



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA  
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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*January 2019*

## Resolutions, Resolve, and Redemption



With each turning of the year and the annual anticipation of the end of winter, we are blessed with the briefest of opportunities to see things anew. Each year we are, for the most fleeting of moments, in a state of mind where we are able to reflect on where we are, and look towards what we might become. It is a time when the potential takes precedence over the actual, and we are filled with excitement, energy, and exhilarating expectations. We are encouraged to look at ourselves anew as well, or, more properly, to consider what we might become if we were to allow ourselves to be made new.

Yet so often our resolve fails, and our resolutions are forgotten. So often we lose our energy and our drive towards that which we know would improve our lives. If you will permit me a metaphor, so often we run out of gas. Our knowledge of our desired destination is there, but we simply find ourselves incapable of moving towards it. And so often we allow the dreary droning of a world which would have us mired in stasis to drown out the voice of Christ crying within us, and calling us to Him. And the reason is this, my friends: Because we try to do it on our own. And we often try to do it on our own because we want to do it on our own terms. We want to live up to our own standard. In short, though we would shudder to think of it as such, we want to place ourselves upon the throne reserved for God alone.

This is what the modern world encourages us to do. According to the modern world, you are perfect the way you are. According to the modern world, the only thing you should rely upon is the supposed strength within yourself. According to the modern world, external standards are intrinsically bad, and the intrinsic standards you set for yourself are where your true value lies. And, consequently, according to the modern world, if you are truly strong, you must “Pull yourself up by the bootstraps!” Yet the very phrase, itself, is an absurdity so preposterous that it provided its name to a paradox. If you try to pull yourself up by tugging on yourself, you will achieve a humorous rather than a happy result.

It is my sad yet solemn duty as your priest to inform you of a fact which I am always surprised *comes* as a surprise to many in the modern world: We are *not* perfect! The only true strength we will find within ourselves is the recognition of the weakness within us that can only be perfected

by the strength of Christ. And the way in which we approach Christ, in seeking the strength that can come only from Him is very different from the false comfort which the world seeks to foist upon us. We do *not* get to accept Him on our own terms; rather we must meet Him on His. We do *not* get to set our own standards; rather we must follow the One True Standard embodied in the Word made flesh. We are *not* our own god; rather is He Who Is, who condescends to meet us where we are. And we are *not* our own salvation; rather is He Who condescended to lower Himself to our level the only One who can raise us up! And though we each stand in desperate need of Him, take heart! Christ has given us a means of coming to Him, that we might be truly perfected in a way that shows the promised “perfection” of the world for the soul-destroying drivel that it is. He has given us the Church!

The Church, founded by Christ and enlivened and guarded by His Holy Spirit, stands as the one sure path to perfection, the one sure source of salvation, and the one sure repository of *all* of the eternal truths of God. Yet with the Church, as with Christ, we often want things on our own terms. Accustomed to comfort in the world, we want to sit comfortably upon the throne of God, that we might judge the saints and the martyrs. For we would tremble were we to be judged by them! It is much less frightening to *imagine* that we are perfect than to actually *seek* to be perfected. It is much less frightening to *imagine* that there is no standard which we must meet outside of those which we set for ourselves than to *acknowledge* the Eternal Standard of Christ. In short, it is much less frightening to pretend that we are gods than to fall prostrate before God dwelling among us!

Sometimes we need a pep talk, and sometimes we need a gut check. At the turning of the year, we need both. To seek to become better than we are, we must first admit that we are not all that we might be. Yet in encountering this sober reality we must not despair, but take heart! We are not perfect, but we *can* be perfected! We are not strong, but we *can* be strengthened. We may often fall into worldly foolishness because it is less intimidating that God’s truth, but we have the potential, through Christ, to choose the wisdom of redemption in Him. And we must resolve to *choose* Him, each day. Yes, doing so takes us out of our comfort zone. Yet this is precisely what resolutions are about, my friends: Eschewing the comforting corruption to which we have become accustomed in favour of the exhilarating ecstasy of what we might become. In 2019, may we sincerely seek this salvation through our submission to Christ through His Church!

In recognition of our common weakness, yet with the knowledge that we might be made strong in Christ in the coming year, I remain,

Fr. William



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# **Parish Council President's Notes**

**By: Delores Minor**

As the new year rolls in, January seems to be our reset button. Many set resolutions or annual goals. That being said, as you reflect upon 2018 and begin to look forward, include your church family in your mindfulness. That might mean attending more than one Sunday service a month, or attending a Wednesday, Friday or Saturday service, or volunteering to assist with the Philoptochos Pascha Bake Sale or joining one of our committees or visiting our shut-ins. Or you might get to know a parishioner during Sunday Agape and sit and have coffee. The list is endless as you can see. There are multiple ways to incorporate your church in to your daily lives and make it meaningful. I wish you all good health and happiness and a blessed 2019!



**IN ETERNAL  
MEMORY OF HIS  
GRACE BISHOP  
ATHANASIOS  
AKUNDA, BISHOP  
OF KISUMU AND  
WESTERN KENYA.  
WHO FELL ASLEEP  
IN THE LORD ON  
JANUARY 4, 2019.**

**HE WAS A FAITHFUL  
SUPPORTER OF  
MISSIONS, HE WAS A  
FERVENT SERVANT  
OF THE CHURCH,  
AND HE  
ENLIGHTENED  
AFRICA WITH THE  
LIGHT OF CHRIST.**

# Family Life Committee

**By: Joel Scott**

Greetings, fellow parishioners of Holy Mother, Queen of All Greek Orthodox Church, and a blessed and prosperous New Year to you! I'm so excited to tell you about all the opportunities for church family growth we have coming up in the first half of 2019! First, our dinner at Marikka's in October was such a big success that Church Life Dinners are going to become a monthly occurrence (with the exception March and April due to Great Lent and Holy Week). You can expect an announcement soon regarding our January 22 dinner. Starting in February they will be the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 PM. In March, we will be making a Lenten retreat to the Hermitage of the Holy Cross in Wayne, West Virginia. Keep an eye on your inbox for the official announcement around the middle of February. God willing, we will go on another retreat to the monastery in June. And we'll be going to four Lexington Legends baseball games this Summer, one each month from May through August. We're also going to try to include a UK baseball game if at all possible. And last but not least, also in May we will go on a nature walk at Raven Run Nature Sanctuary. So that's what we have lined up so far for 2019. As always, if you have any suggestions for future Church Family Life events, please don't hesitate to call or text me at (859) 229-6765 or email me at [joelscott81@gmail.com](mailto:joelscott81@gmail.com). Ok, bye for now, and may God bless us all!

# Sacramental Information

CHRISMATIONS (CONVERSIONS TO ORTHODOXY)

CHRISMATED: BRIAN BLIZARD

DECEMBER 16, 2018

SPONSOR: ROBERT NASH

# Philoptochos Corner

**By: Carolyn Janssen**

As you know, the Philoptochos auctions Vasilopita baked by our church family to raise funds for St. Basil's Academy each January. St Basil's is a home for children in need and provides a loving Christian environment where children are nurtured to adulthood. In addition to educating, feeding and providing shelter the Academy covers medical, dental and emotional needs of the children.

Archbishop Athenagoras founded St. Basil's Academy in 1944 with the assistance of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society who purchased the 400 acre property in Garrison, NY for \$55,000 with the proceeds of two years of Vasilopita celebrations. For 60 years the National Philoptochos has continued to support St Basil's Academy though the Annual Vasilopita appeal.

This is a good time, to thank everyone for the generous donation of time, hard work and generosity. A big thank you to Peter Sawaya for making a worthy cause a lot of fun too. Again thank you to everyone who participates every year to make this a success.

## New Year's Eve + Vespers, Artoklasia, and Reception

On New Year's Eve, as is our practice, we celebrated a Vespers and Artoklasia together for the feasts which open the year, and held a reception. Thirty of our parishioners braved torrential downpours and terrifying winds to make it to church for worship and fellowship together. And as we reverently chanted the first hymns of the Vespers and joined together in prayer, the terrifying tempest calmed. As your priest, I cannot find the words to adequately express the warmth and joy that you engendered in my heart by joining together to welcome the year with worship. I can, however, present you with pictures of the festivities. There is a slideshow with many more pictures on our facebook page. If you haven't already, **Like** and **Follow** us on facebook!



## **FiftyUp Brunch at Josie's**

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 30 members of our FiftyUp ministry enjoyed brunch and fellowship at Josie's Restaurant. To get involved in this exciting ministry, contact Jim Hangis or Kitty Konialis!



## **Youth Caroling Ministry**

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, our youth visited and sung carols for our parishioners who are unable to make it to church. If you would like to be placed on the list for next year, contact Fr. William.



# **Weekly Opportunities for Worship and Fellowship**

## **SUNDAY**

### ***9 AM - Matins and Liturgy***

This is the meeting of the Eucharistic community, the Body of Christ, on the Lord's Day. It is the time we set aside to come together to receive God, that we might be united together with Him and in Him. The Liturgy, should be *the* most important thing in our weekly schedules. For the Christian, this day, and this service, is the center and source of life, given by Him Who is Life! Nothing can take precedence over receiving that which God offers to us!

### ***12 PM – Agape Fellowship***

This is the time when the Body of Christ, having received our Lord together, comes together to rekindle the bonds of fellowship that have just been set aflame by the reception of our Lord.

## **WEDNESDAY**

### ***6 PM – Vespers***

This service is an opportunity to come together in the middle of the week to worship our Lord, and to recall the works of His saints. It gives us a chance to take stock of our lives and rededicate them to Him, as well as to reflect on how He has comforted, uplifted, and transformed us during the week. There is an opportunity to plug back in to the source of our power, to help us to get through the trials and tribulations of the weekly grind!

### ***6:45 PM – Adult Study and Potluck***

On Wednesday nights, we gather together in a fellowship meal provided from the fruits of our labour, and we learn together about our faith. Currently, for the month of January, we do not have an adult study curriculum. We will start back up in February with a curriculum to be announced in the coming weeks. Adult Study will continue on Wednesday nights throughout the year, though the format and topics will change from session to session.

## **FRIDAY**

### ***6 PM – Paraklesis***

This service is an opportunity to ask the Theotokos, the Panagia Pantovasilissa, our beloved patron and God's mother, to intercede with Him on our behalf, as well as on behalf of those whom we know who stand in special need of His grace due to challenges or suffering that they may face. Blank lists for names will be in the narthex before the Paraklesis. The names will then be added to the Proskomide service before the Liturgy on Sunday. The service has a special meaning to us, as the Theotokos is the patron of our community. Please note that, in contrast to the lists of names from the Dormition Fast, the lists of names for our weekly Paraklesis are not kept from week to week.

## **SATURDAY**

### ***6 PM – Great Vespers***

This is the service at which we prepare for and welcome the Lord's Day, on the night before we gather together to receive Christ. At the midpoint of the service, when we sing "O Gladsome Light", the Church, which was dimly lit, becomes awash with light. This is the transition from the Sabbath to the Day of the Lord, on which we shall receive His Body and Blood, thereby sacramentally becoming the Body of Christ. We gather the night before to prepare ourselves.

### ***6:45 PM – The Sacrament of Confession***

Though Confession is always available during the week by appointment, the time following the conclusion of Great Vespers is set aside for those among the faithful who feel burdened and wounded by sin to come to Confession as we prepare to receive our Lord the following day. We are *all* mired in sin; and we all need the sacrament. We are called to be perfect, and we all often fail. Let us run to the Master who, alone, understands. If you wish to confess, please plan to be at the Church by the conclusion of Great Vespers.

## January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> St. Basil and the Feast of the Circumcision 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	<b>2</b> 6:00 PM – Vespers	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	<b>5</b> Eve of Theophany 6:00 PM – Great Vespers and Agiasmos 7:00 PM – Confession
<b>6</b> Theophany 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM - Agiasmos	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting	<b>9</b> 6:00 PM – Vespers	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	<b>12</b> 12:00 PM - Philoptochos Holiday Luncheon 11:00 AM - Ohio River Blessing (Louisville)
<b>13</b> Stewardship Sunday 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – Blessing of the Offerings	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 6:00 PM – Vespers	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	<b>19</b> 5:00 PM – GOYA Laser Tag  NO VESPERS
<b>20</b> 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 6:30 PM – Family Life Outing to Marikka's	<b>23</b> 6:00 PM – Vespers	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	<b>26</b> 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM – Confession
<b>27</b> 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Three Hierarchs 6:00 PM – Vespers	<b>31</b>		

### Parish Ministries and Organizations

**Altar Servers:** Fr. William, Joel Scott, Michael Knierim  
**Adult Education:** Fr. William, Elizabeth Smith  
**Cantors:** Chrisi Karounos, Jacob Kaylor, Nick Douglas  
**Choir:** Helen Pantazakos  
**GOYA:** Mandy Xenos  
**HOPE/JOY:** Leslie Bliziotis  
**FiftyUp:** Jim Hangis  
**Philoptochos:** Carolyn Janssen  
**Sunday Church School:** Aimee Cox  
**Y'ALL:** Alyssa Eliopoulos, Joel Scott, Angela Brown

### Parish Council

**President:** Delores Minor  
**Vice President:** Vlad Radulescu  
**Secretary:** Peter Sawaya  
**Treasurer:** Dennis Karounos  
**Members:** Virgil Cornea, Nick Douglas, Thomas Finsand, Ken Kiriacopoulos, Joel Scott, Elizabeth Smith, Eleftherios Xenos