

**Adult Religious Education (Bible Study)** - Monday, December 11th @ 7:00 p.m. Come join us and learn about the richness of our faith through Scripture. Bring your bibles. We will be using the Orthodox Study Bible. For more information call (773) 334-4515 and speak to Father John.

**December 3 is Stewardship Sunday.** Please join us for a special coffee hour. Also, please check your mail for your 2018 Stewardship packet.

**Parish Council Elections Today in the Presidents Room after Liturgy.**

**SENIOR CIRCLE THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON.** All are welcome to come and join to celebrate with us this festive holiday season. Monday December 11th at 12:00 Psistaria restaurant for reservation please call: (847) 998-5232

**Christmas Food Drive:** November 27 - December 18. Please donate non-perishable items to fill the tables of the families in need from Care for Real. Monetary donations are also much appreciated. Please make checks payable to SWAPS and in the memo put food drive - attn: Stephane Collopy. Food can be dropped off by the bins near the auditorium by 12/18.

**Godparent Sunday has been rescheduled to Sunday, April 29th.** Please mark this date and make plans to be with us for Divine Liturgy followed by a fellowship meal in the gym.

**Our next GOYA meeting will be Friday, December 8th at 7:00pm** in the Presidents' Room. Join us for a night of faith, fellowship, open gym and pizza! Please RSVP to Fr Athanasios at Frathanasios@standrewothodox.org in order to gauge how much food we will need.

**Our annual Family Ski outing will be from January 26-28 2018.** Make your reservations now to get the group rate! To reserve a room call +1 (866) 636-4502 and book under 'Family Weekend. Please also email Fr Athanasios to RSVP at frathanasios@standrewothodox.org.

**St. Andrew's has Graves for Sale @ Elmwood Cemetery, Section 3B and @ Memorial Park at the Cypress Gardens.** Please call the church for additional information if you are interested (773) 334-4515.



**PHILOPTOCHOS**

**Saturday, December 9th 2017 Christmas Dinner Dance** Westin O'Hare Hors D'oeuvres 6:00, Dinner 7:00. Invitations have been sent, reservations are being taken at the Philoptochos table.

This year, in addition to satisfying our annual commitments, we will also be donating a portion of our proceeds from the 2017 Giving Thanks Christmas Dinner Dance to the Navy SEAL Foundation. The Navy SEAL Foundation provides immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and its families.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been an unprecedented demand for our Special Operations Forces.

Never before has so much been asked of so few, from so many, for so long. Established in 2000, to serve U.S. Navy SEALs, Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen, Naval Special Warfare support personnel and their families, the Navy SEAL Foundation's programs are focused on the preservation of the Naval Special Warfare force and their families.

The Foundation provides a comprehensive set of programs specifically designed to improve health and welfare, build and enhance resiliency, empower and educate families and provide critical support during times of illness, injury, loss and transition.

**Sunday, December 31st, New Year's EVE Day Champagne Mimosa Brunch,** after church services in the auditorium! Plan to ring in 2018 in style!! Make your reservations at the Philoptochos table. Adults \$20.00, Children 12-4 ages: \$10.00

**Sunday, January 7th: Cutting of the Vasilopita:** Tickets will go on sale 12/10th after church services. All proceeds will benefit St. Basil Academy.

**Saturday, February 10th: Glendi!!**

*Welcome to Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church*  
*"Proclaiming Orthodoxy Since 1926"*

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Fr. John N. Kalomas – Proistamenos  
Fr. John Kutulas – In Loving Memory  
Fr. Athanasios Minetos

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2017 (14th Sunday of Luke)**

*STEWARDSHIP QUOTE – There Are Two Kinds Of Blindness; Physical And Spiritual. There Are Also Two Kinds Of Stewards; Those Who See With Their Eyes And Those Who See With Their Hearts. See With Your Heart For God's House.*

**MEMORIAL**

His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos - 6 months

**May His Memory Be Eternal!**

**Artoclasia** sponsored by Tom & Georgia Christopoulos for the well being of their family.

**UPCOMING SERVICES**

**Monday, December 4th St. Barbara**

Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

**Wednesday, December 6th St. Nicholas**

Orthros 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

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**FOR NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS:** *We welcome those Christians not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions of Christianity that we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist and for which we must all pray. We do however invite you to receive the blessed bread that is given out to all at the end of service. Thank you for coming and worshipping with us.*  
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# The Blind Beggar Receives His Sight: 14th Sunday of Luke

We have probably all had moments in our lives when we couldn't see very well. Maybe the power went out at night at home, our eyes took a while to adjust after walking out of movie theater, we lost our glasses, or we were headed east or west at just the right time to be blinded by the light of the sun. Unfortunately, we have also had moments when we have been blind in other ways when our actions, words, and thoughts went against God's purposes for our lives. In fact, it's an ongoing struggle to have a clear take on how what we do each day impacts our souls, as well as our neighbors in whom we encounter the Lord.

St. Paul reminded the Ephesians that they had come out of the darkness of paganism and immorality by putting on Christ in baptism and the life of His body, the Church. Instead of returning to the shadowy ways of the world, he called them to turn on the lights, see the truth about themselves, and live accordingly. "Awake from sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light," he tells them. It's not a time to be in a drunken stupor or to be lulled into complacency in any other way, but instead to be alert and focused so that we won't be lulled back into the darkness.

Our Savior, in His earthly ministry, certainly healed many blind people. We read in today's gospel text of a blind beggar who was so eager to see that he would not stop yelling out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" as the Lord passed by. Even though others told the man to be quiet and not to cause a scene, he continued to plead for healing. He succeeded in getting Christ's attention, and He asked the man a simple question: "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man responded, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Christ said, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." Immediately he could see again and began to follow the Lord and to glorify God.

Unlike the Gentiles we mentioned earlier, this fellow was Jewish and waiting for a Messiah to fulfill God's promises to Israel. But he was not able to see the Savior as He passed by. His eyes were shut to the Lord and to all the beauty of the creation. He lived in darkness. He was poor and wretched, a beggar, who could do nothing but call out for help from the Son of David, a common name for "the anointed one" whom the Jews expected. And the man's

sufferings had made quite clear to him what he wanted: to be able to see, for he was tired of living in darkness. When the blind man had his chance, he took it—refusing to shut up when he heard that Christ was passing his way.

Of course, the man knew a portion of the truth. He knew that Jesus was the Son of David, the Messiah, Who could miraculously restore his sight. He had enough faith, enough trust in Christ, to ask for that. His plea for mercy sounds like an early version of the Jesus Prayer. But the man did not know that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. Like the rest of the Jews, he was probably waiting for a Messiah who would be a great political and religious leader, not a Savior Who is both God and man. Fortunately for him and the rest of us, Christ is not a stern master who has mercy only on those with perfect understanding. He heard the man's humble plea and restored his sight; then the man gave thanks to God and began to follow the Lord.

Jesus Christ came to bring us all into the light of His life, regardless of whether we are Gentiles or Jews and no matter how we have lived or what we have done. Just as a blind person could only beg and pray for a miracle in that time and place, we cannot force or earn our way into the blessed life of the Kingdom. We all need His mercy. But like both the blind man and the Ephesians, we have to do our part to become receptive to the light of Christ in our lives.

A person who keeps his eyes closed will never see the day or the beauty of the world. Likewise, it is impossible for those who insist on filling their lives with darkness to receive the light of Christ. If we are asleep, we are not awake. If we insist on living in the shadows, we will never see clearly.

The good news is that we have already open our eyes to the light, for we have put on Christ in the waters of baptism, been sealed with the Holy Spirit in chrismation, and nourished with the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist. Our eyes have been opened to behold the glory of the Lord. We have entered into His house, the Church, and confessed Him in the words of the Creed and in our hearts. Indeed, we know that we are able at any moment of the day to show the humble faith of the blind beggar through the words of the Jesus Prayer.

Nonetheless, our spiritual vision is still obscured by a measure of darkness. We still look at other people with self-righteous judgment, envy, lust, and other bad attitudes. We make hateful, profane, and other unedifying comments that make faithfulness harder for ourselves and other people. We drift off to spiritual sleep thinking that

we will find fulfillment in pleasure, possessions, and the praise of others. We are lured powerfully back to the darkness in many ways. So we continue to need therapy to help us keep our eyes open to the brilliant light of Christ, to the salvation that He has brought to the world.

That's why it's good that we have seasons like Advent to wake us up from our slumbers, to switch on the lights and tell us it's time to wake up. In these weeks of preparation for Christmas, all of us need to gain strength in resisting our self-centered desires by fasting or some other form of self-denial. All of us need to place greater focus on prayer. All of us need to confess our sins and turn away from them through repentance. All of us need to give alms and become more generous to the needy with our time and resources. All of us need to love and forgive our enemies. In these ways, we all need to open our lives more fully to the light of Christ.

At the same time, we also need to do everything that we can to shut out the darkness that so easily overtakes us. Most of us probably do not have to look very closely at our lives to identify habits, weaknesses, relationships, or social settings that can dim the spiritual light pretty quickly. We have to be prudent and persistent in discerning how to respond to those temptations, but it's not our intelligence or will power that is our hope. It's the mercy of the Lord, the same One who responded to the plea of that blind beggar. So when we are tempted to wallow in the darkness, we need to follow his example of calling out to Christ persistently with humility, asking for His forgiveness

and healing. That fellow would not shut up even when his pleas disturbed others, and we must learn not to abandon our spiritual disciplines, mindfulness, and prayers even when our thoughts, feelings, and friends want to lead us away from the light.

Sometimes we feel like it will kill us to resist certain temptations. Of course, that's not true, but it is often how we feel. We all need to cultivate the faith that Christ comes to heal and strengthen us, not to frustrate and destroy us. The disciplines of Advent are not about legalism or causing inconvenience. Instead, they are tools for our healing, ways for us to turn away from the darkness and to walk in the light, into a life where we are not the slaves of sin but embrace joyfully the glorious freedom of the children of God.

No matter where we are in our journey to the Kingdom, we can all welcome the light of Christ more fully into our lives in the coming weeks. No matter our measure of spiritual health or disease, we can open ourselves more fully to the mercy and healing of the Lord. He made a blind beggar see and turned idol-worshipping pagans into saints. And He will do the same for us, if we will only stay focused on Him and turn away from the many distractions that blind us to His truth. As we prepare for Christmas, let's do everything that we can to walk in the light of the Lord.

Taken from Fr. Philip LeMasters Eastern Orthodox priest, professor at McMurry University,

## EPISTLE READING: Ephesians 5:8-19

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart .

## GOSPEL READING: Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.