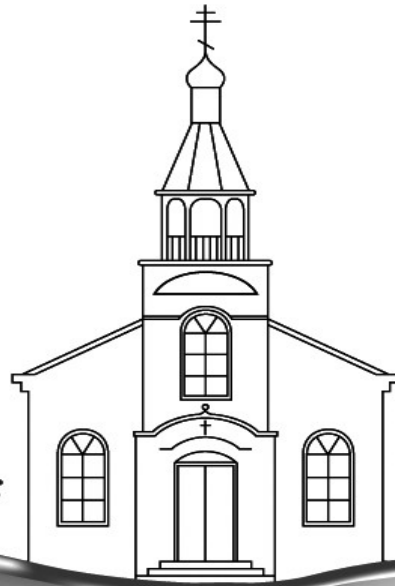


**russian
orthodox
church of**

**saint
nicholas**

ABN 71 384 615 722



newcastle

2008-09

Report and Accounts

CONTENTS

1.	Rector's Message	2
2.	About our Parish	3
3.	The Parish Council	3
4.	Significant Events in 2008-09	4
5.	Parish Council Report	5
6.	Parish Financial Statement with Notes	7
7.	Ladies' Auxiliary Financial Statement with Notes	9
8.	Discussion and Analysis of Financial Statements	10
9.	Auditing Committee's Report	11

RECTOR'S MESSAGE

This 2008-2009 Report and Accounts summarises the activities, achievements and financial position of our parish for the year ending 30 June 2009.

The year under review has been another happy period in the life of our small church. Looking back, it is clear that the most important development has been the joining with this parish of the faithful from the Russian Orthodox Church of the Theophany in Mayfield. Although not a change without sorrow for many, the closure after fifteen years of the Theophany parish has presented us all with opportunities to develop new friendships and to work together far more effectively for the building up of Russian Orthodoxy in Newcastle and across the Hunter Valley.

The Parish Council is again to be commended for its work in facilitating and supporting all that has been accomplished in parish life. Of particular note is the steady improvement in the financial position of the parish. Importantly, this has been achieved whilst also making purchases and undertaking work for the adornment and improvement of the church.

In August this year we observed with joy the 60th anniversary of the beginnings of Russian Orthodoxy in the Hunter Valley. I pray that we will make good use of the many opportunities that the Lord has given us, bearing witness to the Orthodox Christian faith, and that our parish will continue to prosper and grow.

In Christ



Rev. James Carles
Parish Priest
18 November 2009

ABOUT OUR PARISH

Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church is the oldest Orthodox Christian parish in the Hunter Valley. Established in 1950, our parish has served the needs of Orthodox Christians of many and varied backgrounds for nearly 60 years.

We work together to maintain an Orthodox Christian parish of Russian tradition in which we and others can pray, receive the Sacraments, and grow in Orthodox Christian faith and fellowship.

Our heritage is important to us. We value the labours of the founders and builders of our small parish and of Russian Orthodoxy in the Hunter Valley, and seek to preserve both their work and their memory. We value our relationships to other lands, but recognise that Australia is our home and the place that God has given us to work out our salvation. We value our Russian Orthodoxy and the Church Slavonic language, but also seek to give our Orthodox Christianity living expression in a new context.

We are a small community, but one that welcomes others. We strive to be an open and friendly parish.

We have services on the second and fourth weekends of each month – on Saturday at 6.00pm and on Sunday at 9.00am – and on major feast-days whenever possible.

In our present circumstances, gathering for services approximately thrice-monthly is the main expression of parish life. Although limited in such a way, we continually seek to develop the life of our parish and to care for and adorn our church.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

In parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia, the Parish Council consists of the parish priest and other assigned clergy, the Warden, and such lay members as are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the parish.

Since December 2002, the parish priest has been Father James Carles. The Warden, Nikolai Goura, was elected for a first three-year term at the 2005 AGM, and for a second term at the 2008 AGM. Nikolai also fulfils the duties of parish Treasurer. By virtue of his long and significant association with the parish Subdeacon Vitaly Lupish holds an honorary position on the Parish Council.

The lay members of the Parish Council elected at the 2008 AGM are

- Oleg Kolokolow (Deputy Warden)
- Hanna Lestone (Secretary)
- Anna Morhun (Head Sister)
- Raisa Zyza (Deputy Head Sister)
- Antonina Medwedew

Members of the Parish Council are not paid for their work. Standards of conduct for Parish Council members – and indeed, all parish members – are set out in the ‘Normal Parish By-Laws’. They must

- Confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at least once a year
- Pay agreed membership fees if able
- Tend to the moral and economic welfare of the parish
- Remain loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia
- Remain loyal to their parish and cooperate with the parish priest and Parish Council

- Act in a way that promotes peace and unity within the parish

The Parish Council met formally five times during its period of office, generally on Saturday afternoons. Meetings were at times difficult to arrange given work and family commitments, and the geographical distance separating Parish Council members. Those convened were nevertheless well-attended by members of the Parish Council and conducted in a positive spirit. Minutes were kept of meetings.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2008-09

July

On Saturday July 5th, we joined with the Serbian Orthodox parish of Saint Naum of Ochrid for the celebration of their patronal feast. His Grace Bishop Irenej presided at Divine Liturgy. On Sunday July 6th, a number of parishioners travelled to Sydney to hear the Russian choir sing at Saint James Anglican Church. On Sunday July 13th, the day after the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, we enjoyed a parish BBQ. On Sunday July 27th, Metropolitan Hilarion visited our parish with the relics of Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara. The previous evening, Vespers and an akathist had been served at the Theophany church in Mayfield. Over 70 people gathered in the hall after Divine Liturgy for a festive lunch.

August

On Sunday August 14th we held our 2008 Annual General Meeting.

October

On Saturday October 19th we received a visit from 52 people to our parish in association with the National Trust. They were welcomed by Subdeacon Vitaly Lupish and Mrs Anna Morhun.

November

On Sunday November 23rd parishioners and friends joined together for another BBQ as the Nativity Fast approached.

December

On Friday December 19th we celebrated the summer feast of our patron, Saint Nicholas. Father Alexander from the Mayfield parish joined us.

January

On January 7th, as Father James served in Gosford on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, many of us travelled there for the service. On January 19th, the feast of the Baptism of Christ, we visited the Mayfield parish, celebrating with them – as it turned out – for the last time. On the weekend of January 24th -25th three babies were baptised: Isaac Harwood and Ekaterina Martin on Saturday January 24th, and Daniel Goura on Sunday January 25th.

March

On Sunday March 1st, Forgiveness Sunday, we enjoyed blini, or pancakes. At the beginning of Great Lent, our friends from Mayfield joined us, the Mayfield parish having closed its doors after 15 years.

April

On Saturday April 18th we had an early Paschal service, with the church full and overflowing. The Romanian Orthodox community used our church for the first time. On Tuesday April 28th, Radonitsa, many of us visited the graves of our relatives and friends.

May

On Saturday May 23rd and Sunday May 24th Metropolitan Hilarion and other clergy visited our parish in honour of the feast of Saint Nicholas, and to formally observe the joining with us of the Mayfield community. Reader Luke Goura was ordained subdeacon, and Evgeny Bondarenko was tonsured reader. Nearly 120 people from the Russian, Serbian and Romanian Orthodox communities gathered afterwards for a festive lunch.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Parish activities

Service Schedules are prepared on a seasonal basis – Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. Services have been held on the second and fourth weekends throughout the year, with additional services held on certain major feast-days and during Holy Week.

On average, there are six services per calendar month – three in the evening, and three in the morning. Although the services are primarily in the Church Slavonic language, English has increasingly been used over the past year in response to pastoral needs. The Epistle and Gospel readings at Divine Liturgy on Sunday are now generally in both languages, and some litanies and prayers are in English. English has been used for some of the readings during the evening services, particularly the Six Psalms and the canons at Matins. We nevertheless remain committed to Church Slavonic as the primary liturgical language of our parish.

Following on from the signing of the 'Act of Canonical Communion' in May 2007, we continued to develop good relationships with other Orthodox Christian parishes. We visited and received visits from the Theophany parish of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Serbian Orthodox Church of Saint Naum of Ochrid. In May 2009, with Metropolitan Hilarion's blessing, we made our church available for the use of the Romanian Orthodox community in Newcastle.

In January 2009 we learned that the Theophany parish was to be closed and that the faithful of that parish would be joining us. We received our new parishioners with joy soon afterwards. In the time that has passed since, old friendships have been rekindled and new friendships formed. In May 2009, Metropolitan Hilarion presided at a festive Divine Liturgy to formally recognise the unification of the two parishes.

On the occasion of Metropolitan Hilarion's visit to our parish, Reader Luke Goura was raised to the rank of sub-deacon. Evgeny Bondarenko was tonsured to the rank of reader. Subdeacon Luke and Reader Evgeny both serve in the altar and now share the reading of the Apostol, reading alternately in Church Slavonic and English

Services apart from those regularly scheduled are rare in our parish. There have been four baptisms this year, all of them infants, and one funeral. The funeral was that of Anna Kallaur, a woman with a long association with the life of the Russian Orthodox Church in Newcastle. May her memory be eternal!

There have been no weddings.

The baptisms – three of them taking place over two days in January 2009 - were an occasion of particular joy. For the first time in many years we have a number of young families in our parish.

The provision of items necessary for the divine services and adornment of the church building has remained a priority for us. In July 2008 we received from Russia new icons of the Saviour and the Mother of God, a set of icons depicting the saints and events commemorated each day of the year, a vessel for holy water, and other items for use in the divine services. We arranged for the framing of

other icons, and purchased a stand for the front kliros. We continue to await the preparation of vestments for our-altar servers.

We have met our obligation to provide material support to the church authorities. Diocesan levies have been paid in full. All mandatory Diocesan collections were taken. Improvements were made in this regard, with small collection envelopes distributed to parishioners beforehand. This helped parishioners to better plan their contributions, and increased the amounts collected.

Our parish priest is engaged in full-time secular employment and so the need for his remuneration has been significantly reduced. A small stipend is paid four times a year. Honoraria have been paid to our choir director and to visiting clergy.

Our parish has grown this year. An increasing number of people gather regularly after Divine Liturgy on Sundays and major feast-days for a simple meal and for fellowship. This social contact is valuable given our occasional services and the fact that a number of us live a great distance from each other. The opportunity to provide hospitality to visitors is also of importance. To these regular gatherings we have added occasional barbeques and special festive lunches.

Unfortunately, our parish newsletter, *News from Saint Nicholas*, as not published at all this year. Our website, however, was regularly updated and provided access to parish history, service times, announcements and parish reports.

Events in the life of the Diocese have been publicised, allowing our parishioners and friends an opportunity to be involved with seminars, concerts, services and conferences that are a part of the life of our Russian Orthodox Church here in Australia.

Maintenance, improvements and administration

The Parish Council has continued to consider a number of maintenance and administrative tasks of importance. These tasks include:

Grounds and building maintenance

A contractor has again been engaged this year to regularly attend to the parish grounds. Action has been taken in relation to the clearing of gutters and pest control. Agreement previously given to the purchase of equipment to allow parishioners to undertake lawn-mowing and maintenance was not acted upon, there being an insufficient number of people available to do this work. The need to attend to church repairs has been noted. Jenny Millard has undertaken a great deal of work to improve the grounds, establishing new garden beds and planting trees.

Air conditioning

In 2007-2008, in-principle agreement was given to the installation of air-conditioning. It was established during 2008-2009 that significant electrical work is required before the installation of air-conditioning could safely proceed. In view of this, this project remains in abeyance.

Improvement of the church interior

In 2007-2008, the Parish Council agreed to obtain a quote for the replacement of the iconostasis, the icon screen that divides the sanctuary from the main body of the church. Enquiries made in the course of 2008-2009 suggest that this project would cost in excess of \$30,000.00. No agreement has yet been made with regard to this major project.

A prominent iconographer in the Russian Orthodox community in Sydney has agreed to consider the frescoing of (or painting of icons upon) the walls and ceiling of the church and to submit a plan and quote for Parish Council consideration. It is expected that this major project will be extremely costly, and that if agreed to and commenced, it will be completed in stages over a number of years.

Assessment of the suitability of the walls and ceiling for this work will be undertaken in due course.

Quotes for having the floorboards repolished have yet to be obtained. This work would be best undertaken in connection with the replacement of the iconostasis.

The acquisition of icons of important saints and events in sacred history, and of new vestments for the church, are ongoing projects. A number of new icons were obtained in 2008-2009.

Improvement of the parish hall

The Parish Council agreed in principle in 2005-06 that the kitchen in the parish hall required renovation. This too is an expensive project, requiring significant electrical work and evaluation of the plumbing. No action has yet been agreed to by the Parish Council

Record keeping

Work to improve parish record-keeping continued. As noted previously, there has in the past been no co-ordinated or consistent approach to record-keeping, and our records are deficient in many areas. Existing records were gathered in the church hall, and work is ongoing to ensure their preservation, integrity and accessibility.

Education

In partnership with the Gosford parish, a small store made available spiritual literature, icons, CDs and DVDs in Russian and English. A DVD player was donated to make possible the occasional presentation of spiritual and educational films. Apart from these modest initiatives, the circumstances of parish life are such that it has not been possible to supplement the regular teaching given during Divine Liturgy.

Ladies' Auxiliary

Cleaning, administrative tasks and the adornment of the church were undertaken under the direction of the Head Sister. In the course of 2008-2009, the Deputy Head Sister took ongoing responsibility for parish fellowship. Under the auspices of the Ladies' Auxiliary, a great deal of work was done to prepare pilmeni, piroshki and other items for sale. This provided fellowship opportunities in addition to an improved income for the Ladies Auxiliary.

Other projects

In the course of 2008-2009, the Parish Council compiled a list of suggested projects for the purposes of prioritisation and planning. In addition to the projects discussed in detail above, these projects included painting the cupolas on the church, a thorough building inspection, improvements to the toilet block at the rear of the church, replacement of wooden wall panelling in the church, painting, a number of safety and security initiatives, and the installation of a rain water tank.

Identifying the work to be done has itself taken time. It is clear that the Parish Council must now develop a comprehensive maintenance and improvement plan, including estimated costs, before any action can be taken. Necessary tasks must be given priority over those that are merely desirable, and a budget must be drawn up to support implementation of the plan. This will be an important task for the Parish Council in 2009-2010.

In view of changes in parish life in 2008-2009, and in order to ensure continuity during this planning and budgeting process, Metropolitan Hilarion was asked by Father James in July 2009 to bless the convening of an Annual General Meeting in 2009 without electing a Parish Council until 2010.

Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ending 30 June 2009

Position at 1 July 2008 **\$66929.29**

Income

First Plate	3715.20
Second Plate	3051.40
Candles	5864.00
Prospora	879.80
Tithes ¹	555.00
Newspapers	124.00
Diocesan collections	990.65
Donations	526.60
Parish Collections	0.00
Sales	0.00
GST Refunds	0.00
Bank Interest	3137.34
Calendars	110.00
Fees	0.00
Miscellaneous	194.70

Total Income **\$19148.69**

Expenses

Clergy ²	1535.00
Choir Director	800.00
Utilities ³	977.68
Telephone	421.53
Administration ⁴	193.90
Diocesan levies	1368.61
Insurance	3667.14
Repairs and maintenance ⁵	1927.17
Church needs	0.00
Altar needs	270.00
Candles	1315.00
Collections	990.65
Newspapers	251.00
Special purchases ⁶	2015.89
Calendars	105.00
Miscellaneous ⁷	1600.65

Total expenses **\$17439.22**

Profit (Loss) **\$1709.47**

Investment **\$61126.62**

Position at 30 June 2009 **\$68638.76**

Cheque account balance 30.6.2009	6379.14
Term Deposit	61126.62
Cash on hand 30.6.2009	1133.00
Total	68638.76

¹ Tithes are the annual membership fees paid by parish members.

² Clergy payments include honoraria paid to visiting clergy on festive occasions, and to the parish priest.

³ Utilities are gas, water and electricity.

⁴ Administration costs include the cost of the parish website.

⁵ Repairs and maintenance includes lawn mowing, pest control, fire safety, and any necessary maintenance.

⁶ Special purchases included an icon frame and a choir stand.

⁷ Miscellaneous expenses included hall furnishings.

Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Ladies' Auxiliary
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
For the year ending 30 June 2009

Position at 1 July 2008		\$6027.23
Income		
Donations for lunches	2110.70	
Sale of cakes	287.00	
Sale of piroshki	328.60	
Sale of pilmeni and vareniki	434.00	
Other donations	120.50	
Raffles	1078.35	
Collections	140.00	
Sale of pussy willows on Palm Sunday	171.00	
Interest	218.69	
Miscellaneous	320.00	
Total Income		\$5208.84
Expenses		
Groceries for lunches & events	1968.68	
Kitchen, cleaning and bathroom needs	92.81	
Special purchases ⁸	682.00	
Repairs and maintenance	170.29	
Ingredients for pilmeni	108.50	
Ingredients for kutiya	31.10	
Flowers	126.68	
GST ⁹	116.91	
Total expenses		\$3296.97
Profit (Loss)		\$1911.87
Position at 30 June 2009		\$7,939.10
Account balance 30.6.2009	2702.31	
Term Deposit	5000.00	
Cash on hand 30.6.2009	236.79	
Total	7939.10	

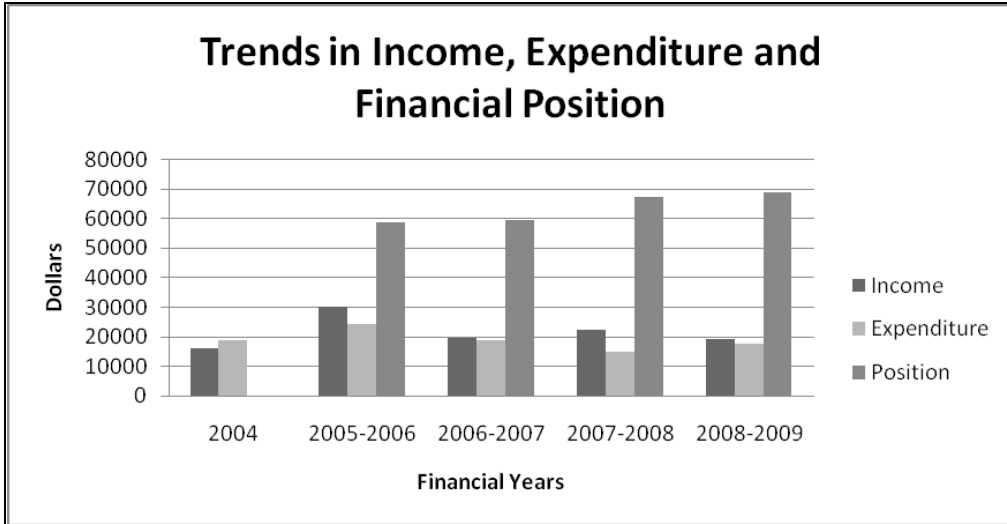
⁸ Special purchases included a sofa bed for the church hall.

⁹ GST is listed separately as a refund can be sought.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Parish

The income of our parish remained small in 2008-2009 and was, as in previous years, derived almost entirely from the parish itself by means of collections, tithes and the sale of candles and prosphora. Given lower interest rates, bank interest was a less significant source of income this year. This loss was offset by increased contributions to the collections taken up at most morning services. Fundraising activity remains limited by the small size of our community. As our community grows, it is



possible that fundraising possibilities and opportunities will increase.

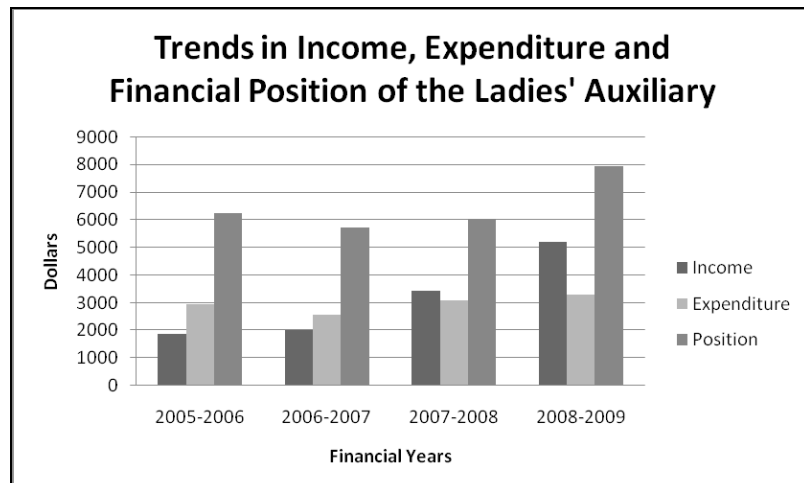
In the 2005-6 and 2006-07 financial years a modest profit was made. This increased significantly in 2007-08. Although our income reduced and

our expenses increased in 2008-2009, a modest profit was made, and our overall position improved. Increased expenditure was due to the purchase of a number of important items for the church. Of note, our overall position has steadily improved over the past five years, even as we have undertaken important maintenance work and purchased items for the church.

The Ladies' Auxiliary

Although a separate Ladies' Auxiliary account is maintained historical and practical reasons, the Ladies Auxiliary is an entity distinct from the parish, and these funds remain under the general supervision the Parish Council.

A significant increase in the sale of items such as pilmeni and vareniki reflects an increasingly active Ladies' Auxiliary. This, together with successful raffles, has increased the income, and thereby improved the financial position, of the Ladies' Auxiliary in 2008-2009.



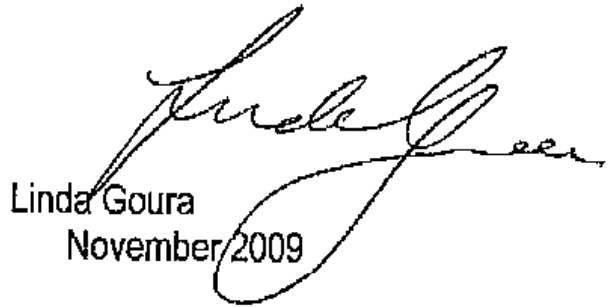
for
not
of

AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Having examined the financial records of Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church and Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church Ladies' Auxiliary, we confirm that the 'Statements of Financial Position' included in this report are accurate and complete.

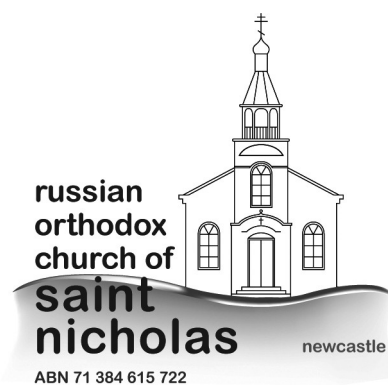


Vitaly Korotkich
November 2009



Linda Goura
November 2009

Members of the 2008-09 Auditing Committee of Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church



Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church
3 Irving Street
WALLSEND NSW 2287

www.stnicholaswallsend.org.au