
THE TORCHBEARER

The Newsletter of the Church of St. John of Damascus, Dedham, MA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

From the Pastor... As I write this, I have just returned from the clergy symposium at the Antiochian Village outside of Pittsburgh and am preparing to go on vacation to visit Khouria Joan's family in Canada for a family wedding. Summertime at St. John's is quiet in one sense yet busy in another. Church school graduation on May 21st was a wonderful "end" to the church year. Tim O'Hara was the recipient of the St. John's scholarship and Leila Zahka was awarded the Robert P. Zahka Scholarship. Tim will attend Westfield State and Leila will attend Roger Williams, in RI. On this day of celebration we see first hand the fruit of the labors of the church staff and teachers and the incredible work of the students. Special note must be made of the parents who bring the children each week. Thank you for taking your responsibilities so seriously; sadly, there are some who choose not to bring their children.

In June, St. George, Boston, hosted the annual parish life conference. St. John's was very well represented! Cameron Close, David Hazerjian, Daniel Totten, and Andrew Weinstein represented us in the bible bowl and WON! These young men traveled to the Antiochian Village on July 22nd to represent our diocese in the archdiocese wide bowl; unfortunately, their efforts came up short but they made us all proud. Carol Hazerjian and Laurie Bradley represented us in the adult bible bowl and also WON!

In July, we welcomed the new members and officers of the Executive Board and thanked the out going members and officers. Below, you can see the names of the new officers and members of the board. I also have met with and have been in constant contact with Nancy Close, as we prepare for church school in the fall.

Now it is August and the church's and pastor's calendars are filling up with events. Soon, the devoted women of the VMS will start their cooking and baking for our bazaar, the choir will again sing at the liturgy, the church school and altar servers will be present, and things will be "back to normal." This is good because it shows that this parish family is alive not dead.

The church is only alive however when its people join with each other to glorify God. You are invited to join us on this journey toward the Kingdom of God. *With my love and prayers, I remain*
Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

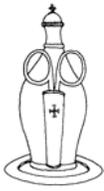
Liturgical notes:

❖ We will return to our regular liturgical schedule on Sunday, September 10th, with Matins at 9 a.m., the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. Confession is offered from 8:45-9:40 a.m. or by appointment. As a reminder, confession is *NOT* available after Liturgy.

❖ To celebrate the Nativity of the Virgin Mary on September 8th, we will join St. George, Norwood for liturgy on Thursday, September 7th at 6 p.m. In addition, for the Elevation of the Holy Cross on September 14th, we will again join St. George, Norwood for liturgy and procession on Wednesday, September 13th at 6 p.m. The procession of the Holy Cross will also take place on September 17th here at St. John's.

❖ **MANY YEARS** to the new officers and new members of the Executive Board; they are: Gail Kurker, Chair; Mike O'Hara, Vice Chair; Kathleen Tawa, Treasurer; Abraham Sabbag, Recording Secretary, Linda O'Hara, Corresponding Secretary, Richard Homsy, Diane Kaleel, Dennis Kirshy, Jr., Rosemary Sabby, and Wayne Zahka. They, along with the returning members of the Board, will be formally installed on September 10th.

Church Records...



"As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ"

- ❖ Brett DeCristoforo, son of Michael and Aimee (Farah) of Attleboro, was baptized on July 9th
- ❖ Taylor DeCristoforo, daughter of Michael and Aimee (Farah) of Attleboro, was baptized on July 9th
- ❖ Ashlynn Daley, daughter of John and Erin (Tawa) of Newberry, FL, was baptized on July 9th
- ❖ Robert Saber, son of Stephen and Stephanie (Ward) of Dover, was baptized on August 6th
- ❖ John Saber, son of Stephen and Stephanie (Ward) of Dover, was baptized on August 6th

Many Years!

"Blessed are they whom thou has chosen and taken O Lord!"

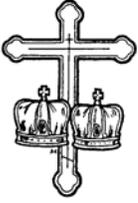


Dorothea Salem (80) of Weymouth fell asleep in the Lord on May 5th. Her 2 daughters and their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Touffe Sabby (86) of Stoughton fell asleep in the Lord on July 4th. His wife, daughter, and her family survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!

"O Lord our God crown them with glory and honor!"



James Chalhub and Gina DeStito were united in marriage on May 20th. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Braintree.

James Johnson and Wanda Saltzman were united in marriage on June 3rd. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Dedham.

Ralph Peavey, III and Diane Lind were united in marriage on July 1st. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Franklin.

Many Years!

From the Executive Board Chair... Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Executive Board has been very busy since our last communication.

The Board conducted the annual Parish Meeting on May 10th. On June 19th, pursuant to a motion made on May 10th a second parish special meeting was held to inform the parish of the Board's plan to address both short term needs for repair and improvement, and the long range plans for future expansion to continue the growth of our spiritual home. At this meeting the Board presented it's newly developed *Capital Improvement Plan*. On July 10th a third Parish Meeting was conducted to vote on the loan. The Parish has voted to return the \$600,000 loan, and conduct fund raising and similar events to raise the funds needed for the priority projects of the Capital Improvement Plan. Accordingly, the scheduled start date of July for repairing the front steps and beautifying the front of our Church while enhancing safety for the parishioners and providing improved access for the handicapped has been slipped until the funding can be raised. It is our hope that the Capital Improvement Plan will become a living plan, passed from board to board to ensure the improvements to our beloved Church are identified, funded, and addressed.

A new board was seated in July. A finance committee has been established by the new Treasurer, Kathleen Tawa, to prepare a balanced budget for the church.

Although we have had great success to date, a lot still remains to be done. The coming months offer many new and exciting challenges for the Board and the Parish membership. We are looking forward to a beautiful and memorable 100th year anniversary. Tom Sabbag and his committees continue the hard work of planning the year's events culminating with the Gala in October. The festivities for the 100th will commence with a New Year's Eve party, details to follow in future letters. We welcome each of you to participate on this or one of the many other committees to help improve our church. If interested in supporting this or any of the Church committees or activities please contact Gail Kurker or Mike O'Hara.

Debbie and Charlie Greenstein have graciously agreed to be co-chairs of our 2006 Bazaar committee. Debbie and Charlie were co-chairs of last year's very successful Bazaar. We welcome your participation in this year's bazaar

We will communicate with the Parish members on a regular basis via newsletter and e-mail to keep you apprised of the progress of activities and to mark key accomplishments of the Parish.

On behalf of the Board, We thank you for taking the time to read this letter and look forward to a successful year forged by your attendance at church and participation on one or more of our committees. *With eternal love in Christ, Gail Kurker & Mike O'Hara*

From the Virgin Mary Society... Now that summer is almost over, we hope that everyone had a most enjoyable and relaxing one. The ladies of the Virgin Mary Society are once again in the kitchen cooking and baking for our upcoming bazaar. We are in urgent need of your help. If you are able to volunteer a few hours a week on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday from 9 am to 1 pm it would be greatly appreciated. We also want to sincerely thank all of our parishioners who picked or donated grape leaves. This helps us tremendously. The bazaar is our biggest moneymaker for the year. If anyone has extra grape leaves, please contact Mary at the church office. *Lillian H. Khouri, President*

From the Church School... Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's "**Back to School Time**" once again at St. John of Damascus Church School! We are eager to work with you towards the spiritual education of your children. Classes begin on September 10th for grades Preschool 2 through Grade 10.

We also offer a Preschool 1 class for children who will be three years old by September 1, 2006. This class is organized as a "Parent Cooperative" – all parents of Preschool 1 students help out on a rotating basis. There will be a brief parent meeting on Sunday, October 8th (during Church School time) to explain how this class operates, set up the parent volunteer schedule, and distribute the curriculum. The first class will be held on October 15th.

Classes begin immediately after Holy Communion. Children will be dismissed from their pews into the Communion line, and then will proceed directly to their classrooms. Adults will be ushered into the Communion line after all children and Church School staff have gone, so that we may start our program as quickly and smoothly as possible. School will be in session until noon each Sunday, at which time children will be sent into the hall area where you can meet them.

In order for children to benefit from our Church School program, regular attendance at the Divine Liturgy and in class is essential. The continuity provided by weekly attendance makes it possible for students to understand, appreciate and embrace our Orthodox faith. **All students who have attained at least 50% attendance during the school year will be awarded a certificate of completion and will be eligible for other awards at graduation on May 20, 2007.** If you have any questions concerning our attendance, please contact me at any time.

We have a busy, productive year planned – make sure your kids are part of it! *Nancy Close*
Church School Director 978-692-0857 / school@stjohnd.org

From the Fellowship... Mark your calendars for now for the Fellowship's annual Lobster Dinner, which will be held on Wednesday, October 11th from 5-7:30 pm. Details to follow so watch the weekly bulletin and/or the web site.

From the Parent Guild... From the Parent Guild...We hope everyone is enjoying the final days and weeks of summer. As usual, the Parent Guild will be hosting the "Welcome Back Barbecue" on the first day of church school, September 10th after liturgy. The cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child over 5 years of age. Please mark your calendars and plan on staying after Divine Liturgy for a delicious barbecue meal and fellowship. Please make a reservation by calling Carol Hazerjian at 508-660-0072 or e-mailing the church office at office@stjohnd.org. We will be sending an email when we set the date for the first Guild meeting of the year, at which time we will schedule our activities for the year. Hope to see you in church and at the barbecue on September 10th! **Bertina Kurker and Carol Hazerjian co-presidents**

From the Order of St. Ignatius...

As we begin the countdown to our centennial year, it is time to reflect on how we can serve our faith to its maximum potential. As the charitable arm of the Archdiocese, The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch provides for many of the needs of our people in the world. The International Orthodox Christian Charities staff is already on the ground in Lebanon coordinating food, medical and hygiene supplies to those displaced by the current aggression. It is important to know that The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch is a major contributor of funds to the IOCC.

IOCC will deliver to St. George Orthodox Hospital in Beirut Emergency Health Kits containing medicines, IV fluids and disposable supplies expected to aid 20,000 patients over a 3 month period. IOCC Beirut staff is purchasing and assembling Family Food and Family Hygiene parcels for those who have fled their homes in Southern Lebanon and are now crowded into public schools, parks and other areas.

The Order also funds important programs in the US, including the Treehouse Ministry, which helps unwed mothers keep and care for their babies, and many youth programs of our Archdiocese, including the Antiochian Village.

The Order is also a major sponsor of the Clergy Retirement Fund.

The American Institute of Philanthropy publishes a Charity Rating Guide which gives high grades to any organization that spends 25% or less of its budget on raising the funds. Some popular charities in this top-rated category are: March of Dimes-75%, Catholic Charities-77%, American Red Cross-91%, St. Jude-83%, Easter Seals-80%, American Cancer Society-77%, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation-83%.

The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch spends 2% of its budget on administrative costs, leaving 98% for charitable purpose.

Individual membership is granted with an annual gift of \$500. Dues can be paid through the electronic funds transfer system -- \$42 a month deducted from your checking account. Less than your cable bill. Our goal for 2007 is to reach membership of 100. New members can join any time and

induction will take place at our gala weekend in October 2007. Please feel free to contact any member of the Order for further information. *Christine Bezreh*

From the Choir... On behalf of the choir members, we hope that your participation in the Divine Liturgy continues to be spiritually uplifting. We will be working diligently in weekly rehearsals to continue to expand the music in the Divine Liturgy as well as preparation for the Christmas Pageant and the New England Region Christmas Concert.

If you have even the slightest desire to sing, please do not hesitate to join us. All voice parts are welcome and no experience is necessary. Did you know that kids ages 10 and older are welcome to join the choir as well? Required rehearsals are conveniently scheduled on Sundays before Liturgy. Please consider joining this fulfilling ministry of the church. If you have any questions, please contact me after Liturgy or call me anytime at 617. 489-9456. **Mark Haddad, Director**

Announcements...

- ❖ **MANY THANKS** to all who donated to the 2006 Food For Hungry Program campaign. Because of your generosity, the church was able to send \$3,543 to the Archdiocese to help those in need.
- ❖ **ST. GEORGE, WEST ROXBURY** announces their 29th annual bazaar and food fair on October 20-22nd at their church hall. For more information, please call St. George at 617.323.0323.
- ❖ **SNOWBIRDS** Before leaving for Florida please give the office your temporary address. This ensures that you get the church's mail in a timely manner and reduces postage costs for the church.

MARK IT DOWN!!
ST. JOHN' S BAZAAR AND AUCTION 2006
NOVEMBER 3RD, 4TH, AND 5TH

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THE TORCHBEARER
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A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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Sunday Services: Matins 9:00 a.m.; Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours...Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is Thursday at 10 a.m.

Please plan accordingly.

DEADLINE for the November/December 2006 Torchbearer will be October 6th.

Please consult the Weekly Sunday Bulletin for any changes, corrections, etc.

