

OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

February 25, 2018

The Second Sunday of the Great Fast

THE SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY RELICS

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, JOHN CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, TIM ERMATINGER, KEN KOMISAREK, MARYLOU LAZOS, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JOE NEHME, MAURICE PARE', PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (5th Tone) Page 51

The Troparion of the Holy Relics (2nd Tone)

O victorious witnesses of the Lord, blessed is the earth fertilized by your blood, and holy are the heavenly places that opened to your souls. You have vanquished the enemy in the stadium, and proclaimed Christ with courage. We beg you to intercede with Him who is all good, that He may save our souls.

The Troparion of St. Gregory Palamas (8th Tone)

O Gregory the Wonderworker, light of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, glory of monks and invincible protector of the theologians, pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace: pray without ceasing for the salvation of us all.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 15

The Kontakon of the Annunciation (8th Tone): Page 16

THE PROKIMENON:

YOU, O LORD, WILL KEEP US
AND PRESERVE US ALWAYS FROM THIS GENERATION.

*Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy man,
for truthfulness has vanished from among the children of men.*

Today's Readings: Hebrews: 1: 10-14; 2: 1-4 and Mark 2:1-12

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, (February 24) 4:30 PM:

For the health and salvation of John C., by John and Kara Siwik

For the repose of Frederick Kfoury, Jr., (5th), Donald Ganem (24th), Paul Kheriarty (22nd), Sara Anton (21st), Shirkey George (38th), Sophie Potoczny (21st), Edmond George (4th), Pauline LeBlanc (11th), Samuel Ashooh (78th), Joseph Abood (32nd), and Fred Kfoury Sr. (18th)

Sunday, (February 25) 10:30 AM

For the repose of those who lost their lives in the Florida school shooting,
and for the consolation and peace for those who grieve for them

Next Saturday, (March 3) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Rose Solomon (20th), Ernest Elhady (20th), and Eugene McGrail (38th)

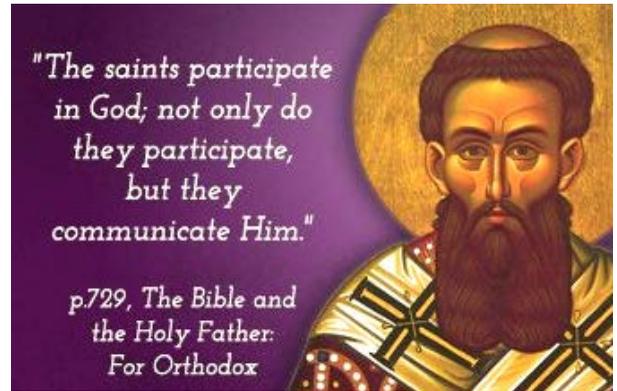
Next Sunday, (March 4) 10:30 AM

For the repose of Janice Terris, the sister of Rt. Rev. Gerasimos Murphy B.S.O.



The Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas and of the Holy Relics

Although the commemorations for this Sunday have changed over the years, the focus has always been on those who have stood fast against the tide of sin and heresy. In early Church history, this Sunday was first set aside for the commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was martyred on February 23, 155. Later, in 1368, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, set aside the Second Sunday of Lent as a day of commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, who had died nine years earlier. Finally, in 1843, the Patriarch of Antioch, Maximos III Mazloum, declared that on the Second Sunday of Lent the relics of all saints should be venerated. As a result, we maintain two commemorations today: St. Gregory Palamas and the Holy Relics.



Have lunch with the parish!

The parish is invited to share a Lenten lunch of **Shrimp Creole & Rice** following the Sunday Divine Liturgy. There is no charge for the lunch. Following the lunch there will be a video presentation from Bishop Robert Baron's acclaimed series "Catholicism." This week: *"Happy are We: The Teachings of Jesus."*

Our Annual Lenten Dinner will be held of Sunday, March 18!

This Saturday: Saturday Kitchen! Meat and spinach pies will be available from the Saturday Kitchen next Saturday morning. Please call in your order in advance at 625-9966. Any help you can offer that morning is greatly appreciated.

Attendance - Last Sat. 4:30 PM: 21 Last Sun. 11:00 AM: 114

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ \$1,289.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$36.⁷²

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$75,978.⁰¹

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Feb. 26	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Wed., Feb. 28	7:00 PM	Presanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 2	7:00 PM	Akathist Hymn
Sat., Mar. 3	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Holy Cross
Sun., Mar. 4	9:45 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Mar. 4	10:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Holy Cross

WEEKDAY SERVICES DURING LENT

Monday evenings, 7:00 PM: Great Compline

The Office of Compline is the nighttime prayer of the church. It is enhanced during Lent to contain beautiful prayers of repentance and to remind us during our Lenten struggle that "*God is with us!*"

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM: Presanctified Liturgy

During the season of Great Lent, we traditionally "fast" from the joy of the Divine Liturgy on weekdays. However, so as not to be denied the strength that comes from receiving from the Lord's Table, the church offers us this service, which is Lenten vespers followed by Holy Communion.

Friday evenings, 7:00 PM: The Akathist Hymn

This service presents a beautiful series of hymns to the Mother of God. We pray this service during Lent in anticipation of the great feast of the Annunciation that comes on March 25th.

The Fathers Speak.....On Prayer:

...be not afraid, for He Who said: 'Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid;' (Matt. 14:27) is Himself with us, He Whom we seek and Who always protects us. So in calling to God we must neither fear nor sigh.

-*St. Gregory of Sinai (Instructions to Hesychasts no. 7)*

...he who loves God cultivates pure prayer, driving out every passion that keeps him from it.

-*St. Maximos the Confessor (Second Century on Love no. 7 Lecture 9 no. 2)*

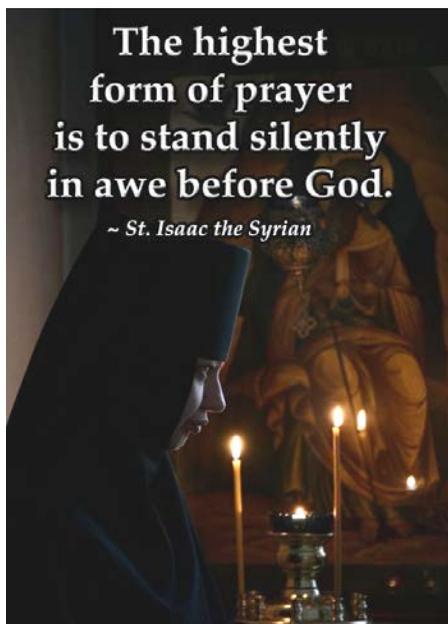
Abba Macarius was asked, 'How should one pray?' The old man said, 'There is no need at all to make long discourses, it is enough to stretch out one's hands and say, "Lord, as You will, and as You know, have mercy." And if the conflict grows fiercer say, "Lord, help!" He knows very well what we need and He shows us His mercy.'

-*Sayings of the Desert Fathers by Benedicta Ward*

Brethren, let us also occupy ourselves with prayer..., and seeking God's mercy, cry out with a humble heart from morning till night and if possible all night long, saying constantly: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us." -*Saint John Chrysostom*

Let no one think, my brother-Christians, that it is the duty only of priests and monks to pray without ceasing, and not of laymen. No, no; it is the duty of all of us Christians to remain always in prayer. So, my Christian brethren, I too implore you, together also with St. Chrysostom, for the sake of saving your souls, do not neglect the practice of this prayer. Imitate those I have mentioned and follow in their footsteps as far as you can.

-*St Gregory Palamas, from "Early Fathers from the Philokalia,"*





Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica,

was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. At age twenty, Gregory withdrew to Mount Athos. There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, St. John the Apostle appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection.

While living the monastic life St. Gregory began to learn the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century: Evagrius Pontikos and St Macarius of Egypt. Later, St Simeon the New Theologian provided detailed instruction in mental activity for this prayer, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice.

The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts." The hesychasts believed that through assiduous prayer, it was possible to experience the uncreated light of God. St. Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life.

About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. He was a sharp-witted scholar and a skilled orator. Barlaam journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts. Barlaam entered into disputes with the monks and asserted that it was impossible to experience the essence of God. He ridiculed their teachings about the methods of prayer and their experience of the uncreated light.

At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia St. Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. The Council accepted the position of St. Gregory Palamas: that God, unapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathematized and fled to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. Patriarch John XIV Kalekos who supported the Barlaamites, had St. Gregory locked up in prison for four years. In 1347, when John the XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore, St. Gregory Palamas was set free and was made Archbishop of Thessalonica. In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings.

While traveling to Constantinople St. Gregory fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, St. Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and even to his Moslem captors. They were astonished by the wisdom of his words. Some of the Moslems were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, St. Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica.

With the words "To the heights! To the heights!" St. Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

Healing from Mere Bones

ON THIS SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT LENT, the Holy Relics are offered for veneration. Their presence calls to mind the deification of our nature. It is particularly appropriate that we venerate the relics of the Saints during the Great Fast, as the ultimate transformation of our nature, *theosis*, is the basis for what we do in the Fast.

We have been created in God's image, and are meant to reflect His divine goodness in us as in a mirror. Because of the Fall, however, we need to be recreated in order for us to reflect God. That re-creation begins at our baptism where we are ontologically united to God in Christ and become by adoption what Christ is by nature. To cherish and preserve this union takes the effort of what has been called "spiritual warfare" or "the ascetic struggle," the effort on our part to live out in our lives what we have become in Baptism. This is the effort that we are called to during Lent.

In some of the Saints, we see visible manifestations of the likeness of God which has developed in them. They display gifts of knowledge or discernment, or their intercession brings healing. They become icons of the love of God on earth. The Church recognizes their holiness by glorifying them and making icons to suggest graphically their likeness to God.

Theosis Reflected in Holy Relics

Since the beginning of the Church, Christians have honored the relics of the saints: either their remains or objects associated with them during their lives. During times of persecution, Christians treasured these mementos secretly in their homes; when circumstances allowed, they erected shrines to house these relics and celebrate the memory of these saints whose lives reflected the divine presence within them. Reverence for the physical remains of the martyrs and other saints may be considered an act of faith that the entire physical creation does have the potential for being transfigured and that the human body in particular participates in the restoration of humanity.

Reverence for relics, like our veneration of icons, is particularly timely during the Great Fast, as it reminds us of the divine life dwelling in those who persevere in the Christian life. In the sanctified remains of the Saints, we see that the state of deification which they attained during this life is prolonged in their bodies after death. The energy of their sanctification does not forsake the body after death; it remains, sometimes in a manifest way, in anticipation of the transfigured bodies of the Saints in the life of the age to come.

The bible describes many events in which God worked miracles through the relics of saints, and testifies that even material articles associated with saints can manifest divine powers:

* Elisha struck the water of river Jordan with the cloak of Prophet Elijah, the river divided into two parts (2 Kings 2:14).



A procession with the relics of St. Nicholas in Moscow

* A man's corpse fell into Elisha's tomb and touched his bones, and that man resurrected to life (2 Kings: 13:21).

* People would bring the sick into the streets and lay them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. (Act 5:15)

* Acts 19:11-12 reads: "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them."

Incorrupt and Healing Remains

The bodies of some saints were so sanctified by divine grace during their lives that, even after death, they were preserved from decomposing. In many cases these relics would even exude myrrh or emit a sweet fragrance, physically witnessing to the saint's holiness. The 2nd Century martyr, St Cecilia, is perhaps the first to manifest this gift of incorruptibility. When her body was exhumed at the end of the sixteenth century, it was found to be incorrupt. Her relics still lie in the Church of St Cecilia on the island of Trastevere in the Tiber, reputedly the site of her own home.

The body of St Charbel, the Lebanese hermit who died in 1898, was exhumed after a bright light was seen surrounding his grave for 45 nights after his burial. His body was found to be in perfect condition, although it was floating on mud in the rain-soaked grave. Examined again in 1927 and 1950, the body was found to be free of corruption.

At other times, these signs would recur regularly over the years, perhaps on the saint's feast. The tomb of St Nicholas of Myra, who died in 346, was said to emit a sweet-smelling liquid with healing properties. With the Turkish seizure of Asia Minor in the eleventh century, the relics were taken to Bari in Italy and placed in a new marble tomb. The same phenomenon began to take place at this tomb and has continued to this day.

Healing through the relics of the Saints is perhaps best illustrated in the case of St Nectarios of Aegina, a saintly hierarch who died of prostate cancer in an Athens charity hospital in 1920. In the next bed, was a man who had been paralyzed for many years. As soon as the Metropolitan expired, a nurse and a nun who had cared for him began preparing his body for burial. They removed the old sweater he was wearing and placed it on the bed of the paralyzed man to get it out of the way. As they continued preparing the saint's body, the paralyzed man began gaining strength and arose from his bed, healthy, glorifying God who had healed him in this way, the first of countless healings attributed to the intercession of St Nectarios. The room where he died was filled with such a powerful fragrance that it could not be used for patients. It is now a shrine to the saint.

Relics in Our Church

Relics play an important role in our Church, because they point to one of the most basic beliefs mentioned in the Creed, the ultimate resurrection of all flesh in the age to come. Many churches have fragments of relics from the bodies or garments of the Saints. They may be encased in reliquaries or embedded in icons for veneration. Icons are also encased in the holy tables of consecrated churches, a reminder of the first centuries when the Liturgy was frequently served at martyrs' graves. In the Byzantine Churches, such relics are sewn into each antimimension placed under the chalice and diskos during the Divine Liturgy. Thus, every Liturgy is served over the remains or belongings of a saint.

Today's Readings:

The Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1: 10-14; 2: 1-4)

You in the beginning, O Lord, did found the earth, and the heavens are works of your hands. They shall perish, but you shall continue; and they shall all grow old as does a garment, and as clothing shall you change them, and they shall be changed. But you are the same, and your years shall not fail (Ps. 101: 26-28)

Now, to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool at your feet" (Ps. 109: 1)? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation?

That is why we should all the more earnestly observe the things we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard it.

الرسالة (عبرانيين 1: 10 الى 2 : 3)

أنت أيها الرب في البدء أسست الارض، والسموات هي صنع يديك. هي تزول وأنت تبقى، وكلها تبلى كالثوب، وتطويها كالرداء فتتغير، وأنت أنت، وسنوك لن تقنى. ولمن من الملائكة قال قط: اجلس عن يميني حتى أجعل أعداءك موطناً لقدميك؟ أليسوا جميعهم أرواحاً خادمة، مرسلّة لخدمته من أجل المزمعين أن يرثوا الخلاص؟ فذلك يجب علينا أن نتنبّه إلى ما سمعناه غاية التنبّه، لئلا نبتعد عنه. فإنها إن كانت الكلمة التي نُطِقَ بها على ألسنه الملائكة قد ثبتت، وكلُّ تعديٍّ ومعصيةٍ قد نالَ جزاءً عادلاً، فكيف نُفِيتُ نحن إن أهملنا خلاصاً عظيماً كهذا قد نُطِقَ به على لسانِ الربِّ أولاً، ثم تَبَّته لنا الذين سمعوه.



The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark, the Evangelist (Mark 2:1-12)

At that time Jesus entered Capernaum, and it was reported that he was at home. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even around the door. And he spoke the word to them.

And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four. And since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and, having made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the Paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Now some of the Scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man blaspheme in this way? Who can forgive sins, beside God?" And at once Jesus, knowing in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, "Why are you arguing these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet, and walk?'"

"But that you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — "I say to you, arise, take up your pallet, and go to your house," And immediately he arose and, taking up his pallet, went forth in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "Never did we see anything like this!"

انجيل الاحد الثاني من الصوم

(مرقس 2 : 1 - 12)

في ذلك الزمان، دخل يسوع كفرناحوم. وسمع أنه في بيت، ففي الحال اجتمع خلق كثير بحيث لم يبق موضع يسع ولا عند الباب، وكان يخاطبهم بالكلمة. فأتوا اليه بمخلع يحمله أربعة. وإذا لم يقدرُوا أن يقربوا اليه بسبب الجمع، كشفوا السقف حيث كان، وبعد ما نقبوه دُلُّوا الفراش الذي كان المخلع مضطجعا عليه. فلما رأى يسوع إيمانهم قال للمخلع: يا بني مغفورة لك خطاياك. وكان قوم من الكتبة جالسين هناك يفكرون في قلوبهم: ما بال هذا يتكلم هكذا بالتجديف؟ من يقدر أن يغفر الخطايا إلا الله وحده؟ فللوقت علم يسوع بروحه انهم يفكرون هكذا في أنفسهم. فقال لهم: لماذا تفكرون بهذا في قلوبكم؟ ما الايسر: أن يقال للمخلع مغفورة لك خطاياك. أم أن يقال قم احمل فراشك وامشي؟ ولكن لكي تعلموا ان ابن الانسان له سلطان على الارض ان يغفر الخطايا، قال للمخلع: لك أقول قم احمل فراشك واذهب الى بيتك. فقام للوقت وحمل فراشه وخرج أمام الجميع، حتى دُهِشوا كلهم ومجدوا الله قائلين: ما رأينا قط مثل هذا.

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Donna Andruskiewicz, Olivia Aragon, Paul Archambeault, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Sarah Dagher, Bishop John Elya, Sher Farrow, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, John Gallagher, Marguerite Ganem, Mary Ann Garvey, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Laurice Haddad, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Eileen Kennedy, Leila Khoury, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Label, Haley Lesmerises, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Ramona Matias, Susan Merrill, Maria Moser, Joanne Nader, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Raymond Nehme, Samira Nehme, Steve Notter, Steven O'Leary, Ellen Osgood, Josephine Paquette, MaryJo Pond, Sheila Quinn, Susan Quintal, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvias, Raymond Sherburne, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, George Webber, Martha Webber, Marilyn Whitmore, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.



  <p>Joe Ashooh, Agent 297 South Willow St Manchester, NH 03103 603-624-1000 www.joesthere.com</p> <p>Providing Insurance and Financial Services Call us for a free quote</p>	<p>NORTH HILLS REALTY GROUP, LLC <i>Residential Real Estate Brokers</i> Abraham Dagher, Realtor 814 Elm St., Suite # 302 Manchester, NH 03101 (603) 629-9988</p>	 <p>Chuck Stephen 814 Elm Street, Suite 503 Manchester, NH 03101 Tel # 603.606.3391 Toll Free 866.491.9675 chuck@glenwoodinvestment.com www.glenwoodinvestment.com</p> <p>Glenwood Investment Group <i>“Grow and protect your hard-earned wealth”</i></p>
<p>THE STEPHEN GROUP</p> <p>814 Elm Street, Suite 309 Manchester, NH 03101 Office 603.625.8825 Cell 603.419.9592</p> <p>JOHN STEPHEN <i>Managing Partner</i> jstephen@stephengroupinc.com www.stephengroupinc.com</p>		 <p>Stephen LAW GROUP P.L.L.C.</p> <p>Robert Stephen, Attorney at Law 582 Chestnut Street Manchester, NH 03104 phone 603-663-1007 www.StephenLaw.com</p>
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