

THE APOSTLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Christ is Risen, He is Truly Risen

MAY 2016

المسيح قام! حقاً قام!

SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH

OF IRVINE

17840 Sky Park Circle
Irvine, CA 92614-6407
Tel: (949) 851-8933
Fax: (949) 851-0010
Email: frmlaffoon@yahoo.com
Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Very Rev. Father Michael Laffoon, Pastor
Residence phone: (949) 559-6133
Rev Fr. Patrick Irish, Attached
Rev. Protodeacon George Moubayed
Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri
Choir Director: Barbara Scholl
Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Karim Youssef, & Mark Ellis
Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh
Teen's Advisors: Paula Rodriguez & Dana Chade

2015-2016 PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Randy Dabbah {17} (949) 293-7732
Vice Chairman – Barbara Scholl {18} (949) 533-4634
Secretary – Dimitri Kort {18} (909) 529-3671
Treasurer - Fouad Tarazi {16} (949) 637-0621
Assistant Treasurers- Kyra Pelachik {18} (714) 906-9231 & **Dimitri Kort {18}** (909) 529-3671
Afifa Artoul {16} (949) 215-2305
Ghassan Awayjan {17} (951) 454-5429
Joe Daruty {17} (949) 612-7939
Richard Jirjis {16} (949) 552-7424
Paula Rodriguez {16} (949) 922-9916

[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his or her current term]

Church School Director: Eileen Ellis (949) 458-1604
Men's Club President: Ghassan Awayjan (951) 454-5429

Antiochian Women of St. Mark President: Denise Nassif (949) 500-8318

Christ is Risen!

المسيح قام! حقاً قام!

As we enjoy this most glorious Paschal season, we should reflect on the great joy that infuses our services during this time. We sing "Christ is Risen..." to open and close all services, and we continue to greet one another with the Paschal greeting for forty days. This is much more than a simple custom. Rather, this is the affirmation of the central belief of the Christian Faith. Christ is risen and has defeated death by death, opening a way to the resurrection for all. The grave is no longer the final word for mankind. Instead, God, in his love, sends his only-begotten Son to die for our sins and to burst the bonds of Hades through his holy Resurrection.

This underscores a very important aspect of the Christian Faith: The Church is founded not on a set of principles, or even morals, but on the Person of Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of the Godhead. Jesus did not say "I *know* the way, the truth and the life.", but rather "I *am* the Way the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:9). In Christ we have new and eternal life. In Christ we have reconciliation with the Heavenly Father, and have the perspective of the Kingdom of heaven. This is one of the things communicated in our worship. The importance of caring for the poor, loving the neighbor, storing up treasure in heaven: these are the values of the kingdom. The true Christian, because of the resurrection, loves the whole creation. He does not abuse the creation and equally he does not confuse

the creation with the Creator. He recognizes that the world is good, but that its goodness is distorted by sin, and needs redemption. The Risen Christ is the Redeemer of Creation and upon his Coming in the final day, Creation will be renewed, without “natural” disasters or disease, and of course without death. We both live for that Day and are the witnesses of its coming. Our witness is to live out (and even sometimes to speak about) the Crucified and Risen Christ.

Let us therefore rejoice in the Resurrection, because in it we are freed from the frustration of life in this fallen world. We know that the world will be renewed and that all that is tragic, evil and wrong will be swept away. At the same time we can partake of the kingdom to come through our life with Christ. As it says in one of the hymns from the Paschal Canon:

“Come, let us on this famous day of Resurrection participate in the kingdom of Christ, and the new fruit of the Vine which is for divine rejoicing. Praise him; for he God forevermore.”

Let us adore his third-day resurrection!

Fr. Michael

SPECIAL SERVICES/EVENTS IN MAY 2016

May 1, GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA: The Paschal Vigil begins at 11:00 p.m. Saturday night, followed by our Pascha Breakfast. Agape Vespers at 1:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon. In the Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate the entire 40 days between Pascha and Ascension is a fast-free period.

Sunday May 8, Thomas Sunday and Mother’s Day – Luncheon sponsored by Men’s Club

Sunday May 22, Mother/Daughter Tea (see flyer for details)

Sunday May 29, FOCUS Ministry

Advanced Calendar of Services & Events in June

June 5 Last Day of Church School

June 9 Feast of Ascension

June 12 Church School Awards, Presentation

June 19 Father’s Day Luncheon sponsored by the Antiochian Women

June 24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist

June 28 to July 3 Diocese Parish Life Conference, Phoenix, CA

June 29, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

WEEKLY SERVICES

Saturday Vespers 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Confessions heard from 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Selected Saints of the Month

May 3

THE HOLY MARTYRS TIMOTHY AND MAURA

The fate of these two wonderful martyrs, husband and wife, is amazing! Because of their Christian Faith, and only twenty days following their marriage, they were brought to court before Arrianus, the governor of Thebaid, during the reign of Diocletian. Timothy was a reader in his local church. The governor questioned him: "Who are you?" To this Timothy responded: "I am a Christian and a reader in God's Church." The governor further said to him: "Do you not see these instruments of torture surrounding you?" Timothy replied: "And do you not see all the angels of God who strengthen me?" Then the governor ordered an iron rod be pierced through his ears, so that the pupils of his eyes protruded from pain. After that, they hung him upside down and placed a piece of wood in his mouth. At first Maura was frightened because of Timothy's sufferings, but when her husband encouraged her, she also confessed her steadfast faith before the governor. The governor then

ordered all the hairs of her head pulled out and after that severed the fingers from her hands. After many other tortures, from which they would have succumbed had not the Grace of God strengthened them, they were both crucified facing each other. Thus hanging on the crosses, they lived for nine days, counseling and encouraging each other in perseverance. On the tenth day, they gave up their souls to their Lord for Whom they had endured death on a cross, and so were made worthy of His kingdom. They suffered honorably for Christ in the year 286 A.D.

(*) The name "Maura" means black. Therefore, in Macedonia, the feast day of these two saints is referred to as Black Day. On the island of Zakynthos, there exists a church dedicated to Saints Timothy and Maura in which many miracles of healing have taken place.

May 11 SAINT NICODEMUS, THE ARCHBISHOP OF PEĆ

This great hierarch was a Serb by birth. He lived a life of asceticism on the Holy Mt. Athos and was abbot of Hilendar Monastery. Following the death of Sava III, he was elected as the Archbishop of "all the Serbian and coastal lands" in the year 1317 A.D. Nicodemus crowned King Milutin in the year 1321 A.D. He translated the Jerusalem Typikon into Serbian. [The Typikon is a book containing the rubrics (directions) for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and other offices of the Orthodox Church.] In the introduction of this book, Nicodemus writes: "Almighty God, Who knows our weaknesses, will give us spiritual strength, but only if we first display effort." He sincerely loved the ascetical life and labored to strengthen it throughout the Serbian land. He labored relentlessly to uproot the Bogomil heresy and to strengthen the Orthodox Faith. He died in the Lord in the year 1325 A.D. His miracle-working relics repose in the monastery in Peć.

May 20 THE HOLY MARTYR ASCLAS

Asclas suffered in the town of Antinoe in Egypt during the reign of Diocletian. He was flogged, scraped, burned with candles, but he remained

unwavering in the Faith to the end. When the tormentor Arrian was crossing the Nile by boat, Asclas, through prayer, stopped the boat in the middle of the river and would not allow it to move until Arrian wrote that he believed in Christ as the One and Almighty God. But ascribing this miracle to a magical skill of Asclas, the tormentor forgot what he wrote and continued to torment the man of God. Finally they tied a stone around his neck and cast him into the Nile River. On the third day Christians found the body of Asclas along the shore with the stone around his neck (as the martyr foretold to them before his death) and honorably buried him in the year 287 A.D. Leonides, the holy martyr, also suffered with him. Arrian, their tormentor, later repented, believed in Christ with his whole heart and openly began to express his faith before the pagans. The pagans also killed him, and so Arrian--a former tormentor of Christians--was made worthy of the martyr's wreath for Christ.

May 29 COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

The commemoration and praise of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council is held on the Sunday before Pentecost, the Seventh Sunday after Pascha. This Council was held in Nicaea in the year 325 A.D. during the reign of the saintly Emperor Constantine the Great. The Council was convened to eliminate the confusion which Arius, a priest of Alexandria, had created by his false teaching. He taught that Christ was created in time by God and that He is not the pre-eternal Son of God, equal in being [essence] with God the Father. Three hundred and eighteen Holy Fathers participated in this Council. The Council condemned the teaching of Arius, and Arius was anathematized since he refused to repent. The Council finally confirmed the Symbol of Faith [The Creed], which was later augmented at the Second Ecumenical Council [381 A.D.]. Many distinguished saints were present at the First Ecumenical Council, among whom the most notable were: St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, St. Spyridon, St. Athanasius, St. Acillus, St. Paphnutius, St. James of Nisibis, Macarius of Jerusalem, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, Metrophanes of Constantinople, John of Persia, Aristarchus of

Armenia and many others from the East. From the West, the following were present: Hosius of Cordova, Theophilus the Goth, Cecilianus of Carthage and others. The most important work of this Council was the confirmation of the Symbol of Faith [The Creed]. The Council also established the time of the celebration of the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ [Pascha] and issued twenty various canons.

Parish & Organizations News

St. Mark 2016 Stewardship Pledge Drive Progress Report

Thank you to all of you who have made their 2016 Pledge Commitment to St. Mark. As of May 30, we have a total of \$197,725 pledged which means we are only @2,275 away from our total goal of \$200,000. We have also successfully collected 143 pledge commitments!

We thank you for your continued support! Please turn in your pledge commitment cards if you have not done so yet.

In Christ,

St. Mark Stewardship Committee

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

Antiochian Women of St. Marks Monthly Meeting was held on Sunday April 10, 2016 with the Opening Prayers by Fr. Michael Laffoon.

Treasurer Report: was given by Giselle Awayjan. \$260 earned from the Spinach Pie Sale, and \$452 earned from the Luncheon for Hungry Children and was sent to the Hungry Children campaign. Sunshine Report was given by Khouria, Donna Laffoon where she sent get-well and sympathy cards to various parishioners this month.

Script: Saeda Turk reported that we have 18 members who are signed up with Script for Ralph's Grocery Store and we need to spread the word to get more.

Old Business: President, Denise Nassif reported that March Ladies Month was a success with many ladies participating in the reading of the epistles, ushering, collection etc. The Women's Retreat is this month and

Lydia Wakileh reminded the ladies that the deadline is near for signing up. Therese Joubran and Julie Bahbah were thanked for all their work in helping to make the Fatayer baking a success. The spinach pies sold fast. There was suggestion to bake and sell these pies every two weeks during lent. The proposal was tabled for discussion at a later date.

New Business: The church kitchen was remodeled and organized. We now have new cabinets, and new appliances along with a new ice maker. This was a coordinated effort of both the parish council and the ladies groups. It was brought up that there are still needed items for the kitchen such as dish towels and a hamper. Donna Laffoon and Lydia Wakileh will make up a donation list of items needed.

A Mother/Daughter Tea is being planned for May 22nd. A notice needs to be made in the bulletin and a handout as well.

The Palm Sunday Bake Sale was chaired by Julie Bahbah, Barbara Khamis & Denise Nassif. Thank you to all the ladies who baked goods. Especial Thank you to Theresa Joubran for baking 100 pieces of Spinach pies at her home. Thank you to the Ladies who came and baked on Friday April 22, at the church kitchen, Julie Bahbah, Carol Tierney, Keitie Turk, Janette Ganter, Marty Morrison, Lilian Debbas, Barbara Khamis, Diana Khamis, Martha Toubbeh, Nadia & George Sindaha.

The Pascha Breakfast will be held Saturday Night after Liturgy. Thank you to all who helped and donated money or food for this event.

Emily Laffoon suggested that a donation be made for new robes. We will discuss at the next meeting.

Next meeting to be announced in the weekly bulletin

Lori Nour

Antiochian Women's Secretary

Men's Club

Men's Club sponsored and organized Falafel Luncheon on April 17 and had a successful one.

Thanks to the men and the ladies who helped in this event.

We will be hosting Mother's Day Lunch in May 8, after church.

Respectfully submitted by

Don Skaff/Men's Club Secretar

Teen SOYO

Sunday, March 13th we held a SOYO Meeting where we discussed "Paul's Pavers", Movie night & sign-ups for Italian pot-luck, as well as sign-ups for The Friday Night Vigil.

Danny Attalah, George Bahbah, Alex Mosham, Paul Rodriguez & Father Tony Rodriguez came to church on Wednesday April 6th to start digging & clearing the area for "Paul's Pavers". They worked for about 4 hours!

On Saturday, April 9th Paul Rodriguez and his "handsome" father, Tony Rodriguez returned, (after some much needed rest), with the help of Alex Munayyer to complete the clearing of the weeds, grass, & dirt for Paul's Pavers. They labored for another 4 hours!

Again, Paul and Tony Rodriguez came on Thursday, April 14th to finish the "prep" work and re-route pipes for sprinklers. They put in another 8 hour day of very hard labor so that everything was prepared and ready to go for the big install on on the following Saturday!

Paul greatly appreciated the young men and his Father who helped to do all the prep work for "Paul's Paver's" project in order for it to be constructed and completed on April 16th. Their hard work has helped to expedite & "pave" the way for the process for the following weekend.

Saturday, the 16th was such a blessed day! So many of you, women, men, and our youth, (even a few from our sister churches), and Boy Scouts from different troops, came to help and pitch in! There were a lot of hard workers willing to get dirty in the hot sun that pulled together like a fine working machine to get the job down!

We are deeply appreciative and so proud of how everyone supported "Paul's Pavers" Eagle Project!!! Without all of your support, prayers, donations, and hard work this project would not have gone so smoothly or have been possible! Thank you for helping Paul realizes his dream of accomplishing his Eagle Scout Award and for giving so unselfishly back to the church! There is one more step though to completing the project!!!

Next Saturday Paul will need another 15 volunteers to transfer some of the dirt and beautify the area. So, If you weren't able to help yet you have another opportunity this coming Saturday, the 23rd. Please call or text me, Paula @ (949)922-9916. God blessed this project and God bless you all always.

Movie Night-Potluck following Vespers took place April 15th. We had a delicious Lenten dinner that everyone enjoyed. We had about 22 kids show.

SOYO All Night Vigil is on Good Friday, the 29th of April. This is when our SOYO kids go to Good Friday Services and then stay to sleep over night at the church and take turns reading excerpts from the Bible and watching over Jesus's tomb. It is a very spiritual and special experience for all who participate! Please have your teens join us.

*St. Nicholas Summer Camp Registration has opened! Go on line to sign your kid up today! They will create memories to last a life time, and learn more about Orthodoxy while being in a beautiful and spiritual setting up in the Mountains at Frazier Park.

Financials:

Current SOYO Account Balance is \$4,044.96 (however there are still some outstanding reimbursement owed)

Yours in Christ,

Teen's Advisor; Paula Rodriguez



June Anter 5/20
Justine Bahbah 5/18
Ghassan Bahou 5/4
Steven Berouty 5/13
Ruth Conn 5/30
Maha Daher 5/25
Scott Daruty 5/19
May Dabbah 5/27
Natalie Debbas 5/9
Mirna Debbas 5/29
George Debbas 5/18
Omar Fakhouri 5/2

Sammi Faraj 5/15
Noah Fortuna 5/4
Josie Goson 5/28
Tania Habeeb 5/21
Paul Habeeb 5/22
Sahar Hanna 5/25
Vera Jirjis 5/13
Michael Joellson 5/16
Bachir Kassir 5/30
Alexander Kashou 5/5
Michael Khoury 5/5
Maysoon Khoury 5/10
Kandy Kort 5/4
Elizabeth Kort 5/4
Emilie Laffoon 5/27
Nelson Mamey 5/29
Alexander Mokbel 5/31
George Richards 5/22
Sophia Richards 5/22
Ramez Sayegh 5/20
Natalia Souri 5/14
Fouad Tarazi 5/31
Richie Tierney 5/2
Anise Turk 5/4
Angelina Turk 5/29
Sophia Whitacre 5/20
Connor Wilde 5/8

Happy Anniversary

Phillip & Tarize Bahbah 5/9
Jacob & Vera Bahbah 5/13
Samir & Lucy Billeh 5/2
Mark & Eileen Ellis 5/22
Kevin & Sara Fortuna 5/23
Richard & Vera Jirjis 5/9
Michel & Theresa Joubran 5/17
Bachir & Helen Kassir 5/27
Elias & Najat Khury 5/1
Fr. Michael & Donna Laffoon 5/6
Nelson & Jerri Mamey 5/30
Tanya & Joseph Richards 5/29
Najeeb & Heba Saadeh 5/15
Robert & Sarah Smathers 5/10
Anees & Reham Turk 5/22
Anton & Keitie Turk 5/29
Patrick & Susan Wilde 5/25

BUY SCRIP! Our Ladies Guild buys scrip from many and various stores and restaurants (see list included in this bulletin) at a 3 to 10% discount. When you buy the scrip, which is accepted just like cash at the issuing store, the parish benefits. You pay no more for these goods and services and are making a donation to our parish. You can purchase this scrip from Saeda Turk at the coffee hour.

The Apostle is a monthly newsletter of St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church. Parish Organizations are to submit articles by the 15th of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)

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