“Thou shall bless the crown of the year of thy goodness.”
– Psalm 65:11

“O Master of all created things.
Thou has established seasons and years by Thy power.
Bless this New Year with Thy bounty.
Preserve this land and its people in peace,
And save us through the prayers of the Mother of God.”
– Molieben Hymn
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Back Cover: 81st Novogodny Ball

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The mission of the Orthodox Christian JOURNAL is to educate the membership of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, to showcase the talents of its membership and, in so doing, to propagate the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.
Mission Statement of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America

TO WITNESS OUR FAITH
BY CHARITABLE WORKS
THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTARY

Marge Kovach
44th National FOCA President

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As we celebrate the Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, let us be reminded of God’s love toward mankind and give thanks for the many gifts we have received throughout the year.

The Fellowship is blessed to have dedicated individuals who willingly share their time and talents, hierarchs who bless our efforts, and generous supporters who make our charitable programs possible. My hope is that we can continue to be blessed with these gifts for years to come.

Thank you to the chapters, parishes, and individuals for all you do for the Church and for the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America.

May the Light of Christ shine in your heart throughout the year!

St. Nicholas Wish List Program

by Vice President Allison Steffaro

2017 marks the 18th year that the Fellowship has been filling the St. Nicholas “wish lists” of married seminarian students and their families. Through the generosity of many parishes, chapters and individuals, we were able to fill the lists of 31 families at St. Tikhon’s and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries (that’s 74 total children whose Nativity was brighter because of your love!). In addition to the wish lists at the two seminaries, over $1,000 was sent to St. Herman’s Seminary in Alaska for distribution among their married seminarians and families. This is truly a labor of love by our members. Words cannot express the gratitude and thankfulness of the students whose lives you have made brighter this holiday season. Please remember that we have an “Adopt-a-Seminarian” program that runs throughout the academic year. If you would like to adopt a student on a monthly basis, please contact Allison Steffaro at michaelsteffaro@comcast.net to receive a name and address. No monthly donation is too small to make a difference in a family’s life!
F.O.C.A. HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS-IN-BRIEF

Central Pennsylvania District Holds 87th Convention at National Convention

Because chapters and members were already participating in the recent national convention in Hershey/Harrisburg, the Central Pennsylvania District decided to hold its district convention on Sunday, September 3rd after liturgy at the hotel's Hemlock Room. The idea was taken from those dioceses who have their assemblies at the All-American Council during council years, making it both convenient and economical. Bill and Joan Dupkanick kindly provided a luncheon. Gov. Gary Lelo ran the meeting after a prayer by Father Dan Ressetar, district spiritual advisor. Over $12,600 is in the scholarship fund for worthy applicants. Reports were heard on the annual Knoebel's summer outing and the baseball/picnic in Reading as well as from officers and individual chapters. National President Marge Kovach graciously interrupted her own busy schedule to provide us with a message of encouragement. On the downside, chapter participation and membership continue to decline as parishes in the OCA Diocese of Eastern PA have gotten smaller and smaller in recent years (e.g., weekly attendance at liturgy of 25 to 30 is not uncommon). But those participating resolved to maintain an active district and promote the Fellowship. $100 was donated to the seminarian Christmas fund. Board members for next year are Gov. Lelo, Lt. Gov. Gregory Ressetar (new), Treasurer Bill Dupkanick and Secretary Nick Ressetar; nominating committee: Joan Dupkanick (1 year) and Mat. Theodora Ressetar (2 years). Father Dan remains spiritual advisor (as he has for over 30 years!). Also attending were Peggy & Jesse Kiefer and Dimitri Ressetar. Thanks to Deacon Peter Ilchuk, new CP&o, for arranging the meeting room.

2018 Articles Deadline for the OCJ:
Winter due February 15th
Send all material to our Editor: Nicholas D. Ressetar
1510 Green Street Harrisburg, PA 17102-2511
Phone: 717-761-2121
E-mail: tsarnick3@aol.com or nressetar@costopoulos.com
Please send photos in jpg format and don’t embed them in the document; attach separately.

EDITOR’S NOTES

Nicholas D. Ressetar
Editor, Orthodox Christian JOURNAL

As we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus Christ and the New Year, the latest edition of the Orthodox Christian Journal has just been issued for your reading interest. Our main focus – in a series of articles – is the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the election and enthronement of Saint Patriarch Tikhon in Moscow in late November - early December. Coinciding with the Russian Orthodox Church Council of Bishops meeting, Patriarch Kirill led the commemoration together with representatives of local Orthodox churches, including Metropolitan Tikhon of the Orthodox Church in America and his delegation. We have an overview of the events, the epistle released by the bishops, President Putin’s remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon’s address and more, including a fascinating eyewitness account by the Hubiak’s of the discovery of the saint’s relics in 1992. Why the focus? St. Tikhon – who served as ruling bishop of North America from 1898 to 1907 – is the icon of canonical unity among Orthodox Christians in the United States and Canada, and thus his holy life and sacrificial service are of enormous importance to us even today.

Two “thank you” notes are included in this issue. Dorothy Gray, who was present at the national convention together with Bishop David to receive the “Gifts of Love” donation for the St. Nikolai Chapel in Kenai, Alaska, pens a story demonstrating the real impact of this gift; and Fr. John Nemes of St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Alliance, Ohia expresses his thanks for the gift made in response to the arson fire at their parish. Fellowship in action! For youth and young adults, we have a call to participate in the OCA All-American Council’s program in St. Louis in July (come to the FOCA convention first!) as well as the summary of a fascinating study by Alexei Krindatch (for the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops) which should be read closely by the FOCA and each parish as we go forward in our efforts to keep young people active in the Faith.

In Fellowship news, we report on several district conventions: Colonial by Larry Skvir, Pittsburgh by Dr. John Schultz and Central PA by your Editor. Inside is a 2018 membership form – copy and circulate to others! Matushka Theodora submits a prayer bouquet project for Great Lent in Kidz Corner (early this year). And we have transitions, an updated calendar, President Marge’s remarks and the Novogodny Ball promo – support the new chairmen, the Cox brothers! On a personal note, I’d like to remember the recent passing of our Aunt Jo Jo, an extraordinary woman married to the late Prof. Alexander (son of Fr. & Matushka Prislopsky). She loved to read the Journal, finding names of those she knew in Cleveland, and critiquing each issue. But she always complained about not finding her photo inside. Well, Aunt Jo Jo, you finally made it! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all and the Journal will return in late winter ... until then, enjoy the Fellowship you find on these pages!
An Alaskan “Thank You” from Holy Assumption Church in Kenai

By Dorothy Gray

On behalf of all the parishioners from the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Kenai, Alaska, I sincerely thank all of the FOCA members who generously donated to the 2017 Gifts of Love program to help restore our St. Nicholas Chapel in Kenai, Alaska. This little log chapel is a part of the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church National Historic Landmark, one of only 50 National Historic Landmarks in the State of Alaska.

We were so surprised and so grateful to have been selected for this honor by FOCA. The St. Nicholas Chapel is a very special place for us, and one that is visited by hundreds, if not thousands of visitors each year because it is the final resting place of the first Russian Orthodox resident priest, Father Igumen Nikolai, who came to Kenai around 1844.

Father Igumen Nikolai Militov began to establish the first permanent parish by adding an iconostas and altar table to the Russian chapel that was inside the original Russian fur trading post in Kenai.

For nearly 25 years, Father Nikolai served the Kenai parish. In his journal, he noted that his territory, the Kenai Peninsula, was so vast, it required him almost two years to make the complete circuit to visit all the native villages that existed at that time. He had to travel by foot, by boat to those villages only accessible by water, and by dog sled in the winter.

During this time, smallpox ravaged the area, and it was Father Nikolai who sent to St. Petersburg for vaccine. After the first wave of the epidemic, half of the native population was killed. When the vaccine arrived in Alaska, Father Nikolai appointed his helper, song leader Makary Ivanov, to inoculate the survivors. It took Makary two years also to make the full journey throughout the territory which today is approximately the size of the state of West Virginia. These two church leaders managed to keep smallpox from completely destroying the native population. It is noted in the journal of Father Nikolai that as a reward for Makary Ivanov’s dedication, the Russian American Company gave him one thousand bricks for his oven and glass for windows in his house. (The Ivanov family still lives in Kenai today and attends our church.)
Around 1864, Father Nikolai established a Russian school inside his home for the native children of Kenai to learn the Russian language so they could read the Bible and other materials.

Father Nikolai’s work in Kenai lasted nearly 25 years, until his death in 1867. His song leader, Makary Ivanov, served not only the Kenai parish, but also the churches in Ninilchik and Tyonek until his death in 1878. Both men are buried beneath the St. Nicholas Chapel that was built in their honor in 1906. The chapel sits on what used to be the northwest corner of the original Russian fur trading post, overlooking the bluff where the Kenai River meets Cook Inlet.

Over the years, wind and weather have taken their toll on our little log chapel. Time and the elements have contributed to the log structure’s deterioration over the last 100 years. It is our hope to restore the chapel by stabilizing its foundation, replacing any rotten logs, weather-proofing the roof, restoring the dome, and securing the entire chapel with a strong structural framework that will be earthquake-proof.

Your FOCA Gifts of Love donations will help us apply toward a matching funds grant from the Rasmuson Foundation in Alaska. We are hoping to double the $12,500 you raised which will allow us to request a $25,000 grant, making a grand total of $50,000 toward the chapel’s restoration.

Again, our sincere thanks for your very generous endowment to the preservation of the St. Nicholas Chapel, Father Nikolai and Makary Ivanov’s final resting place in Kenai, Alaska. Memory Eternal.

Dorothy Gray is a lifelong member of the Russian Orthodox Church and serves as the secretary of the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church Council in Kenai. She also serves as treasurer of ROSSIA, Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska, whose main mission is to preserve Alaska’s historic Russian Orthodox churches and the historic articles and furnishings therein. We are pleased that Dorothy has just joined the Fellowship as a member!
Dear Ms. Tesar,

On behalf of St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church of Alliance, OH, I would like to take this opportunity to say Thank You to the FOCA organization for the generous $500.00 which was raised last month during it’s 92st National Convention. Your donation towards helping our Parish restore the Cross in front of our Church, which was senselessly vandalized on August 27, 2017, is very much appreciated.

May God bless the FOCA organization and it’s members for this act of Christian solidarity.

With Gratitude,

Rev. Fr. John Nemes
Parish Priest

Christ is Among Us! He is and always shall be!
The Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries looks forward to welcoming youth ages 5-18 from across North America to the 19th All-American Council (AAC) in St. Louis, Missouri, July 23-27, 2018.

“Like the AAC at large, our youth and teen program will focus on the theme of ‘For the Life of the World,’” said Priest Benjamin Tucci, 19th AAC youth program coordinator. “We will explore the ways our children can live as Orthodox Christians in today’s challenging secular world.”

The five-day program will include:

- **Worship**
  A teaching liturgy and daily morning/evening services
- **Fellowship**
  Daily excursions to local sites including Six-Flags and the St. Louis Arch
- **Service**
  Volunteering in a social responsibility project at a local food pantry
- **Education**
  Discussions and lessons on the sacramental life of the church

Activities and content will be organized in four specific age groups. “The richness of our Orthodox Faith provides limitless opportunities to encounter God,” Father Benjamin explained, “Whether it be in the divine liturgy, or serving those in need, or spending time with friends, we will explore many of the countless ways youth can live a sacramental life wherever they live.”

This year’s program looks to build upon the success of previous AAC youth programs, most recently in Atlanta, Georgia in 2015.

**Who Can Attend:**

- Youth at least 5 years old (and have completed Kindergarten by July 1, 2018)
- Teens of any age, including those entering 12th grade in the Fall of 2018
- Recent high school graduates and young adults (ages 18-20) are encouraged to serve as junior counselors
- Those ages 21+ are welcome to serve as counselors
- Seminarians or Parish Youth Directors

**Registration**

The youth program registration will open **January 1, 2018**. An early bird registration rate will be offered until **March 1, 2018**. Exact pricing is still being determined to ensure as many young people can attend as possible. Final registration will close on **May 1, 2018**.

“Youth and teens who typically don’t have an opportunity to attend an Orthodox summer camp may want to consider joining us in St. Louis at the All-American Council in 2018,” Fr Benjamin said, adding, “Where else can you spend a week with hundreds of Orthodox youth from across North America? It will be a wonderful opportunity to nurture the faith of our youth.”
“In giving praise to the Creator, Provider and Giver of all good things, we prayerfully recollect the most important of events in the history of our Church, the 100th anniversary of which is being marked this year, the opening of the Holy Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1917-1918 and the restoration of the Patriarchy.

One of the main acts of that Council, the election of the holy hierarch Tikhon to the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow, coincided with the beginning of the cruel persecution of God’s Church. Our land was soaked red with the innocent blood of the first martyrs of modern history. Soon iniquity and mistreatment of the Church became commonplace. In these persecutions and sufferings for Christ, a great multitude of the faithful children of the Church made manifest the greatest heroic deed of faith and courage, accepted death and the “crown of glory that does not fade away.” (1 Peter 5:4).

It was a time of dreadful tribulation for all of the peoples of our Fatherland. As a result, the country stood on the brink of destruction. But by the prayers of St. Tikhon and the host of New Martyrs and Confessors of the Church of Russia, the Lord bestowed His mercy upon the people and did not allow evil to triumph definitely. Today we exclaim with thanksgiving together with the Psalmist: “The Lord has chastened me sorely but he has not given me over unto death.” (Psalm 117:8).

In remembering the tragic events of the 20th Century and pondering their cause, we must with deep humility and sincere conviction bear witness before those close to us and
those afar to the main lesson of the past century: without God no state or social building can ever lead to prosperity. History has shown that revolutionary attitudes, generated by political provocations, including those that appeal to social justice, are ruinous for the state and destructive for the people. Representatives of all layers of society must exert all their efforts in avoiding the repetition of errors which led in the last century to the suffering of deaths of many people and to the destruction of our statehood.

In glorifying “with one mouth and one heart” the heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ we, the members of the Holy Council of Bishops, bear witness to the fact that through the prayerful intercession before the Throne of the Almighty of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Church of Russia, through the labors of a multitude of bishops, clerics, monks and nuns and laity, the cause of building up the Church continues to develop. Holy sites are being restored, new churches are being built, numerous residents of Orthodox monasteries take upon themselves the great feat of the monastic life, the number of Church charity projects is growing, and the Church’s work in supporting the family, mothers and children is getting stronger. Special joy is evoked by the success in the field of working with youth, including the development of volunteer service in the dioceses and parishes, as well as in bringing children to the faith through Sunday schools and other Church educational programs.

With thanksgiving to the good dispensation of God, the Council testifies to the showing forth of a whole host of saints for church-wide veneration. In recalling the trials that were endured by our fathers and are now being endured by many Christians, let us preserve the unity of the Church in praying at each service for the “well being of the holy Church of God and the union of all,” as Christ prayed for the unity of Christians and that they may lead peaceful lives. “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.” (2 Thessalonians 3:16). Amen.”

In an unprecedented move, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the assembly on December 1st, congratulating the Church on the anniversary of the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate. He asked: “What will happen if civilization wastes its spiritual and humanistic foundations and what risks will humanity be faced with? Already now we can see the traditional values being eroded in many countries. This breeds degradation and mutual estrangement in society and the de-personification of individuals. Indifference and loss of moral bearings bring about an upsurge of
radicalism, xenophobia and religious conflicts. Egoism ruins the person and turns into aggressive nationalism. Extremists and ideologists of terrorism and enemies of progress and the whole civilization fill the spiritual vacuum.” He recalled the crimes committed by terrorists in Syria and “how they persecuted their co-religionists and Christians, ruined churches and killed people.” And Putin stressed that “ever more people set their eyes on Russia as a benchmark of unshakable traditional values and sound human existence.”

Patriarch Kirill welcomed the bishops, guests and representatives, noting that the restoration of the patriarchate “occurred, perhaps, at the most difficult moment in our national history, when the revolutionary breakdown of all life occurred, when so many forces, external and internal, rebelled against the Church of God and bloody persecutions had already struck the Church. The first sacrifices among the clergy, led by the martyrdom of Archpriest John Kochurov in Tsarskoe Selo, were committed before the election of Patriarch Tikhon. He was fully aware of the destiny that was to be his when he heard the news about his election to the throne.” Yet “every day he risked his life” for the Church and her people. “He did not see the glory of our Church and the spiritual revival of our people, but we know that from heaven Saint Tikhon sees everything and, being glorified in the face of the saints, he prays for our Church and for all our people,” emphasized His Holiness.

Participants from the local Orthodox Churches included Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria, Patriarch Theophilus of Jerusalem, Patriarch John of Antioch, Patriarch Irenei of Serbia, Patriarch Daniel of Romania, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, Metropolitan Sawa of Poland, Metropolitan Rostislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and Metropolitan Tikhon of the Orthodox Church in America. Those from the Russian church included Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev and the Ukraine, Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and Japan and Metropolitan Hilarion of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). Each representative spoke to the bishops’ council and the delegations later met privately with Patriarch Kirill.

Patriarch Theodoros was the main celebrant at the festal liturgy on December 4 with the other hierarchs, including Patriarch Kirill, as concelebrants. That evening President Putin hosted all the participants at the State Kremlin Palace for a reception and concert featuring the famed Kuban Cossack Chorus. St. Patriarch Tikhon was the ruling bishop of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America from 1898 to 1907 and blessed the establishment of St. Tikhon’s Monastery in Pennsylvania before returning to Russia. “O Holy Hierarch Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and Enlightener of North America, pray unto God for us!”

SOURCES: patriarchia.ru, synod.com and tass.ru
During their visit to Russia during the first week of December 2017 in conjunction with celebrations marking the 100th Anniversary of the Election and Enthronement of Saint Tikhon as Patriarch of Moscow and the Restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and the members of the Orthodox Church in America’s delegation were received by His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill at the Patriarchal Residence in the Danilov Monastery.

After celebrating a Service of Thanksgiving in the Patriarchal Chapel of All Saints of Russia, Patriarch Kirill extended a warm welcome to Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation, which included His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa; Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, Rector of Saint Tikhon of Moscow Church, Anchorage, AK; Melanie Ringa OCA Treasurer; Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak; and Subdeacon Roman Ostash. Also present were His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chair of the Patriarchate’s Department of External Church Relations [DECR]; His Grace, Bishop John of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA; Protopresbyter Nikolai Balashov, DECR Deputy Chairman; Protopresbyter Igor Jakimchuk, DECR Secretary for Inter-Orthodox Relations; and DECR staff member D. I. Petrovsky.

“Your Beatitude, I welcome you to Moscow and thank you for participating in the 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Patriarchate,” Patriarch Kirill said in his welcoming remarks. “It is a very important occasion, not only because it brings together Primates and representatives of the Orthodox Churches, but also because it gives us an opportunity to contemplate on the role of Orthodoxy.”

Reflecting on the importance of Saint Tikhon for the Churches of Russia and America, Patriarch Kirill continued by saying, “the election of Patriarch Tikhon to the Patriarchal See has a special relevance [for us]. It marks a special occasion for the American Church, because he was instrumental in its establishment, and for many years he headed the American Church. It was under him that the first seminaries opened in North America, and the people who lived there enjoyed the light of Orthodoxy shed upon them. We can also recall that many of the uniate immigrants came home to Orthodoxy, which was largely due to the work of Saint Tikhon. I am aware that Saint Tikhon is deeply venerated in North America, and I deeply appreciate the fact that you visited Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York, which was established by Saint Tikhon, and celebrated the Divine Liturgy there.

“Your Beatitude, you bear the name Tikhon, which means that this celebration is of special relevance to you and to all those who join their voices in prayer with you,” Patriarch Kirill concluded. “Because relations between the US and Russia are difficult, contact between our two Churches gains special relevance because these are the ties that link people who share common beliefs, people who share history, and actually can serve as a connective link and contribute to reconciliation and establishment of true partnership. I very much appreciate this opportunity to meet with you and your delegation.”
Metropolitan Tikhon in turn offered greetings on behalf of the OCA delegation.

“Your Holiness, I extend my heartfelt thanks for the warm hospitality that has been shown to me and to my delegation from the Orthodox Church in America during our time here in Moscow,” Metropolitan Tikhon said. “It has been a great joy to participate in all the celebrations marking the Centennial of the Restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate, an event which remains significant not only for the Russian Orthodox Church, but for world Orthodoxy.

“It is world Orthodoxy that, in large part, is represented here in Moscow this week, and I congratulate Your Holiness on your initiative in gathering representations from thirteen of the Local Orthodox Churches in a spirit of unity and brotherhood,” Metropolitan Tikhon continued. “This spirit was tangibly felt in our common celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Entrance of the Mother of God and in the many opportunities for dialogue and conversation amongst the brothers.

“The Orthodox Church in America takes particular joy in sharing in this celebration because of the veneration that our bishops, clergy, monastics, and faithful have for the person and holiness of Saint Tikhon, who so nobly and humbly assumed the heavy yoke of the restored Patriarchal throne,” Metropolitan Tikhon concluded. “It has been an honor for our delegation to be accompanied this week by His Grace, Bishop John, of Naro-Fominsk, with whom I had the pleasure of concelebrating a few weeks ago on the occasion of the centennial of Saint Tikhon’s Election, which coincided also with the 115th Anniversary of the Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York City, for which Saint Tikhon laid the cornerstone. I wish Your Holiness many years on the recent celebration of the First Anniversary of your 70th anniversary and I look forward to our discussions today.”

During the formal meeting that followed the Service of Thanksgiving, Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Tikhon affirmed the positive relations shared by the Churches of Russia and America, exemplified by the respective visits of Bishop Daniel to Russia for the celebration of the 220th Anniversary of the birth of Saint Innocent [Veniaminov] and the visit of Metropolitan Hilarion to the US, at which time he met with Metropolitan Tikhon.

“These mutual visits and meetings and the sharing of experiences and information are of great importance as they help us to better understand what is happening in our Churches,” Patriarch Kirill remarked. “I am satisfied that at the last meeting in Moscow between the leadership of the Church-wide post-graduate and doctoral studies and the Department of Theological Education of the Orthodox Church in America, an agreement was reached to continue student exchanges between theological educational institutions.”

Patriarch Kirill also spoke of initiating summer camps, the exchange of professors between US and Russian theological schools, and opportunities for US Orthodox faithful to make pilgrimages to the Russian Church.

“We have much to show those who are interested in Orthodoxy, especially those Orthodox living in the North American continent,” Patriarch Kirill said, adding that “with joy and love we would welcome pilgrims from the United States.”

Various current issues affecting Orthodox Christianity around the world also were discussed, including the situation of the Church in Ukraine.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Patriarch Kirill presented a special edition cross and panagia set designed to mark the 100th Anniversary of Saint Tikhon’s Enthronement—exact copies of a set worn by Saint Tikhon himself—to Metropolitan Tikhon. In turn, Metropolitan Tikhon presented a hand-painted icon of Saint Tikhon to Patriarch Kirill. The unique icon depicts Saint Tikhon with the Kremlin’s Dormition Cathedral, in which he was enthroned in 1917, and Saint Tikhon’s Monastery, South Canaan, PA, which he founded while serving as Bishop and later Archbishop of North America from 1898 until 1907.

SOURCES: oca.org and patriarchia.ru
As widely reported, this year—2017—marks the 100th Anniversary of the Election and Enthronement of Saint Tikhon as Patriarch of Moscow during the All-Russian Church Council. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and a delegation representing the Orthodox Church in America departed for Moscow on Thursday, November 30, 2017 to participate in the celebration of this ever-memorable occasion that directly relates to the life of the Church in Russia and America.

This year also marks the 25th Anniversary of the discovery and recovery of the relics of Saint Tikhon, which were secured after his death in Moscow’s Donskoy Monastery. Saint Patriarch Tikhon fell asleep in the Lord on April 8, 1925. He had suffered greatly during the years of turmoil and persecution that followed the Russian Revolution. He was laid to rest in the monastery’s small “winter” cathedral. Subsequently the monastery was closed and repurposed, and the relics of Saint Tikhon were moved for safe keeping.

The Donskoy Monastery subsequently was returned to the Church and has been restored. It was on Saturday, February 22, 1992, that Saint Tikhon’s relics were discovered, hidden deep beneath the floor of the small cathedral.

Just weeks before this joyous event, Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, together with Matushka Dunia, had arrived in Moscow as the Orthodox Church in America’s first Representative to the Russian Orthodox Church. Little did they realize at the time that they would be witnesses to the discovery of Saint Tikhon’s relics on that cold February afternoon.

Both Father Daniel and Matushka Dunia wrote first-hand accounts of the discovery of Saint Tikhon’s relics, now enshrined in the Donskoy Monastery’s main cathedral.

In conjunction with the Anniversary of Saint Tikhon’s Enthronement in 1917, we offer the Hubiaks’ accounts of the discovery of Saint Tikhon’s relics.

**Account of Matushka Dunia Hubiak**

It is Saturday, February 22, 1992, in Moscow. Father Dan and I are living at the Danilovsky Hotel. We arrived in Moscow a month ago for Father Dan to begin his assignment as Representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Russian Orthodox Church (The Moscow Patriarchate).

Because no church was yet designated as our Representation Church, Father Dan would call Father Matfey Stadniuk on Saturday mornings to be told where he was to be for the Vigil and Divine Liturgy that weekend (usually at the Patriarchal Cathedral). This Saturday morning (February 22) Father Matfey could not be reached. Finally, around noon he answered the phone and told Father Dan to be at the Donskoy Monastery for a special service at 2:00 p.m.

The receptionists at the hotel (who were always very helpful) ordered a car and driver for us, and off we were to the Donskoy Monastery. Upon our arrival at the main gate of the monastery, a mass of people, including clergy of all ranks, was gathering. A sense of excitement permeated the scene.

What could all of this mean?

We arrived at the winter church and saw more people, clergy and TV cameras! Father Dan was separated from me to join the clergy — I was left behind. At that time, a month after arriving in Moscow, my linguistic ability was almost nonexistent, so I was unable to ask anyone anything. So I stood there, trying to not get squeezed trying to see. We were standing around what looked like a crypt in the vestibule.

Patriarch Alexy entered and began the service. More and more people crowded into the space, and again I was pushed to the side, unable to see. However, I could still hear, and to my astonishment I discovered that we were standing at the tomb of the recently canonized Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia — in many ways OUR Patriarch whom we commemorate as “the Enlightener of North America.”

The Molieben service began and the coffin was opened. I made my way to a side of the area and found a chair on which I stood. When the reality dawned on me as to what was taking place, I was very much moved and could hardly see because of my tears.

After most of the crowd had pushed and shoved its way to the side, I was able to look down and found the Mantia still intact with the eagles on the shoulders and at the hem. Father Dan was given a piece of wood from the casket.

**Account of Father Daniel Hubiak**


Just think! If Father Dan had not reached Father Matfey, who was in his office all of two minutes, we would have missed this once in a lifetime experience!

At the end of the meeting of the Permanent Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness, Patriarch Alexy was informed that the grave of Saint Tikhon had been found in the smaller Cathedral of Our Lady of the Don in the Donskoy Monastery. The Patriarch immediately went to the site and arranged for the opening of the casket at a special service at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 22, 1992.

The top of the simple wooden casket was removed, revealing the mantia which covered the body of the saint. Two gold brocaded emblems on the mantia were shining as new. His Holiness said that the green patriarchal mantia was special in that it was one of only three made with that material and special style. The stones in the cross of the Saint’s miter glistened as camera lights flashed.

A Molieben was sung. Patriarch Alexy spoke of the significance of this discovery and stated that a crypt will be made for the Saint’s relics.

The discovery of the Saint’s grave was miraculous. Three different rumors pointed to the improbability of ever finding the remains of the Saint. One version had it that the remains of the Saint had been cremated, another that he was buried in an unmarked grave in one cemetery, another that his remains were in another, unidentified cemetery. The Church had no plans of trying to find the grave.

A fire at the smaller Cathedral of Our Lady of the Don made it necessary to undertake an extensive renovation of the church. In the process of this renovation, a grave marker was found, but there was no body under the stone. It was thought that perhaps the burial place was to one side or another of the stone. A search of the area proved fruitless. But under the stone was a large heating pipe that appeared to be intact. An archeological expert examined the site and noticed that in fact the pipe, not detectable to the untrained eye, had indeed been disturbed. The pipe was removed and beneath it, covered by earth, was a grave vault. The vault was opened and the casket of Saint Tikhon was discovered there. On the casket was a plaque identifying it as the casket of the Saint. Those who buried the Saint took special pains to keep his body and his burial place secure and safe.

The finding of the Saint’s grave was a miracle. The presence of the Representative of the OCA at the opening of the grave was another sign of God’s providence. By chance I had called Father Matfey Stadniuk to discuss the schedule of services for the weekend. He was in his office for only for a few minutes — and that was when I called. He told me to be at the Donskoy Monastery for a Molieben. It appears that the person who was to have informed me simply forgot to do so.

An Act of the Opening of the Grave was signed by the Patriarch, the hierarchs, clergy and lay persons present. My name and my wife’s name appear on the document. I obtained a piece of wood from the top of the Saint’s casket.

O Holy Father Patriarch Tikhon, pray unto God for us!

SOURCE: oca.org
Address of Metropolitan Tikhon to the Russian Orthodox Church Council of Bishops

Your Holinesses, Your Beattitudes, Your Eminences and Your Graces, Members of the Bishops Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, Honored Guests,

It is a great joy to be here, in the company of my fathers and brothers in Christ, the Primates and leaders of the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, and at the invitation of our brother, His Holiness, Kirill, the 16th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, to honor Saint Tikhon, the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and first in the line of the restored Patriarchate, the anniversary of which we celebrate this week.

I come to you from the far-away lands of North America, with a small delegation representing the Orthodox Church in America, to offer a few words before this august body concerning the great man of God and confessor whose name I bear and who is also my predecessor in the United States and Canada, where he served as ruling hierarch of the North American diocese from 1898 to 1907.

Bishop Tikhon had a vision for Orthodoxy in America, in which the future united Orthodox Church in the New World would include all the national Orthodox communities, with Arabic, Greek and Serbian bishops leading those communities — all united in one Archdiocese led by a Russian Orthodox Archbishop. There is even a written record showing that Archbishop Tikhon saw a future autocephalous Orthodox Church in the New World. Before leaving America, he succeeded in moving towards realizing his vision, with such actions as the appointment of a Bishop of Brooklyn for the Arab Orthodox and a Bishop of Alaska for the Alaskan native communities.

From the American missionary fields white for harvest, Saint Tikhon returned to Russia to enter a world where dark clouds were gathering and the blood of the Bolshevik revolution would soon begin to spill. The restoration of the Patriarchate in 1917 was not simply an administrative and ecclesiastical decision borne out of historical necessity, but was truly a prophetic event that placed a man of a great integrity and holiness in a position which would become the heaviest of crosses for him, but the source of unity for his flock.

Along with the delegates of the All-Russian Local Council, Patriarch Tikhon was fully aware of the reality of the persecution: bishops monks, and priests rounded up, arrested, humiliated, and shot, simply because of their faith, killed as they carried out their sacred duties; a priest in Stavropol shot in his vestments and carrying a cross; another priest dragged from the altar while serving the liturgy and shot in the church vestibule; a priest murdered while his daughter pleads for his life, his wife begging for his corpse and refused; his three sons later shot that day for protesting their father’s execution. When asked by a reporter what he had heard from around Russia, Patriarch Tikhon replied, “I’ve heard the sound of weeping.”

One hundred years later, we continue to hear the sound of weeping throughout the world, weeping brought on by the increase of human passions, the rise of religious extremism, the division of political polarization and the moral confusion brought about by hearts empty of the love of Christ. All of this has subjected Christians to grave challenges and real persecution. And yet, just as the Local Council did one hundred years ago, so do we today continue to discuss and debate issues such as principles of hierarchy and democracy, primacy and conciliarity, liturgical tradition and renewal, the role of women in the Church, and so forth.

Saint Tikhon was a man deeply rooted in the authentic experience of the Church who was firmly convinced of the ongoing action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and of the responsibility of the shepherds of the Church to find the middle way of the Gospel in all things. He was faced with many agonizing choices and was pressured from many sides. Perhaps he could have echoed the sentiments of the theologian Vladimir Lossky at the outbreak of the Second World War, who said: “Revolutionaries are always in the wrong since, in their juvenile fervor for everything new, in their hopes for a better future and a way of life built on justice, they always base themselves on theories that are abstract, and artificial, making a clean sweep of the living tradition, which is, after all, founded on the experience of centuries. Conservatives are always wrong, too, despite being rich in life experience, despite being shrewd and prudent, intelligent and skeptical. For, in their desire to preserve ancient institutions that have withstood the test of time, they decry the necessity of renewal, and man’s yearning for a better way of life.”

Even in the midst of the fiery trials, Saint Tikhon stood as an image of “meekness in authority” and an icon of the extreme humility and sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. And today, his life and legacy offer all of us hope that our yearning for a better way of life can be found in the Church, even in this post- and anti-Christian world.

As each of us oversees the life and mission of our Churches and dioceses, may we be inspired by the meekness, humility and love of our Father among the saints, Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow and Enlightener of North America.

Holy Hierarch, Father, and Confessor Tikhon, pray to God for us!

SOURCES: oca.org and patriarchia.ru
2018 FOCA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Become a Member of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America or Give a Gift Membership!

Join hundreds of other Orthodox Christians in America's oldest Orthodox-based national social-service organization by becoming a member today! Or consider giving a gift membership to a family member or friend! A membership includes a subscription to this Orthodox Christian Journal as well as other benefits too numerous to mention.

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Construction Stops at the St. Nicholas Shrine, Ground Zero, New York City

In a troubling move, the main construction company building the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine in lower Manhattan has stopped work. Skanska USA, effective December 5, 2017, “has terminated its contract with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America on account of GOA’s default in making payments. Skanska is demobilizing from the project site,” the company wrote in a letter to subcontractors. The shrine, being built in Liberty Park near the 9/11 Memorial Plaza at Ground Zero, is intended to honor the memory of the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, a small church in the vicinity, was destroyed when the towers fell. Among those known to pray there were the late shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis and actor Telly Savalas, whose parents were members years ago.

The Greek Archdiocese, which has received over $37 million in donations for the project, is facing a financial crisis first discovered in October 2016 but never made public fully until recently. It has launched an internal investigation and audit by outside companies into the shortfall amidst allegations that restricted funds for the shrine were used to cover a $4 to 5 million shortfall in the archdiocese’s general operating budget. In a December letter to donors, Father Alex Karloutsos, the shrine’s main fundraiser, wrote that “there will be investigations into how funds were transferred from the St. Nicholas account and let there be no doubt that they will be returned.” In a formal statement issued on December 9th, the church stated: “Construction at the site of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at The World Trade Center in New York has been temporarily suspended. In light of recent financial difficulties at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and in order to make certain that all operations and funds are being correctly managed, this difficult yet necessary step has been taken. The Archdiocese is confidently hopeful that construction will recommence in the very near future[.] . . . The Archdiocese remains committed to the rebuilding of Saint Nicholas and the fundraising efforts to support this important project and ministry.” AHEPA, the largest Greek-American Orthodox lay organization, which raised some $1 million for the shrine, has expressed its concern about the work stoppage and alleged diversion of designated funds: “We are deeply disappointed that construction of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center has come to a halt and regret the inadequate transparency provided thus far about the project’s construction status.” According to the archdiocese, the project’s estimated cost has gone from $35 million in 2015 to $72-78 million today, of which $49 million has been pledged.

Information on the project, as well as a live “cam,” may be found at www.stnicholaswtc.org

SOURCES: goarch.org, ahepa.org, pappaspost.com & The New York Times

St. Nicholas Church in shadow on the World Trade Center
Original photo by Grisha Ressetar
The subject of young Orthodox Church members was a major topic on the agenda of the recent annual meeting of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA on October 3-5, 2017 in Garfield, New Jersey. This report, prepared by Alexei Krindatch, is intended to help address our common concern about the engagement of youth and young adults in the lives of America Orthodox Christian parishes. Some of the key subjects include:

- Which programs and activities are most crucial for attracting young adult church members?
- Why is it important to have a designated young adult leader in a parish?
- Which aspects of Orthodox worship are especially appealing to young adult church members?
- How does a parish’s involvement with an Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) affect young adult parishioners and young adult ministries?

Parishes of five Orthodox jurisdictions participated in this study. The following is the executive summary of Mr. Krindatch’s report to the bishops.

Young adults pose an urgent and difficult challenge for American religious congregations. Orthodox parishes are not exempt from this challenge. On the one hand, young adult members are crucial for church growth and vitality. This is true both demographically (i.e., growing young families with children) and also because young adults are more likely than older church members to bring into a congregation new energy, talents, approaches and capacity to “think out of the box.” On the other hand, recent studies show that today’s young adults are less church affiliated, have more religious “Nones,” and are less inclined to actively participate in organized religion than ever before. Young adults (defined as persons ages 18-34) comprise 23% of the total US population, but only one in ten American congregations has this percentage of young adults among its members. In nine of ten congregations, the presence of young adults is lower than their presence in the overall population.

The report “Young Adults and Young Adults Ministries in American Orthodox Parishes” is extracted from the 2016 national study “Orthodox Christian Parishes in 21st Century America” (the full study report will be released in the near future). The study was conducted via a national survey of 580 parishes (about 30% of all US Orthodox parishes). Five Orthodox jurisdictions had a sufficient number of participating parishes that allowed for statistically reliable conclusions: American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, GOA, OCA and Serbian Orthodox Church. Here are some key-findings:

- Young adults (persons ages 18-34) constitute 12% of active Orthodox church members. This figure (12%) is only half of the presence of young adults (23%) in the US general population. In only 8% of Orthodox parishes the percentage of young adults is equal or higher than 23%;
- Among individual jurisdictions, the American Carpatho-Russian Diocese has the lowest percentage (8%) of young adults among parishioners, while the Antiochian Archdiocese has the largest presence (15%) of young adults among regularly participating members;
- Only a small minority (15%) of Orthodox parishes consider young adult ministries as one of their top priorities. There is no significant difference among individual Orthodox jurisdictions in this prioritization.
- Only one-in-five Orthodox parishes (22%) evaluated their young adult ministries as “Good/Excellent,” while 37% of churches judged their young adult ministries as “Poor;” Compared to other jurisdictions, the Antiochian Archdiocese has more parishes (31%) with “Good/Excellent” young adults ministries;
- Only 9% of parishes developed strategies that are geared to creating opportunities or programs specifically for young adults;
• Only one-third (35%) of parishes have designated leaders whose primary responsibility is to work with young adults (including 28% with volunteers serving as young adult leaders and 7% with part- or full-time professionals);

• Survey data show that having designated young adult leaders is very important for thriving young adult ministries and growth in young adult members. Parishes with designated young adult leaders are much more likely to grow in the number of young adults and report “Good/Excellent” young adult ministries than the other parishes. Remarkably, this survey data also suggest that it does not make much difference whether these leaders are volunteers or paid professionals (although this answer may change if the survey were expanded to youth leaders): what is most important is to have a person whose clear responsibility is to engage young adults;

• The five activities/programs that are offered most frequently to young adults in Orthodox parishes are: "community service activities" (offered in 57% of parishes), "fellowship groups" (offered in 52% of parishes), "web, social media sites" (offered in 46% of parishes), "engagement, premarital groups" (offered in 45% of parishes) and "scripture study groups" (offered in 44% of parishes). On the opposite end are four activities/programs that are rather rarely offered to young adults. These "rare" young adult ministries are "parenting groups/classes" (only 18% of parishes offer this ministry), "worship services specifically for young adults" (13%), "dating groups" (10%) and "singles groups" (9%);

• Offering young adults the opportunities (1) to learn more about the Orthodox Faith (via "scripture study groups/classes," "theology and/or contemporary issues study groups/classes," "prayer groups, spiritual retreats"); and (2) the possibility to reach out into wider community (via "community service activities," "mission trips") are the two most crucial areas of activities for the overall success of young adult ministries and attracting young adult church members. Conversely, offering young adults various "social" activities (such as "engagement, premarital groups," "recreational, sport groups," "marriage groups/classes," "parenting groups/classes," "dating groups," "singles groups") has a relatively small effect on attracting and engaging the young adult church members;

• If Orthodox parishes desire to improve their young adult ministries and attract more young adult members, they should pay much greater attention to “mission trips," "prayer groups, spiritual retreats" and "theology and contemporary issues study groups/classes" specifically designed for young adults;

• Out of seven characteristics describing the style of worship in an Orthodox parish, the words “joyful” and “inspirational” have the strongest relation with a parish’s growth in young adult members and presence of “Good/Excellent” young adult ministries. In other words, the parishes where worship services are "joyful" and "inspirational" are the parishes that are very likely to grow in the young adult members and have “Good/Excellent” young adult ministries. On the opposite end are two characteristics of worship that have relatively little or no influence: worship being "reverent" or "innovative." In other words, the fact that a parish has a “reverent” or “innovative” style of worship has no impact on parish’s growth in young adult members and presence of thriving young adult ministries;

• Young adults are especially attracted to the parishes that offer vibrant spiritual life and are open to and welcome new people into a parish community. The presence of various small interest groups in a parish, effective usage of social media, parish’s readiness for innovation and change, mutual support and help among parishioners, involvement of a parish in a social justice work, clarity of vision for a parish’s future and other characteristics also have a positive influence on attracting young adults. Yet, it is spiritual vibrancy and openness to newcomers that have special appeal for the young adults;

• The vast majority of parish clergy (71%) believe that the greatest problem in ministering to young adult members are young adults themselves, because they have little interest in participating in parish life;

• The involvement of a parish with a local OCF chapter and parish’s success in serving its own young adult members go hand in hand with each other. That is, compared to other parishes, the parishes that are involved with local OCF chapters:

  • Have significantly higher presence of young adults among parishioners
  • Have experienced growth in the number of young adult parishioners in the past three years
  • Are much more likely to evaluate their young adult ministries as "Good/Excellent"

• Typically, the work of a parish with a local OCF chapter is limited to a parish priest who serves as its spiritual advisor. Less than half of the parishes that are involved with OCF either offer to OCF chapters some financial support (48%) or sponsor various OCF events (42%). And only one-in-seven (14%) of parishes that are involved with OCF have permanent boards/committees whose primary goal is to work with OCF chapters.
Christmas Greetings from the Journal's Patrons
Christ is born! Glorify Him! Merry Christmas!

Helene Emerick, #109, Canonsburg, PA
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Passaic “O” Club, #66, Passaic, NJ

FOCA CALENDAR 2018

Mon. February 19: Great Lent begins
Sun. April 8: HOLY PASCHA
April 20-22: National Basketball Tournament, Cleveland “R” Club, Cleveland, OH
May 18-20: 88th National Bowling Tournament, Campbell “O” Club, Campbell, OH
May 25-28: Annual Pilgrimage, St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA
July 8-14: National Junior Summer Sports Tournament, St. Vladimir Camp, Farmdale, OH
July 20-23: 92nd National FOCA Convention, Union Station Hotel, St. Louis, MO (with the OCA All-American Council)

For updates and detailed info, visit www.orthodoxfellowship.org
On Saturday, October 14, Nation's Capital “R” Club, Chapter #79 in Washington, DC, was the host chapter for the 82nd Colonial District Convention. Walter Alesevich, chapter President and Colonial District Governor, welcomed district chapters from Baltimore, Bethesda, Philadelphia, and Washington to St. Nicholas Cathedral for the convention sessions. The convention sessions were also attended by National F.O.C.A. President, Marge Kovach.

Following registration and refreshments, Governor Alesevich called the convention to order, followed by opening prayers, the national and F.O.C.A. anthems, and Memory Eternal for departed members. The convention proceeded with the roll call of district officers and chapter delegates. Governor Alesevich formally introduced President Kovach and welcomed her to the convention. Copies of President Kovach’s very fine banquet speech at the recent Harrisburg national convention and the September 5 letter from His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon praising the F.O.C.A. were distributed to everyone.

The reports of the district officers and chapter presidents were presented. The minutes of the 81st Colonial District Convention were not available for approval but will be circulated to the chapters and presented for review. They will be approved at the 83rd convention along with minutes of the 82nd convention. The audit of the financial books and records is currently being performed and will be presented at the winter board of trustees meeting in January.

Prior to breaking for lunch, the Nominating Committee placed into nomination the following individuals: Walter Alesevich, Governor; Diana Haverlack, Corresponding Secretary; and Deacon Jamie Magruder, Two-Year Nominating Committee.

Following lunch, Governor Alesevich presented the 2017-2018 calendar of events for the Colonial District and the National F.O.C.A. Under Old Business, Walter reported on the annual St. Andrew’s Appeal, the 91st National F.O.C.A. Convention in Harrisburg, the F.O.C.A. Seminarian Wish List Program, and the Colonial District Adopt a Seminarian project.

Under New Business, the district voted to continue the Adopt a Seminarian Project in 2017-2018. A seminarian from St. Tikhon’s will be sent $100 monthly during the school year. There were no district applicants for F.O.C.A. scholarships during 2017 and therefore no Colonial District scholarship was awarded. There is a new junior chapter (Columbia) in the district and perhaps there will be an applicant in 2018. President Kovach did note that there will be another fund raising cruise in 2018 and potentially a calendar raffle in 2018, administered by the New Jersey District. We had an extensive discussion about the Fellowship’s organizational growth and development. The district budget for 2017-2018 was approved. A motion was also made and approved to make a $100 contribution from the district to the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (S.O.C.A.).

Marge Kovach re-opened the nominations for the district officers. With no other nominations, Walter Alesevich (Bless Him) was re-elected Governor for the umpteenth time, Diana Haverlack was re-elected Corresponding Secretary, and Deacon Jamie Magruder was re-elected to the Two-Year Nominating Committee. The convention was closed with the fellowship circle. The officers and delegates adjourned to the cathedral for the officer installation performed by District Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Ted Boback, followed by vespers. Congratulations to the re-elected officers and to the Colonial District on a successful convention. Pray. Study. Toil. Be Temperate.
On October 15, 2017, the members of the Pittsburgh District of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) gathered at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral for the District’s 91st Annual District Convention. District Spiritual Advisor Archpriest William Evansky opened the Convention with a prayer and after the opening ceremony, Governor Matushka Danielle Ilchuk called the meeting to order. Cathedral Dean Archpriest Michael Senyo greeted the attendees and welcomed them to the Cathedral. After the greeting, Governor Ilchuk turned to the business portion of the meeting.

The Convention attendees reviewed the activities of District over the previous year. Governor Ilchuk reported that the Archdiocese’s Annual Family Day was again a success. Attendance was up, and everyone enjoyed the day. District members Lory Nescott and Matushka Debbie Evansky again organized the event. After hearing Lory Nescott’s report, the Convention body reaffirmed the standing motion to support Family Day with an annual donation of $500.00. Each Chapter will also continue to donate two items to the Baba’s Auction.

The Convention then heard the report of the Youth and Young Adult Committee. This Committee is the combined Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh District FOCA ministry for Youth and Young Adult activities within the Archdiocese. Committee Member and former Co-Chair, Helene Emerick, reviewed the activities of the Youth over the previous year. The Pittsburgh FOCA will continue to lead the program for Youth and Young Adult Activities for the Archdiocese. Helene reported the Youth and Young Adult Activities scheduled for late 2017 and 2018 include the Annual Bonfire at the Archdiocesan Center Saturday October 21, Youth Retreat for youth in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade on November 11 and Teens on February 23, 2018. Young Adults will gather for a Christmas Decorating Party at the Archbishop’s Residence. Other activities will include the Annual Ice Skating gathering at the outdoor rink in Downtown Pittsburgh, the Annual Family Bowling Party in February, and the Annual Orthodox Day at a Pirate game.

Governor Ilchuk then reviewed the actions taken at the 2017 National Convention held in Hershey, PA. At the Governor’s request, John Schultz updated the District on the St. Tikhon’s Married Student Housing Project. Plans and schedule for the 2018 combined National FOCA Convention and All-American Council in St. Louis were also reviewed.

After discussion, the Convention body also decided to hold a Fellowship Fun-raiser event for the District and Archdiocese to support the charitable activities of the District. Please watch for details in early 2018.

The District elected new Officers for the 2017-2018 year. The newly elected District Officers are Governor Dr. John Schultz (Weirton, Chapter #58), Lt. Governor Matushka Danielle Ilchuk (Ambridge, Chapter #5); Recording Secretary Matushka Debbie Evansky (Ambridge, Chapter #5), Administrative Secretary Taisia Zupancic (Canonsburg, Chapter #109), and Treasurer Sonia Schultz (Weirton, Chapter #58). Archpriest William Evansky will continue as District Spiritual Advisor. The 2018 District Convention was awarded to St. Nicholas, Weirton and will be held October 21, 2018.

The District would like to thank outgoing District Executive Board Member, Serge Daniels, for his many years on the Board, and for his long-standing and unwavering dedication to the FOCA and the Archdiocese. May God grant Serge and his wife Carol many years!

Calling all Orthodox youth to celebrate your faith and participate in the....

2018 Celebration of Faith

The theme: “For The Life of The World”

The Task: Create and submit a project in any of the following areas:
- Literature
- Musical Composition
- Photography
- Visual Arts

A detailed list of rules for each category and the entry form may be found on the FOCA website in the Juniors Section under Celebration of Faith: www.orthodoxfellowship.org

Deadline for entries is June 4, 2018

Mail entries to: F.O.C.A. Celebration of Faith
c/o Danielle Kovach
8 Ginesi Drive • Clark, NJ 07066
dkovach517@aol.com

All entries will be displayed and awards will be presented at the F.O.C.A. National Convention and 19th All American Council in St. Louis, Missouri from July 20-July 27.

This contest is sponsored by the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (F.O.C.A.) and is open to all youth who are communicants in a parish or mission of a canonical Orthodox Church in North America.
**DEPARTED:** Archpriest Stephen Charles Mack, 64, long-time rector of St. Nicholas Church in Auburn, NY, fell asleep peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, at Matthew House there on Sunday, October 22nd. Born in Cohoes, Father Stephen was a 1976 graduate of St. Tikhon’s Seminary. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1984, he served as rector at St. Nicholas Church until his repose. Father Stephen also served for many years as spiritual advisor of both the Senior and Junior Upper New York State Districts of the FOCA/FROC as well as the local “R” club. He was on the boards of the Auburn Human Rights Commission and Cayuga County Homesite, loved spending time with his family and traveling, and was an avid Yankees fan. Father Stephen is survived by his wife, Matushka Barbara, two cherished children, Christopher and Tanya, his beloved granddaughter, Loralie Rose, and his father, Stephen. He was predeceased by his mother, Helen and sister, Barbara. Funeral services were celebrated at his church with interment in the parish cemetery. May Father Stephen’s memory be eternal! – from oca.org

**DEPARTED:** George “Digger” Salowich Stevens, 85, passed away peacefully on October 7th at home in Englewood, FL. He grew up in Detroit, MI and graduated from the University of Detroit in 1950. George was a Korean War veteran and served in the U.S. Army as a supply sergeant. He studied mortuary science and worked alongside his father at their family-owned funeral home, Salowich and Stevens, in Detroit; he was a funeral director for 50 years. Growing up with Ukrainian heritage, he was an avid Russian dancer and instructor. George also enjoyed golf and bowling, and participated in many FROC/FOCA tournaments. He was a long-time member of the Detroit “R” Club, #2/9. His uncle was Nick Salowich, FROC life member, and he was a cousin to Nick Salowich, past FROC vice president. George is survived by his brother LeRoy (Carol), sons Gregory (Teresa) and Jeffrey (Kristin), granddaughters Anastasia (Scott) and Carley, and grandsons Alexander and Jacob. Funeral services were held at Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Venice, FL with interment at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, MI. May George’s memory be eternal! – submitted by Henry Pishko

**BIRTH:** Born on September 20, 2017 at 7:33 am, Juliana Barbara Nelko, to Priest Andrew P. and Matushka Kaila Nelko. She weighed 7 pounds 12 ounces. Fr. Andrew is the Acting Rector of St. Nicholas Church in Weirton, WV, and is the Spiritual Advisor of Weirton’s FOCA Chapters # 58 & 58-J. While at St. Tikhon’s Seminary, Fr. Andrew was instrumental in restarting the FOCA Chapter at the Seminary. He is a former recipient of the Misha Michaelson Scholarship. Juliana was Baptized on October 28th by her Paternal Grandfather Archpriest Andrew D. Nelko. Fr. Andrew and Grandmother Matushka Tanya are members of the Campbell “O” Club. Standing as Godparents were Priest Gabriel and Matushka Laura Bilas. Fr. Gabriel is also a past recipient of the Misha Michaelson Scholarship. May God grant Juliana, Fr. Andrew, Matushka Kaila, and their families many years.

**ORDINATION:** Peter (Scott) Staller was ordained to the holy diaconate by Archbishop Mark (Maymon) during the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 17th at Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church near Harrisburg, PA. Assisting clergy included Fathers Daniel Ressetar and Steve Vernak. The new deacon and his wife, Robbin, are members of the Harrisburg “O” Club, #199, and both participated in the recent Hershey/Harrisburg national FOCA convention as delegates over the Labor Day weekend. Axios and many years!
A LENTEN PRAYER BOUQUET

Great Lent will begin early this year, on Monday, February 19th, because Pascha (Easter) will be celebrated on Sunday, April 8th. This prayer bouquet is a project to take with you on your journey through Great Lent to Pascha. Copy and enlarge the line drawing of the bouquet of flowers below on a piece of construction paper (making a “bouquet”). Each week of Great Lent take a mini-cupcake paper and write the name of the person for whom you are praying on it; then paste the paper on the bouquet. Once Pascha arrives, you will have a full bouquet of prayer to display. Suggested persons for prayers are your parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents and friends; and don’t forget your parish priest.
81st Novogodny Ball

Sponsored by

St. Stephen’s OCF - Chapter 82
Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America

Sunday, January 14, 2018

Radisson Hotel – Philadelphia Northeast
Trevose, PA

A Semi-Formal Event for the benefit of deserving charities

Dinner (Optional), Dancing & Treats by Reservation Only
Optional Dinner: 5:00 PM  Dancing & Treats: 7:30 – 11:30 PM

For detailed information regarding reservations,
call Andre Cox at (215) 290-4542 or
e-mail: novogodnyball@gmail.com