



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January - February 2020

Status of the Church Expansion Project

It has been over ten years since we began planning for an expansion of our church and hall facilities. When we started back then we were already aware that our parish was growing and that we needed more room for worship and community. We knew we were growing in numbers but had no idea that we would get to where we are now.

At the beginning of the last decade we had grown to an average attendance of about eighty at Liturgy on Sundays. Already standing room was getting tight. We now have nearly twice that on an average Sunday. It is common for us to have over eighty communicants at Liturgy.

During the colder, winter months it is difficult to find standing room in our hall for Trapeza, let alone find a seat. Thankfully, warmer weather allows use of our deck and church yard where children play, parents watch and find fellowship with one another.

Over five years ago we put together a committee to ascertain our needs and make recommendations for expansion. At the same time, we redoubled our fund-raising efforts to prepare for building.

The result was a recommendation for the expansion of the nave of the church, North, South and West, and the building of a new hall with 2,000 sf of open space. We then had a professional estimator look over our proposed project and tell us what we could expect to spend. The figure he gave us for the whole project was about \$850,000.

We decided on a strategy of designing and building the new hall first so that, once completed, we could move our altar into it and serve there while the expansion of the church itself was taking place. An architect was engaged with our builder and a plan was drawn up. The Methuen City Planning Dept. gave the go ahead. We pressed our builder to give us a hard quote on the total cost of the construction. As he began getting his numbers from subcontractors it became obvious that the cost of construction of the hall alone was in the \$950k-\$1.2m range. This exceeded what we had available, even after borrowing from a bank, for the entire project—church and hall.

We made the decision to put the hall construction on hold and go ahead with the church expansion. Our fund-raising has assured that we have the monies in hand for this phase of the project without additional borrowing. Our best estimate so far for this phase is \$350k-\$400k.

The basis of this decision is simple—our worship comes first. It is important that 1) our church is tolerable for our current congregation, and 2) that we are able to continue to welcome guests and others seeking a genuine Orthodox experience. It has become particularly difficult for our elderly parishioners to come to participate in Divine Services. It is also difficult for newcomers to even enter the building with people already pressed to the doors. It is not uncommon for our numbers to exceed two-hundred at a Sunday or Festive Service.

Making the church expansion phase one will bring some inconvenience. There will no doubt be some weekends when we will be unable to serve in our current space. We will make every effort to deal with this as best we can, hopefully with no interruption in our liturgical life.

The initial expansion of the nave will not extend into our current hall. This expansion will only require moving the current wall and so will be a later phase. We are in fact stepping into this expansion, assessing where we are as we move forward. We will continue to have the use of our current hall.

We are in the midst of looking for creative ways of using our current space more efficiently, including the use of the basement. Another idea is to erect a semi-permanent tent/canopy in our church yard for Trapeza use in the milder months.

We are moving forward as we are able. Our architect is currently finalizing drawings to bring to the appropriate departments of the city for approval.

Pascha is on April 19 this year. We always serve on Bright Monday as a second Pascha for the children. We told our builder that we want the digging of the foundation to begin on April 21. By God's Grace!!

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. HILARION of Eastern America & New York. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly 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 15th of the month prior to publication to Father Michael at frmichael@stxenia.org. Thank you.

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

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Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare, anything is appreciated.

Note: If you are preparing anything containing nuts or other allergens, please put a label to that effect in front of your dish. Nut allergies are especially fatal to small children.

A note about Trapeza etiquette: Standing, even for short periods of time, is often extremely difficult for older people and expectant mothers. It would be an act of Christian charity to allow them to collect their meal first and to be seated. It should go without saying that this courtesy should also be extended to visiting clergy.

January

*5 Raisa, Natalie Avram, Alesia Alevtina
 12 YOLKA - POTLUCK
 19 Matushka Nancy, JoJo Crowley, Dorothea Poletti, Sasha Prokopienko
 26 Engalichev, Lynch, Harris

February

2 Suzie Soloviev, Olga McLellen, Lexie Lehmkuhl
 9 Pekar, Claire Murphy
 16 Katia Fredette, Natasha Kirichuk, Vera Sarantakis
 23 Meatfare Sunday -- Matushka Helena, Marianne Dimatteo, Tanya Nikshych

PARISH NEWS

Thank you!

To all who helped prepare the Church for the Nativity! In particular, thank you to Kaleria Sarantakis who decorated the Iconostasis, to everyone who brought poinsettias, and to everyone who participated in the Church clean up on Jan 1st.

Please Remember in Your Prayers ~

Athanasia Tamvlakis, Peter Danas, Dimitri Nikshych, Masha Harris, Laryssa Doohovskoy, and Matushka.

Please be sure to inform the Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations!

To Mary and Andrei Doohovskoy and families on the baptism of their baby, Natalya, on December 14. We ask God's Blessing and many years to all!

House Blessings ~

Fr. Michael will begin scheduling house blessings after Theophany on Jan 19. There will be a sign-up sheet on the candle table.

Trapeza Reminers ~

Thank you to all who generously donate their time and energy to provide such wonderful meals for us all after Liturgy each Sunday. Please remember to check the clean-up list posted in the kitchen before leaving for the day to make sure everything is done. It would also be most helpful if bathroom trash was emptied along with kitchen trash after Trapeza.

If anyone would like to volunteer to help with Trapeza, please contact Judy Engalichev @ dujy-kot@comcast.net. New groups or individuals are always welcomed!

Sunday School News ~

Please join us for the 2020 Parish Yolka to be held on January 12th.

Choir News ~

If you have a private service - wedding, baptism, funeral, etc. - and would like to have choir singers, please contact Laryssa at stxeniachoir@gmail.com.

DIOCESE NEWS

St Herman Youth Conference

On Tuesday morning, December 24, the annual St. Herman Youth Conference opened in Holy Epiphany Church in Roslindale (Boston), MA. This year over 170 young men and women took part in the conference, some traveling thousands of miles from across the Eastern American and Canadian Dioceses.

Greeting the youth following a short moleben, Archbishop Gabriel of Montreal & Canada, chairman of the St. Herman Executive Committee, noted the importance of the conference as a place where young people can gather yearly and interact on subjects of interest to them. His Eminence also drew attention to the significant events in the life of the Church being commemorated this coming year. This year's conference is dedicated to the life and teachings of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose; +1982).

The day's keynote speaker, Eastern American Diocesan vicar Bishop Luke of Syracuse, delivered a lecture on the topic "The Role of Culture in Forming the Orthodox Life."

The same day, the youth took part in workshops discussing various subjects, such as relationships, missionary work, and contemporary Orthodox issues, among others.

The youth then departed for the Holy Epiphany Church, where Archbishop Gabriel led the All-Night Vigil, co-served by Bishop Luke and parish, diocesan, and visiting clergy.



Pilgrimage Tour to Italy with Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan May 11-25, 2020

The tour includes ample visitation time at the principle Orthodox Christian holy sites in Rome, Bari, Naples, and their environs. In most of these, the pilgrims will

be able hold prayer services; in some, even be able to celebrate Divine Liturgy, led by His Grace Nicholas, Bishop of Manhattan. More information may be found here:

https://eadiocese.org/files/announcements/2019/bn_italy_en.pdf

12th Pilgrimage of Russian Church Abroad to Russia June 20-July 4, 2020

With the blessing of the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, a twelfth pilgrimage for members of the Church Abroad to the holy places of Russia will take place from June 20-July 4, 2020. A full program (in Russian) with contact information may be found here:

<https://eadiocese.org/files/announcements/2019/15.pdf>

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Holy Martyress Juliana, Commemorated Dec 21/January 3) daughter of an illustrious pagan named Africanus, was born in the city of Nicomedia. In her adolescent years she was betrothed to a certain Eleusios. Saint Juliana was endowed with a profound intellect and an inclination to goodness of soul, and she saw through the delusion and deception of the pagan faith. She secretly accepted holy Baptism. When the time of the wedding approached, Juliana resolutely refused to be married. Her father began to urge her not to break the long engagement but, not getting his wish, he began to beat her viciously. Then Africanus handed his daughter over to the magistrate of the city, -- which was that very Eleusios, the former fiancée of Juliana. Eleusios heatedly asked Juliana to marry him, promising not to require of her a change of faith. Saint Juliana refused and preferred the torture. They beat the saint both long and harshly, but after each beating she received from God healing and new strength. Her beating was done before a large number of people. Of these, 500 men and 150 women came to confess Christ -- having witnessed the steadfastness and courage of the holy virgin miraculously healed from her wounds. They were beheaded, having been baptised in their own blood. Convinced finally of his own hopeless attempt to tear the holy virgin away from her Heavenly Bridegroom, Eleusios sentenced Juliana to death. She accepted the sentence with joy and glorified the Lord for permitting her to receive a martyr's crown. The execution of the holy Martyress Juliana was done in the year 304.

The Nun Melania, (Commemorated Dec 31/Jan 13) the first of a series of Roman girls who "yearned from their youthful years for Christ, thirsting for bodily chastity and stung by Divine love", -- was born into a Christian family. Her parents, people of property and wealth, looked on their daughter as an heiress and continuant of their line. At fourteen years of age Melania was given, against her will, in marriage to the illustrious youth Apinian. From the very beginning of their married life, Saint Melania besought her spouse to live with her in chastity or else release her from the marriage, chaste in both body and soul. Apinian answered: "When through the will of the Lord we come to have two children as heirs to the property, then together we shall renounce the world". Soon Melania gave birth to a daughter, whom the young parents dedicated to God. Continuing to live together in marriage, Melania in secret wore an hairshirt and spent her nights at prayer. The second time Melania gave birth, it was premature and with severe complications. A boy was born, they baptised him, and at once he expired to the Lord. Seeing the suffering of his spouse, Blessed Apinian besought the Lord to preserve Saint Melania alive, and he gave a vow to spend the rest of their life together in chastity. Recovering, Saint Melania did away once for all with her silken-like clothing. Soon also their daughter died. Amongst themselves, the parents of the Saints were against the desire of the young couple to devote themselves to God. It was only when the father of Saint Melania became deathly sick, that he asked forgiveness of them and gave his permission for them to follow their chosen path, meanwhile asking them to pray for him. The saints then quit the city of Rome, and a new life began for them, completely dedicated to the service of God. Apinian at this time was 24 years of age, and Melania -- age 20. They began to visit the sick, to take in wanderers, and generously to help the indigent. They made the rounds of the prisons, places of those exiled and mine-convicts and the destitute, held there in debtor's prison. Having sold off estates in Italy and Spain, they generously rendered help to elders and monasteries by purchasing for the monasteries -- lands in Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Phoenicia and Palestine. By their assist was built many a church and sick-house. Churches of both West and East benefited from them. When in forsaking their native land, they set sail for Africa, a strong storm broke loose as they sailed. The sailors said, that this was from the wrath of God, but Blessed Melania said, that they had been given over in the ship to His unfathomable will. The waves carried the ship to an island, on which stood a city, besieged by barbarians. The besiegers demanded a ransom payment from the inhabitants, else-

wise they threatened to lay waste the city. The saints supplied the necessary money, and thus saved the city and its people from destruction. Arriving then in Africa, they rendered help to all the needy there, and with the blessing of the local bishops they made offerings to churches and monasteries. During this while Saint Melania continued to humble her flesh by strict fasting, and she fortified her soul by constant reading of the Word of God, making copies of the sacred books and distributing them to those that lacked them. She herself sewed an hairshirt, and having donned it continued to wear it.

In Africa the saints spent 7 years and then, freed of all their wealth, on the command of Christ, they set off to Jerusalem. Along the way, at Alexandria, they were welcomed by the bishop, Saint Cyril, and they met in church with the holy elder Nestorios, who was possessed of the gift of prophecy and healing. The elder turned to them, comforting and calling them to courage and patience in expectation of the Glory of Heaven. At Jerusalem the saints distributed to the destitute their remaining gold and then spent their days in poverty and prayer. After a short visit to Egypt, where the saints visited many of the desert fathers, Saint Melania secluded herself into a solitary cell on the Mount of Olives, and only occasionally saw Saint Apinian. Gradually around her cell there arose a monastery, where gathered eventually nine women. Saint Melania, out of humility, would not consent to be hegumeness, and as before lived and prayed in solitude. In her instructions Saint Melania urged the sisters to be vigilant and to pray, to disdain their own opinions and cultivate first of all love for God and for one another, to keep the holy Orthodox faith and purity both of soul and of body. In particular she exhorted them to be obedient to the will of God. Calling to mind the words of the Apostle Paul, she counselled them to keep the fasts "not with wailing nor from compunction: but in virtuous disposition bestowed with love for God". By her efforts in the monastery was built an oratory and altar, where they buried relics of saints: of the Prophet of God Zachariah, of the holy First Martyr Stephen, and of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia. At about this time Saint Apinian expired to the Lord. Saint Melania buried his relics and there spent another four years in fasting and unceasing prayer.

Saint Melania wanted to build a men's monastery on the Mount of the Ascension of the Lord. The Lord blessed her intent, by sending a benefactor who provided the means for the monastery. Joyfully accepting it, Saint Melania finished the great work in a single year. In this monastery, saintly men began to lift up unceasing prayer in the church of the Ascension of

Christ. Having finished her tasks, the saint left Jerusalem for Constantinople, to go to her pagan uncle in hope of saving his soul. Along the way she prayed at the relics of Saint Lawrence, at the place of his martyrdom, and received auspicious signs. Arriving in Constantinople, the saint found her uncle suffering in sickness, and she conversed with him. Under her influence the sick man gave up paganism and died a Christian. During this period many inhabitants of the capital were worked up over the heretical teaching of Nestorius. Saint Melania accepted anyone who turned to her for proper explanation. Many miracles were worked through the prayer of the saint. Returning then to her own monastery, the saint sensed the nearness of death, and declared this to the presbyter and the sisters. They listened to her final instructions in deep sorrow and with tears. Having asked their prayers and commanding them to preserve themselves in purity, and having communed the Holy Mysteries with joy and psalmody, Saint Melania calmly and in peace gave up her soul to the Lord. This occurred in the year 439.

The Holy Martyr Theodore (+ 1784) (*Commemorated January 30/February 12*) was born in the city of Mytilene, where he married and raised children in Orthodox piety. Through the sufferance of God he renounced Christ and accepted Mahometanism, but soon repented himself, left his family and went off to Athos. But even in the monastery Saint Theodore was deeply anguished by his renunciation. The Lord blessed the saint in a confession of Orthodoxy afront a Mahometan judge in the year 1784. The enraged judge gave orders to fiercely torture the holy martyr, and then they strangled him with a rope and cast him into the sea. Christians buried the body of the holy Martyr Theodore in a church named for Saint John the Forerunner.

The Monk Kirill (Cyril) of Novoezersk (+ 1532) (*Commemorated Feb 4/Feb 17*) was born into a pious family. The Lord marked him among the chosen while still in the womb of his mother. One time when Kirill's mother, having her son beneath her heart, was praying in church during the time of Divine Liturgy, the infant within her womb thrice cried out -- at the reading of the Gospel, during the Cherubic Hymn, and at the moment of the transformation of the Holy Gifts.

From the time of his childhood the saint was fond of solitude and prayer, and he dreamt of monastic life. At fifteen years of age Kirill secretly left his parental home, intending to enter the Pskovo-Pechersk monastery. He did not know directions for the way to

the monastery, and having taken along nothing from home for the journey he went his way, putting all his trust in the Lord and His All-Pure Mother. At 20 versts from the city the lad met up with a magnificent monastic-elder, who led him to the monastery and at parting blessed him with the words: "May God bless thee, my child, and grant thee the Angelic form, and may thou be a chosen vessel of the Divine Spirit". Having said this, the starets-elder became invisible. The lad perceived that this had been a messenger from God, and he gave thanks to the Lord.

The monastery head -- the Monk Kornilii (Comm. 20 February) saw with his perspicacious eye the grace manifest in the lad. He provided him with much guidance and tonsured him into the monastic form with the name Kirill (Cyril). The fifteen year old monk astonished the brethren with his efforts: by fasting and prayer he emaciated the flesh, zealously he fulfilled obediences, day and night he was ready to study the Word of God; and already then he thought to finish his days in the wilderness, in solitude.

The parents of the lad bewept him as one dead, but one time an elder of the monastery of the Monk Kornilii came to them and told them about their son and his life at the monastery. The joyful news confirmed in the mother of the Kirill her love for God. Having spoken with her husband about leaving to the monastery her portion of the inheritance, she herself left the world and assumed the monastic form with the name Elena (Helen), and then soon peacefully died. The father of the monk came to the monastery, and Hegumen Kornilii bid Kirill to meet with him. The monk was troubled, but not daring to disobey the hegumen, he fell down at the feet of his father, imploring forgiveness for having secretly left home. The father forgave his son, and he himself remained henceforth at the monastery, with the Monk Kornilii tonsuring him into monasticism with the name Varsonophii, and gave him over for instruction to his son. Three years later he peacefully died. His son continued all the more fervently to toil for the Lord, disdaining his own will in making obediences not only to the hegumen, but also to the brethren. He thirsted to go about all the Russian land, venerating its holy things and to choose for himself a wilderness place for a life in quietude. Having received the blessing of the Monk Kornilii, the Monk Kirill left the monastery, in which he had grown strong spiritually, and he went off to the seacoast regions, roaming about through the forests and the wild places, eating tree roots and forest berries. In this difficult exploit of wanderer the saint spent about twenty years, and he went about on the outskirts of Moscow, and Novgorod and Pskov, but he never entered any

house nor took alms. By day he wandered, nights he spent at prayer on church porches, and did not pass up the church services.

One time while at prayer, an heavenly light shone forth for the Monk Kirill, indicating the direction where he should found a monastery. He at once set off on his way, and having reached the Tikhvinsk monastery, he spent three days and three nights at it in incessant prayer to the MostHoly Lady Mother of God. In his sleep the Mother of God appeared to him. Showing Her approval of him, She said: "Thou pleaser of the MostHoly Trinity, My servant Kirill, go to the Eastern region of Beloozero (WhiteLake), and the Lord My Son wilt show thee the place of rest for thine old age".

The monk proceeded on to Beloozero, with tears of humility at the miraculous vision. On the lake he caught sight of a not-large island, from which a pillar of fire rose up to the sky. There, beneath a many-centuries old spruce tree, Blessed Kirill built himself an hut and then he set up two cells: one for himself, the other for future brethren; the hermit also erected two small churches, one in honour of the Resurrection of Christ and the other in honour of the Mother of God Hodegetria ("Way-Guide"). He underwent many a temptation here from enemies invisible and from idlers roving about, but he overcame everything by brave endurance and constant prayer. News about his holy life spread everywhere, and brethren gathered about him.

There was many an instance of graced healing through the prayers of the monk, and the Lord granted His saint also the gift of foresight. Sensing his impending end, the monk summoned the brethren. With tears of humility the saint instructed his spiritual children one final time, until his voice gave out. For a long time then he was silent, but suddenly he cried out with loud sobbing. "I go off to the Lord into life eternal; ye however I do entrust to God the Word and His Grace, bestowing an inheritance and sanctification to all. May it help you. But I beseech ye, slacken not in fasting and prayers, guard yourself from the snares of the enemy, and the Lord in His ineffable mercy will not condemn your humility".

Having said this, the saint gave a final kiss to the brethren, communed the Holy Divine Mysteries, signed himself with the Sign of the Cross, and with the words "Glory to God for everything!", he gave up his pure soul on 4 February 1532.



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JANUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 29 (Dec 16) 28th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	Dec 30 (Dec 17) Fast: wine & oil	Dec 31 (Dec 18) Fast: wine & oil	1 (Dec 19) 11:00 Church Cleaning Day Fast	2 (Dec 20) Fast	3 (Dec 21) Fast	4 (Dec 22) 3:30 Children's Choir & Adult Class 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine, & oil
5 (Dec 23) Sunday before Nativity Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	6 (Dec 24) 6:30 Vigil of the Nativity Fast	7 (Dec 25) NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of Nativity 12 Noon Festive Trapeza Fast free	8 (Dec 26) Fast free	9 (Dec 27) Fast free	10 (Dec 28) Fast free	11 (Dec 29) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
12 (Dec 30) Sunday after Nativity Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast free	13 (Dec 31) Fast free	14 (Jan 1) Circumcision of the Lord Fast free	15 (Jan 2) Fast free	16 (Jan 3) Fast free	17 (Jan 4) Fast free	18 (Jan 5) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
19 (Jan 6) THEOPHANY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	20 (Jan 7) Synaxis of the Baptist Fast: wine & oil	21 (Jan 8) Fast: wine & oil	22 (Jan 9) Fast: wine & oil	23 (Jan 10) Fast: wine & oil	24 (Jan 11) Fast: wine & oil	25 (Jan 12) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
26 (Jan 13) Sunday after Theophany Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast	27 (Jan 14) Fast	28 (Jan 15) Fast	29 (Jan 16) Fast	30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great Fast	31 (Jan 18) Fast	Feb 1 (Jan 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast

