

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rejoice in the Great Fast by Dn. David Smith

THIS WINTER has given many of us “snow days”—days of grace and contemplation because of a winter storm, when life is “forced” providentially to slow down and our agendas compelled to yield to the greater work of God. It is an opportunity granted to us for refreshment if we but step into it and receive it with faith, hope, and love as God’s gift.

Such is Great Lent, the Great Fast. We have entered into this providential season of contemplation and of grace: of prayer and of fasting and of almsgiving. Like the other fasts, this one is afforded to us by the Church for our renewal through the personal and communal practice of intensified spiritual disciplines. It is the Great Fast, however, because of its more intense rigor, a rigor preceding and leading us into the Resurrection of Christ God, a rigor worthy of the Church’s participation and of the Great and Holy Pascha. It is a holy season and a divinely appointed opportunity for our spiritual renewal and reclamation (shades of Ebenezer Scrooge here).

But, the question is: Will we receive this holy season as a gift of utter grace for our salvation or will we bear it, begrudge it, put up with it, tolerate it, resent it, and not find joy in the salvation it offers us? May we not forget last month’s parable of the elder brother of the prodigal son (*Luke 15:11-32*). It is the younger brother, the prodigal, who tends to get our attention and limelight. (Pesky younger siblings and troublemakers tend to!)

However, this parable of our Lord is just as much about the older brother as it is about the younger. It is a sad commentary that the elder—and obviously, more responsible—sibling could not rejoice in the return of the family’s black sheep to the fold. Perhaps it takes the heart of a father to thoroughly bask in such a return or repentance.

But, at the same time, it certainly is not out of the question for such joy to be shared by all in the family, including the dutiful older brother. Sadly, despite never leaving the family estate and the preserve of his father, the dutiful elder son of the family could not tolerate such wasteful extravagance on someone who had obviously failed and proven his unworthiness!

Sadly, having served faithfully his father “these many years,” going about his father’s business each and every day without so much as a request, the elder son, loved dearly by his father, had lost the joy (*I wonder, did he ever have it?*) of being a part of the family, of celebrating the fact that he was the son of so loving and forgiving a father as his. It is so very easy to “neglect [the joy] of so great a salvation” (*Heb. 2:3*) when we get focused solely on our fulfilling of “obligations” and start comparing ourselves to others who may not be living up to our standards. Insidiously, the old devil turns our attention from whence we have come and saps our hearts of the joy of being made sons and daughters of our heavenly Father by Whose utter grace “we live, and move, and have our [very] being” (*Acts 17:28*)

(continued, see REJOICE, last page)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
119 S. Sparks Street
State College, PA 16801

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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers**
March 2	E. George & M. Stevens* (<i>Blini</i>)	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	B. Haupt and M. Fedkin	Team A
March 9	C. Strauss and P. Doy*	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	G. Cattell and R. Patel	Team B
March 16	J. Miranda and L. Radomsky*	M. Thompson and M. Fedkin	H. Torbic and S. Stevens	Team A
March 23	A. Swisher and C. Swisher*	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	M. Fedkin and R. Patel	Team B
March 30	L. Georgiou and H. Torbic*	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	R. Patel and B. Haupt	Team A
April 6	Russian Ladies*	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	S. Stevens and G. Cattell	Team B

* Denotes Fast

**Team A: M. Doy, A. Miranda, N. Peltkan, S. Oleynik, D. Stickers, Jo. Stickers, J. Torbic, and J. Swisher
Team B: J. Cadman, P. Doy, N. McFarland, B. Oleynik, S. Patel, L. Torbic, and Je. Stickers.

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK Digging Out Again?

Digging out: It seems that's all we've done since the "polar vortex" descended upon us in January. Snowfall has been seemingly heavier than usual. The chore of cleaning off driveways, sidewalks, and cars has produced a constant source of stress in homes. We have to get up earlier and dress more warmly and then attempt to drive in less than ideal conditions. When will it end? Is there any point? Do we just give up?

Oddly enough, we can use this winter to help us focus on Lent. The burden of sin is much like the snowfall this year. It seems to keep coming. No matter what we do, there is always more to shovel. Lent becomes the season of digging out, but hopefully not merely to allow another storm to block the paths to our homes, hearts and minds.

By God's grace in the discipline of the Fast, we can keep digging knowing that ultimately spring comes, not merely the temporal season, but the eternal one. Without eyes set on Pascha, it's hard to believe that repenting and attempting to live a more godly, Christ-pleasing life has any real merit. Won't we simply turn around again and find another spiritual "vortex" covering and slowing us down again?

Yet, we know that if we don't dig out of the snow, we will eventually become paralyzed, isolated, locked in our homes with no way out. So too with the Fast, we fast to dig our way out again. As with this winter, we keep digging. There is a point, there is a purpose.

While Pascha doesn't promise the absence of spiritual storm, it does promise hope during foul weather in our souls, and an eternal victory where no storm clouds roll. ■

Also From Father's Desk...

- **Speaking of Snow and Cold,** *I returned home to a comparatively balmy 48° from Anchorage, where it was only 9°. It was a joy to attend the consecration of Bp. David (Mahaffey) to the episcopate and get to see a number of Alaskan friends from Marshall. Our own Fr. James and Mka. Lisa Weremedic were on hand as well. (Fr. James was a layman at HTOC before entering seminary and ordination. He serves in the Diocese of Eastern PA, where he came to know Bishop David very well.)*
- **It was a joy** to surprise Judy Fryncko with a celebration of her ten years of service to the parish with a luncheon at Rotelli's on February 9. Yet that doesn't tell half the story of her dedication to this parish. Even before most of us thought about arriving on this scene, before Holy Trinity was even a mission, when it was only a hope and a prayer, Judy was doing those many unheralded things she always has done, with grace and graciousness. We are truly thankful to have her through it all. We can never thank you enough, Judy!
- **Good News for our Chapel:** *The Archdiocese is drawing up plans to loan money for the construction of a temple in Beavertown. A special parish meeting will be called in May to authorize the transaction.*
- **Meatfare Sunday** marked the start of another HTOC tradition when singers and their families enjoyed a sumptuous spread at the Choir Social held at the Rectory. Not surprisingly, meat played a major role in the potluck entrees.
- **Confession:** *Don't wait until the last minute to make yours during Lent. While those receiving Holy Communion regularly should already be going to confession every month to six weeks, confession during Lent is obligatory for all Orthodox Christians. Confessions will be heard following Saturday Vespers, on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5 p.m., or by appointment. If you need to confess more than once during the Fast, please do not do so more than once on Saturdays out of consideration for others. Confessions are not heard during Holy Week.*

Lenten Drive 2014: Syrian Crisis

The humanitarian crisis in the Middle East has reached epic proportions. Since the Syrian crisis began more than 100,000 people have died and more than 7 million people have been displaced from their homes. This Lent, Holy Trinity's *Matthew 25* ministry is coordinating a drive to help International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) provide critical food aid, home necessities, shelter, and education for Syrian refugees. Your generous donations will help families get the support they need to survive this crisis. A special collection will be received following each Sunday liturgy through April 13.

Volunteer at Housing Transitions

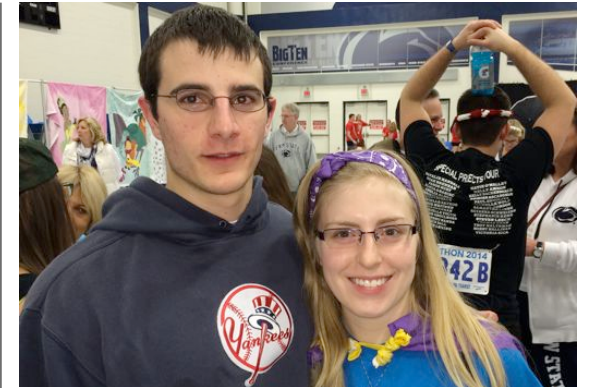
Housing Transitions is a non-profit organization that provides housing, food, clothes and various other services to the people in need in Centre County. Every second Tuesday of the month, volunteers from our church visit the residents (217 E. Nittany Avenue, State College), cook and eat dinner with them. It is a great experience to share family-like time with the residents. If you would like to volunteer please contact Samar Al Maalouf (samaralmaalouf@gmail.com).

A Note from the Parish Council

The Parish Council hopes that every parishioner will give the new offering envelope system a fair chance this year. "We think that this is a good way to increase our weekly and monthly giving," says Chuck Beechan, Council President. If you did not receive offering envelopes for the month of March, please let Laura know at parishoffice@holyltrinity-oca.org.

Diocesan Catechetical Series

The spring term of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Series will meet on Tuesday evenings at the Chancery beginning on March 18, and run through June 3. The 11-week unit will be taught by Fr. Paul Ziatky and focus on church history. Classes are open to anyone; tuition is \$125. Call (724) 776-5555 for details.



\$13.3 Million For the Kids!

Congratulations to Orthodox Christian Fellowship's Evan Bittner and Rachael Krizmanich, the first OCF participants in the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon. They made it through the entire 46 hours, inspiring many to join the fight against pediatric cancer. Donors from Holy Trinity and the Chapel helped OCF raise \$6,633.39 this year, which allowed Evan and Rachael to qualify. Thank you!

Rejoice in the Fast *(cont. from page 1)*

In these holy days of "obligation," the Church invites us to "rejoice and be exceedingly glad" (*Matt. 5:12*) in the midst of the "duty" of our Lenten labors, basking in the sublime reality that we are profoundly loved by God our Father, though unworthy sinners that we are. Through the coming of our true elder Brother, Jesus Christ, in the flesh we have all been made children of the Most High to share in the joy of His Kingdom (*Rom. 14:17-18*). ■

For the Record

BIRTH

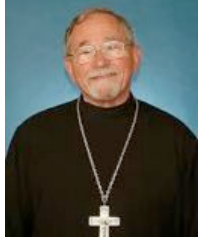
- **Solomiya Stefaniya Golovko**, daughter of **Sergii and Iryna Demko Golovko**, born Feb. 1, measuring 8 lbs. and 21 in. long. **Many years!**

ACHIEVEMENT

- OCF President **John Carpenter**, is one of eight young singers chosen to join the Bavarian State Opera in Munich this year. **Congratulations!**

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

55 Maxims of the Christian Life



This Lent, as we prepare to experience our Lord's Resurrection, Fr. Thomas Hopko has simple, practical advice for leading a Christian life.

1. Be always with Christ.
2. Pray as you can, not as you want.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer that you do by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times a day.
5. Have a short prayer that you constantly repeat when your mind is not occupied with other things.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation.
8. Keep the Church's fasting rules.
9. Spend some time in silence every day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings. Cut them off at the start.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings regularly to a trusted person.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person.
19. Be polite with everyone.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, and a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all, with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, and then forget it.

27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful in all things.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and be attentive.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly and directly.
37. Flee imagination, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, mumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
41. Don't seek or expect praise or pity from anyone.
42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God alone.
46. Accept criticism gratefully but test it critically.
47. Give advice to others only when asked or obligated to do so.
48. Do nothing for anyone that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and with others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, not on sin and darkness.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your own faults and sins peacefully, serenely, because you know that God's mercy is greater than your wretchedness.
54. When you fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear and without shame. ■

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Children are the Church's Present

by Jesse Torbic
and Joelle Rush

Last December, middle school students left Holy Trinity for a middle school retreat at Antiochian Village. At the retreat we had a great time, but also learned about our faith as Orthodox Christians. We also met other middle school aged Orthodox Christians as well as Bishop Thomas.

One idea that we looked at on this retreat was "Children are the *Present* of the Church", not just the future. This means that we are a part of the church from baptism and we should live in the presence of God. Another thing we talked about at the retreat was not only how to be a Christian inside the Church, but also outside the Church. We discussed how the Church isn't only a building; it is a world we live in, and that we have a toolbox that God has provided us with. In it are things such as faith, the Church, the Bible, and saints.

Another topic we discussed is how we dedicate ourselves to Christ. The kids were split into six different groups. We were all assigned a saint to learn about. An example of one of these saints was the Theotokos. She gave her life to Christ at about the age of 14. Other examples were Faith, Hope, and Love, who in a time of trouble, always believed in their faith. They gave their lives to Christ at about the ages of 9, 12, and 14. A third topic that was discussed was that we should love ourselves, but not be in love with ourselves. We should love ourselves because we are God's creation.

Alongside of having discussions, we did many other activities including sledding and playing in the snow, playing four-square, having a bonfire, singing Christmas carols, making cinnamon flavored apples, assembling hygiene kits for charity, and other team building activities that required us to interact with other people outside of our church parish.

Extra Scoops

Children Sing Unto the Lord

This spring our younger children (second grade and older) will begin to meet under the direction of Zach Mandell. The singers will meet prior to Vespers on selected Saturday evenings beginning at 5:15 p.m. (see the calendar for dates) and they will be learning simple settings for various hymns. Hopefully, with practice and encouragement, we will hear their voices being "lifted up" in unison during the Divine Services soon.

On Another Note

In the coming months, our children will participate at an increased level in various Church duties such as being greeters, reading Scripture at Vespers and the Liturgy, and taking up the collection. Please encourage our children in these efforts.

—Dn. Mark Oleynik

Along with spending time with others, Bishop Thomas was there as well. He talked to us about always following God and not making excuses to skip church and church activities; that church is a feast we should take advantage of. In the sermon on Sunday, he talked about being in time-out, which means that we need to take a break and look at our faith.

On the drive back from the retreat we asked everyone what their favorite part was and what they took out of this weekend. Nick McFarland quoted, "It was fun to hang out with my friends and make more friends." "I learned you have to be yourself all the time," said Nicholas Siewers. "I learned you have to believe in your faith," stated Anna Abashidze. "The church isn't only a building," Lauren Torbic said. "My favorite part was sledding and making a ramp for the sleds," said Ben Oleynik. ■

Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College unless where noted.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Confessions are also heard Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:00 p.m. during Great Lent.</i></p> <p><i>To receive Communion on a weeknight, at a minimum, fast from all food and drink beginning at noon.</i></p>						March 1 Great Vespers, 6pm
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare) Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Blini Luncheon, 12pm Forgiveness Vespers, 7pm Penn State OCF National Day of Prayer Service, 9pm	LENT BEGINS Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, 7pm	Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, 7pm	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	Penn State OCF: "Stay to Pray" Dinner 6pm @ <i>Holy Trinity</i> Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, 7pm	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	St. Theodore of Tyre Hours, 8:40am Memorial Divine Liturgy, 9am Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sunday of Orthodoxy Matins, 9am (No Sunday School) Divine Liturgy, 10am Children's Icon Procession, 11:45am Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, 3pm @ <i>Christ the Savior Cathedral, Johnstown</i>		Homeless Shelter Ministry, 4pm @ <i>Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave., State College</i> Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	Memorial Saturday Divine Liturgy, 9am Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 9am Sunday School "Soup-er" Sunday Prep. 4pm Great Vespers/Conf. 6pm
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
St. Gregory Palamas Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am "Soup-er" Sunday Luncheon, 12pm Choir Rehearsal, 1pm Deanery Vespers, 4pm @ <i>St. Mary's Church, Osceola Mills</i>	Penn State OCF Executive Committee Mtg., 7pm @ <i>W. College Ave. Starbucks</i>	Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center</i>	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	Children's Choir Rehearsal, 5:15pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Veneration of the Cross Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Choir Rehearsal, 12:15pm Archdiocesan Vespers, 5pm @ <i>St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park</i>	Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS Confessions 5:30pm Great Vespers/Divine Liturgy, 6pm	Synaxis of the Theotokos Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	Penn State OCF: Stump the Priest Night, 6pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center</i>	OCF Mission Trip to NJ (through Sunday)	
30	31	April 1	2	3	4	5
St. John Climacus Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Parents' Meeting, 12:15pm Deanery Vespers, 4pm @ <i>Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Beavertown</i>	Choir Rehearsal, 7pm.	Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center</i>	Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Akathist, 7:45pm	Annual Parish Work Day, 9am-12:30pm Children's Choir Rehearsal, 5:15pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions

Chapel Calendar

All events take place at 350 Old Orchard Road in Beavertown unless where noted.

Saturday 1	Sunday 16
Great Vespers, 6pm	St. Gregory Palamas Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am Book Study on the Prayer of St. Ephrem, 6pm
Sunday 2	Tuesday 18
Forgiveness Sunday Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am Forgiveness Vespers, 1pm	Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave. (Lyter Residence)
Thursday 6	Friday 21
Great Canon of St. Andrew, 6:30pm @ <i>Bucknell Univ. (Bucknell Hall)</i>	Akathist, 6:30pm @ <i>Bucknell University (Bucknell Hall)</i>
Friday 7	Sunday 23
Akathist, 6:30pm	Veneration of the Cross Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am Book Study on the Prayer of St. Ephrem, 6pm
Sunday 9	Friday 28
Sunday of Orthodoxy Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am	Akathist, 6:30pm
Tuesday 11	Saturday 29
Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave. (Lyter Residence)	Great Vespers, 6pm
Friday 14	Sunday 30
Akathist, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave. (Lyter Residence)	St. John Climacus Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am Deanery Vespers with Hospitality Reception 4pm
Saturday 15	
Great Vespers, 6pm	

March 2014