



# St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September-October 2003

## Building the Temple of the Lord

Except the Lord build the house, in vain do they labour that build it. Except the Lord guard the city, in vain doth he watch that guardeth her; it is vain for you to rise at dawn. Ps. 126:1-2

The Psalmist/Prophet/King David wrote these words for us over 1000 years before the coming of our Lord. His son, Solomon, built the first temple to the God of Israelites on top of Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Each one of us Orthodox Christians have the unique opportunity to continue to build this temple.

St. Xenia's Church is truly a miracle and testament to the building power of the Lord. Any one who hears the history of how this church came to be cannot help but be awe struck at the love and commitment expressed by the early members as they worked for and with the Lord in constructing this Holy Temple.

We are, though, not finished. It is a work in progress that will continue throughout our lifetime. We are even now involved in a number of projects that will help St. Xenia's continue to grow. We have contracted with a gifted iconographer for the beautification of our altar with frescoes. We are awaiting a shipment of bells from Russia that will greet our Hierarch on his visit, call us to prayer and bring us to deeper attention during the Divine Services. We are expanding the parking lot so that the increasing number of vehicles on Sundays will be able to park safely and orderly. The list goes on. In order for this and more to continue there are some things that you must do.

### *Spiritual Life*

King David says we labor in vain if we are not working for the Lord. This means that we must be striving after and nurturing a spiritual life. As infants we are brought to the Church, first to be baptized, then to pray and be instructed in the faith. The Church fills our senses with all things beautiful. Not only is our conscience awakened to what is right and what is true, but our earthly hearts are opened to make room for the dwelling of God Himself. We "taste and see that the Lord is good!" When we are brought to Church from an early age, we find ourselves at home there—comforted and strengthened to deal with the outside world which will confront us soon enough. If, like many of us, we come to the Church later in life, we have to strive even harder to break through the encrustations of our past to allow the sweetness of God's love to fill us. We have to be diligent in our prayers, read the soul-forming words of the Fathers and the great works of literature that reflect Godliness to us, and most of all, not deprive our families of the fullness of spiritual life as we may have been deprived.

### *Stewardship*

Though the Lord builds the Temple, He does it with us for our salvation. He provides us with material goods and money not only for ourselves, but so that we can share with the poor. And how better to share than by providing a church where they can eat and drink the very essence of God Himself? What greater help and riches could we bring than to introduce them to the Kingdom of Heaven? Certainly, if God so willed, all of the wealth of His creation would be available to His Church. But no, He instead gives us the opportunity to give of ourselves. While He, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, was completely self-emptying for our sake, He only asks us to give back a tenth part because of our weakness. There is no surer way to accumulate the grace we need for salvation than by giving monetarily to the building of the Church. This is because it automatically fulfills those things that our Lord instructs us that we need for salvation—feeding the poor, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, giving comfort to the sick and imprisoned. It is not that we might not have other opportunities to fulfill this as well, but none more immediate.

### *Participation*

Lastly, we must give of ourselves. We must participate in the fullness of the life of the Church both in our conduct at home and work, and in our faithfulness to the Divine Services. Spiritual life will be fleeting at best if we are not continually pressing ourselves to live as Orthodox, that is, "right glorifiers." Simply showing up at Services for the last few minutes is inadequate and an affront to God.

The truth is that if we do not do all of this, according to our strength, we personally will not be the only ones to lose. We are laboring in the Lord to build this Church for those who are still lost and for the generations to come. It is not, and cannot be, only for us. And if we do not do what is so clearly set before us, "it is vain for you to rise at dawn" to try to build some other kind of life in the world. The Church is eternal, our life in it is eternal, all else is folly and will ultimately fail.

As we prepare to enter into this New Year of the Church, let us each one examine ourselves and renew our commitment to God and to each other. Let us not be found wanting and in need at the hour of our judgment because we were lazy or self-satisfied in our fleeting earthly life.

—Fr. Michael

St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under the omophorion of Metropolitan LAURUS, First Hierarch, and Bishop GABRIEL of Manhattan. The parish newsletter is published bimonthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication to Margaret Lark at (603) 332-9613, e-mail: [skovranok@ttlc.net](mailto:skovranok@ttlc.net), or to Father Michael at [tcrowley@maine.rr.com](mailto:tcrowley@maine.rr.com). Thank you.

**Rector:**

Rev. Michael Crowley  
16 Channel Road, South Portland, ME  
(978) 204-0428 (cell phone with voice mail)

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment

**Parish Council**

- President: Rev. Michael Crowley (207) 767-1889
- Starosta: Rdr. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
- Secretary: Natalie Pishenin (978) 658-5564
- Treasurer: Tony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
- Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
- Property: David Lavoie (603) 880-7978
- Youth: Amy McLellan (978) 499-6822
- Outreach: Rdr. Maelrubha Donley (603) 882-5570
- Cemetery: Rdr. Andrew Bargoot (617) 471-0538
- Michael Johnson (978) 691-0045
- John Rush (603) 898-4315

**Non-Council Ministries:**

- Sunday School: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

**Trapeza Schedule:**

**\* =Strict Fast(no meats, fish or dairy)**

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday, please call and switch with someone. If you have any questions contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410. Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare on your day. Some parishioners prefer to make a big lunch but this isn't necessary. As long as there is enough food for about 40 people anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

**September**

**October**



**Sisterhood News:** Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our meetings take place, with rare exceptions, on the last Sunday of the month—one of those exceptions being this coming meeting, **September 7**, at which we will finalize plans for our upcoming visit from Bishop Gabriel on September 28.

On behalf of the parish, the Sisterhood has recently given charitable contributions to the Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and clerical families in Russia

### **Thank You...Спасибо...Ευχαριστο...**

...from Margaret Lark to the parish of St. Xenia's, for sponsoring me at the Summer School of Liturgical Music. I was graduated this year, and certified as a choir director and precentor.

...to Ellen Pishenin Williams, who donated all the fabric for the new anoly covers; also to her sister, Natalie Pishenin, who sewed them. They look strikingly beautiful, especially the new blue ones that were made for feasts of the Theotokos.

...to Anna Johnson for carrying on our charity work in Russia.

to Lily Dombrowski and her family for their generous donations toward the Resurrection fresco.

**Please remember in your prayers...** Nicholas, Paul, Bart, Alice, Dimitri, Kyriaki, Genevieve, Anne, and Apostolos; also the family of Alexandra Brasol, who reposed in the Lord on August 7. May her memory be eternal!

Please remember to inform the Myrrh-bearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

**Choir News:** Rehearsals are on Sundays, following trapeza, and last about an hour to an hour and a half. This summer's primary theme for the choir is, "The Octoechos, it's your friend." Every few years we need to get back to the basics for clean up and review of our fundamental, weekly music. This year is one of those years. As well, the choir will begin working on new music for the Divine Liturgy and for the major feasts; we are also learning a new Cherubic Hymn, and encourage all choir members to attend rehearsals regularly.

### **Congratulations:**

...to Patricia Crowley and Alexei Klar, on the occasion of their July 13<sup>th</sup> marriage. Many, many years!

...to Jim and Margaret Lark, on the July 17<sup>th</sup> birth of their first grandchild, Benjamin Joseph.

...to Pamela and Peter Reed, on the birth of their daughter Natalie. Many years to all!

**Financial Update:** As of August 2003, the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$91,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

**Sunday School News:** Thanks from Michael Lang and all the Sunday School teachers to the parents of St. Xenia's parish for sending their children faithfully for religious instruction, and to the teachers for their willingness to sacrifice part of their Sunday worship to this important ministry.

Sometime before resuming, Michael would like to meet with those who have taught this past year's class, to get a sense of topics for the upcoming Sunday School year. The kids are growing up and a number of them should be promoted. If anyone has any specific ideas or input, or would like to teach next year, please see Michael after church.

### **Annual Meeting Notice**

- The annual meeting of St. Xenia's Parish will take place on Sunday, October 19, 2003 in the parish hall after trapeza. The main points of the meeting include:
- presentation of the 2002/2003 Audit Committee report
- presentation of the 2003/2004 annual budget for review and approval
- election of parish council members having one-year terms
- election of three Auditing Committee members for 2003/2004
- update from Father Michael
- open forum questions

Voting parish members are those who have completed and returned their renewal membership forms, which were sent out at the beginning of August. **Please note that these forms are due back by Sept. 1.** If you have any questions, please see Natalie Pishenin.

## Why Women Cover Their Heads in Church

*...every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head... (I Cor. 11:5)*

For a visitor to an Old Believer parish, one of the most striking "differences" is the sight of all women, even girls, with their heads covered. The Orthodox tradition that women wear head coverings in church is certainly not peculiar to the Old Rite. One wonders, therefore, why this is not the common practice in all Orthodox churches. It used to be.

There was a case not long ago of a woman who visited the Soviet Union. On a feast day she went to church and at the end of the service went forward to kiss the cross. But when her turn came the priest drew back the cross, explaining that he couldn't allow her to venerate it because her head was uncovered. She protested that she was from abroad and didn't know the local customs, and thought that it was only necessary to cover the head when receiving Holy Communion. The priest told her these were insubstantial excuses, that women should always have their heads covered in church and that he could not permit her to kiss the cross.

Who has ever heard of a priest in this country taking such a firm stand on this question! Some priests make occasional pleas from the ambo, but they seem to have little or only temporary effect. The tradition of covering the head is so little respected nowadays that many--especially among the younger generations of women--are quite unaware of it.

In the interest of fashion, many women are not willing to acknowledge the spiritual benefit to be gained by submitting to this very simple--and meaningful--tradition of covering their heads. This is not a recent innovation but rather an ancient tradition which has been with the Church since the beginning. The Most Holy Virgin Mary herself from a very young age covered her head as a sign of her submission to the will of God, a submission which she later manifest so perfectly on the day of Annunciation. In imitating the Mother of God in this small way, women should feel honored, not humiliated or irritated, and should be thankful for the opportunity which the Church gives them to curb their self-will and to promote a modest disposition.

Why, some ask, aren't men required to do the same? Clergy and monastics, in fact, do have rules for covering their heads in church. But even if such were not the case, who are we to question the wisdom of the Church in requiring of us this small sacrifice of our vanity, our pride, that spark of rebellion which says "Why should I?" Let us pay less attention to how we look and more attention to adorning our souls with the virtues of humility and modesty, virtues we can help cultivate by the simple act of covering our heads in church. Not our will, O Lord, but Thine be done."

*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*  
(Luke 16:10)

(Based on an article in *Blagovestnik*, Parish Bulletin of the Holy Virgin Cathedral, San Francisco, CA; November, 1987)

## Events

### Bishop Gabriel to Visit St. Xenia's Parish on September 27-28

On the weekend of September 27-28, we look forward to welcoming our beloved Vladyka Gabriel to celebrate Vigil and Divine Liturgy with us. This weekend was chosen due to its proximity to our parish feast of September 24, when we celebrate the glorification of our parish Patron, St. Xenia of St. Petersburg

As of this writing, plans are still in the elementary stage. We will definitely have an expanded Trapeza after Liturgy on the 28<sup>th</sup>, to which we plan to invite other area parishes and clergy. Under consideration are a picnic/cookout, or a catered affair; we plan to have a tent erected behind the church as an accommodation for inclement weather.

If anyone has suggestions for this celebration, please see Matushka Nancy, Amy McLellan, Alexandra Gonzalez, or Natalie Pishenin.

### St. Seraphim's Camp

St. Seraphim's Camp, a week long camp in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania for the past 9 or so years, was a great success! It was attended this year by over 200 campers from 8 to 18 years of age. Over the course of the week there were 9 priests and a deacon present, along with quite a few matushki, parents, senior and junior counselors. Over a dozen of us from St. Xenia's were at the camp for the week enjoying ourselves, receiving spiritual instruction and edification and both renewing and making new relationships with our brothers and sisters in Orthodoxy—relationships which will most probably last a lifetime.

The camp begins each morning with morning prayers and breakfast, followed by an hour-long Law of God class. All manner of topics both vital and of interest to Orthodox youth are discussed in the various age groups.

The camp, though, is not only about classes. There is a schedule for each group in which they participate in field events, archery, rifle (bb gun) range, arts & crafts, water sports, etc.

It is difficult to fully express the many blessings that we experience at camp. Perhaps you too, whether you have children or grandchildren to bring, or just want to come and pitch in, will have the opportunity to experience it for yourselves.

## The Russian Corner

### WHAT KIND OF DEW IS FOUND ON THE GRASS?

—L. N. Tolstoy

When on a sunny morning in summer, you go to the woods, you will find in the fields, in the grass, diamonds. All the diamonds are shining and made iridescent by the sun in all different colors — yellow, red, and blue.

When you come closer and examine closely, you will see that those are the drops of the dew that have gathered in the triangles of the grass and are shining in the sun.

The leaf of the grass is shaggy, and as downy as velvet. And the drops are rolling along the leaf and are not moistening it.

When you carelessly tear off that leaf with the dew, then the drop will slide, as a bright ball, and you won't see how it will slip by on the stem.

Sometimes, you tear off such a little cup. Slowly, you will bring it to your mouth and will drink the dew, and that little dew is the most delicious of all drinks, it seems.

## Русский Уголок

### КАКАЯ БЫВАЕТ РОСА НА ТРАВЕ?

—Л. Н. Толстой

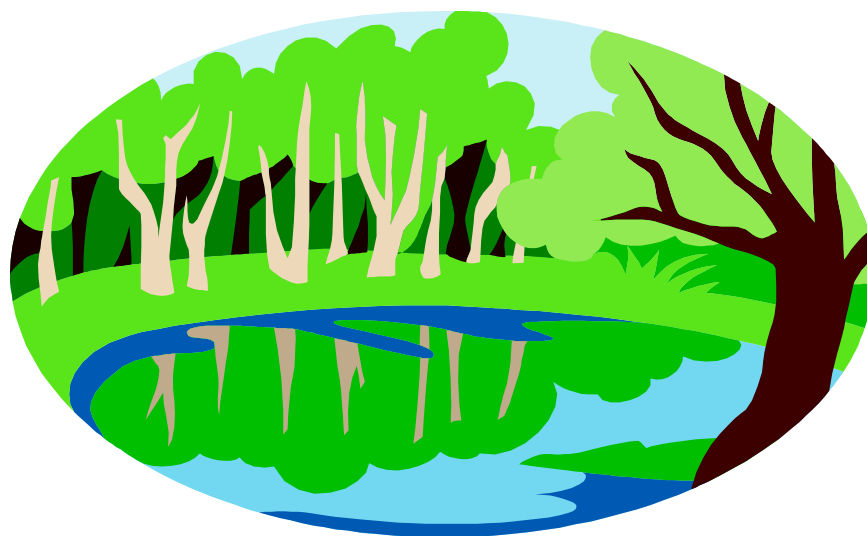
Когда в солнечное утро, летом, пойдешь в лес, то на полях, в траве, видны алмазы. Все алмазы эти блестят и переливаются на солнце разными цветами — и желтым, и красным, и синим.

Когда подойдешь ближе и разглядишь, что это такое, то увидишь, что это капли росы собрались в треугольных листьях травы и блестят на солнце.

Листок этой травы внутри мохнат и пушист, как бархат. И капли катаются по листку и не мочат его.

Когда неосторожно сорвешь листок с росинкой, то капелька скатится, как шарик светлый, и не увидишь, как проскользнет мимо стебля.

Бывало, сорвешь такую чашечку, потихоньку поднесешь ко рту и выпьешь росинку, и посинка эта вкуснее всякого напитка кажется.



# St Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church

## September 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Fast Day	4	5 Fast, wine & oil allowed	6 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
7 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 12 Divine Liturgy Tone 3	8	9	10 7:30 PM Bible Study - Epistle to the Romans Fast Day	11	12 Fast Day	13 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
14 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Church New Year Divine Liturgy Tone 4	15	16	17 Fast Day	18	19 Fast, wine & oil allowed	20 6:30 PM Vigil of Nativity of the Theotokos
21 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Nativity of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy	22	23 7:30 PM St. Xenia of Petersburg Vespers Only	24 Canonization of St. Xenia of Petersburg to be celebrated on weekend following with Bishop Gabriel. Fast Day	25	26 6:30 PM Vigil of the Exaltation of the Cross Fast, wine & oil allowed	27 10:00 AM Exaltation of the Cross Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM Vigil of Church Feast Fast, wine & oil allowed
28 9:30 AM Hours & Meeting of the Bishop 10:00 AM Celebration of Parish Feast w/ Bishop Gabriel Divine Liturgy	29	30				

# St Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church

## October 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<i>1</i> Fast Day	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> Fast Day	<i>4</i> 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
<i>5</i> 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 16 Divine Liturgy Tone 7	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i> 7:30 PM Bible Study - Epistle to the Romans Fast Day	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> Fast Day	<i>11</i> 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
<i>12</i> 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 17 Divine Liturgy Tone 8	<i>13</i> 7:30 PM Vespers of the Protection of the Theotokos	<i>14</i> (1 Oct)Protection of the Theotokos	<i>15</i> Fast Day	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Fast Day	<i>18</i> 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
<i>19</i> 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 18 Divine Liturgy Tone 1	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i> 7:30 PM Enquirer's Class Fast Day Wine & oil allowed	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> Fast Day	<i>25</i> 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
<i>26</i> 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 19 Divine Liturgy Tone 2	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i> Fast Day	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i> 7:00 PM Vespers of St. John of Kronstadt 8:00 PM Young People's Party Fast Day Wine & oil allowed	

Please remove my name from your mailing list.

I no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

Please add the following people to your mailing list:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

St. Xenia Orthodox Church  
170 North Lowell Street  
P.O. Box 147  
Methuen, MA 01844

**Forwarding Service Requested**

**Postmaster: Dated Material**

### **DIRECTIONS TO ST. XENIA CHURCH:**

**From I-93 North or South take Exit 46, Routes 110 and 113 Dracut and Lawrence. If you were travelling North on I-93,** take the exit and go around the rotary and under the highway. Follow the signs and bear right off the rotary for Route 110/113 Dracut. **If you were travelling South on I-93,** bear right at the bottom of the exit ramp towards Route 110/113 Dracut.

Where Routes 110 and 113 split, bear right onto Route 113 towards Dracut. You will pass several cemeteries on your left, including the Polish National Catholic Cemetery. The very next gate on the left is the entrance to St. Xenia's. Please note that the church is on the left just before the Hickory Hill Golf course, so if you pass the golf course, you will have missed the church. Parking is available on church grounds.