



Being Separate in a Connected World

Beloved in Christ, we have to see ourselves as being *different* than the world around us! As Christians we are called to be “in the world, but not of the world.” (John 15:19). The Scripture says “come out and be *separate*.....” (2 Cor. 6:17) Yet this can be very difficult in a world that pressures us to conform to its ways and to be *connected* to it at all times. We live in this age of the 24hr news cycle, which most of the time is not really “news,” but entertainment, shock factor, blog/twitter commentary of usually trivial information. We live in the age of text, twitter, snap chat, Facebook, etc., etc. and we’re pressured to feel we have to be connected constantly or we’ll miss something. And yes, we are missing something, Jesus, and relationship with Him. We’re missing quietness, prayer, stillness, reflection. And instead, we’ve become impersonal, impatient, addicted, nervous if we don’t have our iPhone “on us” at all times. Is this human advancement? Is this progress of civilization? Simply because Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs say this is the way we should live, think, interact, then must it be so? Who are they anyway - Prophets, Saints? Meanwhile, like the national heroin epidemic, we have the smart phone/screen addiction epidemic. Yet people are in denial as their texting thumbs ache from carpal tunnel. Is all this natural? We’re all high on information overload and our minds are not wired to handle it. In his book “*The Shallows*”, Nicholas Carr explores the impact that our perpetual internet connection is having on the way we think. Numerous studies point to the same conclusion, he writes: “When we go online, we enter an environment that promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning. We’ve grown quite adept at scanning and skimming, but what we are losing is our capacity for concentration, contemplation and reflection.” Yes, we need the technology to function, but how much have we allowed it to control us? Are we able to take breaks, step away and *be separate* – and make a connection with God without a screen in front of us?

Now more than ever, **Great Lent** is a great way to feel that *separation* during these 40 days of prayer and fasting; to feel that things are different; to slow down, put the phone aside, and be within ourselves and in God’s presence. Beloved, don’t let trendy modern gadgetry rule and ruin your life! Use moderation and self-discipline. Take breaks from your home/office computer and smart phone. Get some exercise; take a walk; communicate face to face with your spouse and children; come to church more often to pray and get connected with the “spiritual network,” not just the social network. Rather than constantly gaze at the icon apps on your computer screen at home, come to Sunday Liturgies and the Lenten services and gaze at the Iconostasion *icon screen* and enter into true connection and real prayer. I certainly realize the importance of networking and messaging, etc. But I also believe that as modern Orthodox Christians we have a responsibility, whether its through banners on our texts, tweets, emails, websites, etc. to not only spread the truth of Christ and the Gospel, but to communicate the message to use *less* technology, in order to remind people to take significant breaks from “the screen.” Less is more. Less screen means *more* worship time; it means *more* time alone reading the Bible, in prayer, in reflection, without all the beeps and buzzing. It means *more* quality family time, *more* time in communication and interaction with your spouse; *more* real conversations and human interaction with real people; *more* eyes off the screen and contemplating the beauty of nature and God’s presence in all things with our natural eyes.

Do not conform to this world, but be transformed (Romans 12:2). Social media has a highly addictive and time consuming effect which can negatively affect our marriages, families and relationships. Therefore we should not feel pressured to *conform* to all the jinglism of the technology lingo. Certainly it’s fine to do so in moderation, but I submit that its also ok if you do not choose to *like us* or *friend us* or *follow us*....and it doesn’t mean that you’re not hip or cool. And, though it may be a bit extreme, I declare it’s also ok if you want to throw your phone out the window and say enough! I believe that we are way beyond society simply “adjusting” to the new technology, as we have in the past to the advent of radio, television or the remote control. We’re in a spiritual and contemplative free fall. Just google “screen addiction” and read for yourself. I also think its fascinating that as we “advance” with the larger HD 3D TV’s and ever more vivid images of “the screen,” we have very little that is good (*noble, just, pure, lovely*) to display (Philippians 4:8). Many modern movies and TV shows & reruns lack creativity, art, joy and beauty. Without God, is that not the result? We have fantastic screens, but mediocre entertainment. It seems modern man has lost his soul as fast as the speed of technology advances.

And so therefore beloved in Christ, during this beautiful Lenten season, may we “consider our ways.” (Haggai 1:7). Let us come out and be separate - not conforming to the world but transforming the times. And let us consider some serious fasting from the gadgetry that controls us, and focus on *disconnecting*..... so that we may truly connect, and commit ourselves, and one another, and our whole life, to Christ our God.

Fr. Christopher Makiej, Andover, MA, Archdiocese Department of Outreach & Evangelism

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from the Parish Council. We are very excited and proud to report that we are making progress in implementing our Vision Support Program that was outlined in our Stewardship Plan. We will be celebrating the Sunday of Orthodoxy on March 1, which will be followed by the initiation of our expansion plan for the church sanctuary. Father Bill, the Parish Council, Ministry Leaders, and our youth will all take a swing at the wall between the sanctuary and the pre-school classroom to begin its' demolition. We will be removing the wall to expand the sanctuary and increase the capacity by 30-40 seats. The pre-school classroom will be relocated upstairs. This is the Parish Council's commitment to lead the vision and support the growth of our St. Basil Church. These improvements will require nominal costs and have great benefit to demonstrating to our parish and church visitors that we are growing. This will also begin our campaign for your support to complete the Vision Support Program. We need donations in addition to your stewardship pledges to raise funds for new carpet, flooring, and reconfiguration of the nursery and narthex to further improve the efficiency of the space. These are roughly estimated at \$14,000 as outlined in the Plan. We are also raising funds to expand our classroom facilities, storage, practice space for dance and GOYA activities. This is to support our growing ministries that have been so successful this past year. The new space is estimated to cost an additional \$2,500/month or \$30,000 per year. We have included this into our budget. However, we are looking for upfront donations to offset our monthly expenses.

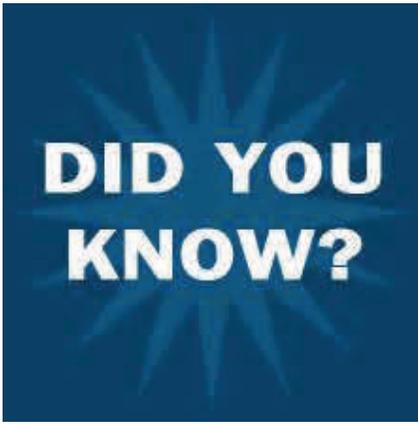
God Bless all of you who have made your 2015 stewardship pledges. Those who haven't pledged yet, please do so immediately. In addition, please consider increasing your support for these very important programs, which will further implement our vision and promote increased membership. Speaking of Vision and Membership, we are also making progress on our Vision and Membership Committees. Demo Zeppos is hard at work further defining the Vision and developing a plan to execute a long term fund raising program. Chrissie Zeppos is ramping up her efforts on the Membership Committee, so stay tuned for more information and requests for volunteer support on Welcoming Teams and Community Outreach Activities. Thanks to both of them for taking on these very important roles. I also want to thank the Parish Council and all of the ministry leaders and volunteers for their dedication and hard work to make St. Basil a very special place. We are all blessed to be together and experience the many miracles that God provides us. In His Name and May God Bless!

Dennis Papilion Parish Council President



Greek Folk Dance Festival 2015
Congratulations to our three teams:
Magalio, Eftihia & Paralia



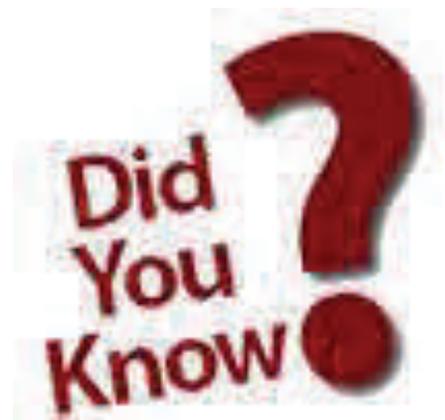


Our growth.....

- Our Sunday School has quadrupled in size in the last 4 years.
- Our stewards went from 95 to 107 in the last year.
- Our Greek Dance Ministry had 45 children this year.
- We have 2 youth basketball teams.
- We successfully hosted our 2nd Greek Festival last year.
- We expanded our Greek Festival to two days in 2014.
- We had about 200 people attend Holy Friday last year.
- Our Prime Timers meet every month.
- Our Ladies Auxiliary supports our Church with donations, volunteers and prayers.
- Our Greek School doubled in size this year.
- St. Basil himself gave gifts and read stories at the JOY Christmas party for K - 3rd graders at Fr. & Presbytera's house
- Our Altar Boys outnumber our altar boy robes for the 1st time

Here's what it takes to keep our church going

- It costs approximately \$8000 a week to operate our Church.
- We need an average of \$2,300 with 130 stewards to meet our budget each month.
- Our annual pledges average \$1,900 per family.
- We average about \$650 from our weekly collection trays.
- The Archdiocese does not pay for the priest's compensation
- We are now considered a growing parish and report to the Metropolis Mission Board quarterly.
- We have struggled to pay our rent and take care of operating expenses the past two months.
- It takes a great commitment from everyone to grow a successful mission into a fully matured Church



God is calling all of us to build up His Church

- And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47)
- Building up a Mission Church is a Christian gift you give to the future generations that speaks of your love and faithfulness.
- Jesus started with only 12 Disciples.
- God blesses a Church that does His will.
- We have very talented & faithful Parish Council and ministry leaders
- God has called us all to be Apostles.
- God calls ordinary sinners to extraordinary works of Faith.
- We have a warm and welcoming community.

St. Basil Stewardship Committee
www.stbasiloc.org

March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Liturgy: 10 am Vespers 6:00 pm at St. Paul's Irvine Basketball (home) vs. St. Katherine	2	3 <u>Choir Practice</u> 7:00 p.m.	4	5	6 Salutation to the Theotokos 7:15 p.m.	7 B-Ball Practice
8 Liturgy: 10 am Ahepa Luncheon: 11:45 <u>Goya Meeting</u> 12 Noon B-ball home vs. St John	9	10 <u>Board Meeting</u> 7:00 p.m.	11 <u>Greek School</u> 3:45 p.m. <u>Pre-Sanctified</u> Liturgy 7:15 p.m.	12 <u>Prime Timers</u> 1:00 p.m.	13 Salutation to the Theotokos 7:15 p.m.	14 B-Ball Practice 9:00 a.m.
15 Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am Basketball (home) vs. St. Anthony	16	17	18 <u>Greek School</u> 3:45 p.m. <u>Pre-Sanctified</u> Liturgy 7:15 p.m.	19 <u>Ahepa meeting</u> 6:30 p.m.	20 Salutation to the Theotokos 7:15 p.m.	21 B-Ball Practice 9:00 a.m.
22 Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am Basketball (home) vs. St. Sophia	23	24	25 <u>Annunciation</u> Liturgy 9:30 a.m. <u>Greek School</u> 3:45 p.m.	26	27 <u>Akathist Hymn</u> 7:15 p.m.	28 B-Ball Practice 9:00 a.m.
29 Orthros: 9:00 am Liturgy: 10 am Basketball (away) vs. Assumption	30	31 <u>Choir Practice</u> 7:00 p.m.	<u>April</u> 1 <u>Greek School</u> 3:45 p.m. <u>Pre-Sanctified</u> Liturgy 7:15 p.m.	2	3	4 <u>Lazarus Saturday</u> Liturgy 9:30 am 10:30 Youth Breakfast & Palm making