



ST. GEORGE *Chronicle*

Rev. Christopher Morris
Pastor

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST GEORGE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

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Our Beloved Icons

by Sbdn. John Wolf

This issue's icon is that of the **Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

We all know the story, right? Most of us probably have a Nativity Set tucked away in a closet that we pull out every Christmas and set up in a prominent place in our homes. **Look, there's Mary and Joseph**, a handsome young couple, kneeling at the manger, looking down at the **Christ Child**. There are animals too, perhaps wondering why these humans have taken possession of their wooden stable. Maybe you have shepherds, dressed in heavy clothes to keep out the cold from the long winter's night. And what would a Nativity Set be without the Three Wise Men, on their camels, bearing gifts? Such warm fuzzy feelings come over us when we see these little tableaus. All seems right with the world when we view them next to our Christmas trees, decorated with tinsel and garland, with the great mounds of presents lying beneath.



*Sponsorship of **The Nativity of Christ** icon at St. George Kearney, was offered by the Klein family*

But what a contrast between our little nativity sets and the **Icon of the Nativity** we have prominently displayed on our temple ceiling!

Our icons, as beautiful as they may be, are not meant to give us warm fuzzies, but are meant to instruct us in the **reality of the person of Jesus Christ**, and aid us in uniting ourselves with Him. Therefore, every item depicted is of great importance to understanding the underlying message.

Let's start at the top. The sky salutes Him with a **star**, the light of wisdom. This is a sign that Christ came for everyone: "For by it, those who worshiped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient on high" (from the troparion of Christmas). Note the three rays from the star, representing the **Holy Trinity**.

(continued on page 2)

Below the star, we see **three angels and a shepherd**. Note that two of the angels are holding **staffs**. If we recall from last month, the staff is a symbol of a messenger. The angels are glorifying God, tending to the action, and ministering: **announcing the Good News to the shepherd**. The shepherd holds a **flute**, indicating his joy at the news the angels bring.

In the center of the icon we have the **cave**. It is common knowledge that livestock were sheltered and fed in caves in the region of Bethlehem,

(sorry, no wooden stables!) and in fact we see a **donkey and a cow** looking down at the Christ Child. The ox and the donkey are from an Old



Testament prophecy: "The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib" (Isaiah 1:3). Jesus is depicted in **swaddling clothes**, in what could be described as a manger, although this one is fairly substantial, being made of brick. It could also be described as a tomb, with the swaddling clothes looking suspiciously like **burial wrappings**. This is not a coincidence, but is meant to prophesy His ultimate human death and burial. **Mary lies beside the Christ Child**, gazing down at Joseph.

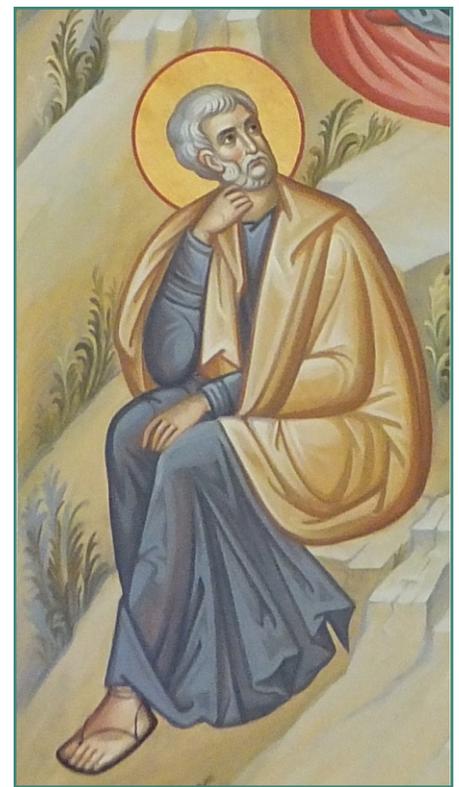
The **Righteous Joseph** is depicted as an old man, seated away from Jesus and the Theotokos, off to the bottom left. This is because he was not involved in the miracle of the

Incarnation of the Son of God, but he was the protector of Mary and Jesus. Joseph is troubled. He is wondering why, if the infant were truly divine, He would have been born in this human way. (This argument, assuming different forms, keeps on reappearing through the whole history of the Church. It is the basis of many heresies) In the person of Joseph, the icon discloses not only his personal drama, but the drama of all mankind, the difficulty of accepting that which is beyond

reason, **the Incarnation of God**. Joseph gazes toward Mary, who looks at him as if trying to overcome his doubts and temptations.

Below Mary is the **Jesse Tree**. This is an old testament prophecy which says that a shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse (the father of King David): "A shoot shall sprout from the stump (tree) of Jesse and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Finally in the lower right corner we see a figure that shows up in no nativity set I have ever seen. It is a **midwife, bathing the Son of God!** Simply put, she is there



to indicate that Jesus was born in the normal way and would have needed washing, as a regular human baby would.

Our nativity sets attempt to capture a sweet, intimate moment in time. Our Nativity Icons attempt to instruct us about the **Truth of Our Savior**. Namely, that He was born, in time, to a woman in the flesh, and that He fulfilled all of the prophecies written about Him from the beginning. The first tries to evoke human emotions in the viewer, **the latter tries to educate us in The Eternal Truth. Glory to Jesus Christ!**



*A note from
Fr. Christopher . . .*



Dear Members, Friends, and Benefactors of St. George,

In the month of September, we **celebrate our Church New Year**, beginning our annual cycle of feasts and fasts once again. By living these great and wonderful events year after year, we keep ourselves ever-mindful of the Lord and all that He has accomplished for our salvation.

What a great blessing to be able to look up at our church ceiling and see the feasts! May these beautiful icons spur us on to **continue reaching for the heavens in faith, prayer, and repentance**. I hope you all are reading and enjoying Subdeacon John's great articles!!

Besides beginning the Church New Year, we are also beginning a **weekly youth group** at St. George. This is an outgrowth of our delightful time together during our VBS. Already, our youth have served lunch for volunteers at our local Habitat for Humanity building site and collected clothing and goods for our local homeless shelter. We have a fantastic group of young people, and are looking forward to our time together this year! **Please keep us in your prayers.**



In Christ,
Fr. Christopher

**PARISH
DIRECTORY**



We have a parish volunteer that has offered to put together a much needed, **St. George Parish Directory** but we **need your help!**

In an effort to get all personal contact info updated, the Chronicle will provide **Contact Information forms**, during coffee hour, for each family to fill out. Please be sure to pick one of these up to fill out. You can leave them in the Chronicle tray in basement, place in offering tray at the candle table upstairs, or give to Joanie.

Space will also be provided for Birthday, Names Day and Anniversary dates. Please omit if you **do not** wish to have these published in the Chronicle/Directory.

Family Photos were taken, Fall of 2013 by Matt Noffke, and although these are not current, the directory will still include these photos for the publication. If you prefer to submit your own photo to use, please send to:

stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

THANK YOU - your help in filling out these forms is greatly appreciated.



LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN
COME TO ME, AND DO NOT
FORBID THEM;
FOR OF SUCH IS THE
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

- MATTHEW 19:14

**Volunteer Opportunities
for all St. George Parish Members**

Win Bin pick-ups - twice a week, flexible hours and days
Substitute Sunday School Teachers - starting in September
Habitat for Humanity building - Saturdays

PLEASE NOTE

*Articles and photos for the Chronicle are **due on the 24th** of the month, prior to the month of the desired publication.*

Please submit content to:

stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

The Chronicle is the monthly newsletter of St. George Orthodox Christian Church of Kearney, Nebraska.

FROM OUR READERS ...



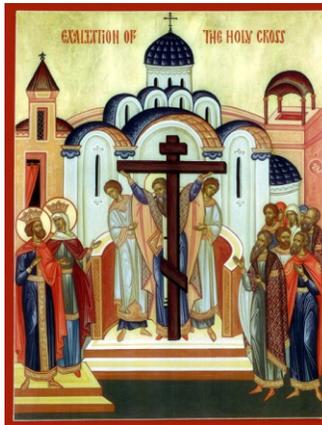
To the Chronicle,

Thank you so much for offering a **printed version** of the *Chronicle* as well as an Emailed version. The Email I skim and pick out important dates and events, but I **really love** sitting down and enjoying the printed version (with such gorgeous color icons) at home when I can really study it and **enjoy it**.

I know it comes at an added cost, but I want to express my thanks!
Ashley Maloley

THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Feast Day - September 14



Troparion

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by the virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

Kontakion

As Thou was mercifully crucified for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy name; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.



ST. GEORGE Chronicle



Have an event you would like to share with your St. George parish family? Do you have an idea, photo, article, or cartoon, to be considered for an upcoming newsletter? **Or tell Us what you like about the Chronicle.**

We welcome your letters and comments - help us to improve the Chronicle so we can better serve you, our readers. Email us at:

stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

THANK YOU!



Birthdays

September 4
Amy Hadley

Sept 10
Alexis Hadley

Sept 27
Mark Buchman



None that the Chronicle knows about

GOD GRANT YOU MANY YEARS

Donations Gratefully Received

To the Chronicle, in honor of Randy Langenberg and thanksgiving for the blessings of good health, from an Anonymous donor

To the Chronicle, for inspiring me to be a better Orthodox Christian, from an Anonymous donor

May God bless you all for your generosity!



In Memory of

In Memory of Betty Patsios from Joanie & Mark Klein to the St. George Beautification Committee and to the St. George Sunday School program



"Give something however small to the one in need; for it is not small to the one who has nothing; neither is it small to God, if we have given what we **could**".
- Saint Gregory the Theologian



Congratulations and Thank you to Ashley Maloley for volunteering to organize our St. Helena Ladies Society for the upcoming new year at St. George.

Meetings will be the **first Sunday of each month** (Potluck Sunday) with our first "official" meeting planned for **Sept. 6th**.

As a reminder, every woman in our parish, over the age of 18, is automatically a member of our Ladies Society. Ashley has extended a personal invitation, to each of us, to attend. Come share ideas and help plan upcoming events. Bring your calendars and let's make this a great year for St. George.

Lebanese Breakfast - Oct 17
Fall Bake Sale - Nov 21



Gifts! **NEW BOOKS**

and ICONS
JEWELRY

Thank you for your support! Your purchases allow the Bookstore to purchase new items throughout the year.



We are ONE year old! In August we met at the **Big Apple Fun Center** for a night of bowling and snacks! We had fun bowling and enjoyed the time of fellowship together. A few of our members also enjoyed serving the community by working at the **Kearney Habitat for Humanity** site on August 22nd. Many thanks to those who donated their time and talents on that day.

Our next gathering will be **September 20**. Mike and Ronda Maloley will host the 20/40 group at their home at **Johnson Lake**. We're still looking for **hosts and themes** for upcoming events. Parish family members (40+) are welcome to host the group, which is a great way to get involved! Members please check our [facebook](#) page for more info.



The **Women's Bible Study** group will begin the new fall year on **Monday, Sept. 14th, at 4:00**. Our meeting time lasts for approx. 1 hour and child care is provided by a few of our kind, caring and responsible St. George youth members. **Thank you**

QUESTION: Would you like to read another book on one of our holy elders, or saints? Or do you prefer this next session to focus on Scripture? Please share your thoughts with Kh. Anastasia to help plan our first session. Come join us as we journey through our Orthodox faith **together!**



The New Sunday School Year at St. George will begin **Sept. 13th**

Hey Kids! - Come see your classrooms and meet your **★ teachers** at our **Open House**

Thank you to our Teachers and Volunteers **★**

3-6 year olds
Ronda Maloley, Amy Hadley
7-10 year olds

Kim Rehtus, Ashley Maloley
★ 11 - Up
Sarah Fothergill



The St. George Parish Council meets the **first Monday** of each month, at 7:00 p.m.

Council members for 2015

- Fr. Christopher
- Tim Shada, chairman
- Mark Klein, vice chairman
- Mike Maloley, Treasurer
- Sarah Fothergill, Secretary
- Gerald Rehtus, council member
- Mike LiaKos, council member
- Rocky Steinbrink, council member

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN BOARD

Please join the Children, Grandchildren & Great-Grandchildren of

Loretta Sinsel

in Celebrating her 80th Birthday at an Open House in her honor on Saturday, September 5, 2015 Food & Refreshments served from 5:00-8:00 pm at the Kearney County Fairgrounds 2200 N Hwy 10 Minden, NE



Did you know?

Our website has helpful information about **St. George** and timeless wisdom of our Orthodox Faith.

Keep up with important service dates by using the **calendar** that is published monthly and updated often.

Visit us at:

www.saintgeorgekearney.com

St. George Garage Sale

Sept. 11 and 12

Friday 1:00 - 6:00/Saturday 8:00 - 12:00

Please price your larger items ahead of time. This will help when setting up. Mark and Joanie will accept items starting Wednesday, Sept. 9th after 12:00. Please call ahead (293-5090) or email to

stgeorgechronicle@yahoo.com

to let them know when you would like to deliver your items.

Volunteers are needed to help set up, work it, and clean up.



Thank you for your donations, and for your gift of time to help ensure a successful fund-raiser for St. George.

"Just as the blessings of God are unutterably great, so their acquisition requires much hardship and toil undertaken with hope and faith."

- St. Macarius the Great



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday
Oct. 3



The faithful of the **Holy Spirit Greek Orthodox Church of Omaha**, desire to make a pilgrimage to St. George. We will be hosting Fr. Alexander and guests with a **potluck lunch**. There will be a brief presentation on **"The Seeds of Sanctity in the Heartland"**.

Please plan to attend and show the parish of Omaha our wonderful St. George hospitality!



SUPER



SLIDE

Thank you to our generous benefactor that provided this **super fun water slide!** What a fun way to cool off and end our week of **Vacation Bible School.**
In Christ's Love,
St. George VBS Kids



ST. GEORGE SCRAPBOOK

"We're Makin' Memories"



"When your children are still small, you have to help them understand what is good. That is the deepest meaning of life".
- Saint Paisios



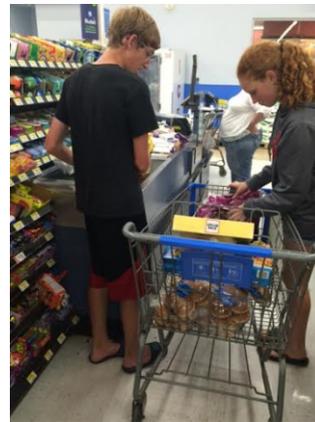
From Our youth group

On August 19th the **St. George Youth Group** met for fellowship and a service project. Along with Sarah Fothergill, we shopped at Walmart for ingredients to make lunch for **Habitat for Humanity** workers. After a quick stop at Sonic for **fruit slushies**, we prepared a meal to be served that weekend. the youth packed up served it to 17th and M. Lunch sandwiches, pasta beans, and cookies. **40 volunteers!** Thank you youth, and other volunteers to support the youth!



On Saturday the lunch and volunteers at was pulled pork salad, baked **We fed almost** to the parents, for donating money and

On August 26th the youth group attended **Daily Vespers** and then ate a **spaghetti meal** at the Fothergill residence. We enjoyed discussions about school, books, movies, and what it means to be an **"authentic Christian"** in today's society. We look forward to our weekly meetings on Wednesdays. Glory to God for All Things!



We Shopped - We had Fellowship!



And We Served!



Habitat
for Humanity®

Doing the Hard Work of Communion

by Fr. Barnabas Powell

There seems to be a cottage industry that has developed in America all surrounding the notion that modern life is lonely. It seems this sense of loneliness flows from the notion that we are to be “self sufficient” and not “need” anybody to help us. **We live in a society of radically autonomous people** all insisting that their immediate desire is the highest good and must be achieved! Of course, there is nothing wrong with being capable of caring for yourself, but, as all good things, this ability can be twisted and made to be an impoverishment to our lives.

As usual, the **elusive power of balance** and sobriety mark the places in my life and your life where we need the grace of God to heal us and set us free from the delusion of our own self-sufficiency. This message of balance and sobriety is not a very popular message and it certainly isn't an easy one as well. So, in light of our life in Christ, with the gift of the Holy Spirit and His power given to us by the Church, with all the spiritual tools given to us in our precious and timeless faith, how can we regularly confront ourselves with the wisdom of the faith to overcome this sickness of radical autonomy?

Look at our Gospel Lesson in Matthew 5:20-26:

Jesus said to his disciples, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that every one who is angry with

his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your



gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to

the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.”

Here, Jesus speaks very plainly to the crowd around Him about **the dangers of destroyed relationships**.

In one section He says “So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Broken relationships directly affect our relationship with God. Broken relationships directly affect our communion and our lives. Broken relationships release the spiritual “poisons” of resentment, bitterness, fear, despondency, anger, and the desire for revenge. Left unattended these spiritual poisons then infect all our other relationships setting up a pattern of self-protection and defensiveness that reinforce the very

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loneliness we fear. And all this usually flows from our insistence that we are autonomous from one another and that we always have to **look out for “number 1!”**

One of the remedies of this spiritual spiral down into loneliness is taking seriously the Lord's command **to not let these difficulties and broken relationships fester**. Deal with misunderstandings and arguments as quickly as you can after a “cooling off” period. In another place the Apostle Paul said “Don't let the sun set on your anger.” Keep short accounts, especially with those closest to you.

By doing this you invite the grace of God into all your relationships to provide healing and humility and you can approach the Chalice of the Eucharist with integrity and peace. At each liturgy the priest, before he takes the Eucharist there in the altar, turns to the faithful gathered and asks forgiveness, all because broken relationships poison communion and doing the hard work of communion **sets me free** to receive the Eucharist in peace and not merely by **habit or as “my right.”**

Today, do you see the value of the **hard work of communion** to be the medicine that heals you of self-destructive selfishness that breaks the

relationships in your life? Are you willing to take up the **spiritual “weapons”** given to you through your orthodox faith to combat the real enemies of your life? Even though it's hard, are you willing to do the work to restore broken relationships so that your reception of the Lord's Body and Blood will be a **healing to you** and freedom from the delusion of a selfish prison? You can, and you will **discover the joy of the hard work of communion**.

SOURCE:

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2015/06/doing-the-hard-work-of-communion/>

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Wichita and Mid-America
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The Rev. Christopher Morris,
pastor, contact:
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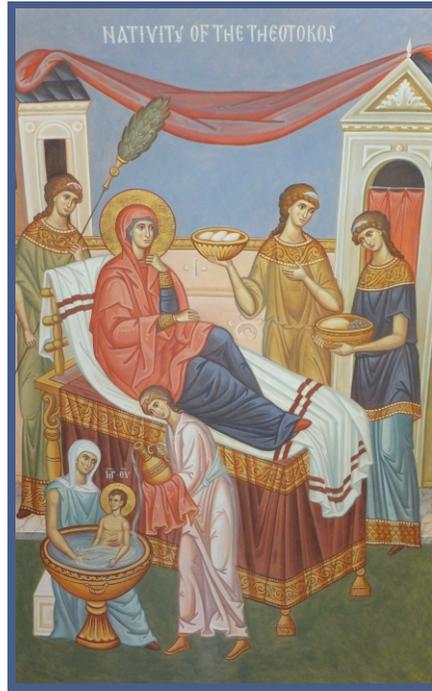
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NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

Feast Day - September 8



The **first Great Feast** to fall in the Church Year is the **Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos**. It is entirely fitting that at the beginning of the new religious year all Orthodox Christians should come before the highest example of human holiness that the Orthodox Church holds precious and venerates, that of Mary, the Theotokos, and Mother of God. **This day is seen as one of universal joy**; for on this day the boundary of the Old and New Covenants was born the Most-Blessed Virgin, pre-arranged from the ages by Divine Providence to serve the mystical **Incarnation of God the Word**.

Troparion

Your Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from You, O Theotokos! By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing. By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.

Kontakion

By Your Nativity, O Most Pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life.

SEPTEMBER FASTING



During this period, the normal fasting traditions are observed: abstain from meat, poultry and dairy products on **Wednesdays and Fridays**. The **Elevation of the Cross**, Monday, September 14th is a **strict fast day**.

Year-to-date for 2015



As of **August 28** ... We have received \$63,654 of the \$81,055 we have budgeted for pledges.
As of **August 28** ... We have received \$11,842 of the \$17,000 we have budgeted for trays and candles.

Thank you!

A GIFT FOR ST. GEORGE

I am committed to Stewardship and growth at St. George Orthodox Church in Kearney, NE. As an expression of my gratitude to God for His many blessings in my life, I would like to make a donation to my church.
Please use this donation for:

I would like my donation to be in **Memory of:**

or in **Honor of:**

Please make my donation (circle one) **anonymous** or YES you may use **my name** in the Chronicle.

Name _____ Donation \$ _____
(please print)

Thank you, and may God bless you for your generosity

“And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26