

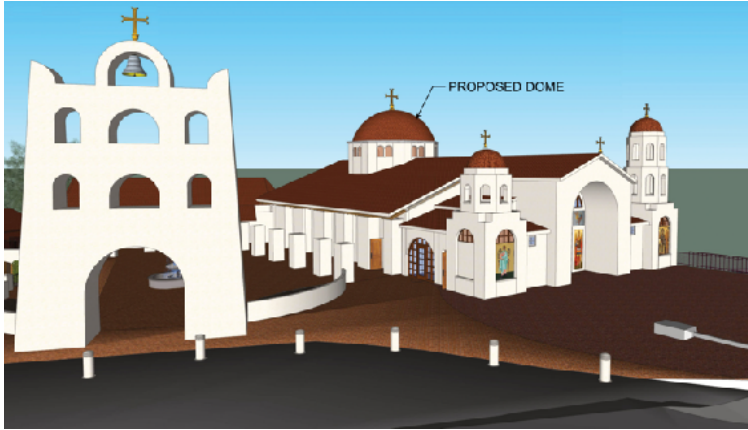
January Beyond 50

Connect • Engage • Grow



The Beyond 50 Plan

As reported at the Fall Parish Assembly on October 23, we have either completed or commenced work on all aspects of the original Plan, with the exception of three remaining facility enhancement projects - the Narthex Gateway, ADA Accessibility, and the Small Hall. We are currently finalizing plans and costs for all three. Renderings have been submitted to the City of Novato to begin a design review process. Here is a closer look into these exciting projects:

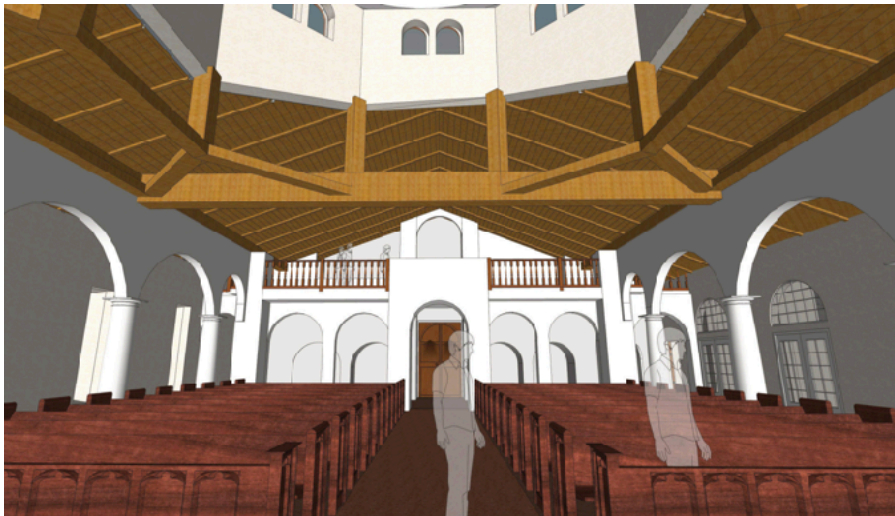


A Front Entrance and Drop Off

"Where is the church?" Where is the bathroom?" These are common questions by visitors, and the Narthex Gateway will provide a divine presence for our house of worship with a safe drop-off area to be used for our seniors, limousines for weddings, or hearses for funerals.

Enlarged Dome

In an effort to pursue all possibilities, enlarging the dome is being researched to understand what the cost would be, and to engage the parish to see if this is desired by our stewards. Including this new idea in the drawings now will avoid having to go back to the City of Novato at a later date for approval. It will only be pursued if approved by the parish and sufficient funds are received.



Lifted Choir Loft

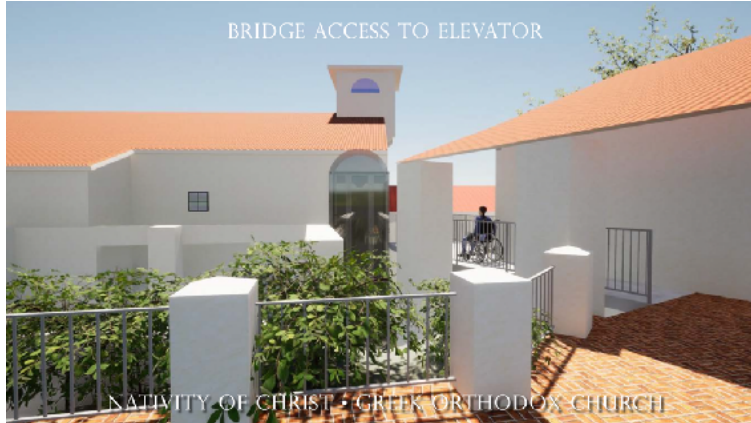
To accommodate the new entrance, the choir loft will be raised and the existing narthex will become an extension of the nave. Also depicted is the interior space if the dome is enlarged.

January Beyond 50

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“Walk of Faith”

Beginning from the new drop-off area in front of the church will be a path connecting to the back patios. This will be an opportunity to fully connect our entire campus as well as provide a path for ecclesiastical processions such as Great Friday.



To connect the elevator with the office building, a small bridge will be built from just beneath the overhang. This will allow an easy course of travel from church services to the Fellowship Hall and outdoor patios.

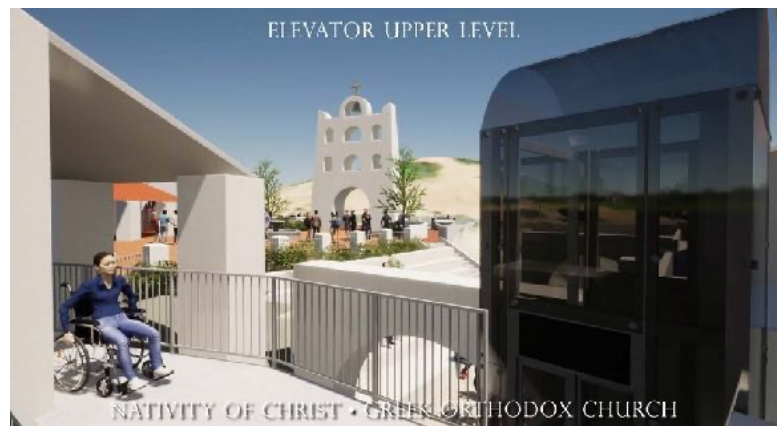
Small Hall/Outdoor Pavilion

Costs were a major factor in simplifying the plans from a new Small Hall to an Outdoor Pavilion. The simplified, open-air pavilion now has a dramatically lower estimated cost.



ADA Accessibility: Elevator

An elevator and ramp were both thoroughly researched, but an elevator is ultimately being pursued since this was the preferred solution by the majority of parishioners in need of ADA accessibility. A ramp, although also effective, would require removal and reworking of the landscaping bed closest to the Fellowship Hall with an additional 130 feet of paved walkway to ensure the legally required slope.



The new design also offers an openness to the surrounding space and has the potential of being enclosed at a later time.

Next Beyond 50 Update

The goal is to update the community as soon as bids for the large projects have been finalized. The next formal gathering will be the Spring Parish Assembly, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, February 26, 2023.

February Beyond 50

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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

BEYOND 50



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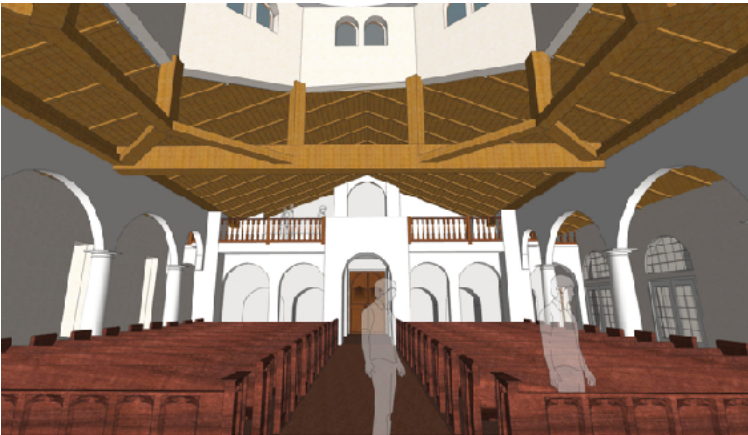
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Beyond 50: 10 Steps to Parish Health (Part 1 of 3)

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During the pandemic, the Archdiocese offered 10 steps to provide parishes with a guide to a healthy community. As the article states:

"The steps listed here may be reminders to some and new information to others. In leading through this crisis and the changes it imposes on our ministry, it is important at every opportunity to communicate our vision for the future of our parish."

For the next three months of the Word, these steps will be listed to also provide examples of how our community is addressing these steps through the Beyond 50 Plan.

1. Positive and Grateful Communication

Keep parishioners up-to-date. Communication needs to be positive and full of gratitude. Avoid fear and scarcity as fundraising methods. Brief testimonials from members are helpful. Use all electronic means available. Include photos and videos. Mail hard copy to those that do not have internet access. Check in with vulnerable members and see how they are doing. Ask regular parishioners to keep you informed of others in need.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- Constantly communicates the wonderful successes of our ministry through email, social media, monthly bulletins and announcements in church.
- The Visitation Ministry constantly reaches out to shut-ins and those unable to attend worship services. (Contact Susan Stockton for more information)

2. Welcoming and Inclusive

Welcome ministry has never been more important. As the pandemic winds down, it is important to encourage people to return to in-person worship. Appoint and train a welcome team. If possible, greet people even before they enter the church. Collect visitor information in a book or with a visitor card. Offer visitors a Worshiper's Guide to the Divine Liturgy booklet or a copy of the House of God tri-fold, both of which explain aspects of our worship. Encourage members to be inclusive. When permitted, reinstate fellowship hour – outdoors or indoors – to allow people to re-connect. People don't want a friendly church; they want friends at church.



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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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So, what is Nativity doing?

- Narthex Greeters have been strengthened to engage visitors in worship and offer them a visitor's card to collect information and reach out. (Contact Dina Camamis for more information)
- The Welcome Ministry was established to have special gatherings and welcome new families to the community. (Contact Dina Stathis for more information)

3. Collaborate with Local Businesses and Charitable Organizations

Support local organizations whose work is in line with the vision and ministry of your parish. Collect clothing, coats, food and more to support the local pantry or shelter. Develop mutually beneficial relationships with local businesses to co-sponsor an event or sale. A spring plant sale in the church parking lot coordinated with the local nursery could share proceeds with the parish and provide an opportunity to welcome neighbors to the church. Local bakeries may coordinate on a bake sale. If restrictions require, the sale could be set up as a drive-thru. Cooperative efforts encourage interaction with our communities and open our doors to those that are seeking. Online ordering provides the parish with a list of emails for ongoing communication with our neighbors regarding events and a welcome to join us in worship.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- Promotes and donates to several local charities during the year. (See the January Word for a complete list).
- Hosts an array of events such as Boy Scout gatherings, official polling place, vaccination site, and Novato Police Department greeting event.
- Makes lunches for St. Vincent's as well as hygiene kits for Novato Downtown Streets Team.

Beyond 50: 10 Steps to Parish Health (Part 2 of 3)

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During the pandemic, the Archdiocese offered 10 steps to provide parishes with a guide to a healthy community. As the article states:

"The steps listed here may be reminders to some and new information to others. In leading through this crisis and the changes it imposes on our ministry, it is important at every opportunity to communicate our vision for the future of our parish."

Below is the the second part of listing how Nativity is addressing these steps through the Beyond 50 Plan.

4. Virtual or Socially-Distanced Spring & Fall Events

Plan now for an outdoor Spring or Fall Event on the church property, or a virtual event if necessary. During lockdown, people have been cooking, baking and gardening more than ever. Speak to community leaders to brainstorm on creative collaborations that could benefit your church and the community at large.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- At the time, offered outdoor coffee hours and Parish Assemblies
- Made sack lunches for St. Vincents
- Organized outdoor work days to beautify campus

5. Major Gifts

Ask donors to consider a major gift. Consider creating an endowment fund for the long-term financial viability of the parish. Incorporate [Planned Giving](#) materials into this effort.

Remind all to remember the church in their will or estate planning. Ask those that are able to be founding members of the church foundation. Invite major donors to serve on the foundation board.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- Continue to meet with individuals of the Parish
- Continue to promote planned giving and remembering the church in estate planning through the Word and individual conversations
- Have received just over \$525k in pledges and will reengage parishioners when plans are ready to submit to City.



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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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6. Personal thank you

Vital to donor retention is a personal thank you that lets them know how their gift will be used. Handwritten notes and personal emails are critical to this process and often lead to repeat giving. Every level of donor matters. Acknowledge gifts electronically when received and follow up with a written thank you.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- No matter the size donation, each donation is sent a thank you letter.
- Financial accountability ensures each donation is allocated to donors intent.
- Gratitude has lead to additional donations.

7. Assist, Support, Train and Thank Parish Leadership and Volunteers

Provide the necessary technical support for volunteers and parish council. In most parishes, our volunteers may be seen as *unpaid staff*, and need to be provided workspace and supplies to carry out their work/ministry. Reach out, thank and take care of church support staff and volunteers. Organize leadership, stewardship and tech seminars/webinars for parish council and ministry leaders. Contact the Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism (www.outreach.goarch.org) for resources and assistance.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- Each Parish Assembly ministry leaders give report and are thanked for their leadership.
- Each ministry leader is insured that everything needed for their ministry will be provided.
- Stewardship forms are used to connect ministry leaders with stewards who have shown interest in given ministry.

Beyond 50: 10 Steps to Parish Health (Part 3 of 3)

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During the pandemic, the Archdiocese offered parishes a 10-step guide to a healthy community. As the Archdiocese article states:

"The steps listed here may be reminders to some and new information to others. In leading through this crisis and the changes it imposes on our ministry, it is important at every opportunity to communicate our vision for the future of our parish."

Below is the third part listing of how Nativity is addressing these steps through the Beyond 50 Plan.

8. Celebrate milestones and anniversaries.

Honor members of the church for accomplishments, birthdays, and other milestones. Acknowledge publicly those who give generously of time and treasure. Church milestones and anniversaries could be commemorated as a celebration of all who made them possible. Take every opportunity to express gratitude, lifting up examples for others to emulate.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- **Celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Parish and initiated the Beyond 50 Plan.**
- **List parishioner name days and stewardship pledges in each monthly bulletin.**
- **Always acknowledge donations and church improvements to encourage joyful giving.**



**NATIVITY OF CHRIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

BEYOND 50

9. Encourage youth and young professionals to organize events.

Recruit youth leaders to organize a movie night or other event. A family-friendly film in the church parking lot, with a concession stand and a small raffle may be exactly what we need to lift our spirits. Use this event to collect food or clothing for the local pantry or shelter. Movie night can be a way of teaching our youth how to organize and contribute to parish ministries. Young professionals need to be empowered.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- **During and after Covid, we continue to offer events and ministries for fellowship and spiritual enrichment.**
- **Young professionals are leading ministries and the Parish Council.**
- **We encourage students to lead programs and ministries.**

10. Educational Events

In the words of Fr. Thomas Hopko, "An Orthodox Christian parish ... is essentially a teaching and learning community for its believers." Possibly our greatest mission in

the 21st Century is to counteract misperceptions of the faith and to instruct our people in the basics of our faith. A major component of outreach is first reaching in and getting our parishioners to be informed and enthusiastic Orthodox Christians. Visiting speakers and virtual presentations in theology, parish ministry, Church music, missions, community service and more will help to uplift and inspire parish membership, further engaging them in the life of the church.

So, what is Nativity doing?

- **We have hosted speakers like Dr. Philip Mamalakis and Bishop Neofitos.**
- **Promoting local presentations and speakers at other parishes.**
- **Encouraging participation in summer camp, Project Mexico, and OCMC events.**

Vision, Passion & Inspiration

Each parish is located in a particular environment and made up of people with specific needs, skills, interests and education. Every parish will have a different vision for the ministry that lies before them. Clear vision brings passion. Parish leadership is encouraged to hammer out a vision for the future of their church. Vision causes people to imagine the future of their church and to develop concrete steps to realize that vision. If we are passionate about ministry, that passion will be contagious and our people will be inspired.

Beyond 50: Sharing Our Orthodox Faith

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GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR'S FAITH

"Ask Me Anything!"

Come join the Marin Interfaith Council to get to know your neighbors and hear about their different faith traditions.

June 21, 2023 at 6 pm,
Greek Orthodox Christianity
Father John Kocolas



NATIVITY OF CHRIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

BEYOND 50

Beyond 50 Goal: **Initiate New Church** **Member Growth Strategies**

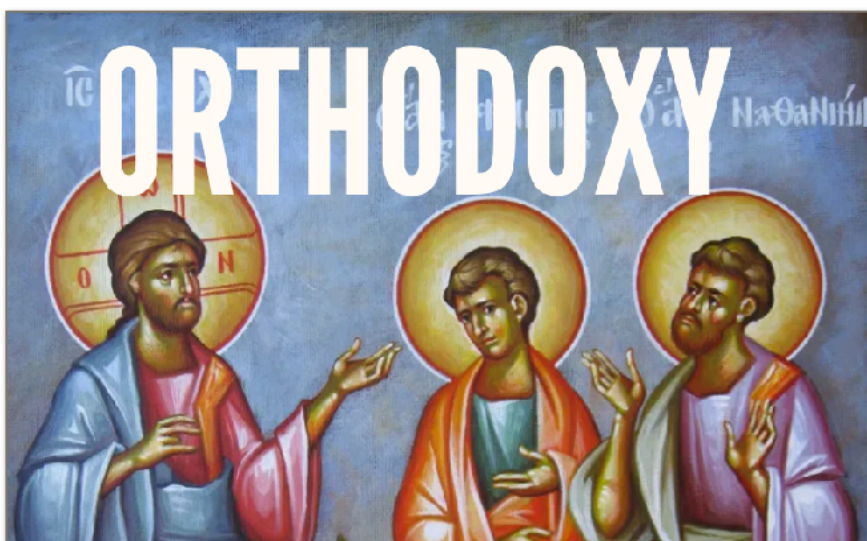
As we celebrate Pentecost on June 4, we will mimic the Apostles by sharing the Gospel in various capacities this month. At the Festival Church Tours, we had 10 individuals sign up for our 4 week discussion series to continue their interest in learning about the Orthodox faith. All are welcome! Begins at 7 pm.

May 31: What We Believe

June 7: Historical Overview

June 14: Saints and Missionaries

June 21: Orthodoxy in America and the World



"COME AND SEE" THE FAITH, HISTORY AND
TRADITIONS OF OUR ORTHODOX CHURCH THROUGH
A 4 WEEK INTRODUCTORY SERIES

WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 PM

5/31: WHAT WE BELIEVE

FR. JOHN KOCOLAS

6/7: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

FR. CONSTANTINE EFSTATHIU

6/14: SAINTS & MISSIONARIES

ANASTASIA PAMELA BARKSDALE, MDIV.

**6/21: ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA
AND IN THE WORLD**

FR. CONSTANTINE EFSTATHIU &
ANASTASIA PAMELA BARKSDALE, MDIV.

Contact Anastasia at a.barksdale@ocmc.org
for more information.



NATIVITY OF CHRIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
• Faith • Love • Community •

On Wednesday, June 7, we participated in a Design Review Workshop at Novato City Hall. Members of the Novato Design Review Commission (DRC) were present (Mark Schatz, Michael Barber, and Joseph Farrell) in addition to members of the Novato Planning Division (Steve Marshall and Vivek Damodaran).

Fr. John spoke first, communicating to the DRC that Nativity has received tremendous support from the neighborhood. Christ Kamages then gave a presentation highlighting the goals and aspirations of our projects. Members of the DRC and attendees from Nativity (Ed Keller, Steve Rouman, Dina Stathis, and Spiro Stratigos) then gathered for a roundtable discussion on the projects.

There were five areas of suggestions & refinement by the DRC:

- Roof line. It was suggested to make the roofline of the Narthex addition one level the entire way.
- Updated Landscape Plan. It was desired to have a clear understanding of the type and composition of the trees that will be landscaped.
- Bathroom connection. It was suggested that both bathrooms in the Narthex addition should be accessed through the hallway.
- Retaining Wall. The retaining wall should be stucco like the existing building and not be a living wall.
- Lighting. The DRC wanted to ensure that there would be no obtrusive lighting. CJK offered to provide appropriate graphics for the next DRC meeting.

Apart from these suggestions, all members of the DRC were extremely impressed with the project and overwhelmingly

supported how this project:

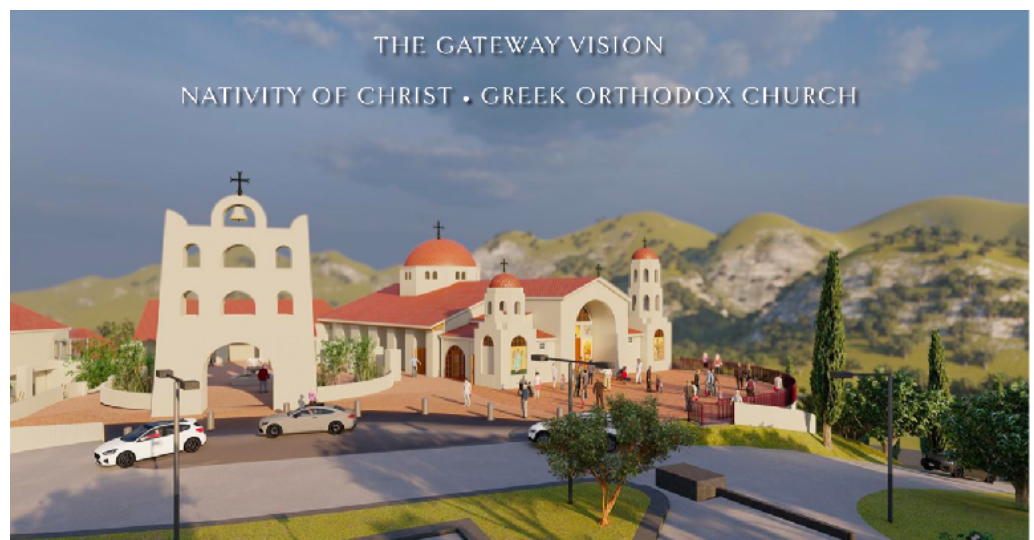
- Gives a welcoming front entrance.
- Creates a convenient drop off, particularly for seniors.
- Creates a physical presence through the increased size of the dome.
- Offers creative architectural features with the asymmetry of the front two bell towers

Additional comments from the DRC: "I'd vote yes on this today if I could." "It's a tremendous improvement and great use of the space." "It's an honor to be part of this project."

We are anticipating the public hearing for the official Design Review approval to be held on Wednesday, July 19 at Novato City Hall. After this approval, the plans will then need to be approved by the Novato Planning Commission and the Novato City Council.

We look forward to engaging with parishioners in the coming months through various workshops to involve the Parish community on this exciting progress. A special Parish Assembly will be held prior to submitting plans to the City of Novato for building permits.

Please refer to our website, nativityofchrist.org/strategic-planning-process to learn more about our progress and updates from the last several years.



October: Beyond 50

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City of Novato Approves Architectural Plans!

On Wednesday, September 6, 2023, the City of Novato had all five of its Design Review Committee members present and unanimously approved the architectural design submitted by Nativity of Christ. A condition of this approval is that the landscape plan and site lighting plan will be brought back to the Design Review Committee for final approval.

We thank Christ Kamages and John Hunter for representing our Parish at these series of meetings and all the work they and CJK Studios continue to offer as we strive to make these exciting dreams a reality.

So, what's next?

These plans will now go to the Novato Planning Commission, and then finally to the City Council. Once approved by the City Council, Nativity will be able to submit its final plans for building permits.

As this process continues, it is our desire to receive final feedback from all of you! To that end, we will be holding two parish-wide Design Review

Workshops in the month of October. The first on Sunday, October 8, following the Divine Liturgy (to be held in person) and the second on Thursday, October 12 (via Zoom).

At each Workshop, members of the Beyond 50 Committee will be offering updates on our progress with the City of Novato, our projected total timeline, and presenting current designs on our large capital projects for parishioner feedback. After completion of the Workshops, our final step will be approval of the final plans. This approval will not be at our Fall Parish Assembly as previously communicated but will take place once plans have been finalized.

With Parish support, we can submit our final plans for building permits, which will then allow us to more actively pursue contractors to receive bids and have a concrete understanding of pricing for fundraising purposes.

We look forward to hearing from our community at these Workshops so we can continue to pursue an exciting vision for the future of our Parish to connect, engage, and grow!



November: Beyond 50

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Enhancing and improving ministries has been a major goal from the beginning of the Beyond 50 Plan and it is with excitement and joy that we announce the hiring of Eleni Kelley (Katsaros) as Nativity's new Ministries Director!

Eleni has tremendous energy and passion for our Orthodoxy faith regularly attends services with her husband, Stephen, and their daughter, Cora.

Look through the Word to find the exciting new events happening through Eleni's leadership!

MINISTRIES DIRECTOR: ELENI KELLEY

Eleni Kelley was baptized at Ascension Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland but all of her fond memories of church community come from Nativity of Christ. From the Minoans, to GOYA, to Greek School, many hours of her youth were spent on this campus. The past 13 years she has been on a journey pursuing a career she loved. Eleni graduated with an Interior Design Degree which led her to working in the design industry and management. Management lead her to corporate sales. She had a wonderful leader who encouraged her to find our WHY in life. This lead Eleni back to school where she obtained her Teaching Credential and eventually her Masters in Educational Leadership. For the last 8 years, Eleni has been dedicated to her position as a Teacher. She carefully curated a curriculum that encouraged students to be problem solvers and creative thinkers. She coached athletic teams, sat on leadership boards, and planned monthly community events for students and staff. Recently, Eleni found passion in a new role as a Mother. Her greatest accomplishment to date. While this has lead her to taking a pause from the classroom, the desire to contribute and build with a community still holds strong with her. Eleni wants to bring all her years of experience to our church, to *our* community. She is honored to enhance our ministries and grow our community through education, events, and opportunities for members of all ages.



December: Beyond 50

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Beyond 50 Workshop

On Sunday, November 5, a video presentation was given to update parishioners on the progress of the Beyond 50 Plan and particularly the three remaining capitol projects: the Narthex Gateway, Small Hall, and Accessibility. There was a fruitful and productive session of questions and discussion and we thank all of the parishioners for vocalizing their questions, concerns, and support for these projects. The Beyond 50 Workshop Video Presentation is also available on the church's website.



Nativity of Christ Preschool

Opening a preschool was part of the original goals of the Beyond 50 Plan and through the efforts of our Ministries Director, Eleni Kelley, we continue to pursue opening in the Fall of 2024. To this date we have:

- Purchased and installed furniture for the classrooms and exterior fencing to establish the outside play area.
- Completed and submitted documentation to become a license child care facility.
- Received preliminary inspection from the local fire department to insure our space is safe for future preschool use.

All of this is possible through stewardship and donations to our Beyond 50 Plan. We are grateful to all those who have supported this effort and greatly look forward to welcoming children on our campus in the Fall of 2024!



Missions and Evangelism

We thank Susan Seifkas and Floretta Burrows for setting up a table at the Holiday Bazaar to speak about our Orthodox faith to all of our guests; a wonderful example for each of us to feel comfortable freely speaking about our faith in Christ.

