

The Faithful Servant

Volume 16, No. 4

July/August, 2011

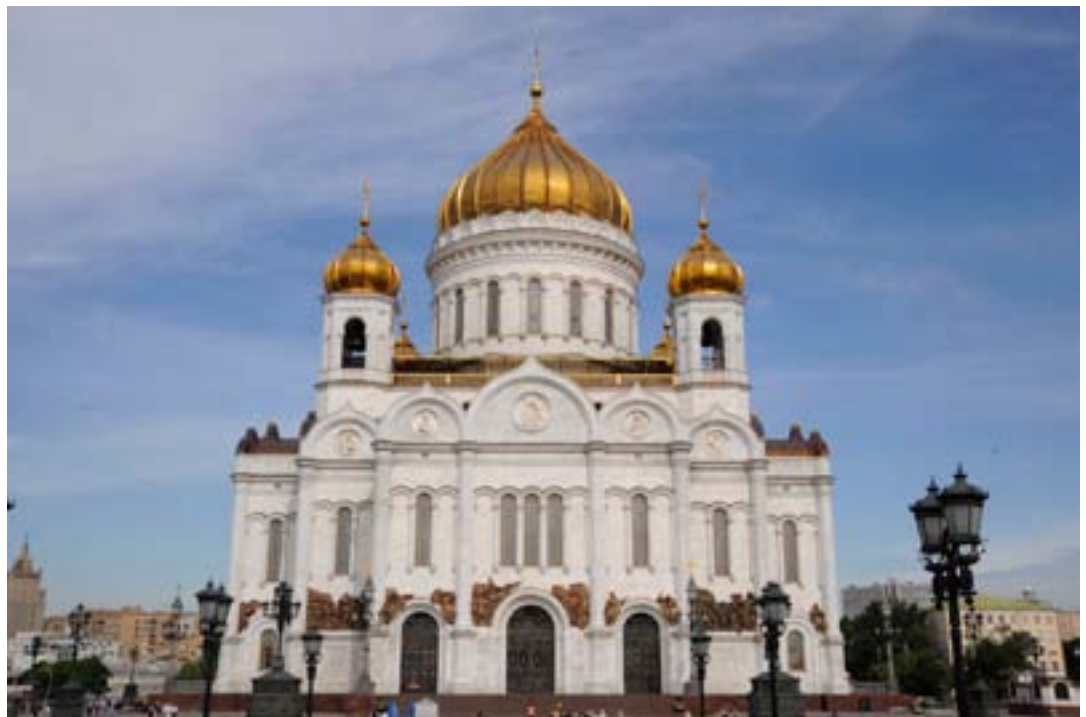
Orthodox Domes in Russia

American Orthodox Christians feel a closeness to Russia because of Russia's long association with the Orthodox Church. Visitors to Russia are always impressed by the many elements in Russian history and architecture influenced by the Orthodox Church. Pictured here are several sights attractive to American Orthodox visitors to Russia



Right—Profusion of Orthodox Domes in the Kremlin in Moscow

Below—Christ the Savior Cathedral is the largest and most expensive in Moscow. Originally built over 5 decades in the 19th century, the cathedral was a monument to Russia's victory over Napoleon. It was razed in the 1930's and a large indoor/outdoor swimming pool was built. In 1994, the pool was drained and the cathedral was reconstructed. The domes are plated with gold alloy. The cathedral is on the banks of the Moscow river. It is the venue for huge Orthodox conferences and many official ceremonies.



Notes and Notices

The month of July is a fairly slow one in the life of our Church: people gone for vacation, few activities planned, few major-level feast days that we are celebrating in our parish. Though things do pick up in August (Dormition and its Fast, Transfiguration, more Name Days, etc.), I often think it would be good in these pages simply to address some current aspects of our Church life at St. Catherine's in the mid-summer newsletter. So here 'tis.

Many newcomers in recent weeks and months. A blessing in and of itself, true, but even more



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Orthodox Church
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www.saint-catherine-church.net/

Saturday Vespers: 6:30 PM
Sunday Divine Liturgy: 10AM
Church School:
11:30 AM Sept through May

Priest: V.Rev. Fr. Dennis Buck

Assisting Priests:
V.Rev. Fr. John Mason (Ret.)
Rev. Fr. Alister Anderson (Ret.)

Council President:
Gene Aleshin

Council Immediate Past President
David Heatwole

Council Vice President:
June Aleshin

Council Treasurer:
Dennis Powell

Council Secretary
Erin Mumma

so when we observe that many of them are more than eager to be assisting in so many tasks, and simply to be immersed in the life of our parish. First of all, there soon will be another round of instruction classes forming. If interested, let Fr. Dennis know so we can discuss meeting times and get sufficient materials. Meanwhile, the book discussion group meets the first Sunday of each month (7/3 & 8/7); and July 31, our "5th Sunday Speakers' Series" continues with Fr. Igor Soroka of Donora, PA, a pioneer in setting Church music into English, speaking to us about his work over the years. There will be a luncheon.

Also, those newcomers should also realize that by the time this issue runs its course, we will fast be approaching our biggest fundraiser of the year, Boonesboro Days, the weekend after Labor Day. Have no fear, Newcomers, there will be plenty for you to do, and you WILL be approached about it! The good news is that it can be a rather enjoyable experience, especially working together in the booth; and you will have ample opportunities to get to know your St. Catherine's brothers and sisters so much better!

And in answer to your questions, O Newcomers, we finance St. Catherine's by a pledge system. Pledge cards are available around church or from a council member, and we will begin to solicit for 2012 also around the time of the next newsletter issue in the fall. Details to follow. Thank you for bringing this up yourselves, and for all you do already for the church!

Meanwhile, let us who have been here a while recognize that our openness and warmth towards visitors and newcomers continues to be a strength of St. Catherine's. Recent guests have made favorable comments about this recently. Well done to all! Let us continue to be open and welcoming to all who approach the Church of Christ in good faith. Our growth and even survival as a local church depends upon it! And let us also be grateful to God for recent growth and for His grace towards us to deal with it appropriately.

Another strength of our parish is its children. Their numbers also continue to grow while they continue to show their own openness and joy about their life in Christ and so easily develop relationships with other little brothers and sisters in Christ. A true joy to behold! Our policy at St. Catherine's is that the place of children in the church is just that—IN THE CHURCH! And, by the way, visitors have also commented favorably on the presence of our children at Liturgy.

Two suggestions come to mind. First, there are those times when small children can be disruptive. We generally grant a lot of leeway towards the children, knowing their importance in the life and growth of St. Catherine's (and isn't it blessedly eerie at those times of the Liturgy when all the children—even babes in arms—are totally quiet?). There are those times, though, when common sense suggests that a bit of "time out" would calm a distressed young child down. Feel free to take that time out with the child, but do understand, we want you both back in with us as soon as possible!

Secondly, while the youngest children may need some distraction, we parents need to develop some discretion as to when it is time to "wean" them from the use of toys and such to keep them still. My own opinion is that as they enter

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Parish Council Invites Member Participation

Meetings of your Parish Council are normally held the second Sunday of the month after Church School (please consult the weekly Bulletin for changes). All Parishioners are encouraged to attend and participate (the Council is not a closed club). You may comment and/or introduce subjects for discussion. If you wish to introduce anything at a Council meeting, it is best to contact the President so that it can be placed on the Agenda. However, only Council members may vote.



Left—On Kizhi Island, 250 miles NE of St. Petersburg is the 22 domed Church of Transfiguration of our Savior (1714). It is made entirely of wood. Services were held here only in the summer.

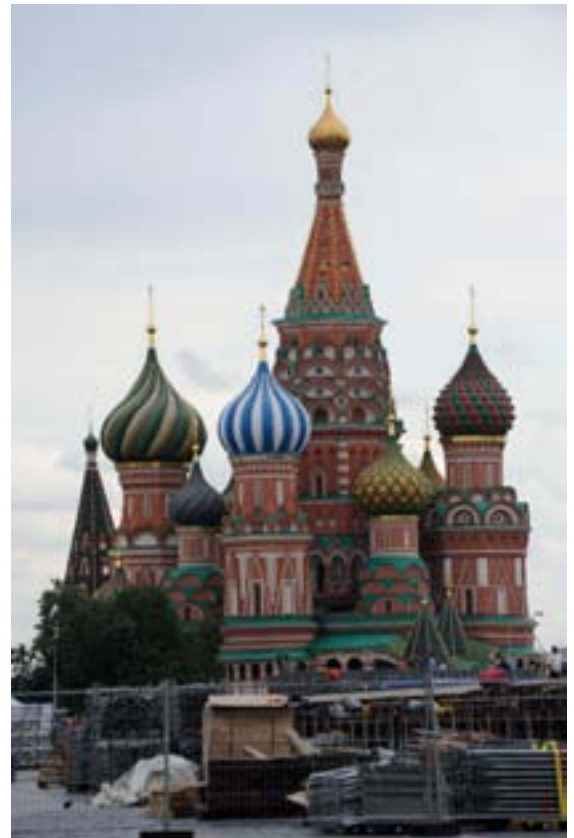
Right—Uglich, 136 miles north of Moscow on the Volga river, is the site of the Church of St. Dmitry on the Blood



Left—Church of the Savior on the Spilled Blood, is the most photographed church in St. Petersburg. It was built on the site where Czar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881.

Right—St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square in Moscow. It is essentially a union of 9 different churches and styles and 9 different chapels, beneath 9 domes, each unique in size, form, and color

(Photos by Carlo LaFiandra)



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Notes and Notices

elementary school age, it is time for them to begin to develop an awareness of what's going on around them in church. Encouraging their singing the responses could help, I think—the many “Lord, have mercy”s could be a start. A gift of a child's prayer book may also be helpful, and we can get them for the parish bookstore.

Of course, we ourselves still need to see to our timeliness for services—among other things, a matter of good example for our kids. Liturgy is at 10, and, lo and behold, we're beginning (starting the censuring, at least) right around then. But anyone who has a task during Liturgy—servers, singers, readers—should really be in church early to make sure all is arranged and in order for you by the time the service begins. There are other specific notes I'd like to address with the singers, readers and servers, and I'll do so soon.

Those who have tasks on the “work rotation” or other tasks after Liturgy—cleaning the church or coffee hour, baking, taking the collection, teaching Church School, etc.—need to make sure they have arranged a substitute if they know they'll be away on

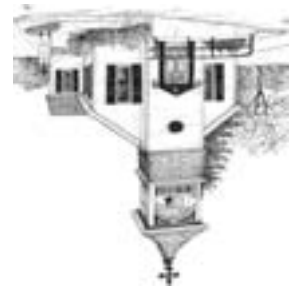
a given Sunday. Please do not assume someone else will just be around to step in. It has sometimes happened that the assumed “substitute” isn't there also. A simple phone call during the preceding week takes care of everything.

Another subject I'll address in more detail another time is confession. It is not an option. It is part and parcel of the Christian life. If any of us have heard elsewhere that it is not, or only for the most extreme cases of the most extreme sins, I tell you that this is wrong, the priest (or whoever) that told you this is wrong, and I'd say so to his face—and have done so at least once that I remember. There is more need for teaching about this in the near future. For now, I point out the availability of the pastor for confession Saturday nights before or after Vespers or by appointment, and that the approaching Fast (8/1-14) before Dormition would be an ideal time to come.

It is a good time at St. Catherine's. The “summer slump” isn't so severe so far. Attendance is good, once everyone's there. There is fervent prayer offered in good order, good fellowship, growth, activity, financial stability. We would be demonstrating our thanksgiving to God by working to assure that these blessings continue in our midst, and addressing the issues where we fall short.

F. Dennis

*Boonsboro Days
September 10-11
Are you ready!!*



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