

# THE MESSENGER

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
BANGOR, MAINE

EDITORS:  
AMBROSE &  
MARINA  
SMITHERMAN

NOV./DEC. 2014

***To the beloved stewards of the St. George Parish in Bangor, Maine***

**My brothers and sisters in the household of God,**

**As we begin the month of November, I address my warmest best wishes to you as we prepare on November 15 to enter the liturgical season of Christmas and celebrate the great American feast of Thanksgiving. I believe the two celebrations are related. As the Dutch hymn reads, on Thanksgiving Thursday, “we gather together to ask the Lord’s blessings”, to thank almighty God for the countless blessings He has bestowed upon us as Americans of Greek Orthodox faith living in this great country. We thank Him for our families and friends, and invoke His blessings upon our nation, ‘the home of the brave and the land of the free’.**

**On Christmas, we gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior—to thank God because “He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3.16).**

**This Christmas, I pray that you will offer your hearts as a manger where our Savior may be born to bring peace, love and happiness to you as a Parish and as individuals. Embrace one another this advent season. Remain steadfast in your Faith, united and determined to keep the light of Orthodoxy shining brightly. You have been an inspiration to Orthodox brethren throughout our Metropolis!**

**With Archpastoral love in the Incarnate Lord,**

**METHODIOS**  
**Metropolitan of Boston**

# DANCING WITH THE GREEKS 2014



Dear St. George Family,

In light of the current tragedy that is affecting our beloved Church community, we want to address each parish member because we truly believe that in the midst of this storm, clear and open communication is vital. It is helpful for us recall that when St. Peter was walking on the water toward Christ, he began to sink the moment he shifted his focus away from Christ, becoming preoccupied with the terrifying waves and wind of the storm. Likewise, we must stay focused on Christ in order to keep our heads above water.

We were all very disturbed to learn of the arrest of Adam Metropoulos. His Eminence responded swiftly in suspending him from his priestly duties; and we are all cooperating fully with local law enforcement in this matter. The weekly Liturgical services are being conducted by visiting clergy from throughout the Metropolis of Boston; and the life and ministries of our parish continue with that assistance. Meanwhile, we await the assignment of a new parish priest. A special thank you also is sent to our Chancellor, Father Ted Barbas for guiding us through these very difficult times.

We must not allow these trying times break apart our precious Church. We are a loving, caring family that must and will go on for another 85+ years as the vibrant light of Orthodoxy in our community.

As we enter the Christmas season and celebrate the birth of our Saviour, let us take a moment, and reflect what the birth of Jesus Christ means to each of us. Now in particular, the gift of eternal peace and salvation is even more in the foremost of our thoughts. Please remember all those less fortunate and that church provides a place of salvation for all. Whenever possible invite someone to a service and bring in non-perishable food items to help our Sunday School children with their food drive.

Thanks to some very special people, Maria Brountas' dream of new windows throughout the church has been realized. The window project started eight years ago, has been finished and the church is even more beautiful. Our Greek Dance was once again very successful, thanks to our co-chair Cynthia Karris and Cathy Speronis and to our Master of Dance, Lambros Karris.

So we bring to a close, another year at Saint George. This was a year of great joy and excitement. This was also a year of great sadness. This is a community that shows its strength on a daily basis and I am humbled and grateful to serve such an amazing group of caring and loving people who give their time, hearts and wallets on behalf of Saint George.

I wish you all a joyous Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas  
In the love of Christ, and asking God's blessing on us all,

Lee Speronis  
President, Parish Council



The devil besets those especially who are engaged in spiritual matters... But we have one weapon which is the best... in everything to give thanks to God.

St. John Chrysostom



**ST. GEORGE PARISH COUNCIL 2014**

**Underwriting *The Messenger***

We invite parishioners to help subsidize our newsletter. You can support publication of *The Messenger* in the following ways:

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Thank you to all who helped to make the Greek Dance a success this year. Especially to **Cynthia Karris** and **Cathy Speronis** who organized the occasion, and to **Lambros Karris** giving us the inspiration to dance, and to **Lee Speronis** and his crew from **Husson University**. Also a big thank you to our sponsors:

**Angelos Pizza, Arista Hospitality, Bangor Savings Bank, Brontas Enterprises, Brontas Rental Company, Dennis Paper & Food, High Tide Restaurant, Kostas Restaurant, Jack & Hopie Montgomery, Stillwater Dental, The Corner Store, The Main Tavern, Van Sycle Kia, Vision Care**

A **Christmas Offering Envelope** is being sent to you in hopes that you will bring it to church, or drop it in the mail if you find you are unable to attend services. It is our fervent hope that you will take this opportunity to honor our Lord at His Nativity, along with helping His church.

If anyone would like to donate a pointsettia to help decorate the church for the Nativity season, please talk to a parish council member in the office on Sunday.

To St. George Greek Orthodox Church,  
Thank you all so much for the generous donation to Chris' fund. We appreciate your help along with the love and prayers already sent. Chris is doing well. Thanks, again! **Chris and Nancy Limberis**

## **Please keep these people in your prayers:**

Chris Limberis, Nicholas George, Maria & Gene Muller, Chip Fitzpatrick, Barry Levine, Christian Meyer, Sophia Wirta, Brian Page, Kyvele St. Peter, Eleni Nawfel, Kosta Shanos, Jason Nicholas Anovich, Theodosia Kelley, Mary Limberis, Marianna DeJesus, Elizabeth Markowsky, Eleni Angel's cousin Alexis, and her brother-in-law Methodios, Stefania, Kay Gaddis, Nancy Lowd, Yelena Aleksyeva, Augie's father August, Quantan Fabiano, Electra Giatrelis, Helen Speronis, Alyce Speronis, Aristeia Halkedis, Gene Lachner, Lourdes Wellington, Richard Spencer, Lisa Henderson, Ussi, Adam & Lisa Metropoulos, Artemis Bennett, Christina Pizarro, and the street pastors ministry



## The Spirit of Thankfulness

It is natural for us to ask help from God in times of trouble or sorrow. It is also natural to plead on behalf of our loved ones. These two forms of prayer - *petition* and *intercession* - are vital. But the *prayer of thanksgiving*, mentioned so often in Scripture and made so eloquently in many Psalms, must also be an essential part of our lives as Christians. Are we truly thankful to God for His innumerable blessings and mercies toward us? Do we really feel we even have anything to be thankful for? Perhaps, amid our daily duties and struggles, an occasion for gratitude seems hard to find. We may have pressing financial needs, urgent family problems, deep personal sorrows or concerns. We may be only too well aware of the evils of our time, or the sins of our heart. We may simply feel empty, weary, isolated. The evening news, or the events in our neighborhood, may make us feel that talk of thanking God is at best simple-minded and at worst hypocritical.

In reality, the practice of prayerful thanksgiving is essential to acquiring inner peace. Far from being simple-minded, it requires - and develops - a living faith and humility in the soul. One of the reasons God often seems far from us is simply because we do not - even will not - see Him where He *is*, in the daily circumstances of life He sends us. Giving thanks to God for everything in our "ordinary" lives can help us to see at last that nothing in our lives is really ordinary. Life is never "ordinary". It is rather a passage from time into eternity. The circumstances that rise before us, the problems we encounter, the relationships we form, the choices we make, all ultimately concern our eternal union with or separation from God.

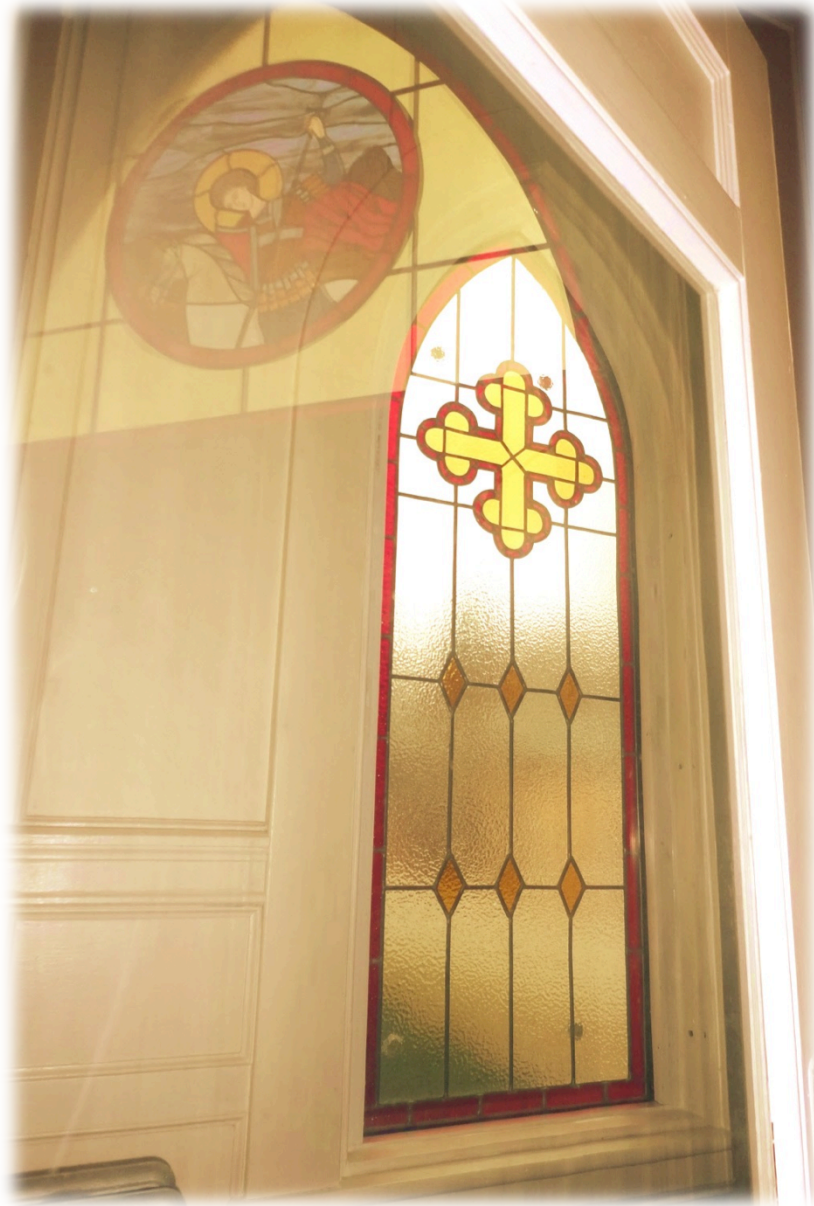
If we as Christians truly believe that our lives are lived under the sign of the Cross and in the light of eternity, then we must believe that God is with us in all the changing fortunes of our days. And we must also believe that despite natural disasters and human ills, evil is not finally triumphant and death is not victorious. In our lives there are no chance events, no irrational twists of empty fate, but rather the ever-present workings of a provident God, Who uses all means to lead us into the harbor of Christ.

When we begin to feel, however faintly, the truth of this, we shall find much to be grateful for. The spirit of thankfulness is a necessary part of the spiritual discipline of living in the present moment - with God - and not in the past or the future. We cannot know what will happen tomorrow, or even tonight; we cannot change what is already past. But we can be grateful today for the blessings of today - the blessing of life itself, the blessing of communion with God through prayer and the Holy Eucharist, the blessing of repentance, the healing of forgiveness. Even the small, seemingly trivial, moments in our day - the sight of a bird in the sky, the greening of a tree, the laugh of a child, the voice of a friend - speak to us of God if only we wish to hear, for everything of beauty, of light, of love, comes to us from Him.

In such small moments, as much as in the dramatic crises of our lives, the headlong rush of time opens upon eternity. If we learn to live quietly, attentively, faithfully, in the "now" which alone truly exists for us, we shall be prepared by degrees for the "everlasting now" which awaits us after death. If we do not find and follow Christ in the present moment, we shall not recognize Him at the end of time.

Let us ask of God a grateful heart, and let us resolve to give thanks each day for the day itself and the presence of Christ in it, sustaining our life by His hand and giving courage to our struggles, zeal to our repentance, contrition to our prayer, and stability to our labors. If only we will make an effort, we will find that giving thanks to God - even in adversity - opens our hearts to see blessings we had not thought to find.

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*Many thanks to all who contributed to the new windows, and a very special thanks to Arthur and Maria Brountas!*

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**This issue of The Messenger is sponsored by Stephanie (Rozos) Masters. Dedicated to the memories of Helen S. Rozos and Georgia Paul. May their souls rest in a place of no pain or sorrow, but life everlasting.**

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