

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Parish Resoundingly Supports Chapel

We took a remarkable step this past Sunday, voting with no dissent (and one abstention) to purchase property for our Snyder County Outreach, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. It was an affirmation of a core value we have had since our inception: we do not exist merely to minister to ourselves and the immediate community: Our church exists to build up the Church beyond our parish.

Your overwhelming vote of confidence for our Beavertown brethren allows the Chapel to close on a 0.55-acre tract of land that will become an active base of ministry in due time. Strategic planning is already underway to expand outreach opportunities in order to facilitate construction of a permanent building. In fact, earlier this week, on the very day a team from the Chapel completed an intensive two-day church planting workshop, Holy Trinity surpassed its \$9,000 fundraising goal. When added to offerings from the Chapel proper, these generous donations ensure that enough money is available for both the land and closing costs (approximately \$42,000 in all), while keeping funds in reserve for future expenses.

The Chapel forms an integral part of Holy Trinity's life, providing sacramental ministry for the over ten percent of our parish that lives as far away as Lewisburg and Selinsgrove. In England, such an arrangement would be known as a chapel-of-ease, providing pastoral care and service to people living at some distance from the parish church.

Currently, the Chapel meets in the home of Dave and Brenda Smith in Beavertown, but space has become a problem attempting to accommodate more worshippers. Attendance averages between 25 and 30 on the Sundays when the Divine Liturgy is held.

Since 2009, Fr. Basil has been serving the Chapel as priest-in-charge, increasing services from only one vespers per month to two liturgies and two vespers per month. Additional services are forecast for the not distant future.

Special thanks to everyone who have contributed so sacrificially to this effort, as well as to those State College residents who take turns traveling to help the Chapel learn all the "ins-and-outs" of Orthodox liturgical life, especially Dr. Bob Roberts and members of the Holy Trinity Choir.

- Fr. John



Fr. John trains Chapel members at "Boot Camp," a church planting workshop currently being resurrected in the OCA.

Photo Credit: Brenda Smith

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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
August 7	Melody Thompson and Jean Miranda	Ben Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B
August 14	Mat. Jennifer Gadsman and Judy Fyncko	Leslyn and Mark Radomsky	Team A
August 21	Holly Torbic and Diana Van Duijn	Melody Thompson and Mark Fedlin	Team B
August 28	Bob Schrauf and Leslyn Radomsky	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team A
September 4	Russian Ladies	Ben Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B
September 11	Elen George and Maria Stevens	Leslyn and Mark Radomsky	Team A

* Team A: C. Dory, N. Fedlin, M. Haupt, A. Miranda, N. Peltan, S. Olynek, D. Seckler, and Jo. Stocker
 Team B: J. Capell, M. Dory, P. Dory, J. Miranda, B. Olynek, S. Peltan, and Jo. Stocker.

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Take a Little Honey With You

by Deacon Mark Oleynik

The words “take...a little honey” were spoken by Jacob when he instructed his sons to go and buy more grain from the Egyptian government (*Gen. 43:11*). One of his sons, Judah, reminded him that the prime minister (actually Joseph, Jacob’s own son) had solemnly warned the brothers on their last visit, “You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you” (*Gen. 43:5*). Jacob reluctantly agreed, and then suggested improving “public relations” with the powerful Egyptian prime minister by taking him presents. In addition to choice fruits, Jacob also instructed them to take some honey.

Of course, Jacob meant the delicious product produced by honeybees. Now it stands for using a pleasing approach, a sincere compliment. So often we are grim with the corners of our mouth turned down—worried and concerned about the next thing, whatever it may be. But there are wondrous things a smile, an appreciative word, or an encouraging message can accomplish.

For all of us, there is power in our manner and words. What is the power? It is the right glance, the right touch, the right word. Things like these make us joyful. It is a wonder why they are sometimes forgotten.

As parents, spouses, and friends we are to see the image of Christ in **everyone** we encounter. Take some honey with you when your child doesn’t clean his room as you wish, or when your spouse is running late, or when you see a friend struggling, or when a child misbehaves but perhaps is just acting her age. By doing so, we can approach a situation with a proper attitude and frame of mind—to make it better, to make it sweeter.

Extra “Scoops”

GOAL SETTING

Have you set and achieved any of your summer goals? It’s still not too late to study a book of the Bible, perform a charity project or do something special for the needy, memorize an entire Psalm (or a couple), or attend a full cycle of services for an entire week or two.

A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN

We are blessed to have a growing Sunday School. In order to accommodate this, we also need a growing staff. Last year we introduced a new class level (a separate class for grades 2-5). If possible, we would like to add one more class to allow for more focused instruction in the elementary grades. For each class, we really need to have at least two teachers to share the responsibility and workload, provide coverage when one teacher is away, and promote creativity and synergy among the teams. If you would like to be part of the Church School staff and grow your faith, please see Deacon Mark. Our first teachers’ meeting of the school year will be on Saturday, August 27, at 5 p.m.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Our first day is September 11. We will start the year with special prayers for all of our students and teachers for the beginning of instruction. Parents of returning students will receive information by e-mail; new students can be registered beginning August 21 following the Divine Liturgy.

Jesus must have been the best of company. The people loved having Him at weddings, and the children ran to Him and climbed on His knees. He took the little children into His arms. He said encouraging words, whenever He could. He was certainly the Sweetness of life.

So in all your encounters with your children and others, take a little honey with you. ■

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Where True Beauty is Found

by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

At the end of June, a group of men from Holy Trinity went to a presentation on Orthodox architecture at the St. Vladimir’s Seminary in New York. The presentation was led by Mr. Andrew Gould, an Orthodox designer of church buildings and furnishings. (You can learn more about him and his work at <http://newworldbyzantine.com>.) Attending in anticipation of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit’s building of a church in Snyder County, we went without knowing entirely what to expect.

Mr. Gould’s presentation was an extended virtual tour of Orthodox churches from antiquity to the modern day. There was no one shape or size that was more “right” than the others. Each one was a product of faith, history, and the needs of the community and place. Whether marble, masonry, stucco, or wood, each one reflected the best that the faithful could give. Mr. Gould showed the attention that was given even to the small details found in all of his examples: The idea that one would create a makeshift or patchwork structure just to get by was notably absent in all of them.

In listening to the presentation, I couldn’t help but recall the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness: “the children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the Lord, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring material for all kinds of work which the Lord, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done” (*cf. Ex. 3:4-29*).

In our time, we often marvel at the construction of Orthodox churches in the old world, and even those constructed decades ago here in North America. We wonder how we could ever hope to construct something similarly enduring and beautiful in this early 21st-century America. Land is ever more expensive, especially in areas with

growing populations. Building materials cost more, too. The tradesmen and artisans who do the work must charge more today than they did “back then.” Numerous regulations lead to still more expense. The dollar signs overwhelm us.

In spite of this we must consider our own situation. We must also ask ourselves about our own family incomes relative to those of the faithful who built so many of the beautiful Orthodox churches, large and small, here in America in the past two centuries. How did they build while having so little in comparison, without an emperor or government to help, and lacking so many of our “essentials”?

Mr. Gould’s presentation led all of us to think about these things, but he cautioned that beauty need not be extravagant or excessively expensive. Rather, true beauty comes from a structure and adornment that reflect the genuine self-giving and care of a prayerful and believing Orthodox community. Our Chapel of the Holy Spirit will, of course, be considering all of this very soon. Our prayer should be that our hearts, like those of the Israelites, would be stirred for the proclamation of Christ’s Gospel in word and deed as well as beauty and grace. ■



Designer Andrew Gould explains the intricacies of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Read more at svots.edu/headlines.

■ NEWS & NOTES

The Orthodox Church Beyond Our Parish

Meteorologists Fail to Explain Descending Cloud on Place of the Lord's Transfiguration



ISRAEL [via *Interfax*] – Science cannot explain a mystery of a cloud that every year descends on the Mount Tabor where, according to the Bible, the Transfiguration of the Lord took place.

According to Sergey Mirov, a participant in the research organized by the working group on miraculous signs at the Synodal Theological Commission, Russian and Israeli meteorologists concluded that fog cannot be generated in such dry air and temperature.

Mirov stressed that the “descending of the blessed cloud” takes place only in the territory of the Orthodox monastery. He said that during the Feast of the Transfiguration, the cloud appears above the cross of the church. It then grows and descends on believers, covering them and pouring life-giving moisture over them.

Mirov's group also examined the Holy Fire at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem with the help of modern, highly accurate equipment. The lead scientist, Russian Academy of Natural Sciences academician Pavel Florensky, found that the

appearance of fire there is accompanied with a “powerful piezoelectrical phenomenon” similar to those that take place during thunderstorms. But since no storm was present at the time, “this event can be considered miraculous,” he believes.

AGAPE GRANTS TO ASSIST MINISTRIES IN EIGHT COUNTRIES THIS YEAR

UGANDA – Missionaries now have effective malaria medicine to prescribe to more than 4,000 people here because of a 2011 grant provided by the Agape Canister Program, an outreach of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC).

So far in 2011, this philanthropic and development outreach program has assisted nine projects in eight countries. Nearly 200 active partners, including Holy Trinity, oversee approximately 1,000 plastic canisters placed in offices, restaurants, parishes, and businesses throughout the United States and Canada. You can contribute by placing your spare change in the canister in the Parish Hall.

RUSSIA GETS READY TO SLAP WARNING LABELS ON ABORTION ADS

MOSCOW [via *LifeSiteNews.com*] – The Russian Federation is poised to enact a new law requiring abortion advertisements to include warnings explaining the associated health risks. Once passed, President Dmitry Medvedev will likely sign the bill.

Pro-life legislation rolling back Russia's abortion culture (as many as 6 million abortions occur annually here) has been strongly championed by the Orthodox Church. Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia urged the government to make “preservation of pregnancy a priority task for the doctor” and discourage incentives for abortion. He also advocated state support for pro-motherhood media campaigns and crisis pregnancy centers.

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Why Fast for Dormition? by Daniel Manzuk

So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch.

It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church...gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt.

Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or

other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ's retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it.

Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article originally appeared in the June 2008 edition of The Word magazine and is featured here with the permission of the author.*

Back-to-School Drive Kicks Off

Each year, Holy Trinity provides school supplies for underprivileged children through *Matthew 25*. Monetary donations are especially appreciated since we purchase all outstanding items for our forty-plus sponsored children. Contributions will be accepted through Sunday, August 21. Visit holytrinity-oca.org to learn more.

Congratulations to our Bowlers

Congratulations to Jr. OYA participants Josiah Stickles, who finished in first place (scoring 191 on one game, with seven strikes and a spare) and Tanya Roberts, who finished in second place. Jr. OYA is open to fifth through eighth graders and meets regularly on the second Sunday evening of the month. Each meeting is a time for fun and fellowship. Friends are always invited to come!

Join Us at Newcomers' Night

Mark your calendars! Holy Trinity's annual social for newcomers and anyone looking to learn more about the life of our parish community will take place Thursday, September 8 from 7 to 9 p.m. This enjoyable and informal evening gives you an opportunity to interact with clergy, staff, and ministry leaders to discover the various outreach, educational, and fellowship activities taking place. Whether you've just joined Holy Trinity or been around for a long time, come and learn how you can get involved. Refreshments will be provided.

For the Record

BAPTISM

➤ *Maria Dmitrievna, baptized July 2, daughter of Dmitry Dolgopyat and Natlia Tchetcherina, sponsored by Rousko and Svetlana Hristov.*