
ST. MICHAEL ROMANIAN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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October 2009

Chairman's Corner: Opportunities

By Christopher Meyer

The Third Leg: Participation

In this issue, we'll focus on the third leg of the tripod: participation. Both issues deal with communication, as a newsletter is a form of communication, but in the next issue, we'll propose some new and alternative ways we plan to communicate even more.

Participation is critical to a church. As a teenager, I was a singer in a rock band, and I learned how hard it is to play for one person (and I think he was the town drunk). There's no one to draw energy from, and there's no one to send energy to. I've seen Father Pater give the Liturgy to 4 people, and he did it, but I sensed disappointment. I've seen him give the Liturgy to 200 people and felt the energy from the people and being sent to the people ... it was a beautiful thing.

Newsletters ...

When I first sat down to write this newsletter, I did it because I like to write. Growing up I wrote poetry, stories, critical essays, and songs. I've always loved how one can craft something to say just what you want to say and how many ways one can say anything.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOV 20, 21, 22 – SAUSAGE SALE

NOV 26 – THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

DEC 13 – CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

DEC 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

In Memoriam

Most Reverend Louis Puscas, Bishop Emeritus
09.13.1915 – 10.03.2009



Bishop Louis Puscas graduated from St. Michael Grade School, Aurora, Illinois, and attended Quigley Prep, the Minor Seminary of the Chicago Archdiocese. His first two years of Major Seminary were completed at Oradea, Romania. The next two years were finished at the Propaganda Fidei Seminary, Rome, Italy, and he was placed in the Benedictine Major Seminary, St. Procopius, Lisle, Illinois, for his final two years.

He was ordained into the priesthood, May 14, 1942, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by the Most Reverend Basil Takach, Bishop of the Byzantine Ruthenian Rite Diocese. On February 1, 1965, Bishop Puscas was appointed pastor of St. George Byzantine Romanian Rite parish, Aurora, IL.

On June 26, 1983, Father Puscas was ordained Bishop and was appointed as the first Exarch of the Byzantine Romanian Exarchy, founded December 4, 1982, by Pope John Paul II. Bishop Puscas was installed, August 28, 1983, at St. George Church, Canton, OH, by Archbishop Pio Laghi, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States.

On March 26, 1987, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, elevated the Exarchy to the rank of Diocese, and on the same date, appointed Bishop Puscas as the first Bishop of the Byzantine Romanian Rite Diocese of St. George the Martyr. Bishop Louis Puscas fell asleep in the arms of the Lord on October 3, 2009. ❖

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The other reason I wrote it is because I am passionate about St. Michael Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church. I don't know why, since I am American and Roman Catholic, but I feel at home in the building and in the presence of the congregation. And I saw St. Michael struggling and wanted to do something about it. So I volunteered to write, to share my gift and craft in hopes it would inspire.

And inspire it did. Within a week I received, through various channels, multitude of accolades and a handful of criticisms. The church received enough money in a week to pay the monthly bills, and the number of new (both new and old members didn't know about the dues) members rapidly increased. The newsletter even made it up to the Bishop and around the Diocese, where it received even more accolades and criticism.

So thank you for responding positively and critically to the debut newsletter ... I am open to more constructive criticism, so please write me (contact info at the end of the newsletter). I'm also on the hook to write this every month, so send ideas and even articles ... I'll review, edit, and publish as appropriate; this newsletter is not about me but about us, the congregation.

... and Volunteers

The other overwhelming response came with volunteers. I estimated it would take a couple issues to prove the newsletter was real, and that people would then start to send money and volunteer. I got that wrong in a big way.

The calendar to bring pastries and help with coffee hour is full ... I'm not sure you can sign up before January 2010. The ushers – the ones who normally usher – quickly signed up for a month ... I guess they really like doing it, but there are other people signing up as well.

Opportunities

What's next? How else can we participate and improve participation? We've got the money coming in to take care of the basic needs of the church, and we'll soon have enough to go beyond the basics. Most of the churches I was a member of had bake sales and picnics and lots of social parties ... we're starting to do that, but perhaps we should do more.

What do you think? How can you participate more? Many of you have been members of St. Michael long before I came along ... what was the congregation doing 50-years ago? What were you doing then that we could and should be doing now?

My contact information is at the end of the newsletter. Communicate to me in private or catch me after Sunday service. I am open to all ideas, but remember ... anyone can come up with ideas and suggestions and criticisms. I'm looking for participation, so I'll ask you to follow through with what you propose, even if I am the one initially taking the lead. ❖

Church Finances

By Christopher Meyer

The Annual Report and Audit

Claudia Meyer, Viola Moldovan, Father Pater, and I worked with Father Ovidiu Marginean, who is the Assisting Pastor & Chancellor for the Diocese, to get the finances in order. I cannot deliver all the details because we're not done yet, but here is where we are: July, August and September 2009 records are in the computer. Every income, every outgoing bill is accounted for; Viola's paper records were accurate, so we just had to input them into the computer. We are looking to expand the use of the computer by paying bills online to provide electronic records and save on stamps.



As we input bills into the computer, we found a few opportunities to improve spending. The church uses AT&T for telephone, and they charged us for every service possible. No longer, and the bill has been cut 60%. We have also changed out long-distance carrier, and we expect to see savings of around 50%.

Several more opportunities exist, and I'll update you again in November. ❖

The Cost of Running the Church

By Christopher Meyer

As mentioned in "Opportunities", the church received enough money in September to pay the monthly bills. We did not have to borrow from one account to pay another account. We did not have to pay only a portion of the utility bill. In fact, we were able to start putting borrowed money back. What a great feeling to know we're able to start making basic repairs to the church along with paying the basic monthly bills.

As I review the bulletins, I noticed the weekly collections have increased from ~\$700/week to ~\$1100/week. That's over a 50% increase towards our target of ~\$1500/week. The influx of membership dues and special collection dues are supplementing the gap for the next few months, so let's hope that, when everyone's paid their dues, we'll see the goal of \$1500/week goal. And, as mentioned in the "Church Finances" article, we will work to reduce monthly expenses to lower the \$1500/week goal to ~\$1300/week or lower. In the next issue, we get more into the details.

The trends are encouraging. Thank you. ❖

Volunteer Opportunities

By *Claudia Meyer*

Thank You Volunteers

One of the criticisms we received regarding the first newsletter was that we listed only a handful of volunteers. The intent of the first issue was to provide examples of volunteers in hopes of recruiting more; but since enough people wanted a list of volunteers that consistently provide service, here they are and what they do:

Jim Banks and Judy Mennecke usher during the Saturday Liturgy.

Gus Silagi, John Silagi, Attila Vig, Mike Ardelean and Leon Saros usher during the Sunday Liturgy.

We would like to see others sign up to usher (sign-up sheet is available in the narthex).

Dee Masee has been providing the orange juice and assists Viola Moldovan for Sunday Coffee Hour. Viola has been providing the pastries for the Sunday Coffee Hour for a long time and we are excited to see other parishioners starting to contribute as well (sign-up is available in the narthex).

Lena Matyas, Emma Ideran and Viola Moldovan have been providing all the decorations for the holidays.

The following families always help with cooking/serving/cleaning up at all our celebrations: Mr. & Mrs. Cirstoin, Ms. Viola Moldovan, Mr. & Mrs. Ioan Naghi, Mr. & Mrs. John Silagi, Mr. & Mrs. Tamasi, Mr. & Mrs. Cristian Vesa, Mr. & Mrs. Florin Vesa, and Mr. & Mrs. Attila Vig.

And let's not forget the delicious cooking of Mrs. Florica Pater and the efforts of Father Pater, who organizes all the parties and does all the shopping and menu selection.

Thank you Donors

Next on our list is a thank you to all those who have already donated to the special maintenance fund collection to make basic repairs to the church and to bring it up to safety and city codes. Your contributions have helped tremendously and we are blessed to have you as parishioners.

A special thank you also goes out to all the parishioners who have paid their membership dues for 2009. That additional income has made a significant difference to St. Michael Church.

More Opportunities

The special collection is still open for donations, and volunteer opportunities will continue to be needed. If you have ideas for improvements to the church grounds or services we could be offering the community, please contact Claudia Meyer using the phone number or email in the Contact Information section of this Newsletter. ❖

Youth Sunday

School

By *Christopher Meyer*
and *Amaal Tokars*



Youth Sunday School continues to be held every Sunday in the white house. Children kindergarten through high school are encouraged to attend.

On September 20th, it was an overwhelming experience to see all the children walk down the aisle for communion. Father Pater cried at the sight. Let's keep making him cry.

Here is the schedule; coordinate with Amaal for changes:

10-11 ... Marcel	10-18 ... Rahuca
10-25 ... Amaal	11-01 ... Ana
11-08 ... Judy	11-15 ... Ioan
11-22 ... Marcel	11-29 ... Rahuca

Closing Thoughts

By *Christopher Meyer*

The first newsletter generated more interest and activity than I predicted. I really thought it'd take three issues to lay the communication foundation. The additional donations and volunteering is proof this congregation demands St. Michael Church remain open.

As I worried, some members are displeased with the changes. I pray they see these changes as forward progress toward an open future for the church and its members. We are making forward progress: bills paid on time, bank accounts and membership growing, and increased activity from the congregation.

Remember, in this country, the Constitution dictates the separation of state and church, therefore, St. Michael receives no assistance from the local, state, or federal governments. We also do not receive any help from the Diocese. In fact, we pay them 12% of our gross revenue.

We, the congregation, bring St. Michael Church to life. We that are served by her must serve her with the knowledge that what is given to her is returned ten-fold.

God Bless. ❖

A special thank you goes to Mr. Cristinel Gingu for making a donation towards the cost of mailing this Newsletter to all parishioners.

Upcoming Events

By *Claudia Meyer*

We have four exciting events coming up in the next few months: the Sausage Sale, the Thanksgiving Celebration, the Children's Christmas Party, and the New Year's Eve Party.

The **Sausage Sale** will be held November 20th, 21st and 22nd. Please call Father Pater (630.897.8115) to order your sausage (fresh or smoked) by Sunday, November 8, 2009. The price is \$4.50/lb for fresh sausage and \$5.50/lb for smoked sausage. Please bring cash or check (made payable to St. Michael Church) when you pick up your sausage.

The **Thanksgiving Celebration** will be held on Thursday, November 26, 2009, starting at 2pm. The menu will be a delicious selection of stuffed turkey, sausage with cabbage, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, vegetables and various desserts. The price per person is \$20 for adults and \$6 for kids 7-12 yrs old (kids 0-6 are free). Alcoholic beverages are not included, but a cash bar will be available for those over 21 (IDs will be checked). Reservations will be taken by Claudia Meyer via phone (630.440.9964) or email (st.michael.church@live.com) by Sunday, Nov.

15, 2009. The cost of the tickets goes up to \$30 per person if you do not reserve your seats in advance and we cannot guarantee availability on the day of the event (maximum capacity is 120 adults).

We would prefer for this Thanksgiving lunch to be served family style at each table (not buffet), so we are looking for volunteers to be servers. If you are over 15-yrs-old and wish to volunteer, please call or email Claudia Meyer. We would like to encourage high school and college students to volunteer to be servers. We would also like to encourage our parishioners to bring a dessert to be shared with everyone.

The **Children's Christmas Party** will be held on Sunday, December 13th, 2009, following the Sunday Liturgy. Santa Claus will be bringing gifts to the children and will be on hand for pictures. Although there is no formal party, we would like to encourage all parishioners to bring either an appetizer or a dessert to be shared with everyone.

The **New Year's Eve Party** will be held on Thursday, December 31st, 2009, starting at 7pm. The price is \$80 for adults over 21, \$60 for ages 13-20 and \$6 for kids 7-12. All beverages are included in this price. Reservations should be made by Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009. The cost of the tickets goes up by \$20 per person if you do not

Contact Information

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For volunteer opportunities or to donate towards the support of this Newsletter:
Claudia Meyer 630.440.9964 or st.michael.church@live.com

To place an announcement (birthday, marriage, anniversary) in this Newsletter:
Claudia Meyer 630.440.9964 or st.michael.church@live.com

To purchase ad space (business) in this Newsletter:
Christopher Meyer 630.853.6200 or st.michael.church@live.com

If you would like to help us save on envelopes/stamps, please sign up at st.michael.church@live.com to receive this Newsletter and other church communication via email.