

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Chapel: “Building” Consensus by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

Our chapel continues to work toward a plan for a building that is within our financial limits of what we could accomplish during coffee hour discussions, we decided to move to a building committee format. The committee, which is open to all Holy Trinity members, meets roughly weekly (usually Thursdays at the Chapel), for about two hours at a time. The goal has been to determine our needs in areas such as narthex layout, building aesthetic (including roofline), and altar size.

At our first meeting, to get a real sense of the size of our proposed narthex, we broke out the masking tape. Using that tape, we taped off a full-size floor plan in the Smith family’s garage. Within that we could see how large everything would be. Things (like bathrooms) that seemed too big or small on paper, looked reasonable when laid out on the garage floor. We could imagine a hallway lined with coat hooks on one side and a greeting table (to hold a guest book, candles, etc.) on the other. There was even room for our kitchen-in-a-closet, which could hold a sink, refrigerator, microwave, and coffee service, all hidden behind bi-fold doors.

Most importantly, it allowed us to see how much space remained for people to gather in the narthex. The narthex plays a vital role in several services, being the place where lityas, baptisms, chrismations, and betrothals are served. It’s also a place for the faithful to enter the church and prepare, however briefly, for worship. It is where the first-time visitor can take a moment to look around, ad-



Elmer Aemmer, Kodiak Alaska Military History

*An Orthodox church built in 1872 on Alaska’s Woody Island is currently inspiring Chapel members. The church utilizes the same simple rectangular footprint the Chapel is exploring but features a soaring roofline that draws attention upward.*

justing to unfamiliar surroundings before going in further. However, in the plans under discussion, it will also serve a secondary (but still important) purpose as our Chapel’s hall. Thus, after services, we will gather there for fellowship and meals, and at other times for classes, meetings, and the like. We want to have enough space for people to be in the narthex for all of these different uses, and ensure that the secondary functions—food and fellowship—do not distract from its primary ones.

Then there’s the matter of church aesthetic. From the very beginning, we have desired a church building that looks like it “belongs” in our community, but with enough distinctiveness to be immediately recognizable as Orthodox. We sifted through numerous photos of historical churches, particularly those in the New World that would fit our criteria. The most popular one so far features a nave with high walls and a hip roof, crowned with a

*(continued—see last page)*

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## Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers**
April 7	Russian Ladies*	M. Thompson and M. Fedin	M. Fedin and M. Stevens	Team A
April 14	J. Vaughan and B. Roberts*	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	R. Patel and B. Haupt	Team B
April 21	J. Cadman and M. Leathers*	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	S. Stevens and G. Carrell	Team A
April 28	M. Thompson and K. Carrell*	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	M. Fedin and B. Schrieff	Team B
May 5	GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA	All Available Greeters	R. Patel and B. Haupt	All Servers
May 12	L. Rush and D. Van Duijn	M. Thompson and M. Fedin	S. Stevens and G. Carrell	Team A
* Devotes Fast	** Team A: G. Doox, M. Fedin, A. Miranda, N. Pallas, S. Deynek, D. Stokols, Jr. Stokols, and J. Swisher Team B: J. Cadman, M. Doox, P. Doox, K. Radomskyy, J. Miranda, B. Deynek, and Jr. Stokols.			

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# Lent: What Kind of Bore Will it Be?

by Fr. John Reeves

Many words can have more than one meaning. As I began to write this article the word “bore” came to mind, as in *full bore*. It’s a mechanical term referring to the maximum effort expended to get the most power out of a cylinder, or bore. Just as I was prepared to exhort everyone to put full effort into the remainder of the Fast, I thought of the other meaning of bore, as in to *be bored!* It made me think that for some, Lent might be approached more as a big bore, something to be endured, designed to take all the fun out of living and dining for forty days, and little else.

Let’s look at the two approaches. One presumes that there is indeed something to “get out” of Lent, that spiritual effort is required, but that in the end maximum benefits are the results. The Church certainly has this understanding. Manifold services are to be accompanied by fasting and additional personal prayer. It is a period which brings “great profit to the soul,” to quote from Lenten hymns.

The other approach, that Lent is a bore, views this time as the following rules and regulations, noting how strictly, or not, one fasts. Little emphasis is placed on prayer, the natural end of fasting. Therefore, attempting to fast can not only be a challenge but a “downer,” a meaningless exercise trying to stay on a semblance of an ecclesiastical diet, but nothing more. It becomes an end, in and of itself, and hence a spiritually insignificant practice.

Of course, the purpose of Orthodoxy is not to fast. It is to draw us into an ever closer relationship with God. During Lent, we have a dedicated, seasonal opportunity to do that, to be drawn ever closer to God by spending more time in prayer and worship and limiting the distractions of food and entertainment. The latter are not bad in and of themselves, but often become the focus of much of our lives.

The many opportunities for “extra” prayer and worship—Presanctified Liturgies, Memorial Saturdays, Mission Vespers—become a natural end of our fasting, if we are fasting to draw nearer to God. Without availing ourselves of them, without going “full bore”, however, limits Lent’s outcome, like underutilizing the potential power of an engine. We might fire on some cylinders, but not all. That’s when Lent becomes a big bore, something to endure at best, until “it’s over” at Pascha.

Clean Week was when we drained the crankcase and changed the oil at Forgiveness Vespers. Perhaps, we accompanied this by changing the timing on our spiritual engines. Or we might have adjusted our carburetors to accommodate a new spiritual regimen, a richer mixture of “fuel” and “air.” But unless we engage the disciplines of Lent fully, we are merely tinkering around in the garage, with an engine that might be idling nicely, but in a car that’s not going anywhere.

We don’t admire a car merely because it idles well, however. What we are really interested in is the ride. That takes more effort but it will demonstrate what the car was actually made for. Souls are like that, too. They aren’t made to idle, any more than cars are. Souls are made for action and movement. A Lenten discipline is a test track, a proving ground for the soul to reach its capacity.

For the rest of Lent, let the brake off and ease into drive. Don’t race the engine, but gradually increase the speed, the intensity of the spiritual effort. Lent won’t seem so boring, and we can make it to a fuller capacity, if not a wide open throttle, by Pascha.

Ultimately the biggest difference between “big bore” and “full bore” in Lent simply depends on the effort we put into it. ■

discerned a call to switch to “living water” (John 7:38) instead, and off to Holy Cross he went. Now in his final semester at the Seminary, he is a husband (married to his wife, Stephanie, whom he met at a Penn State OCF Retreat), a father (Niko, born on Pascha 2011), and was just ordained to the Holy Diaconate in January. Dn. Alexey and family will be returning to Pennsylvania after graduating in May to serve somewhere in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh. With regards to the future, he looks forward to sending as many youth to Penn State as possible, to supply an ample Orthodox student population for the ministries of Holy Trinity and the Penn State OCF.



**Nun Margarete (Roeber)**

Sister Margarete (Liberal Arts, ’05) is now a member of Holy Assumption Monastery (OCA) in Calistoga, CA. This monastery, the oldest for Orthodox women in the United States, was renovated over a period of twelve years, and Sister Margarete was part of an unexpected “transplant” of nuns to the property in 2009. The community is still

developing means of supporting itself, including mounting icons, baking, and producing fine chalice wine in conjunction with a local Napa Valley Orthodox parish.



**Missionary Maria Roeber**

Maria Roeber (Nursing, ’04) is currently finishing a two-year term as an OCMC long-term medical missionary, providing health care to the people of Bukoba, Tanzania. Although only spending a year-and-a-half at University Park (she was studying in Greece, Danville, or Hershey from the second semester of sophomore year until graduating), Holy Trinity and Penn State OCF had a profound impact on her life. She fondly remembers going on an OCF trip to Holy Transfiguration Monastery with her sister (now Sr. Margarete and (now) Sr. Helene Krenitsky. They laughed at the time about the “alternative” choice of a student celebrating her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday at a monastery instead of at a bar, and it remains one of her favorite memories from her college years. Friendships formed at retreats, service projects, and

Real Break Spring Break trips more than ten years ago have lasted to this day, and she continues to be so grateful to God for them.



**Priest James Weremedic**

Fr. James and Mka. Lisa attended Holy Trinity while he worked as the administrative director of radiology at Centre Community Hospital (now Mount Nittany Medical Center). After leaving Holy Trinity to pursue a life of church service, Fr. James graduated from St. Tikhon’s Seminary in 2001. Throughout his priesthood, Fr. James has been connected with campus ministry, serving as the OCF chaplain at Bloomsburg University while acting as rector of Holy Annunciation Church in Berwick. In 2010, Fr. James and Mka. Lisa moved to Wilmington, home of the University of Delaware, to become rector of St. Michael’s Church. There he oversaw the completion of a half-million dollar Parish Hall construction project. He and Mka. Lisa have been married for 27 years. They have 2 children, James Jr., who is now 23 years old, and a daughter, Victoria (age 15). ■



**Preparing a New Generation of Church Leaders.** Thirteen members of the Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship travelled to New Jersey last month to serve coastal residents who are still cleaning up from last year’s superstorm.

## For the Record

### BAPTISMS

- **Victor Michael Herman van Duin**, son of Adri and Diana van Duin, baptized March 2, sponsored by Mark and Katya Fedkin.
- **Cadence Juliet Stodart**, daughter of Brandon Stodart, baptized March 9, sponsored by Robert Speer and Heather Dinsmore.

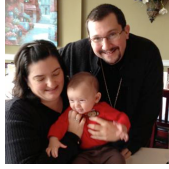
### BIRTHS

- **Styliana Artemiou**, daughter of Andreas and Andria Artemiou, born March 9.



■ BUILDING UP THE CHURCH BEYOND OUR PARISH

# From Holy Trinity to a Life Dedicated to Church Service: Where Are They Now?



**Priest John Diamantis**

Fr. John Diamantis (Psychology '02) lives in New York City with his wife, Mka, Andrea, and their son Stavros, born November 2012. As Chairman of the Department of College Ministry for His Grace Bishop Michael, Fr. John ministers to students throughout the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, and also serves as a district chaplain for the same area with the North American OCF. Currently, Fr. John is attached to Holy Trinity Church in East Meadow, New York where he is involved with a variety of ministries, both in the parish and in the New York City community, where he works to train and recruit foster parents. He expects to be officially assigned to St. Vladimir Orthodox Church in Trenton, NJ by Summer 2013 where he will be able to fully commit himself to the work of the Church. Thinking back to his time at Holy Trinity and the Penn State OCF, St. John's gospel, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (3:30) encompasses the spirit of everything he learned and experienced here.



**Priest Hector & Katerina Firoglanis**

Missions and church service always have been a part of the Firoglanis family.

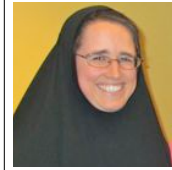
Shortly after leaving Penn State, Fr. Hector (Biobehavioral Health '99) and Pres. Katerina (Art Ed. '02), served together on a Summer 2002 mission trip to Kenya. Immediately after the Paschal Liturgy the following year, Fr. Hector proposed to Katerina and they were married four months later. Fr. Hector attended Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston while Katerina taught at Theophany Preschool. After he graduated in 2004, Fr. Hector and Katerina studied Byzantine music and iconography, respectively, in Thessaloniki for a year before serving as long-term missionaries in Albania. After completing their term, Fr. Hector became the Assistant Priest of Annunciation Church in Lancaster, the same parish he and Pres. Katerina attended in their youth. They now have three children, Christo, Evdoxia, and Vasili. Fr. Hector always thanks God for leading him to Holy Trinity where he discovered God's calling during one of the most critical stages of his life.



**Priest Gheevarghese John**

Fr. Gheevarghese John (Marketing, '02), graduated from St. Vladimir's Seminary in 2002 and was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on March 26, 2011 at St. Thomas (Malankara Orthodox Syrian) Church, where he currently serves. A prolific speaker and youth leader, and director of Way of the Cross Ministries, Fr. Gheevarghese is very

active in campus ministry throughout the Philadelphia area, having been both the Secretary and Treasurer of the North American Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement (MGOCSM). Since 2005, he has taught Science and Math in the School District of Philadelphia. Fr. Gheevarghese married Linju Jacob on July 5, 2009. They have a daughter together, Bethenny, born November 27, 2011.



**Nun Helene (Krenitsky)**

After diligently serving the St. Nicholas Church Choir (McKees Rocks, PA) Sister Helene (Mech. Eng. '05) entered the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Elwood City on July 26, 2009. Using experience she gained while singing at St. Nicholas and Holy Trinity, she has taken on responsibility for the monastery choir for all chapel services. She is teaching the community how to breathe, blend, enunciate, and sing as a genuine choir.



**Deacon Alexandros Petrides**

For Dn. Alexey, his time in State College will forever be remembered as the place where his call to serve Christ was revealed. After his undergraduate studies (Civ. Eng./Water Resources, '09), Dn. Alexey

## Bridge of Hope 5K Fun Run/Walk

Holy Trinity's newest partner ministry, *Bridge of Hope*, is hosting a Mother's Day 5K Fun Run/Walk to strengthen its single women's support network. The race begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 11 with registration (\$30 for adults/\$8 for children) taking place an hour earlier. Individuals or teams signing up at [bridgeofhopeinc.org](http://bridgeofhopeinc.org) by April 24 will receive a \$5 discount and a free t-shirt for each participant. For more information on Holy Trinity's new and ongoing relationship with Bridge of Hope, contact Maria Stevens at [bridgeofhope@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:bridgeofhope@holytrinity-oca.org).

## Men to Serve "Work Day" Meal

The Men's Fellowship will serve a free brunch to all volunteers attending Holy Trinity's annual Parish Work Day on Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please attend: Many hands make light work!

## Annual Audit Conducted

Holy Trinity's annual audit of FY '12 was conducted last month. Deposits and accounts were randomly chosen and checked. No discrepancies were found.

## Bylaw Revision Fails

The vote to revise parish bylaws failed on Sunday, March 24 because of a lack of quorum. Fifty-two ballots were cast, but a quorum of 63 was necessary for the measure to pass. The Parish Council will review the issue at its next meeting (Thursday, April 11 at 7 p.m.) before setting a date for another ballot.

## Stay to the End

Out of respect for our Lord's presence in the Holy Eucharist, it is very important not to leave the church during Communion. Worshippers are kindly requested to remain prayerfully in the Nave until the completion of Liturgy. Thank you for understanding.

## Remember Matt. 25 This Lent

Please support Holy Trinity's ministry to the hungry, poor, and naked in our area by placing a donation of any amount in the *Matthew 25* Alms Box this Lent.

## ■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP



Church School members dice celery and onions during a food preparation workshop on the eve of the event. The fundraiser has been a student Lenten service project for the past 3 years.

## Children Raise \$761 for Housing Transitions

The Holy Trinity Church School hosted their annual "SOUPer Sunday" lunch on Sunday, March 31. The students were responsible for serving and hosting the meal, which featured a variety of homemade soups prepared by the children, at which a free-will offering was accepted. The charity event raised a record \$761 (as of the time of writing), which will be formally presented to Housing Transitions in the near future. *Hungry for more?* OCF Treasurer Christopher McNulty will serve more Lenten soups the very next Sunday (April 7) in support of his summer mission trip to orphanages in Ukraine! ■

## ■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**"Building" Consensus** (from pg. 1) square cupola and three-bar cross, with gabled narthex and altar, as used in a church (now torn down) in Woody Island, Alaska, and similar to the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church in Kenai, Alaska, a National Historic Landmark since 1970. Right now, we are still waiting for drawings to visualize what we're thinking, but these churches reveal our inspiration. As always your prayers and financial support for the Chapel are coveted. ■