

ST. GEORGE *Chronicle*

Rev. Christopher Morris
Pastor

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST GEORGE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1
ICONOGRAPHY PROJECT
Transfiguration of the Lord

PAGE 2
A NOTE FROM
FR. CHRISTOPHER

PAGE 3
COFFEE WITH
ELDER THADDEUS

PAGE 4
WE GET LETTERS...
BIRTHDAYS
ANNIVERSARIES
DONATIONS

PAGE 5
COMMITTEE UPDATES

PAGE 6
BULLETIN BOARD
Announcements
Thank you cards

PAGE 8
A BLESSED PILGRIMAGE

PAGE 9
ST GEORGE SCRAPBOOK
We're Makin' Memories

SAVE THE DATES

LEBANESE BREAKFAST
March 5th, 7:00 - 11:00 am

BAKE SALE
March 19th at 9:00 am

ANNUNCIATION OF THEOTOKOS
March 25

SPAGHETTI LUNCH, April 10th

PASCHA, May 1

Our Beloved Icons *by Subdeacon John Wolf*

This month's icon is the **Transfiguration of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. This feast is celebrated each year on August 6. The feast commemorates the transfiguration or metamorphosis of Christ on Mount Tabor, when our Lord appeared in His divine glory before the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

The event of the Transfiguration is recorded in three of the four Gospels:

Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36.

Jesus took the Apostles Peter, James, and John with Him up upon a mountain, and while they were on the mountain Jesus was transfigured. His face shone like the sun, and His garments became glistening white.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ, talking to Him. Peter declared how good it was for them to be there and expressed the

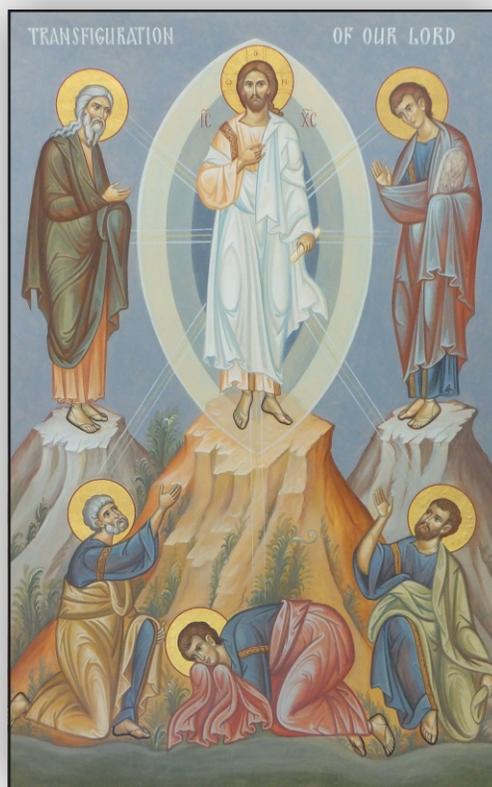
desire to build three booths for Moses, Elijah, and Christ. This reference to the

booths could imply that this occurred during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles when the Jews would be camping out in the fields for the grape harvest. One of the traditions even to this day is the blessing of grapes after the Divine Liturgy.

Christ is the center and focus of the image, his hand held in a blessing, eyes

directed at us. His clothes are depicted "white as light" as the Gospel writers describe, and the glory of God overshadowing the scene is shown by the mandorla around his body. From His body, shafts of light are shown striking each of the five others present: to Christ's right, the Prophet Elijah; to His left Moses; scattered about His feet, the Apostles Peter, John and James.

The mountain on which the Transfiguration took place is identified by St Jerome as Mount Tabor. The mountain plays an important part in divine



Sponsorship of the Transfiguration of Our Lord icon at St. George Kearney, was offered in Memory of R. G. & Ruth Aldridge by the John Morris family

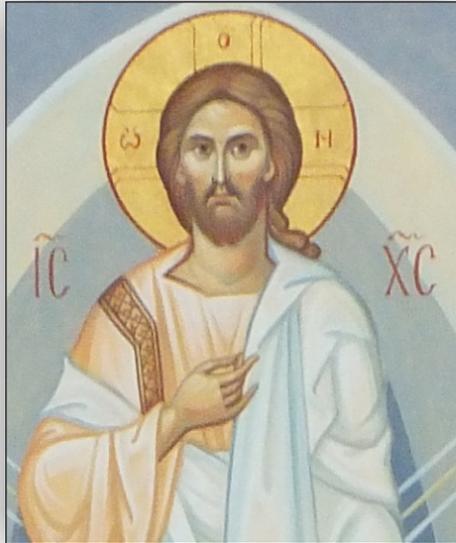
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revelation, as described by Scriptures, and links Moses and Elijah who are miraculously present by Christ's side. Placing Elijah and Moses on separate peaks is a subtle nod to their individual histories. Moses ascended Mt Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and converse with God in a great cloud of divine glory (Ex. 24:12-18; Ex. 33:11-23; 34:4-6,8). Elijah was told to ascend Mt Horeb where he heard the voice of God in the "gentle breeze".

The icon of the feast directs our attention toward the event of the Transfiguration and specifically to the glory of God as revealed in Christ. This event came at a critical point in the ministry of

our Lord, just as He was setting out on His journey to Jerusalem. He would soon experience the humiliation, suffering, and death of the Cross. However, the glorious light of the Resurrection was revealed to strengthen His disciples for the trials that they would soon experience. The



kontakion of the feast makes this very clear:

"You were transfigured upon the mount, O Christ our God, and Your disciples, insofar as they could bear it, beheld Your glory. Thus, when they see You crucified, they may understand Your

voluntary passion, and proclaim to the world that You are truly the effulgence of the Father."



A note from Fr. Christopher . . .

Dear Friends and Benefactors of Saint George,

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the Holy Apostle Paul compares our life of faith to a competitive race. What does this mean for us?

Runners preparing for a race train hard, alter their diets, and willingly endure pain. All of this, they do in order to win. All of their efforts, however, are made in order to win only a "perishable crown," a mere trophy that has no lasting value.

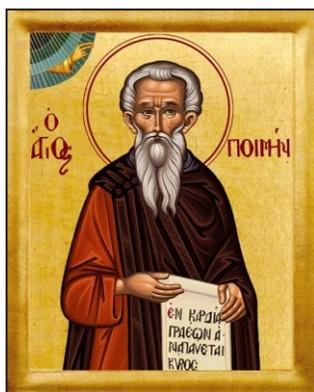
As followers of Jesus Christ, the crown for which we compete is so much more excellent! We are racing to attain the incorruptible crown of eternal life--our birthright as sons and daughters of God through Jesus Christ.

In the middle of this month, we will once again commence the hardest of training: Great Lent.

In order to win the race of faith, we will willingly endure increased prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. And it will hurt! Our egos, spiritual laziness, and self-love won't like it. But, if we train, the prize that waits at the end is the indestructible joy and promise of Pascha!

With love for Christ, and care for our own souls, let us run swiftly and surely, competing boldly against ourselves.

May you all have a blessed Lent!
Through your prayers,
Fr. Christopher



The greatest deed that a man can do is to assume responsibility for his sin before God and expect temptation until his last breath.

- St. Poimen the Great

I HAVE LOVED, O LORD,
THE BEAUTY OF THY HOUSE, AND
THE PLACE WHERE
THY GLORY DWELLETH.



Psalm 26:8

Coffee with Elder Thaddeus

by Sarah Fothergill

I recently took a mini-vacation to visit a close friend and enjoy some “me” time. At one point during my trip, I ended up in a coffee shop. I walked in, treated myself to a large mocha with whipped cream, and found a spacious booth in a quiet corner. I spread out my novels, my journal, and yes, even a stress-relieving nature coloring book. I was practically giddy as I took a sip of warm, mocha goodness, and surveyed all the possibilities laid out in front of me (that’s right-reading, writing, and coloring cause me to geek out!). I took a deep breath and thought...“finally, an afternoon all to myself!” Time to relax. I opened a book, sat back, and...**boom!** The next thing I knew, I was anything but relaxed.

Thoughts were quickly lining up, breaking down the door to my mind one by one: *Did I buy enough groceries before I left town? I need to do laundry when I get home. How much gas is left in the car? Is my husband out of food? I wish we could buy a house. Did I make copies for Monday’s lesson? Should I keep growing out my hair or just cut it? I have no idea what to do with my homeroom next week. Why is our world becoming so violent? I shouldn’t be drinking this mocha. I should start working out again. When is my dentist appointment? I hate taxes. I wish I had more money to spend at the mall. Why am I here when there’s so much to do at home?*

Eek! I **was totally alone**, and yet I felt surrounded by a deafening army. This was the opposite of what I needed! How was I supposed to turn off all these thoughts? All I craved was a peaceful state of mind. I just wanted to get lost in a good book or color a silly picture of a flower garden!

Have you ever experienced a similar situation? What do we do when it feels like we have a never-ending to-do list or a mind racing at Nascar speeds? I closed my book and then my eyes, and I whispered, *Lord, help me find peace.* Then I began praying the **Jesus Prayer**. This short but powerful prayer always helps me find peace in stressful times. If I focus really hard, I can usually slow down the mental mayhem. Soon I could feel God trying to enter in, saying, “Hey! Remember me? I’m here if you’ll let me in.”

As I repeated the words *Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*, over and over, I felt a wave of peace come over me. **God is in control.** God will take care of me. Why do I seem to forget this? Suddenly, the words of Elder Thaddeus (1914-2002) came to mind. He says, “We must

learn to ease the burden of thoughts that bears down upon us. As soon as we feel burdened, we must turn to the Lord and give our worries over to Him...”

Duh! Stop trying to fix the world, Sarah. It’s almost humorous to think that I, the chief of sinners, would attempt to solve the world’s problems all by myself. Reality check!

Thinking about Elder Thaddeus in that coffee shop brought to mind a book I had read with friends during our women’s book study. It is entitled ***Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*** and was written by this same monk. In it, the elder reminds us that our thoughts influence every moment of our lives and those around us. Elder Thaddeus writes, “When the soul is mature, God will give it inner peace. The Lord watches over us, and He is pleased that you long for His peace. Until the soul is ready, He will only sometimes allow us to see that He is everywhere present and fills all things. At these moments the soul feels such joy! It feels as though it has everything! But then the Lord conceals Himself from us again, in order that we might **long for Him and seek Him with our hearts.**”

Clearly, my soul is far from mature. And I find myself longing for God ever more intensely as my life fills up with the stresses of the world.

Elder Thaddeus also writes “Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility.” I love this advice because it forces us to slow down and carefully think about our thoughts and attitudes, and how they are

affecting our day and those around us. We can make the choice to carry a positive attitude and spread that joy to others, instead of being controlled by negativity.

As I look ahead at the calendar and see that Great Lent is approaching, I encourage all of us to think: Am I trying to acquire a peaceful spirit? Am I surrounding myself with positivity? Is prayer part of my every day routine? How can I slow down the chaos? I think of the words in the prayer of St. Ephraim in which we ask the Lord to “grant a spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love.” Elder Thaddeus echoes this when he says, “Peace starts with each one of us. When we have peace in us, we spread it around to others...there can be no peace in the world unless there is inner peace in each one of us.” As I left the coffee shop that day, I thanked God for opening my eyes and reminding me of the ultimate truth of these words. Words we should all reflect upon each and every day.



The merciful person is he who gives to others what he has himself received from God, whether it be money, food, strength, a helpful word, prayer or anything else that he has through which he can express his compassion for those in need. At the same time he considers himself a debtor since he has received more than he is asked to give.

- St. Peter of Damascus

WE GET LETTERS . . .



I just wanted to say how much I **enjoyed the February Chronicle**. I just love the short quotes from the church Fathers, as well as the little reminders about feasts, fasts, and ways to live our Orthodox life.

Thank you so much for the love and time you pour into each edition.

Bless you!
Sarah Fothergill

We would like to make a donation to the **Camp St. Raphael scholarship** fund in honor of our granddaughter, Schylar Patsios and her #3 birthday. Glory to God for His many blessings and for her good health. She is such a joy in our life!

In Christ's love,
her YiaYia and Gramps

I pray this finds all of **St. George's family well**. The newsletter is so well prepared, and I especially appreciate Subdeacon John's articles on icons.

I'm thankful for Archbishop Michael's visit and Amanda's personal touch to the visit. How I wish she could've known Saidna Philip Saliba, especially in his younger days. I've seen this Archdiocese unite and so many innovations and improvements under Archbishop Philip. We still have a letter he sent the three Yacio children in December 1975 thanking them for a donation. He was able to inspire and lead so many to bring honor to Almighty God as all of you are doing with the icon project.

I'm enclosing a donation for the health of Nick Shada and Sally Ganem for their March 7th birthdays, as well as in memory of Saidna Philip and John Yacio's souls.

Love to all of you.
Thank God for God!

In the Risen Christ,
Judy Yacio and Kathy Sargent

Thank you for the special tour of the St. George Orthodox Church last October for my spouse, Mary Jo, Aunt Jenny Bergt, Aunt Helen George, and me. It had been many years since I was last in the church (probably my dad's funeral - Roy Abood) and it brought back many memories. The church is absolutely stunning and I commend the congregation for all of your efforts.

A special hello to all of the church members who were such an important part of my life growing up. I enjoy following you through the Chronicle.

Tom Abood

Thank you so much for allowing Troop 845 to use the fellowship hall for our **Etiquette Dinner**. The girls had fun socializing, practicing conversation skills, learning proper dining etiquette, and eating dinner while working on their "Social Butterfly" badge.

Thanks again!
Troop 845



Birthdays

- March 1**
Rachel Rehtus
- March 3**
Emma Rehtus
- March 7**
Nick Shada
- March 15**
Tracey Shada
- March 21**
Theodora Wolf
Mark Klein
- March 25**
Sara Theoharis
- March 27**
John Maloley
- March 30**
Ron Denny



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

March 5
Bill & Millie Rempel

Donations *Gratefully Received*

- Donation to the **St. George iconography project** from the Denny family
- Donation to **St. George Orthodox Church** from Tom Abood
- Donation to **St. George Orthodox Church** from Gus and Christina Katrouzos

In Memory of

- Donation to **St. George Church**, in memory of Metropolitan Philip and John Yacio, from Judy Yacio & Kathy Sargent
- Donation to **St. George Church**, in memory of Vernon Yanney from Tony & Bessie Shada

In Honor of

- Donation to **Camp St. Raphael scholarship fund**, in honor of Schylar Patsios, from Mark & Joanie Klein
- Donation to **St. George Church**, in honor of Nick Shada and Sally Ganem, from Judy Yacio & Kathy Sargent

May God bless you all for your generosity!



Thank you, to all of you who attended our annual St. George Parish Meeting on February 7th. **Glory to God for His many blessings in our lives.** Because of your generosity and stewardship, we were able to increase our annual budget for 2016. It is the desire of the parish council to make some much needed improvements to the church building, our Sunday school programs, and to pursue ways in sharing our faith with the community in developing an outreach program.

Thank you again for your generous donations that allowed us to **pay off the loan** we had from the 2008 storm.

A big heartfelt Thank You to Tim Shada, as he stepped down from his position as chairman, and for the **many years** he has devoted to St. George by serving on the parish council.



The **Women's Bible Study** group will meet Monday, March 7th, and the 21st, from 4:00 - 5:00 pm. Thank you Amanda Denny, for opening your home to us, for this fun hour of sharing. **Come join us!** We would welcome seeing you.



ST. GEORGE
YOUTH
GROUP

Q&A with the St. George Youth Group . . .

Q: What stands out to you when you think about Orthodoxy?

A:

Alexis: I love the history of the Church and the fact that you can go to many countries to visit ancient churches. I like that Orthodoxy is world-wide.

Micah: Our church is a family, just like band! A group of people get together and instantly become a close community.

Jameson: The parishioners at St. George are very friendly and easy to talk to. They are not intimidating and seem to really care about each other.

Rachel: I love our Divine Liturgy. It has a meaning and depth unlike some other churches I have been to. I feel like I am a part of something special and unique.

Grace: I think of attending services with my church family and then being able to socialize and have fun with the same group of people. Sunday mornings are a great mix of serious prayer time and fun fellowship.

The **St. George Youth Group** meets Wednesday evenings for Vespers at 6:00 pm followed by snacks and discussions.

Thank you to the Rehtus and Wolf families for hosting us recently. Also, thank you to Georgia Bakas for donating the Feb. **Mystery Basket.** The proceeds will help the youth group tremendously! The youth group looks forward to participating in more service projects and outreach.



The younger classes are working to learn about the **Creative Arts** theme for this year, which is, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”* Joshua 24:15. We are learning about how we can serve each other and the Lord every day in our lives. We are also learning about other distractions like tv, iPads, phones, etc. that take up more of our time than serving. We will begin writing poems and narratives, taking photos and drawing beautiful representations of this theme. You will be able to see our entries very soon!

In addition to Creative Arts projects, the **middle/high school** class is continuing through their curriculum book **The Way, The Truth, and The Life.** Current topics are the sacraments, feast days, and walking the path of salvation in a secular world.

Each Sunday the **Preschool Sunday School class** takes a little time to review the Sunday's Gospel reading. We always have a great discussion about what we learned from the Gospel and the message God is sending to us.

We almost always have an activity to reinforce the Gospel reading. The preschoolers recently found out what it was like to be blind, like the man Jesus healed. They were blindfolded and asked to identify Skittles or M&M's! They realized what a miracle it was for Jesus to give the blind man back his sight because the man believed in Him!

We are always amazed and proud of how well they have **listened to the Gospel.** We have a lot of fun completing the hands-on activity to reinforce the learning of **God's Word.**

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN BOARD

Save the Date!

April 10th, Sunday



The St. George Youth Group will be providing lunch

for the parish. Freewill donations will be accepted. Don't miss out!



Spaghetti Lunch

Our Baptism Congratulations:

To Radu and Alexandra Neamu on the baptism of their son, **Albert Dimitrie Neamu** on February 20, 2016.



"As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"
Alleluia

•MANY YEARS•

Our Sympathy

TO THE FAMILY OF:

Katie (Shada) and Kirk Ramsey, in the loss of her mother-in-law (Kirk's mother), **LeDean Ramsey**, who passed away on February 4, 2016 in Grand Island, Nebraska.



MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL

Plan now to attend and/or help with our annual Spring St. George

LEBANESE BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 5, 2016

7:00 am to 11:00 am

ST. GEORGE

Bake Sale



March 19th

9:00 am

To the students of the Sunday Middle/High School Class-

Thank you!

What a special treat to be greeted with your smiles after Divine Liturgy and to receive your little goodie package of chocolate and **inspirational scripture** for Valentine's Day!

Your kindness made our day *Special!*

In Christ's love,
your St. George Parish family



Our Baby Congratulations:

To **Nick Shada** (great-grandfather), and **Jim & Kelly Shada** (grandparents), on the birth of Mia Margaret Shada. She was born on Feb. 10, 2016 to Nick and Nichole Shada.



Mia Margaret Shada



MANY YEARS

The Chronicle asks, "What's your story?"

By now, most of you have heard about Archbishop Michael's recent visit, in which he answered a parishioner's question, regarding his advice on how to "grow our church." His reply inspired many of us. Simply put, "Tell Your Story", he said.

We have opportunities everyday to tell our story to those we encounter in our day-to-day living. Orthodoxy doesn't have to be a discussion. It's a way of living our life with integrity. The example we live inside the church should be the same as what we show outside the church. Tell your story.

If you would like to share a comment or story, please send to us for consideration in a future newsletter. We would enjoy hearing from you. Your parish family would enjoy getting to know you better as well.

please send to: stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com



Thank you to Georgia Bakas for the donation of the wonderful Valentine's Day basket full of goodies for our **Fundraising Basket of the Month**. We all enjoyed the treats and Phil and I are planning a dinner at Alley Rose with the gift card. Thanks again for your generosity. We were so excited to be the February WINNERS!

Phil, Ashley,
Grace, Claire and Clay

Thank You



IMPORTANT MARCH DATES IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- March 6 - Sunday of Last Judgement (Meatfare Sunday)
- March 13 - Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)
- March 14 - Clean Monday, Lent Begins
- March 20 - Sunday of Orthodoxy (Bring your Icons)
- March 25 - The Annunciation of the Theotokos
- March 27 - Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas



Don't compare yourself to other Christians. Compare yourself to Christ. He's the One you're following.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my Life!
 Take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling,
 lust of power and idle talk.
 But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility,
 patience, and love to Thy servant.
 Yea, O Lord and King!
 Grant me to see my own sins and not to
 judge my brother;
 For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages.
 Amen

One day, a person complained to his priest that the Church and Christianity is one continual "give, give, give" to which the priest replied,

"Thank you very much for the finest definition of Christianity I have ever heard. You're right, Christianity is all about a constant 'give, give, give.' God giving His only Son to the world to show His unconditional love. His son Jesus giving His life on the cross to forgive our sins and destroy death. Then our Lord's disciples giving all they had to make sure God's Good News of love was preached to all people everywhere.

They not only gave away their homes and businesses, but even gave up their lives as martyrs in gratitude to God."



A BLESSED PILGRIMAGE

by Joanie Klein



Welcome Home, Subdeacon Michael and Darlene.

They were gone for several weeks, traveled 1000's of miles, and visited holy places that left them in awe and almost speechless. I say that with a smile, as they agreed to let me interview them, in anticipation of providing a "small" article for the Chronicle about their pilgrimage. Our interview lasted over 2 hours and poor Darlene, she hardly got a word in! Imagine that.

As some of you may know, my twin brother John and I were blessed to be baptized and chrismated into the holy Orthodox Church as babies. We attended Liturgy in Grand Island, Nebraska. We worshipped at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, and on occasion, here in Kearney at St. George. My parents, of blessed memory, kept very busy raising 6 kids and like many of us, became distracted with "things of this world". I was about 11 years old when our family started to slowly fall away from the church, and sadly, our faith. But . . . God IS such a Loving God - He never gave up on me. 40+ years later, I finally understood that the "insistent tap" on my shoulder and the "tug in my heart", was our Heavenly Father calling me **back home**, to His church.

As I anticipated meeting with Subdeacon Michael and Darlene, I had to Google "holy pilgrimage" and I discovered that it can be described as a journey to visit a holy shrine, church or monastery with a desire to nourish the soul. I wondered to myself, "what does one do when they visit a monastery?" and "how does one prepare for an extended stay with monks?" I even wondered to myself, how "good" does one have to be to visit a holy place? and "what advice would they give to a parishioner considering a pilgrimage?"

We picked a day and time to meet, and soon they started to share with such humble joy about their experiences. They talked of the fun they had meeting other brothers and sisters in Christ. Everywhere they visited, the people were so loving and kind. Their walks to and from the chapels, discovering the surrounding beauty

of nature, experiencing quietness and being at peace. They woke early each morning to gather with monks, priests, and the faithful, in prayer and worship. Such reverence, as they spoke about the beautiful churches, the chapels, icons and being in the presence of holy relics.

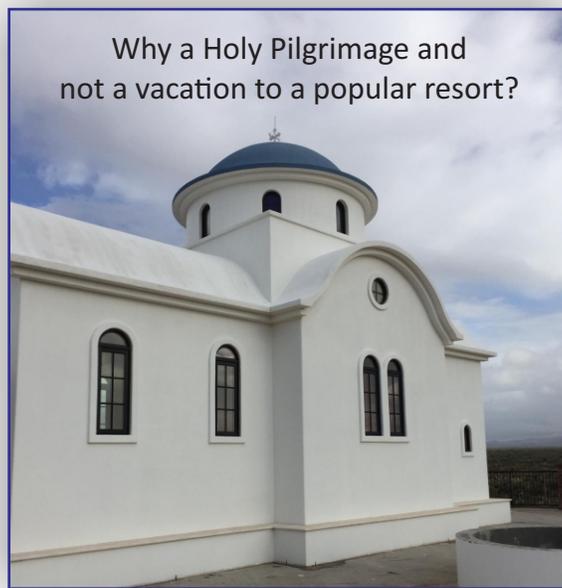
As I listened, I was reminded of Archbishop Michael's recent visit and his sermon about the holy relics we have at St. George and what gifts they are to us. His kind words invited each of us to look at them, "not from the outside, looking in" but rather "from the inside, looking out". (I thought to myself, that can be quite a task and do I even understand how to do that?) But, Subdeacon Michael started to share about the reliquary of Saint John Maximovitch in San Francisco, CA and in his humble face, I could see his tears, feel his emotion and then it happened,

. . . it was as if my mind opened up with such clarity, and I could understand how the saints really do become a "cloud of witnesses", encouraging each of us in our journey of faith. By **their example**, they become "living proof" to us that there is life after death. What a beautiful revelation this is! I was seeing Subdeacon Michael's smile and his eyes, speaking with such reverence, but the love I was feeling kept me from hearing a single word he was saying; instead, my heart was becoming so full, as if it could burst!

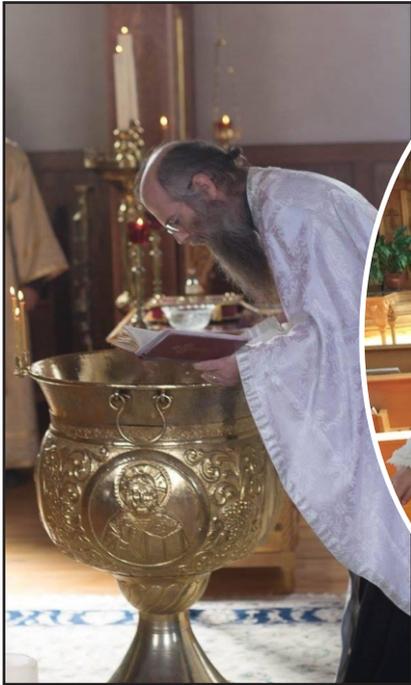
It then occurred to me, I have been on a pilgrimage myself, seeking a closer relationship

with God. Though my physical body has not traveled distance or miles, as Subdeacon Michael and Darlene had, through the lives and prayers of our saints, and through the friendships and love of my parish family, my soul has been nourished. Through prayer, worship, confession and desiring to live my life with the rhythm of the church, I have experienced both growth in the church and in my spiritual self. I give thanks to God for His many blessings in my life and what a blessed pilgrimage it has been thus far.

I invite you to follow us to next month's Chronicle for more insight into their travels and ask you to consider your own pilgrimage. To be made holy is to become "whole", not divided or broken up. A pilgrim is a person that takes a journey or path, usually on foot. So, the next time you walk up the steps to St. George and stand before our holy icons and relics, perhaps this can be the start of your journey to becoming whole. Find comfort and joy in knowing, **you're never alone.**



ST. GEORGE SCRAPBOOK



Albert Dimitrie
Neamu
Baptized Into Christ
Feb. 20, 2016



ST. GEORGE *Chronicle*

Volume 2, No. 3, March 2016

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THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS



Happy Feast Day - March 25

MARCH FASTING

Just as there are times for feasting, there are also times set aside for fasting. The traditional fasting from flesh meats, eggs, and dairy products is observed on Wed. March 2nd and Fri. March 4th. The next two weeks, the Church continues to ease us into our fasting discipline. **March 6 is Meatfare Sunday** (the Sunday of the Last Judgment) and on this day we say "goodbye" to meat. During this week that follows (March 7 - 13) **we fast from meat only**. All dairy, cheese, eggs, wine, and oil are permitted during this week, even on Wed. and Fri. **March 13 is Cheesefare Sunday** (the Sunday of Forgiveness) and on this day we say "goodbye" to cheese, dairy, eggs, wine, and oil. **Clean Monday is March 14th and Great Lent begins**. From this day through the Friday before Lazarus Saturday, olive oil and wine are permitted on weekends. **Friday, March 25th**, the Feast of the Annunciation, fish, wine and olive oil are permitted.



2016 PLEDGE CARD - ST. GEORGE CHURCH

Name _____ Phone home _____ Cell _____
(please print)

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Pledge

In thanksgiving to God for all His many blessings and in my desire to be a good and faithful steward of St. George Church, I
pledge to the Lord \$ _____ for the year **2016**.

I will fulfill my pledge (circle one)

Annually Semi-annually Quarterly (every 3 mos.) Monthly Weekly

Signature _____ Date _____

*May God continue to bless you and your loved ones richly as He abundantly enriches
His parish of St. George - Kearney, Nebraska*

"And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Acts 11:26