

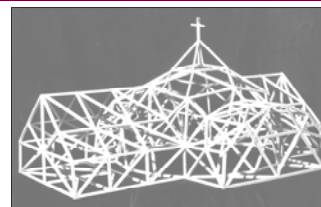
Volume 1, Issue 4

Fall 2005



Within These Walls —A Building of Faith

By Father Marc Dunaway



Twenty-five years ago there was no St. John Orthodox Cathedral in Eagle River. There was, however, a congregation of Christians who called themselves “Evangelical Orthodox” and who were part of a larger journey of several Protestant churches to Orthodoxy. Our church was about 200 in number and we met on the upstairs floor of the building that now houses St. John’s school. We called it the “Upper Room,” after the place where the disciples met on the day of Pentecost, and it was always hot and crowded on Sunday mornings.

By 1981 we knew we needed a larger place to gather, a place designed specifically for worship. As we were journeying steadily toward Orthodoxy, the importance of a proper “temple” versus a simple meeting hall was becoming apparent. An Orthodox church building is itself an icon of sorts. It is first of all an icon of the community which worships in it. It is their spiritual “living room,” the place where they gather and become God’s family. It speaks of them and reflects who they are.

An Orthodox “temple” has three main parts: the Narthex, which represents the world; the Nave (from the Latin word for “ship”), which represents the Church; and the Sanctuary, in which stands the Altar and which represents the Kingdom of Heaven, the place toward which we are always heading. The church building is often built in the shape of the Cross and, if possible, it traditionally faces east, the direction of the sunrise which symbolizes the age to come.

One particular characteristic of a traditional, Orthodox “temple” became especially important in the design of our cathedral. The dome shape, as opposed to a long hall or auditorium, reminds us that God is present with us and that in our worship we are gathered in His warm embrace.

The idea of a dome prompted parishioner Dick Eckert to suggest that we build a geodesic dome.

The morning we began to raise the dome we had to sweep the first snowfall off the plywood deck.

We were not very enthusiastic, as most geodesic domes in those days looked like large golf balls ready to be teed off into outer space, besides being associated with hippies and back to nature types. But Dick built a model of balsa wood, adding a Narthex, a Sanctuary, and two side wings to make the shape of a Cross. He showed us his model at a congregational meeting and, instantly and unanimously, we knew that it was what we wanted to build.

At the same meeting, another important idea was proposed and accepted. We would all donate our first ever Alaska Permanent Fund dividend checks (\$1000 each) to create a building fund. We collected \$150,000 in this way, eventually borrowing \$285,000 more which was paid off on December 30, 1997.

A design committee was formed in the fall of 1982 and Fr. Harold and Fr. Marc visited Orthodox churches in southern California to

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Our Journey Together as Orthodox Christians
In Community



Community Cooks:

Featuring: KC Jones

Kerry Clyde Jones, known and loved by one and all as “KC” came to Alaska in 1967 with the Army. When the Dunaway family arrived in 1968 and started their Campus Crusade ministry on Anchorage’s military bases, K.C. was at their first get-together. Since that time, he has been busy helping, serving, building, and fixing in every imaginable way. K.C. is usually the first person called when there is any kind of fix-it challenge around the church, school or private homes in the community. He is also just as handy in the kitchen. Here is one of his many recipes in the church cookbook.

Brulot Bread Pudding

1 loaf day-old French bread
(about 6-8 cups, cubed)
¼ c. butter, melted
1 qt. milk
4 eggs, beaten
1 c. raisins
1 T. vanilla
1 T. cinnamon & nutmeg
2 c. sugar

In a large bowl, break bread into small pieces. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Bake in a greased, shallow, 2-qt. baking dish at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Top with Whiskey Sauce.



Whiskey Sauce

2 eggs, beaten
½ c. butter
1 c. sugar
¼ - ½ c. whiskey or rum

Stir butter and sugar in saucepan over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and SLOWLY add beaten eggs, stirring constantly. Add whiskey to taste. Stir and pour over pudding.

Sitka Mother of God Icon visits St. John Cathedral.



August 10, 2005 In our last issue, we told part of the story of the wonder-working Sitka Icon of the Mother of God, which visited St. John’s parish on August 10. The 155 year old icon will travel throughout the parishes of Alaska before departing for Seattle and the West Coast, then to the Eastern United States before ending its journey in November in Dallas. Fr. Michael Oleksa of Anchorage and Fr. Christopher Stanton of Wasilla accompanied the icon on its visit to St. John’s and joined Fr. Marc in the Paraklesis service. At a reception following the service, Fr. Michael talked about the dramatic rescue of the icon from a catastrophic fire in 1966. Many buildings in Sitka were destroyed, including St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral, home of the icon. The temperature was below zero as the townspeople formed a human chain to rescue the cathedral’s icons, paintings

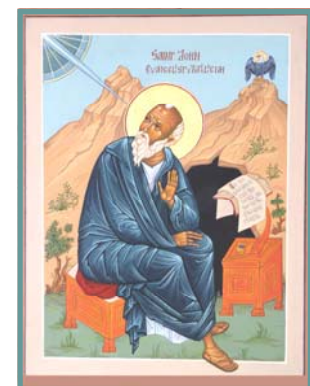
and vestments before the building burned to the ground. The icon is rarely taken from the reconstructed St. Michael’s, where it is displayed in one of the side chapels. We at St. John’s are grateful for the opportunity to venerate this beautiful and historical icon.

Welcome Home, our church cookbook, is available for \$18.00. Contact Maye Johnson to order. tommaye@mtaonline.net
Phone or fax: 907-696-3326

In Community

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Saint John Summer Camp 2005

June 23, 2005

Dear Fr. Marc,

Christ is Risen! My wife Georgiana and I used to attend St. John's Cathedral about five years ago and we really appreciated the fellowship, the choir and the acoustics of the Cathedral. We are former Roman Catholics who met in St. Mary's High School (a Catholic boarding school) in St. Mary's, Alaska. We often receive Protestant evangelists who come to our village to "convert" us and shine the Light of Christ in the darkest recesses of the wilderness of Alaska. Very often I speak of Frank Schaeffer and his conversion to Holy Orthodoxy and of the Orthodox faithful in the St. John's parish in Eagle River. I describe how many of us former Roman Catholics and Protestants have found the "Long Way Home."

Thank you for your parish's example of a successful search for the Truth; the story of your journey is effective material for evangelization of the Protestant evangelists (Jehovah's Witnesses, Bah'ai, etc.) who invite themselves to our villages to convert us. This morning I downloaded and printed five copies of the first issue of your newsletter and gave one to each of the Protestant evangelists at my door. I told them, "I hope you are open minded Protestant Christians, because these open minded formerly Protestant Christians in search of the Truth, became Orthodox."

My wife and I were chrismated and married on the same day, August 5, 2001, at St. Innocent's Cathedral (OCA) in Anchorage. We have bought a house in Eagle River and may be once more able to attend St. John's. Thank you again for your parish's example of a successful journey to Orthodoxy.

George Owletuck
Marshall, Alaska



Fr. Marc and family met with **Dee Pennock** at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Portland, Oregon on June 26th. Mrs. Pennock is the author of: *Who is God, Who am I, Who are You*, which many in our parish have read and appreciated. They treated her to lunch after Liturgy and extended an invitation for her to visit Alaska.



During a chance encounter with Dawn Clodfelter in downtown Anchorage, **His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman** expressed a wish to visit St. John's Cathedral. Dawn drove the Metropolitan and his party to Eagle River for a brief but pleasant visit.

Left to right are Proto-Deacon Alexia Climetchiv, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit, Metropolitan Herman and Fr. Marc. The Bishops were in Alaska for the August St. Herman pilgrimage on Kodiak Island.



Eagle River Institute: A Place to Learn

By Maye Johnson

The beginning of August is really the beginning of the Alaskan fall. The nights begin to show a hint of darkness and we are starting to weary of our busy summer. But by August 1, the cathedral lawn is trimmed, snacks and meals are planned for our guests and with great anticipation the community looks forward to another Eagle River Institute. We slow down our crazy pace to stop and listen to the wisdom and knowledge of the speakers who have come to teach us every August 1-5 for the last eleven years. We enjoy seeing new faces and answering the questions of the guests who come to participate in the Institute with us.

The ERI was first proposed by Fr. John Boojamra, of blessed memory, who joked that it would give him an excuse to travel each summer to Alaska. He and Fr. Marc collaborated on decisions about speakers, laid out the format for classes and worked on spreading the news about the Institute. Our speakers have come



Samia Habib, Father Michael Oleska, Lester Atterbury, and Joan Goodreau.

from many churches and jurisdictions from the United States and Europe, and have included Bishop KALLISTOS Ware, Sister Mary Magdalene of St. John the Baptist Monastery in Essex, England, and Matushka Julianna Schmemann. Last year Fr. Meletios Weber of Santa Cruz, California took us into the painful depths of addiction and showed us the power of transformation through Christ Jesus, the Church and the sacraments.

This year Fr. Michael Oleksa of Anchorage taught us, in his delightful and informative style, the stories of Native Alaskans and their journey to Orthodoxy. Fr. Alkiviades (Alky) Calivas led us as we explored the building blocks and history of the Church's liturgy. Fr. Alky and his wife Mia left the busyness of New York City so that Fr. Alky could take us back to the early church, explaining why we do what we do in our liturgical calendar and how these acts of faith, hope and love are for the working out of our salvation.

The ERI format allows one teacher to present an afternoon session and another to speak in the evening after Vespers. The schedule allows plenty of time for exploring the area around Eagle River. Even though by August 1 days are getting shorter, the sun does not set until around 10:30 p.m., inviting a late evening drive to view a glorious sunset. As the Feast of Transfiguration falls on August 6, most teachers and guests join us for Divine Liturgy and the grilled salmon feast afterward. ERI week is crowned by a pilgrimage to Kodiak and Spruce Island on the anniversary of the canonization of St. Herman.

Some of the guests who attended ERI this past August were asked about their expectations and reactions. Fr. Alky and Mia

mentioned that they had traveled to many parishes throughout the world and they were struck by the "warmth, openness, and gentle hospitality. The Bible teaches us to receive one another and we can see how your worship service carries over into daily life in genuine openness."

Joan Goodreau from Whittier, California, attended ERI for the second year. She commented that the institute was "well organized with enough time for individual excursions and quiet time. The presentations, discussions, outings, daily services and prayers combine to teach our minds and enrich our hearts."

"The speakers are so knowledgeable, so down to earth and very easy to follow during their lectures," said Samia Habib of Burbank, California. "They answer your questions, acknowledge our fears and lack of strong faith, help us to rebuild that faith in a different way, and they offer a fresh point of view...They address relevant issues and acknowledge their own difficulties in life and I felt valued and accepted by their compassion, concern and realistic outlook on life."

Tony Willey joined us for the first time from Las Vegas, Nevada and commented, "The presentations were wonderful as was the worship...I think what made ERI and what keeps people coming is not any one thing but the many people who make the community of St. John's."

Joan added, "People need to come and experience the community's hospitality and warmth. The community is more than beautiful buildings...It is the cooperative spirit and faith of the congregation that shows and shines with joy in their daily work and liturgies...This community is unique."

We at St. John's look forward to the Institute each year because of the great teaching and for the opportunity to meet fellow Christians who are struggling as we are. We are isolated



"The presentations were wonderful as was the worship...I think what made ERI and what keeps people coming is not any one thing but the many people who make the community of St. John's."

here in Alaska and we cherish the points of view we get from our guests and the reminder that we do indeed live in an awesome place. Too often, we get caught up in the mundane chores and challenges of life and forget to "lift our eyes unto the hills."

Consider a visit to Alaska some time soon. With available housing, plentiful snacks and delicious meals provided during ERI, the cost is not as great as you might think. We would love to extend our hospitality to you.

(Tapes of all Eagle River Institute sessions are available from Orthodox Christian Cassettes, www.orthodoxtapes.org.)

Crown them with Glory and Honor...



Rebecca Hanna and Amal Agalawatta

were married in St. John Cathedral on June 10, 2005. Rebecca grew up in Spruce Pine, NC and Pomona, CA and Amal, who is Sri Lankan, was born in England and has also lived in New York. Rebecca is a dental assistant in an Anchorage office and Amal is in the U.S. Army, stationed at Ft. Richardson. In the summer of 2001, Rebecca had just graduated from college in California and was unsure of what she would do next. She met Peter



Lamb who suggested she move to Eagle River and enroll in the St. James House program. She did so and later met Amal at a friend's birthday party. Amal, who was first invited to St. John's by Rebecca's roommates at the "girls' house," was chrismated a week before the wedding. He has three more years to serve in the Army, after which he hopes to work for the U.N. or the State Department. Rebecca hopes to attend dental school, but she has learned already that, in military life, "things can change tomorrow or next week."

Anastasia Elizabeth Truelson and Matthew Thomas Titus Howell

were married at St. John's on July 10, 2005. Anastasia is the daughter of Eric and Diana Truelson and has lived in Eagle River all of her life.



Matthew is the son of Dn. Stephen and Sally Howell. He grew up in Sacramento, CA where his family attended St. Athanasius Orthodox Church. Matthew first visited St. John's with Bp. Joseph at Christmas, 2003. He later moved here to live in the St. James House. Anastasia works full time at Alaska Regional Hospital as a Certified Nurse's Assistant. Matthew is a junior at UAA and an office assistant at St. John's. After finishing work on his bachelor's degree, Matthew and Anastasia hope to attend seminary.



Mary Bernstein and James D. Curry

were married at St. John's on May 22, 2005. Mary is the daughter of Fr. James and Kh. Martha Bernstein. She grew up in New York and Seattle, where Fr. James is priest of St. Paul's Orthodox Church. J.D., who grew up in the small town of Tolono, Illinois, is the son of James and Susan Curry. Mary's older sisters encouraged her to go to Alaska, so she headed north and moved into the St.



James House right after graduating from high school. J.D. heard about the St. James House from a friend and it sounded good to him. He was chrismated at Pascha, 2004. Mary invited J.D. to a family Thanksgiving and when he heard that snow machines would be involved, he accepted. J.D. works for DiTomaso Produce and Northern Air Cargo. Mary is a student at UAA, studying early childhood development. She works part-time at the child development center on Elmendorf AFB. Mary and J.D. hope to finish their education, work in their chosen fields, continue to live in the community, and...

"raise multitudes of children."



Within These Walls – A Building of Faith

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collect ideas. By the summer of 1983, we were clearing trees. Bob Ross was general contractor

had to sweep the first snowfall off the plywood deck.

Construction continued through the winter and in December Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos from Holy Cross Seminary in Boston graciously agreed to come and give us advice on the interior design. His counsel led us to design the Sanctuary as a half-round apse. We also copied the

next day we celebrated for the first time the Divine Liturgy at one Altar in the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

The first consecration service took place on July 21, 1985 and a picture from that day hangs in the Narthex. The basement was finished the following year, again with PFD donations. In 1987 Metropolitan PHILIP came to bring us all the

Karen White, an interior designer in Anchorage, yielded a much different suggestion.

“This ceiling is unique and beautiful,” she said. “Don’t hide it. Accentuate it. Put wood on it.”

and Dn. Harley Cranor (now Fr. Mark) became the on-site foreman and the only full-time paid employee of the project.

At that time, our church was made up of several small “house churches,” and each of these was assigned one Saturday a month to hold a work day. In those days many Alaskans were employed in the construction industry and it did not seem unthinkable for us to take on such a project and simply do it ourselves. We consulted briefly with an architect who suggested replacing our idea of a geodesic dome with one made of many glue-laminate beams and who offered to help us for a fee of \$40,000. We said “no thanks” and soon made a deal with Timberline Geodesic, a California dome company. Plans were sketched out on an early Macintosh computer and engineers were consulted when necessary.

By August we had a large hole in the ground and were laying block. By September the deck was laid for the main floor, and the dome company owners,

brothers Vik and Ray Schwartz, arrived with the dome package to help us construct the frame. It was the largest dome they had ever built, sixty feet in diameter. The morning we began to raise the dome we

design of the five-columned Altar from a picture he brought from his seminary. One piece of his advice, however, we did not follow. Fr. Ted, familiar with the beautiful, white stucco interiors of Greek churches, advised us to round off the geodesic angles inside and paint the ceiling white. But a later consultation with Karen White, an interior designer in Anchorage, yielded a much different suggestion. “This ceiling is unique and beautiful,” she said. “Don’t hide it. Accentuate it. Put wood on it.” Again, the idea clicked and we made a deal with a local cabinet manufacturer to mill paneling for us out of birch trees from Wasilla.

At times we had to torch the ice from the joists before the day’s work could begin, and there was once a snowball fight on the plywood covered roof. But we kept going and by the summer of 1984, we were building sidewalks and hammering copper on top of the cupola. The aluminum cross on top was made by a metal worker in Eagle River. Robin Armstrong painted icons for the icon screen which was built by her husband Gale. Ben McNee, a deacon in Saskatoon, made the altar furnishings from Canadian cherry. Tom Johnson and Keith & Trish Haley crafted stained glass windows designed by Kathy Stone. Fr. Luke Dingman, a priest and iconographer from California, painted the large Ascension icon in the apse. Many, many more people contributed their talents to finish the building.

On November 17, 1984, just two years after Dick first held aloft his balsam model, we held our first Great Vespers in the Cathedral. The home churches each brought their small Altar tables and placed them in the front of the Nave. The

way into the Orthodox Church, first consecrating the Altar and the building as an Orthodox Cathedral on March 31. His Eminence placed a paper with the names of all 256 members in the reliquary of the Altar where it remains to this day.

It is a special blessing to participate in the building of an Orthodox temple. I can imagine only one more satisfying accomplishment in one lifetime – to build two. We need another Orthodox church in our town. **Let’s do it again!**



July 21, 1985



Everyone's Home

by Rebekah Johnson

Many people, especially my husband, find it strange that I have lived my entire life in the same town. I have been blessed to travel around the United States and to four other countries, but the longest I have ever been away from home was for six months. As much as I love to travel, I am always glad to come home.

I was born and raised here in the St. John's community and have always lived within walking distance of my church, my school (at least through the 7th grade) and my closest friends. I always knew almost everyone on our half-mile road and everyone's backyard was my backyard. My neighborhood, I knew, was unique.

Growing up, I loved going to St. John's school. I liked the small classes and the fact that my teachers were also my neighbors. One was even my mom. As a high school senior, I wanted to attend college out of state but didn't want to go into debt paying out of state tuition. I attended University of Alaska Anchorage and graduated in December, 2001 with an Elementary Education degree. While attending UAA I lived at the St. James House with my good friend Katie Armstrong. Her mother Robin had been my mother's roommate 25 years earlier.

Not knowing exactly what I wanted to do next, I traveled to Honduras for six



Baseball on the lawn at Saint James House

months dating and were married in August of 2003. And yes, there were plenty of jokes about how I didn't even have to change my name.

I had been a substitute teacher in the Anchorage school district for a year and then, in the fall of 2003, was hired as the 3rd/4th grade teacher for St. John's school. Life was really coming full circle for me. At first, it was strange to be a teacher in the school where I had been a student. But I felt very much at home there and enjoyed teaching the 3rd and 4th graders for two years.

On June 24th I gave birth to Lucas Peter and the next day, we signed the

minute walk to church and three minutes to my parents' house.

I love Alaska with its wide-open spaces, but I love even more the closeness of the St. John's community. I thank God I am here. I can't think of any other place I would rather spend my life.

Now we are back in the neighborhood where I grew up and where, God willing, we will raise our own children.

months to teach in an Orthodox trilingual school and while there gave a lot of thought to what I would do upon my return to Alaska. I was 23 years old and didn't want to move back home with my parents so, after talking with several people, I decided to join the St. James House program for a year. At first I was skeptical because many of the residents, I learned, would be just out of high school.

As it turned out, there was one guy from Minnesota, Peter Johnson, who was my age. I had a great time getting to know everyone in the house. In March, the guy from Minnesota and I started

papers to buy our first house, right behind the school. Peter and our parents spent four weeks fixing up the place and we moved from our Eagle River apartment into our new home on August 1st. While fixing up a new place and moving with a newborn is not something I would recommend to new parents, it was unavoidable and certainly very worthwhile in the end.

Now we are back in the neighborhood where I grew up and where, God willing, we will raise our own children. I can look out my kitchen window at the school and the familiar playground. It is a two-



Rebekah, Lucas Peter and Peter celebrating Rebekah's 27th birthday.

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Saints Peter the Aleut and Juvenaly, Alaska's Martyrs

By Mary Ann Northey

On September 24 we remember two of Alaska's saints, one a young heiromonk from Russia, the other a Native Alaskan Aleut boy. Heiromonk Juvenalii (Juvenaly) was born in 1761 into a middle class family in the Ural Mountains. In 1791 he resigned a military commission to join the monastic brotherhood at Valaam. Juvenaly had been ordained only a few months when he was recruited to join a mission group to Alaska, charged with ministering to the fur traders and natives. The group included St. Herman, who described his zealous fellow monks Juvenaly and Makarii as "always so fervent, almost like madmen wanting to rush off in all directions." We know that Juvenaly traveled north along the coast of the mainland and across Cook Inlet to the Iliamna area. Native oral tradition tells us that he made his way to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River, near the village of Quinhagak. As Juvenaly stood in his small boat to preach to the villagers, the local shaman ordered him to be silent. Defying the order, he began to preach anyway. The shaman then ordered that Juvenaly be killed in a "hail of arrows." Immediately before his death, Juvenaly appeared to be waving his arm, as if he were "chasing away flies." He was probably blessing his murderers with the sign of the cross, a gesture they had never seen before. His Tanaina Indian guide tried to escape by swimming away. He also perished. The shaman removed Juvenaly's pectoral cross and tried to work some kind of rite with it but was unsuccessful, which convinced him of the cross's strong power. St. Juvenaly was canonized in 1977.

The young Aleut from Kodiak was named Tchounagnak at birth and given the name Peter at his baptism. In 1815 Peter lived at the Russian trading post of Fort Ross north of San Francisco. He and fourteen others set out on a hunting expedition. On the way they were captured by Spanish soldiers who took them to a mission near San Francisco. The soldiers demanded the captives convert to the Catholic faith. The Aleuts said they were already Christians, to which the soldiers replied that their Russian faith was schismatic. The soldiers repeated their demand. The Aleuts again refused and were held several days without food and water. Peter tried again to convince the soldiers he and his friends were Christians, showing them his baptismal cross. The soldiers responded by cutting off, one by one, Peter's fingers, toes, hands and feet, thus inflicting a horrible death on the young boy. Some of Peter's comrades eventually managed to escape or were perhaps ransomed and told the story of Peter's martyrdom. St. Peter the Aleut was canonized in 1980. God grant that we may be as zealous as St. Juvenaly and as faithful as St. Peter.

