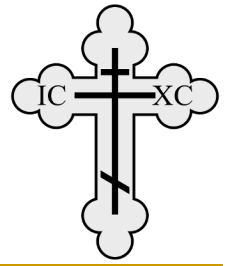




# Agape



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH DEC. - 2019

*Just a little love... by Fr. Stephen Freeman*

*Christ is Born! Give Him Glory!*

In the 1965 classic *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, Charlie Brown picks a small, weak and flimsy-looking Christmas tree for the Christmas play he and his friends are putting together. When he goes to put an ornament on it, the tree falls. Charlie Brown is devastated. However, his friend Linus says the following: "I never thought it was such a bad little tree. It's not bad at all really – maybe it just needs a little love." At that point, Charlie Brown's friends rush to help decorate that vulnerable tree and it is transformed and becomes beautiful, strong and bright.

I believe the aforementioned scene captures an essential theme of the great Feast Day of Christmas: weak, broken humanity is refashioned and made spiritually beautiful, strong and bright through the abundant love of God, by God becoming a human being, a reality that Orthodox Christians refer to as the Incarnation. Charlie Brown did not reject this little, weak tree when he first saw it. God also, did not reject His weak, broken and sinful creation. Instead, the eternal Logos came down from heaven to dwell among us and when He did, He did not shun us. Many "righteous" people in the Gospels looked at spiritually weak, sinful and broken people such as the man born blind, the harlot, the tax collector, and the woman caught in adultery and wanted nothing to do with them. Our Lord, on the other hand, showed mercy, compassion and love to these individuals, establishing the fertile soil for their spiritual rebirth.

I believe many people are spiritually broken and weak because they do not have the love of God in their lives. What does it mean to be spiritually broken and weak? It can mean to be confused, lost, empty, selfish or in despair. To be spiritually beautiful, strong and bright means to be full of genuine hope, peace, joy and love.

All people need the love of God to be to be spiritually beautiful, strong and bright. The love of God is found in the Church. And who is the Church? We are – both clergy and laity! Every baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christian constitute together the Church of Christ. Just like that little tree was transformed through the love of Charlie Brown's friends, we too, as the Church, transform the spiritually broken and weak we encounter by giving them the love of Christ.

We, as the Church, give the love of Christ by not giving up on people because of their spiritual weakness and brokenness. We, as the Church, must see in others what others may not see in themselves: their goodness, value, worth and that they are lovable. We, as the Church, give the love of Christ by treating all people with kindness, respect, care, concern, mercy, and compassion.

The tragedy is that it is possible that this love of Christ may not be experienced in a parish. We must make sure that we do our part so that anyone who attends our services, ministries and functions, can tell others that they are loved, welcomed, cherished and embraced.

***Building a Stronger Orthodox Christian Community by: Spiritually growing together; Sharing the Orthodox Faith through fellowship, outreach, and philanthropy; Worshiping in a traditional Byzantine church; Supported through Stewardship***

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Above all, I hope we ourselves--spiritually broken and weak though we might be--have experienced transformation; being made spiritually beautiful, strong and bright through the love of God found in the Church. It is this love of Christ, and only this love, that can fulfill us and restore us.

May you and your loved ones experience the transformative love of Christ in His Church this Christmas, now and always.

## Parish Council

November's meeting began with Father's reflection on managing anxiety. Leaders can survive anxious situations by: 1. Staying calm; 2. Staying connected; and 3. Staying the course.

A ministry report followed from Kathryn and Michael Becker via printout presented by Neal on fellowship and church cleaning. There are varying thoughts on fellowship. Some parishioners feel a complete meal is in order; while others feel only a healthy snack should be provided. This discussion followed many of the thoughts provided by last year's survey. St. Johns in Beaverton has a standard snack/defined meal menu to make it easy for people. Families were assigned to specific Sundays in groups and people could trade with others if needed. Neal is following up with the Beckers regarding fellowship hour and will report to December's General Assembly.

Creating church-cleaning teams was suggested. After church on Sunday is problematic for some people. It could pose challenging to get some people to commit. Cleaning the church takes a long time on your own but teams would make it go faster. In a healthy parish, people spend time together after liturgy. In an unhealthy parish, everyone leaves after liturgy and the congregation does not interact. PC likes the idea of teams for both fellowship and cleaning. Neal will follow up on organizing this.

Minutes from the October meeting and the Treasurer's report through October were approved. 2020 Stewardship cards went out last week. Stewardship Sunday is December 1. OCF had their first meeting this school year in October. There was a great turnout. Two students came from OSU. They will be meeting at least once a month.

Old Business: Sufficient funds have been donated for the new Paraklesis books and the 2020 calendars.

Youth Safety: Emails have gone out to all people

working with youth to complete the training and background check. The goal is to have everyone complete both by end of November. Steve brought down the hardware and curtains for the Royal Doors.

New Business: Date for elections: December 15th. Four people are going off this year: Ron, Larisa, Art, and Greg. All 4 candidates should be identified by Dec. 1; so they can go through the training with Fr. and Steve. Date for December Parish Assembly & 2020 budget approval: December 15th. Salem might want to borrow our big tent for their groundbreaking ceremony. Greg has been talking to Craig in Salem and will follow up if they need it.

Clergy Report: Date for Steve's ordination has been set. Saturday March 14th will be Great Vespers and dinner with the Metropolitan and lay leaders. Sunday March 15th will be the ordination and luncheon/anniversary celebration. Father sent out seven "we miss you" post cards to former parishioners who have not attended services in a while. There will be a pulpit exchange with Fr. Alban; so Fr. Jerry can have a parish assembly with the Salem mission. We received a thank you letter from Thomaida for our record M&E contribution. The Metropolis M&E team has decided to grant \$90,000 to the Salem Mission to pay off their property. Father suggested we consider hosting a co-op for Orthodox families who are home-schooling. We could also invite St. John's families. This might evolve into an Orthodox school someday.

Next meeting will be December 9 at 6:30.

### Treasurer's Report:

Operational Funds Balance November 30, 2019: \$59,898.

Dedicated Funds Balance November 30, 2019: \$43,368

## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

**Come one, Come all**

to our annual **BAKE SALE & CRAFT FAIR,**

**December 7th 11:00 AM-3:00 PM  
and December 8 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM**

There will be wonderful food, pastries and artisans. Come and enjoy, and bring a friend!

## Missions and Evangelism Ministry Report

December is here! We are in preparation for the most wonderful event of the Nativity of Christ. Having been Orthodox for only 6 years now, every feast still has so much meaning that I am continuing to fully understand. At the Feast of the Entrance of the Holy Theotokos into the Temple, Father was sharing how this was a very joyful occasion! The Israelites had danced (even King David) when the Ark of the Covenant had been returned from the Philistines. And now, an even more joyful occasion occurs when the young Theotokos is presented to the priest Zacharias. She will become the Ark of the New Covenant – the Holy temple of the Lord Jesus Christ, incarnate for us! What an amazing event! And right before Thanksgiving! So, we have much to be thankful for, much to anticipate.

“Wherefore the Church rejoices and exhorts all the friends of God for their part to enter into the temple of their heart, there to make ready for the coming of the Lord by silence and prayer, withdrawing from the pleasures and cares of this world.”

As you see visitors entering into our sweet space this month, please reach out and welcome them into our presence and thus into the presence of our Lord.

Your fellow servant in Christ, Kathryn

## Greetings from the Bookstore!

As we are now preparing to celebrate Advent and the Nativity of our Lord, we are given the opportunity to pray more, to fast more, and to turn our hearts to Christ.

We can bring Christ into our lives and the lives of our families and others. For your time of prayer and meditation, the Bookstore has:

- \* The Winter Pascha, Readings for the Christmas-Epiphany Season
- \*Meditations for Advent, Preparing for Christ's Birth
- \*Meditations for the Twelve Great Feasts, Becoming Fully Human in Christ
- \*A Book of Hours, Meditations on the Traditional Hours of Prayer
- \*Songs of Praise, A Psalter Devotional for Orthodox Women
- \*Celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas, A Family Devotional in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

The Bookstore also has icons and holiday cards for the Nativity season. If you would like to special order any items, I am happy to do so and have a catalog available.

I wish you many blessings and much peace. In Christ, Stella Kallianis

## Stewardship Report:

Are you an active member of the body of Christ? Are you actively serving God and sharing Him with others? Are you contributing to peace and unity within His body? Do you worship regularly? Have you returned your 2020 Stewardship Card?

We are called to apply our gifts, training, abilities, education and skills to the tasks that God places before us. If we do this humbly and prayerfully, the body of Christ will function to its full potential. Have you returned your 2020 Stewardship Card filled out on both sides?

The Biblical motivation for giving is grace; giving is an act of worship in response to the generosity of God. You are to give, Paul says, “as God has prospered you.” II Corinthians 8 and 9 teach clearly, “He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” God blesses those who give with generosity.” Have you returned your 2020 Stewardship Card?

Giving is a way to thank God for His grace and generosity. The question is not, “How much do I give to stay in the club?” or “What are the dues?” but “How can I thank God for my many blessings?” Stewardship Sunday is December 1!

**PHILIA**

Our Philia Ladies have been busily baking cookies for the church. Thank you to all who helped with this venture. St. George's Pastry and Gift Fair is scheduled for Saturday, Dec 7 from 11:00 - 3:00 and Sunday, Dec 8 from 11:30 for parishioners, and 12:30 to 4:00 for the public. This is a fundraiser for the parish, so please come and support us. Pick up your pastry pre-orders or purchase them on site, do some Christmas shopping at our unique vendor tables and enjoy a nice lunch from our Kafenion. We'll have vegetarian options available for those observing the fast. Cash, checks or credit cards are welcome. And perhaps our church school children might add to the festivities with their renditions of Christmas carols.

On December 22, after fellowship, we will meet in the back of the hall for our annual White Elephant Philia Party, an event open to all women. Bring a silly present either wrapped or in an anonymous gift bag, for an afternoon of fun and laughter.

**Plans for the future:**

- \* Pastry and Gift Fair - December 7 from 11 to 3 & December 8 from 11:30 to 4:00
- \* White Elephant Party - December 22, 2019
- \* Vasilopita Luncheon - January 12, 2020

For info on wedding or baptismal items contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimons@gmail.com. And if interested in Rada cutlery and products please ask Julie.

**Next meetings: December 29, 2019 (please note change) & January 19, 2020.**

**Reminder:** Philia is a philanthropic organization open to ALL women in the parish. Come and join us! We could always use helping hands and helpful minds.

Julie Lenkoff, Philia Coordinator  
julielenkoff2@comcast.net

**Family Wellness Ministry**

Jesse Tree Project for Nativity Fast

I hope you are all having a blessed Nativity Fast! Even though we have already begun the fast, I thought I would share this resource for families to use in preparation for Christmas.

The Jesse Tree is an Advent tradition that originated in medieval Europe. Based on the image of Christ as a "shoot from the tree of Jesse", a tree (it can be real, or made from fabric or paper) is decorated with an ornament for every day leading up to Christmas. Each ornament (paper or fabric) has an image which corresponds to a specific Scripture reading, which foretells the birth of Christ and the mystery of salvation. As the readings progress, so does a rich web of images and meaning, as well as a sense of waiting and expectation for the birth of Jesus. This is a really sweet resource to draw children into the meaning of the fast, and of course our celebration of Nativity (they may even learn to recognize the scriptural references in the liturgical texts for Nativity!). It also serves as a countdown to Christmas, which can be helpful for children :)

The following website has free printables both of ornaments for your tree as well as Scripture readings for every day of the Nativity Fast (and options in case you wish to abbreviate it). The second website also has project ideas as well as historical information about the Jesse Tree.

<https://orthodoxjessetree.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/jessetrees.shtml>

**From the Missions...**

This week, as I started jotting down items onto my Christmas gift list, my mind began to wander. I ended up thinking about what a Mission Church would want for Christmas! Here are some of my ideas:

**Words of Encouragement:** Working in a mission church is a struggle. A card, email, or even a greeting passed via Father Jerry reminds us that we are part of a larger Family. **Visit Us:** Not only are we incredibly encouraged when you come to one of our services, we could really benefit when you share a loving critique of what you see. **Send Your Used Books:** I've never been to a mission parish that had a good library! If you have little-read Orthodox books on your shelves, we would love to give them a good home in our library. **Gift an Icon:** We work hard keeping the doors open, and we don't often have funds left over for important Liturgical Purchases such as the Icons of the 12 Feasts. You can help! And most importantly continue to **Remember Us in Your Prayers:** .... 'for it is God who gives the growth' (1 Cor 3:7). We at Holy Cross love and appreciate you, and wish you a Blessed Fast and Nativity.

In Christ ~ Lisa Buck, Holy Cross, Roseburg, OR

**Greetings from the Salem Mission,**

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

At the time of this writing before Thanksgiving Day, we at the Salem Mission with faith, hope, and love are anticipating time with Metropolitan Gerasimos after many years since his last visit. We look forward to a little field trip to our property where the bishop will bless the land, and we will install a "Future Home of Holy Resurrection Greek Orthodox Church" sign. Our future home address (God willing!) is 4986 Herrin Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97305. Please pray for us and our relationship with our neighbors. We look forward to worshipping together at Great Vespers and naming of the parish and then enjoying a meal together. The next day we'll gather early at St. John the Baptist in Beaverton who has graciously allowed us to host the Holy Ordination to the Diaconate of Steve Tussing there. All Salem hands are on deck to host the catered celebration meal following. We pray for a blessed Nativity Season for everyone at St. George. Glory to God in the Highest!  
Maria Hauser

**December Celebrations****Birthdays**

December 10th-Leo Hall

December 15th-Debbie Wilson

December 18th-John Timmons, Lester Wilson

December 22nd-Lisa Lilles

December 23rd-Timothy Kaelin

**Feast Days**

December 6th-St. Nicholas

Nick Skrepetos, Nick Markopoulos, Nikolai Lilles

December 9th-St. Anna

Ann Leith

December 17th-St Daniel, St Sarah

Daniel Doran, Aftasie Doran

December 24th-St Eugenia

Cassandra Batterson

December 27th-St Stephen

Stephen Kaelin

**Wedding Anniversaries**

December 31st- Pete & Katharine;

Trenton & Francis

**Baptized in Christ/Chrismated**

December 6th-Nikolas Jon Pos

Many Years! Chronia Polla!

## News and Events

**What's New!**

- **First Saturday Breakfast:** The dates of the First Saturday Breakfast in December are: Food prep on Friday, December 6th (St Nicholas Day) and the breakfast on Saturday, December 7th (Pastry & Craft Sale) . Many hands make for light work so please lend us yours!
- **Nativity Fast:** The Nativity Fast continues this month through December 24th. The "Winter Pascha" is a wonderful opportunity to prepare ourselves spiritually for the birth of Christ. As with the other major Fasts, it is recommended that you participate in the Sacrament of Confession. The "world" around us pre-celebrates Christmas and gives no heed to preparation and anticipation. Therefore it misses out on so much. Don't miss this opportunity to nurture your soul and more fully experience the Incarnation.
- **Help Needed:** There are several OPEN dates for hosting Fellowship and cleaning the church. For cleaning, the open dates are 11/30, 12/21 & 12/28. For Fellowship, the open dates are 12/22 & 12/29. Please see Father Jerry if you are willing and able to cover any of these dates.
- **40-Day Blessings:** In November, we were blessed to receive the son of Gubae Beyene & Hewan Berhane, and the son of Jeff & Daria Lowe, on the occasion of their 40-Day Blessing. May they live for us!
- **Baptized in Christ:** The son of Gubae Beyene & Hewan Berhane, was baptized on November 17th and was given the name Samuel. Ethiopia Messelu is his sponsor. May he live for us!
- **Monthly Celebrations:** Each month I print the names of those celebrating a birthday, name day or feast day, that month. I pull that information from our old database, and in turn, miss many celebrations. Stella has volunteered to help with the new database and with data entry. Please see Stella or myself, so we can add your celebrations to our new database and honor you on your special days.

**Care Ministry Report:**

This fall the Care Ministry Team has been involved in the following activities: Meals-Preparation & Delivery; Homebound Visits; Contacts-Notes, Cards, Visits and Phone Calls to homebound parishioners.

Please remember to contact us if we can be of service.

One of our homebound ladies makes knitted hats for needy children in our community and is in need of yarn. If you have any yarn you would be willing to donate for this purpose, please contact Gloria.

Wishing you and yours a blessed Nativity!

Gloria Zeazeas-Timmons  
Care Ministry Coordinator

**Care Note**

*"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."  
Ebenezer Scrooge-A Christmas Carol-1843*

# KOINONIA

	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/22	12/29
<b>FELLOWSHIP</b>	Lilles	Pastry & Craft Fair	Kaelin	OPEN	OPEN
<b>GREETER</b>	Stella	Helen S	Larisa	Kathryn	Jerry
<b>PROSFORON</b>	Creech	Lilles	Kaelin	Markopoulos	Freezer
<b>FLOWERS</b>	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
<b>READERS</b>	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas
<b>CLEANING CREW</b>	11/30 OPEN	12/7 Hutanu	12/14 Sollars	12/21 OPEN	12/28 OPEN

## GET INVOLVED!!!

Look through this list of organizations, programs, and ministries at our parish, then call the contact person and get involved!!!

<b>PARISH COUNCIL</b>	Neal Zoumboulos 541-344-4485
<b>SAFETY COMMITTEE</b>	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
<b>BOOKSTORE</b>	Stella Kallianis 541-274-9110
<b>PHILIA WOMEN'S GROUP</b>	Julie Lenkoff 541-345-2107
<b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b>	Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
<b>CHANTER/CHANT GROUP</b>	Brad Thomas 541-689-9690, Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
<b>FAMILY WELLNESS</b>	Ashli Mueller 541-731-3319
<b>FELLOWSHIP</b>	
<b>STEWARDSHIP</b>	Neal Zoumboukos 541-344-4485
<b>GREETERS</b>	Larisa Lilles 541-484-7525
<b>CARE MINISTRY</b>	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
<b>PRAYER CIRCLE</b>	Bonnie Sollars 541-852-9496
<b>MISSIONS &amp; EVANGELISM</b>	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
<b>FUNDRAISERS</b>	Presbyteria Maria 971-678-5112

Saint George Greek Orthodox Church  
202 Hillview 1  
Eugene, OR 97408-5018

## A Good word...

*“Before Your birth O Lord, the angelic hosts looked with trembling on this mystery and were struck with wonder: for You who adorned the vault of heaven with stars have been well pleased to be born as a babe; and You who hold all the ends of the earth in the hollow of Your hand are laid in a manger of dumb beasts. For by such a dispensation has Your compassion been made known, O Christ, and Your great mercy. Glory to You!*

**Hymn from the Eve of the Nativity**

*Christ is Born! Give Him Glory!*