

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Get Busy: Answering God’s Call to Serve

One never really begins to understand or appreciate something until he or she is willing to give something for it. This is especially true regarding the Church. We can fully learn the finest way of life when we give to God the gifts of time, effort, service, money, or anything that costs us something.

Although it is important to give from all of the things that we possess, we should always consider our gift of service. What service have I rendered God? What have I done for Him? What work can I do in the Kingdom of God?

First, let’s clear away certain misconceptions which often arise. The chief of these is typified by the question, “Why call on me? I have a lot to do. Why not get somebody who is doing nothing?” The other is expressed by the statement, “I don’t have the ability.”

Look at Moses. He was a great and capable man but never knew it. God called him; He protested. One objection after another was raised. But Moses forgot something of prime importance—God. God answered, “Take off your shoes. Recognize Me. What difference does it make if you cannot speak well; Aaron can speak for you. Go.” (Exodus 3:1-4:17)

There was Isaiah. “O Lord,” he said, “I am a man of unclean lips.” “But,” said God, “I can clean them.” So the argument continued until he took God into his heart and soul. (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Great Summertime Tips For the Entire Family

As our thoughts turn towards warm days and vacations, there are still plenty of opportunities to help your family grow in Christ this summer. Here are some ideas:

- *If you’re traveling out of town, use the Web site orthodoxyinamerica.org to locate a nearby Orthodox parish and attend the Liturgy there. Take an opportunity to compare the similarities and differences in the celebration of the services, architecture, local traditions, etc.*
- *Visit a monastery. When children see monks and nuns showing obedience and humility, cheerfully serving others, and spending long, joyous hours in prayer, they better understand how our Faith can be lived every day.*
- *If your child is going away to camp or a friend’s house for a few days include a small icon, prayer book and/or Bible. Exhort them to maintain your family prayer routine while away.*
- *Make a commitment to your children to teach them a least one new prayer or hymn.*
- *Remember the Dormition Fast (August 1–14).*
- *Place a list on the refrigerator, as a reminder to yourself and your children, of special deeds to do for others throughout the summer.*
- *Teach your child about the life of one saint – their patron saint, your patron saint, a family saint, a “new” saint, an American saint, etc.*

(continued—see GET BUSY!, page 2)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
July 11	Russian Ladies	Melody Thompson & Mark Fedkin	Team B
July 18	Elaine Stewart and Dee Patel	Megan Leathers & David Swisher	Team A
July 25	Julianne Vaughan and Beth Roberts	Beth Roberts & Ed Miranda	Team B
August 1	Anne Swisher and Corene Swisher	Rachael Cattell and Andy Symes	Team A
August 8	Ellen George	Leslyn & Mark Radomsky	Team B
August 15	Anne-Therese Pelikan and Cathy Nemtsov	Melody Thompson & Mark Fedkin	Team A

* Team A: C. Doty, N. Fedkin, M. Haupt, A. Miranda, S. Olevnik., and Jo. Stickers
 Team B: J. Cattell, M. Doty, P. Doty, J. Miranda, S. Pelikan, and Je. Stickers.

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP Get Busy! *(continued from page 1)*

There is the crux of the whole matter. It is not in the latent ability of man that his successful service consists, but in his relationship with God. This is fundamental. The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy! God is in my heart; I cannot be still.

Now regarding the first objection (“Get someone who is not so busy”), understand that God does not call the lazy. Lazy people are always looking for someone else to do something for him or her. But busy people want to do things. Examine the Bible and consider those whom God called to follow Him: Moses was busy with the flock at Horeb. Gideon was busy threshing wheat. Saul was searching for his father’s beasts. David was caring for his father’s flocks. Peter and Andrew were fishing. James and John were mending nets. Matthew was collecting taxes.

When Jesus sought workers He went to the busy marts of trade and toil to find followers and leaders then prepared them for the task ahead. As our forefathers and fathers worked so we work and we will do well by teaching our children to serve—especially through our good example.

Yes, God and the Church are calling all of us to serve Him. Let’s all get busy!
- Dn. Mark

Holy Trinity Church Health Team Forms

On Saturday, June 26, Holy Trinity kicked off an 18-month program of comprehensive strategic planning and evaluation of parish ministries with a daylong workshop led by Orthodox Natural Church Development coach Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff. Participants learned about the quality areas that contribute to the overall strength of a parish, then

Extra “Scoops”

GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS NEEDED

Our Sunday School asks you to consider becoming a teacher in our program. Teaching the Word of God is essential to Church life, and, as the Church, we should not want to miss any opportunity to aid our children.

What does it take to be a teacher? It takes a love of God and His children, a passion for His Word, good listening and speaking skills, some time each week for preparation, and patience. In return, you receive many blessings, including a sense of fulfillment in knowing that what you impart to each child is not just for today or tomorrow, but also for eternity.

So why not you this year? Even if you answered the Call years ago or couldn’t make a commitment before, consider doing so now. God has given each of us talents—it’s up to us to ensure that we use what He has entrusted to us so that we also may hear the words, “well done good and faithful servant.”

LOOKING AHEAD

- *Vacation Bible School (VBS) takes place August 16-20 from 9 a.m. to noon for ages 4-14. The all-new curriculum developed exclusively for Holy Trinity follows the life of St. Herman and is packed with songs, crafts, games, and more.*
- *In appreciation for our children and parents, our Sunday School is sponsoring a trip to Lancaster to see the play “Joseph” and to tour a life-size reproduction of Moses’ Tabernacle. It is tentatively planned for the last week of August.*
- *The first day of Sunday School this Fall is September 12. Mark your calendars!*

nominated a six-member Church Health Team that will be responsible for analyzing our standing in each of these areas. This team plans to survey ministry heads in mid-August and will guide the parish as a whole in discussing the results of the study through lay- and clergy-led focus groups that will take place in the Fall.

Former Parishioner to Become Long-Term Missionary

Maria Roeber, a former member of Holy Trinity and Penn State alumna (B.S., Nursing, 2004), was recently accepted as a long-term missionary candidate with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) in St. Augustine, Florida. She will provide health care to the people of Bukoba, Tanzania for a two-year term beginning as early as January 2011.

Maria will continue her work as a Labor and Delivery Nurse at Georgetown University Hospital in the greater Washington, D.C. area while building a support team composed of people and parishes who will pray regularly for her and/or support her financially. She has previously studied abroad in Greece and participated on an OCMC Health Care Team to Uganda. In May, Maria also completed OCMC’s New Candidate Orientation, a training program for newly accepted long-term missionary candidates.

Pool Party Postponed

The swimming party hosted by the Miranda family that was originally scheduled for this Saturday, July 8 has been postponed because of unplanned maintenance. Check the Sunday Parish Bulletin or our weekly *This Week* email for rescheduling information. Not yet a member of our emailing list? Contact Dn. Alex at dnalex@holytrinity-oca.org.

Iconographer Scheduled

Master iconographer Dmitry Shkolnik and an associate will travel to State College on July 26 to install all the icons of Christ, Theotokos, Ss. Stephen and Romanos, the Annunciation, and the Four Evangelists on our iconostasis as well as a large mural of the *Platytera* (featuring the Theotokos and Christ as a child) in the apse (blue painted area) above the altar. Work will be completed by Great Vespers on July 31.

Archdiocese Sponsors Summer Fellowship Activities

The Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania is providing several opportunities for fellowship in the upcoming months. **Orthodox Day at PNC Park** will be held July 20 at 7:05 p.m., as the Pittsburgh Pirates take on the Milwaukee Brewers. The cost is \$32. For more information, contact Jay Schultz at jpsvw@comcast.net.

All of the children of the Archdiocese are also invited to participate in an overnighter on Friday, September 3 at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh. This experience includes an Omnimax movie, Laser Show, planetarium show, submarine tour, and full access to *SportsWorks*. Chaperones will be provided for all children between the ages of 10 and 17 years of age who are attending the event (those under 10 must be accompanied by a parent or designated guardian). The event fee is \$45. See Deacon Mark for more details.

Coffee Hour Looking for Volunteers for New Rotation

Thank you to everyone who donates their time and talents to make Holy Trinity’s Coffee Hour such a success. We are looking for more people to join our next rotation, which begins in September. If you would like to learn how you can partner with this invaluable ministry of hospitality, please see or contact Ellen George (emg7@psu.edu).

For the Record

CATECHUMENS

- *Andrew Symes enrolled in the Holy Catechumenate on June 20.*
- *Jay (Benjamin), Laura, Joelle, and Julia Rush enrolled in the Holy Catechumenate on June 27*
- *Earl Lyter, enrolled in the Holy Catechumenate on July 4.*

■ ORTHODOX CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Developing Your Personal Christian Life

Since all mission efforts must begin with us, as individuals and families, we must develop our personal Christian life. Prayer, of course, is the first component of that life. Absent this regular conversation with God with an emphasis on listening rather than talking, we find our spiritual lives dry and barren. Our hearts become hardened. Our spiritual eyes become blind. Our judgment becomes worldly, interested more in outward, numerical signs of success rather than on becoming healthy Christians. But what else makes up the personal Christian life?

The next component is in being a regular member of the Christian community, attending frequently, with an emphasis on participation in our Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Just think about Christ's own words:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world... Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you (John 6:51, 53).

We receive life only from our participation in the living bread. If we are not present to partake of it, we wither.

We produce fruit only in connection with Christ:

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:4-6).

Taking these things together, we cannot expect to thrive as Christians if we are cut off from Life himself. If we are not producing fruit ourselves, our efforts to spread the Gospel will not yield fruit either. (Can you name a situation in Scripture where a neglected spiritual life yielded fruit before repentance and the end of the neglect?)



CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A MINISTRY OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

We also have to consider that being present for worship (including services beyond Sunday morning) is an essential form of prayer. If our discipline of personal prayer shapes us in one way, our discipline of communal prayer in worship shapes us in another.

Communal prayer directs us to the common life in Christ, in contrast to the individual concerns of personal prayer. Both work to form us in Christ, pruning our "branches" to produce more fruit—in our own lives and in the lives of others.

Regular prayer and regular participation in Communion are thus central to our mission-building efforts. The results are not instantaneous. As a mission building "program," neither of them offers a silver bullet.

What they do offer is the foundation of personal growth that, ultimately, leads to our growth as a Christian community. Each one of us is part of the larger whole. If one of us suffers, so does the body. But if many of us grow, stronger and healthier, so does the body. (1 Cor. 12:26) That's mission at work!

- Fr. Basil

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Thoughts During Prayer

by St. Isaac the Syrian

When you are in prayer, do not ask to be entirely free of mental wandering, which is impossible, but seek to wander following something that is good. For even pure prayer consists in a wandering which follows something—but this wandering is excellent, seeing that the search for something good is excellent.

Wandering is bad when someone is distracted by empty thoughts or by pondering on something bad, and so he thinks evil thoughts when he is praying to God.

Wandering is good when the mind wanders on God during the entire extent of his prayer, on God's glory and majesty, stemming from a recollection of the Scriptures, from an understanding of the divine utterances and holy words of the Spirit. For we do not consider as alien to purity of prayer and detrimental to recollection of thoughts in prayer any profitable recollection that may spring up from the Writings of the Spirit, resulting in insights and spiritual understanding of the divine world during the time of prayer.

■ NEWS & NOTES

The Orthodox Church Beyond Our Parish

MEETING AT THE RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY
MOSCOW, RUSSIA – Archpriest John M. Reeves had an opportunity to visit the Russian Bible Society here to see first hand how approximately \$65,000 in donations through the Orthodox Church in America funded the publication of 7,000 Bibles, translated for the first time into the Chuvash language. He expressed his satisfaction in the way the funds from the OCA were utilized and thanked the society's director for carefully following the guidelines set forth when the funds were first transferred.

For someone to examine and think in a recollected manner about the object of his supplication and the request of his prayer is an excellent kind of prayer, provided it is consistent with the intention of the Lord's commandment. This kind of recollection of the mind is very good.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article appears courtesy of the Preachers Institute (preachersinstitute.com).*

A Nun at Last!

She is one of the newest nuns at All Saints Greek Orthodox Monastery in Calverton, NY, and, at 92, the oldest. Chrystalla Petropoulou recently received her black habit, fulfilling a longtime dream that had been delayed by life challenges and health problems. Her new religious name: Sister Patience. "She can't do physical work," Abbess Soteini, head of the monastery, says of her charge, who sat in a wheelchair during the induction ceremony. "But what she offers is to spend days in prayer and reading the Bible and hymns of the church. In that way, she offers something to God and to us."

— Reported by Mike Tucker, *AARP Bulletin*

Fr. John's stop here is just one of many on his four-month pilgrimage across Russia to Alaska. You can read more about his journey by visiting frjohn.holytrinity-oca.org.

ORTHODOX EDUCATION DAY SCHEDULED
CRESTWOOD, NEW YORK – St. Vladimir's Seminary's annual open house, Orthodox Education Day, will feature Alaskan missions and cultural expert Archpriest Michael Oleksa as the keynote speaker. The event's theme is "Many Cultures, One Faith," and will take place on Saturday, October 2.

