

Fr Dennis J. Schutte
Proistamenos

Archangel Michael

Greek Orthodox Church

THE MESSENGER

Volume 10.1

March 2018

FROM FATHER DENNIS

Dear Faithful in the Lord,

What a wonderful privilege it is for us to have this beautiful season of Great Lent. Much joy and spiritual benefit is granted to those who participate with sincerity. In many respects, we can even feel the loss when it finally ends. This is expressed very well by +Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, from the book, *The Diary of a Russian Priest*. He says:

"I bid a sad farewell to the end of Lent. In Lent how much good is accomplished with greater ease, how much evil loses its power and fades away, what joy there is in observing those who pray, fast, approach the holy Chalice with devotion! However, frequent the disappointments and vexations during confession, however great the number of lazy, indifferent souls, blinded by sins and passions—there are yet many who possess a keenly sensitive conscience, who are merciless towards themselves, who love God and thirst for purification. Every confession is also a lesson and a spiritual gain for the priest who hears it." SVS Press, Crestwood, NY, page 112.

Since we have a few weeks left before the Holy and Great Pascha of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, let us not be apathetic, nominal or marginal Orthodox Christians. Let us finish the course of the fast, with our increased prayer, attendance at services, almsgiving, and reading the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the saints. Also, if we have not been as engaged in this season, let us make a new beginning now. Many of our hymns begin with the word "today", noting the present tense.

I pray our Good Lord strengthen and inspire you during the remainder of Great Lent and may the light of the Resurrected Christ shine in your hearts.

In the Lord, Fr. Dennis

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA SCHEDULE

The schedule is available online at our website at: [Holy Week and Pascha Schedule](#)

Please note we need help with cleaning the church for Holy Week and Pascha: Cleaning and polishing brass and silver items, etc. Holy Monday evening, April 2, 2018, His Eminence, Met. Isaiah will visit our community and preside for the Bridegroom Service at 6pm. Following services we will offer very light Lenten refreshments (salad, fruit, coffee, etc.) but not a meal. Please make every effort to attend especially with our children.

Pearls of Wisdom

"Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience."

"Fire and water do not mix, neither can you mix judgment of others with the desire to repent."

"When you hear that your neighbor or friend has slandered you behind your back, or even to your face, praise and love him."

—St. John of the Ladder 7th cent.



PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Dear Faithful,

As we find ourselves in the middle of the Great Lenten season, we look back on the past few weeks of the fast period and reflect on how far we've come. We also look forward to the next few weeks and anticipate the joy of celebrating our Lord's resurrection. This time of year also makes me ponder the greater picture. We look back at how far we've come as a church and as a family in Christ, reflecting on the past 20 years. We see our struggles, hard times and efforts; we also look forward to the years to come and the anticipation of celebrating our future life in Christ Jesus. We've come so far and yet we still have far to go. The journey will determine the outcome! I'm proud to make this journey with all of you and to call you my family. I'm pleased with what we've accomplished and I'm pleased to see our forward progress.

We will be visiting some locations in the months to come that could possibly be our new home. Our capital campaign efforts are moving forward with great success. I'm also happy to see our communication as a parish excelling with the newsletter and the newly founded bi-monthly *Courier*. I thank all of you who have made the effort and put much work to accomplish these goals.

I encourage you to make the most of the remainder of Great Lent, this spiritually nourishing season. As always, continue your support of this great community by your stewardship, volunteer time, and most of all...your prayers! May God bless you all and may you have a blessed Pascha. —Iakovos "Jake" Topakas

2018 AMGOC MISSION VESPERS



Every year during Great Lent, the five Orthodox parishes in southern Colorado gather each Sunday evening to celebrate Lenten Vespers together. The theme for the sermon offered is *Missions and Evangelism*.

The five parishes are listed here as scheduled for Vespers:

- Sts. Constantine and Helen/Holy Theophany Church—Colorado Springs
- St. Michael Orthodox Church—Pueblo
- Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church—Colorado Springs
- St. Mary's Holy Dormition Orthodox Church—Calhan
- St. John the Baptist—Pueblo

Following services a collection is taken by each parish and will benefit the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM). Also, each parish offers a Lenten meal for those attending.

We are grateful to all who attended and brought food items for the March 11th service. There were many faithful visiting from other parishes that evening. As you can see we had 9 priests and 1 deacon that evening for worship.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE—LEON BASDEKAS

We have been developing materials for use in our next fundraising phase. One particularly inspiring task was the theme we developed: "Offering from Our Abundance for the Glory of God". Below you will find our logo with the imbedded theme for the Capital Campaign. You will soon notice inspirational posters and table flyers to help keep this important pursuit of a larger church home at the forefront of our thoughts.

Our real estate agent recently identified a few property possibilities and some members of the committee visited one property on March 1. It is located on Academy Boulevard, about one mile south of the Woodman interchange. Generally, it is a large open steel structure that currently serves as a church for a Universalist group. The open steel structure contains some partitioning for a small kitchen, office and daycare. The two outdoor modular buildings are roomy for classrooms but have no restrooms. The grounds consist of an old miniature golf course and about 2 acres of parking that need maintenance. The site has a lot of potential but also several challenges as well, which makes it an unsuitable option at this time. While we have investigated three other properties, none of those have been viable due to different limitations.

Financially we have \$239,490 in cash out of \$334,900 pledged (42 pledges). Given a conservative estimate of our current property value of approximately \$300,000 we have an estimated total of \$634,900.

We have \$285 from the AmazonSmile program and \$6,800 from the King Soopers program since 2015.

Thank you all for your continued patience during this long process. If you are interested in becoming involved with the Committee please do not hesitate to ask.

In Christ,

Leon



GREEK DANCE GROUP—DINA VASILIADES

We welcome your children, ages 4 and older, to join our parish **Youth Greek Dance Group**. The first meeting was held on February 4, 2018. The children are learning their first Greek dance and practices will take place every two weeks. The goal is to have a group dancing for our Annual Greek Festival. Any interested adults with knowledge of Greek dances are welcome to help teach. *Practice will resume on Sunday, April 15.*



There has been much interest in creating an **Adult Greek Dance Group**. All ages over 18 are welcome and we hope to perform at our Greek Festival. If there is enough interest, practices will parallel the youth dance group every two weeks after church on Sundays, with additional dancing after the children have left.

For more information please contact Constadina Vasiliades at: 808-373-0312 or constadina@shaw.ca if interested or for questions.



STEWARDSHIP—RUXANDRA GEORGESCU

Work at it with All Your Heart: Stewardship Message

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...." Colossians 3:23

Saint Phocas was a gardener and Saint Euphrosinos was a cook. They are not known as "Phocas the Great" or "Euphrosinos the Theologian." Known instead by the work they did, they became saints of the Church. We know that service to God and His Church is sacred, and because of this we strive to serve and support the Church. But is it possible for our work to be sacred? Can we be Christian stewards of our work? According to Saint Porphyrios, "At your work, whatever it may be, you can become a saint through

meekness, patience, and love."

Some are blessed to follow a career path to a life's work bringing satisfaction. Others may work in a position that may not appear to be spiritually or emotionally fulfilling. In whatever type of work we find ourselves, our work can become sacred when we dedicate it to God. In the words of Mother Theresa, "Wherever God has put you, that is your vocation. It is not what we do, but how much love we put into it."

Life on earth is a gift. The work we do is also a gift if we see it as an opportunity to serve God and others. Saint Paul instructs us, *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...."* (Colossians 3:23). When we see our work in this way, we are able to become Christian stewards of our work.

Saint Phocas the Gardener lived in the late 3rd Century, in the ancient region of Paphlagonia (now northern Turkey). Phocas lived humbly on the sale of fruits and vegetables he would grow in his garden. Through his work, Phocas fed the hungry and gave shelter to those in need. Because of his dedication to his work and his generosity to those in need, he became a Christian example to others. Even the non-believers treated him with respect, and by his Christ-like manner, many were drawn to the Christian Faith.

Saint Euphrosynos worked as a cook in a monastery in Palestine, serving the brother monks humbly and faithfully. The others were not aware of the depth of his spiritual growth until it was revealed in a dream to a priest-monk of the monastery and then related to the brother monks. St. Euphrosynos is known to us by his humble work as the Cook.

As Christian Stewards we are called to give back to God from the "first fruits" of our labor. We support our parish and her ministries in an intentional way and not with only what it left after everything else has been taken care of.

In whatever work we do, we are called to give glory to God for the abilities and opportunities He provides. We do this by caring for the work we do, applying our God-given abilities to our work, and by respecting the responsibilities with which we have been entrusted. We do our best and give the glory to God.

Just to update our stewardship: As of February 28, 2018 our church has 38 stewards who have pledged \$98,945. The average pledge is \$2,603 per steward, significantly higher than in past years.

FESTIVAL COORDINATORS—NORM STRUCK

Two years ago in 2015, at our fall General Assembly, I announced Coordinator Positions for functional areas of the festival. A poster board was developed listing each position with a brief description of duties. We need nine coordinators and as of March 1, we have four positions filled. The following positions remain unfilled: Ticket Sales, Souvenir/Greek Food Store, Festival Set Up and Teardown, two Food Coordinators and the Festival Director. The unfilled positions must be filled as soon as possible. I will then train each person on the responsibilities of the Coordinator Position and provide a milestone date chart. This program has to happen this coming year.

GREEK FESTIVAL—NORM STRUCK

Our 2017 was a great success. We have gone from an event that was two days to three and an event with gross income from \$20,000 to \$68,000. We averaged income in the past of \$12,000 on Friday night to \$22,000 this year. We can be proud of that achievement. As for our volunteer participation it was the least amount. We had an extreme shortage of volunteers which tested us to the limit. Our Friday operation presented the challenge of not enough people all day to open at 4:00 p.m. On the Sunday operation there were barely enough volunteers to close and cleanup the festival.

We had 15 people who worked each day and others worked two days. Some were there for 10 to 14 hours. We had others who hadn't signed up but just showed up—awfully glad they did. We need to think about this volunteer issue and come up with a solution. Start with the question: "Am I doing enough?" Some of my thoughts and others: First, the Parish Council needs to lead the effort by working each day of the festival and participating in the week leading up to the start. Second, all able bodied parishioners need to work two shifts during the festival and be available during the days of preparation for at least once. Third, all parishioners of AMGOC should think about how we can get outside volunteer participation. Friends, co-workers, neighbors and organizations need to be approached and asked.

We all know that a successful festival provides significant funds to the operation of AMGOC and over the years the funds provided have increased. We need to have your continued support and participation in order to have a successful event. So for 2018—mark your calendars now: **August 17, 18 & 19** is the Festival and Aug 12, 14, 15, and 16 are the days of preparation.

SATURDAY OF SOULS

Although every Saturday is dedicated to the departed, as it is the day that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ rested in the tomb, the Orthodox Church dedicates four Saturdays specifically to remember our departed faithful Orthodox Christians. They are the two preceding Saturdays before Great Lent, the first Saturday of Great Lent and the Saturday before Holy Pentecost.

The first Saturday is dedicated to those faithful who may have died without the benefit of funeral or memorial services, at sea, or in the mountains, war, etc. The Fathers of the Church through their love for mankind, ordained that the Orthodox Catholic Church make commemoration of all people, a tradition which they inherited from the Holy Apostles. This Saturday always precedes the Sunday of the Last Judgment and Meat-Fare Sunday. We are reminded of our own mortality as well, hopefully to have a humble and repentant soul.

The Second Saturday is dedicated to "the men and women who have passed their lives in a manner pleasing to God, so by their example they might make us more eager in the work of virtue and more courageous against the passions." *From the Synaxarion of Cheese-Fare Saturday*

The Third Saturday commemorates the miracle of St. Theodore the Recruit, during the reign of Julian the Apostate. Julian had all the food in the market replaced with foods that were defiled by the blood of animals offered in sacrifice to idols. St. Theodore (Feb. 17) appeared to the Archbishop of Constantinople, Eudoxius and told him to call all of the faithful to warn them not to purchase those foods, but to make kollyva. These events took place in the year 362 and the Church keeps this commemoration each year to the glory of God and the honor of the Martyr, St. Theodore.

It is a tradition for each family to make a small bowl of kollyva for these Saturdays, and to submit a list of names for the priest to commemorate during the Memorial Service.



Faithful brought beautifully prepared kollyva for the third Saturday of Souls, St. Theodore Saturday.

TERRITORY DAYS

Dear faithful in the Lord, We are reaching out to you for your assistance regarding our annual booth at Territory Days in Old Colorado City May 26-28, 2018. The proceeds of Territory Days are vital to our annual budget so we need all the help we can get. I will need about 12 positions in the booth from opening to closing for all three days. They will be broken into shifts if someone feels they cannot handle the entire day. I will also need volunteers for the setup, break down as well as some food preparation prior to the event. I will be there from open to close for the entire weekend to work the booth, as well as supervise each individual in their station. This will assure the best possible product with the best possible service. We ask you to prayerfully consider giving your time and talent to this weekend. Without your help we cannot achieve a successful financial income, which is necessary for the stability of our Holy Church. Thank you for your consideration. I wish you all a blessed and glorious Pascha celebration. God Bless you!

In Christ, Iakovos "Jake" Topakas
Parish Council President/Territory Days Coordinator

USAFA SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Fr. Dennis has been serving cadets at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) for 14 years by conducting Special Programs in Religious Education (SPIRE) once a week during the academic year. He has also performed religious services during Basic Cadet Training (BCT) during the summer. We are blessed to have Capt. Matthew Streett (Fr. Matthew) join USAFA this past summer. It has been quite a long time since the Academy has had an Eastern Orthodox chaplain. Fr. Matthew is here with his Presvytera Photini and three children, and serves cadets in a myriad of ways. In addition to BCT and SPIRE, Fr. Matthew holds services every Sunday

morning in the Cadet Chapel and is holding services at USAFA for Great Lent. The cadets are fortunate to have both Fr. Dennis and Father Matthew to minister to their spiritual needs. Many thanks also to Connie Leonard who provides light meals and snacks for those attending on Monday evenings. *Aim High!*

DEPUTY SHERIFF + MICAH FLICK

Deputy Micah Flick, 34, with the El Paso County Sheriff's Dept. in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was killed in the line of duty on Thursday, February 5, 2018. Our parish during Great Lent, collected \$1,000 to benefit his wife and two children. We pray our Lord have mercy on +Micah and grant him eternal repose. We pray also for comfort and strength to be granted to his family and fellow officers.

Deacon: For the president of our country, for all civil authorities, and for our armed forces on land, at sea, and in the air, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. *(How important it is for us to pray for our civil authorities in our services.)*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Dear Faithful in the Lord,

Having reviewed the Planning Study for Archangel Michael prepared and presented by Jerry Minetos we noticed one of the challenges facing our Parish is the 80/20 rule. Overwhelmingly, you felt the need for more involvement in the work of the church was needed. "We need more people to jump on board and help" was one expression used. There was much appreciation to the "core group" of workers but, we all seemed to realize they either need more help or need someone else to take their place.

So, we are trying to reach out to you, to give you the different areas of help we need and the time commitment. Some of these can be done by an individual and some by families which would present an excellent opportunity for the children to learn to serve the church.

The following is a list of areas our parish currently needs help with. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these areas please email Lynne Meister at: secretary@amgoc.org. Thank you for taking the time to consider volunteering in one of these important areas!

1. **Kitchen Organizer:** Oversee the cabinets, storage area, supplies used for coffee hour, etc. The kitchen needs to be thoroughly cleaned twice a year—preferably before Pascha and after the Festival.
2. **Recycle Organizer:** Monitor two containers in the Church Hall for recycling and an outside container. If they are full, see that they are empty and ready to go again.
3. **Church Hall Organizer:** Oversee the refrigerator by throwing spoiled items out, making sure it's clean. Ensure the ladies and men's restroom, supplies, chairs, and tables are clean.
4. **Building Maintenance:** Check the building inside and out, swamp cooler, oversee minor repairs when necessary and bring to the attention of the Council.
5. **Outside Maintenance Custodian:** Cleanup the lot around the fences, trim over hanging trees and bushes, near both stairwells and our shrubbery next to the building. This would be a wonderful family responsibility.
6. **Stewardship:** Assist the Chairman with any additional jobs, i.e. getting the posters made, sending out thank you notes, adding names to the roster, ordering any supplies.
7. **Youth Director:** Find people to help organize activities for our children and see that it's followed through.

AMGOC CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER

Dear Faithful in the Lord,

It is with much joy that I announce to you a wonderful opportunity offered to our community. A faithful family has offered to *match dollar for dollar* up to \$25,000, all new donations given toward our Capital Campaign Fund. This is in addition to previous pledges you have made. That means we have the potential of raising \$50,000!

The challenge is to have raised the matching funds by Pascha, so we have 3 weeks until **April 8th** to meet this goal! I know how generous our faithful have been throughout the years at Archangel Michael Church and I am sure this opportunity is achievable.

When sending checks, please put **CC Challenge** in the memo. I wish you a blessed remainder of Great Lent and a joyous celebration of our Lord's Resurrection, Kalo Pascha!

In the Lord,

Fr. Dennis

ICON PAINTING WORKSHOP—NICK ROUGAS

Our last Icon Painting Workshop was a great success! The workshop was held at the church on the weekend of October 20-22, 2017 with a total of eight participating in our workshop. We will be hosting another workshop May 3-6, 2018. May 3rd and 4th will be in the evening, while May 5th and 6th will be during the day. We've added Thursday evening for those who need extra time, so please don't hesitate to sign up if you are unable to attend on Thursday. The cost is \$275 including materials and no experience in drawing or painting is needed. Mr. Christopher Gosey, is our iconographer and is from New Hampshire. Those who participated in the last iconography class will be painting John the Baptist. Those who are newcomers will be painting the Panagia. Please RSVP to Nick Rougas by April 1 at 719-369-7700 or rougasn@comcast.net



BOOKSTORE—OLGA SONNENBURG

If you would like to purchase a Holy Week book, they are \$25 each. We also have the following Eikona CDs available for \$16 each: Sacred Hymns of the Divine Liturgy, Great Saints and Major Feasts, Abundant Mercy—The Polyeleos, The Akathist Hymn, and Prayers for Orthodox Christians.

A number of new books and items are arriving soon so please see Olga Sonnenburg for more information. *Thank you for your continued support!*

Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church

2215 Paseo Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Phone: 719-634-5678

E-mail: info@amgoc.org

Website: amgoc.org

FB: www.facebook.com/amgoc.co