

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Looking Back at 2014

by Dn. Mark Oleynik

During the last school year my daughter was assigned to list three significant events for each year of her life. Reflecting back on the last year I was reminded of this assignment and decided to refresh my memory of the events of 2013. I proceeded to sit down in front of my personal computer and entered the search phrase, “looking back at 2014.” I immediately realized my error but was surprised that there were more than 17,000 hits that looked back “at the future.” I briefly glanced at a few of the articles in curiosity but mostly it gave me pause to think: *if we could look back now at our lives during 2014, what would we find?*

With such advanced knowledge of our lives this year we would surely avoid the pitfalls, circumstances, and situations which would cause us pain and grief, wouldn't we? Certainly, we would choose only those things that would profit us, our children, and our friends both now and hereafter. Although we might still experience sadness and failure during the upcoming year we would be prepared for it. When something would come up, we could make the wise decision.

That's it: making wise decisions. For some, decision making can be an ordeal. Although something deep within us shouts that life is a series of decisions (moments in truth), we like to put things off; and if there is any way by which we can delay a decision (“I'll do that when the kids get older”, “I

(continued—see LOOKING BACK, page 3)



Two Outdoor Blessings Scheduled for January 12!

by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

On the Eve of Theophany at the Great Blessing of Water, we gather and the priest, wearing full vestments, calls down God's blessing upon the water and plunges into it the Cross to recall Christ sanctifying the Jordan. The service concludes with the blessing of the entire church and all the people by sprinkling the water, while all come and partake of this newly prepared Holy Water. This event also marks the beginning of the annual blessing of homes of the faithful.

However, there is a second blessing of water often served at Theophany. This blessing is that of a body of clean water—a river, spring, creek, or even a lake. It is conducted in the exact same way as the “inside” blessing of water, but includes a procession to the water, with the faithful led by the Cross, the Gospel, banners, and torches. The Cross is once

(continued—see OUTDOOR WATERS, last page)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers**
January 5	A. Swisher and C. Swisher*	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	M. Stevens and G. Cattell	Team A
January 12	A. Oriener and L. Georgiou	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	B. Haupt and S. Stevens	Team B
January 19	J. Miranda and L. Rush	M. Thompson and M. Fedkin	G. Cattell and M. Fedkin	Team A
January 26	P. Doly and M. Thompson	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	H. Torbic and R. Patel	Team B
February 2	E. Files and M. & D. Anthony	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	M. Fedkin and S. Stevens	Team A
February 9	D. Patel and K. Oleynik	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	R. Patel and B. Haupt	Team B
* Directors Fast				
** Servers Fast	Team A: M. Doly, A. Miranda, N. Puljan, S. Oleynik, D. Seckler, Jo Seckler, J. Torbic, and J. Swisher Team B: J. Cochran, P. Doly, N. McFarland, B. Oleynik, S. Patel, L. Torbic, and Jo Seckler.			

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

2014 Home Blessing Schedule

The entire month of January following Theophany is set aside for home blessings. The process is simple: start by determining your preference (*first, second, third, etc.*) among the shifts listed below for your particular location. Next, submit your choices through the form at holytrinity-oca.org or the sign-up sheets in the Narthex.

After placing your request, you will be contacted within 48 hours with confirmation of your exact appointment time. Every effort will be made to accommodate your date and time choices, personal availability, and any special needs you may have.

Thirty minutes have been reserved for each home blessing, so unfortunately meals with Fathers John and Basil are not possible. The best way to show hospitality is to have your home clean and brightly lit. If possible, have a candle and bowl ready.

Everyone and everything in the home is blessed to bring Christ's sanctification to them, making us and our homes a small church in essence. As with any Orthodox sacrament, there is absolutely no charge to have your home blessed. Requests can be made by anyone affiliated with Holy Trinity or the Chapel (members, catechumens, visitors, etc.). ■

LOCATION	AVAILABLE DATES AND TIMES	
Eastern Centre County (16801, -27, -28, -51) <i>including Downtown State College, State College (South Atherton), Boalsburg, Centre Hall, Houserville, Lemont, and Pine Grove Mills.</i>	Thursday, January 9	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
	Monday, January 13	6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
	Tuesday, January 14	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Wednesday, January 15	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Friday, January 17	10 a.m. – 12 noon
	Saturday, January 18	1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
	Friday, January 24	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Penn State Campus (16802)	Tuesday, January 21	6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
	Monday, January 27	6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Western Centre County (16803, -68, -70) <i>including State College (North Atherton), Park Forest, Pine Grove Mills, Port Matilda, and Stormstown.</i>	Wednesday, January 8	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Friday, January 10	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Monday, January 20	6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
	Tuesday, January 21	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Thursday, January 23	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
	Saturday, January 25	9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Northern Centre County (16823, -53) <i>including Bellefonte, Milesburg, and Zion.</i>	Thursday, January 16	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
	Friday, January 17	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Tuesday, January 28	10 a.m. – 12 noon
	Saturday, February 1	9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Snyder County (178xx)	Sunday, January 19	1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
	Sunday, February 2	1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Other Locations/Make-ups	Sunday, January 26	2 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
	Tuesday, January 28	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Wednesday, January 29	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
	Thursday, January 30	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
	Friday, January 31	10 a.m. – 12 noon; 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Looking Back *(cont. from page 1)*

don't have time", "that's too difficult"), or push the responsibility of the decision on to somebody else, we probably wouldn't hesitate to do so. That is the way many live; dwelling in the valley of indecision. The prophet Joel speaks that, "the day of the Lord is at hand in the valley of decision" (*Joel 3:14*). Although we may be indecisive, let us not be confused—God will make His decision.

We often begin the new year with the good intentions of changing things (lose ten pounds, exercise, more prayer, travel, etc.) but we often lose our enthusiasm and interest after a short while. Nobody ever likes to look back and realize nothing much changed year to year and most especially in their relationship with God. That's a most sad and sobering thought, but perhaps you can decide now to become God-centered in all you do and really make this year different from years past.

Be grateful for the gifts you have at this very moment. Don't moan or groan over what you haven't got. You are alive. You love and you are loved by God. You may be surrounded by dear friends and family who care for you. It is better to want what you have than to have what you want. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name" (*Psalms 100:4*).

Something else you can do is to learn to master your thoughts. Remember the saying, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Start each day with Metropolitan Philaret's prayer especially asking God to guide you in all your "thoughts and feelings." Stop the thought wrestling and see Christ in the person you meet at the checkout line, at coffee hour, or in the driver who just cut you off in traffic. Don't let your thoughts push you around, but rather take the initiative and push your thoughts to where they result in goodness.



On the Sunday before the Nativity, Church school students performed a traditional Christmas play complete with singers, wise men, shepherds, angels, and animals. The Friday before, they also sang carols to neighbors and decorated cookies.

Another good thing is to do something (or something more) for others regardless of your age. The self-centered person is usually miserable. Invest something of yourself in others every day. Our parish has many ministries dedicated to helping others in some way. If you don't find something here then reach out into our community (take to heart our mission to "Build up the Church beyond our Parish"). Scripture tells us that, "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (*Mark 10:45*). Follow Jesus' example.

Finally, place your trust in God. Stop and consider your place: do you make yourself big and God small? Faith and trust is betting your life that God lives and that He loves each one of us with a love that can never fail. We simply need to remember our Lord's trust in the Father as He gave up His spirit. At the end, there was the utmost assurance that the One who had been with Him from eternity would not desert Him.

Of course, we can't look into the future but what we can do now, with the help of our Lord, is to make wiser decisions that will bring profit to our souls. May your decisions this year bring you a penitent, praying, pure, obedient, and a very happy heart. And when you look back at 2014 may it be with joy. ■

Growth Team to Review “Vision 2016” Progress; Survey Parish

This month, Holy Trinity’s Strategic Growth Team will continue its work of planning for Holy Trinity’s future by analyzing progress made towards a five-year vision cast by ministry leaders in 2011. To gain even more insight, the Parish Council is inviting all adult members to participate in a custom survey to gauge what you value about Holy Trinity, and what you would like the parish to be in another five years. Questionnaires will be mailed out in early February. Please participate!

Young Adult Ministry Returns

After a brief hiatus, the Young Adult Ministry returns for 2014. The group will meet at Champs at 8:45 p.m. on Monday, January 13 for fellowship, 50¢ wings, and to plan activities for the upcoming year. Newcomers and friends are especially welcome.

Join the Altar Society

The Altar Society will hold its annual planning meeting to prepare for this year’s feasts at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 1. More ladies are needed to get involved in taking care of the church’s needs. For details, see Joanne Takarcheck or call (814) 231-2855.

Housing Transitions Needs You!

Each month, we commit to provide a home-cooked meal for the residents of the Centre House shelter. Samar Al Maalouf—who assumed leadership of this ministry last month—thanks Diana Van Duin for her service and invites you to partner with one of our experienced volunteers on a second Tuesday this year. See the sheet in the Narthex to learn more

OCF Featured in National Video

Our Penn State chapter is prominently featured in a national promotional video highlighting the programs of Orthodox Christian Fellowship. The four-minute spot, a unique twist on the 12 Days of Christmas, can be viewed at holytrinity-oca.org.

■ NEWS AND NOTES

Two New Orthodox Saints Canonized

HONG KONG – On November 27 the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate formally included the elder Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia and Meletios of Lardos on the List of Saints of the Orthodox Church. The feast days of Ss. Porphyrios and Meletios are December 2 and February 12, respectively. Through their prayers, O Lord our God, have mercy on us!

ARCHDIOCESE SEEKS INPUT ON PROPOSED SALE ON TWO FRIDAY “TOWN HALL” CALLS

CRANBERRY TWP. – The Extraordinary Archdiocesan Assembly to consider two unsolicited purchase proposals for the Chancery and surrounding land was postponed until this month so that a detailed analysis could be prepared for the delegates. A copy of this analysis is on file for review upon request in the Holy Trinity Parish Office. In addition, the Diocesan Council will hold two “town hall” call-in meetings on Friday, January 3 and 10 at 6 p.m. for all interested parties. To join, dial (712) 432-1500, and enter pass code 501586. In addition, a “FAQ” will be published on the archdiocesan webpage, ocadwpa.org. Please pray for the safe travel of our ten delegates to the special assembly on January 11.

For the Record

FAREWELL

- **Peter, Timea, and Eszter Maria Veres** moved to the Washington, DC area on December 29 to pursue a new job opportunity. **Many years!**

WELCOME

- **Rdr. Samuel Leathers** returned from Colorado on December 22 with an opportunity to work remotely with his company. **Welcome back!**

YOUR GENEROSITY

- **\$718** was raised at Orthodox Christian Fellowship’s annual spaghetti luncheon for THON to help combat pediatric cancer **Thank you!**

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Outdoor Waters *(from page 1)*

again immersed in the water, sometimes by throwing, marking the sanctification of the water by Christ, its Creator. If the Cross is thrown, it is often retrieved with a cord, or, in more adventurous circumstances, by swimmers diving for it. (This is just fun in coastal Florida, but the thought of diving into the icy waters of a Russian lake in winter makes me turn blue simply thinking about it!)

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit has served the outdoor blessing of water for the past couple of years in Beaver Springs, sanctifying the waters of a creek that flows through the area. Doing so has not only edified our Chapel faithful, but also the surrounding community. Last year’s blessing also resulted in newspaper coverage, along with a follow-up article on the Sunday of the Cross two months later.

Encouraged by the positive reception of the outdoor blessing of water at the Chapel, Holy Trinity will also hold this outdoor blessing this upcoming Theophany. The faithful are invited to Spring Creek Park on Sunday, January 12, following the Liturgy, for a short procession and the service of sanctification. At the same time we will bless the waters in Beaver Springs, bringing the two communities of the parish together in common worship and celebration. (Spring Creek is an excellent choice, as rehabilitation efforts have resulted in a clean, thriving stream, which flows through a large portion of Centre County, from five miles east of State College to Milesburg. That the Holy Spirit would be called down upon this creek for the sanctification of the world is fitting.)

Mark your calendars now for this special event on Sunday, January 12, and plan to celebrate our Lord’s Baptism, and the sanctification of the waters, with us at the Chapel in Snyder County or at Holy Trinity in State College. ■

From the Rector’s Desk

Every month, I’ll be writing this informal column to catch us up on what has been going on and what we hope to happen in the parish. Feature articles will be written by all the clergy staff in rotation during the year. Articles from individual ministry leaders will also appear not only to inform us of their activities but to encourage any one not currently active in a parish ministry to find one which fits one’s gifts and talents.

So here goes:

- **First off, Judy Fryncko** has served us well as parish secretary for a solid decade, doing many things far beyond the scope of her job description. But Judy has asked to retire and her request has been reluctantly blessed, beginning January 1. Words cannot express my personal thanks to her for all her tireless, well-humored, professional demeanor putting up with me. We started off sharing a computer and a desk in the old office before we remodeled. Judy has carried off everything with tact and poise over the years.
- **Laura Rush** will replace Judy as parish secretary as of the first of the year. She has been shadowing Judy during December to learn the ropes and brings much personal experience in bookkeeping to her position. Laura, husband **Jay**, and daughters, **Joelle** and **Julia** have been part of HTOC for almost five years now. A native, Laura grew up in Boalsburg and graduated from State High. It is a joy to welcome Laura on staff.
- It will be our joy to welcome His Grace **Bishop Melchisedek** to celebrate Theophany with us—Saturday, January 4 through Monday, January 6.
- Each year, we seem to send more marchers on the **March for Life**, January 22, in Washington. It is one of the most conspicuously under-reported events by most of the nation’s media but to anyone who has ever participated it is jaw-dropping and overwhelming. The size of the crowds and the youth of the majority of the marchers is an awe-inspiring sight. As in recent years, HTOC will be sending at least one, if not two, vans to transport our marchers. Donations are gladly accepted to defray the cost of the trip. Reservation donations can be refunded up to one week before departure. See **Deacons Alex** or **Mark** for details.

At this pace, January will be over before we know it, but that’s how it appears from the Rector’s Desk. Blessings!

— Fr. John

