

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК
PARISH NEWSLETTER

~ Number 73, February 2008 ~

PARISH LIFE IN JANUARY 2008

Although we did not have the major services on Christmas Day or the feast of Theophany, January was a busy month. Our service on Sunday January 6th, Christmas Eve, was well-attended, with many people assisting with the Old Testament readings at Vespers immediately after Divine Liturgy. Christmas gift bags were presented to the children at the end of the service, in anticipation of the approaching feast. A small number of people - around 15 - returned to church the following evening for Great Vespers on Christmas Day.

As Father James served at the Russian Orthodox Church of the Theophany - a parish of the Moscow Patriarchate - in Newcastle on Theophany, the customary Great Blessing of Water took place in our parish on the second day of the feast, Sunday January 20th. Over 80 people were in church that day, with many visitors and holidaymakers from Sydney joining our usual congregation. The choir under Olga Itsikson's direction sang beautifully, and many people afterwards remarked positively on both the service and on parish life.

As an aside, it is customary to bless water twice on the feast of the Theophany. The first blessing, on the Eve of Theophany, is in church, and then on the day of the feast itself, if possible, there is a procession "to the Jordan": a nearby river, lake, or bay. For most parishes this is impossible, but something for us to consider in future is making our way down to Brisbane Water and having the Great Blessing of Water there, followed by a parish BBQ.

On the afternoon of Sunday 20th and on the two days following, Father James travelled around the parish, blessing homes with the Holy Water. This is always spiritually uplifting, as well as an opportunity for Father James to meet and converse with parish families in their own homes.

On Monday January 21st, five children from our parish departed for the annual camp of the National Organisation of Russian Scouts (NORS), a fine organisation to which a number of our parishioners once belonged. The camp was held this year at the Mount Keira Scout Camp near Wollongong. Father James attended the camp on Friday January 25th and served a moleben for camp participants, afterwards leading a beseda on the topic of the Holy Right-Believing Grand-Duke Alexander Nevsky, the patron saint of the Sydney NORS troop.

On Saturday January 26th, Father James and parishioner Philip Clarke attended Divine Liturgy at the church of All Saints of Russia in Croydon for the ordination of Subdeacon Martin Naef to the rank of deacon. At the same service, Deacon David Lloyd was ordained to the priesthood. As has been advised in previous newsletters, Deacon Martin will serve

our parish here in Gosford. At a festive lunch after the service, Father James presented the newly-ordained Father Martin with an icon of Saint Panteleimon on behalf of our parish. On Sunday January 27th Father James and the Wallsend congregation once again joined with the Theophany parish in Newcastle on the occasion of Archbishop Hilarion's visit there. Other clergy serving were Father Alexander Filchakov, the parish rector; Protodeacon Alexander Kotlaroff from Strathfield; and Father Milic Rakic, the Serbian Orthodox priest for Newcastle and the Central Coast.

Parish Council did not meet during January. Father James and Sophia Kfoury worked on the preparation of the financial records for our forthcoming Annual General Meeting. A number of administrative projects remain underway. The Parish Council will meet for the first time in 2008 on Tuesday February 19th.

Parishioners are asked to give thought to possible developments in parish life this year, particularly educational activities such as discussion and study groups for adults and religious instruction for our children, and to share their ideas with Father James and other members of the Parish Council.

PARISH LIFE: NEW FACES

Some new faces in church on January 20th were Margaret Valenta and her children Damian and Samantha, from Lisarow, all of whom will be regularly attending our services. Damian helped the younger boys in the altar that day, and will continue to do so. We welcome Margaret and her children into the life of our parish.

Joining us regularly as of Sunday February 3rd will be our new deacon, Father Martin Naef, his wife Tatiana, and their children Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian. The Naef family are not new faces, having visited us before, but are a welcome regular addition. We pray that the Lord will bless Father Martin and his family as they serve here.

PARISH LIFE: FUNDRAISING AND CHARITABLE WORK

Although a final total amount is not yet available, our Nativity Fast collection for the Russian Children's Fund was a successful one, raising a generous amount to assist large needy families in Russia. The total collected will be published in the next newsletter. God willing, Katya Rubbo will pass on our contribution to the fund when she visits Russia later this year.

Our 5th Annual Fishing Competition is now almost upon us. Information about the fishing competition, an important fundraising event for our parish, has been given in previous newsletters and is available in church and on our website. All parishioners and friends are encouraged to support this event. A portion of the funds raised will go to a charitable cause, either Gosford Hospital or Volunteer Maritime Rescue.

Katya Lugovoy is planning a fundraising concert to be held at the Russian Club in Strathfield later this year. Assistance will be required for organisation on the day; those able to help should talk to either Katya or Olga Petroff.

Although we have only a little over \$40000 remaining on our mortgage, fundraising activities such as the fishing competition and the planned concert remain of ongoing importance. By reducing what we owe on the mortgage so quickly we have saved a great deal on interest payments, and will thereby strengthen the longer term financial position of our small parish.

PARISH LIFE: DIVINE SERVICES

A schedule of services covering the autumn months (March, April and May) has been prepared, and will be available in church from Sunday February 17th. This schedule sets out the services for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. As in previous years we will have services on most Wednesday and Sunday evenings during Great Lent, as well as regular services on four weekends.

Some key services to note are Forgiveness Vespers at 5.00pm on Sunday March 9th, Compline with the Great Canon on the first four nights of Great Lent, and the service of General Anointing at 6.00pm on Monday April 21st. Archbishop Hilarion will be present for this latter service. Those wishing to be anointed at this service should take care to confess at some stage during Great Lent.

Although the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, Sunday March 30th, is the fifth Sunday in that month, the service that day will be a regular service rather than an English-only service. Our English-only services will not recommence until August this year, the fifth Sunday in June being the feast of All Saints of Russia, the patronal feast of the Croydon parish.

Many have asked Father James whether or not there will be a midnight Easter service in Gosford this year. At the beginning of 2006 he decided that the midnight service would be held in the parish whose "regular" Sunday it was. This was considered necessary as by alternating from year to year, it was possible for one parish to have services three Sundays in a row - Palm Sunday, Easter, and Thomas Sunday - while the other had none at all, and this at the most important time of the church year. On the assumption that one parish would have to miss out for the foreseeable future, the schedule was as follows:

Year	Date of Easter	Sunday	Parish in which there will be a midnight service
2006	23-Apr	4th	Newcastle
2007	8-Apr	2nd	Newcastle
2008	27-Apr	4th	Newcastle
2009	19-Apr	3rd	Gosford
2010	4-Apr	1st	Gosford
2011	24-Apr	4th	Newcastle
2012	15-Apr	3rd	Gosford
2013	5-May	1st	Gosford
2014	20-Apr	3rd	Gosford
2015	12-Apr	2nd	Newcastle

It can be seen that each parish has 5 Midnight Easter services over a 10-year period. It is possible, of course, that circumstances may change such that all the Easter services are conducted in both parishes.

PARISH LIFE: OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Sunday March 2nd, 2008. An announcement to this effect will be made in church each Sunday from February 3rd onwards. Parish members will be given a Notice of Meeting and Agenda that day, together with a copy of the 2006 AGM minutes and a nomination form for Parish Council. Those members not in church will have these documents posted to them. This meeting will not be postponed further and all members are asked to set aside time to attend. The meeting should take no longer than one hour. As this meeting is a late 2007 AGM, members should also expect a second AGM this year - the 2008 AGM - in November, as is usual.

PARISH LIFE: OUR BOOKSTORE

A number of books, icons and other items have now been set out in our new display shelves in the church hall. Two sizeable book orders have been placed, with a range of interesting titles - and some DVDs - coming from both Russia and the United States. We expect this material to arrive over the next few weeks, just in time for Great Lent! We hope that the bookstore will grow in time to be an important part of the life of our parish, supplying edifying spiritual literature and other items to our parishioners and friends. Questions about the bookstall can be directed to Chris Dowling in person or by email at bookstore@gosfordrussianchurch.org.au.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

Ioanna, Anatoly and family

The sick & suffering: Our parishioner Victor (Manjetny); and also for Zinaida, Vasili, Vera, Eugenia, Olga, Margaret, Galina, George, Tatiana and Daniel

Newly-ordained: Deacon Martin Naef and his family Tatiana, Xenia, Alexander and Sebastian; Priest David Lloyd and his family

Departed: Metropolitan Vitaly, and former parishioners and benefactors Irina (Kamenev), Nun Maria, George (Kraihin), Theodore & Antonina (Tialshinsky), Lyubov (Smieska), Victor (Pulkownik), Olga (Timohina), Alexander (Dikan)



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