

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

State of the Parish: Challenges Ahead

Every year, we pause at the Annual Meeting, to assess where we have come from, what God has done and where we believe God wishes us to go. Packets will be readied for distribution, containing annual reports from all ministries, the Treasurer’s report and the proposed budget. Please make sure you avail yourself of the opportunity to read all the materials prior.

Where have we come from?

Holy Trinity developed from a campus ministry established in 1980 to a mission station of the Archdiocese when our current Sparks Street location was purchased in 1993. At that time, the census was only 16 souls. In 1996, the status was upgraded to that of mission with the appointment of the first priest. By then, the census was 30.

A decade later, major remodeling of our current building was undertaken and completed in 2006. Missionary outreach to Snyder County began in 2008. It has culminated in the establishment of our parochial outreach, the Orthodox Chapel of the Holy Spirit. While the Chapel’s membership is not counted separately from our “main campus,” it now consists of 18 adults and 6 children. In August 2011, property was purchased for the Chapel’s future building, with no mortgage.

What has God done?

As St Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” This could well have been written to Holy Trinity. The work of many who have planted,

watered, tended, and nurtured has allowed a receptive environment for God to work: “Every good and perfect gift comes down from on high, from the Father of lights.”

In short, God has blessed us and blessed us abundantly. Consider the following:

- Our new parish census now stands at **128 adults**. Children now number 70, for a total of 198 baptized members in our two locations, Holy Trinity (State College) and Holy Spirit (Beavertown).
- Sunday **Liturgy** is always comfortably full. Saturday night **Great Vespers** averages about 50.
- An additional **Sunday School** class has been added to meet demand. Our space is now maxed out and facilities are increasingly inadequate.
- Parking is increasingly harder to find. Some park at a distance now out of habit to leave room for newcomers to park at the church. Others park further away out of necessity.

(continued—see CHALLENGES AHEAD, page 3)



Holy Trinity’s Sunday School has grown to 42 children in 2011, creating extraordinary demands on facility space.

Photo Credit: Mausshka Kelly Oleynik

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
November 6	Melody Thompson and Jean Miranda	Leshyn and Mark Radenskiy	Team A
November 13	Judy Fryczko and Holly Torbic	Melody Thompson and Mark Feduh	Team B
November 20	Caryl Strauss and Laura Rush	Meggin Leathers and David Slesher	Team A
November 27	Bob Schrauf and Leshyn Radenskiy	Beth Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B
December 4	Russian Ladies	Leshyn and Mark Radenskiy	Team A
December 11	Elaine Files and Dee Pizol	Melody Thompson and Mark Feduh	Team B

* Team A: C. Dory, N. Feduh, A. Miranda, N. Puhar, S. Oleynik, D. Slesher, and J. Slesher
Team B: M. Dory, P. Dory, K. Nutenyevskiy, J. Miranda, B. Oleynik, J. Slesher, and T. Vahne

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Our Sunday Best (Part III) by Deacon Mark Oleynik

It is often heard in the Church that the children are “our future,” which is true in one sense but in no way minimizes their *present* membership. And it is the responsibility of the Church—which means all of us—to teach and show them how to love the Church.

There will be times when those without children will need to be both patient and compassionate as a child “grows” (e.g., endure the small disturbances that young children make). If we really want the children and young people to be “our future” then we must model a proper behavior at every opportunity now.

Raising children who love the Church and are in the church is probably the most difficult task most parents will ever encounter. As a parent, there will certainly be times when you wonder if you were even in church or if it was worth going at all after all the commotion and energy spent trying to rein in and calm down your children for entire service. But when you see your child kiss an icon or hear her sing “Lord have mercy” or become an altar boy you will recognize the fruits. You will certainly know that work you have done for God, His Church, and your child.

To prepare your children to attend church and while in church, here are some guidelines which may be helpful.

- **Preparing the Heart.** *Whenever possible, one should begin to quiet one’s heart in preparation for arrival at Church to better experience God’s presence through the Liturgy and the prayers.*
- **Entering the Church Temple.** *Arriving early (10-15 minutes) allows time to “warm” the heart for prayer. When entering the Nave, cross yourself in prayer, bow and venerate the icons, light candles (see below), and*

then move to your place. In order not to distract others from prayer or to show a lack of reverence, do not enter or leave the church during the Epistle or Gospel reading, the sermon, the Great Entrance, the Anaphora and the Consecration of the Holy Gifts, and all occasions when the Priest turns toward the people.

- **Lighting Candles.** *Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them to make an offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles upon entering the church, during or after venerating the icons. If a service is already in progress it should be done only at a point in the service that does not prohibit movement (see below).*
- **“Let Us Stand Aright!”** *The traditional posture for prayer and worship is standing. If a child or someone with special needs cannot stand for the entire service, he should definitely stand for: “Blessed is the Kingdom...”, the Small Entrance, the Gospel Reading, the Great Entrance, the exclamation of the Litany of Supplication through the Hymn to the Theotokos, the Lord’s Prayer, the distribution of Holy Communion, and the Dismissal. Try to stand during all litanies if possible and whenever the priest faces the people.*
- **“Be Still and Know that I am God.”** *In church, be still and as quiet as possible, and vigorously train children to do the same. Especially do not move about the church during the reading of the Six Psalms, the Gospel, while special prayers are being said by the priest, the Cherubic Hymn, from the beginning of the Creed until the end of the consecration (“...and the mercies of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all.”), the Lord’s Prayer, at “Holy Things for the Holy,” and at any time the priest gives the blessing.*
- **Entering Church Late.** *The time to arrive at church is before the service starts, but for some it has become the custom—or rather the bad habit—to come to church late. If you arrive after the liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly, observe what is happening, and follow the guidelines above. If in doubt, check with one of the greeters to see if it is a good time to move and find your place.*

(continued—see OUR SUNDAY BEST, last page)

Our Sunday Best (continued from page 2)

The above is provided for guidance and personal reflection, not as a means of judging others. We come to church to pray and worship God above all else, and that should be our only focus. In my next article I will offer tips about special considerations which must be taken into account when applying these guidelines for small children. ■

Lending Library Debuts

Holy Trinity has established a lending library consisting of Orthodox books, magazines, videos, and music CDs. To access this new resource, visit holytrinity-oca.org or browse through the printed directory in the Parish Hall. Borrowers can check out books for six weeks at a time with a maximum of three renewals. Simply email the librarian at library@holytrinity-oca.org or complete the form on the library webpage to request a book.

If you own Orthodox titles that you would be willing to loan out, please contact Anna Stickles or use the online form. Your titles will be added to the list and you will be contacted if someone wants to borrow something.

Learn How to Bake Prosfophora

The Altar Society will sponsor a prosfophora baking workshop taking place at Leslyn Radomsky’s house (1336 Ridge Master Dr.) on Saturday, November 19, and be led by Fr. Basil. Instruction will begin at 10 a.m. and last for approximately 2½ hours. For information, please contact Joanne Takarchek.

Hungry for Nachos?

All young adults of Holy Trinity are invited to Champs Sports Grill (1211 North Atherton Street in State College) for “Nacho Night” and fellowship on Tuesday, November 8 at 9 p.m. All food will be provided by Holy Trinity; bring money for drinks. If you need directions or a ride, contact Megan at youngadults@holytrinity-oca.org. See you there!

Matt. 25 Revs Up for Holidays

Please watch for upcoming information about our **Matthew 25** activities. We will soon begin organizing our annual Thanksgiving food drive, and in December, the ever-popular St. Nicholas Tree will make its appearance.

The poor are among us even in State College. Through your donations of time, food, gifts, or money—and through prayer—we can serve Christ by serving others. These activities are an opportunity for each of us to follow St. John Chrysostom’s advice to “Lift up and stretch out your hands, not to heaven but to the poor; for if you stretch out your hands to the poor, you have reached the summit of heaven.” Learn how you can get involved in the weekly bulletin, on the website, and through announcements following Divine Liturgy.

TLC Supports Our Parish Family

Recently, TLC has been called upon to reach out to several members of our parish family. Calls, visits, and meals were made and flowers and/or plants of condolences were sent to over a dozen ailing and mourning people over the past few months. A big “Thank You” to all who have pitched in to assist. We continue to look for others to assist in our efforts. Please contact us if you can lend a hand.

Register for College Conference

Registration for the 2011 College Conference at Antiochian Village is now open at events.ocf.net. Annually, nearly 400 college students from across North America participate in the conference to learn and grow in their Orthodox Faith.

For the Record

FAREWELL

- **Sheena Sands**, a longtime Sunday School teacher, moved to Maryland on October 16 to pursue a new job opportunity. Many years!

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Thirsty for More?

by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

On two consecutive Saturdays, September 24 and October 1, our Chapel of the Holy Spirit (CHS) ran booths at the Selinsgrove Market Street Festival and the Beaver Springs Oktoberfest. Chapel faithful manned the booths, greeting those who stopped by, answering questions about Orthodox Christianity, and, most notably, handing out free bottles of water with labels asking, “Thirsty for more?” In fact, we handed out over 700 free bottles of water over the course of eight hours at the Selinsgrove festival alone.

Indeed, we most likely irritated those church groups and charities at neighboring booths, for they were *selling* bottled water. (Rather, they were attempting to sell bottled water; with the same product available for free only fifteen feet

away, only pity explains any purchases at all.) At the CHS booth, not everyone responded to our gentle calls for “Free water?” Some clearly feared that there were strings attached, perhaps in the form of a “free will” offering or some religious arm-twisting. We expected neither. It was free water (and a pen) and free water alone.

In other words, the Chapel was there to give, not to receive. We were not there to raise funds for our young outreach or to accept accolades for our generosity or to bolster our public standing. We were at those festivals because we wanted the free bottled water to be emblematic of the water Christ speaks of to the Samaritan woman:

“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:13)

Christ gives it to us, and it is our desire to give it to others. It is a great temptation for young congregations to desire numerical growth for the sake of increasing the size and strength of the parish, of increasing the funds available to pay for parish construction projects and personnel, and of acquiring status in the wider community. But these all represent receiving. The young Christian community should desire numerical growth solely because each person who responds to the

message comes to drink of the Living Water that springs forth into everlasting life. That Living Water is free of charge, given without receiving.

Because we have received the Living Water ourselves, it is our fervent desire to share it with others. To do that, we must be visible in our community, accessible, ready to talk, more ready to listen.

Above all, we must intercede for our neighbors, in prayer and in acts of charity and kindness. And in doing that, we can expect that Living Water to spring up richly, not in a trickle, but in a flood. ■



Fr. Basil Biberdorf (middle) and David Smith (right) hand out water to passersby at the Selinsgrove Market Street Festival. The annual outreach is now in its third year.

■ STATE OF THE PARISH

Challenges Ahead: Annual Meeting Nov. 13

- **Giving is strong:** Appeals have met or surpassed their goals; the weekly offering is only slightly below budget.
- **Campus Ministry** has produced at least one priest, two deacons, two current seminarians, two monastics, and several missionaries who have served short or long term missions, both in this country and abroad.
- Ministries continue to expand, with two having been recently added: **Young Adults** (fellowship for post graduates and young marrieds) and **Adult Study**.
- **OYA and Jr. OYA** offer fellowship for middle- and high school aged youth, while **VBS** continues to surpass past years in both attendance and enthusiasm.
- **Matthew 25** is embraced enthusiastically by the parish, systematically and regularly ministering to the poor in our community.
- Catechesis for adults now involves two distinct tiers of study, **Orthodoxy 101** (general) and **Orthodoxy 2.0** (catechumens).

This is God's work. It is truly marvelous in our eyes!

Where does God wish us to go?

This is where we have to be careful, lest we substitute a personal opinion for Divine direction. If we accept that God has sent the Church out into the world for one purpose, to make disciples of all nations (cf. Mt. 28:18-20), the overarching rubric, the guidelines for us in the future will be to continue, to the best of our ability to make disciples both here and abroad. Whatever decisions we make and actions we take must conform to this Great Commission.

Over the next five years, we will have to come to terms with and make decisions about the following, in order to accommodate God's continued blessing.

- **Construction** of a temple for the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in Beavertown.

Annual Meeting Information

Holy Trinity will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 13 at noon following the Divine Liturgy. Nominations are open for Council Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President—Building. Any agenda items must be submitted in writing to the Parish Council for review by November 8. **Nothing will be considered from the floor.**

Parishioners in good standing who were registered with the parish as members at the end of the previous calendar year and who have fulfilled their Lenten obligations of Confession and Communion may and should attend.

Agenda

- Opening Prayer: “O Heavenly King...”
- Minutes of the 2010 Meeting
- Priest's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Review and Approval of 2012 Budget
- Election of Officers
- Closing Prayer: “It is truly meet...”

- **Provide** additional facilities for continued growth in State College, whether on site or through relocation.

- **Add** more ministries as warranted to assimilate increased membership and continue to provide loving fellowship for them.

Let us be cautious and prayerful, listening to one another and above all to God Himself, as we begin a process of Strategic Planning and Development for both Holy Trinity and the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

Let us let God speak to us, where we should go, what we should do, how we should do it.

And then let us, to quote from St. Herman, “Seek, above all, to do His most holy will.” - Fr. John ■