



THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

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Pastor's Corner

By Fr. Olof Scott



Where were you when President Kennedy was assassinated? That was a question asked over and over again a few weeks ago on the 50th anniversary of the event. My recollection of those days is related below. It was submitted to Charleston Newspapers but wasn't selected for printing.

Those of us old enough to remember November 22, 1963 know exactly where and what we were doing at that moment. Shocking world-wide historical events, especially since the advent of instantaneous electronic communications, become indelibly etched into our memories: Pearl Harbor, 9/11, etc.

What about other earth-shattering events like the birth of Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection? The fact is, at the time of their happening, they went essentially unnoticed. There were only a few witnesses, and they weren't readily believed when relating the details to others.

However, the events surrounding the life of Jesus Christ have impacted mankind for over two thousand years. While at the same time the so-called major historical events during that same period have faded from memory. And so too, with the passing of our generations, will Pearl Harbor, JFK and 9/11.

The difference between Jesus Christ and other historical persons/events is the extent to which they impact our history. The first is infinite and eternal. The second is finite and temporal.

So, as we end one more year and begin another anew, let us not get caught up in the personalities and events that will impact us day to day. They may seem important and significant at the time, but they too will pass.

Only the transformation and restoration of the world and our humanity through the life and death of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is ultimately necessary and essential. May this be the only historical event that impacts, guides and motivates us throughout 2014 and whatever years to come.

November 22-25, 1963

"The President's been shot!" These shocking words exclaimed by a passing student struck me as outlandish, and I fought down a smart-aleck reply. Having just completed a lengthy and challenging electronics lab on this November Friday afternoon, I was looking forward to the weekend.

It had been a difficult week in my senior year at Franklin & Marshall College (F&M) in Lancaster, PA, and as I approached the doors of Stahr Hall, I heard a loud voice in the distance. Exiting the building I was assaulted by a radio broadcast coming over speakers on the outside of the nearby campus coffeehouse.

Students and faculty were standing in stunned silence listening to reports of the breaking events in Dallas, TX. Finally we heard words that we never thought we'd hear—President John F. Kennedy was dead.

Trying to absorb this tragic news, I made my way across campus to my fraternity house where I encountered many brothers in front of the TV. Over the next two days we all moved about in a dazed state as we heard reports on people named J. D. Tippit, Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

On Sunday afternoon the college announced that classes would continue on Monday. What??? The entire nation was in shock, and F&M was planning business

as usual on the day of the President's funeral!

Within hours of this announcement several of us fraternity brothers decided to leave for Washington, DC. Stopping at a brother's home on the way, we changed into suits, ties and top coats and then headed into our nation's capitol as midnight approached.

Our first plan was to join those paying their respects to our fallen president in the Capitol rotunda. That ended when we saw the line extending well beyond ten blocks from the foot of the Capitol steps.

Not sure what to do next and in dire need of food and coffee, we found an all-night eatery and grabbed a newspaper. Within the paper was a schedule and a map showing the funeral procession and venues for the coming day. A quick study of this information led us to believe that it would be best to make our way to the Cathedral of St. Matthew where the funeral mass would be celebrated.

After a long walk we found the cathedral site bustling with activity in the early morning hours. The broadcast media was erecting scaffolding and platforms across from the cathedral. Government agents

Continued on Page 3

RADIO PROGRAM

"Come Receive the Light"

Our parish continues to be a supporting partner of the popular Orthodox radio program, "Come Receive the Light," which airs on WCHS, 580 AM, Sundays at 8:00 A.M. There is no better way to grow in the knowledge of the Orthodox Faith, to be inspired and to prepare for the Divine Services than to tune in every Sunday morning. It costs you nothing and you gain something. ✝



THE GIFT

By Subdeacon George M. Damous

During this season of the feast of the Nativity, gift giving is a major event and also a common topic of discussion. Some argue gift giving is over-emphasized; others argue it is not conducted for the appropriate reasons; and others say the true meaning of Christmas is lost. In today's secular society, Christmas is being misconstrued as a seasonal festival and a secular holiday only.

The word **Christmas** comes from the Old English words *Cristes moesse*, 'the mass or festival of Christ'. The first celebration took place in Rome about the middle of the fourth century (336) and spread throughout the West. In the East, the feast of the Epiphany (the Baptism of Christ) on January 6 was prominent. In the latter part of the fourth century, Epiphany was connected to Christmas Day, especially in Syria, and by the Middle of the fifth century most of the Eastern Churches adopted December 25 as the Feast of our Lord's Nativity. Some Orthodox churches still observe only January 6 (7) such as in Russia. The exact date of the Nativity is not known, but even in pre-Christian times the period between December 25 and January 6 was considered a special time of year - now known as "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The abbreviation Xmas is thought as sacrilegious by some. The letter X (*chi*) is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ.

Many sources discuss the tradition of gift giving originating at the birth of Jesus.

However gift giving is a tradition which was present since the beginning of time. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices unto God. Jacob offered gifts to Esau in hopes of soothing any ill will. Many examples are described throughout the Holy Scriptures. In Psalm 57:3 it is written: "He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth His Mercy and His Truth." God's Mercy (Love), Jesus; God's Truth, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 4:4-6 Paul writes: "...God sent forth His Son...God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father."

The Gift from God is great and we must truly understand this gift to appreciate and realize our giving of gifts at Christmas and anytime throughout the year. The Trinity is the three Persons of one God; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of one essence or the "same stuff." The Trinity is consumed with Love; It is Love. Some say God created man to have someone to love Him but this is incorrect. God did not need this and it is not His reason for creating man because the Trinity is love within itself. Since God is pure Love He had to create all the possible creatures that are found or were found in creation throughout the ages. In Luke 3:21 it is written that after the baptism of Jesus, "...a voice came from heaven, Thou art My beloved Son; with Thee I am well pleased." The phrase My Beloved Son is more accurately translated as "the Son of My Love."

The Mystery of the Nativity is that the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, took on flesh and walked the earth, yet this Second Person of the Trinity never departed from the Trinity. He remained in the Trinity without separation, yet took on flesh and roamed the earth. Ponder that! Also contrary to what some people believe, Mary, the Theotokos, remained pure and without stain, as we sing in her hymn: "More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without stain barest God the Word and art truly Theotokos we magnify thee." She is known as Theotokos which means God-bearer. Some heretics in the early Church tried to refer to her as Christotokos (Christ-bearer) but this is incorrect for Mary bore Jesus Who is not only the Christ but also God. Mary also is Ever-Virgin. She had no other

children. If you look upon the Icons of Mary you see three emblems, one on each shoulder and one on her head covering. This reminds us Mary was virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ! Now ponder that!

Gifts were brought to the Nativity by the Wise Men. Gifts are appropriate for giving in the Christian faith. Maybe we need to focus on the type of gifts to offer. I have been blessed by gifts given to me by friends and family from such amazing places as the Holy Land, Cyprus, and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (Constantinople), as well as books and other Holy items from their own families. For example a most recent gift received from Bechara Haddad of North Carolina of stones from the Mount of Olives. One of the greatest gifts though that I can think of is offering a prayer for others. A person takes the time and effort when standing before God to remember me! What more could one ask for? So in the season of gift-giving be sure to remember others in your prayers and maybe consider an item that will inspire a loved one's faith or teach them about the Greatest Gift, Jesus Christ. Christ Is Born! Glorify Him! Hope to see you in Adult Church School. Come and learn more about the Greatest Gift ever given. ✝

Annual Parish Meeting

The annual parish meeting and elections will be held on Sunday, January 12, 2014 at 1:30 PM, in the conference center. Please remember the following:

- All 2013 pledge commitments must be paid in full to be eligible to vote. In addition, all other pledge commitments (domes, building, chancery, etc.) must be fulfilled by their respective deadlines to be eligible to vote. Requests for dispensation must be made to Fr. Olof Scott.

- All eligible voting members must have participated in the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion during 2013.

- All parish organizations are to have written reports on their 2013 activities and finances to the church office for printing and collation no later than Wednesday, January 8, typed and ready to print. ✝



THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

St. George Orthodox Cathedral
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A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America

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<http://www.stgeorgecharleston.org/>

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November 22-25, 1963

and military personnel were initiating plans to secure the area. Wandering among them were curious on-lookers, including us, who would not be permitted to be in close proximity to the cathedral come daylight. What to do?

I decided to approach the most senior army officer within reach and try my luck. "Excuse me, (and I called him by rank), could you tell me what's going to be cordoned off and the closest point to the cathedral that the general public will be allowed?"

Not realizing it at the time, I had approached him from the direction of the broadcast media. He must have assumed that I was one of them and surprised me by saying, "Certainly, sir," and then proceeded to tell me precisely the information that I sought. Afterwards, I thought it fortunate that we had changed into suits and ties.

Returning to my fraternity brothers I pointed out the revealed point of ground across from the cathedral, and we positioned ourselves on that spot. Within a few hours the general public was told to move back and the area was cordoned off around us.

We were as close as anyone would be allowed, and we had an unobstructed view of the entire scene. But we also had an FBI (or Secret Service) agent posted directly in front of us.

Among the dignitaries arriving be-

fore the funeral procession were cabinet members, senators, congressmen, and justices. Two foreign dignitaries who exited limousines within ten feet of us were King Haili Selassie of Ethiopia and Prince Philip of Great Britain.

The arrival of the caisson bearing the President's flag-draped casket along with his family was observed by everyone present with great respect. Only an occasional jingle of the horses' harness or a nervous "clop" of their hooves dared to break the silence that had descended upon the scene. The sight of Black Jack, the riderless horse, added to the somber mood of the moment. After the President's casket was carried into the cathedral followed by his family, we decided to make our way to Arlington National Cemetery hoping to find another good venue from which we could observe the interment ceremony.

Reaching the Lincoln Memorial and the approach to Arlington Memorial Bridge we encountered a huge mass of humanity between us and the cemetery. Exhausted from no sleep and walking all over DC, we decided to end our odyssey, head to our car and proceed back to Lancaster, PA.

After a short night's sleep and restarting the college grind, it would take a while before we began to realize the history that we had encountered "up close and personal." ✝

Labor Day Weekend 2013



The Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast began on Tuesday, November 15, and is divided into two parts. The first period is November 15 through December 19, when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but is modified allowing wine and oil on Tuesday and Thursday (some also permit fish on Tuesday and Thursday during this first period) and allowing fish, wine and oil on Saturday and Sunday.

The second period is December 20 through 24 (the period of the Forefeast) when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed Monday through Friday, but is modified allowing wine and oil on Saturday and Sunday. ✝

Basic Class on the Orthodox Faith

During Christmas Lent (Advent), Fr. Olof is again lecturing on the Basics of the Orthodox Faith. Sessions are held on Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 9:00 PM. The topics and the dates that remain through December are:

12/ 5: Great Ecumenical Councils—2 (conf. center)

12/12: Church Doctrine (conf. center)

12/19: Sacraments (conf. center)

The class is open to all parishioners and anyone interested in becoming a member of the Orthodox Church. ✝

A Pre-Lenten Retreat

The Fellowship of St. John the Divine is sponsoring a Pre-Lenten Retreat on Meat Fare Saturday, February 22. Our speakers this year are from St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. They are a husband and wife team, Dr. David Ford, Professor of Church History, and Dr. Mary Ford, Associate Professor of New Testament and Spirituality. The retreat topic is "Making the Home a Little Church," which will reflect on developing a Christian family life.

The retreat is an excellent means of preparing our hearts and minds to begin Great Lent. Mark your calendars now to take the day off to attend. Details will be publicized in the future. ✝



Word Search

50th anniversary of Beatles US invasion

Find the words in this grid. Words can go horizontal, vertical and diagonal.

D	R	U	E	S	U	A	S	U	Y	N	U	H	A
N	B	T	E	G	E	O	S	T	R	A	E	W	E
A	A	A	M	O	R	E	D	R	A	L	D	O	M
B	C	H	L	I	B	O	L	D	S	G	S	P	L
S	K	A	I	H	C	H	E	L	R	L	U	A	E
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P	O	S	O	T	N	S	E	O	L	O	N	P	C
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S	N	G	U	I	R	T	A	H	P	A	O	S	L
J	O	H	N	L	E	N	R	P	E	P	W	A	L
N	I	T	Z	E	E	B	T	I	T	E	L	L	E
S	H	E	L	O	V	E	S	Y	O	U	H	E	V
M	I	N	E	L	O	P	P	A	M	O	C	H	O
H	A	E	Y	H	A	E	Y	H	A	E	Y	E	L

JOHN
GEORGE
RINGO
PAUL
LIVERPOOL
ED SULLIVAN SHOW
DRUMS
GUITARS
A HARD DAYS NIGHT

SGT PEPPERS BAND
HELP
LET IT BE
SHE LOVES YOU
NY USA
APPLE
MICHELLE
STRAWBERRY FIELDS
YEAH YEAH YEAH



A New Year Wish



May the New Year bring us:
Enough happiness to keep us sweet;
Enough trials to keep us strong;
Enough hope to keep us lively;
Enough sorrows to keep us dependent on God;
Enough failure to keep us humble;
Enough success to keep us eager;
Enough friends to give us comfort;
Enough wealth to meet our needs;
Enough enthusiasm to keep us looking forward;
Enough faith to overcome despair;
And enough determination to use every day and situation somehow for good. ✠

Senior Fellowship

2013 is coming to a close and Old Man Winter will soon be knocking at our door!

Thank you to all Seniors who braved the cold and attended our last get-together on Nov. 12.

We truly enjoyed the barbershop harmony of the Kanawha Kordsmen that night. Our own Fr. Olof and Scott Ridsen were two of the twelve Kordsmen who performed for us.

Our next get-together will be in February if the weather permits. Stay warm Seniors and may God bless you and keep you in His care until we meet again!

Christ Is Born! Glorify Him! ✠



Kid's Corner - Q & A

Q: What is the Sacrament of Confession?

A: Just below the icon of Christ on the icon screen there is often a kneeler. This is where people meet the priest for the sacrament of forgiveness, which is called **confession**.

This is where we can come to tell Jesus about how sorry we feel for our sins. This is where we receive Christ's forgiveness.

When we kneel before the icon, we face Jesus, not the priest.

We do this to show that we are telling our sins to Jesus, not the priest. Jesus is the One who forgives us. The priest stands behind us as a witness for Jesus.

We tell Jesus the sins for which we are very sorry. The priest explains how we can overcome our sins with God's help.

We promise to do better. And with God's help, we will do better.

The priest then places his stole over us as he pronounces God's forgiveness upon us.

Then we hear those beautiful words, "(Your name), your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Jesus takes away our sins.

We leave feeling renewed and cleansed. We leave with the great joy of God's salvation in our hearts.

As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us (Ps. 103:12).



Church School News



By Layla Michael

As the snow is falling and Thanksgiving has come and gone, I hope that you all have had a blessed fall and have not forgotten the true meaning of Thanksgiving. I am thankful for each of you in my church family and feel beyond fortunate to be surrounded by such great people year after year. I hope that our entire church community is with me in the realization of how fortunate and blessed we truly are and the importance of helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

As December approaches, so does the preparation for our annual Church School Program. Mark your calendars for December 21 at 10 AM when all Church School children will meet in the gym for the rehearsal which will be followed by a luncheon in the lower level. The program will follow the next day, Sunday December 22, with special guest Bishop Thomas in attendance. I look forward to seeing you all there and for another successful program this year. Per usual, the program will be immediately followed with a special coffee hour and food provided by the generous families of our Church School children. We ask that our Church School parents follow these guidelines in preparing their designated dish; last names: A-C: Fruit D-F: Cookies G-I: Cheese, crackers J-L: Fruit M-Q: Muffins S-V: Cookies W-Z: Veggies

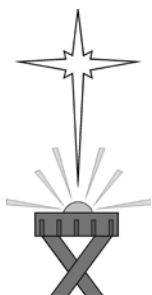
As we ring in the New Year, we will begin preparations for the Creative arts festival. Children will work on their projects in accordance to the year's theme.

In February, there will be two dates for the Creative arts workshops in the art room. I will relay more information with the exact times and dates as the time approaches.

Love and God Bless Always.



Xmas: An abbreviation of the word Christmas. The letter X is the Greek letter Chi, the first letter of Christ's name written in the Greek alphabet.




CHRIST IS BORN !
GLORIFY HIM!

Teen SOYO




Congratulations to the Teen Soyo officers for 2014: President, Luke Lowen; Vice-President, Matthew Ede; Secretary, Ben Tappe; Treasurer, Anna Mobayed; Chaplain, Jenna Bsharah; Historian, John Asseff; Sergeant-at Arms, Jessica Lowen; and Parliamentarian, Renee Lowen. May God grant them a fruitful year.

Support the Teens in all their endeavors throughout the year and especially on "Souper Bowl Sunday" with your generous donations to help the needy! Thank you. 

St Ignatius

In December, we remember St. Ignatius. Members of the Order of St. Ignatius will participate in the service by passing the offering trays, reading the Epistle, and ushering the Communion line. The Order is a ministry of faith, love and sacrificial giving. Parishioners are welcomed to join the Order any time. Contact Dr. Ganim Howard or Fr. Olof.


"As the tree is known by its fruits, so they who claim to belong to Christ are known by their actions: for this work of ours does not consist in just making professions, but in a faith that is both practical and lasting."

St. Ignatius of Antioch 

The Gift Of Friendship



FRIENDSHIP is a PRICELESS GIFT that cannot be bought or sold.


But its value is far greater than a mountain made of gold—
For gold is cold and lifeless,
it can neither see nor hear,
And in the time of trouble
it is powerless to cheer—
It has no ears to listen,
no heart to understand,
It cannot bring you comfort
or reach out a helping hand—
So when you ask God for a GIFT,
be thankful if HE sends
Not diamonds, pearls or riches,
but the love of real true friends. 

Antiochian Women - (Ladies Guild)

"Thank you, thank you, thank you" (as Gomer Pyle would say) to all volunteers from teens to seniors of St. George who worked to make our annual dinner a success! And many thanks to our chairperson Mary Dooley and her committee for a job well done! We served 1800 people, which includes the dining room plus the carry-out, netting a profit of \$28,000. Our hard work and dedication to serving the community is a rewarding experience for all year after year.

Our officers for 2014 are: President, Joy Browne; Vice-President, Natalie Tappe; Recording Secretary, Julie Mobayed; Corresponding Secretary, Amelia Yerrid; Treasurer, Jackie Biruakis; Co-Chaplains, Lila Damous and Eva Scott; and Parliamentarian, Maryann Skaff.

Dec. 2 was our last meeting for the year and a Christmas dinner was held for members on Dec. 8. Ladies, make one of your New Year's Resolutions to include coming out to our monthly meetings the first Monday of each month at 7P.M. New members and new ideas are always welcomed! We are reaching out to our parishioners, especially during this holiday season to share the love and act of giving by helping our own families in need at St. George. Contact Julie Mobayed if you are able to provide a dinner or other offering for those in need.

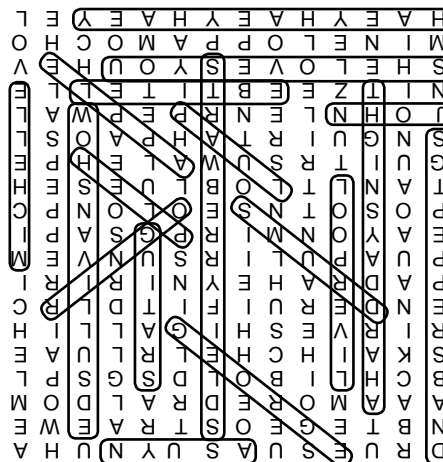
Have a blessed holiday and healthy new year! 



Food for Thought

You may give without loving, but you cannot love without giving!!!

Answer to Word Search





CALENDAR

December

- 1: Choir Christmas Cantata, 7:30 PM
- 2: Ladies Guild, 7:00 PM
- 3: Arabic Class, every Tues. 6:30 PM (except 12/24, 31)
- 4: Parish Council, 7:30 PM
- 5: Evening Liturgy–St. Nicholas, 6:30 PM; Basic Class #4, 7:30 PM
- 8: Holy Cross Monastery Sale; Guild Christmas Gathering, 6:30 PM
- 9: Pastoral Comm., 6:30 PM
- 10: Hospice Love Light Tree in Mall
- 12: Basic Class #5, 7:30 PM
- 15: St. Ignatius Social, 6:00 PM
- 19: Basic Class #6, 7:30 PM
- 21: Church School Xmas Rehearsal; Choir Caroling, 6:00 PM
- 22: St. Ignatius Sunday; Church School Christmas Program
- 23/24: Communion for Shut-ins
- 24: Christmas Matins, 6:00 PM, Liturgy, 7:00 PM
- 28: Manna Meal Preparation, 9:30 AM; Baptism 11 AM
- 31: Evening Liturgy–St. Basil, 6:30 PM

Dec. 2013

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Jan 2014

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Feb 2014

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



January:

- 6: Theophany Matins, 6:00 PM, Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water, 7:00 PM
- 7: House blessings begin; Arabic Class every Tues., 6:30 PM; Icon Festival Comm., 7:00 PM
- 8: Parish Council, 7:30 PM
- 12: Annual Parish Meeting, 1:30 PM
- 13: Ladies Guild, 7:00 PM.
- 16: Communion for Shut-ins
- 21: FSJD Dinner Mtg.
- 25: Manna Meal Preparation, 9:30 AM
- 29: Evening Liturgy–3 Hierarchs, 6:30 PM



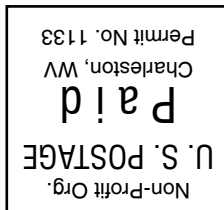
February

- 1-15: Fr. Olof & Kh. Eva–Vacation
- 2: Feast of the Presentation
- 3: Ladies Guild, 7:00 PM
- 4: Arabic Class every Tues., 7:00 PM
- 5: Parish Council, 7:30 PM
- 15: Manna Meal Preparation, 9:30 AM
- 20: Communion for Shut-ins
- 22: Meat Fare Soul Liturgy, 8:00 AM; Pre-Lenten Retreat
- 28: Eastern Dioceses Spring Mtg.–Antiochian Village

Deadline for next issue Mar/Apr/May 2014 is Feb. 15, 2014.

Place articles in box outside Church office or email ritakee@aol.com

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