



KATAVASIA OF THE FIRST CANON OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

Ode 9

Magnify, O my soul, her that is more honorable and more glorious than the hosts on high.

A strange and marvelous mystery do I behold;
the cave is a heaven; the Virgin a cherubic throne;
the manger a space wherein Christ God the
Uncontainable One hath reclined.
Him do we praise and magnify.

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church welcomes everyone! Father Ben Kjendal
www.stmichaelcapecod.org (508) 450-1113
 WINTER HOURS: SUNDAY LITURGY 10:00 AM SATURDAY VESPERS 5:00 PM

St. Michael the Archangel
Orthodox Church
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December 2021 Newsletter

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A Message from Fr. Ben Kjendal

Oh, that birth forever blessed
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face
evermore and evermore.

- verses 2 and 3 of "Of the Father's Love Begotten", Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, late 4th century

This is he whom seers and sages
sang of old with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word.
Now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.



Dearest children of God in Christ Jesus,

December is upon us, the nights continue to grow longer while the days continue to grow colder. And yet, the cold and darkness of this world will soon be shattered by the Light and Life of the celebration of the incarnation of God, the Nativity of Christ. The Virgin becomes a Mother. The ageless One becomes an infant. God himself comes to dwell with us and reveals to us his sacred face, that he might lead us back from our darkness into the way of light and life.

This great mystery in time and in eternity is revealed to us at this time, that we might know our salvation comes not from ourselves or from men, but from God on high. God's great love and mercy for us that rescues us from the depths of sin and the attacks of the evil one, even now. We fast in preparation for this great feast that we might set our minds not on the things of this world, with eyes cast down to the earth, but rather that we might lift our eyes up to behold the heavenly and divine Gift that comes down from eternity into time.

As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, "God is with us, understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!" Let us indeed submit ourselves to God, who draws near to us and is with us. Let us follow him in humility and obedience, who for our sakes humbled himself and became obedient even unto death on the cross.

The Lord was born in a cave to show that the whole world is a dark cave that only He can illumine. The Lord was born in Bethlehem — the House of Bread — to show that He is the only Bread of life worthy of true men (St. Nikolai Velimirovic). Taste and see, dear loved ones, that the Lord is good!

To him who enlightens and nourishes us be all glory, honor, and praise as we cry out Christ is born, glorify him!

Fr. Ben

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

- Kontakion of the pre-feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



THANK YOU and Plans for 2022 – by Joseph Rahal

As we look back at 2021, St Michael's had a very good year despite the Covid pandemic. We maintained our financial stability; our parish welcomed several new families and our organizations resumed full activities. This could only have happened with the commitment of our entire parish. For this, we say a huge THANK YOU!

As we look to 2022, we need to think forward and keep pace with the world's challenges. Some of our plans for 2022 include:

- Distributing newsletter with a combination of electronic mail and US mail. We will be in touch asking for your preference.
- Using our kitchen dishes to both be more environmentally friendly and significantly more economical by saving on paper goods.
- Engaging more parishioners in Church activities and needs
- Investing in, and installing, a professional video and sound system so we can resume live streaming
- Continuing to maintain and upgrade our physical church and grounds. The Parish Council has already approved funds to repaint the interior nave and alter and will be reviewing options for repainting the exterior of the church.
- God willing, resuming our narthex project which is the necessary first step in being able to grow our capacity

As we continue to thrive and grow as a parish, the needs of our church also continue to grow. Once again, we ask all those who care about our beloved St. Michaels to recommit to give of their time and talent. THANK YOU.

Church School Corner

Preschool to 2nd Grade Class – by Michelle Moeck

Church School is off to a great start for the new year. We began the year by learning about the Feast of the Elevation of the cross in September with a scavenger hunt. We also learned about the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation and Communion. In October we started putting together our own personal prayer books, this will be an ongoing project throughout the year. In October we started focusing mainly on Sunday's Gospel lesson which you can find on the Antiochian Website (<https://antiochian.org/dashboard?name=christian%20education>). There are additional resources and activities for parents and caregivers under Christian Education. I have been sending each child home with the coloring sheet that accompanies the Gospel lesson and encouraging them to share the Gospel story we read and the lesson they learned with their family. The other focus of church school has been church etiquette and we have been practicing being quiet and still so we can hear God's voice in church and in everyday life. We learned about the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos to the temple on November 21st and then celebrated the feast at Divine Liturgy. We are excited to be preparing for the Nativity Feast and we will spend the month of December learning about the Winter Saints (St Herman, St Lucia and St Nicholas) and of course the Nativity of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. I have enjoyed getting to know each of the children in church school and look forward to the rest of the year. We meet every Sunday morning (unless noted otherwise) from Labor Day thru Memorial Day at 9 am in the church hall. We are accepting new enrollments all year long and the registration form can be found on the St Michael's website and returned to Kh. Alyssa or myself. We are always excited to welcome new friends!

"Middle" Aged Class – by Kh. Alyssa Kjendal

We have a team of teachers – Tara and Mark Philips who are teaching the "middle" aged Church School class. This group of students is divided in two, and each week one group attends class (in the conference room) while the other group attends Orthros. Every other week, they switch. If your child would like to join the group, please send an email at alyssakjendal@yahoo.com (Kh. Alyssa).

The Kjendal Kliros

The fall of 2021 brought a new look to St. Michael: a new chanter stand. To explore what led to this new stand, we met with its builders, Anders Kjendal and Rick Bardine.

Q. How did you come up with the idea of building the chanter stand?

Singing is and always has been an integral part of our Orthodox liturgical practice. During the height of the pandemic, when attendance at services was limited, our chanters, Erika and Anders, and our choir director, Dave, kept this musical tradition alive.

As the church reopened and more people were able to return for services, new chanters came forward to help with liturgy. We found that we needed a better focal point to center our singing and to store and read music for Vespers, Orthros and Divine Liturgy. Our needs coalesced during Great Lent. So, the idea of buying or building a new chanter stand was born.

Q. What inspired you? How did you do your research?

We started by thinking about how and where we sing at St. Michael. In our church, we have dedicated chanters, a choir and broad participation of our congregation in hymns and prayers. The “kliros” is the area dedicated to the choir and refers to both the area where the chanters and choir assemble and the music stand on which music is stored and read. In St. Michael, as in many Orthodox churches, the kliros is to the right side and in front of the iconostasis. So, we knew the area, and then did some Internet research for designs we could use for the stand itself.



We realized that, although we found many examples of chanter stands, we had some unique requirements which would be best served by customizing a stand for our needs. We knew we needed enough storage area for the music binders for the chanters and the choir which had been stored in crates behind the old chanter stand. We also felt that we would need both fixed and moveable shelves to accommodate the Epistle book and other music and books we use throughout the Liturgical Year. Finally, we knew that we would need three or four different areas from which the chanters could read the services and that, ideally, we may want to rotate the top of the stand so that we could display the appropriate text and music during services. And so, armed with those requirements, we sketched the chanter stand which we built.

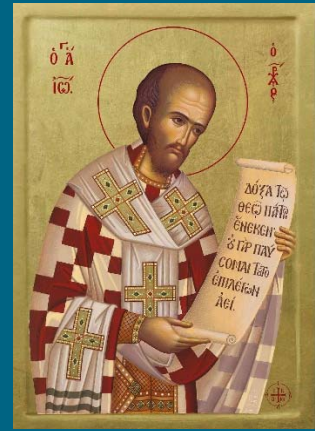
Q. What were the biggest challenges you faced?

The body of the stand wasn't too difficult to envision or build. Our greatest challenge was figuring out the angles we would need for the top and how to let it freely rotate.

We designed during the latter part of Great Lent, started building shortly after Pascha and installed it for the Dormition of the Theotokos in August. Although it took some time from idea to completion, the stand came together easily through the combined design and building efforts of our chanters, Erika and Anders, a little woodworking effort by Rick and a wonderful Orthodox woodcarver, Subdeacon Dan Rudder, who carved the cross on the front of the stand, a lot of prayers and the grace of God. We hope that the music from the Kjendal Kliros will bless our church for many years to come.



A Quote from a Saint



"Nothing elevates the soul, nothing gives it wings as a liturgical hymn does."

+ St. John Chrysostom

The Unexpected Gift – by George Soupel

Clang! Clang! Clang! The shrill clatter of the bell pierced the softly falling snow. Franny sat on the sidewalk in front of the pizza shop on Main Street in Hyannis. It was a gray December afternoon and the noise came from the Salvation Army collection station next door. Franny didn't bother to look at it - technology had replaced the human element. A small optical scanner sensed when someone approached, signalling the bell to ring - rising in volume when a coin was placed in the kettle. Many of the people she knew from the shelter had lost their small source of earnings at Christmas when the automated devices arrived.

As she pulled her tattered coat closer to ward off the chill, Franny heard the sound of approaching footsteps. She raised her gaze hoping to catch the eyes of the person above. At this hour she knew it would likely be someone leaving early from work to perhaps do a bit of gift shopping at the department store nearby, or a student leaving the school next door. In either case she figured the person would be in a good mood.

While a small cup was placed on the ground next to her, money was not the reason Franny sat here each afternoon. Her needs were small - the shelter gave her a sandwich and a fresh bar of soap daily. What money she did manage to collect, she gave away. Usually to the older people who had a harder time managing their problems. Sometimes she bought cat food for the strays that slept behind the church across the street.

What caused Franny to return every day was the hope of connecting with another human being. Twenty years on the streets had taken its toll on her - physically and mentally. She looked older than her forty-two years; wrinkles from worry and the weather cast a harsh look on her features. On days the shelter was full, Franny slept in a small tent or under the bandstand on the Green - often in frigid temperatures or damp, rainy conditions. She was no stranger to physical violence, being teased then beaten by groups of kids more times than she would like to remember. The cadre of "homeless" people in Hyannis helped each other when they could, but for the most part kept to themselves. Franny's life was a lonely one.

Sarah turned the corner as she exited the school on Main Street. As she often did after band practice, she headed to the pizza shop to pick up a sandwich. A quiet girl, Sarah did not have many friends. In fact her life had been quite chaotic as a child - moving from town to town. Her dad's job as a business executive paid very well but required the family to lead a nomadic lifestyle. Just when she made new friends, they had to move. Sarah found comfort in her books and learned to avoid close relationships. She lived in a large home in Osterville, but often it was empty - with her dad at work and mother out with friends or shopping.

Franny looked up as the girl walked by. As Sarah usually did, she placed a ten dollar bill in the woman's cup before opening the door to the restaurant. Her parents had taught her that with their

wealth came a responsibility to be generous and giving. They also told her about the dangers of being alone after dark, so she always averted her eyes so as to not make contact with the haggard looking woman on the sidewalk.

As the street lights came on, Franny knew it was time to head to the shelter. The doors closed at five o'clock and on cold nights there was a long line to get in. Often a fight would break out and the staff had to regain order. For the most part the counselors were young and kind, but their energy was often focused on the loudest and most belligerent residents. Consequently, Franny had very few interactions with them, and like with the people passing by her on the sidewalk, there was never any eye contact. She understood people's reluctance to engage - perhaps fearing her, or the sense of failure she represented to them. At one time she had a family and a life. But that was many years and buckets of tears ago.

As Sarah emerged from the pizza shop, she heard the squeal of brakes and a loud thud. Laying on the ground in front of her was the woman from the sidewalk. She did not appear to be badly injured, and Sarah ran over to help her up. The car took off. The people nearby looked away and kept walking. After helping Franny to the sidewalk, Sarah started to dial the police - but Franny gently took the phone from her hands and hung up. She did not want to create a fuss - and after thanking Sarah, headed to the shelter.

It all happened so fast Sarah thought. She was not even able to see what the woman looked like since it was so dark. Reassured that she was able to walk - Sarah dialed her mom for a ride home. When no one answered she tried her dad - but of course it went right to voicemail. Snow had started falling and it was getting cold, so she headed into the church across the street - preferring its quiet to the crowds in the stores. Sarah was not particularly religious, but knew the building was usually open. It was not the first time she had to wait until someone remembered and came to bring her home.

As Sarah entered the church, she saw that it was empty. She took a seat near the aisle to wait for someone to answer her calls home. After a few minutes Sarah heard muffled sobbing, and she noticed someone laying on the floor behind the pews. It was the woman who had been hit by the car. Fearfully she approached and called out to her in a soft voice. Perhaps she had been more badly injured than Sarah thought. "Why are you crying," she asked. "Are you hurt?"

Franny responded, "No, these are tears of joy. The shelter was full so I came in here to sleep." Sarah asked, "What are you joyful about - there's no food here, you were hit by a car and instead of a soft mattress your bed is a hard floor?"

Franny replied, "I have been praying every day because I was so lonely. People walk by and don't even bother to look at me. I have no one. Then, as I was walking across the street, God answered my prayers. Thankfully I was not hurt - but all the people who saw it happen just kept walking. Except you."

Sarah answered, "But I did nothing but help you up. I am ashamed of myself - I should have made sure you were safe and had a place to stay." Franny replied, "You gave me a wonderful Christmas present young lady - more valuable than the money people drop in my cup. You noticed me. For twenty years I have had a place to sleep and food to eat, but over time, the emptiness in my heart and soul has been growing. God is always there which gives me great comfort, but to not feel the touch of another person or never be truly seen is more painful than any car accident." With that, Sarah reached towards the woman and the two embraced.

Mount Tabor School – by Erika Kjendal

In fall our Teen SOYO put together a family raffle basket to support the newly established Mount Tabor School of the Liberal Arts in Kansas City, Missouri. Thanks to all of your generous support, we raised eight hundred dollars! The school opened its doors for the first time this September and welcomed twenty-seven students from grades first through twelfth. The school was started by St. Mary of Egypt parish and provides a classical education grounded in the Orthodox faith. Purposely situated in a lower class area, the school also serves as a beacon of light and welcomes students from not only the parish but also the vulnerable children in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Adam Lockridge is the headmaster, and I was blessed to be in his online literature class last year. I miss his excellent teaching this year, but I know this school is in the very best of hands. To continue to help as the school grows, the Teen SOYO is trying to plan a mission trip there in the not too distant future to give our help however we can. There is a playground to be built and many other projects to be done! This school and other Orthodox schools like it are such integral outposts of the church as they raise the next generation of laborers' in Christ's Kingdom. The foundation of these young men and women is being laid down in these school years, and it is a great blessing to support a school that teaches them the wisdom and virtue they need to accomplish the work God is calling them to do.

Outreach – by Kh. Alyssa Kjendal

AUGUST 2021 • Backpack Blessings: Once again we collected new school supplies for children living at the Village at Cataumet, a transitional housing shelter. On Sunday, August 29 we packed and delivered fifteen backpacks to overflowing, along with several additional bags of “extra” school supplies to be distributed as needed to the children at the Village at Cataumet. Thank you to everyone who donated time, supplies, and money to help these kids start the school year off on the right foot!!! Thank you, especially, to the Klovov family who delivered the backpacks on behalf of the parish!



SEPTEMBER 2021 • Assistance to Mount Tabor School of the Liberal Arts: a newly opened Orthodox school (grades K-12) in Kansas City, Missouri.

OCTOBER 2021 • Non-perishable food drive: Extra effort was made to bring non-perishable food for our food pantry collection box. Thank you to Julia who has been delivering this non-perishable food!

NOVEMBER 2021 • Thanksgiving Meals: On Friday 11/19, we delivered 50 Thanksgiving meals including turkeys to Faith Family Kitchen. Thank you for donating food, donating money, making phone calls, picking up needed items, and helping deliver and pack the meals for each family! Thank you for your generosity and your time!

DECEMBER 2021 • Christmas Meals: We are delivering 50 Christmas meals to Faith Family Kitchen along with 200 dozen of homemade cookies. SOYO is helping a struggling family in our community buying Christmas gifts for themselves and their children. They do this through CCB Media's "Christmas wishes" program.

JANUARY 2022 • Scarfs & Care Bag Distribution: God willing, we will be tying scarfs and placing care bags along Main Street in downtown Hyannis.



Women's Group – by Elaine Burke

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the Women's Group for a very successful International Food Fair. The baked goods were a great hit and, in fact, the event was a sellout long before it was scheduled to be finished! While it was a tremendous amount of work, it led to overwhelming success and offered great exposure of St Michael to the Cape Cod community at large, with people coming all the way from Wellfleet! The funds raised by the event will allow the Women's Group to meet its 2022 Stewardship pledge to St. Michael.

Two of our ongoing projects are still available for your generous support. There are copies of "The Foods That Unite Us", the St. Michael cookbook, available for purchase at the SOYO Bookstore table. This fabulous, full color and full size book, will make a thoughtful Christmas gift. Also available at the SOYO Bookstore table are 8-card set packages of any-occasion Archangel Icon Greeting cards. These are prints of the beautiful Archangel Icons, lovingly and prayerfully painted by our own Zarina Sheglov.



At the October meeting, Elaine Burke stepped down as President of the Women's group after five years of leadership. Soraya Bandeli, who has co-chaired the group for the past year, is looking for someone to co-chair with her. If you are interested in honing your leadership skills and helping the Women's Group continue in their projects, consider joining Soraya in this supported leadership position. Whoever steps into this position will receive positive guidance from both Elaine and Soraya, and from all the other experienced members of the Women's Group, to help them succeed. There are many volunteer opportunities available, all of which enrich our Parish life. Together, we can be the evidence of Christ's love right from our own parish and beyond!

Be the change! Be the love!

Recipe Box – by Pauline Rassias

Katya Rosenzweig volunteered to make Sharlotka for our recent bake sale, so we added it to our preorder form. The response was more than expected and seven Sharlotka cakes were ordered. Some came forward to help Katya, and a few of us non-Russians undertook the task. I chose a recipe online and enjoyed making my first deliciously light and fluffy Russian Apple Cake.

Sharlotka - Russian Apple Cake

Ingredients:

- 4 Granny Smith apples. (any apple is acceptable)
- 1 TBS lemon juice
- 3 lg. eggs at room temp.
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 tsp almond extract
- ¾ C plus 2 TBS flour. (fluff before measuring and measure accurately)
- Add to flour and sift together:
 - ¼ tsp cinnamon
 - ¼ tsp nutmeg
 - dash Kosher salt
 - Confectioners sugar for dusting.

Preheat oven to 350F.

Grease bottom and sides of a 9" springform pan and line with parchment.

Peel, core and slice apples about 1/4" thick. Toss with lemon juice and 2 TBS sugar. Set aside. Beat eggs on high speed with electric mixer (hand or standing) until fluffy.

Add almond flavor and slowly add sugar while continuing to beat. Beat until ribbon forms when you raise the beaters, about 8 minutes.

Gently fold in the flour 1/3 at a time. Be careful here to maintain air in the batter.

Now, layer the sliced apples on the bottom of the springform pan. Pour the batter over the apples and shake pan lightly so batter falls between apples. Let stand 5 minutes then bake until toothpick comes out clean (45-60 min). I know you will ENJOY!