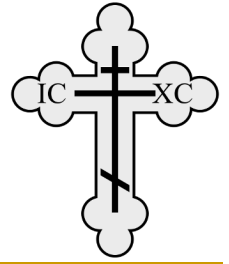




Agape



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH DEC.-2021

“If We Have Our Health, Do We Really Have Everything?” (excerpts from a homily given by John Nixon)

When the Covid pandemic was in its two-weeks-to-flatten-the-curve phase, we eagerly asked, “What must we do to stay well?” We stocked up on hand sanitizers, face masks, and so forth. More than a year later as certain conditions endure, we think we know what we must do to stay well now, and we do those things, and perhaps we do other things too “just in case” the extra measures might make a difference. Even if there’s the slightest chance we might be saved from disease, we’ll eagerly pursue actions both mandated and suggested. After all, isn’t it said that “If we have our health, we have everything?” But if we have our health, do we really have everything?

Your attendance in church suggests that health isn’t everything; that we need more than good health, and that we need more than human medicines if we’re “unwell.” In view of eternity, what is the benefit of good health if we lose our souls? The message that Jesus brings is one that demands not only behavioral compliance, but a disposition of the heart that is compatible with the indwelling of holiness – the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The promise of eternal life demands more on our part than checking off boxes on a behavior checklist and following a set of rules.

We want eternal life, but we also want to keep our lives as they are. Hieromonk Gabriel of Holy Cross Monastery in West Virginia speaks of double-mindedness as the “main temptation” we face today in the western world “in the sense of wanting to be faithful Orthodox Christians, but at the same time being able to live comfortably in the world.” In many of us lies a certain tension, where we want to be true to living the faith in an authentic way, and at the same time, at some level, fearing that what the world says is really true or correct about a number of things.” The temptation then is to compromise or ignore aspects of our faith because they’re just too inconvenient for life in the world.

Perhaps we care too much about what others think of us – we rely too heavily on their praise – we uncritically accept their values that are contrary to the Gospel. As a result, it weakens our ability to resist sin. It seems like a trap, doesn’t it? We live in this sinful world with its values and priorities. We’re affected by all that, we incline toward all that. So it is too often in our lives. We try to live by the commandments and so forth, but in our hearts rage a fire that’s not a fire for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Rather, that fire inside of us is governed by our passions – passions that keep us far from God.

We can go away sad because the cost of salvation is too great. We can’t free ourselves of our own accord. But we’re not expected to. We take instruction and hope from Jesus’ words, “What is impossible for man is possible with God.” Thus here we are, with the hope in eternal life, because it is possible with God.

May we be mindful of all we have to be thankful to God for. May we, with God’s help, challenge our double-mindedness of wanting eternal salvation and the easy life in this world. May we not lose hope and may we remember that what is impossible for us alone, is possible with God’s help.

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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Website: www.stgeorgeor.org
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Greetings from your Parish council!

The Parish Council has been working with Neal and Liana to develop the budget for 2022 which was presented to the General Assembly on November 28. Our next General Assembly will be on December 12th where we will vote to approve the budget. We have 4 PC members whose terms are ending this year, Neal Zoumboukos, Kay Mehas, Mark Lipson, and Larisa Lilles. Many thanks to Neal, Kay, Mark, and Larisa for your service! Your slate of candidates to fill the 4 positions are Chris Sumstine, Judy Kennedy, Stella Kallianis, Kay Mehas, and Mark Lipson. Ballots will be mailed out in early December to all Stewards in good standing, please make every effort to return your ballot either by mail or in person prior to the December 12th Assembly.

We have become a community partner with the Refugee Resettlement Coalition locally. Liana and Helen are leading this effort, please see either of them if you would like to help with this important mission in our community. We encourage everyone to see their website for more information on the work they are doing to help refugees who are resettling right here in our area. Your Parish Council wishes you a blessed Nativity fast and looks forward to celebrating the Nativity of our Lord with you all.

In Christ,
Larisa Lilles
Interim PC President

Treasurer's Report

As of November 27, 2021, the bank account balances were:

Operations Account: \$64,067.46

Dedicated Account: \$86,626.66

FUNDRAISING

We have been helping Philia with the holiday Bake Sale & Raffle. As long as restrictions stay as they are or improve, we plan to have a Spring fundraiser. The committee will meet after the holidays to decide on an event. Details to follow.

Presv. Maria

STEWARDSHIP

We have a wonderful group of volunteers who help to clean our church, which is another form of stewardship. At this time each cleaning crew takes a turn every ten weeks. It generally takes about two hours to clean. If you are interested in being added to the list, please let me know. Thank you!

Lisa Lilles-Lilleslw@gmail.com

CARE MINISTRY

The Care Ministry serves the parishioners of St. George, however there are occasions when the wider community is assisted as well. Due to the shipping crisis this Christmas season, many individuals, organizations, and families, have yet to receive their planned gifts. Perhaps this is a way to focus on what really matters - that of caring about others and sharing with others less fortunate. Instead of concentrating on expensive family gifts, why not find ways to contribute to our community? Donations of clothing, food, toys, and volunteer & monetary efforts are much needed and always appreciated.

If you wish to make a donation, please contact the Care Ministry for a list of resources.

May your holidays be blessed with the true meaning of Christmas!

Gloria Zezeas-Timmons, Coordinator

Greetings from the Bookstore! And a happy and blessed Nativity Season!

Last month, the Bookstore highlighted meditations on two Great Feasts: The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, and the Nativity of our Lord, with the Nativity Fast beginning on November 15. The next Great Feast will be in January, so the Bookstore highlights two books in December, perhaps to consider as we approach the end of this calendar year and prepare to begin the next.

- *The Path to Salvation, A Concise Outline of Christian Ascesis*, (St. Theophan the Recluse). About the Saint: Steeped in Philokalia tradition, the holy Hierarch Theophan was a prolific writer and interpreter of the holy Fathers of the Church, making them accessible to contemporary Christians. Patristic literature has always provided an age-old, tried-and-tested model of spiritual life, foreign to fleeting fashions. St. Theophan keeps this traditional model sharp and clear, presenting it in an approachable language. In this book, his crowning achievement, the Saint himself expresses its precise aim as follows, "It is possible to describe the feelings and inclinations which a Christian must have, but this is very far from being all that is demanded for the ordering of one's salvation. The important things for us is a real life in the spirit of Christ. But just touch on this, and how many perplexities are uncovered, how many guideposts are necessary, as a result, almost at every step! True, one may know man's final goal: communion with God. And one may describe the path to it: faith, and walking in the commandments, with the aid of divine grace. One need only say in addition: Here is the path – start walking!" Inspiration from the Saint: "The principal thing is to walk before God, or under God's eye, aware that God is looking at you, searching your soul and your heart, seeing all that is there. This awareness is the most powerful lever in the mechanism of the inner spiritual life. The most important condition is faith that God is near and hears us. Say the prayer into God's ear."
- *The Sunflower, Conforming the Will of Man to the Will of God*, St. John of Tobolsk. "May our love for the Sun, the Will of God, be as strong as the sunflower's, so that even in days of hardship and sorrow we will continue to sail unerringly along the sea of life, following the directions of the barometer and compass of God's will that leads us to the safe haven of eternity," St. John of Tobolsk. This is a thoroughly practical manual of the spiritual life that focuses on the central goal of every Christian: discerning the will of God and struggling to mold our life to it, just as Christ "humbled Himself and became obedient." Saint John addresses fundamental questions: Why should we care about God's will? How do we avoid common obstacles to living in accordance with His will? The reader will find practical and eternal wisdom running through these writings that discuss the perennial questions of why a good God permits evil. This is the first English edition of St. John's text, edited and abbreviated for the contemporary reader.

About the Saint: St. John Maximovitch (1651-1715) was Metropolitan of Tobolsk and all Siberia. He served as a missionary in Siberia and was known for his unpretentiousness and his generosity to the poor. His veneration among the people grew after his repose and he was glorified by the Russian Church in 1916, becoming the last canonized saint of the pre-revolutionary period. He is best known today as the namesake and ancestor of the great twentieth century saint of the Russian Diaspora, St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco.

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

PHILIA

I am happy to report that our group is still alive and well. While we have not been meeting physically as we used to, we still communicate, discuss and make decisions electronically. We have also managed to sneak in a couple of fun and much needed gatherings in my backyard. The proceeds from our recent successful fundraiser are earmarked for Community Court Lunches, Father Jerry's Discretionary Fund and of course our other philanthropic endeavors. We will continue reaching out to each other and other members of our community, offering help wher-ever help is needed. And as always, we thank our parishioners for all their support. May you all have a Blessed and Merry Christmas, and may 2022 be a promising year!

Plans for the future:

- Community Court Lunches - TBD

For info on wedding or baptismal items please contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimmons@gmail.com.

Next meetings: No meetings scheduled at this time. Just email updates.

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

Pray for an end to abortion

Recently, I had an email exchange with a Community Outreach Program Manager with Oregon Right to Life. In one of her emails, she shared the following with me... As a side note, I've been telling folks about an experience I had last week in Eugene that I think is important to keep in mind when moving forward in ministry. I went to a facility there that is a medical resource for pregnant women down that way - and had a pretty sobering experience. A staff member we met with, who has been in the pro-life movement for 20 years, discussed the reality that many of the women they are seeing (college-aged mostly because it's near the college but ladies from all walks of life come there,) will, for the most part, still choose to have an abortion even after services are offered. She stated she's seen a trend in the past 5 years or so: women recognizing more and more what abortion actually is, and does, but still feeling like it is the only option for them. She reported that they are in "turmoil about being second class citizens and burdens on society" if they become moms. Somewhere along the way, the message they got was that being a mom will hurt you, and when there is not a ton of social support for these girls, they feel that this is the truth. Twenty years ago, there was shame around becoming pregnant. **Now there is shame around having a baby at all.** It is interesting to me that centers like this are seeing a shift in the "why" and that it appears to relate to society's views of motherhood and women's roles in general. She said she hopes that the pro-life movement starts addressing the perception of motherhood - that it is something to celebrate rather than something to fear.

Lord have mercy! It's time to launch a pro-life ministry here. Who wants to help?

From the Mission Churches

Dear St. George Faithful;
Thank you so much for your continued prayers for Holy Cross Mission! This past year has been a struggle for us all, but we are thankful to see God's provision and blessing in the midst of the storm. While we mourn that there are parishioners who have not yet returned since the beginning of the pandemic, we are so grateful that our numbers still continue to grow. We are also grateful that our parishioners are committed to the mission, offering their abilities and finances with joyful sacrifice. As we approach the Feast of Nativity, we pray for the courage and fortitude to glorify Christ in Spirit and Truth.

With love in Christ ~ Lisa Buck, Holy Cross Mission, Roseburg OR

Dear St. George Faithful;

Reviewing the end of the year at Holy Resurrection includes several new and renewed activities taking place. Children's church school and coffee hours are back, with Fr. Steve adding a Theology 101 time after Sunday liturgy and before coffee hour. The men's and women's groups gathered for online webinar retreat days. The men's group has spent several days cleaning up the property, moving fencing, and improving the gate. The chanters group is growing, and they've started meeting regularly to practice. The bookstore has increased the icon selections. Almsgiving projects for the Christmas season include opportunities to donate to the Marion County Food Share barrel, gift cards for Swegle Elementary School families (the school is right next door to Blanchet where we meet for services), and a caroling party to a retirement community. We're grateful to God and to you for your prayers.

**Merry Christmas to you all and your families.
Christ is born! Glorify him!
Maria Hauser-Holy Resurrection Mission**

December Celebrations Birthdays

December 7th-Mackenziew Campbell
December 10th-Leo Hall
December 15th-Debbie Wilson
December 18th-John Timmons, Lester Wilson
December 20th-Lisa Lilles
December 23rd-Timothy Kaelin

Feast Days

December 6th-St. Nicholas
Nick Skrepetos, Nick Markopoulos, Nikolai Lilles

December 17th-Holy Forefathers & Foremothers
Daniel & Sarah Doran, Daniel Jaquette

December 24th-St. Eugenia
Eugenia Lloyd

December 27th-St. Stephen
Stephanie Carroll, Stephen Kaelin

Wedding Anniversaries

December 31st
Pete & Katharine
Trenton & Francis

Baptized in Christ/Chrismated

Nikolas Jon Pos

Many Years! Chronia Polla!

News and Events

What's New!

- **First Saturday Breakfast:** As of the printing of this edition of the AGAPE there was no news regarding the resuming of the First Saturday Breakfast.
- **Live-streaming:** We invite you to tune in to our YouTube Channel (Saint George GOC), and pray the services with us. You can access the link by visiting our website www.stgeorgeor.org.
- **Holiday Bake Sale:** The second of two dates of our Holiday Bake Sale is Sunday, December 5th. After services on that day, you will be able to purchase items such as baklava, kouroumbiethes, dolmathes, and mixes. These make great Christmas gifts or can be enjoyed at family gatherings. Proceeds from this sale go to support Philia's philanthropic efforts. Enjoy!
- **Raffle Basket:** A holiday raffle basket has been prepared and it will be raffled off on Sunday, December 12th. You may purchase tickets from Pres. Maria up until we draw the winning ticket.
- **Parish Assembly:** Please join us after services on Sunday, December 12th, for an important Parish Assembly. We will be discussing and voting on the 2022 Budget. You can participate in the Assembly either in person or by signing on to Zoom. Your participation is vital so please make every effort to attend.
- **Parish Council Elections:** Elections for the 2022 Parish Council will take place on Sunday, December 12th. A ballot will be sent by mail to all stewards. We ask that you return the completed ballot by 12/12/2021 at noon. You will also be able to vote in person on the 12th. There are five candidates running for the four vacant positions. They are: Kay Mehas, Stella Kallianis, Judy Kennedy, Chris Sumstine, and Mark Lipson. What a blessing that we have new parishioners willing to give of their time and talent to this vital ministry of our parish!
- **Services for Nativity:** Services for the feast of Holy Nativity are as follows: Royal Hours of Christmas, Friday, December 24th at 9 am; Nativity Great Vespers, Friday, December 24th at 6 pm; Orthros & Divine Liturgy for Nativity, Saturday, December 25th, beginning at 8 am. (There will not be Great Vespers on Saturday, December 25th). Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
- **St. George HSCLC:** We are always looking for volunteers and donors to help support the Learning Center. We have established a scholarship fund to assist families so that their children can attend. We also are raising money for tutor training. Finally, we could use additional "Noble Attendants" to assist in the classrooms. If you are willing and able, please see Alli or Ashli.
- **Services:** To provide an opportunity for Learning Center students to participate in weekday services, we are making a slight change in the schedule of weekday services. Weekday services that fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays will begin at 8:45 am (PCP-Pre-Communion Prayers) followed by the Divine Liturgy at approximately 9:15 am.
- **Stay Connected to the Metropolis:** Text SFNEWS to 22828 and subscribe to the E-News from the Metropolis of San Francisco. It's a great way to stay connected to the latest ministry information from the Metropolis. Sign up today!
- **Prayer Team:** Did you know that there is a team of parishioners devoted to praying for you, and for those you know who are in need of prayer? These faithful brothers and sisters comprise our Prayer Team and are ever ready to take on requests for prayer. At this time, Elizabeth Sumstine is the contact person for the Prayer Team. If you would like to contact her please email her at sumstine@gmail.com
- **Cleaning Help:** A special thanks to those helping with the cleaning of the church. Please consider joining the others in this labor of love. "Bless those who love the beauty of Your House, O Lord".

(As of this printing I am not aware that anyone has signed up to clean in December)

KOINONIA

	1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week	5th week
FELLOWSHIP	Lisa L.	Liana C	Mark L	Katharine D	
GREETER					
PROSFORON	Creech	Lilles	Kaelin	Markopoulos	
FLOWERS	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
READERS	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas
CLEANING CREW					

GET INVOLVED!!!

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

PARISH COUNCIL	Larisa Lilles 541-484-7525
SAFETY COMMITTEE	Norman Hartig 541-344-8759
BOOKSTORE	Stella Kallianis 541-274-9110
PHILIA WOMEN'S GROUP	Julie Lenkoff 541-345-2107
CHURCH SCHOOL	Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
CHANTER/CHANT GROUP	Brad Thomas 541-689-9690, Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
FAMILY WELLNESS	Ashli Mueller 541-731-3319
FELLOWSHIP	Liana Creech 541-285-4469
STEWARDSHIP	Neal Zoumboukos 541-344-4485
GREETERS	Larisa Lilles 541-484-7525
CARE MINISTRY	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
PRAYER CIRCLE	Elizabeth Sumstine (sumstine@gmail.com)
MISSIONS & EVANGELISM	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
FUNDRAISERS	Presbytera Maria 971-678-5112

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

A Good Word...

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to
God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages;

Dance for joy, O' earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings;

With the angels and the shepherds glorify Him Who is will-
ing to be gazed on as a young child Who before the ages is
God!

Christ is born! Give Him glory!