

From the desk of Fr. Matthew

My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we prepare for another new year, I think it's important for us as Orthodox Christians to take a moment and reflect on all of the blessings we have received this past year. This has been my first full calendar year here at St. Nicholas (I arrived here in Wilmington in July of 2008), and Presbytera Emily and I have felt truly blessed to be part of such a wonderful and nurturing community. Here are some of our accomplishments for 2009:

January

Our Romiosini Dance Group and our St. Nicholas Choral Group participated in our Metropolis Hellenic Dance Festival in Atlanta, GA, and received silver medals for both our senior dance group and choral group.

February

We held our annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Mary Dandulakis received first place in our senior division and represented our parish at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival.

March

In March we began our Lenten journey together. Our Adult Education class met on Wednesday evenings and studied The Lenten Spring by Fr. Thomas Hopko. We learned more about how important Great Lent is to our spiritual lives and took turns leading short discussions.

April

We celebrated Holy Week together as a parish, and many of our young people participated during the evening services by reading the Psalms. We had our visiting seminarian, the newly ordained Dn. Barnabas Powell, with us the entire week. We had more people participate during Holy Week this year than at any other point in the history of our parish. We also had a wonderful Anastasi service and celebrated our Agape Vespers and picnic at Halyburton Park.

May

We held our annual Greek Festival, and despite some bad weather on Sunday, we had a very successful year and were able to donate \$7000 to the Carousel Center which offers support locally for abused children.

June

We had our Biennial Metropolis of Atlanta Clergy-Laity Conference in Clearwater, FL, and our parish was represented by me, Rick, and Barbara Reynolds. This is an important conference for our Holy Metropolis, and we discussed many important issues that are affecting the faithful.

Also in June we held a Vacation Church School for our children and focused on learning more about the Divine Liturgy. We had a number of children participate, and we enjoyed spending the week together.

July

I directed two weeks of our Metropolis' St. Stephen's Summer Camp at the end of July and the beginning of August. We had a number of teens from our parish participate and learn more about the importance of worship for us as Orthodox Christians. Summer camp is an important ministry for our young people, and we need to encourage all of our teens to participate.