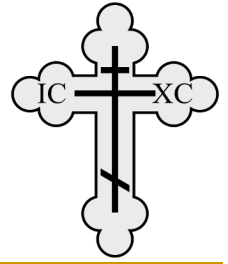




Agape



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH SEPT.-2021

My Beloved Christians, "Take Heart"

+christodoulos, priest-monk

As He wondrously walked upon the waters of the Sea of Galilee, our Savior encouraged His frightened Disciples (Mt. 14:27); "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

Have no fear. Is this not the very reason God the Father sent His Only-begotten Son into the world? To assuage all our fears? Did not Christ come into the world to give us hope? Did He not promise eternal life to those who believe in Him and do His commandments? Did not the Son of God climb up on the Cross as a ransom for the sins of all people? Did not Jesus raise the dead, give sight to the blind, and flight to the paralytic? Did He not cast out demons, feed the multitudes and forgive the woman caught in adultery? Yes! out of His infinite agape for all mankind, He did all this and more. Jesus's desire is that we never fear again – because He is with us always (Mt. 28:20); "...I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

There are multitudes of things in this temporary world that are, to say, "frightening." Wars and rumors of wars, false prophets, socio-political hypocrisy, unnecessary poverty, a seemingly never-ending cycle of crime, etc. Yet, we are called not to become "caught up" in these – except for our prayerful entreaties before our All-merciful God's throne (1 Jn. 16:33). "In the world you will have sorrows. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Caution, yes. But fear? No. What's most important is that we aim at perfect love (τελεία αγάπη) and place our trust in Christ Himself – free from fear (1 Jn 4:18).

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment."

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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Greetings from your Parish council!

Dear St. George Parishioners,
Summer is drawing to a close and the new church year is arriving. We are all longing for things to return to normal, i.e., "pre-pandemic days." However, with the Delta variant raging throughout our county, we will need to be vigilant and safe with our interactions. Please be patient with us and one another, as we continue forward.

For the time being, may I suggest we concentrate on loving one another in unity and praying. This prayer is from early on in the pandemic, but is still so relevant:

"O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in Your ineffable goodness, look down upon Your people gathered in Your name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. You know our weakness, You hear our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who loves mankind deliver us from the impending threat of the corona virus. Send Your Angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians, and preserve those who are healthy that we may continue to serve You in peace and glorify Your most honorable and majestic Name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit now and forever until to the age of ages. Amen."

Lord have mercy –
Kathryn Becker, PC President

Treasurer's Report

As of August 30th, the account balances are:

Operating Account: \$65,937.19

Dedicated Funds Account: \$89,146.56

A New Church Year, A Fresh Start

Our Church, like our daily lives, is full of calendars and cycles. Just like our annual calendar has a distinctive start to the new year each January 1st, our ecclesiastical new year starts on September 1st each year. Historically, this was the time of harvest, preparations for the coming winter and the following year. It was a time of thankfulness for God's provisions for the previous year, seeing His sovereignty to enable us to complete another year, and entreat Him to bless this coming year.

As we look back at the past year, we may have a hard time finding our Lord with so many challenges and sufferings we, and our world, have experienced. Some of us have been thoroughly beat down by real hardships and illnesses, confused by information overload, or feeling like failures or guilty telling ourselves we should have done more. We may have stepped back from coming to church regularly to try to just survive.

As a priest of almost one year now, I share more in the struggles that all of you face and I lament with what you in your sorrows and trials. Yet despite all of pain and anguish we have all faced, here we stand, as a community of faithful Christians seeking Christ's will and His mercy. Through our small community and fellowship with one another we have been able to stay sane and be able to see glimpses of Christ through the darkness around us. Through the Divine Liturgy, we have been nourished by the True Life of Christ to experience something beyond this shadowy world. Through confession we have been able to pour out our sins, struggles, and fears to receive guidance and forgiveness.

With the coming of the new Church year, the Church offers us another blessing, a fresh start. A fresh start to reconnect with Christ, with one another and return to His Church regardless of what happened last year. Not to fulfill some religious obligation, not because the priest is telling you to, and not because it will magically make all our problems go away but because it is the one place where we can find Truth and Life. Amidst the shifting sands of our life and the chaos in the world, it is the only rock to cling to for stability. It is the place that welcomes all of us, no matter where we are, becoming a hospital for our torn souls.

May we all take this blessed opportunity of a fresh start to come to the Lord with our fears and the tragedy in our lives. To put on the armor of light to stand with the Lord to face the new year in the ark of salvation, His Church; with each other, with the saints and Angels, and with our Holy Mother, the Theotokos.

In Christ, Fr. Steve

Greetings from the Bookstore! And a blessed Ecclesiastical New Year!

Such as it has been, this past year has had many challenges, in human life and in our environment; yet September is the beginning of a new Ecclesiastical year. And once again, Orthodox Christians begin the cycle of the Great Feasts. **On the Twelve Great Feasts of the Ecclesiastical Year (beginning September through August); excerpts from Meditations for the 12 Great Feasts, Becoming Fully Human in Christ.** In every age, in every culture, regardless of religion, class, and status, human beings celebrate. Even in times of war and austerity, sorrow and pain, people will always thirst for celebration, for ritual, for remembrance. Man celebrates not because he has to in order to survive, but because it is human, and it expresses a deep longing in man to rejoice, to feel, to love and to be loved, to belong, to be glad and to be whole. This "unnecessary need" for celebration is not something which the Church frowns on as sinful or idle; on the contrary, the Church is full of celebration. The entire Church calendar is a year-long festivity, taking us from one feast to another, from one saint to the next, as soon as one season has ended, a new one begins. At the heart of this annual cycle of celebrations is Pascha, the "Feasts of Feasts." After this, great importance is attached to the Twelve Great Feasts, which commemorate significant events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Mother. A central theme which runs throughout all of these Great Feasts is God taking upon Himself the likeness of man, that man might acquire the likeness of God. It is this fullness of humanity of God, through which we humans can become fully alive and one with God, that we celebrate in these Twelve Great Feasts. In them, we are called to recognize and worship not only One who is both fully God and fully man, the One who truly loves us as Himself and gave Himself up for us. In this recognition and adoration, in our response to all He has done for us, in our celebration, we discover what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God, what it means to be fully human and fully alive. On September 8, we will commemorate the Nativity of the Theotokos, and on September 14, we will commemorate the Exaltation of the Cross. In addition, September 1 has become the Orthodox Christian Day of Prayers for the Environment. Orthodox Christians are called to take good care of God's earth. This is the message of Scripture, the Saints, and perhaps most eloquently the Patriarchs of the Orthodox Churches speaking in one united voice. They call us to repent on whatever ways we have abused the earth and, in their words, "we urge all the faithful to respect and protect the environment."

Books to consider to begin the Ecclesiastical New Year:

- *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year, According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God* (St. Theophan the Recluse). St. Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894) was one of the most prolific and beloved spiritual writers of nineteenth-century Russia. In this book, St. Theophan takes us through the yearly cycle of Gospel and Epistle readings, humbly and reverently offering us brief but powerful daily meditations on the word of God. He also addresses the problems of his day – lack of faith, coldness of heart, trust in the rational mind rather than in the revealed Truth of God - which are problems of our day as well. Contemplating the sacred texts together with St. Theophan, the reader will learn to penetrate more deeply into Holy Scripture, and will receive answers to many dogmatic, moral, and spiritual questions which touch upon our salvation. As well, readers can more closely connect their lives with the life of Christ in His Holy Church and to gain a better knowledge of how to fulfill his Commandments.
- *A Long Walk with Mary, A Personal Search for the Mother of God.* The Orthodox Church's reverence for Mary the Mother of God can be a stumbling block for converts, and a fulfilling relationship with her can prove elusive for converts and lifelong Orthodox Christians alike. In this deeply personal but beautifully universal memoir, Brandi Willis Schreiber relates her own quest to know and love the Virgin Mary and to incorporate her as a vital participant in her spiritual life. Selected excerpts: "In my evangelical Protestant background, Mary was regarded as just a minor player in the Bible, if she was regarded at all....every culture must confront her mystery; every Christian must face the debt we have to her...whatever personal thoughts and feelings people have about her, she does have a part in the story of Christ's life, in Christianity as a whole, and in our salvation."
- *Stories from the Gerontikon** (Christos Gousidis). About this graphic novel, Christos Gousidis writes "One of Man's greatest aspirations is freedom. However, freedom has lost its meaning for our culture, and is now defined as merely "doing whatever pleases me." Obviously, this is hardly freedom. In fact, it could be said that it is more akin to slavery of the "free" man to his desires. Authentic freedom liberates the soul from selfish interest and all of the afflictions associated with it: jealousy, envy, and egoism. The life of the hesychasts is illustrative for those who wish to enjoy true freedom. Theirs was a life of love and humility. It was not founded on religious formality, but rather derived its entire meaning from the monk's relationship with Christ – who is truth and authentic freedom – and whether or not that relationship preserved in the difficult wilderness of the desert, where their strongly felt love for God had led them." *Gerontikon: a booklet that tells us about the community of saintly men and their exploits towards spiritual progress. The Gerontikon contains the "flower of Christ's wisdom." Its purpose is to instruct and encourage us to imitate the lives of these Saints, and to assist us to tread spiritual pathways with discernment.

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

St. George Home-School Community Learning Center Update

Just a few short months ago, we began to pray and then prepare for the opening of St. George Home-School Community Learning Center this fall. And now we're here! There are still plenty of preparations underway, and we are (somewhat frantically) ordering curriculum, designing classrooms, and writing up systems for use in the learning center. It has been a joy to see this take shape, however, and we are grateful for your continued prayers as we begin learning and settling into a rhythm together.

There will more opportunities for our parish family to help out with projects pertaining to the learning center, so be on the lookout for announcements.

Stewardship

As the new Church year begins, we must consider our goals and aspirations. Over the course of the past few years, the national stewardship ministry has offered us many themes:

"Let us commit ourselves and one another to building the Body of Christ" "See the world as God's gift to you. See what the Church can become. See God work through you" "Your gift to Him for His blessings to you" "A rich man is not one who has much but one who gives much"

"You are the voice of Christ in a changing world"

Let any or all of these themes inspire you to get involved at Saint George. We have tried to emphasize to you the importance of being a participant in at least one or perhaps more of the ministries of our parish. There is room for everyone's talents; and as you are able, there is need for everyone's time. Be vested in Saint George and bringing Orthodoxy to the un-churched and the seekers of faith in the Willamette Valley.

Prison Ministry

Earlier in the Summer it looked as if we were going to be able to actually start going back in to OSP for our Orthodox Bible Study. We had to take a volunteer course, and Fr. Jerry even heard from the chaplain's office, which raised our hopes, and then Delta struck. Presently they have restricted visiting at OSP and other facilities. We will continue to send in a monthly reflection and greetings as long as we are unable to physically be present. What a blessing we can provide some encouragement to these men during this rather isolating time. Please keep this ministry and the men involved in your prayers. Thank you, Joanna

Prayer support: Almighty God, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, come to the aid of (Names) those in prison and grant them Your peace in the midst of this difficult time in their lives. I believe Lord, that all of the trials of life are under Your care and that all things work for the good of those who love You. Take away from those in prison all fear, anxiety and distress. Help them to face and endure incarceration with faith, courage and wisdom. Grant that this trial may bring them closer to You for You are our rock and our refuge, our comfort and our hope, our delight and our joy. I trust in Your love and compassion. Blessed is Your name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Names: Brian, David, Nicholas, Andrew, Joel, Pericles, Joel, Jason, Adam, Erik, Herman, John, Shawn, Gary and Robbie.

From the Mission Churches

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

Thank you for your prayers for Holy Cross! We recently realized that we have outgrown the small chapel that we've called home for the last 10 years. Until we are able to locate a larger space to rent, we decided to meet downstairs in the fellowship area of the Episcopal Church. It has been a huge challenge to make this space suitable, much less beautiful. When we were granted funds from the recent Mission to America campaign for a project, we decided that designing and building a light, portable Iconostasis that we could set up easily every week would have the most impact. Lester Wilson stayed with us for several weeks and used his considerable skill to create an Iconostasis beyond our expectations! We are so thankful to now have a space that welcomes the faithful and visitors alike to worship in an appropriate manner. We invite you to see this new addition at our Feast Day service! Join us Monday evening, September 13, for a Vespers Liturgy celebrating the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross.

In Christ, Lisa Buck
Holy Cross Orthodox Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We've got some new changes at Holy Resurrection this autumn. Our Sunday service times are beginning a little earlier. Orthros begins at 8:20 a.m. and Divine Liturgy begins about 9:30 a.m. We'll be starting Church School and Theology 101 on September 12th. Everyone will be together for the entirety of the Sunday services including post-communion prayers, then we'll have our classes beginning about 11:15 a.m. Snack, fellowship and cleanup follow.

May the Lord bless our parish communities as we embark on this new Ecclesiastical Year

In Christ,
Maria Hauser
Holy Resurrection Mission, Salem

September Celebrations

Birthdays

September 7th-Alexis Rundt, Kevin Kaelin
September 11th-Nikolai Lilles
September 21st-Rachel Hauser
September 16th-Mikaela Jaquette
September 26th-Katharine Drakatos

Feast Days

Wedding Anniversaries

September 1st
Father Jerry & Pres. Maria

September 10th
Sean & Marci Molling

September 13th
Michael & Liana Creech

September 30th
Mark & Joanna Jaquette

Baptized in Christ/Chrismated

September 12th
Michael Creech

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, but Fr. John did tell me that he is seeking a blessing from his bishop to resume the ministry. I told Fr. John that I was confident that those who had been involved from our parish would likely continue that involvement should the breakfast resume. As soon as I hear more I will send an email out to our community.
- **Live-streaming:** We are having technical problems with the Live-streaming of the Divine Services but hopefully they will be resolved soon. 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.
- **Men's Fellowship:** Our Men's Fellowship gatherings will take place on Saturday, September 4th at noon. We will meet at Coldfire Brewery. All men of the parish are invited.
- **New Church Year:** September 1st marks the beginning of the new Church year and the resumption of ministries. Plans are in process for resuming ministries that took the summer off. Be on the lookout for announcements in the Sunday weekly bulletins as well as via email. May it be blessed!
- **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".

KOINONIA

	9/5	9/12	9/19	9/26	
FELLOWSHIP	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	
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	Lilles	Markopoulos	Hutanu/ Mueller	Kaelin/Spears	

GET INVOLVED!!!

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

PARISH COUNCIL	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
SAFETY COMMITTEE	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
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	
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...

“In the hour in which we are tempted, we must be patient and pray. Temptation is a clever craftsman. He is able to make small things loom large. Temptation disquiets, saddens, and creates external battles. He knows many arts. He brings man to doubt; for this reason, we have many shipwrecks. When we are beset by temptations — that’s when the grace of God comes. When one undergoes temptation, he recognizes his weakness [repents], is humbled and [then he] attracts the grace of God. Don’t let the winds of temptation affect you. They can’t do you any harm.”

Saint Amphilochios