

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER JUNE - JULY 2018

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

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

Rector: Protopriest Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

SUMMER HOURS: HOURS at 9:00 AM - LITURGY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.

JUNE NAMESDAYS

3	Eleanore Yarowski	6	Vincent Parella
	Elena Krisie	20	Zinaida Borscok
	Ellie Baker	23	Antonette Fritz
	Elena Pervychine		
	Ella Nikiforov		

JULY NAMESDAYS

1	Peter Levsha	18	Elizabeth (Isabella) Hauf
2	John Richards	19	Melissa Fitzpatrick
8	Nikhon Schuler	24	Olga Varvarchin
12	Paul Nikiforov		Olga Kinnear
	Paul Markessinis		Olga Bradley
	Peter Strubel		Olga Usov
	Jude Dragon		Olga Parella
13	Sub Deacon Phillip Rudko	28	Vladimir Timofeev
14	Kosma Nikiforov		Vladimir Usov
	Anzhelika Cherkezov		Vladimir Welsh
17	Anastasia Welsh		Vladimir (Kevin) Baker
18	Anna Nikiforov	30	Margo Beighey

MNOGAYA LETA! MANY YEARS to all of our Parishioners celebrating their Namesday in the month of JUNE and JULY.

IMPORTANT DATES IN JUNE and JULY

June 4 th -	Apostles Fast Begins
July 12 th -	Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul
June 24 th - July 21 st -	Fr. Alexis will be in Russia
July 31 st -August 7 th	St. Seraphim's Camp

NO MORE COFFEE HOURS FOR THE SUMMER COFFEE HOURS WILL RESUME IN SEPTEMBER

GOLUBSTI and PIROGY FUNDRAISER DINNER

On Friday, June 1st, a fast-free Friday, a Fundraising Golubtsi and Pirogy dinner was held at our Church Hall. Thank you Maria Hauf, Christina DiLello and Tasia Fedorov for preparing the food and setting up the hall. Thank you to Alex and Barbara Nikiforov for donating the bread and pickles. A huge thank you to Emily Soloviev for being our hostess and waitress for the day. Thank you to Natasha and Sonia Smelova, Dimitri Soloviev, David and Alika Taylor who were our clean-up committee. And thank you to all of our Parishioners who joined us that evening in our fundraising efforts. We raised \$1000 for our Capital Improvement Fund. .

NEW BABY

Sub Deacon Eugene and Melissa Fitzpatrick welcomed the newest addition to their family - Eileen Rose born on May 29th at 7lbs. 11oz. Eileen means little Ellen/Helen and she is named in honor of St. Helen of Constantinople. Congratulations to her big siblings Amelia, Kieran and Maura. Mnogaya Leta and May God Bless!

CHURCH FLOWER BEDS

A reminder to the people who have volunteered to be responsible for the flower beds around the Church. Please weed and plant flowers in your flower bed. Thank you to Christina DiLello and Paula Markessinis for planting flowers along the Church walkway. As many of you may have noticed, the plantings around the hall need some attention. They need to be weeded and the bushes need to be trimmed. If anyone has some spare time to donate to weeding around the hall it would be greatly appreciated. Remember, it is everyone's Church and Hall and we ALL need to be involved in the upkeep. Please do not take the attitude that "SOMEBODY" will do it – "SOMEBODY" is getting very tired. Thank you.

ST. SERAPHIM'S CAMP - July 31st - August 7th

Registration for St. Seraphim Camp in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania has begun and is now available on line at the camp website.

St. Seraphim Camp provides an Orthodox environment for children beginning with the third grade and through high school. Days are filled with exciting adventures, such as river tubing, swimming, hiking, bonfires, sports competitions, arts and crafts, and archery. Of course, there are daily prayers, services, and the Orthodox fast is observed. Each day, each group visits with a priest in a course of religious instruction known as The Law of God. Children from all over America, Canada, Russia, and Europe come to participate. Many lifelong friendships develop and children are encouraged to participate not only in the summer camp, but to become deeply involved in the life of the Russian Church Abroad.

If you would like more information, please speak to either Fr. Alexis or Matushka Cecelia Soloviev.

The camp will begin on Sunday, July 31, and conclude on Sunday, August 7. More information and registration is available at www.stseraphimcamp.org.

CHURCH PARKING LOT

Many of you may have noticed that the Church Parking lot is in need of repair. There are several holes and crumbling areas. We have received a quote to have the parking lot repaired, sealed and restriped for \$6,000 from a very reputable company. We hope that our parishioners will be generous in donating towards this Capital Improvement. Please contact Church Treasurer Natasha Smelova if you are interested in making a donation towards the repair of the parking lot.

We would also like to thank Reader Rick Schuler for all of his years of dedicated service in repairing the parking lot in the past. He has patched holes and sealed cracks for years. Thank you Rick for always noticing what has to be done and taking care of it.

FATHER ALEXIS WILL BE VISITING RUSSIA

Father Alexis will be in Russia from June 24th through July 21st. If you are in need of the services of a priest you should contact Father Michael Fritz 518 753-7550.

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

This year's Church Picnic will be held on Sunday, September 23rd. Usually we would be celebrating our Church Feastday on this Sunday with a Bishop and several out of town guests. Unfortunately, all of our Bishops will be in London for the consecration of a new Church, and none are available to serve in Albany. Since no other Sundays were available during July and August (either because of Lent or Weddings), it was decided that we would hold the picnic on Sunday, September 23rd. The picnic will take place on our Church property. Thank you to Brian Farley and Dimitri Soloviev for taking on the responsibility of the Church Picnic. You guys are the BEST! **More information about the picnic will be in the August Newsletter.**

SAVE THE DATE

27th Annual Russian Orthodox Church Musicians' Conference

This year's 27th Annual Russian Orthodox Church Musicians' Conference will be held October 3-7, 2018 in Albany New York. The Conference participants will be singing the Vigil service on October 7th and the Liturgy on Sunday, October 8th at our Church, Nativity of the Mother of God. We hope that ALL of our parishioners will be in attendance at both of these services so they can experience the wonderful Church Musicians singing.

RUSSIAN - TASTE OF RUSSIA - FESTIVAL

This year, instead of our usual Taste of Russia in November, we will be having a RUSSIAN TASTE OF RUSSIA FESTIVAL on Saturday, October 20th on our Church Grounds. We will have tents, vendors, live music, entertainment, bounce houses, food, kids zone, and many other attractions to help draw a younger, more vibrant crowd. With this new endeavor we will need the ENTIRE parish to help. We will need help in the planning stages as well as MANY, MANY people to work on the day of the event. This includes EVERYONE, Women, Men and Children. More information will be in upcoming Newsletters. If you wish to help on the organizing Committee you are asked to contact Emily Soloviev who has graciously agreed to Coordinate this year's Festival.

This year it will only be a ONE day event. We hope that this year's Festival will be a huge success and we can grow into a two or three day event, like many of the other Ethnic Churches in the area. But in order for it to be a success, we need everyone's cooperation and assistance. Thank you!

CHURCH PLAYGROUND

The swingset has been installed: We will need help for the final stages of playground completion.

1. We need volunteers on **SATURDAY, JUNE 9th at 10:30 am** to even out the play area and lay out the first layer of landscaping fabric
2. The stone will be delivered sometime next week.
3. Spreading of the stone will take place on Saturday, June 16th. With the second layer of landscaping fabric going on top of the stone.
4. Mulch will be delivered during the week of June 17th,
5. Spreading the mulch will be on Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23rd.

If you are interested in helping with ANY of the above aspects of completing the playground, please contact Natasha Smelova at 518-374-9275 or smelova@yahoo.com

THANK YOU

RUSSIAN DANCE CLASSES

The New Russia Cultural Center has been offering Summer International Character Dance Program in the Capital District with a clear goal to provide cultural awareness through dance for children ages 3-17.

The program includes dance classes (character dance - instructor Vladimir Nikitin, ballet - instructor Beth Jacobs), introduction to Russian language, crafts, arts and more! Our structured program from 7:30am to 5:30pm provides children with fun and interactive cultural oriented activities on premises of the New Russia Cultural Center, located at 1550 Broadway Rensselaer NY 12144. The cost for our summer program is \$100 per week (classes only). Full day cost is \$150 per week.

Full information and registration online at www.newrussiacycenter.org/dance-program/dance-program-2018. For questions call 518-382-9438.



The Holy Glorious and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul Commemorated on June 29/July 12th

Sermon of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo

Today the Holy Church piously remembers the sufferings of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was deemed worthy by the Savior to hear in answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church" (Mt.16:16-18). On "this stone" [petra], is on that which thou sayest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the "thou art Peter": it is from the "stone" [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the "stone" [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of "rock" [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: "Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant," says the Apostle of Christ, "how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10: 1-4). Here is the from whence the "Rock" is Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these "keys" and the right "to bind and loosen." And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" and further after this, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained" (John 20: 22-23); or: "whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven" (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore "Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins," says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. "Simon of John" -- says the Lord to Peter -- "lovest thou Me?" -- and the Apostle answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "And sayeth Jesus to him" all three times "Feed My sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given "the keys of the kingdom" and the right "to bind and to loose," bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock," the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter: "Feed My sheep," did not say: "Feed thy sheep," but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor.1:13). "Feed My sheep". Wherefore "wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock" (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr's death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but "He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn" (Ps 2:4). When he, "having persecuted and vexed" in such manner "the Church of God" (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against

the goad” (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, “trembling and frightened”, cried out: “Who art Thou, Lord?” The Lord answered him, “I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest.”

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: “What wantest Thou me to do?” -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: “Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: “Arise and go into the street” to a man, “by the name of Saul,” and baptize him, “for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel must be filled with My Grace. “Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name” (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: “Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus), meaning “small, little, less,” demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: “I am,” says he, “the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me” (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, “in which to be likened to them” (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but “we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it “the author and finisher of our faith,” our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15: 5).