

# O. N. E.

## ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND

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## Christ the Savior Church: Twenty-Five Years of Witness



V. Rev. Aleandro

After a year of preparation, Saturday June 10, 2016 and the celebration of our Silver Jubilee finally arrived. This celebration marked 25 years from our first Liturgy in the Aleandro living room with two families. The year not only put us in touch with our past through photos and memories but most of all by renewed contact with people who have been part of our parish family life over a quarter of a century.

Since the beginning, ten sons of our parish have been ordained to serve The Lord, five deacons and five priests. Most of them were at the Holy Table that

morning along with many priests from our Deanery and Diocese. I was surprised at Communion time when Subdeacon Michael told the Archbishop there were twenty clergy who would be approaching to receive the Sacred Gifts.

Among the over two hundred people in the church were former parishioners who flew from California, drove from Indiana and many other states. We were also aware of the spiritual bond with those who could not join us that day and our brothers and sisters in Turkana, Africa.

Continued on page 2



**Above:** Archbishop Nikon is welcomed into Christ the Savior Church.

**Below:** Fr. Michael Koblosh, who served the mission in its early days, participated in the celebration.

Archbishop Nikon said: "...I remember fondly my first visits to the Mission and the day of Ground Breaking with the planting of the Cross... Most importantly, for two and half decades your community has accepted the gospel mandate to 'proclaim the glad news' ... May your anniversary celebration be a time of joyous thanksgiving to Almighty God for His many blessings throughout these twenty five years."

Perhaps the spirit and joy of that day is summarized in the following note from Rev Marston Preice, the Rector of Epiphany Episcopal church in Southbury. It is the church that gave us a home when we out grew our living room twenty five years ago.

Rev. Preice wrote: "My heart is full of joy after attending your 25th anniversary celebration. It was an honor to have been included. Everyone from the Archbishop to so many of your parishioners made me feel welcome. At one point a women came over and whispered in my ear gratitude that I was there. You are blessed to have such a loving and inclusive parish."

"I was deeply moved by the liturgy which was celebrated with great reverence and beauty. As I left I felt that I had truly been in the presence of the Holy."

"May God continue to bless you and Christ the Savior Church with his grace and glory."

On Friday evening Archbishop Nikon was present for Vespers along with a number of clergy, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. The choir sang, as always, with great enthusiasm and reverence. Following Vespers there was a Memorial for all who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

It seemed like the Reception on Friday night would not end until Saturday morning as people renewed and began new friendships. It made us realize that some important things didn't change over a quarter of a century. The photo gallery in the hall and slide presentation aroused laughs as we realized that some things have changed. A wonderful commemorative book was put together





**Above and below:**  
**Archbishop Nikon awards**  
**several gramota** to honor  
exemplary service at Christ  
the Savior Church.

so if you did not get one, and would like a copy, contact Fr. Vladimir.

At the end of Liturgy some grammota were presented by His Eminence. A Synodal Certificate to Christ the Savior parish: "with gratitude for their commitment to the life and ministry of the Orthodox Church in America." Presentations were also given to Fr. Michael and M. Nadia Koblosh, our Founders; the parish of SS. Cyril and Methodius, our Mother Parish; Peter and Chezelle Serev, who donated the property for our church; Paul Filpowich who has been our treasurer for over two decades and Rdr. Peter Kopcha, faithful choir director.

After a gentle springing of "Holy Water" from the clouds above, the large tent on the grounds set up for brunch reverberated with laughter and

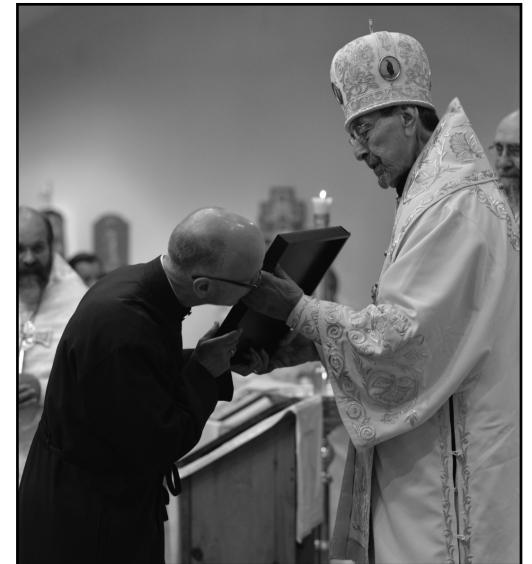


celebration. Everyone there will remember Fabio the accordion player. When he played the Tarantella Napolitano, a little old Italian priest, and many others, could not keep their feet and hands from dancing.

Rabbi Eric Polokoff, on behalf of the Southbury Clergy Association, wrote the following: "With its vitality, strength and vision your church has deepened our diversity and sense of the sacred. You make a notable and positive impact in many realms and touch many souls—all the way from Connecticut to Africa.... Looking ahead we pray that you continue to go and grow, from strength to strength. And as we say in Hebrew: Mazal Tov!"

We are humbly and profoundly grateful to the Connecticut Deanery and Diocese of New England for their support and love through the years. We invite you and "the whole world" to join with us, and Archbishop Nikon, in this 25th anniversary year as we celebrate Vespers of the Feast of St. Nektarios on the Sunday before his feast, November 6 at 4:00 PM.

**ONE +**



# Thirty Years of Youth Rally

Right: The choir at Youth Rally.



## V. Rev. John Hopko

This year was our 30th anniversary year of Youth Rally in the Diocese of New England. Rally took place from Monday, August 8, until Saturday, Aug. 13, 2016.

At Rally this year we had 40 children between the ages of 10 and 17 participating as "Rallyers", with 17 adult staff members, and one underage child of staff members (a nearly three-year-old child), for a total of 58 participants. Thirteen of the 40 Rallyers were attending Rally for the first time, which means that 27 of the 34 children we had at Rally in 2015 participated once again. Given the fact that some of the 2015 participants are now too old to participate in 2016, this is a remarkable rate of continuing participation.

With the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON, children of staff members at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary were once again invited to participate in Rally. We had four children from Saint Vladimir's Seminary and two children

from Saint Tikhon's Seminary. Two children participated from the Albanian Archdiocese this summer, again with His Eminence's blessing.

Of the sixteen staff members, four were serving as staff members for the first time. Putting together a staff this year proved a great challenge. Eventually, we recruited from beyond the geographical boundaries of our diocese, bringing in Alexandra Bercich from Texas and Simeon Brasowski from New Jersey. We thank our daughter, Lucy Hopko, who recruited Alexandra and Simeon for us. Alexandra and Simeon are fellow members with Lucy of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF). Lucy became acquainted with them both on an OCF pilgrimage to Alaska this past spring. Other new members of staff were Maria Rodriguez, a member of our diocese's parish in Meriden, Connecticut, and Stephen Brown, a member of our diocese's Claremont, New Hampshire parish. Of the four new members of Rally Staff, only Stephen Brown had previously participated in Rally as a youth participant. All four of

our first-time staff members had very successful weeks as members of our staff.

As in previous years, we once again, also, reached out to family members and, for the fourth time, my nephew Zachariah Mandell served as member of Rally Staff. (Zachariah's younger brother, Jacob, was a member of Rally Staff in 2015, the one year that Zach could not be with us. Jacob spent this summer as the cook at Camp Nazareth, the summer youth camp of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese.) Zachariah is a graduate student at SUNY Buffalo (State University of New York, Buffalo Campus) and is Choir Director at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Buffalo, New York.

**Right:** A multitude of scenes from Youth Rally

## Rally Staff

In my capacity as Diocesan Youth Director, I served for the thirteenth consecutive year as Rally Rector and Director. Fr. Dennis Rhodes again served as a member of the Rally Clergy and as Rally Choir Director. Fr. Dennis has been participating in Youth Rally for more than a decade now. For the seventh consecutive summer, Fr. Sergius Halvorsen again served as a member of the Rally Clergy. Both Fr. Dennis and Fr. Sergius are accomplished preachers and fine liturgical celebrants, and add much to the quality of Youth Rally. The clergy also led our educational sessions. It must be said that the clergy prepare carefully and attentively for the educational sessions and do a wonderful job!

Macrina Hopko again served as Rally Nurse. She is a duly licensed Registered Nurse in the state of New Hampshire, as well as in her home state of Connecticut, where she works as an Intensive Care Unit Staff Nurse at Bristol Hospital, Bristol. Macrina is also a Part-Time Faculty Member of the School of Nursing at Quinnipiac University, Hamden, CT, supervising third-year nursing students doing practical clinical training at Bristol





**Above:** Archbishop Nikon visits Youth Rally.

Hospital. Macrina's licensure in the state of New Hampshire was obtained some years ago specifically on account of her participation in Youth Rally. Lucy Hopko, our daughter, assisted her mother with the health care duties at Rally for the fourth consecutive year. Lucy is a duly certified emergency medical technician.

I am deeply grateful for my accomplished wife and daughter, and for their love for and commitment to the annual Diocesan Youth Rally. It is a tremendous comfort—indeed, a requirement—to have competent, trustworthy health staff for Rally.

Beyond the three clergy staff members and two health staff members already detailed above, a total of twelve other adults volunteered as Youth Rally Staff in various capacities, primarily as cabin and activity counselors. They were: Alexandra Bercich, Simeon Brasowski, Stephen Brown, Julia Brockett, Stephen Brown, Laura Chadwick, Sarah Gaulin, Brian Kennedy, Stephanie Kennedy, Zachariah Mandell, Melanie Osuch, Maria Rodriguez, and Timothy Tassmer. Stephanie and Brian Kennedy, with the permission of the Rally Director, blessed Rally by bringing with them to Rally their nearly four-year-old daughter, Brigid. Four years ago, at Rally 2012, Stephanie was seven months

pregnant with Brigid, while participating very actively. This year it was once again a tremendous blessing to have this whole family with us at Rally. The Kennedys—Brian, Stephanie and Brigid—do a wonderful job of showing us all what it means to be an Orthodox Christian family. Their presence, as a family, adds tremendous value to our Rally program.

It is vitally important to have an adequate staff. We are grateful that this year we were again blessed with a wonderful group of adult volunteers willing to give freely of their time, talents and, even, treasure, to serve as staff members at Youth Rally.

## Theme and Activities

The theme for Rally 2016 was "Peace be to all," meditating on the liturgical phrase that we use and hear so often during our Orthodox Christian liturgical services. We announced this theme early in 2016 as part of our pre-Rally publications and activities, which included announcing the dates for Youth Rally and engaging in staff recruitment. Along with announcing the theme, we, also, let it be known that we would be inviting Fr. James Parnell to speak to us on the Rally theme, given his real-life experience of war. As well as being an ordained Orthodox Christian



**Above:** On the bus to Canobie Lake Amusement Park.

**Below:** The waterfront at Youth Rally.

priest, and the Rector of our diocesan parish in Hartford, Connecticut, Fr. James is an Army National Guard Chaplain endorsed by the Orthodox Church in America. He is, also, a twice-deployed veteran of the Iraq War, where he served as an enlisted soldier, and specifically as an Arabic language specialist. Among other U.S. Army badges, Fr. James wears on his Army uniform the Combat Action Badge, indicating that as a soldier he has been “engaged by the enemy.”

Following the announcement of the theme and guest speaker, we did have some concerns expressed to us about how we would be talking specifically about war and warriors at Youth Rally. I had several profitable private dialogues with various others in the Diocese, including some of those who would later be presenting at Rally. I think these conversations truly helped us prepare for Rally.

Fr. Sergius Halvorsen presented the opening “keynote” address on our theme on Tuesday morning. He addressed from a broad Churchly perspective the notion of “peace.” He noted that, for

Orthodox Christians, peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but rather a product of doing the Will of God, even in circumstances that are anything but observably “peaceful.”

On Wednesday, Fr. James Parnell spoke to us, fulfilling his charge to speak to us about the realities of war in a way that the young,

inexperienced, and, for the most part, quite sheltered Rally participants could receive. His was a very powerful presentation, especially when he spoke to us about the beautiful things he witnessed, as well as the traumatic and toxic reality of war. The participants had many questions for Fr. James and were moved by his presentation.

To ensure the discussion was streamlined and appropriate for the entire group, the children submitted their questions on index cards. We hope and pray, also, that for Fr. James this was a beneficial experience, whereby he could share, with a receptive audience of caring young people, something of the trauma he has suffered as a soldier. We are deeply grateful to Fr. James for his measured, thoughtful, yet passionate presentation. May God bless



and heal Fr. James and fellow soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and veterans!

The daily schedule for Rally followed the rhythms that have been established during the past Rallies that have been held in Contoocook at the Faith and Heritage Center. Liturgical services are held mornings, afternoons and evenings in the chapel. Choir rehearsals and educational sessions are held in the earlier part of each day and other activities, such as time at the waterfront, arts and crafts, drama club, sports and games, trail-walking, team building exercises, training in Church reading and chanting, are later in the day.

On Thursday of Rally, in the afternoon and evening, we went on our traditional annual field trip to the Canobie Lake Amusement Park, Salem, New Hampshire. This is a field trip requiring the rental and hiring of a school bus and driver for the one-hundred-mile roundtrip. The children love this outing, which is a strong Youth Rally tradition.

It should be mentioned here that we did have several unprecedented occurrences at Rally this year. One of these was the fact that I, in my capacity as Rally Director and Rector, had to hand over my responsibilities for part of one day at Rally. We learned that the 24-year-old daughter of one of the members of our

Terryville parish, was in Hartford Hospital suffering from a serious illness. So, at the urging of all the Rally participants, adults and youths, on Tuesday afternoon I handed over the leadership of Rally to Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, and was able to travel to Hartford to spend an hour with the young woman and her family. I was extremely grateful that this was possible, and I thank Fr. Sergius and all the Rally participants for making it work.

This year, we received an average of just \$188 from each Rallyer. The actual cost of Rally was \$681 per youth participant, which is down just over 4% from last year's \$711.50.

We should understand that the Diocese of New England is heavily subsidizing Youth Rally, which is an expensive program! It is good to know that once again this year numerous donations were made in support of Youth Rally via the ONE Stewards Program of the Diocese of New England or by direct contribution to the Youth Rally income line item in the Diocesan expense budget. Therefore, we could say that actual receipts in support of Rally were much more than the figure quoted above, since the Diocese receives additional donations specifically earmarked for Rally.

**ONE +**

**Below: Youth Rally**  
participants assemble for worship.



# Iconography reaches new heights at Holy Transfiguration, New Haven

V. Rev. Michael Westerberg

This July our parish took a giant step forward in completing our iconography as the dome and upper central area of our church were adorned with a Pantocrator, surrounded by the Holy Theotokos, Saint John the Baptist, the four Evangelists, and angels. Additionally, icons of the Rublov Trinity, the Scourging of the Lord, the Crucifixion, and the Taking-down of the Lord from the Cross, and icons of twenty-four different saints were completed.

Our iconographer is Father Theodore Jurewicz. Father Theodore, a priest of the Old Believer parish of the Nativity of the Theotokos, in Erie, Penn., was a student of Father Kyprian of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY. A widely recognized "master" Father

Theodore has been writing icons for nearly fifty years. He and Matushka Alexandra have ten children and numerous grandchildren.

For the past few years Father has been aided by his son, John, who began as an apprentice, but whose talent and abilities, though not quite rivaling his father at this point, are coming into full bloom. Also, for the past several years Irene Vassos, a student of iconography from our Saint Nicholas parish in Pittsfield, Mass., has assisted Father Theodore. And this year, Olga Shevelkina, our own parishioner, and a talented art student, also participated.

The iconography work began in our parish more than thirty-four years ago as we replaced crumbling paper print festal icons with hand-painted icons. Step by step there was continuing and growing

**Right:** The icon of the Pantocrator now stands at the center of Holy Transfiguration's dome.

Photos by John Kruchok.



interest in traditional Orthodox iconography. We offered adult education classes and sponsored visiting lecturers, including the late Archbishop JOB, himself a gifted iconographer, when he was our diocesan bishop.

Sponsor donors came forward and the work has been ‘in process’ for more than thirty-four years.

All iconography in our parish was done by special donations, some in memoriam, some in thanksgiving, some as bequests, some simply in support of the iconographic work. Our parish has never borrowed or gone into debt to fund the work and no iconography was done until the necessary funds were “in hand.”

At the present time the patrons of every one of our parishioners are shown somewhere in our church. Of course, this is a moving target. New parishioners could arrive at any time and might have saints’ names whose icons



**Above:** Scaffolding covers **Holy Transfiguration** while the new iconography was completed. The chandelier is barely visible, swathed in protective material.

**Below:** The chandelier hangs brightly amid the lower levels of the newly-painted dome.

Photos by John Kruchok.

are not yet shown.

The loft area of our church remains to be completed. We are hopeful that the sponsorship will materialize and that our loft area will be completed next summer.

We invite and welcome visitors at any and all times.

**ONE +**



## Fr. Robert Holet returning to lead retreat on Stewardship: Sept. 23-24

V. Rev. Robert Holet will be leading a retreat at SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden, Conn., Friday-Saturday, Sept. 23-24. The title of the retreat "The Gift of Giving: Growing in Our Personal and Parish Life through the Cycle of Stewardship."

Fr. Robert's presentation to the Diocesan Assembly last year was considered fascinating and inspiring. This is an opportunity to delve deeper into these ideas, or to hear Fr. Robert for the first time.

The retreat opens with Vespers on Friday evening at 6:30, followed by the initial presentation. On Saturday, we will begin at 9:00, break for lunch at noon, and end with Vespers at 3:30.

The event is free and open to all, but donations are requested to defray costs. Registration in advance is necessary for planning: the deadline is Sept. 16. Please contact Fr. Joshua Mosher at [frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org](mailto:frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org) or [203-237-4539](tel:203-237-4539).

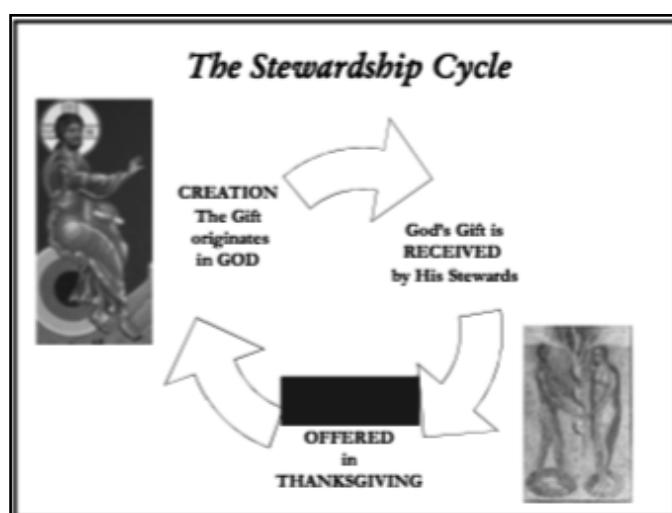
V. Rev. Robert Holet is a parish priest in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with a



Doctor of Ministry in the understanding of stewardship in Orthodoxy. Author of *The First and Finest: Orthodox Christian Stewardship as Sacred Offering*, he has spoken widely, including at the 2015 Assembly of the Diocese of New England.

Fr. Robert helps Christians today rediscover a richer understanding of offering. He challenges us to consider whether we offer our first and finest to the Lord, and encourages parishes to exercise stewardship as an act of divine worship in the service of God and the poor.

Full details are published at SS. Peter & Paul's website: [www.sspeterpaul.org](http://www.sspeterpaul.org).



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**Upcoming Events**

<b>Sept 30</b>	<b>Deadline for the next issue of the ONE</b>
Sept. 10	Altar Server Retreat led by Fr. John Hopko at SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden, Conn.
Sept 18	Holy Annunciation, Maynard, Mass., celebrates centennial
Sept. 23-24	Stewardship Retreat led by Fr. Robert Holet at SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden, Conn.
Oct 9	Holy Trinity, Willimantic, Conn., celebrates centennial
Oct. 29	St. Peter & St. Paul, Springfield, Mass., celebrates centennial
Oct. 29-30	Diocesan Assembly hosted by St. Peter & St. Paul, Springfield, Mass.
Nov. 6	St. Nectarios Celebration at Christ the Savior, Southbury, Conn.