

Rector's Letter for July, 2011

Dear brothers and sisters:

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

On June 29, 2011, in the midst of our centennial year, we celebrate 99 years since our first church was consecrated to Saints Peter & Paul. In a town where many of those founders worked desperately hard and many struggled even with the language, they had the courage to ask the Holy Spirit to come and bless a temple named for the two great leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. They shared a vision with the apostles, to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to every land, people and language—so that we, people they never met, could worship the same God they worshipped with such dedication and trust.

In this hundredth year, let us be encouraged: God wants to bless our church and make it thrive. He wants it to grow strong, to be a beacon of light to those who are lost and confused, a haven of love for all those who draw near. Our Father in heaven honors the founders and benefactors of this parish, who had the vision to establish the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Meriden and the dedication to continue the work to the present day. And our Father desires that we not only remember and celebrate our fathers and mothers who did this work but also be inspired to even greater efforts.

It may seem too difficult for us, but for God all things are possible. Remember that the entire Church looks for her guide to a handful of apostles — not the great, powerful, clever or rich, but people who trusted in God and who were faithful to the Gospel, the “Good News.”

We do not have to be anything other than who we are to serve God. We do not have to have anything other than the gifts God has already given us to join Him in the work of building up our church. That work is not small or easy —

if we want our church to thrive, everyone will have to make personal sacrifices. But if we hold back our lives from God, if we do not make the health and mission of the church our first priority, we should not be surprised if God takes from us the gifts we already have.

The Scriptures assure us that if we offer our best, our “first-fruits,” to God, our Father in heaven will honor them. He will take that small offering, bless it, and return it to us a hundred-fold in ways we cannot imagine.

We have already received amazing blessings in return for what our church community has offered over the past one hundred years—or even the past five years, or one! Who could have imagined the stories that have been bound together in the one story of SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church? Who has not been blessed by an elder who shares wisdom from the past generations? Who has not been blessed by a newcomer full of joy and gratitude? And, if we continue to trust and work hand in hand with our Lord, what new blessings might we encounter?

So “let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life to Christ our God!” If we follow Jesus Christ wholeheartedly, we can be sure that we will find many challenges but also the fulfillment of our life's purpose and lasting joy.

Yours in Christ,

F. John S. Mosher



Around the Parish

Our patronal feast of the Holy Apostles Peter & Paul on June 29 is an especially full occasion this year, in honor of our 100th anniversary. We will celebrate with Vespers and Liturgy, June 28, at 6 PM, conclude the feast with an **Akathist Service to SS. Peter & Paul on Wednesday, June 29**, at 6 PM, **followed by a picnic** for the whole neighborhood. We hope you can join us!

We are looking forward to the baptism of **Charlotte Anne Lombardi**, daughter of Charles and Stacey and granddaughter of David and Irene Zavednak, on Saturday, July 9, at 11 AM.

We are getting ready to rent the apartment in our apartment house next door to the church. **Please make any referrals** to John Stoidis or any member of the parish council.

We are now only a few months away from our **Parish Anniversary Celebration, Oct. 8–9**. Please make your plans to attend, and in particular, please let us know whether you will attend the dinner on Sunday, Oct. 9—contact Irene White (203-269-8655) or Irene Zavednak (203-484-4071).

Youth Rally 2011 is set for August 8–13. Youth Rally is our annual diocesan summer camp for youth who have completed 5th grade and have not reached their 18th birthday. It takes place at the Campgrounds of the Greek Orthodox Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center, Contoocook, New Hampshire. For further information and to request registration materials, please contact Fr. John Hopko, Youth Rally Director, at (860) 582-3631, or email saintcyril@snet.net. NOTE: The deadline for registration is July 11, 2011.

Youth Rally also needs volunteers over 18 years of age to serve on the staff. Adult Staff Members need to be active Orthodox Christian communicants of at least 18 years old who have the blessing of their parish priest (i.e, the priest who regularly hears their confession) to participate and who have been approved as staff by Fr. John Hopko, Rally Director, on behalf of the Diocese of New England.

Looking ahead to August, the **Dormition Fast begins on Aug. 1**. It always lasts two weeks, in preparation for the Feast of the Dormition (Falling-Asleep) of the Theotokos on Aug. 15.

National Night Out will be taking place once again in City Park, our “front yard,” on Tuesday, Aug. 2. We plan to be a part of this community-building celebration, which will include more than 60 organizations all encouraging Meriden kids to find opportunities for their energies. We will be serving lemonade, talking to inquirers and inviting visitors into our church. If you are able to come for any part of the evening, please speak to Fr. Joshua or John Stoidis.

Please support **ONE Stewards** in your giving! ONE Stewards is the annual campaign of the Diocese of New England to support its outreach ministries through free-will offerings. We have a special message from the Treasurer of ONE Stewards, Protodeacon Paul Nimcheck: We are nearing our budget goal of \$20,000 for the first time in several years. Please make a summer donation to ONE Stewards using the reply envelope that was included with the last issue of the ONE Newsletter. With your help we will exceed our \$20,000 goal in support of the diocesan Youth Rally, our diocesan Missions, our diocesan Seminarians, and our diocesan charitable offerings. Thank you for your continued support.