

# Beyond 50 2024 Review - January Word

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2024 marked the 55th Anniversary of Nativity of Christ and the final year of the Beyond 50 Plan. It's been an inspirational journey with significant accomplishments every year. In 2024, funds were once again donated and released from the Beyond 50 restricted funds to enhance and support the diverse and uplifting ministries of our Parish. Each Beyond 50 Plan goal continues to receive inspirational progress.

## Initiate New Church Membership

### Strategies: Catechumens/City of Novato

#### *Catechumens*

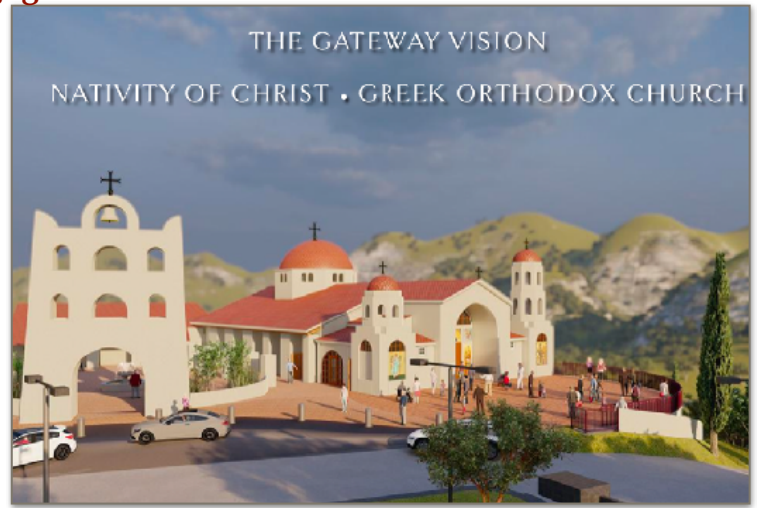
In the coming months, a structured series of discussions will be offered for the several individuals that have expressed interest in learning more about the Orthodox faith. This series will be open to all, but primarily focused to those potentially preparing to be received into the Orthodox Church.

#### *Online Interview*

Fr. John was interviewed by THE ORTHOCHAT. The episode covers various topics on the Orthodox faith and is now available on Spotify.

#### *Evangelism*

Susan Siefkas and Floretta Burrows once again hosted a table at the Holiday Market to speak to individuals curious about our faith as well as assist with the Church Tours at the Marin Greek Festival.



#### *City of Novato*

In 2024, Christ Kamages and his team at CJK studios continued to dedicate significant time for the major projects of the Beyond 50 Plan but specifically with the City of Novato. The Master Plan & Precise Development Plan was submitted earlier this year and on December 16, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the proposed projects. We anticipate final approval from the Novato City Council on February 25, 2025.

Through the generosity of our stewards and donors, all 2024 expenses related to city fees, civil, geotechnical, traffic, and structural engineers have been paid through restricted funds. Nativity of Christ received additional donations in 2024 and there is currently \$180,000 remaining in the Narthex Gateway restricted fund. We also again thank Christ and Pat Kamages for their donation of architectural fees.

### Expand and Support Existing Ministry: Ministries Director

In October of 2023, Eleni Kelley was hired as our new Ministries Director on a part-time basis. She has brought tremendous energy and structure to new ministries with consistent gatherings for men and women on Fridays, and for our families on the first Sunday of every month. Through this established line-item on our Parish budget, we're grateful for our stewards to ensure our ministries are alive and vibrant.

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attention as they physically represent the way in which we care for God's home. Painting the exterior of our large hall is a primary example. Nativity again expresses gratitude to the Antonis family who donated the \$40,000 in labor.

Within the Master Plan and Precise Development Plans submitted to the City of

Novato, are renderings for an elevator which will address our current accessibility issue. Once final approval is received from the City Council, Nativity will be able to pursue the important topic of accessibility with potential completion in 2025.

## *Increase and Expand Financial Resources: Nativity of Christ Preschool*

One of the most exciting accomplishments of 2024 was the opening of our Nativity of Christ Preschool! Through the hard work of Eleni Kelley and our Preschool Advisory Committee (Fran Corcoran, Daphne Cummings, and Kathy Marshall), our very own Angelina Susmani was hired as our Preschool Teacher/Director.

The Preschool is currently three, full-days a week for those 2 – 5 year olds. There are currently three students enrolled, and we look forward to expanding enrollment. This program would not be possible without the financial support of the Beyond 50 Plan and the stewards of Nativity of Christ.

## *In Closing*

The Beyond 50 Plan served as a tremendous exercise for the future development and growth of Nativity of Christ. Even though we technically have completed this five-year strategic plan, the established goals will continue to serve as a constant guide. It will indeed be exciting and ultimately fulfilling to complete the remaining capital projects of the Plan which will only be accomplished through the engagement of our faithful.

## *Expand and Increase Service to Poor and Needy: Sack Meals*

In 2024, Nativity continued to make sack meals for St. Vincent De Paul every month. 1,500 sack meals were made in 2024 alone, making our grand total nearly 7,500 sack meals over the past five years! We're grateful to our donors who provided the \$10,000 needed to make these meals over this period. We thank Elaine Chyrklund and Mary Kay Stratigos for spearheading this effort!



## *Improve and Enhance Existing Facilities: Maintenance and Accessibility*

Our facilities continue to receive our constant



# *Beyond 50: February Word*

On Sunday, February 23, we will host our Spring Parish Assembly. This will be a unique Assembly as the Parish will be voting to approve the final design of our Narthex Gateway and the Small Hall addition.

Based upon the overwhelming support from both the City of Novato Design Review and Planning Commission, we anticipate the full approval from Novato City Council at their February 25 meeting. This will enable CJK Studios to complete the construction documents necessary for bidding and permits.

All are encouraged to review the [Beyond 50 Workshop Video Presentation](#) which highlights the progression of the design in response to continued parishioner feedback.

May our Lord continue to bless our community to connect, engage, and grow!



## *What's our progress with the City of Novato for the Narthex Gateway?*

**October 2023** - The City of Novato informed Nativity of Christ that a more detailed submittal will be needed in the form of a Master Plan and Precise Development Plan.

**November 2023 - September 2024** - CJK Studios performed the requirements listed for the Master Plan and Precise Development Plan. Examples: Zoning/Planning Applications, traffic information, geological hazard map, site and grading plans, landscape architectural renderings, a biological cultural report, and much more.

**December 2024** - The City of Novato Planning Commission unanimously approved our Master Plan and Precise Development.

**February 2025** - Nativity anticipates complete approval of our capital projects from the Novato City Council. This will enable CJK Studios to begin construction documents for bidding and permits.

# Beyond 50: Initiate New Member Strategies

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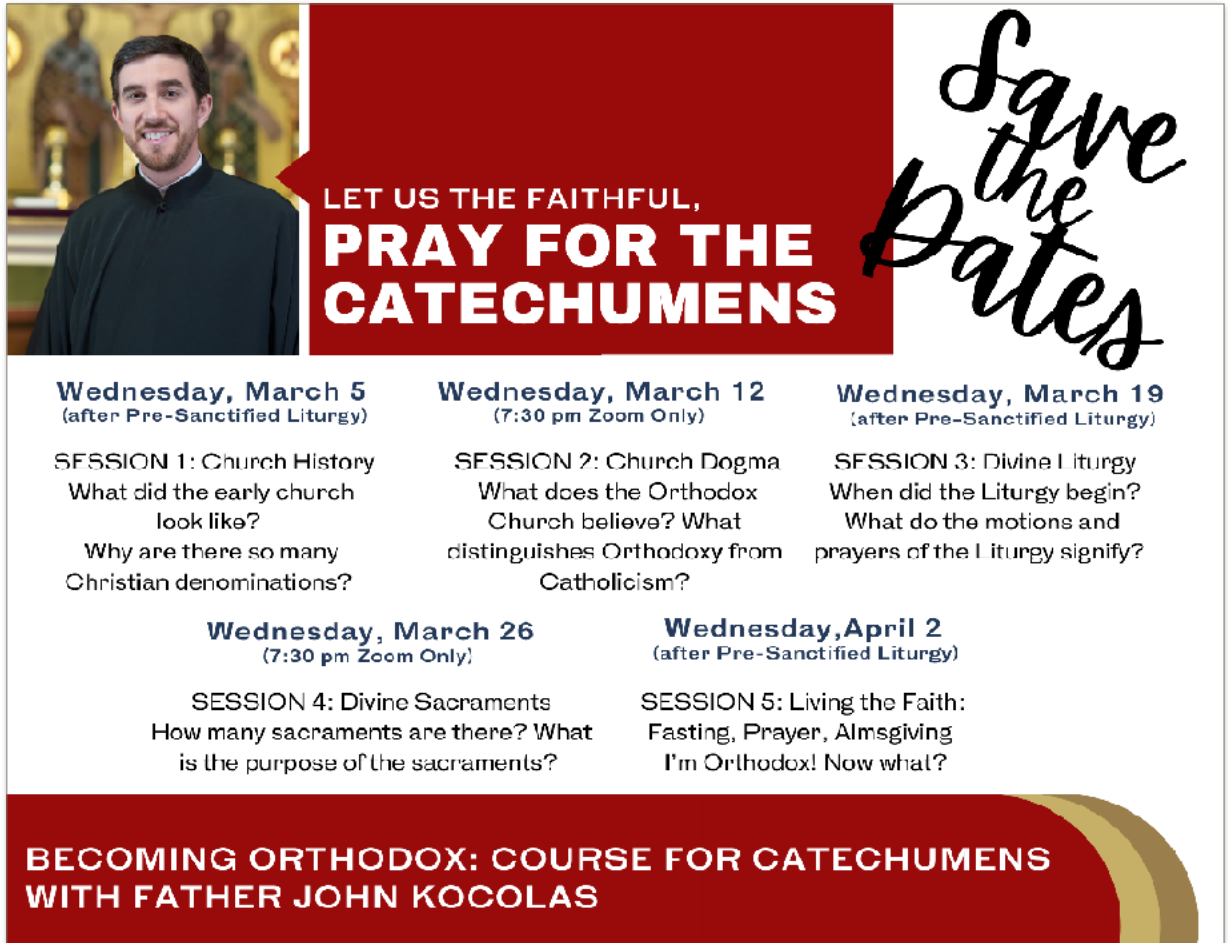
February Word 2025

## Beyond 50 Goal

Initiate New Church Membership Strategies.

Recently, there has been numerous people seeking more about the Orthodox faith. With the prayer that more discussion will lead more to the faith, Fr. John is preparing for a Catechumen's course during Great Lent.

ALL are welcome to learn and grow in our Orthodox faith during these times.



**LET US THE FAITHFUL,  
PRAY FOR THE  
CATECHUMENS**

*Save the Dates*

<b>Wednesday, March 5</b> (after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy)	<b>Wednesday, March 12</b> (7:30 pm Zoom Only)	<b>Wednesday, March 19</b> (after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy)
<b>SESSION 1: Church History</b> What did the early church look like? Why are there so many Christian denominations?	<b>SESSION 2: Church Dogma</b> What does the Orthodox Church believe? What distinguishes Orthodoxy from Catholicism?	<b>SESSION 3: Divine Liturgy</b> When did the Liturgy begin? What do the motions and prayers of the Liturgy signify?
<b>Wednesday, March 26</b> (7:30 pm Zoom Only)	<b>Wednesday, April 2</b> (after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy)	
<b>SESSION 4: Divine Sacraments</b> How many sacraments are there? What is the purpose of the sacraments?	<b>SESSION 5: Living the Faith: Fasting, Prayer, Almsgiving</b> I'm Orthodox! Now what?	

**BECOMING ORTHODOX: COURSE FOR CATECHUMENS WITH FATHER JOHN KOCOLAS**

# Beyond 50: March 2025

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## City of Novato and Parish Assembly unanimously approve Beyond 50 capital projects!

It is with great joy that we announce on Tuesday, February 25, the Novato City Council unanimously approved the designs of the large capital projects of our Beyond 50 Plan. With this approval, we are now eligible to prepare the proper documents to submit back to the City of Novato for building permits.

Just a few days prior, at the Spring Parish Assembly on Sunday, February 23, a unique presentation was made to seek the Parish's affirmation on the refined designs of the large remaining capital projects of the Beyond 50 Plan.

The Parish Council drafted a suggested motion and after discussion and a small amendment, the motion was unanimously approved by the Assembly: *"I move that the design drawings as presented for the remaining large capital projects of the Beyond 50 Plan be affirmed so that construction documents can be produced. This in turn will allow us to submit for building permits, conduct a formal bidding process, and initiate a parish-wide fundraising effort, pending further refinement."*

The "pending further refinement" language was added to the original motion as there are still details of the projects that parishioners would like further clarification on and an opportunity to offer their input. For example: deciding whether to have a window in the proposed cry/bride room or installing one or two stair cases in the modified loft. As a result, it was suggested and confirmed that we should hold additional workshops to discuss these details. There will be at least two Beyond 50 Capital Project Workshops scheduled for:

**Sunday, March 9 after the Divine Liturgy**  
**Thursday, March 20 at 7:00 pm on Zoom**

The results of these discussions will give CJK Studios the needed information & direction to begin the construction documents that will be used for building permits, bidding, and a fundraising effort.

\*It should be noted that we have also received enthusiastic approval from the Metropolis of San Francisco Art and Architectural Committee.

All parishioners are encouraged to review the [Beyond 50 Capital Project Presentation](#) and participate in the upcoming workshops to be engaged in the details of this exciting endeavor of



our Parish.

# Beyond 50: April Word

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On Sunday, March 9, and Thursday, March 20, two Beyond 50 Capital Project Workshops were offered for parishioners to provide a better understanding, and gather feedback, about the four recently approved capital projects: Elevator, Small Hall, Narthex Gateway, and enlarged Dome. These workshop sessions provided fruitful discussions and helped familiarize parishioners on how these projects will enhance our current facilities.

Providing improved accessibility, with the installation of an elevator on our campus, continues to be a very important topic for many parishioners. The type of elevator best suited for our grounds is still yet to be decided. Three different models are being considered: (1) a Lift, (2) a LULA, and (3) an Elevator. Each model has its own specifications and price point.

## LIFT

A Lift is the lowest price point as it is the slowest, least user-friendly, and smallest of the three options. Although a Lift is technically a possibility, it is not currently being considered as the best option for Nativity.

For those interested in testing out this option, a Lift is located at the offices of CJK Studios at 2 Commercial Blvd. in Novato.

## LULA

When compared to the Lift and the Elevator, a LULA (limited use/limited application) is the midpoint in speed, cabin space, and price. Unlike a Lift, it operates identically as a standard elevator. It provides a wheelchair accessibility option for spaces that are too small for standard elevators but require more capacity than a Lift. Additionally, a LULA requires minimal maintenance as there are fewer mechanical parts than a standard elevator.

For those who wish to test out this option, a two-

stop LULA is located at 95 Racquet Club Drive in San Rafael, and a three-stop LULA is located at 10 S Knoll Road in Mill Valley.

## ELEVATOR

A standard elevator has the highest capacity and is the fastest, but is the most expensive of the three options. An elevator will certainly be the smoothest and most spacious experience, however, because of its large footprint and complex system, it will be the most extensive installation. Compared to the other options, the elevator requires more frequent maintenance and has higher operational expenses.

A standard elevator at Nativity would resemble all other standard commercial elevators.

## TWO-STOP vs THREE-STOP

Another choice being considered is whether to install a two-stop or three-stop Elevator or LULA. A two-stop would connect the upper courtyard (church/classrooms/offices) with the lower level (Large Hall and back patios).

A three-stop Elevator or LULA would connect the approximately 4,000 square feet of unfinished space below the Large Hall. The cost of an added stop, and additional excavation, would be considered an investment for the future development of the currently unused space.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The primary goal of the Elevator or LULA is to accommodate those who are in need of accessibility on our grounds. Parishioners are encouraged to communicate their preference to Fr. John or Steve Rouman for a Lift, LULA, or Elevator. This will help provide the necessary direction in determining the cost benefits of installing a two-stop or three-stop elevator.

