

Iconography – October 2017

What an exciting time to be a member of Saint Nicholas Church. We have been blessed with a wonderful priest who leads us in faith and humility, truly caring about our salvation. We have a variety of ministries that not only educate us, but encourage giving towards our neighbor and to God. We have a wide range of diversity in our Church with the University and its Health Center nearby. We have a successful festival through the hard work of our members. Our mortgage is paid off. Last, but not least, our iconography for Phase II – West and Phase III – Dome is completed. Thank you for your patience through these final weeks of this edifying project. Themis and his crew, with the help of Tony Daniels, have worked diligently in completing the iconography. All the repair work is finished and looks brand new. Currently you may enter the children's room and see the spectacular icons on the walls. You also can catch a glimpse of the icons in the Church. The choir loft is absolutely breathtaking. I was awestruck when I saw Christ Pantocrator in the dome; His majestic, but loving presence gives one the feeling of absolute peace. We are truly blessed here at Saint Nicholas.



Christ Pantocrator, The Almighty

As a reminder to all, Phase II – West consists of the back of the Church, including the choir loft and the children's room. The children's room depicts many vibrant icons meant to draw the children to a love for Christ. Guardians of children, including the Theotokos, Saint Stylianos, and a Guardian Angel were also written especially for the children's room. Many icons of the Saints in the choir loft are hymnographers. Those Saints who helped compose the beautiful hymns of our church. It is fitting to have them adorn the choir loft as our choir always sings beautiful praises to God. We all must be thankful and sing praises to God for He came down to earth from on high as the Christ for our salvation.

Adjacent to the choir loft, above, we have the depiction of the life of the Theotokos. Here we will see her Nativity, her Entrance into the Temple as a young girl, and her Falling Asleep or Dormition. The final icon of the Theotokos is her Holy Protection. In this icon, the Virgin Mary grants protection to those of her children who ask for her help. Numerous times the Theotokos has interceded by not only aiding individuals, but whole cities from harm. "Most Holy Theotokos intercede and save us."

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Directly in front of the choir loft are depicted the feasts celebrated on the 5 weeks of Lent. These feasts are meant to help prepare us for Christ's glorious Resurrection. They remind us of faithfulness, holding to tradition, obedience, repentance, and sacrifice, all which lead us to Christ and His Heavenly Kingdom. Directly in the center is seen the Holy Cross of Christ which reminds us of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for us.

Two Old Testament Scenes are depicted in the upper west corners: the Prophet Jonah who prefigures Christ's death and Resurrection and Elijah who was taken up to heaven without undergoing death. Two New Testament Scenes depict two of Christ's miracles: healing the woman with an issue of blood and healing the Canaanite woman's daughter. The Evangelists, Mark and Luke, are depicted in the west corners. Many important Apostles and Defenders of our Faith have been written in the western part of our Church, while the prophets are found surrounding Christ the Pantocrator in the dome. These prophets, through the Holy Spirit, pointed the way to our Savior Jesus Christ whose awe-inspiring presence will remind us not only to have the fear of God, but most importantly to have the Love of God. For when we love God, we also love our neighbor who was made in the image of God.



**Iconographer Themis Petrou
with an icon of one of the Holy Prophets**

We on the iconography committee want to thank all those who have donated to the iconography programs. We are blessed to have supportive members who understand the importance of iconography and the completion of our Church. We want to thank all those who gave hospitality to the iconographers as they worked long hours to complete their work. For those who would like to donate towards iconography, funds are still needed to complete the icon of Christ Pantocrator, the Almighty.

Soon our Saint Nicholas Community will enjoy the beauty of iconography in more than half of our Church. Our Church will look more like "heaven on earth" as it was meant to be, drawing our being from the earthy to the heavenly, connecting our lives to God's through our prayers and the sacramental life. The Church is the center of our spiritual life, for the Church is the Body with Christ as its Head. When we visualize Christ and the Saints around us in the Church, the chaos of our lives calms and Christ's peace dominates. May the peace and blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with us all.

Sophia Radwanski, on behalf of the
Iconography Implementation Committee