PARISH NEWS

108 East Main St | PO Box 134 | Clinton, CT 06413

Highlighted Charity

Food for All Garden

All speak of the Food for All project as "more than a garden" - there is something special about working together for the common good, especially outside. The volunteers have a regular schedule of being in the garden on Wed and Sat mornings, between 9a and 12p. There are plenty of non-labor related tasks that need to be fulfilled as well.

Contact Margaret Larom at 917-714-4215 or at margaretlarom@gmail.com for more information as to how you might participate in this local community cause.

Pastor's Note

Glory to Jesus Christ!

With the start of this Ecclesial New Year, I would like to share with you an article that I shared originally on the Parish Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/stalexisorthodox/) and then with the Parish Council. The article is entitled, "The Most Common Factor in Declining Churches", by Thom S Rainer.

In sharing this with you, I am in no way indicating that our parish is in decline, but there are some characteristics that we do indeed share with the declining churches mentioned in the full article. Here is the synopsis:

"I am honored and humbled to be in a place where I get to hear from and study about thousands of churches. The leaders and congregants in those churches provide me with incredible information and data. I am grateful, because I'm not smart enough to understand these issues on my own.

Celebrations and Commemorations

This month we celebrate the birthdays of:

Ann Pavlik, Maxwell Freeman, Isaac Freeman, Melissa Josefiak and Phyllis Sturtevant .

Susan and Loyd Davis celebrate their anniversary, as do Mary Ella and Lee Luft.

God grant you all many years!

Prayer Requests

Please continue to pray for the servants of God:

Our catechumens - Joe Barbera, Kyle Hollis and Stephen Wexell

And for the health and well-being of - Glenn PenkoffLedbeck, Robert Pavlik, Joan Novarro, June Sacatos Bronen, Alla Hamesevich, Olga Kucharski and Daria Krawchuk

As God has allowed me to study congregations for more than 25 years, I began to see a common pattern in churches that had become outwardly focused. You can read some of the practical steps these churches have taken. (http://thomrainer.com/2014/05/28/seven-habits-outwardly-focused-churches/)

THE MOST COMMON FACTOR

Conversely, though, I also can see a simple but profound pattern among the declining churches.

Stated simply, the most common factor in declining churches is an inward focus.

The ministries are only for the members. The budgetary funds are used almost exclusively to meet the needs of the members. The times of worship and worship styles are geared primarily for the members. Conflict takes place when members don't get things their way. You get the picture.

WARNING SYMPTOMS

After studying and consulting with thousands of churches, I began to see clearly this pattern. Even more, I began to recognize symptoms of an inward focus. See if you recognize a few of these.

•There are very few attempts to minister to those in the community.

•Church business meetings become arguments over preferences and desires.

•Numbers of members in the congregation are openly critical of the pastor, other church staff, and lay leaders in the church.

•Any change necessary to become a Great Commission church is met with anger and resistance.

•The past becomes the hero.

•Culture is seen as the enemy instead of an opportunity for believers to become salt and light.

•Pastors and other leaders in the church become discouraged and withdraw from effective leadership.

Clinton Community Corner

Social Services Help Day

Please spread the word about this bi-monthly event. Both the Old Saybrook and the Clinton Help Day Event services are available to all people who live in our shoreline towns.

The "Help Days" are held on the first Monday of every month in Clinton and the fourth Thursday of every month in Old Saybrook. The CT Food Bank Mobile Food Truck distributes free groceries. Each month these events provide different offerings.

Call for more information - in Clinton call Cheryl Church at (860) 669-7347 and in Old Saybrook call Sue Consoli at (860) 395-3188.

•If the churches are a part of a denomination or similar affiliation, meetings of those denominations mirror the churches in lost focus and divisiveness.

THERE IS HOPE

For those of us in Christ, however, there is always hope—His hope.

I have written in recent years about the dire straits of most of our churches. I have felt it necessary to do so in order to face the facts. Indeed, I wrote Autopsy of a Deceased Church about the deaths of many churches. (http://lfwy.co/2b9qPOw)

I don't have my head in the sand. I know times are tough in many churches. I know congregations are dying every day. I know many church leaders are discouraged.

But we serve the God of hope.

Decline in our churches does not have to be a reality."

This post first appeared at ThomRainer.com.

UPDATE: Check out this companion piece, Transitioning to Become an Outward Focused Church. (http://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2016/08/19/transitioning-to-become-an-outward-focused-church/)

Ministry Reports

Buildings and Grounds:

The maintenance and upkeep of the parish property has required little attention this past month, with the replacement of a broken window and door knob being the primary repairs made. The Red House did require a maintenance call for the air conditioner, and thank you to Greg Jankura for fixing some leaky faucets in the bathroom of the Red House. If you notice something around the buildings and grounds of the church that needs attention, please be sure to notify Vinny Melesko, Sophia Brubaker or Fr Steven.

Fellowship and Stewardship:

On Sunday August 7, 2016 the Fellowship and Stewardship ministry had a brief meeting.

We would like to do more to introduce our Catechumens, Joe Barbera, Kyle Hollis and Steven Wexell to our community. Their conversion stories will appear in this newsletter, and they meet occasionally with Fr Steven. Might there be a Sunday when all three are present?

Marlene Melesko had an idea about bags of candy for our police, firefighters and veterans - our way of saying 'thank you' to them. This could be coordinated with the church school children as well.

Congratulations to Jack Jankura, who has left to begin his freshman year of college. On the Sunday before his departure, Jack was presented with an icon of St. Alexis. Best wishes to him, and all our college students; God grant you many years.

Outreach and Evangelism:

The Outreach ministry is asking for support in helping those in need as a result of the flooding in Louisiana. Through the coordination of the IOCC, we are asking parishioners to provide supplies and prepare "emergency clean-up" buckets. (https://www.iocc.org/take-action/assemble-emergency-kits/clean-up-bucket). The specific information is also included with the e-bulletin and is available on the parish website at http://stalexischurch.org/files/fliers/cleanup_checklist.pdf. Any help is much appreciated. Please talk with Marlene Melesko for specific details as to how you may participate. Thank you.

Red House:

Melissa Josefiak has continued to work at the Clinton Historical Society and Clinton and Killingworth town halls to identify the ownership of the property which will help date the Red House and tell us something about the owners. There was a gap from the first grant of the land in 1650 until the early 1800s.

Phyllis used ancestry.com to trace the William Williams family, known owners of the property, back to the early 17th century. The family was not an original grantee of the land. By searching probate documents we determined the family had property and a house on the main road by the death of Augustine Williams in 1722.

With the family information Melissa was able to search the deeds and can now follow the ownership of the property from the original grant to the present. To prove the property lines Alex and Melissa conducted a measuring experiment with the children on Sunday August 7th. They were able to measure the front margin of the property in rods and yards and prove that the red house and church are on the original grant given to Rev Woodbridge.

Other information that has been uncovered is that the Williams family did not have a captain as an owner. The rumor that the signer of the Declaration of Independence William Williams had hidden in the house and was a relative is probably false. There is no relationship between the families. Both Williams families were traced on ancestry.com to the late 16th century England. Their spouses' families were also searched for a possible connection.

Next on the agenda is to try to get a circuit rider (historical engineer) to look at the Red House to ascertain if the house or foundation could be old enough to be the house mentioned on the probate documents in 1722. Melissa is hoping to arrange this.

Also so far the Clinton Historical Society has not returned our calls about their rumored interest in the stone house.

Council Meeting Minutes

New Business:

It is that time of year: a Nominations Committee has been formed to solicit volunteers to run for the Parish Council of Stewards and to serve as representative at next year's Diocesan Assembly. If you have never served the parish as council member or represented the parish at a Diocesan Assembly, I strongly encourage you to volunteer. This is a vital ministry of the Church in which every member of the community may participate. Please consider giving of your time.

Highlighted Activities and Events

Deanery Youth Retreat	*September 16th - All Saints Orthodox Church, Hartford* Please see the attached flyer
Tag Sale	*September 17th* All proceeds to go to a local or other designated charities.
Stewardship Retreat	*September 23-24th - The Gift of Giving: Growing in our Personal and Parish Life Through the Cycle of Stewardship - Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Meriden* Please see the attached flyer

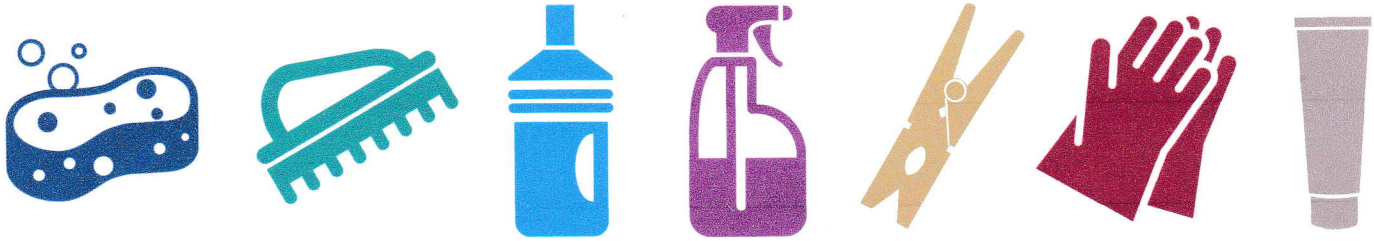
An Introduction to our Catechumens

Joseph Barbera

"I was introduced to the Eastern Orthodox religion about three years ago by a girlfriend. We attended church together in the Hartford area. I was surprised and taken in by the other-worldliness of the service, e.g. the solemn chanting, the choir, the icons, candles and the incense. I have also attended Vespers in the evenings around Christmas and I had felt especially close to God during the Vespers services. I noticed the congregation crossed themselves at each mention of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. It was explained to me that the Church has a "liturgical rhythm" and fasting throughout the year that I thought was fascinating. I learned the reasons for the feasts and the fasts. It was told to me that fasting only not concerned abstaining from certain foods throughout the year but it also trained one to tame one's passions and to rely more on God. I learned about church history, Byzantium and the seven Ecumenical Councils and why they were put in place by reading "The Orthodox Church" by Kallistos Ware. I have also read " Becoming Orthodox" by Peter Gillquist and "Welcome to the Orthodox Church" by Frederica Mathewes-Green. She gives her personal slant as a convert to the faith and answered some of my questions. I have learned about many of the saints as well, especially St John Chrysostom (Golden Mouth) and St. Basil the Great. I also have several Orthodox prayer books and an Orthodox bible that were given to me. As a result of attending the Orthodox Church and reading and researching, I believe this is the true church and the right way to worship. I look forward to my Chrismation and Baptism."

Clean-Up Bucket Checklist

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

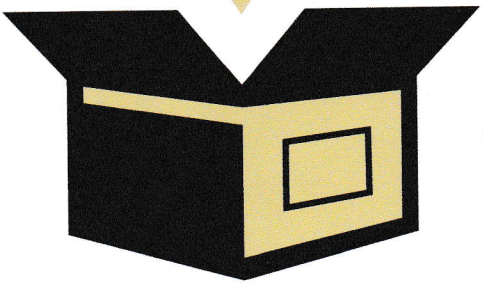


- ☐ Five scouring pads
- ☐ Seven sponges, assorted sizes
- ☐ One scrub brush
- ☐ Eighteen cleaning towels (reusable, like Easy Wipes®)
- ☐ One 50-78 oz. box dry laundry detergent
- ☐ One 12 oz. bottle of liquid concentrated household cleaner (like Lysol®)
- ☐ One 25 oz. bottle liquid disinfectant dish soap (like Dawn®)
- ☐ Fifty clothes pins
- ☐ Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
- ☐ Five dust masks
- ☐ Two pairs latex gloves
- ☐ One pair work gloves
- ☐ One 22-27 count box heavy-duty trash bags (33-45 gallon)
- ☐ One 6-14 oz. bottle of insect repellent (drops or lotion, not aerosol)

Please purchase all liquids in plastic bottles. Be sure to send all new, unopened materials.

Place all items inside a five gallon bucket with resealable lid.

Pack each assembled bucket in a separate box. Print IOCC return label for each box and mail to:



IOCC / CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
Brethren Service Center Annex
601 Main St. • P.O. Box 188
New Windsor, MD 21776-0188

IOCC
iocc.org/kits

ST. VLADIMIR'S SEMINARY ORTHODOX EDUCATION DAY

CELEBRATING MARY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2016

DAY OPENS WITH 8AM DIVINE LITURGY

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, the Virgin Mary has been the focus of unparalleled love and devotion, the subject of fervent prayer. Join us for our annual open house and fall festival, on the feast day of the Protection of the Mother of God, as we celebrate the life and person of the Theotokos.

Renowned scholar Dr. Mary B. Cunningham, author of *Gateway of Life: Orthodox Thinking on the Mother of God*, will present the keynote address. The day will be filled with Orthodox church services; engaging presentations on topics such as the iconography of the Akathist; special activities for children; and a marketplace filled with international cuisine and Orthodox books and gifts.

Three Hierarchs Chapel and the seminary bookstore will be open to the public throughout the day. Admission is free. Visit our website for more details!

St Vladimir's
Orthodox Theological Seminary

575 Scarsdale Road | Yonkers NY 10707
(914) 961-8313 www.svots.edu

"FORCC"

The Fellowship of Orthodox Churches of Connecticut

You are cordially invited

What: **TWENTY THIRD ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER**

When: Sunday, October 9, 2016
1:00 p.m.

Where: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Hall
4070 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT

Who: Honored Guest Speaker: Louis Zagami
Development Officer of International Orthodox Christian Charities
(IOCC)

FORCC IN ACTION - Power Point Presentation

Menu: Chicken or Fish

Tickets: Adult = $35.00 **(paid by Oct.2nd)**
$45.00 **(paid between Oct. 3rd – 8th)**
Child = $10.00 (up to age 12)

Reservations Required by Oct. 2nd
Advance ticket sales only
NO TICKETS SOLD/PAID AT THE DOOR

Contact your parish FORCC representative or
Nina Kosowsky 203-924-0936 or Bill Balamaci 203-876-2379
Proceeds of this dinner provide major funding for FORCC programs.

THE GIFT OF GIVING:

Growing in our Personal and Parish Life Through the Cycle of Stewardship

A retreat led by
V. Rev. Robert Holet

SS. Peter & Paul
Orthodox Church,
Meriden, CT

Sept. 23–24

Free & open to all
Register by Sept. 16

Contact Fr. Joshua Mosher
frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org
or 203-237-4539

Details at www.sspeterpaul.org

Friday

6:30 PM	Vespers
7:45–8:30	Movement 1: God as the Lord & source of all things *—This really is God's Church*

Saturday

9:00 AM	Morning Prayers (Third Hour)
9:15–10:30	Movement 2: Receiving God's gifts Movement 3: Offering the First Fruits to God
10:45–Noon	Movement 4: Commending all our life to Christ our God *The Church's Offering – Our first fruits, and our ministries*
Noon	Noon Prayers
12:15 PM	Lunch
1:30 – 2:15	Movement 5: God provides a growing abundance Movement 6: The stewards grow in their capabilities *Church operations – growing in our spiritual mission* *Open Discussion, submitted questions.*
2:30 – 3:15	Movement 7: The steward gives an account *Spiritual exercise, Stewardship Examination of Conscience*
3:30	Great Vespers, followed by brief remarks: Movement 8: The faithful steward receives his reward
5:00	Opportunity for Confession, as desired

V. Rev. Robert Holet is a parish priest in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with a Doctor of Ministry in the understanding of stewardship in Orthodoxy. Author of *The First and Finest: Orthodox Christian Stewardship as Sacred Offering*, he has spoken widely, including at the 2015 Assembly of the Diocese of New England (Orthodox Church in America).

Fr. Robert helps Christians today rediscover a richer understanding of offering. He challenges us to consider whether we offer our first and finest to the Lord, and encourages parishes to exercise stewardship as an act of divine worship in the service of God and the poor.

Deanery Youth Retreat

Friday, September 16th

"YOUTH: The PRESENT of Our Church"

Schedule

6:00pm - Vespers

6:45pm - Dinner

7:30pm - Activity

8:45pm - Compline

Age Range

Youth in grades 6-12 are welcome to join us for Food, Fun, & Fellowship

Come when you can!

All Saints Orthodox Church

205 Scarborough Street

Hartford, CT 06105

September 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10th Sunday of Matthew Outreach and Evangelism Mini... 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	29 Beheading of the Holy and Glo...	30 Anastasia Elliott - B Apodosis of the Feast of the F... John, Amy & Kevin Andrews - B Skuby - A 8:30 AM Daily Matins 10:30 AM CT Food Bank mtg	31 Irene Kaiser - B The Placing of the Honorable... 4:30 PM Open Doors 5:30 PM Daily Vespers 6 PM Indiction for the new ecclesial year	1 Church New Year Ecclesiastical New Year 8:30 AM Daily Matins	2 Mammas the Martyr Voytovich - A	3 Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedea 5:30 PM Great Vespers
4 11th Sunday of Matthew Annie Ruperto - B 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	5 Holy Prophet Zacharias, Fathe...	6 The Commemoration of the Mi... 8:30 AM Daily Matins 6:30 PM Tag Sale Organizational Meeting	7 The Forefeast of the Nativity o... 12 PM Valley Shore Clergy 6 PM Vesperal Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of the Theotokos	8 Ann Pavlik - B Maxwell Freeman - B Nativity of the Holy Theotokos 8:30 AM Akathist for Joachim and Anna 7 PM Deanery Mtg	9 The Holy & Righteous Ancesto...	10 Saturday before Holy Cross 10 AM Altar Server Retreat 5:30 PM Great Vespers
11 Akathist to Venerable Silouan Red House Committee Sunday before Holy Cross 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	12 Kathryn Jankura - B	13 Forefeast of the Elevation of th... 8:30 AM Daily Matins 6 PM Vesperal Divine Liturgy	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross Isaac Freeman - B The Elevation of the Venerable... 4:30 PM Open Doors 6:30 PM Akathist to the Precious and Life Giving Cross 6:30 PM Catecumen's Meeting	15 Nikitas the Great Martyr 8:30 AM Daily Matins 7 PM Bible Study	16 Euphemia the Great Martyr Melissa Josefiak	17 Akathist to Sts Faith, Hope, Ch... Parish Tag Sale 4 PM Great Vespers
18 Fellowship and Stewardship Mi... Sunday after Holy Cross 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	19 Trophimus, Sabbatius, & Dory... 6 PM Council meeting	20 Eustathius the Great Martyr, hi... 8:30 AM Daily Matins 9 AM Bible Study	21 Apodosis of the Elevation of th... Luft - A 4:30 PM Open Doors 6 PM Daily Vespers	22 Phocas the Martyr, Bishop of S... 8:30 AM Daily Matins 7 PM Bible Study	23 The Gift of Giving: Growing in our Personal and Parish Life Through... The Conception of St. John th...	24 New Martyrs of Alaska, Hierom... 5:30 PM Great Vespers 6:30 PM General Confession
25 1st Sunday of Luke Liturgical Ministry (Choir) 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	26 The Falling Asleep of St. John...	27 Callistratus the Martyr & his 4... Phyllis Sturtevant - B 8:30 AM Daily Matins 9 AM Bible Study	28 Bill Kokis - B Chariton the Confessor Soup Kitchen	29 Annette Andrews - B Cyriacus the Hermit of Palestine Veneri - A 8:30 AM Daily Matins 7 PM Bible Study	30 Davis - A Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop... Matushka Cindy - B	1 Akathist to Protection of the Al...