



ST. GEORGE *Chronicle*

MAY 2020



The Very Rev. Christopher Morris
Pastor

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST GEORGE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

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Friday eve & Saturday morning

The Law of Kindness by Fr. Alexii

The entire world is experiencing the impact of COVID-19, the Novel Corona Virus pandemic. It is commonly said that one of the Chinese words for crisis can be interpreted as opportunity. With the limiting of so many being able to go out, we invite you to discover the opportunity to go in. To go in to the place of the heart. Over the coming days, we will be posting wisdom from the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the Church regarding the values to be found from times of silence, solitude, and reflection.



The wise king Solomon said of the virtuous woman, 'The Law of kindness is on her lips' (Prov. 31:26). It is most often a mother who has been given the special grace of teaching us kindness, not only with her words, but also through her ways. If this has not been in our experience, the Mother of God is there to help us, when we turn to her in prayer. The painting above, *The Maiden of Kosovo*, by Uroš Predić, captures this special quality as she tends to the wounded, martyred soldiers on the hallowed battlefield.

During these times of isolation, some are in lock down with the same people day in, and day out. Qualities in the

others that before were 'no big deal', now can become irritating. This is eye-opening. It leads to lessons that we learn about ourselves and others. Opportunities present themselves to grow in kindness, patience and love. The following snapshots reveal this law of kindness from a few stories about Abba Poemen and another elder. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ grow in us as we seek His help and mercy.

Once two brothers came to a certain [elder]. It was his custom not to eat every day but when he saw them he received them joyfully and said, 'A fast has its own reward, but he who eats for the sake of love fulfils two commandments: he leaves his own will and he refreshes his brothers.'

Daily Readings with the Desert Fathers,
B. Ward, SLG, p. 42

Often when trying to fast, we can become grumpy. It comes from the desire to grow spiritually struggling with our natural desire to eat! But, when our will is set on fasting too much, it can lead to overlooking the care of our brother. We have 'zeal without knowledge' of the immense love of God.

In the Desert Fathers and Mothers we see that the law of charity supersedes the law of fasting. If taken to an extreme, we could use this as an excuse for omitting the spiritually beneficial discipline of fasting altogether! But if we carry this value of love first, we will find a way to fulfill both, as Jesus said, "These things you ought to have done, without neglecting the other also" (Lk. 11:42).

(continued on back cover)



Don't let quarantine keep you down! We are taking the 6K virtual this year: you can walk from your front door or on the treadmill, but we will still be raising money to bring clean water to those in need. **JOIN US!**



On May 16, 2020 World Vision's Global 6K for Water will unite people around the world to walk or run for water!



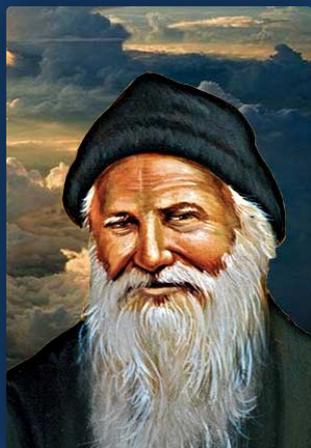
- 6K (3.72 mi) is the average distance people in the developing world have to walk for water.



- The lack of clean water is the #1 preventable cause of death in the world.
- About 1,000 children under the age of 5 die everyday from unsafe drinking water.

But we can change that, right here in Nebraska! When you register for the Global 6K for Water, your registration fee provides lasting clean water to one child in developing world. Will you join us on **May 16** to help end the water crisis? Click this link for more information.

HELP US BRING CLEAN WATER TO THOSE IN NEED



"When a bad or gloomy thought, fear or temptation threatens to afflict you, don't fight it to try and get rid of it. Open your arms to Christ's love and He will embrace you, then it will vanish by itself."

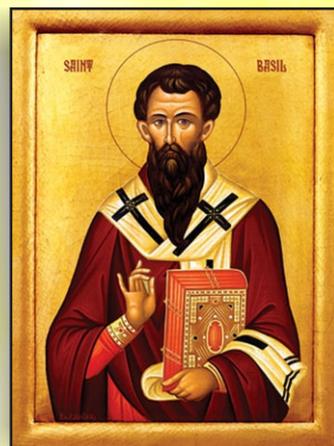
– Saint Porphyrios



You who are in the monastery, when you approach your brother; you who are married, when you approach your spouse; you who are a father or a mother, when you approach your child: "Let words of consolation leap forward before the rest of your speech." Whatever you say, whatever you think of saying, say it only after you've said a word or two which Will give the others joy, consolation, a breath of life. Make them say, "I feel relief; I feel joy."

Make others . . . dance for joy when they see you. Because everybody in their life, in their home, in their body, and in their soul, has pain, illness, difficulties, torments, and everybody hides them within the secret purse of his heart and home, so that others won't know about it. I don't know what sort of pain you're in, and you don't know what pain I'm in. I may laugh . . . and appear happy, but deep down, I'm in pain, and I laugh to cover up my sorrow. And so, before anything else, greet the other person with a smile.

And Saint Basil adds this: "Let your face be bright, in order to give joy to him who speaks with you." Once you've made the other person smile, don't stop smiling. This is what it means to have a "bright face." Let



your face be a radiant sun, so that throughout the conversation the other will continue to feel the same happiness. "Take delight in every achievement of your neighbor." With respect to whatever achievement your neighbor has, rejoice along with him. "For his achievements are yours, and yours are his." Let the one share in the joy of the other.

In this way, there can be a meeting, a true social relation, of monks and married people, of all people, saints and sinners, giving us all the right and ability to pray. And when we say, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me," everybody is included: my husband, my wife, my brothers and sisters, my children, the whole world. When God sees such love, when He sees the paradise in my heart, that my heart has room for everybody, then it will be impossible for Him not to find room in His paradise for me and for you.

*--Archimandrite Amilianos of Simonopetra
The Church of Prayer, page 88*

Staying Anchored to Christ

by Sarah Fothergill

"O how noble! O how dear! O how sweet is thy voice, O Christ; for thou hast verily made us a true promise, that thou shalt be with us to the end of time; a promise to which we believers hold, an anchor for our hopes, as we sing rejoicing with joy."

Christ is Risen! The entire Paschal canon is filled with beautiful reminders of the joy of the Resurrection, but I have always particularly loved this verse. To me, it is a perfect message for us in the current situation in which we find ourselves--a period of living day by day, moment by moment, surrounded by uncertainties and changes to our lives that were so suddenly cast upon us. As many of us have strived to turn our homes into little churches and increase the time spent in our prayer corners, we have surely come to see glimmers of hope and reassurance that this coronavirus is not the "end of the world" as we know it. I am starting to believe (I'm a very slow learner. . . Lord, I believe, help my unbelief) that the timing of this particular struggle (occurring during Great Lent and now the Pascha season) is really a unique opportunity for us to realize that as Christians, we set our hope on the Lord, and not on the earthly, temporary comforts of this world. It's easy for me to "say" or "think" that, but now that it is actually a reality--it's time to put my faith into action. When the world around us closed--schools, jobs, shopping malls, entertainment, even visits with families and friends--something else opened up. The virus did not take away our personal Pascha that we experience with the Lord. The virus did not stop us from shouting, "Christ is Risen!" in the middle of the night! And, that's what matters the most, right? The virus cannot take away our inner peace that comes from continually seeking and being with the Lord.

I have a magnet on my refrigerator with this quote:
"Peace- it does not mean to be in a place where

there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart." Surely, the noise of the news, the trouble of financial stress, loneliness and more has become very loud these days. Yet, how do we find peace when we can't change the situation around us? I believe that remembering the Lord's promise that He will be with us to the end of time, and relying on Him as our anchor of hope is the only way! "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world!" There is no need for fear and anxiety with a promise like this!

I remember being at a Lenten retreat a couple of years ago at Holy Archangel Michael and All Angels Skete in Weatherby, MO and hearing Father Alexii say, "The Lord leads and the devil drives." Again, this reminds me of the Paschal canon verse, "O how noble! O how dear!

O how sweet is thy voice, O Christ..." Christ's voice is so reassuring and comforting.

Father Alexii reminded us that when we are experiencing feelings of agitation and disturbance, prayer is required! He also encouraged spiritual exercises such as maintaining a manageable prayer rule, regular confession, fasting, and almsgiving. Even though we are in the midst of celebrating the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord, I'm starting to let it sink in that we might still taste the "lenten struggle" for a bit longer. The Church offers so much spiritual food and healing during Lent--it would be wise to continue to lean on the practices of Lent so that they may carry us through this continued period of social distancing. If we keep up the spiritual exercises of increased prayer, spiritual reading, almsgiving, fasting, and quiet time, we can try to find our balance again, which can only come when we allow God to be the center of our life.

Lord, thank You for the reminder of Your promises and for speaking to us with Your sweet voice. Help us to surrender our fears and anxieties and rely on You as the anchor of our hopes and the source of peace. Please help our unbelief and allow us to hear Your sweet voice as we cry out to You with rejoicing and joy in the Resurrection!



WE GET LETTERS . . . 

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

Dear St. George Family,
On this Bright Friday, Theotokos of the Life-giving Spring, sending our love and Paschal Greetings! How blessed, comforted, and sustained we have been to tune in to livestream services at St. George especially during this season. Seeing the beauty of the church, hearing the wonderful hymns, it was a feast for our senses. Wishing you all health and safety, with many prayers and virtual hugs.

Love,
Tom and Kate Salem



Dear Chronicle,
Thank you for all of the love you put into the monthly newsletter. Each month your quotes from the Saints seem to be “hand-picked” just for me. WOW! Keep up the good work! God Bless you.
from a loyal reader

Dear St. George Family,
Thank you so very much for all of your thoughts and prayers as we welcomed Rexten into our family. He is such a blessing and can't wait for him to meet everyone! Your beautiful cards and gifts, and meals have been greatly appreciated! We are so blessed to have such an amazing church family! We pray everyone is staying healthy and hope to see you all soon!

Zane, Amanda and Rexten Williamson

Christ Is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Great Lent 2020 - what a struggle for most of us as we experienced how difficult it is to not be in church and see our church family! How hard it must have been for our committed priest, altar servers and chanters to provide the many “behind the scenes” activities to ensure live streaming for us all. And even harder to not see our faces smiling back!

Your offerings of love will not be forgotten.

In Christ,
Mark & Joanie Klein



 **Birthdays**

May 8
Levi Hadley

May 9
Margo Maloley

May 11
Elizabeth Morris

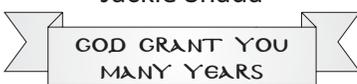
May 17
Aaron Kremer

May 19
Henri Kremer

May 22
Varthie Eliakis

May 27
Georgia Bakas

May 30
Jackie Shada



 **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

May 14
Levi and Amy Hadley

May 18
Mike and Darlene LiaKos



Happy Belated Birthday to Cara Guikema

The Chronicle missed your special day on April 27th.

Many Years!

Donations
Gratefully Received

Donation to **St. George building fund** from George and Sharon Maloley

Donation to **St. George Chronicle newsletter** by anonymous donor

Donation to **St. George Church** from *Tom and Kate Salem*

Donation to **St. George Church** from *Kim and Jeannie Leonard; Nicholas, Mary, and Adelaide Leonard, and their unborn daughter Beatrice (hoping to be a Pascha baby!); Angelena, Matt, and Seraphima Leone Panizzi; Christopher, Melissa, Harrison, and Grant Leonard; and Gabriel Leonard*

Donation to **St. George Church** from *Dottie and Terry Bettar*



Donation to **St. George Ladies Society**, in honor *Margo Maloley* and her birthday from anonymous donor

May God bless you for your generosity!

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN BOARD

Garage Sale 2020

Accepting Donations In August



When: Fri. & Sat. September 11 & 12
Where: St. George Driveway
Time: Friday 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
 Saturday 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Please SAVE THE DATE and plan now to help volunteer your time. Helpers needed for setting up Friday morning, working both Friday evening and Saturday morning, and clean up after the sale. Thank you!

Sale will be a FREE WILL OFFERING. Donations do not need price tags. Receipts for your donations are available, see Mark or Tracey for your questions.

Proceeds will go toward the "Burn the Mortgage Fundraiser".

*If you have an expensive item that you would like to be priced, we can accept a price tag and will keep the item in a different area, perhaps the front yard. Please let Mark know in advance of the item(s) and provide a price tag or sign. Please remember you are responsible for picking up the item, if it does not sell.

Garage Sale



MEMORIAL DAY

MONDAY

MAY 25, 2020

Our Baby Congratulations

Congratulations to **Josh and Amber Hartley** on the birth of their daughter **Marina Rose**, born on April 7th, at 12:36 pm. Baby Hartley came into the world at 19 1/2" long and 7 lb 10 1/2 oz.



Marina Rose Hartley



Our Baby Congratulations

Congratulations to proud parents **Zane and Amanda Williamson**, grandparents **Tim and Tracey Shada** and their families, on the birth of baby boy **Rexten Alan**, born on April 8th, weighing in at 6 lbs 11 oz, and 19" long.



Rexten Alan Williamson



Dear Church family,

The Chronicle is published each month with the desire to communicate, educate, inspire, and to stay connected. Your content (ideas, tips, announcements, etc.) are very valuable to the success of our newsletter.

Please consider offering submissions for these regular monthly features:

1. Cloud of Witnesses
2. Recipe Corner
3. Kidzone
4. Photos for scrapbook
5. Ministry updates
6. Thank you's and notes of appreciation
7. Your articles of interest
8. Book reviews
9. Puzzles, Coloring pages
10. Updates

Deadline for sending content is the 24th of the month that proceeds the next month's newsletter. For example, content deadline for the June newsletter will be May 24th.

Please send to:

Thank You!

stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

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St. George Orthodox Church
1505 Ave. G
Kearney, Nebraska 68847

A parish of the Antiochian
Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of North America, Diocese of
Wichita and Mid-America
The Right Rev. BASIL, bishop

The Very Rev. Christopher
Morris, pastor
stgeorgekearney@yahoo.com

Newsletter Contact: Joanie Klein
stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

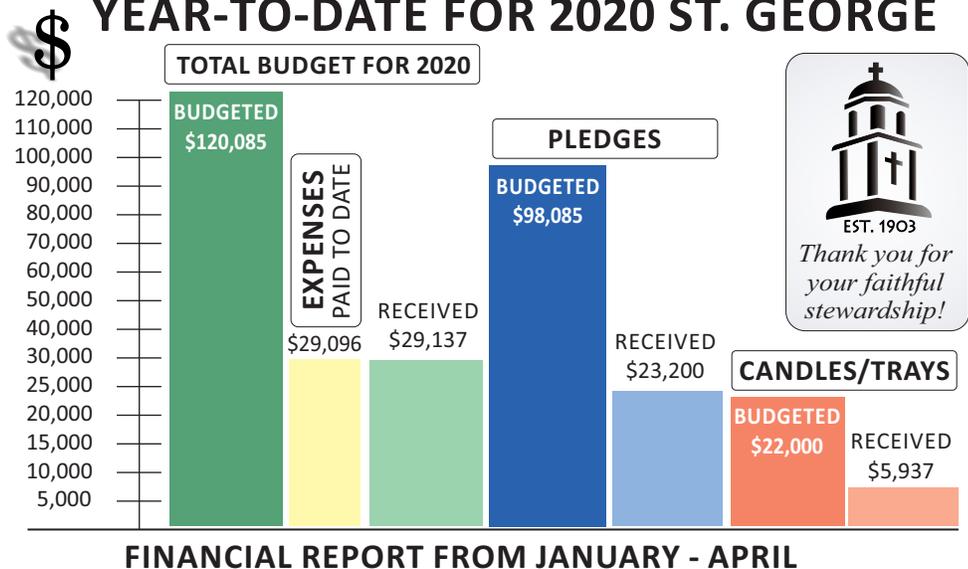
Church Office Phone:
(308) 234-6969

Church website:
www.saintgeorgekearney.com

THE PASCHAL GREETING

DID YOU KNOW? The Paschal greeting is a custom among Orthodox Christians, consisting of a greeting and response. Instead of "hello" or its equivalent, one is to greet another person with "Christ is Risen!". The response is "Indeed, He is risen!" or "Truly, He is risen!". This greeting is used during liturgical services and informally at other times, starting with the feast of Pascha and lasting until Ascension – the period known as the Paschal season or Paschaltide.

YEAR-TO-DATE FOR 2020 ST. GEORGE



(continued from page 1)

Some monks came to see Abba Poemen and said to him, 'When we see brothers dozing during the services in church, should we rouse them so that they can be watchful?' He said to them, 'For my part, when I see a brother dozing, I put his head on my knees and let him rest.'

Daily Readings with the Desert Fathers, B. Ward, SLG, p. 45

Such kindness in Abba Poemen! St. Paul said, 'But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children' (1 Thes. 2:7 NKJV). This kind of 'bearing one another's burdens' (Gal. 6:2) is found throughout the Desert Fathers and Mothers. At home, such opportunities present themselves often. Not saying anything if my sister uses up most of the available minutes on the phone, or if my brother didn't clean up after himself, or if dad used up most of the hot water. Yes, we could say something, and sometimes we need to, but often finding little ways to care for the other without them noticing, brings a spiritual blessing and joy. When we are so busy we can distract from each other, these things might not matter. But when we are all together in lockdown, these normally small things can become big. So we see it, pray about it, and then go on, trusting that God will help us do better the next time.

Abba Poemen said, 'There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbor. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge; then you are laying down your life for your neighbor.'

Daily Readings with the Desert Fathers, B. Ward, SLG, p. 42

This way of love is so simple! I don't have to literally die in these examples. I just have to die to myself. I put Christ first by putting my neighbor first. One of the earliest examples I remember from the law of kindness is when my mother explained about not taking the biggest piece of cake for myself, but leaving it for another as an act of love. I didn't understand it at the time. But later I realized that she was training me in the law of kindness.



This Covid-19 pandemic won't be here forever. But the lessons and treasures we learn from this time will be. The Word of the Lord abideth forever. May He continue to write His Laws on the tablets of our hearts, especially the Law of Kindness. **The "fruit of the Holy Spirit is... kindness!"** (Gal. 5:22)