writing. Thank you. BACVAS@dishmail.net

Then, look for a Lenten healthy cookie recipe reviewed by Ben Taylor and his college friends. It would have been included in this newsletter, but your editor's first submission of samples to Ben garnered very helpful comments from some of his friends suggesting that tweaking the recipe was desirable. Also, soliciting the opinions of non-Orthodox about such recipes might just invite curiosity about our faith, often described as a "best kept secret"—which reminds your editor of what his "godmother", the late Mary Tarcha, remarked after his first heart attack twenty-five years ago: "It sounds like what you need, Vas, is a good Orthodox diet!"

Also, look for the Sisterhood's latest about the upcoming Pascha sale.

CharlieVas Murn, Editor

Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church
617 Sand Creek Road
Albany NY 12205