

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011 ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Church Directory

Parish Priest

Rev. Barnabas Fravel, 442-2669

Pastor Emeritus

V. Rev. Josef Petranin, 442-2016

Parish President

Irene Vassos, 441-4966

Vice President/Parish Life

Barbara Parhizgar, 443-1439

Evangelism

Emilie Goudey, 637-2109

Secretary/Public Relations

Pat Davis, 442-3513

Education

Tanya Bogaevskaya, 443-4630

At Large

Nicholas Bobrovsky, 448-8330

Soren Fiscu, 684-9920

from Fr. Barnabas

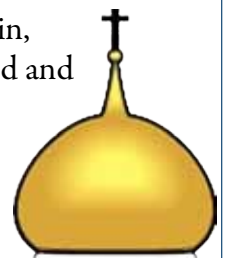
My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Who is so great a God as our God, Thou art our God who does wonders!” These are the words of the Great Prokeimenon sung on Holy Pascha. These words, or this proclamation, speaks to the very heart of our journey as individuals struggling for salvation.

“Thou art our God who does wonders,” and wonders He truly does in our lives. He somehow takes what is sinful and faithless (us) and brings about a transformation. At this time of year, the Lenten spring, we should marvel at the works of our Lord. And yet in perhaps a very personal way the marvel or wonder at the works of our Lord takes on a more specific internal question as to why? Why Lord? Why do You continue to bring about man’s (our) salvation despite his sinfulness, despite his faithlessness, despite his lack of effort? Why Lord? Why do you continue to care about me as an individual when I barely (or rarely) care about You?

We marvel and wonder about our Lord’s solidarity with us, His works and actions in the salvation of the human race but, more specifically, perhaps we marvel and wonder why He would do this for us...after all, we are sinful and unfaithful, aren’t we? Yet despite our unfaithfulness our Lord continues to look favorably upon us, He continues to move us to salvation. Why?

It is interesting and perhaps not always noticeable to us but the Church, and in particular the services, are constantly reminding us as to “why”. She tells us time and time again, especially at the exclamation of the litanies that He is, “a good God and lovest mankind and unto Thee do we ascribe glory...” or one of my favorites at the Presanctified liturgy we hear the exclamation at the third litany, “For Thou art our God, a Merciful and Saving God, and unto Thee do we ascribe glory...” All of the services point to this end. Our God is a merciful and a saving God, and He loves and cares for us. This is the reason why. We are His creation and He takes full responsibility for us. He is a good and loving Father. This is why. He has come and brought the truth into the world, and into our life. And with it He has brought abundant joy and shown us love and life.



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76 WAHCONAH STREET · PITTSFIELD, MA 01201 · 413-442-2669

Father Barnabas (continued)



If that is not enough, He frees us from the fetters which our unworthiness has made for us; He frees us from those choices which tie us down; the chains we own which are made from the sins that are freely chosen by us. He frees us from sins which were done by us to one another, and sins as a result of those things which we failed to do for one another. Chains brought about by sinful choices that, if we had not committed them but instead had acted faithfully, could have brought so much joy, so much hope, that there would have been some evidence that we are worthy of God's faith and love for us. Of all this, in the end we find a God who is willing to accept us and deliver us out of them all.

The fact is that we aren't saved by our striving which always fails, but we are saved by the Love of Christ which continually draws us to Him. And in the experience of this saving love—and that is what it is, a living experience—our soul begins to long for the living God. In this experience we desire to offer thanksgiving, we desire to commune with Him. It gives us our drive, our motivation to carry on day by day. And as we make our journey to Holy Pascha, even when we fail, we must not forget our Lord's love and continually say, "Lord, you know everything, you know my weakness, my lapses, my uncertainty, my inconsistency, but you also know that I love you, that that is the final deepest thing in me."

Then we can go farther, just as many throughout the centuries, like Mary of Egypt, who followed Christ, knowing that God believes in this love, that God believes us and believes in us. And we can go on with faltering steps, with uncertain tread, with ups and downs, but our hearts must not break away from God; we must carry on, day by day, and soon, we will find ourselves face to face with the Lord's passion, with the demonstration of the love with which He loves us. To endure what He endured for our sakes can be done only through inexhaustible, bottomless love. And

our response to it is awe and wonder proclaiming the greatness of our God.

And if we can do anything, let us respond to this by offering in this way, giving, or "ascribing," with our hearts and mouths, glory, awe, wonder, and worship to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for all of His goodness, despite our unfaithfulness. How else could we act in the face of this reality but in wonder and amazement ascribing glory to Him? And we do need to respond to it; we

do need to respond to mercy and graciousness, otherwise we will continue to feel unsettled and lost in life because this is the reality. God does not desire the death of the sinner, no! He desires that the sinner turns from his way and lives.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us turn now to our Lord in gratitude ascribing glory honor and worship to Him. And if we have difficulty responding in gratitude, if we cannot unite ourselves to Christ in a more mysterious way by communing with Him, if we cannot unite ourselves to Him through prayer and fasting, if we cannot through contemplation and



Mission Vespers in Watervliet - Sunday of Orthodoxy

ascetic effort unite ourselves to Him this Lenten season, let us at least stand at the roadside, beside this way of the Cross and with the awe and wonder, with the humility and tenderness of a shaken soul, look upon what it means to love as God is capable of loving us. And let us say to Him, if we cannot say anything else, let us at least say in awe and wonder, "Thank you, Lord, that you love me, dead, stony, devoid of feeling, lifeless that I am, thank you." If we can at the very least do this, that joyous shout of Holy Pascha, "Christ is Risen," will mean more to us than it ever has before.

We have done nothing worthy of this shout, we have no right to this Paschal joy therefore in whatever way we have lived out this Lenten season, or even our life up to this point in time, may we now come with awe and wonder, as a moth is drawn to a flame, may we now come to the glow of Holy Pascha and shine, shine with its brightness, shine with its glory, shine with its wonder and shout in gratitude from the bottom of our heart this joyous proclamation, "Who is so great a God as our God, Thou art our God who does Wonders!"

*Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!
With love in Christ,
Fr. Barnabas*



At the All Parish meeting in January we vote to sell the current church and rectory to make plans for a new church.

From our Parish Council President

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

What is a Capital Campaign? We have planned carefully as a parish and as a Church Council to look at our resources as we plan for our new church. We don't know what the final building will look like. Below is a "conceptual" idea of a generic Orthodox church. It could have one dome, two domes, arches, no arches, exterior icons, basement or attached building.... so many different possibilities.

We have decided as a parish that from the sale of the current church building to BMC (which took place on Wednesday, March 23) and from the future sale of the current rectory on Marco drive, there will be approximately +\$300,000 in a special "Building Fund" account at Greylock Federal Savings to begin the construction of a new temple.

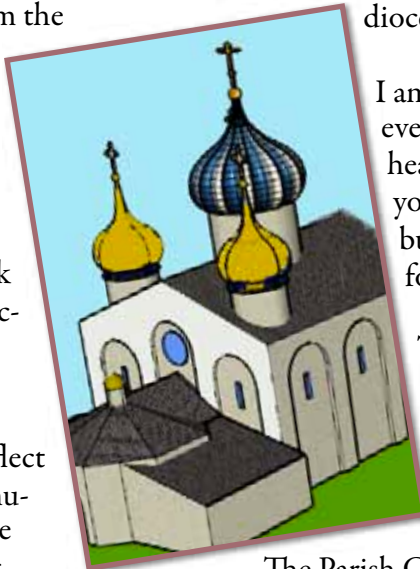
But we will need more than this to build the kind of church that will reflect the diversity of our Orthodox community and to fill the needs that we have continued to define now for the past three years: adequate liturgical space, Sunday School rooms, a fellowship hall, handicapped access, ample parking, and more. At a recent Council meeting we talked about the vision of this new temple as an edifice that would last at least 100 years.

We decided that to fund the kind of church we dream about, one that will define our presence in the Berkshires as an Orthodox church for everyone, we are beginning a Capital Campaign to augment the building fund. This means that each of us now has the opportunity to make a pledge towards this dream, to make this dream a reality.

For me it is easier to pledge an amount that I can pay over three years. Others may want to extend their pledges over five years. Still others may feel that they can give a certain amount in one lump sum. Some may want to contribute to a particular

feature of the new church: for example, perhaps you would like to earmark your donation towards a dome, or for handicapped access costs, or to the Sunday School rooms, or to pay for the internal frescos and iconography, including a new iconostasis.

We are also reaching out to the larger community: to those who have contributed to this church in the past or who feel a special love for the St. Nicholas community and its history. These could be our relatives, other parishes and dioceses, and to members of our own diocese.



I am personally appealing to each and every one of you to reach into your hearts and to your finances to help your church family reach its goals to build a beautiful and lasting legacy for St. Nicholas.

The Capital Campaign will continue until we have reached a goal that we feel will cover the full costs of what we are projecting: between \$500K and \$600K.

The Parish Council would like, if possible, to avoid having to secure a mortgage. It is important that we plan well so that we will still be able to pay a full time priest and continue with a full cycle of liturgical services. The building should not affect these important aspects of our being a vibrant church. But as one Council member said the other day, "We want to be able to think about this beautiful building standing for another 100 years, so let's not shortchange ourselves."

Think of yourself as an "architect" for your new home. You have the opportunity to help build it board by board, stone by stone, icon by icon. We hope everyone will choose a method that will allow them to contribute to this worthwhile building fund. We hope to send out detailed information about our Capital Campaign by Holy Pascha.

*With respect, Irene Vassos
Parish Council President*

Saturday Evenings 6:00 p.m.

Sundays 10:00 a.m. followed by Church School and Coffee hour

Wednesday Evenings at 6:30 except during Great Lent

Friday evenings after Akathist Service at 6:30 p.m. (during Great Lent)

***Presanctified Liturgy
Wednesday Evenings* during
Lent 6:30 p.m.***

Wednesday, March 16
Wednesday, March 23
Wednesday, March 30
Wednesday, April 6
Wednesday, April 13

All presanctified liturgies are followed by a lenten pot luck dinner



***Annunciation of the Most Holy
Theotokos celebrated on
Thursday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m.***

Vespers with Liturgy followed by a lenten Pot Luck dinner



***Akathist and Daily Vespers Services Friday
Evenings during Lent at 6:30 p.m.***

Friday, March 11, Akathist to the Glory to God for All Things
Friday, March 18, Akathist for the Departed
Friday, March 25, Akathist to the Theotokos
Friday, April 1, Akathist to St Nicholas
Friday, April 8, Akathist to the Saints of North America
Friday, April 15, Daily Vespers

Service at 9:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Bridegroom Matins 6:30 p.m.

Bridegroom Matins 6:00 p.m.

Bridegroom Matins 6:00 p.m.

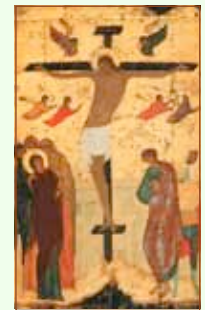
Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 a.m.
Office of Holy Unction 6:30 p.m.

Divine Liturgy Commemorating the Last Supper 9:00 a.m.,
Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels 6:30 p.m. (with the bringing out of the Holy Cross)

Royal Hours 9:00 am,
Holy Friday Vespers (Burial of our Lord) 6:30 p.m., followed by Grave watch, reading of Lamentations, and the Acts of the Apostles

Vespers Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. (with 12 Old Testament readings)
Reading of the Acts of the Apostles 10:30 p.m.

Nocturns 11:30 p.m.,
Paschal Matins & Liturgy 12:00 a.m. with outdoor procession (rain or shine)
Paschal Vespers (time to be announced)



Images of Healing

Irene Vassos (Part 10)

On March 23, 2011 we sold our church building at 76 Wahconah Street to Berkshire Medical Center. It was an event that we had been anticipating for several months; in some ways the sale of the church building concluded years of discussion, planning, and apprehension; yet it was a decision based on wise counsel that we need new worship space. One Parish Council member said that she felt both joy and sadness. Several people in our community (if not all) will experience a sense of loss when we vacate this historical home and move into “the proverbial desert”, for it is almost certain that a new church will not be completed when we give the keys over to BMC on Nov. 1.

Is the church just a building?

One might argue that the four exterior walls that enclose the altar, nave and narthex are simply wood. So the Cross is simply wood. Both symbolize our faith, the Church on earth and the Church of salvation.

If we rue the loss of our building when BMC takes possession and turns it into parking space, we need instead to see that this “space” will still be connected to healing. The hospital currently houses two oxygen chambers at its Medical Art Building on Charles St. These hyperbaric chambers are used to heal wounds that normally don't respond to conventional treatment. BMC, according to VP Tom Romeo, cannot keep up with demand for the use of these chambers, so the plan is to move the chambers to the old Crane Center, purchase two more, change the entrance to Charles Street (facing the church) and utilize the church for parking space for patients and families using this “healing” equipment.

Healing: the icon below depicts the raising of Jairus' daughter as recounted in all three synoptic Gospels. It is paired with Jesus' healing of the woman with the issue of blood. Jesus brings about both physical and spiritual healing in these miracles. The gospels differ in their description of the

young girl's “state”: is she dead, dying, or at the point of death? This young woman, like Lazarus, experiences a taste of the resurrection, a miracle of suspended and then fully realized belief.

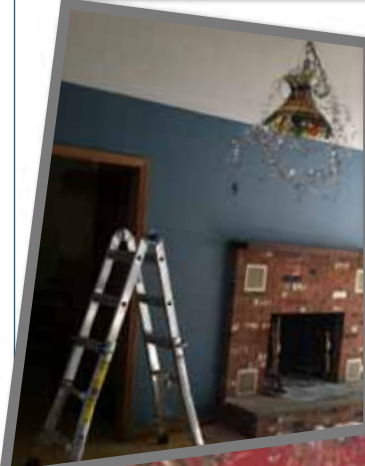
While it may seem a stretch to compare the transformation of a church into a parking lot to this Gospel miracle, we surely leave behind in this

space on Wahconah many years of prayer, faith and miracle. The reality of our experiences here are timeless; we have occupied it and will leave our sacred imprint on whatever is to follow. Perhaps we will take with us a piece of the wood to incorporate into our new temple. The Cross will move with us. We leave behind a piece of our hearts but a piece that may invite those across the street to emerge more whole from their wounds.

“Mystically, this walk of Jairus after Christ did not end and will never end. It goes on even now, and we can all participate in it. Let us hasten to join Jairus. Then the words of Christ, ‘Fear not: Believe only, and she shall be made whole,’ will refer also to us.” [from a sermon of Archbishop Andrei (Rymarenko)]



Raising of Jairus' Daughter (Dionysi, 16th c.)



Paint Party at 1304!

Around the Parish

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA ATTENDANCE

If we have missed the more than 30 different Lenten services leading up to Holy Week, please be sure not to forget our Lord during Holy Week and Pascha. During Holy Week, March 28th-April 3rd, the Church commemorates Christ's Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Holy Week is when all Orthodox Christians should make every effort to move closer to Christ, and there is no better way than to participate in the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord.

Through the Passion and Resurrection Holy Pascha becomes the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day (Heaven). It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. All Orthodox Christians should be present and participate at Orthodox Midnight Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy. Unless special circumstances do not permit, missing this once a year opportunity to witness as an Orthodox is a "no-no". It is remarkable that those who have no problem whatsoever attending New Year's Eve parties, and drinking, eating, and dancing at wedding receptions, yet give excuses that "it is too late, too long, and too tiresome" to attend all of Holy Week and Pascha. Our children should participate too! We think nothing of driving our children late at night while traveling on vacation, or making special trips, or going camping. Children of all ages are welcome to come and participate in the procession at midnight. Jesus says, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them." (Luke 18:16). Bring blankets and pillows if you want, but, give children the experience; let them see! Attend as many of these services as possible. Please come and see!"

BLESSING OF BASKETS

The ancient Christian practice of blessing food before it is eaten took on a new dimension in Slavic Orthodox lands at the celebration of the great Feast of Pascha. Customarily, foods from which one was fasting would be brought to the Church for blessing by the priest after Paschal Liturgy. We continue this tradition, and encourage everyone to prepare a basket of Paschal foods for blessing.

Traditionally, this includes bread with a candle, eggs, butter, cheese, kielbasa and other meats. Cultural variations (such as chocolates or other foods and breads) are also most suitable for Pascha baskets. Food baskets should be brought to the hall downstairs before services begin on Pascha night to be blessed immediately following Paschal Liturgy.

ST. THOMAS SUNDAY BLESSING OF THE GRAVES

We will be having a general Panikhida for the Founders and Benefactors of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church on St. Thomas Sunday May 1st. Fr. Barnabas will also be available for blessing graves in the afternoon on St. Thomas Sunday. Please let him know if you would like the grave of your loved one blessed.

SUMMER CAMPS

Summer will be here before we know it! Each summer our Orthodox church provides some exciting opportunities for our young people by way of Orthodox summer camps. St. Tikhon's in South Canaan, PA offers a summer camp in July. And our diocese of New England offers its own Youth Rally in August. This past year Matushka Daria, Cristiana Stanescu, and Lisa Goudey worked as counselors at St. Tikhon's summer camp and three of our parish youth attended.

We would like to encourage parents to consider sending their children. It is an invaluable

opportunity for our youth to interact with other Orthodox youth as well as have some fun. To help encourage parents St. Nicholas Church Parish Life Ministry is once again offering scholarships to camp for the children of parish members. Please consider this opportunity and let us know if you are interested in sending your children.

RENOVATION WORK AT 1304 NORTH STREET NEARLY COMPLETED

By the time you receive this newsletter renovations will probably have been completed at the new property. The new Parish Rectory has received a new roof, plenty of plaster repair, hardwood floors sanded and re-varnished, new appliances, new back door, wallpapering, painting, and more...whew! Fr. Barnabas and family will soon be in and we will be putting our old rectory on 15 Marco Dr. up for sale. A special thank you to all who have helped in the renovations work; we could not have done it without you!

76 WAHCONAH STREET SALE

As unanimously resolved and passed at our Annual Parish meeting in January we have completed the sale of our Wahconah St. property with Berkshire Medical Center. We continue, by the grace of God, to make steps towards building our new church. Berkshire Medical Center did an extensive history report on our parish and our Wahconah St. property. The report with all kinds of interesting details is available for any and all to read. Once again thank you to Fr. Josef and Irene Vassos, as well as our Parish Council, and to all of our faithful for your continued, faith, hard works, and dedication.

PASCHA PARISH OPEN HOUSE

In celebration of Holy Pascha and also of our newly Parish Rectory, Fr. Barnabas and Ma-

tushka Daria and family would like to invite all of our faithful to a Paschal parish open house at our new property at 1304 North St. It will be a double celebration of the Feast of feasts, Pascha, as well as the completion of the renovations at the new parish rectory. All are welcome to come and be a part of the Paschal joy at our new parish property. We will have an egg hunt for our kids as well as plenty of good food. Please come and join us on Pascha day Sunday, April 24th following our Pascha Vespers service. If you are interested in bringing a dish or helping organize the egg hunt please see Matushka Daria. All are welcome to come and join us but please be sure to come to Holy Pascha the night before!



The March 23 signing of our church property at 76 Wahconah St. to BMC. Fr. Josef shares stories about the history of St. Nicholas.



This edition of the newsletter is offered
in memory of our sister and benefactor,

Vera Garín

from

her friend, Alice Guimond



PRAYER REQUESTS

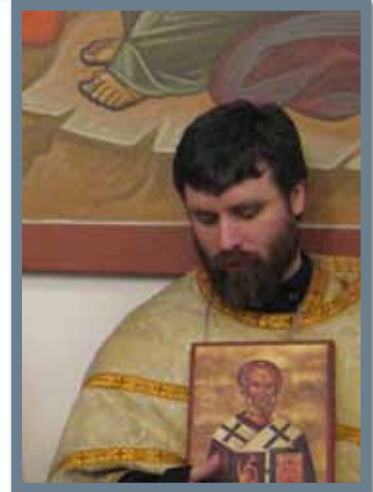
Please remember in your prayers the servants of God:

Our Bishops: His Grace Bishop Nikon, the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America.

For the health and well being of: Archpriest Daniel Donalick, Archpriest William Dubovic, Matushka Dolores Donalick, Matushka Julia Petranin, Marjorie Grinko, Mary Romanchak, Paul Koronchick, Joseph White, Olga Zaiken, Svetlana Postnik, Aleksandra Poznikova

For the Departed: the newly departed Arsene, the newly departed Badia, the newly departed Alice, and all the departed founders, benefactors, brothers and sisters of St. Nicholas Church. May their memories be eternal!

**Do you have a prayer request? Please contact Fr. Barnabas by calling the parish office at (413) 442-2669, or write:
St Nicholas Orthodox Church • 76 Wahconah St. • Pittsfield, MA 01201**



Sunday of Orthodoxy



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
76 Wahconah St
Pittsfield, MA 01201
stnicholaspittsfield.org