

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Christian Ending to Our Lives

“Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace...” With these words, the Prophet Simeon embraced Jesus when He was presented in the temple as a babe of forty days.

Simeon saw prophecy fulfilled: the Messiah had come. Israel's redemption was at hand and the Gentiles were to receive great Light. Simeon could now “depart” (i.e. pass away, die) in peace; his eyes had seen his own salvation in the person of his Lord, Jesus Christ.

Truly, this is a prayer that each of us must make our own by our willingness to embrace Christ, not merely believe in God, and see in Him the salvation of the world.

The Feast of Christ's Presentation in the Temple is celebrated forty days after the Nativity to commemorate this event not merely in the Saviour's life, nor in Simeon's, but in our own hearts as well.

This year's services take place this Wednesday, February 1, at 7 p.m. (Great Vespers, Litiya, and the Blessing of Candles) and Thursday at 9 a.m. (Divine Liturgy) Will you be there?

The Prophet Simeon's words also remind us of how we should face the rest of our days, peacefully, looking for a Christian end to our lives. This month, I will teach a one night class on Orthodox funeral practices. The class will

examine decisions that we need to make so that all things are in order for our burials according to the teachings of our Faith, what is required by the Church or by law, what is permitted, and what is customary. As well, we'll also touch on end-of-life decisions.

Sometimes, we neglect discussing details of a funeral, the selection of a cemetery plot, or other details out of fear or denial. But is that the way a Christian should face the end of his days? The time comes when these decisions have to be made, with or without the input of the very one concerned.

This short class will offer an opportunity to begin to make personal plans for a Christian burial, a Christian ending to our lives, in the sure hope of the Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. — Fr. John

A Christian End: The Orthodox Funeral

- WHAT:** *A special presentation examining how a Christian can prepare for his or her last days. This short class will help attendees make personal plans now for a proper Church burial later.*
- WHEN:** *Thursday, February 16, 7 – 9 p.m.*
- WHERE:** *Holy Trinity Parish Hall, located at 119 S. Sparks St. in State College.*

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeting	Altar Servers*
February 5	Elaine Files, Gerry Anthony, and Dee Patel	Melody Thompson and Mark Fedin	Team B
February 12	Mrs. Kelly Oeynik and Mrs. Dea Eberdorf	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team A
February 19	Russian Ladies	Bob Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B
February 26	Karen Cattel and Diana Van Duijn	Leslyn and Mark Radensky	Team A
March 4	Anne Swisher and Coene Swisher	Melody Thompson and Mark Fedin	Team B
March 11	Carol Strauss and Jean Miranda	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team A

* Team A: C. Dory, N. Fedin, A. Miranda, K. Nelson, S. Oeynik, D. Swales, and J. Swales
Team B: M. Dory, P. Dory, K. Kuchynsky, J. Miranda, B. Oeynik, Jc. Swales, and a partner.

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Proclaiming God at Beaver Creek by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

This is from the second prophecy read at the Great Blessing of Water, celebrated every year in conjunction with Theophany. At Holy Trinity, we hear it at the Vigil the evening before the Feast.

However, it can be served a second time, at a “living” (i.e., moving) body of water. We did just that at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit on the Sunday after Theophany, making procession through Beaver Springs, arriving where Beaver Creek runs through the middle of town.



This was a service done not for our benefit, but for that of the community. We prayed for the sanctification of the water, and asked that it receive “the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan” and that it be made “a fountain of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a loosing of sins, a healing of sicknesses, a destruction of demons, unapproachable by hostile powers, filled with angelic might, that all that draw and partake of it may have it for the cleansing of souls and bodies, for the healing of sufferings, for the sanctification of homes, and for every useful purpose.” In the Roman Empire



before the time of Christ, *leitourgia* (liturgy) was the public and usually expensive act of an official or prominent citizen for the benefit of the masses. The blessing of Beaver Creek was truly *leitourgia* in that sense. It was a service to our community, that they would receive the blessing of the Chapel’s presence in their midst.

Even more than that, the blessing was missionary, by way of recalling that prophecy from Isaiah above. The rain comes down not so that it might return immediately to its Creator, but so that it would “water the earth.” Likewise, God’s Word

goes forth from his mouth, and it does not return “void,” having done nothing. Rather, the Word is proclaimed—in public and before all—so that it would accomplish what God pleases, and would “prosper in the thing for which [God] sent it.” The Word of God was proclaimed at Beaver Creek that day, and God’s blessing was called down upon that water. The prophecies, the epistle, and the Gospel were sown in that place. Our prayers ascended not only for us, but also for all those around us. The precious Cross plunged into that creek not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the water that nourishes so many.

For that we give thanks, as we participate in the cleansing flood of our own Baptisms, and trusting absolutely that God’s Word never returns to Him void. ■

■ FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW

Over a Quarter of a Million in Stewardship

In 2011, the generosity of parishioners poured out through a variety of outreaches, charitable giving, and the faithful support of the operating budget. Despite having adopted a growth budget in difficult financial times, Holy Trinity ended the fiscal year on December 31 with a budget surplus of more

than \$5,000. And when non-budgeted appeals and offerings are factored in, more than a quarter of a million dollars was donated to further God’s work in Central Pennsylvania. In November, members opted to sustain Holy Trinity’s ministries, pledging \$3,500 in weekly giving in 2012. ■

INCOME – BUDGETED

CATEGORY	2011 ACTUAL	2011 BUDGET	2012 BUDGET
Weekly Offerings	\$186,485	\$181,000	\$182,064
Deacon Support Appeal	\$5,155	\$5,000	\$5,000
Candles/Flowers	\$2,872	\$2,600	\$2,600
Parking	\$2,155	\$3,240	\$2,000
Missions Appeal	\$1,946	\$2,000	\$2,000
OCF Funding Appeal	\$1,580	\$2,000	\$2,000
Gertrude Hawke Net	\$677	—	\$700
Interest	\$858	\$500	\$500
Discretionary Fund	\$920	—	\$500
Other	\$89	—	—
Total	\$202,737	\$196,340	\$197,364

EXPENSES – BUDGETED

Personnel	\$117,217	\$117,198	\$120,004
Archdiocesan Assessment	\$17,068	\$18,466	\$17,891
Mortgage	\$19,267	\$19,444	\$17,316
Outreach & Fellowship	\$8,205	\$6,850	\$7,250
Utilities	\$5,311	\$7,150	\$6,485
Liturgical	\$4,814	\$4,675	\$4,675
Physical Plant	\$3,954	\$4,300	\$4,050
Christian Education	\$3,944	\$2,250	\$3,900
Office Administration	\$3,806	\$3,100	\$3,350
Missionary/Seminaries	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Coffee Hour	\$1,710	\$2,000	\$2,000
Insurance	\$1,660	\$1,650	\$1,815
Discretionary Fund	\$1,027	\$1,500	\$1,500
All-American Council	\$6,130	\$4,000	\$1,000
Refurnishings	\$219	\$250	\$750
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$170	\$250	\$250
Other	\$177	—	\$2,129
Total	\$197,679	\$196,083	\$197,364

Net Gain (Loss)	\$5,058	\$257	—
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INCOME – NON-BUDGETED

CATEGORY	2011 ACTUAL
Chapel of the Holy Spirit	\$57,764
Carryover from 2010	7,149
Offering	30,782
Building Fund	10,125
HTOC Property Appeal	9,708
Holy Trinity	\$28,273
Building Fund	10,890
Icon (Designated)	7,705
Bookstore	3,351
Matthew 25	3,192
Other HTOC Income	3,135
Parish Appeals	\$6,284
Campus Ministry	1,800
Japan Earthquake (IOCC)	1,358
OCF/THON	752
Ukrainian Appeal	700
Souper Sunday	694
Missions (OCMC)	551
Other Appeals	429
Total	\$92,321

EXPENSES – NON-BUDGETED

Chapel of the Holy Spirit	\$57,764
Holy Trinity	\$29,168
Parish Appeals	\$6,254
Total	\$93,186

TOTALS

Total Income	\$295,058
Total Expenses	\$290,865

Reflections on the March for Life

On January 23, 2012, twenty people from Holy Trinity and the Chapel of the Spirit embarked on an all-day pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., to stand in defense of our nation's unborn at the 39th March for Life. Here, in their own words, are two first-person accounts of their remarkable experience.



I wanted, but was unable, to attend the last four years. This year I was committed to going and was thrilled [Holy Trinity] had organized the entire trip, making the day much less daunting.

It was rainy and cold in Washington that Monday but the mud did not dampen the resolve of the crowds. There were lots of banners, many held high above young adults and teenagers. I... saw a young woman with a sign that read: "As a former fetus, I oppose abortion." Although there were many creative slogans, most signs simply read "Life" or "I vote pro-life first." It was invigorating to see so many young people committed to protecting life at conception...

We found [our fellow Orthodox Christians] at the end of the March and received a blessing from the Metropolitan. I was excited to see the familiar icons raised high. While at the March, I had to choke

— Corene Swisher

back tears many times as I read signs, looked at pictures and reflected on the reason for this annual pilgrimage. At least 52 million babies have been killed legally just since 1973.

It is shameful that the debate has turned into a "private" issue between a woman and her doctor despite that more babies are killed every day than perished on the 9/11 attacks. With nearly 22% of annual pregnancies in America ended by induced abortion, evidence of our "culture of death," is all around; and more unwilling Americans are pulled into participating in the massacre through tax-funded abortions.

Father John was right when he said that hearts need to change before laws will. May the Lord have mercy on the lives of the unborn and strengthen our hearts to speak out for the very least of these.

— Brenda Smith

The weather was wet and dreary but spirits were high. For many in the group, this was the first time making the trip and we were unsure of what to expect. One thing we did know was that we were all marching for the same cause, the fight against abortion.

After a short trip on the Metro we ascended into the streets of the capital and marched for a couple of hours with thousands, sometimes shoulder to shoulder at a snail's pace, to "defend life." What an amazing feeling to be marching with an estimated 500,000 others – all fighting for the same purpose! After marching over a mile...we were able to locate the Orthodox contingent. There we received a blessing from His Beatitude Met. Jonah and we greeted other Orthodox faithful. Shortly thereafter we were back on the metro and PA bound. What a great experience it was to be a part of this first time event!

Retreat to Prepare Elementary Schoolers for Lenten Season

Holy Trinity's younger students (Pre-K through fifth grade) will participate in a pre-Lenten retreat designed especially for them. Entitled *Ready... Set..., LENT!*, the retreat will be held on Saturday February 11, beginning at 9 a.m. and concluding at lunchtime. Participants of the retreat will "journey" through the various disciplines of Great Lent: fasting, prayer, charity, reconciliation/confession, and going to Church (more often). The retreat is intended to help younger students understand how to prepare and spiritually grow during this season.

Choir Hosts Afternoon Clinic

On Saturday, February 11, from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., the Choir will sponsor a clinic for all current and potential members. Dr. Nicholas Reeves from St. Vladimir's Seminary will work with the group on vocal technique, pitch, intonation and balance, singing from the text and sight reading, and the role of the choir in Orthodox worship. For more information, contact choir@holytrinity-oca.org.

Orthodox Priest Martyred

HAMA, SYRIA [via johnsanidopoulos.com] – On January 25, Orthodox Hieromonk Basilios Nassar was shot by an armed terrorist group on the second day of heavy fighting there. Fr. Basilios was at the Metropolis when he was informed by a phone call that a parishioner of his was shot and needed assistance. The 30-year-old priest was then shot in the chest and in the right armpit while giving medical aid to the wounded man. Immediately another priest who was with him dragged his bloody body to a nearby building to save him, but the martyr for Christ was dead within 30 minutes from hemorrhaging. His funeral took place January 26.

Holy Hieromartyr Basilios, pray unto God for us!

PSU OCF Raises Thousands for THON; Awaits Dancer Lottery

Thus far, the Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship has raised \$4,778.63 for THON, giving them five entries in a lottery for dancers. If selected Wednesday, two students from OCF will dance for 46 hours from February 17-19. The group thanks you for your continued support and numerous donations that have been done online, through *THONvelopes*, and through its fundraisers at Holy Trinity. There is still time to donate! If you would like to contribute to THON on behalf of Orthodox Christian Fellowship, please go to THON.org and mark "Orthodox Christian Fellowship" as the organization to credit. *"Today we dance to find a cure but one day we will dance in celebration."*

Pro-Life Auction to be Held

Citizens Concerned for Human Life, Centre County Chapter, will hold their annual Pro-Life auction on February 11 at the State College Knights of Columbus Hall, 850 Stratford Drive. Among the many items up for auction is the last autographed football to be signed by the late Joe Paterno. There will be great food all day, a TAG table, bake sale, and a Silent Auction. If you have an item to donate or wish to learn more, call (814) 237-3213.

For the Record

BAPTISM

➤ **Luke Theodore Stevens**, son of Shane and Maria Stevens, baptized January 14, sponsored by Matthew and Jill Finke.

BIRTH

➤ **Mikhail Shklyae**v, son of Oleg and Olga Shklyaev, born January 19.

WELCOME

➤ **Dr. Thomas and Margaret Yawkey**, transferred to Holy Trinity from St. John the Baptist Church in Hawk Run.