



**russian orthodox
church of
saint panteleimon
gosford**

ABN 98 562 088 123

2008 Annual Report

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RECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to again present to parish members an Annual Report summarising and reviewing parish life and administration. This Annual Report covers the period from 1 October 2007 until 31 December 2008.

For a number of reasons, the year under review has been the most important and successful for us since 2004, the year in which we moved to our current church and parish centre at West Gosford. We have repaid our mortgage in full, some 9 years early. We have constructed an external awning at our parish centre, thereby increasing the space available to us for parish activities.

At the beginning of 2008 we were assigned our own deacon, Father Martin Naef. In the course of the year we organised an enjoyable parish summer camp, and received a number of items from Russia for the adornment of our church. A parish bookstore was successfully established.

There have been many new faces in the parish, and the number of young children continues to grow. This, especially, encourages us and gives us hope for the future of our parish.

Behind the scenes, a great deal of hard work has been done to improve parish administration.

All of these things point to a healthy and happy parish, something for which we give thanks to God.

I pray that our Lord will continue to bless us, both in the year ahead and always.

In Christ,

Rev. James Carles
Parish Priest
4 February 2009

ABOUT OUR PARISH

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church is an Orthodox Christian parish of Russian tradition serving the NSW Central Coast. It exists to

- worship God and praise His saints in the Divine Services of the Holy Orthodox Church
- enable the fullness of the Orthodox Christian life in Christ
- provide for the spiritual and educational needs of Russian and other Orthodox Christians on the Central Coast and
- bear witness to the Orthodox Christian faith

Our parish is part of the Sydney, Australia & New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. We are within the jurisdiction of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, a self-governing part of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Our parish is the youngest in the Diocese, having emerged out of a mission established by the ruling bishop, Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Hilarion, in 2000. It has grown in that time from a small Eucharistic community using rented premises to a vibrant parish with a beautiful place of worship and parish centre.

An Orthodox Christian parish of Russian tradition, our parish is nevertheless diverse, with worshippers from many different backgrounds. Our parish is a friendly one that is well-known for its hospitality.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

The 'Normal Parish By-Laws' ('the By-Laws') of parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia provide for a Parish Council consisting of the rector and other assigned clergy, and such lay members as are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the parish.

The rector of the parish is Priest James Carles. During the period covered by this Annual Report (1 October 2007- 31 December 2008), two successive Parish Councils held office. The lay members of the Parish Council elected at the AGM convened in November 2007 were:

- Kate Marcotrigiano (Secretary)
- Sophia Kfoury (Treasurer)
- Olga Petroff (Head Sister)
- Rick Golovin (Building & Maintenance)
- Paul Pereboeff (Fundraising & Charitable Work)
- Bill Reid
- Victor Bendeovski

As of the beginning of February 2008, Deacon Martin Naef was assigned to our parish and so joined the Parish Council.

An AGM was convened in March 2008. All previous parish councillors were returned and continued in their previous capacities, with Reader George Karmadonoff elected and added to their number.

Lay members of the Parish Council are not paid for their work. Standards of conduct for Parish Council members – and indeed, all parish members – are set out in the By-Laws. They must

- Confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at least once a year
- Pay agreed membership fees if able

- Tend to the moral and economic welfare of the parish
- Remain loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia
- Remain loyal to their parish and cooperate with the parish priest and Parish Council
- Act in a way that promotes peace and unity within the parish

The Parish Council met 13 times during the period covered by this report, 3 times in 2007 and 10 times in 2008. In 2007, meetings were held on the first Tuesday of each month. During 2008, meetings were held on the second Tuesday of each month to allow time for the previous month's accounts to be prepared for tabling at the meeting. Meetings were well-attended by members of the Parish Council and conducted in a positive spirit. Minutes were kept of all meetings.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2007-2008

October

- The Parish Council set aside funds for the establishment of a church bookstore and kiosk

November

- Parish delegates participated in the 15th Diocesan Assembly in Strathfield
- The Parish Council agreed to the construction of an awning in the open area adjoining the parish centre

December

- A major church clean-up was conducted in preparation for the Christmas and Theophany services

January

- \$1320.00 was collected during the Nativity Fast for the Vladimir Children's Fund
- Services for Russian Orthodox Christmas were held on the Eve, January 6th, and on the evening of Christmas Day, January 7th
- Services, the great blessing of water and the customary house blessing were conducted on the Sunday after Theophany
- Father Martin Naef was ordained to the diaconate during Divine Liturgy at Croydon, and subsequently appointed to our parish

February

- Father Martin Naef served with us for the first time
- Our 5th annual fishing competition was held, raising \$1650.00
- A children's fishing day and BBQ was held at Patonga

March

- Our 2007 Annual General Meeting was held
- Our parish bookstore opened for business, with many new books in Russian and English
- Blini were prepared by our hard-working sisterhood
- Forgiveness Vespers was held
- There were services every night during the first week of Great Lent
- Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, reposed in the Lord

April

- Archbishop Hilarion visited to preside at the General Anointing service ("Soborovanie") during Great Lent

- A major church clean-up was held in preparation for the Easter services
- We observed the fourth anniversary of Divine Services in our church at West Gosford
- Services were held for Palm Sunday
- There were services every night for the first four days of Holy Week; Divine Liturgy on Great and Holy Thursday; services for Great and Holy Friday; and Paschal services
- Our new awning was finished
- \$1957.15 was collected during Great Lent for the Fistula Foundation to assist the Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia

May

- Archbishop Hilarion was elected First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia and raised to the rank of Metropolitan

June

- We had services for the Great Feast of Pentecost, followed by the blessing of our new awning and a parish BBQ
- A concert was held at the Russian Club, raising \$3651.00

July

- Parishioners participated in services marking the 90th anniversary of the martyrdom of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas and the other Royal Martyrs of Russia
- We received a number of new church items from Russia: two candle stands, wedding crowns, vessels for holy water and the washing of the hands of the clergy, a set of icons with the saints for each day, and new vestments

August

- We celebrated our patronal feast of Saint Panteleimon, the fifth such celebration at West Gosford, followed by a festive banquet at Narara Community Centre
- We had services for the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
- We had our first English-language Divine Liturgy in almost 12 months

September

- We had services for the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
- An enjoyable trivia and pizza afternoon was held at church
- The Parish Council began to consider a debt elimination appeal
- In response to initial advice concerning the possibility of such an appeal, donations totalling \$12280.00 were received

October

- We held our very successful annual family picnic day at Avoca Beach, prompting plans for a parish family camp

November

- Arrangements were made for our first parish family camp in December
- A fundraising BBQ at Cabramatta raised nearly \$6000 for our parish

December

- His Holiness Alexis, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, reposed in the Lord
- Our first parish camp was held in Balcolyn on Lake Macquarie
- Our mortgage was repaid in full, 9 years before the due date

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Parish activities

Service Schedules are prepared by the rector on a seasonal basis – Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. Since early 2004, services have been held on the first, third and fifth weekends throughout the year, with additional services held on certain major feast-days and during Great Lent and Holy Week.

On average, there are six services per calendar month – three in the evening, and three in the morning. The choir generally sings in English at evening services and in Slavonic at morning services, with occasional exceptions. Other parts of the service are in Slavonic or English according to need.

Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Hilarion visited our parish once in the year under review. This visit was during Great Lent, in order to preside at the customary Service of General Anointing.

Between October 2007 and December 2008 in our parish 11 people – 1 adult and 10 children - were received into the Orthodox Church by Holy Baptism. The adult baptised was Yakov Belov. The children baptised were Christopher Tohadze, Peter Carles, Nika Burlutsky, Anastasia Melnikoff, Timothy Kouznetsov, Chloe (Claudia) Koppman, Christian (Julian) Anderson, Daniel Sheptitsky, Evelina (Evdokia) Sheptitsky, and Thomas Alexandru Harrison.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment for the parish this year was the payment in full of our mortgage. As the financial statements included in this report show, \$51019.41 was repaid during the period under review, more than one third of the amount initially borrowed. We once again received generous assistance from the Holy Protection parish in Cabramatta.

Another significant development has been the assignment to our parish of a deacon, Father Martin Naef. Together with his matushka, Tatiana, and their children, Father Martin has contributed significantly to the conduct of the Divine Services and the life of our parish.

The construction of an awning in the area adjoining the parish centre significantly increased the room available for parish activities.

We continued to work for the adornment of the church, receiving a number of items from Russia for use in the Divine Services.

We have met our obligation to provide material support to the church authorities. All mandatory collections have been taken. We have paid Diocesan levies on candle sales, but have remained free from the obligation to pay other levies in view of our loan repayments. In view of the repayment of our loan, we anticipate beginning to pay general Diocesan levies from 2009.

Our parish priest is engaged in full-time secular employment and has declined a stipend. This decision was taken with regard to the small revenue base of the parish and the taxation obligations that receipt of a stipend would impose. Honoraria have been paid to our choir director and deacon, and to the Archbishop and other visiting clergy.

The majority of parishioners present generally gather after Divine Liturgy on Sundays and major feast-days for a simple meal and for fellowship. This provides an opportunity to be hospitable to the many visitors that we receive in the course of the year. On occasions, the parish ladies arrange a BBQ or prepare piroshki.

A parish newsletter was published monthly throughout the year. This newsletter is distributed in church and by post. It provides information to parishioners and friends about the life of the parish and

about developments in the wider church. As at the end of December 2008, 81 issues of the newsletter had been published since publication was commenced in 2002.

The parish continues to host a website, designed and maintained at no cost to the parish by Olga and Dmitri Lusim of Lussoft Systems. It is one of only three parish websites in the New South Wales Deanery. It is an important source of information to friends of the parish, making service schedules and parish newsletters available to a wide audience.

Our parish school ceased to function at the end of 2007. This was because of the small number of students and competing demands on Saturday mornings. There nevertheless continues to be significant interest in education in the Orthodox Christian faith and in the Russian and Church Slavonic languages. Work to respond to the educational needs of the parish remains ongoing.

An initiative during the Apostles' Fast in 2007 was the distribution of collection tins to parish families. Money was collected in the course of the fast, and the tins returned after the feast day of the Apostles Peter and Paul. The money collected was donated to Gosford Hospital. These collections have continued, with subsequent collections benefiting the Vladimir Children's Fund, the Fistula Foundation, and Camp Breakaway. Funds raised at the fishing competition in 2008 also benefited Hawkesbury River Rescue. The Parish Council remains committed to charitable work that benefits both church and community initiatives.

An important development in parish life this year was our first Summer Camp in late 2008. Over a weekend in December, approximately 50 parishioners and friends stayed for the weekend at Lake Mac Recreation Centre in Balcolyn, on Lake Macquarie. All parish services that weekend were held at the camp. Those present has the opportunity to work, pray and participate in recreational activities together in an Orthodox Christian environment. The camp was a great success and has generated a great deal of interest in other parishes. We plan to have a Winter Camp and a Summer Camp in 2009.

Strategic concerns

The Parish Council has given consideration to a range of issues of strategic importance. These issues include:

Future plans

In 2007 there was a great deal of discussion concerning the possibility of moving to a permanent church building in the future. It was ultimately acknowledged that this was a long-term goal, our present parish centre being adequate for our current needs and those in the foreseeable future.

Having services every Sunday with significant attendance was identified as an indicator that a new church would be necessary. The Parish Council decided at that time that investment in a residential property would be considered upon completion of our mortgage payments.

In January 2009 the Parish Council decided to establish a 'Future Fund' and to contribute \$835.00 a month to this fund, saving \$10000.00 a year. Contributions to this fund will be supplemented where possible – with donations, for example – and reviewed on an ongoing basis. It is expected that this fund will provide future Parish Councils with the means to respond to longer-term parish needs.

The Parish Council considered the building of a second floor above the hall with a view to providing space for a parish office, book and icon store, and a meeting room or classroom. In view of the likely cost of such a project, it has been set aside for the foreseeable future.

Consideration has been given to increased secure storage space for the needs of the Ladies' Auxiliary, and to panelling the lower part of the walls in the church and hall.

Financial management

Significant work was done in late 2007 and during 2008 to ensure accuracy in the financial records of the parish. This has been something of a priority, and the focus on financial record-keeping has delayed progress in other areas of parish administration. Of note, the Rector and Treasurer have convened informally each month to draw up monthly 'Statements of Financial Position', reconcile these statements with the available funds, and ensure that Parish Council is provided with accurate and complete information.

It is likely that the informal work undertaken in this regard during 2008 will be formalised in 2009 in the work of a Finance Sub-Committee of Parish Council. A priority will be standardisation of the information provided to Parish Council each month.

A significant accomplishment has been the development of financial record-keeping practices for the Ladies' Auxiliary that are consistent with those of the parish, and the auditing for the first time of the Ladies' Auxiliary accounts. Another important development has been the inclusion of cash accounts within the parish funds audited each year.

Previous Parish Councils and AGMs have agreed that the Auditing Committee should convene four times a year. To date, this has not occurred. Improvements in financial record-keeping will make this possible in 2009.

Inventory

Having long recognised the importance of undertaking an inventory of parish property for insurance purposes and in order to better facilitate the management of such property, an initial inventory was finally taken in late 2008 and early 2009. The Parish Council will consider the appointment of a Property Officer in 2009 to take responsibility for the inventory and ongoing property management. The inventory showed the contents of the parish centre to be significantly under-insured. This will be rectified in 2009.

Legal obligations

Work has continued to ensure that the parish is compliant with relevant civil laws such as those concerning privacy and child protection.

Record keeping

Work has commenced to ensure that the administrative and financial records of the parish are maintained in an orderly fashion. This includes the proper storage and organisation of such records.

Administrative guidelines

In 2007, the Parish Council began to consider administrative guidelines covering such areas as expenditure, the parish website, the auditing process, the use of email addresses, and so on. Work continued on these guidelines in 2008. It is expected that all administrative guidelines will be finalised in 2009.

Other projects

Other projects being considered are ongoing maintenance, the commissioning of a new memorial table for the commemoration of the departed, and the purchase of four complete sets in English of the Menaion, a collection of liturgical books essential for the Divine Services.

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the 15 months beginning 1 October 2007

Position at 1 October 2007	\$3368.38¹
Income	
First Plate ²	10887.20
Second Plate ³	7602.25
Candles	8697.75
Prospora	1468.80
Tithes ⁴	480.00
Donations ⁵	29575.61
Collections ⁶	4828.35
Fundraising ⁷	6743.00
GST refunds	21.41
Bank Interest	0.00
Miscellaneous and other income	789.45
Calendar sales	140.00
Loan repayment chest ⁸	2334.30
Total Income	73568.12
Expenses	
Choir Conductor ⁹	2205.00
Bank charges	66.00
Mortgage	51019.41
Utilities ¹⁰	830.81
Interest	0.00
Periodicals ¹¹	333.00
Candles	4436.00
Strata	3728.75
Insurance	1520.52
Clergy payments ¹²	2800.00
Collections ¹³	2385.30
Special purchases	350.00
Repairs and maintenance	0.00
Donations ¹⁴	1971.25
Administration and stationery	652.78
Miscellaneous	1827.29
Total expenses	74126.11

¹ The 2007 Annual Report erroneously reported that the final position at 30 September 2007 was \$2936.58. The figure given here is the correct one.

² The first plate is marked "For the needs of the church".

³ The second plate is marked "For the upkeep of the church".

⁴ Tithes are the annual dues of \$20.00 paid by parish members.

⁵ This refers to all donations to our parish and to *external* fundraising.

⁶ This refers to collections taken in church, usually upon Diocesan request, but also for charitable purposes.

⁷ This refers to all *internal* fundraising such as the fishing competition and concerts.

⁸ This refers to a collection box labelled as such and placed in church. This box will be retained from 2009 simply as a general donation box.

⁹ Our choir conductor is paid a small stipend for each service.

¹⁰ This refers to electricity and water. There is no gas line connected to our parish centre, and we no longer have a telephone.

¹¹ This refers to payments for the official Diocesan publications, «Церковное Слово» ("Word of the Church") and "The Voice".

¹² Clergy payments include gifts to the rector in lieu of a stipend, a small stipend paid to the deacon, and honoraria paid to visiting clergy and altar servers, usually on the occasion of an Episcopal visit.

¹³ This refers to funds collected that are returned to the Diocesan authorities.

¹⁴ This refers to funds collected by the parish for charitable purposes, and to donations to such things as Diocesan youth conferences.

Profit (Loss)	(\$557.99)
Position at 31 December 2008	\$2810.39

Actual position as at 31 December 2008	
Cheque account balance	952.91
Cash & cheques on hand	2145.46
Less unrepresented cheques	287.98
Total	\$2810.39

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church Ladies Auxiliary
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
For the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008

Position at 1 January 2008	\$13670.27
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Income	
Lunch donations	3956.75
Pussy willow sales	221.00
Collections	492.80
Feast day	5300.00
Piroshki	453.50
Bank Interest	58.78
Total Income	\$10482.83

Expenses	
Special purchases and projects	6465.03
Concert Expenses	399.00
Feast-day expenses	903.39
Contributions to the parish	2518.26
Groceries	4113.35
Miscellaneous	11.80
Total expenses	\$14410.83

Profit (Loss)	(\$3928.00)
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Position at 31 December 2008	\$9742.27
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Cheque account balance	12267.73
Cash on hand	0.00
Less unrepresented cheques	2525.46
Total	\$9742.27

DISCUSSION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Parish

It is simply noted that a loss was sustained during the period under review in order to repay the mortgage in full. The strategy of rapid repayment of the mortgage, nine years ahead of time, has saved the parish a great deal in interest payments.

The Ladies' Auxiliary

Similarly, the Ladies' Auxiliary sustained a loss during the period under review in order to make possible the construction of an awning and to contribute to the mortgage repayment. A number of church items ordered from Russia remain unpaid for (pending the issue of an invoice by the supplier), thus accounting for the otherwise uninvested funds in the Ladies' Auxiliary account.

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church Bookstore
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the period 1 January 2008 to 31 January 2009

Position at 1 January 2008		\$0.00
Income		
Start-up grant from Parish Council	1000.00	
Start-up donation (anonymous)	1000.00	
Loan from Parish Council	196.65	
Sales	3826.31	
Total Income		\$6022.96
Expenses		
Stock: Русский Паломник	2681.46	
Stock: Rainbow Books	1404.80	
Stock: Michael Galovic	320.00	
Repayment of Parish Council loan	196.65	
Total expenses		\$4602.91
Profit (Loss)		\$1420.05
Position at 31 January 2009		\$1420.05
Cash on hand	\$1420.05	
Total		\$1420.05

AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Having examined the financial records of Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, including those of the Ladies' Auxiliary and the parish bookstore, we confirm that the 'Statements of Financial Position' included in this Annual Report are accurate and complete.

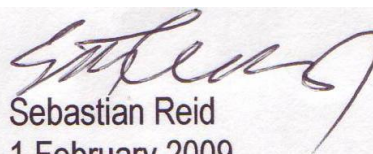
We note the high standard of book-keeping, and the consistent application of this standard across all parish accounts.

We have recommended to the Parish Council some minor changes to administrative practices.

We recommend that the incoming Auditing Committee conduct its work on a quarterly basis.



Andrew Kfoury
1 February 2009



Sebastian Reid
1 February 2009

Members of the 2007-08 Auditing Committee of Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church



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