

Save The Date: October 9, 2021

The Women's Group of St Michael had a great meeting in July, where we were able to welcome both new and returning members. We are thrilled to be planning for the International Food Festival and the Yard Sale both of which will be held on Saturday October 9, 2021. There are committees meeting now to solidify the details. Please contact Soraya Bandeli Sbandeli@comcast.net or Elaine Burke emacburke@gmail.com to learn how you can join us in making these events successful.

We are also pleased to announce the arrival of the second printing of the St. Michael cookbook: "The Foods That Unite Us". There are copies of the book available in the fellowship hall and at the Bookstore table. These full color, full size cookbooks offer some amazing recipes, along with interesting anecdotal stories, memories and photos as shared by our membership and families.



There are greeting cards being made of the new Archangel Icons drawn by our own Zoya Sheglov. They will also be available for purchase at the book store once they are completed.

As always, there are lots of ways to share your talents and time at St. Michael. We meet the 3rd Sunday of every month after Liturgy. Every woman is a member of the Women's Group! There are volunteer opportunities both great and small, so do not hesitate to join in the efforts.

Together, we can be the evidence of Christ's love right from our own parish!

Be the change! Be the love!

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church welcomes everyone! Father Ben Kjendal
www.stmichaelcapecod.org (508) 450-1113
SUMMER HOURS: SUNDAY LITURGY 9:30 AM SATURDAY VESPERS 7:00 PM

St. Michael the Archangel
Orthodox Church
62 Main Street,
Cotuit, MA 02635

August 2021 Newsletter

<i>A Message from Fr. Ben Kjendal</i>	Pg. 2
<i>How and Where Can I Help St. Michael?</i>	Pg. 3
<i>Narthex Update</i>	Pg. 4
<i>The Star Spangled Banner</i>	Pg. 4
<i>Entering the Church Through the Eyes of a Child</i>	Pg. 5
<i>For The DOWNE Oratorical Festival</i>	Pg. 6
<i>What's Really Important, Anyway?</i>	Pg. 7
<i>A Quote from A Saint</i>	Pg. 8
<i>Save The Date: October 9, 2021</i>	

A Message from Fr. Ben Kjendal

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Near the beginning of August we celebrate the great feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him up the mountain where He is transfigured before them, and He takes counsel with Moses and Elijah. Then Peter asks if he can build three tents for them, that they might dwell there. This isn't the first mountain that we hear of in the Scriptures. Indeed, throughout the Scriptures, God dwells on "the mountain" - Mt. Zion, Mt. Sinai, even in the first paradise of Eden. It is understandable that the disciples would want to stay there, in God's presence, on His holy mountain, to worship Him.

So, what are we to do? Do we all need to head to the mountains, to New Hampshire, or Maine, or Vermont? Maybe to Colorado or Washington state? Although we might all benefit by spending time in God's creation, these aren't the mountains that we're looking for. "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy". Though the disciples couldn't stay there on that mountain, their desire to be on the mountain was rightly placed. For God dwells on His holy mountain; God dwells in paradise. Indeed, where God is, there is His holy mountain.

In His holy Church, the new Jerusalem, we are given the opportunity to ascend the mountain of God! It isn't without reason that in our churches the altar area, the sanctuary, is set above the rest of the Church. The stairs may be few (even only one in our case!) but they are a reminder to us that God dwells on high, and when we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, we meet Him on His holy mountain.

Do we desire to ascend the mountain of God, to worship Him at his footstool? This great feast that we celebrate as we draw near the end of our (Church) year, the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, is a call to us once again to ascend His mountain. Here, in His Church, as we worship the Father through the Son and in the Spirit, we are united with the disciples who ascended Mt. Tabor with Christ, to see Him transfigured before them. Here we receive a foretaste of the feast to come. As we gather together to worship Him, we are transformed into His image, His likeness, rather than trying to conform God into ours or the world's.

Children of God, it is with great joy that I see you each week, being "lifted up" to dwell on the mountain of God in the Liturgy. It is with great desire that I long to see those of you whom I haven't seen in recent months. And it is with great love that God calls us together on His holy mountain as His body, to receive His body, and to go forth with His love to be that body to the world, drawing all to Him.

Peace and joy in Christ.

Fr. Benjamin Kjendal



How and Where Can I Help St. Michael? – by Joseph Rahal

You may have asked yourself this question many times – to yourself; maybe to others, and received no specific answers. The answer lies below.

Our mission drives us in 2021 to growth both our Church and our faith:

The Mission of St. Michael the Archangel Church is to love and worship God, to grow closer to Him and to proclaim and to spread the Good News of the salvation of Jesus Christ to our parishioners, our neighbor and people everywhere.

We worship and pray in English. We experience the beauty and joy of living the Holy Orthodox Christian faith – sharing love and fellowship, teaching and leading by example, growing together through service, education, stewardship and forgiveness.

This challenge that God has put before us is significant. As many have stated: “It takes a village to raise a child”. It also takes a similar community – all of St Michael the Archangel parish - to achieve our mission. And, now more than ever, we need your participation to make our mission a reality.

As Orthodox Christians, and members of St Michael, our calling is to give and serve God and to help others. There is no better definition of stewardship than to give of our time and talent in His name. We have before us an opportunity to give, as we have received so much from God and from our relationship with our St Michael’s community.

Please consider and commit to adding one word to your role as a parish member of St Michael. That word being “ACTIVE”. Become an ACTIVE parish member of St Michael by coming forward to participate in one of the following committees. When the work is shared by many, it becomes easier to reach our goals. Please contact Fr. Ben, any of the Chair people listed below or any Parish Council member to directly contribute of your time and talent in the future of our Church.

2021 Committee Roster

Committee	Chair	Members
Stewardship	Subdeacon Joseph Boruch	
Correspondence / Fellowship	Soraya Bandeli	
Outreach	Kh. Alyssa	
Maintenance	Rick Bardine	
Technology	TBD	
Ladies	Elaine Burke & Soraya Bandeli	
Ushers	John Abodeely	
Epistle Readers	David Easa	
Choir	David Easa	
Church School	Natalie Leva	
SOYO / Youth	Looking for a new advisor	
Other		

Please consider giving of your time and talent.

THANK YOU!

Narthex Update – by John Abodeely

Three years ago, we began the process of looking at the long-term future of St. Michaels Church. It became clear that we needed a proper entry into the church. We needed to build a narthex. After developing an initial design, we received preliminary cost estimates from two contractors. A campaign was begun to raise the necessary funds. After receiving a good response to the fund raising and with our ability to finance any shortfall, we proceeded to get the necessary building permits from the Town of Barnstable. We retained an architectural firm to develop the detailed construction documents in order to obtain proposals from various contractors.

Five building companies were contacted and received the material. Two companies came to the church for an onsite meeting. Only one company submitted a bid. The others all said they were too busy to take on new work even though construction would not start until the Fall of 2021.

The one bid exceeded the initial estimates by 50%! Over the past two years, the price of raw materials has increased significantly. Wood alone is up by around 400%. The construction industry on the Cape is overwhelmed with work.

At the last parish council meeting a decision was made to temporarily delay the project. Our hope is that the building market and material costs will improve. This will also allow us to evaluate any alternatives.

To all those who have contributed to the building fund...THANK YOU. We will continue to need everyone's support.

Having faith in our Lord, we know that our church will have a narthex.

The Star Spangled Banner – by David Easa

On Father's day this year some of our choir members sang the Star Spangled Banner at the Cotuit Kettleer's home opener. I have to say, I was nervous. It is something I've always wanted to do - Sing the National Anthem at an event - so this was very exciting for me, and I didn't want to do a bad job of it. As soon as we started practicing the nervousness went away. Anders, Anna, Anastasia and myself were intending to do a four part harmonized version of the song and I found a video that explained the story behind Francis Scott Key's inspiration to write it during the war of 1812. Francis Scott Key and other Americans were aboard a boat in the Chesapeake Bay watching the bombing of Fort McHenry and given the scale of the attack, he was certain the British would win, but in the clearing smoke of "the dawn's early light" he saw the American flag, not the British Union Jack flying over the fort, announcing an American victory. After watching this video together, we began our rehearsal with a better and a more personal understanding of the lyrics. We were joined by Father Ben and Erika for our performance at the game and did a fine job with many compliments and congratulations! ...Oh, and the Kettleer's won!



Photo: Alysa Rubin, Cotuit Kettleers, Photographer

Entering the Church through the Eyes of a Child –

by Michelle Moeck

On Holy Saturday five children entered into The Church. Aubrey Lucia Moeck age 9, Hadley Mary Moeck age 7, Leah Marina Moeck age 4 (daughters of recently illumined, Michelle Moeck) and Eli Elijah Rand age 7 (son of Brittany Rand also recently illumined). Here is a short interview to give you a child's perspective of conversion to the Faith.

What was the first thing you noticed when you visited the Orthodox Church?

Aubrey and Hadley: It was pretty

Eli: The big icon of Jesus on the ceiling

Leah: Praying

Who was the first person you met/talked to?

Aubrey: CeCe

Hadley: Erika

Eli: Johnny, Lucy, CeCe and Emmelia

Leah: Fr. Ben



What is different about St Michael's compared to your old church?

Aubrey: The Liturgy

Hadley: Taking communion Feeling like I am part of the church even though I am a kid

Eli: Everything is different

What did you learn during Lent?

Aubrey: Holy Week

Hadley: More about Icons

Eli: I don't know actually

Leah: Nothing



What was your favorite part of entering the Church?

Aubrey: Celebrating after with Pascha

Hadley: Dunking my head

Eli: Going under the water

Leah: Dunking my head

What is your favorite part about being Orthodox?

Aubrey: The nice people.

Hadley: Taking communion

Eli: Taking communion

Leah: Coffee hour and communion



For The DOWNE Oratorical Festival 2021 – by Erika Kjendal

Christ is risen! Your Grace Bishop John, Your Grace Bishop Anthony, Reverend Clergy, brothers and sisters.

Our world has been in turmoil this past year. A pandemic, a high tension election, shootings, overwhelming violence. Over the past year, all these disasters and more have become our reality. The recording I am reflecting on by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann begins: "No one can today doubt that we are in a deep crisis. Not only a political crisis, not only an economic crisis, but first of all a spiritual crisis." How true these words ring for us! Fr. Schmemmann said this decades ago, but the words live on and speak straight to our hearts today. We are in the midst of a crisis, brothers and sisters, but it is a crisis more widespread than a pandemic, more dangerous than shootings, and more threatening than a war. It is a crisis we have been fighting since the fall of mankind. In fact it is that crisis: we sinned and because of sin, death and corruption entered the world. "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We are no longer in Eden; we are in the world and the world is a treacherous place. From the moment we enter it, we are thrust into a spiritual battleground, and we must fight. But we are not fighting to stay alive as long as we can or to stay healthy forever or to attain any other physical perfection. Neither are we fighting to be a leading world power or to have the best government or strongest army. No. What do those things matter? Our fight is to attain salvation, to be united with Christ. The crisis is that we are separated from the very Word that gives us light and life everlasting.

This is a crisis that cannot be remedied with a vaccine, and a perfect political system cannot resolve it. Those things do not have the power to act in this world because they are as temporal as this world. So we must not put our hope in them.

I live on Cape Cod, and on a stormy day I can go out to the seashore and watch the waves roll over and over, smashing the sand and rocks with a loud roar. That stormy sea is the world, and we live in it. That is a frightening reality, but it is where we have fallen. The newest medicine or the best political philosophy are like flimsy ladders we try to build to save ourselves from the deep. But they fall apart in our hands and prove to be worthless. Only one thing can bridge the gap between earth and heaven. Christ lowered it for us as He entered the world and lifted us up by it when He rose on the third day. The cross of Christ stretches from earth to heaven, and hand over hand we must struggle up it and fight against the demons who are trying to pull us down.

We must always keep in mind our destination. We are in this world but not of this world. It is so easy, though, to be weighted down with worldly cares and concerns. Especially in the time we are living now, there is so, so much to worry about. Whether it is health concerns regarding the coronavirus or safety concerns about the ever-increasing violence around us, these worries lead to loneliness and anxiety that cripple us. They pull us down from the cross and cause us to sink in the waves. St. Paul calls us rather to "be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

We are fighting the good fight. It is a struggle, a war, between us and the demons, and, as is the nature of wars, it is very challenging and trying. This past year brought circumstances that made it even more difficult for many of us. So what are we Christians supposed to do? This world is broken. Fr. Schmemmann recognized we were in a crisis decades ago. We are certainly still in a crisis now. We have always been in a crisis because this is a broken, fallen world. Is it enough to become a doctor, lawyer, or politician and try to fix the structures and systems in this world? To answer that question, here are two more: What is our goal? And where is our destination? It is Christ and unification with Him in His kingdom! "Here we have no earthly city, but we seek the one which is to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

So again: what are we supposed to do? What can we do in this great, big world? Our job is to climb the ladder the cross provides. Yes, the Ladder of Divine Ascent, and the first few rungs are renunciation of the world, detachment, exile or pilgrimage, obedience, repentance...

This journey is an ascetic struggle and a progression in virtue because what acts in this world is the spirit of God and the spirit of evil, and through our lives and actions we choose which to follow. We have to take this journey because we are in the fallen world and we have to reverse the sin we are constantly plunging into. The fall came about when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. St. Maximus the Confessor says something very profound on this subject: the tree was not inherently bad, in fact it was a good tree, but Adam and Eve ate from it with a bad motive. The sin was, as I have been blessed enough to have heard described by Bishop Anthony, a "misdirection of affection and a misfire of desire." By climbing the ladder, we are struggling to reverse our love and turn it not to the tree and the pleasure therein, but to the Creator of the tree, who is the Creator of the universe. It is He who "fills all things, reveals all things, and knows all things." Having in mind then the context that this world is a spiritual battleground, and the mindset that the war is between Good and evil, we can appreciate the beauty and strength in Fr. Schmemmann's words: "every personal victory on evil, maybe even unknown to the world, has an impact on the whole situation."

Many people over this past year, myself included, have felt very alone, very isolated. But we Christians are never alone and never will be. We are all united in the battle against evil. When we stand in front of an icon and light a candle, we are joining in prayer with all the Christians past, present, and future who are along the road to Christ with us. And when we stand in church and receive Communion, we are entering into the very Kingdom where Christ is seated on His throne and the multitude of angels and crowds of saints surround Him. This is the blessing the church gives us, and we need that strength and support because the battle is here and now and present in all of our daily lives. The most important struggle is not in the Middle East, not between political figures, but within ourselves. We have the responsibility as Christians to lead the world in the fight against evil, and we do that by following in the footsteps of Christ and trampling down the devil and his demons, by climbing the ladder, the cross, that bridges the gap between our sinful world and the life to come. In the midst of these hard times, let us never forget that we are "called to be saints" and to set our hearts and minds in the direction of life everlasting. And may Christ who became a man, was crucified and died for our sakes so He could raise us up on the third day from the depths of sin, give us strength in that "great struggle which will be going on until the end of the world."

This paper was written as part of a college entrance application by a young man of our Orthodox faith who wishes to remain anonymous. Suffice to say it is a relative of some of our parishioners and they are super proud of the man he has become. He enjoyed early acceptance to the college of his choice.

Pauline Rassias

What's Really Important, Anyway?

Piping hot triangles of crispy, golden brown filo dough are passed around the crowded dining room table. I can smell the blend of sharp and savory cheeses inside these delicious triangular pillows known as tiropita as my Yiayia encourages me to take more than one. Family gatherings like these were a Sunday ritual after attending church as far back as I can remember. Little did I know, everything was about to change.

I will never forget that hot and humid Thursday night, three days before my Papou's (grandfather's) forty-day memorial service when my family discovered that our priest would be stripped of the priesthood and removed from our parish as a result of a financial scandal. This was a total shock to me all the parishioners. This priest married my parents and all of my aunts and uncles, he baptized me, my brother, and all of my cousins. He was a big part of my life, and to hear that he was basically getting fired from the church was unbelievable.

Saying the church was like a pack of sardines that Sunday after the announcement is an understatement. Hundreds of people packed our church. At the end of the whopping four-hour service, people began chanting our priest's name and holding up signs with his name on them. Some even walked up to the front of the church, screaming for him not to go, making the atmosphere feel more like a Super Bowl parade than a church that just mourned the death of my Papou. For me, this is where the gears in my head began turning.

I love this priest, but I had to ask myself, “What is truly important about coming to church?” Does anyone even care about the prayers we recited today, or are they just coming to give our priest a send-off? All this commotion reminded me of the Bible story when Jesus cleared the courts of the temple when he first arrived in Jerusalem to discover selling and trading happening right in front of His Father’s house. Church should be a place of worship not a place of screaming, throwing up signs, chants and pumping fists. There was a clear division in our church family. I understand that people felt betrayed by the leaders of our church that removed our beloved priest from his parish, but even Father himself thought the commotion was inappropriate and encouraged us to stay with the church after he was gone and help rebuild the community without him.

As the week went on, the fate of the church became more and more clear. That Sunday three years ago was the last Sunday the pews were filled. I found out that more and more people would not be returning to the church now that Father was gone and anyone who stayed was titled a “traitor.” Even my own aunts, uncles and cousins vowed to never return to the church. My fourteen-year-old self was in shock. In just a day, I went from seeing the pews filled by family and friends I had grown very close to over the years, to being part of only the few left. But why would we stay? Shouldn’t we just follow the rest of the parishioners to another church? For my Dad, it was convenient, as the church was right down the street. My Mom believed that you could worship God from anywhere. I on the other hand, was conflicted. I was worried about what others would think, whether or not the “traitor” label would be placed on myself and my family by people I called friends; but at the same time, I felt bad for the our church. Would God want us to leave one of his houses and let it fall to the ground?

I realized that this church was more than a building to me, it was where I grew up. The decision to stay at the church had been made by my parents as I was only fourteen, and instead of worrying about what others were doing elsewhere, my parents encouraged my brother and me to get involved and be part of the solution. This inspired us to step up and take our place in the church as altar boys, and I can say it was one of the best decisions we ever made. I not only got to experience church and really understand it more than I ever could have before by being behind the scenes, but I also formed great friendships with the other altar boys and priests. I started reading aloud the epistle and was taught so many things by the priests and chanters who made me feel special and appreciated. I was serving God more than I ever had before and felt like I was doing good for the community. I went from participating in the Good Friday procession to leading it, listening to the epistle every week to reading it; my total church experience had changed for the better. Do I miss Father ****? Of course. Do I wish my cousins were serving in the altar beside me? Definitely. As much as I would have enjoyed these things, if these events described had never taken place, I would have never uncovered why I truly love church so much. The most important part about going to church is to love God and be of service to Him. No more is it about church politics, who’s the priest or how many people are in the pews. In this congregation's division, I found my connection.

A Quote from A Saint



“It would be a great lie to tell searching souls: ‘Go to church, because there you will find peace.’ The opposite is true. The Church tells those who are at peace and asleep: ‘Go to church, because there you will feel real anguish for your sins, for your perdition, for the world’s sins and perdition. There you will feel an unappeasable hunger for Christ’s truth. There, instead of becoming lukewarm, you will be set on fire; instead of pacified, you will become alarmed; instead of learning the wisdom of this world you will become fools for Christ.”

+St. Maria of Paris