Dormition of the Mother of God
Greek Orthodox Church
600 South Willard Street • Burlington, Vermont

Hail, Bridge that truly leads from death to life all who praise you... – Akathist Hymn

Χαίρε, η γεφυρά οντως η μεταγουσα εκ θανατου παντας τους ιμνουντας σε... – Ακαθιστον Ύμνον
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Vice President
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Secretary
Greg Lambesis (524-3840)

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(Popary member)
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Jacqueline Maria (862-7372)
Sotos Papaseraphim (878-1163)
Nectar Rorris (863-4375)

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Rev. Protopresbyter Robert Athas

Mailings Volunteer

Pat Oleszkiewicz

Sponsor of this issue of The Bridge • Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ

Voula Zonatos, in memory of her husband, Nicholas Zonatos

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Voula Zonatos (878-5475)

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Sunday Church School Director
Presvytera Aimee Ehrs
(217) 621-8260
aimee.ehrs@gmail.com

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Choir Director
Presvytera Anthe Athas

Cantor
Vasilios Contis

Theodora Contis
Zoe Griffing
Paul Henninge
Aleka Michaelides
Maria Michaelides
Mariana Moscin
Constance Thomas

Order of AHEPA

President
Gregory Lambesis

Altar Servers

Thomas Dede
Justin Griffing
Nicholas Rorris

Sponsors needed! This newsletter is our main outreach ministry, sending the message of faith and community to all the members of our parish and others. As a sponsor, you become an important partner in this ministry. Donation: $50 or more.

Please send the following information to Fr. Ephraim:

☐ Yes! I will sponsor an issue of THE BRIDGE • Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ.

Name ____________________________________________
In honor or memory of / To celebrate ____________________
“Christmas is love.” Yes, so they say. But why?
The wonder of Christmas is the coming of our Lord as an innocent, fragile human child. Imagine! The King who holds the universe in the palm of his hand humbled himself by taking on flesh and becoming human. The human creatures flunked God’s first test, in the fall of Adam and Eve. Christmas, or more precisely the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is a celebration of deep, infinite love. The marvel is that God chose to make humans not only knowing full well we could fail in fulfilling our role as priests of God’s creation, but also knowing our potential for falling from grace (and losing some of His angels in the deal), He created us out of love. Our God, as a communion of three individual persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the origin of intimate and infinite love. God poured out his love in creation.

It is also through this love that the Son was born in a cave to a virgin and submitted to being raised as a young babe. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, but he grew up like any other child. He played, he laughed, he learned a trade from his stepfather, St. Joseph the Caregiver. He grew up as a righteous Jewish man and began His ministry as the son of God. It is the most gracious and deep love story we can participate in.

How are we to even begin to respond to such love? This is done best by giving back to God through participation in the Church and contributing to helping the poor and those in need of forgiveness and love. The response must be one of mercy and compas-

sion, recognizing that all people have the imprint of God in them. That is to say, the child born unto us is present in all our lives. Personal prayer, fasting, and good deeds are crucial in the spiritual journey toward divination. However, participation in the worship of the Church is not optional. The Church has to be our center and focus. It is here that we find Jesus Christ, where we personally receive him in Holy Communion. The liturgical worship of the Church is not just Father’s job, but everyone’s job. So the best response to God’s immense love for us is to be invested in our Church liturgically, economically, and socially.

“Christ is born! Glorify Him!” And that’s what we say.

We sing this during the Nativity fast leading up to the great feast of the Nativity, and it will be our greeting from December 25 until Theophany on January 6. Jesus says in the Gospel according to St. John:

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. As the Father loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love. (John 15:5–9)

This “abiding” means participating fully in the body of Christ. It is how we fully receive the gift of Christmas—God’s love—and love Him in return.
# December 2013

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<th>Sun</th>
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<td>1 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy</td>
<td>2 7:00 am Liturgy (St. Porphyrios)</td>
<td>3 9:30–11:30 am Father’s office hours</td>
<td>4 7:00 am Liturgy (St. Barbara and St. John of Damascus) 5:30 pm Vespers followed by Bible Study</td>
<td>5 7:00 am Orthros 2:00–5:00 Father’s office hours 5:00 pm Great Vespers 7:00 pm Ward 6 Neighborhood meeting</td>
<td>6 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy 6:00 pm Small Paraclesis</td>
<td>7 9:30 am Orthros 10:00 am Orthodoxy 101 10:00 am Prosforo baking class 5:00 pm Great Vespers</td>
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<td>8 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy Parish Council meeting</td>
<td>9 9:00 am Liturgy (Conception of the Theotokos)</td>
<td>10 9:30–11:30 am Father’s office hours</td>
<td>11 5:30 pm Vespers followed by Bible Study</td>
<td>12 7:00 am Orthros 2:00–5:00 Father’s office hours</td>
<td>13 6:00 pm Small Paraclesis</td>
<td>14 9:30 am Orthros 10 am Orth. 101 10 am Youth gathering &amp; rehearsal 2 pm Philoptochos meeting at Theodora Contis’s home 5:00 pm Great Vespers</td>
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<td>Coffee hour: Voula Zonatos</td>
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<td>15 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy Christmas Pageant</td>
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<td>17 7:00 am Liturgy (Three Holy Youths) 9:30–11:30 am Father’s office hours</td>
<td>18 5:30 pm Vespers followed by Bible Study</td>
<td>19 7:00 am Orthros 2:00–5:00 Father’s office hours</td>
<td>20 9:00 am Liturgy (St. Ignatius of Antioch) 6:00 pm Small Paraclesis</td>
<td>21 9:30 am Orthros 10:00 am Orthodoxy 101 5:00 pm Great Vespers</td>
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<td>Coffee hour: St. Nicholas breakfast</td>
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<td>22 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy</td>
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<td>24 9:00 am Royal Hours 5:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil (Nativity of the Lord)</td>
<td>25 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy (Nativity of the Lord)</td>
<td>26 9:00 am Liturgy (Synaxis of the Theotokos) 2:00–5:00 Father’s office hours</td>
<td>27 9:00 am Liturgy (St. Stephen) 6:00 pm Small Paraclesis</td>
<td>28 9:30 am Orthros 10:00 am Orthodoxy 101 5:00 pm Great Vespers</td>
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<td>Coffee hour: Prez. Anthe</td>
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<td>29 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy</td>
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<td>31 9:30–11:30 am Father’s office hours 5:00 pm Great Vespers</td>
<td>1 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy (Circumcision of the Lord; St. Basil the Great)</td>
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<td>Coffee hour: Rorris family</td>
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<td>Philoptochos News &amp; Announcements</td>
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<td>Philoptochos means “friend of the poor.”</td>
<td>All women of our parish are invited to become members.</td>
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<td>♥ Thank you! Thank you! Thank you to all of you who made the Fall Bake Sale a success! Thank you to those of you who made pastries and those of you who made donations. Thank you to everyone who helped bake and sell, and to all the unsung heroes who helped in many other ways.</td>
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<td>♥ Look for the article in this newsletter about the NEW CAN TAB PROJECT for the Burlington RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE. Start saving yours now!</td>
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<td>♥ By DECEMBER 15, please drop a new, unwrapped toy in the Toys for Kids of Vermont barrel.</td>
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<td>♥ Mark your calendars:</td>
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<td>♥ Saturday, December 14, 2:00 pm: Meeting &amp; Christmas get-together hosted by Theodora Contis at her home Contact Prez. Anthe at 865-4416 or <a href="mailto:prezanthe@aol.com">prezanthe@aol.com</a> for directions Optional Secret Santa gift swap—bring a gift, get a gift, limit $15</td>
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<td>♥ January 5 Regular meeting and tray for St. Basil’s Academy</td>
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**THE COMING OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE**

Isaiah 9:1–7

But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.²

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.²

Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.³

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Midian.⁴

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.⁵

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”⁶

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.⁷
The Parish Council met on November 10, 2013. The Treasurer’s report showed a balance of $27,482 in the checking account; $75,742 in the money market account; $115,429 in the Sentinel account; $180,574 in the Cunavelis account; and $49,700 in the community center account.

The building committee noted that repairs to the parish house continue, with fireplace repairs to be completed this month. It was decided to delay repairs to the lawn adjacent to the parish house parking lot until the spring.

It was recommended that Efficiency Vermont be consulted to determine if there can be further improvements to the parish house to curtail heating costs.

The handicapped access committee reported that our architectural consultants had received two written bids for $200,000 and $280,000. A verbal bid estimated the cost to be between $150,000 and $200,000. The Parish Council agreed that further evaluation of these bids should be carried out with the expectation that these costs could be lowered.

The Council agreed that a standard contract should be developed for all parties seeking rental of our community center. This will be submitted to the Council for approval at our December meeting.

The Council was informed that the St. Jacob of Alaska Church in Northfield no longer has a priest, as Fr. Caleb has been transferred to a parish in New Hampshire. It was agreed that members of St. Jacob’s should be informed that they are welcome to join our services until they have obtained a replacement for Fr. Caleb.

The Council voted that a letter of authorization be forwarded to North Country Federal Credit Union indicating that Fr. Ephraim is to replace Fr. Bob as the holder of the Visa account at their institution.

Can Tab Collection for Ronald McDonald House

STARTING IN JANUARY

Starting in January 2014, the Dormition community will begin an ongoing collection of can tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Burlington.

If you have a PULL TAB FROM BEVERAGE CAN OR A SOUP, FRUIT OR VEGETABLE CAN, before you refund or recycle the can, please pull off the tab and bring it to the church. There will be a container available in the parish hall for you to place your tabs.

We plan to distribute the first collection of tabs to the Ronald McDonald House after the April 12 Bake Sale and Take Out Dinner.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Burlington “provides emotional support, comfort and temporary lodging to families with children receiving medical treatment at Vermont Children’s Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care...While it costs the Ronald McDonald House in Burlington over $70 a night per family to provide housing and supportive services, families are only asked to contribute $10 per night. No one is ever turned away due to inability to pay.”

The more tabs we collect the more we can help!

For more information visit www.rmhcvt.org

Parish Council News

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Congratulations!

Together we sent 192 pounds of food to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf. Special thanks to our dancers, who used their festival dance money to buy food for this drive!

Stewardship 2014 Update

Despite mailing delays and having our first snow of the year on Stewardship Sunday (November 24), we have received 13 pledge cards so far, with an average commitment of $600. Thank you!

We’ve also had many parishioners express interest in offering their time and talents in new ways – 2014 promises more cooks in the kitchen, bakers at home, visitors to the sick, and youth involvement.

In 2013, we had 81 pledged stewards and 35 unpledged stewards. If every family commits to offering just $3 per day in 2014, we’ll reach our goal of $116,706!

Toys for Kids of Vermont

Please help Vermont families in need during the holiday season. Until December 15, you may drop off a new, unwrapped toy in the barrel in the church hall. The organizers work with the Salvation Army, the Amani Center, Joseph’s House, and food shelves to pinpoint children in need.

Youth Gathering to Decorate, Make Cards & Rehearse (Dec. 14)

Join us at 10:00 Saturday morning to prepare for the Nativity. Musicians, don’t forget to bring your instruments! It’s also a perfect time to drop a gift in the Toys for Kids of Vermont barrel!

Christmas Pageant & St. Nicholas Breakfast (Dec. 15)

After our youth present a brief program about the Incarnation and Nativity of our Lord, along with music, the Nicks of our parish are serving breakfast! (We will also be having a Divine Liturgy on the feastday of St. Nicholas, Friday, December 5.)
Give a Gift of Love

As we commemorate the Incarnation of God’s love, let us take time from our hectic schedules and radiate that love outward to those around us. Let us share with those who have no food, no clothes or shelter, for as the Lord Himself told us, “As you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me” (Matthew 25:40). Below is a listing of some agencies to which you can demonstrate that the Lord has a place in your heart and your life. You may of course donate to any other agency or program of your choosing. I pray that this season of our Lord’s birth will mark a rebirth of His Love emanating from us individually and as a parish.

Zoe for Life*
3352 Mayfield Road
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118-1330

International Orthodox Christian Charities*
PO Box 630225
Baltimore, MD 21263-0225

Project Mexico & Saint Innocent Orphanage*
PO Box 120028
Chula Vista, CA 91912-3128

Hellenic College – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445-7496

Saint Basil Academy
79 Saint Basil’s Road
Garrison, NY 10524-4127

Saint Michael’s Home
3 Lehman Terrace
Yonkers, NY 10705-3699

Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine
PO Box 1960
Saint Augustine, FL 32085-1960

Orthodox Christian Fellowship*
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445-7496

Orthodox Christian Mission Center*
220 Mason Manatee Way
Saint Augustine, FL 32086-9302

Orthodox Christian Network*
PO Box 4690
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338-4690

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry*
PO Box 468
Fleetwood, PA 19522-0468

Trinity Children’s Foundation of America
PO Box 848
Colton, CA 92324-0848

Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center
c/o Metropolis of Boston
162 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445-7414

Philoxenia House
c/o Metropolis of Boston
162 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445-7414

Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf
PO Box 1594
Burlington, VT 05402-1594

COTS
195 South Winooski Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401-4669

Joint Urban Ministry Project
38 South Winooski Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401-3828

Salvation Army
64 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401-8419

United Way of Chittenden County
95 Saint Paul Street, Suite 200
Burlington, VT 05401-4486

Help Fund of Chittenden County
c/o Housing Resource Center
PO Box 1616
Burlington, VT 05402-1616

Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society
PO Box 764
Richmond, VT 05477-0764

Vermont Interfaith Power and Light
PO Box 209
Richmond, VT 05477-0209

*Agencies operating under the blessings of the Episcopal Assembly of North America
formerly known as SCOBA
(Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas)
FAMILY CHALLENGE:
The 12 Days of Christmas

The “twelve days of Christmas” are the days between Christmas and Epiphany (January 6). This is a time to rejoice in the birth of our Lord! Don’t let a day go by without marveling at the tremendous gift we received from our Lord on Christmas Day. These activities accompany the *For to Us a Child Is Born* magazine—ask Pres. Aimee for a copy!

December 25
**Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**
(Keithasias of the Nativity)
After attending the Divine Liturgy, greet everyone by proclaiming “Christ is Born!” Respond with “Glorify Him!” Continue doing this for the twelve days of Christmas.

December 26
**Christ, what shall we offer you?**
(Vespers)
Look at page 7; focus on the wise men. Use the Bible to find out what gifts they brought the baby. Discuss what gifts we can offer Jesus on the occasion of His birth.

December 27
**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit**
(Acts 7:59)
Today we commemorate the First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen. You can read about him in today’s epistle: Acts 6:8–7:5, 47–60 (perhaps shorten and adapt it for young children). Notice his extreme faith as he was being martyred. Discuss how we can look to him as an example of faith and love.

December 28
**Glory to Him who has been born on earth!**
(Matins)
Have everyone head outside to create the Nativity scene in snow. Make sure to have hot cocoa waiting for when you finish. If you don’t have snow, be creative: use rocks or sticks or anything you find.

December 29
**God is with us**
(Compline)
Learn to chant the beautiful Compline hymn on page 8. Listen to the Greek version at http://tinyurl.com/complinehymn. Pair the chant with the English words to learn as a family.

December 30
**The One Who holds the universe**
(Matins)
Go star-gazing. If your town has an observatory open, make the trip. Discuss how amazing it is that God can hold the whole universe in His hand yet came down to the earth as a baby. Read Psalm 104. With younger children, have them create a picture of either this psalm or of God’s beautiful universe.

December 31
**The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry**
(St. Basil the Great)
Get the entire family involved in making the Vasilopita. Begin with a prayer and read about the tradition of the Vasilopita on page 11.

January 1
**O righteous Basil, revealer of heavenly things!**
(Kontakion)
Start the New Year by attending the Divine Liturgy as a family. When you come home, cut your Vasilopita and thank God for the blessing of a New Year.

January 2
**Sanctify both me and the waters**
(Matins)
Schedule a time for the priest to bless your home. Pick up some plastic bottles at a craft store and have each member of the family decorate one to store holy water next to the icons in their room. You can use paint pens, decoupage, and puffy paint.

January 3
**Draw in the water of gladness**
(Great Blessing of the Water)
As the Nativity season comes to a close, make a list of all that you are grateful for. Discuss how you can give proper thanks for these things. Also, this is a good time to write those Christmas thank-you notes.

January 4
**Holy Trinity, glory to You!**
(Prayer to the Holy Trinity)
On the feast of Theophany, the Trinity is revealed—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Read the Gospel lesson for this feast Matthew 3:13–17 and look at the icon on page 13 and discuss as a family.

January 5
**Light from Light**
(Matins)
Make a point of attending the Vespers of Theophany as a family. If your family’s schedule allows, attend the Liturgy the next day as well. For more ideas for celebrating the feast, read *Diving In: Living Theophany in the Orthodox Christian Home* by Nichola Krause, which can be found at http://tinyurl.com/DivingIn.

Reprinted from the free *For to Us a Child Is Born Parent Guide* by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Center for Family Care.
Christ is born!

Glorify Him!

The Bridge • Н ГЕФУРА • December 2013

DORMITION OF THE
Mother of God
Greek Orthodox Church
PO Box 8122
Burlington, VT 05402-8122

TIME VALUED MATERIAL – DO NOT DELAY
12/3/2013
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED