

keeping himself in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and selfish ambition.

Seeing these examples before us, we need the light of Christ's Nativity in our world darkened with confusion, anxiety, and temptations. We might struggle to see this light in our suffering world, racked by a pandemic, and with societal changes coming at an alarming rate. We acutely feel the words of St. Paul: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:22-23).

Be encouraged! It is into our world, "groaning in travail," that our Deliverer is born. God in His love for mankind did not leave the world in darkness but came as its Savior. Even today Christ has "shone to the world the light of wisdom" (Nativity Troparion). We can see this light by unreservedly following the gospel and trading the earthly for the heavenly. Because of the light which shines from the cave this morning, the shadows of ignorance are dispelled and we are able to perceive the world as an object of God's eternal love. For Herod, Christ's Nativity brought anxiety and a troubled heart. For us today, we are offered illumination and joy. Like the shepherds, Magi, and angels let us behold the Incarnation of the Son of God with reverence and pious hope, in full knowledge that the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16) is born for our redemption.

With all the blessings of the Feast,
I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+ ***Tikhon***

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Rector's Letter, January, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters:

We rejoice in the blessings of the past year, concluding in the Feast of the Nativity. Please read His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon's Nativity letter to us, enclosed in this issue. We also are eagerly looking forward to engaging with the opportunities of the coming year. Please read and respond to the enclosed materials on Parish Ministries. The Lord accepts what we offer from our lives, multiplies our efforts beyond our wildest imaginations, and returns them to us in a hundred-fold new blessings.

Yours in Christ,



Around the Parish

Thank you to everyone who worked faithfully to prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord: cleaning and decorating the church, all the aspects of our Christmas flowers, our choir, our altar servers, and all the details attended to behind the scenes. May the Lord bless you.

We begin January with the **Feast of the Theophany** ("manifestation as God") of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, on Jan. 6. We celebrate that,

when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and the Father proclaimed that Jesus was his Only-Begotten Son. Though in America it is overshadowed by Christmas, the Theophany is at least as important to us as Christians. We will celebrate Vespers of Theophany, with the Great Blessing of Water, on Wednesday, Jan. 5, at 6 PM. On Thursday, Jan. 6, we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Theophany at 9:30.

With the Theophany and the Blessing of Water, we enter **the season of house blessings**. Our homes need this spiritual “spring cleaning” each year to free them from the remembrance of sin and fill them with the presence of the Holy Spirit. All that is required is that you prepare a list of the living and departed that you wish to commemorate, and set up a candle and bowl of holy water before an icon. (Fr. Joshua brings holy water, too, in case anyone needs more.) Please sign up for a time on the sheets provided at the candle desk, or contact Fr. Joshua if none of the times are convenient.

Our services in the temple are streamed via Facebook and Youtube. You can most easily find them on our website: <https://sspeterpaul.org/media> .

Please remember that, if severe weather conditions force **church service or event cancellations**, announcements will be posted on WFSB (channel 3) and WNBC/WVIT (channel 30), as well as on our own parish website: <www.sspeterpaul.org>.

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon Nativity of our Lord 2021

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,
CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

I greet you all today on this Great Feast of our illumination. At the Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great for this Feast we sing:

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy virgin, the whole universe was filled with light. The shepherds watched in the fields. The wise men worshiped and the angels sang. But Herod was troubled, for God had appeared in the flesh. He is the Savior of our souls!

(Third Sticheron at “Lord, I Call”)

The Lord’s entry into the world invites us all to pursue this spiritual illumination, which is Christ, the Wisdom of God Himself. In the Gospel we read of the shepherds who leave their pastures to find the Infant Christ. Likewise, Magi, the wise men from the East, traveled in pursuit of true Wisdom, which they found lying in a manger. They came at great cost and with great effort to worship Christ and offer their gifts to Him. In return, the darkness of their hearts was lifted, and they left, refusing to return to Herod, but instead “departed to their own country by another way” (Mt 2:12).

But we know that not everyone wants this light that our Lord offers. Herod did not. We remember that he also pursued the Wisdom of God. But instead of seeking illumination from Him, Herod sought His blood, preferring earthly power to heavenly blessings. His vision was too narrow to see that in guarding his throne he was

**SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
Meriden, Connecticut**

***Mission:** "SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church is a local Christian community of the OCA in Meriden, Connecticut and serving the surrounding area. We offer the love of Christ to all, both in words and in actions. Grateful for God's gifts, we work to expand the mission of Christ."*

January 2022

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As the new year begins, we thank God for the many blessings in 2021 which He has bestowed upon us individually, and for the abundant growth and prosperity which SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church experienced. Truly, we are blessed, and we love the Lord and his Church.

In the new year, it is important for us to organize ourselves to sustain our Parish and move forward. We would like to remind you of the various opportunities for ministry in our Parish and areas in need of assistance. Stewardship involves meeting our financial commitment. In addition, there are volunteer ministries and other opportunities for us to commit ourselves to our Church and to share our God-given skills, interests, and talents.

At our Annual Parish Meeting, we overwhelmingly voted to remain at our present location. This year, a major goal is sustainability and growth. We will explore the possibility of expanding our parking and providing handicap accessibility to and in the temple. Several people have expressed an interest in this initiative. We are forming an Ad Hoc Exploratory Team to research options, gather information from City officials, and seek professional advice to aid in our decision making. We are optimistic that several parishioners will volunteer their time, expertise, and knowledge to this endeavor.

In addition to this special undertaking, the work of our Church must be performed on a weekly and monthly basis. Enclosed is a form identifying Parish Ministry Activities with a brief description of each. We ask that you prayerfully consider how you, and your family, may assist our Parish in doing the work to which Jesus Christ has called us.

Please prayerfully consider ministries and complete the enclosed form by January 23 and return it to Donna Leonowich or Father Joshua.

In Christ,

Father Joshua Mosher

Donna Leonowich, President

Opportunities for Volunteer Ministry at SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

God gives us all the opportunity to serve in many ways, but sometimes it is hard to see how best to dedicate ourselves to the Church. Below are diverse ways in which you may serve the Lord at SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church. Some are fairly obvious, while others are unseen but crucial to our mission.

Please prayerfully consider the opportunities for ministry and let us know the area(s) in which you are willing to serve. You may envision a ministry which we have not identified. By all means, share your thoughts with us.

	Volunteer Ministry	Coordinator
1	WORSHIP SERVICES	
	Before Services: Candle Desk, candle and lamp lighting, greeting worshippers Lighting the Cross: Special weekly commemorations	Fr. Joshua and PC President
	During Services: Altar Servers, Readers, Choir	Fr. Joshua and Choir Director
	After Services: snuffing candles, putting away service books	Fr. Joshua
2	PREPARING CHURCH FOR SERVICES AND SEASONS	
	Baking Bread for the Liturgy and Vigils	Fr. Joshua
	Altar Guild: Preparing, maintaining and changing sacred coverings, vestments, and lamps	Fr. Joshua
	Preparation for Special Seasons: Nativity, Great Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Pascha, SS. Peter & Paul, and others Holy Days: Preparation, decorating and cleanup	Fr. Joshua and PC President
	Flowers and Decorations: Christmas, Pascha, veneration of the Cross, Pentecost, Transfiguration, Dormition, and others	Fr. Joshua and Parish Council
3	COFFEE HOUR, SPECIAL EVENTS, AND HOSPITALITY	
	Coffee Hour Coordinator: Prepare calendar, check supplies, oversee weekly presentation	Coffee Hour Coordinator
	Weekly Hosts and Hostesses: Set up serving table, provide refreshments, cleanup	Coffee Hour Coordinator
	Special Events: Plan and manage Parish Picnic, etc.	Parish Council
	Hospitality: Welcome newcomers and build stronger ties with the parish	Growth/Outreach Committee and Every Parishioner

4	PARISH COMMUNICATIONS	
	Weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, online contributions; parish directory and other informational materials; stewardship information; management of bulletin board	Fr. Joshua, PC President
	Special Events: Contact with local media, other Orthodox parishes, advertising and publicity Exterior Signage	Growth/Outreach Committee
	Live-streaming of services, online meetings, audio-visual needs of the parish	Fr. Joshua, Technology Committee
5	PARISH PROPERTIES MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR	
	Internal: minor repairs and identifying problems External: Beautification, flowers, shrubs, general cleanup and repairs	Building Committee
	Apartment House: Internal and external maintenance and repairs	Apartment House Committee
	Cemetery: Maintenance and Repairs	Cemetery Committee
6	SERVING THOSE IN NEED	
	Visitations: Visit those in need, sick, home-bound, in prison Deliveries: Parishioners and neighbors, food baskets and special treats Addressing urgent needs in our community	Fr. Joshua, Growth/Outreach Committee
	New charitable outreach ideas and efforts	Charity Fund Committee
7	EDUCATION	
	Church School Education: Program for Children Adult Education: Special programs and retreats	Fr. Joshua, M. Jenny, and Church School Teachers
	Bookstore: Order, stock, and inventory Library: Maintain and improve	Fr. Joshua and Parish Council
8	OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM	
	Living a life full of the love of Jesus Christ Inviting friends and family to services and events	Fr. Joshua and Every Parishioner
	New ideas and efforts to broaden and deepen connections with our neighbors and community, to encourage inquiry into Orthodoxy, and to welcome more into the life of our parish	Fr. Joshua and Growth & Outreach Committee

9	MATERIAL SUPPORT OF THE PARISH	
	Pledging and Stewardship: giving responsibly to the needs of the Parish and of others Donations: Items, time, and work	Fr. Joshua, Parish Council, and Every Parishioner
	Fund Raising Events and Special Collections	Parish Council and Finance Committee

January 2022,

Recognizing that SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church needs my talent and help, I have prayerfully considered how to best serve God and his Church during the upcoming year.

I am willing to become a member of the Ad Hoc Exploratory Team:

I wish to volunteer my time and talents to the following ministries:

In addition to the ministries identified, I would like to suggest the Parish consider working on:

Signature

Printed Name

To form our teams and begin our ministries in a timely manner, please return to Father Joshua or Donna Leonowich by Sunday, January 23.

Thank you.