



Saint George Orthodox Church

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Beloved Members and Friends of Saint George in Norwood

Blessings to you and your families. As I write this letter we are days away from Thanksgiving, that time of year when many Americans will pause to recount the abundance of good things in their lives and give thanks. As faithful Orthodox Christians, this is something we do every day. We are reminded by the Apostle Paul to *"be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father."* (Eph. 5:19-20) Here at Saint George we have much to be thankful for and I would like to share some of that with you.

To speak of the blessings God has given to us I must begin our faithful members and friends. Our people are simply amazing, always sharing their energy and time and prayers. I am so honored and grateful to serve as your priest and I thank God daily for this beautiful parish. While we sadly lost too many of our faithful members this past year, I witnessed you coming together to console those who grieve and to dedicate yourselves to making sure that instead of becoming a weaker congregation, we would become stronger. During the summer months when pews in some places empty out, we consistently had nice attendance. For those who worry that we are getting too old, let me point to the happy, young faces we see each week and that new crop of altar servers helping at the Liturgy. There are of course, some wonderful members who we would like to see more often – so let this serve as a personal reminder from me that your presence and prayers in church every Sunday are a vital part of our life together.

Last winter we kicked off a capital campaign with the intention of expanding and renovating our church and making it accessible to everyone. The initial design was met with a range of reactions. One thing our committee heard from you was how important it is to *recognize* our church and to maintain our look and style. We took your concerns to our architect and he has created an exciting new design at a far lower cost. As I write, the new design is being looked by the Town of Norwood; and as soon as we hear that the plans are feasible, we will introduce them to everyone. Our hope is that this will be in the very near future.

Since kicking off the campaign we have received pledges from 58 families and foundations. This represents 95 parishioners and friends and totals over \$215,000. With what is in the bank we now have commitments or cash for over \$825,000. In addition, a group of women in the parish developed and began selling Middle Eastern Salad Dressing, marketed from Sittee's Savory Kitchen. The proceeds are all going to the building fund. The response to the dressing has been overwhelming: from parishioners

to visitors at our booth at Norwood Day to diners at the OCC restaurant in town. Did I say how thankful I am? We still need to raise more money to make this work; our goal is \$1.5 million. With your dedication and love for our church, I know we will accomplish this goal.

Our regular stewardship has again this year continued to grow. There is a danger when a church begins a special campaign that regular giving will slump. That has not happened to us: in fact at Saint George our average pledge for 2016 rose on average, almost \$90 a person from the previous year. Almost half of those making financial commitments to the parish are either new members or parishioners who raised their pledge this year. That is a great statistic. We still rely on extra gifts and donations to make our budget but once again this year we anticipate operating in the black.

Enclosed with this letter for many is an important sheet, which needs your attention. It has been generated by our book keeping software; it shows your regular pledge for 2016 and your building campaign pledge --this may help you make a prayerful decision about your gift for next year. It also shows the amount paid in this calendar year through October and that which is outstanding. Please contact us if these numbers don't look right to you. Also, let us know if your email or other contact information has changed. If you don't have this sheet enclosed, we at Saint George sincerely hope you will consider making a gift to our church in the next year.

Also enclosed is your pledge card for 2017 stewardship gift to the church. The Parish Council kindly asks that you complete this form and return it to the church by December 15th. This will be a tremendous help as we plan our budget for the next fiscal year. Alternatively, you may go online to www.StGeorgeNorwood.org and set up your pledge with PayPal. Many of you have already discovered this system makes is easy for automatic payments from your checking or credit card account. For those who like to make offerings using envelopes at the church, they are available as always. For anyone with special financial circumstances you make speak confidentially with me.

Again, I am so thankful for all of you and your love for Christ and His Church. God bless you and your families,

Father Joseph Kimmett

STEWARDSHIP 2017

Complete and return this form before December 15, 2016.

I pledge to God and to Saint George Orthodox Church in Norwood \$ _____ for 2017.

I / We will pay:

___ weekly ___ monthly ___ quarterly ___ annually by June 1st.

___ I will go to www.StGeorgeNorwood.org/Donations.html and set up a one-time payment or recurring payments with a PayPal.

Signature(s) _____