

Magnificat

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News from
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
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O Christ our God,
Your Kingdom is for all ages,
and Your dominion extends over all.
You have fashioned all things in wisdom
and established the times and seasons of our lives.
In thanksgiving for all things
and in every circumstance
we cry out with joy:
Bless the crown of this year with your goodness,
and grant us, without condemnation, always to sing:
O Lord, Glory to You!

From Matins of the New Year

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.

Indiction: the New Year

The Churches of Byzantine tradition celebrate the New Year on the first day of September. This does not correspond to our current civil calendar, which begins the year shortly after the winter solstice, on January First, the date fixed by Julius Caesar when he reformed the Roman calendar in 45 BC. Byzantine Churches observe that day as the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, eight days after His birth, and the commemoration of St. Basil the Great, who died on that date in AD 379; the prescribed texts take no notice of the civil New Year. Nor does it relate to the more ancient Roman calendar, which, as is obvious from the numerical names by which we call the last four months of the year, began with March, the first month of spring. Rather, its point of correspondence to the secular has to do with Byzantine fiscal administration.

The Roman Empire balanced its accounts and reassessed taxes every fifteen years. This fifteen-year cycle and the proclamation that marked its beginning were both known as the Indiction, a name that still survives in our service books. The Roman economy remained largely agricultural, and land was taxed according to the quantity and quality of what it produced; the best time to assess its productivity was at the end of summer, just before or during the harvest. In AD 312, the Emperor Constantine the Great fixed the Indiction for September First in the East, and the date endured throughout the remaining eleven hundred and forty years of the Eastern Empire's existence.

The ecclesial connection is arbitrary, at best. The liturgical year, in fact, revolves around Pascha, and its occurrence each year on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox determines when we pick up and put down the Lenten and Pentecostal service books.

From it also are set the eight-week cycle of Resurrection tones and the eleven Sunday Resurrection Gospels that repeat throughout the year. For the books that gather together the many Services tied to fixed dates on the solar calendar, however, a less variable point of reference was in order. Books have to begin somewhere, and the Indiction may have seemed as good a place as any.

There was, in any case, an Old Testament precedent. Passover was celebrated in the spring, and the month in which it was celebrated was regarded by divine command (cf. Ex. 12:2) as

the first month of the year. Yet the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) was celebrated at the harvest, a natural time for thanksgiving, for rejoicing in the land's bounty, or for budgeting the months ahead and pleading mercy should the produce be scarce – matters not altogether different from the concerns of the Roman tax assessors. The festival began, again by divine command (cf. Lv. 23:24; Nm. 29:1), on the first day of the seventh month. Thus, the Menaion, the twelve volume set of books detailing the proper texts for each

day of the calendar year, begins on September First with a Service that, in addition to material devoted to the several saints who are commemorated on that day, provides special texts for the Beginning of the New Year.

The Byzantine Roman Empire of the East is now more than five hundred years extinct, and, even for those who are blessed with its religious heritage, the Indiction has little or no meaning. Life rushes on according to current secular time-keeping. The day – unless it happens to fall on Sunday – usually passes without special observance in most parish churches.

But life in a monastery moves to liturgical rhythms. Divine Services fill a significant por-

O God of all,
 Creator and Master of all ages,
 send grace and blessing
 upon the year to come;
 in Your compassion and mercy,
 our one and only Master,
 save all those who worship you
 and, O Savior,
 cry out to You with fear:
 Grant a blessed and fruitful year
 to all people.

Kontakion of the New Year

tion of each day and the books that regulate their celebration see daily use and profoundly impact the community's life and outlook. Reaching the end and turning back to the beginning bring a real sense of time's passage. We observe the Indiction, then, with due solemnity.

The Menaion prescribes two scriptural readings at Vespers for the New Year – the third being for St. Simeon the Stylite, a fifth century ascetic, who is also commemorated on that day – and devotes both the Epistle and Gospel readings of Divine Liturgy to it, as well.

In the appointed Gospel reading (Lk. 4:16-22) the Evangelist recounts how Jesus announced the beginning of His ministry one Sabbath in the synagogue at Nazareth. He read to the assembled people from the Prophecy of Isaiah (61:1-2):

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
because He has anointed Me
to preach the good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

Succinctly describing the nature of His ministry and pointing to Himself as the promised Messiah (Anointed One), Jesus then tells them, **Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing!** In Jesus, *the acceptable year of the Lord*, the time of God's favor, has arrived. For those who remain in Jesus, each year, whatever uncertainties it may hold or adversities it may bring, is a source of blessing.

The first reading at Vespers (Is. 61:1-9) continues the Prophet's words for an additional seven verses and further expounds the blessings that *acceptable year* would bring to the Children of Israel. They would be given comfort and joy in place of their sorrows, and their desolation would be turned into praise of the Lord. They would rebuild the ruins and restore the wastes devastated through many long years. Other peoples would assume their menial work, and they, themselves,

would serve as priests and ministers of the Lord, who would direct their work and make an everlasting covenant with them. He would reward them double for all their past shame and sorrow, and all the world's people would acknowledge that the Lord had especially favored them with His blessings.

The second reading (Lv. 26:3-12; 14-17; 19-24) presents the matter in more basic, material terms and sets it forth as a covenant. God had freed the Israelites from slavery and would lead them to the Promised Land. If they obeyed His commandments and lived according to the ways He had prescribed for them, they would enjoy great natural blessings in their new home. The Lord would ensure favorable weather and the fertility of the earth; He would prosper their work with abundance and grant them peace and security; He would rid the land of their natural predators and give them success in defeating human foes. He would multiply them and remain with them: God among His people.

Should they break this covenant, however, by disobeying His commandments and abandoning their prescribed way of life, He would visit devastation upon them. Their greatest efforts would produce meager results, and even these would their enemies consume. They would suffer defeat in battle, and those who hated them would become their rulers. They would live in fear and decrease in number, and the wilderness would reclaim their land. As long as they continued to oppose God, He would oppose them and would render them seven-fold punishment for their sins.

Subsequent history bore this out all too well. The great arc of the Old Testament narrative concerns struggle, desolation, and ruin, the story of Israel's apostasy being visited upon them. Yet, the burden of its message is one of hope. For all their abandonment of Him, the Lord persisted in His love for them, and His prophets often spoke words of comfort to them in the midst of their calamities, extending the promise of ultimate and glorious redemption. Through all the vi-

cissitudes of life, the faithful clung to hope and awaited fulfillment of the promise.

Now, in Christ Jesus, the time of fulfillment has come. In Him, God has become man, assuming our human nature and uniting it to His divinity. In ways too marvelous to comprehend, Jesus is our everlasting Emmanuel, God With Us for all eternity. Through His sacrificial death on the Cross, we have been redeemed, set free from our slavery to sin and death. By His Resurrection, we also are made able to rise to newness of life. Abiding in Him, we find all times to be *the acceptable year of the Lord*, grace-filled and abounding with blessings.

The lesson of the reading from Leviticus is not lost upon us, of course. We understand that grace and blessing need to be accepted if they are to be our own. They come to us in the person of Christ. They are ours insofar as we remain in Him. Apostasy deprives us of them, and disaster ensues.

Through Baptism we have been incorporated into Christ, into the Church, His abiding and active presence in the world. In the Church, through the celebration of the Divine Mysteries, we are one with Him, nourished by His body and blood, healed of our infirmities, and, through contrition, restored to life when we are dead in sin. In the Church we abide in Christ and are offered a share in His divine life; caught up in the beauty of divine worship, we are offered a glimpse and foretaste of heaven. In Christ, and as His Church, we have become *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart* (1 Pt. 2:9). This is certainly a cause for joy and exultation, but it is also the occasion of grave responsibility.

In the Epistle reading at Divine Liturgy for the feast (I Tim. 2:1-15), the Apostle addresses one of our prime responsibilities as Church:

I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and for all who are all in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and dignity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Accordingly, litanies of supplication punctuate all our major Services. Interspersing the

hymns and psalmody of Matins and Vespers and the Scripture, exhortation, and thanksgiving of Divine Liturgy, they call the faithful to pray for their own needs and for those of all in the world. The petitions are general – for peace, plenty, safety, salvation, repentance, forgiveness of sins, and holiness of life – and are made, not only in behalf of those assembled for prayer or in the immediate community, but also for various groups of people who may be in special circum-

stances of need or responsibility. Thus, we pray for travelers, for the sick and suffering, and for the imprisoned. We invoke the Lord's mercy upon them all, trusting to God, according to His will, to render to each one according to his need.

We pray especially *for all those who are in high positions*, not because their status gives them some special worthiness, but because of their greater responsibility. Thus, we cite by name our monastic superiors, our bishop, our metropolitan, our Patriarch, and the Pope of Rome, as we pray for all clergy, religious, and faithful of our Church. We pray also for our government, for the military, and for all in the service of our

O Lord and God of gods,
one Nature in three Persons,
unapproachable, eternal, and uncreated,
almighty Creator and ruler of all,
falling down in worship
we all beseech You:
In Your goodness,
bless the beginning of this year
and preserve our leaders in peace,
and all Your faithful people,
O compassionate Lord.

From Matins of the New Year



country. Their decisions and actions, for good or ill, impact vast numbers of people; for the sake of the many, we invoke upon them divine guidance and protection.

Civil Government, no less than that of the Church, is of divine ordinance (cf. Rom. 13:1-7). It is endowed with military and policing power for the peace and just ordering of society. In so far as its laws and actions are not contrary to God's commands, the Christian is bound to co-operate with them as with a divine decree. This doctrine has sometimes led the Church to work too closely with government and, in the interest of social harmony, to turn a blind eye to corruption and injustice. Indeed, the Church, particularly in the East, where it has long been deeply entwined with ethnic and national identity, has sometimes been subservient to the State, essentially functioning as an arm of the government, much to the detriment of the prophetic role it should play in society. Nonetheless, Caesar must be rendered his due, and the Church has been able to survive and carry out its mission in a great variety of political circumstances.

Should, however, through ignorance, poor judgment, false priorities, or malice, the civil authority place itself in direct opposition to God, the true Christian must not co-operate in the evil. He must put aside his docility and work to change the situation with the means at his disposal; he must be prepared to resist, if necessary, and suffer the consequences. Thus, martyrdom has remained a constant in the Church's history from antiquity to the present. We pray our civil authorities never place us in such straits.

Moreover, great power brings great temptations, and, because much has been given them, more will be required of those in high stations. For the sake of their souls and that they may have a good defense at the awesome tribunal of Christ, we invoke the Lord's mercy upon them.

Therefore, the priest's prayers during the anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (d. AD 407) are somewhat more specific in their petitions for those in authority.

For the Hierarchs they implore: *For the sake of your holy Churches grant that they may live in peace, safety, honor, and health for many years and rightly impart the word of your truth.* Paraphrasing St. Paul's words to Timothy, they request for the civil authorities *peaceful governance so that in their tranquility we may be able to lead calm and quiet lives in all piety and dignity.* Governmental authority, both ecclesial and civil, is given for the benefit of those governed; we pray it be exercised wisely, that our bishops teach the true faith, and that our government ensure social tranquility and allow us to pursue our lives in peace.

St. Basil the Great (d. AD 379) struggled to teach the true faith during the years when the Emperor Valens was promoting the Arian heresy. His anaphora, which in the Byzantine tradition is still celebrated ten times per year, is more prolix in its prayers and more pointed in its petitions. With respect to those in public office, it also paraphrases St. Paul's admonition to Timothy, but adds, as well:

Remember, O Lord, our public authorities whom you have counted worthy to govern this land... Grant them a profound and lasting peace; speak good things to their hearts concerning your Church and all your people... Lord, remember all lawmakers and magistrates, our brethren in public office, and all the armed forces. Preserve the good in their goodness, and in your goodness make the wicked good.

Whatever its intermediate origin, all authority ultimately derives from God (cf. Jn. 19:11). We pray that those to whom it has been given exercise it benevolently, with an abundance of good will and free of any inclination toward avarice, arrogance, or oppression. May our loving and merciful Lord, to whom they will have to render account, prosper them in all their endeavors for the good of all.

And so we begin another year – our thirty-second on this blessed shore – grateful for the past, hopeful for the future, and mindful of the Apostle's injunction to offer prayers and supplications for all people. God grant us all a year crowned with an abundance of His goodness.

JAMPOT EXPANSION PHASE I



Building Resumes!

We are pleased to report that, after nearly three years of frustration and uncertainty, work on the **Jampot** storage building has resumed. At about 11:00 AM on Wednesday, September 3, 2014, the Eagle Harbor Township Zoning Administrator removed the Stop Work Order he had placed on the building some thirty-three months earlier, signaling the end of negotiations and legal maneuverings that had consumed most of the spring and summer. Our contractor arrived the next day to begin picking up where he had left off.

The dispute in this instance had to do with the height of the structure. It had been designated as an accessory building, which the Township Zoning Ordinance limits to one story and fifteen feet in height, but it was being built to two and a half stories and a height of twenty-six feet. The eventual solution proved simple: additional building would incorporate the existing, uncompleted building to the current Jampot structure, thereby eliminating the Zoning Violation since the new building would now be part of the principal building and no longer an acces-

sory structure. Thus, the Township could take satisfaction in the monastery's adherence to its Zoning Ordinance, and we would be grateful for the possibility of additional space at the Jampot.

This resolution has been a long time coming and involves much more than the storage building in contention.

When we last expanded the **Jampot** - with the erection of its current 720 square foot kitchen - we resolved there would be no further improvements there until we had provided the monastery with a proper church. The new church was consecrated in August of 2003, and in April, of 2007, we sought to erect a small storage building adjacent to the Jampot, which was now bursting at the seams. We knew that the existing infrastructure - let alone our finances - would not allow for expansion of the kitchen, but we hoped that removing the storage of some production items to the new building, which would have no impact on infrastructure, would buy us a little elbowroom until we could address the larger issues.



The Township denied a permit, citing their new Zoning Ordinance, which classified our property as Resort Residential, a zone permitting no commercial or retail operations. Jampot could continue to function as a Legal Non-Conforming Use – but it could not expand in any way; this effectively cut off the possibility of future growth in our ability to support ourselves. We subsequently learned that the Ordinance classified the monastery as “group housing”, which also limited its potential growth, particularly as no more than twelve individuals were to be allowed in any “group housing” facility.

Despite these barriers and the Township’s intransigence on any sort of accommodation, we firmly believed the Lord had called us to this particular place; we resolved to no easy acquiescence. Land purchases in the sum-

mer of that year and in the early winter of 2008 added about 500 acres to our monastic patrimony. We reapplied for the storage building permit in late summer, and were again denied – with the suggestion that if we reapplied for an accessory structure to a “group housing” facility, we would probably get approval.

Shortly thereafter we filed suit against the Township in Federal Court.

After two years of conferences, briefs, legal fees, and one abortive attempt at resolution via a Planned Unit Development, the Court issued on December 13, 2010, with the mutual consent of the parties, a Stipulated Order resolving all claims and settling the case. The Order recognized the monastery as a religious organization, not “group housing” – which the Township



had already done via amendment of its Zoning Ordinance some months before – and granted the various Uses the monastery would need for its future growth. It granted the construction and use of the storage building, but allowed further **Jampot** growth only with the approval of the Township and the fulfillment of other governmental regulations. We were generally pleased with the agreement, but it indicated no mechanism for the Township’s approval of future expansion, and a misunderstanding concerning the scope of the Order concerning the storage building, coupled with mistrust and lack of communication, brought us back to court within the year. The case was still before the State Court of Appeals when the current settlement was reached.

We had thought from the beginning that the solution to the impasse would involve integrating the new building with the existing **Jampot**. But this would constitute an expansion requiring the Township’s approval, an event we considered highly unlikely. Besides, the existing infrastructure, the sewage system in particular, which was on the point of failure, would not support additional growth.

We began design work on a new septic system in the fall of 2012. Bureaucratic delay pushed start of the work into the spring of the following year, and then the busyness of the **Jampot** season forced a hiatus until late fall. Work continued through the winter, and the system finally was completed and met with Health Department approval this spring.

Meanwhile, we began devel-

oping plans for a potential integration of the incomplete storage building with the **Jampot** proper. Many hours of thought and several conferences with our builder resulted in the design of a two-story structure that would tie everything together and fulfill some long-felt needs, as well. We waited for a favorable time – and it was not long in coming.

During a chance encounter at a meeting in the late winter of this year, the new Township Supervisor, who had been in office for somewhat more than a year, informed us of a change in the Zoning Ordinance that the Board had approved a few months earlier. Legal Non-Conforming Land Uses – the category to which the Township had assigned the **Jampot** – could now be expanded via a Special Use Permit. One application had already been approved; this might be the solution to our problem, as well.

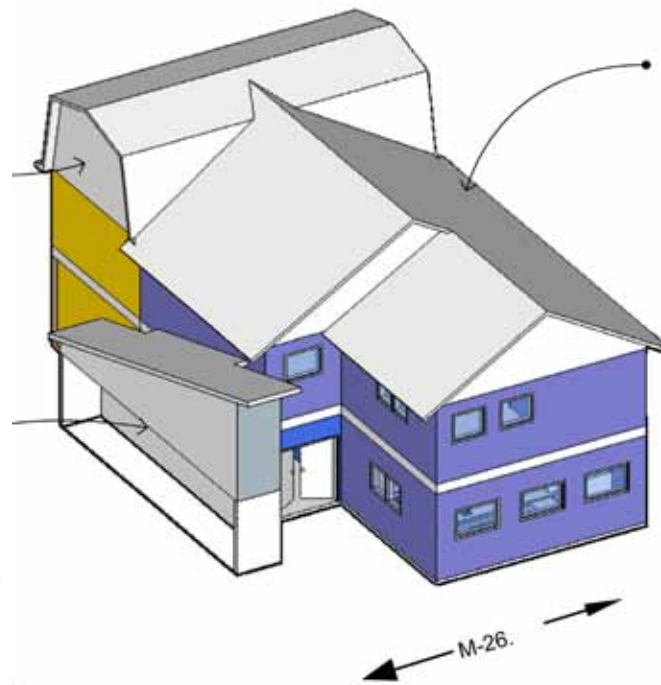
We were skeptical, but met with him a week or so later to show him the design we had worked out for integrating the offending building into a larger **Jampot** expansion. He consulted with other Township officials and telephoned us some days later to say they all thought it was a good idea, but that we should probably include in the Special Use Permit Application all foreseeable **Jampot** expansion, even if it were to take place



some time in the future. The sudden co-operation after so many years was somewhat unnerving, but, after consulting with our attorney and securing a comprehensive outline of the application process, we quickly blocked out a site plan for future development, and, having secured the Health Department's approval of the recently completed septic system, we submitted our application to the Township Planning Commission in late June.

Both the Planning Commission and the Township Board of Trustees approved the application at their July meetings. They both approved the language of the Settlement Agreement for resolving the legal matters at their meetings in early August, and the State Court of Appeals dismissed the court action on August 26th. A week later the Stop Work Order had been rescinded, and we had in hand the Zoning Permit for Phase I of the badly needed and much contested **Jampot** expansion.

The new addition will run perpendicular to the existing uncompleted storage building and will connect to the **Jampot** kitchen along its southwest side. In addition to the long awaited storage space, it will house an area for receiving deliveries on its first floor as well as two rooms devoted exclusively to the production of confections. On the second floor there will be office space, an employee break/lunch room, and a special area for the soaking and wrapping of fruitcakes. All of these spaces are lacking in the current facility, and their provision will do much to improve **Jampot's** efficiency and productivity. We are grateful for the opportunity to realize them in the coming months.



But herein lies a challenge. At the Township's insistence, the Settlement Agreement places us under some rather severe time constraints. We must undertake construction – i.e., have footings in place – before the first of the year. Because of normal weather conditions in our area, this effectively means before Thanksgiving. And we must complete the structure by the end of 2015. Moreover, since the existing candy room and two current storage areas must be demolished to make way for the new building, the incomplete storage building will have to be finished so as

to absorb these functions prior to excavation for the footings. We are in for some rather frantic times in the weeks ahead.

They have, in fact, already begun. Integrating what had been designed as a stand-alone storage building into a new production facility necessitated some changes in layout and structure prior to insulation and drywall. Meanwhile, the hillside was further cut back so as to accommodate the new construction. Installation of the walk-in cooler and the dumbwaiter are still to come, along with the interior finishes. Then comes the rush of moving storage and candy production to make way for demolition, excavation, and footings. We pray the weather co-operate and the energy and finances be there to accomplish all within the allotted time.

It does seem ironic that a larger building is required to bring one that is too tall into compliance and that what once could never be must now be completed in short order. But who are we to question the mercy of God? He bestows His blessing when and where He will and according to His own plan. And we struggle to keep up.

At the Jampot

11



The long, cold, snowy winter yielded to a brief spring and to a cool, wet summer. The blossoming was delayed, but the greening seemed to come at its usual time. The late blooming allowed most everything to escape frost, but the cold and damp interfered with pollination, and the berries were not as plentiful as might have otherwise been the case. Still, we took in an abundance of wild strawberries, blueberries, and chokecherries; the supply of thimbleberries and wild raspberries, while not overwhelming, was adequate, and we continued to get blackberries well into September. We will be well stocked with jam and jelly for the remaining weeks of the season and for the ensuing months of holiday shipping.

With the new septic system in place and operational, we were spared the frustration of the previous year's late start. Making good use of the quiet months of May and June, we built an inventory of preserves and fruitcake to help carry us through the busy times. We continued to make jam five days a week all summer, and by late August we found it necessary to bake occasional batches of fruitcake to keep ahead of demand, but the fruitcake counter has remained fully stocked, and no holes have as yet appeared on the jam shelves. This is the first season in

many years where this has been the case, and, certainly, it was not for lack of customers!

Despite more rain than usual in July and less than ideal temperatures throughout, visitors thronged our area from Independence Day until late August. The Lake remained very cold, and few folk lingered on the beaches, but much of the time **Jampot** had lines of people waiting to get in, and the atmosphere in the sales room remained as energizing as ever. We delighted in the return of

longtime customers and in meeting new friends who had read about us, seen us on television, or heard about us from neighbors, relatives, co-workers, friends, or chance acquaintances. Many said they were told that **Jampot** was the one place they *had* to visit while in our area, and, often as not, they came with list of things to bring back. Usually we were able to accommodate them, although some unusually busy days devastated the bakery counter, and not all items of fresh baked goods were always available.

Though still cool, August was sunny and dry for the most part, and the mosquitoes finally disappeared by the middle of the month. The beautiful weather continued well past Labor Day, and early September proved busier than expected. An early autumn gale during the second week of the month ushered in our fall weather. We enter now what promises to be several weeks of spectacular color.

Some time yet remains in the season. We hope you will be able to visit us again and stock up for winter before the final day on October 18. Should circumstances prevent, we invite you to investigate the items offered for mail order on the following pages.

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
Society of St. John
6559 State Highway M26
Eagle Harbor, Michigan 49950

Prayers Answered

For reasons other than Liturgical - and, indeed, from before the time of our embracing the Byzantine tradition some twenty years ago - autumn has always marked the start of a new year for this holy monastery. We arrived at Jacob's Falls to take up monastic life on August 29, 1983, and, ever since, the startling clarity of late-summer sunlight, along with the variable and sometimes-stormy weather of this season of transition, has brought us a sense of completion and new beginning. It evokes memories of the past and provides occasion for evaluating the current situation and planning for the future.

In contrast with the frustration and anxiety of the previous year, the year just past proved peaceful, productive, and foundational. Despite the handicap of two months' lost production the previous spring, a busy color season and an intense six weeks of shipping for the holidays allowed us to finish the 2013 calendar year with a modest increase in earned revenue. Generous Christmas contributions covered the cost of repainting the interior of the church, and work on the **Jampot** septic system continued through the winter.

The system's completion this spring, along with the plans developed during the winter, allowed us to take advantage of the Township's newly gained flexibility and propose a solution

to the impasse that had prevented **Jampot** expansion these past seven years. Praise God! The prayers we had requested in our last issue of **Magnificat** received a favorable answer. Work on the new building has resumed, and we are now faced with the happy problem of juggling production and construction for the next several months.

We are immensely grateful for the end of this long ordeal and for the prospects now opened for the future. We thank God in particular for the contractor who stayed with the building project through all the frustrating times and contributed so much to developing its plans. We also remember before Him the Township officials who proved so co-operative in bringing this matter to an equitable conclusion, the friends who supported us in the inevitable public hearings, and the members of the various Boards and Commissions who ultimately approved the coming expansion. The Lord's blessing upon them all for their part in forwarding His designs.

We remember you, as well, our friends, patrons, and benefactors, who these past thirty-one years have made it all possible. We hold you in our hearts as we work our way into our thirty-second year on this blessed shore. God grant you peace, joy, and an abundance of every good thing in the months ahead.