

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Women to Usher in Year with Study

by Mary Lanser

TO THE WOMEN OF HOLY TRINITY: Here's hoping you had a blessed Nativity and New Year celebrations! Christ's peace to you all. While New Year's resolutions are not necessarily an official feature of Orthodoxy, change certainly is, and resolving to grow in one's faith is definitely part of our liturgical tradition.

That is why I want to remind you that the Women's Ministry will begin the year with a bible study at Trinity House at 7 p.m. every Tuesday night. The sessions will open on Tuesday, January 10 and close on Tuesday, March 7, with the exceptions of February 14 and 28 (St. Valentine's Day in the West and Clean Tuesday, respectively.) In total, there will be seven sessions and light refreshments will be provided each time.

This year we will use Kelly Minter's book, *Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break*, as a discussion aid along with the biblical text itself. The open discussions will reveal important themes in the biblical text, and will render in more Orthodox terms some of the interpretations and ideas found in Minter's text. The book will be available in the parish bookstore starting on Sunday, January 1.

During the study, we will consider the often-forgotten importance of building community and preserving tradition, as well as the role of prayer in our individual growth as Orthodox women and as women in today's society. Also, we will have occasion to discuss the importance of suffering in our lives and in our salvation.

(continued, see WOMEN'S MINISTRY, page 3)



Parish faithful joined tens of thousands who stood in defense of the unborn at our nation's capital last year. 2017's March for Life takes place on Friday, January 27 (see article on page 6).

Listening to the Lessons of the Unborn

by Fr. Lawrence Farley

Good theology can pop up in unexpected places. One such place is the writing of Dr. Seuss, author of children's books. My favorite theological work of his is *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, a story of conversion and redemption. I also like his pro-life treatise, though it is doubtful that he considered it to be such when he wrote it. It is called *Horton Hears a Who*, and contains the theological assertion, "A person's a person, no matter how small." That would include tiny little persons living inside their mothers. Or, in the more elegant words of our own Holy Synod, "the unborn in the womb are already adorned with God's image and likeness."

(continued, see LESSONS FROM THE UNBORN, last pages)

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Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
January 1	L. Rush and J. Cadman	J. Houser and M. Thompson**	R. Patel and H. Torbic	Team A
January 8	A. Legaspi and K. Cartell	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	B. Haupt and M. Stevens	Team B
January 15	R. Schrauf and D. Patel	J. Fryncko and M. Fedkin	G. Cartell and M. Fedkin	Team A
January 22	L. Georgiou and B. & N. Troyan	A. Swisher and D. Swisher**	R. Patel and S. Stevens	Team B
January 29	A. Swisher and B. Roberts	J. Pettengill and S. Pettengill	M. Fedkin and H. Torbic	Team A
February 5	E. George and K. Oleynik	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	B. Haupt and M. Stevens	Team B

* Denotes Fast
** Denotes scotch/change

Team A: A. Evans, N. Pelikan, D. Stickle, J. Torbic, C. Schrauf, E. Swisher, and J. Swisher. Captains: D. Torbic and S. Oleynik
Team B: J. Cadman, C. Legaspi, N. McFarland, B. Oleynik, S. Patel, and L. Torbic.

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

Trinity House Turns One: A Look Back

While 2016 was a challenging year for all of us, it was also a time of great blessings from God in the life of the parish: January 10 marks the one-year anniversary for Trinity House Ministry Center. Here are some facts:

- AMT. OF NEW MINISTRY SPACE: **2,520 sq. ft.**
- HOURS OF OPERATION: **9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily** (and as late as midnight on Mondays).
- TOTAL COST OF RENOVATIONS: **\$117,838** (including \$11,712 for furnishings and appliances; and \$11,049 in code and safety upgrades).
- AMOUNT RAISED TO DATE: **\$169,940.**
- NO. OF MINISTRIES USING THE CENTER: **18** of Holy Trinity's 26 ministries have used the space; many, like OCF and Sunday School use it weekly; all ministries are coordinated from our offices there.

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOPS

Nativity Season a Busy Time for Youth

Throughout this past Nativity season the parish youth engaged in several service activities intended to teach them to look beyond the parish to serve God and His Church. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Prayer Pals.** To nurture our children in the discipline of prayer every student had a secret Sunday School "pal" for whom he or she prayed for daily through out Advent. Students were to increase their prayer effort for others as well as themselves. Students learned who their pal was on New Year's Day.
- **Christmas Caroling** on the Friday evening of December 9 approximately thirty students and parents filled downtown State College with songs of Christmas. It even began snowing as we finished our last carol!

Upcoming Feast Days

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

RYL. HOURS: Thursday, January 5, 10am
 VESPER: Thursday, January 5, 7pm
(M. Haupt, Litiya Bread; A.T. Pelikan, Prospora; A. Petrick, Icon)

OBEDNITSA: Friday, January 6, 9am

MEETING OF OUR LORD

VESPER: Wednesday, February 1, 7pm
(M. Haupt, Litiya Bread and Prospora; K. Fedkin, Icon)

OBEDNITSA: Thursday, February 2, 8am

- NIGHTS WITH OVERNIGHT GUESTS: **36.** We are blessed to provide hospitality to our archbishop and members of our extended parish family. ■

- **Ready to Give Bags.** After caroling, the students returned to the Parish Hall and prepared "Ready to Give" bags. Each bag was filled with a variety of small items (selected by the students) to be given when they encounter someone in need. (There are extra bags in the Narthex that you can take and keep in your car, backpack, etc. and distribute likewise.)
- **Toys for Tots.** The Sunday School teamed with the Orthodox Youth Association (OYA) and Junior OYA for an evening of moving, sorting, and wrapping gifts for needy children (of which there are thousands) here in Centre County. ■



Our culture values independence... We can feed and clothe ourselves, we say; we are self-sustaining. But these assertions hide the truth that in fact no one feeds himself... Even the farmer who can grow and eat most of his own food is still dependent upon God for the sun and the rain. We are all united, whether we acknowledge it or not, in a vast world-wide web of mutual inter-dependence. I am viable and survive only because of others.

This is not simply true in the world, but in the Kingdom also. God could have arranged the economy of salvation so that it was simply "me and Jesus." But He chose otherwise: it is "me-in-the-Church and Jesus." Thus, to become born again and begin new life with God, I need to be baptized by others. Then I need to receive Holy Communion from others. I experience the saving and transforming Presence of Christ when I gather together with others, even if that gathering be as small as two or three people (Mt. 18:20)...

I cannot be saved apart from the prayers of the others in my local congregation. We are all saved together, as we continue to worship together and pray together, both for the world and for each other. That is why all the images of salvation in the Scriptures are so relentlessly corporate: we are saved not as individuals, but as part of a people Israel; not as single sheep, but as a united flock; not on our own, but as citizens of a city—for when the Bride of the Lamb descends in beauty from heaven, it comes down as a city (Rev. 21:2). And a city, of course, is a place where people live together in community, depending on one another for their daily needs. We are dependent upon one another, both in creation and redemption.

Theology can indeed be found in unexpected places. Our Lord, citing the Psalter, said that out of the mouths of babes, God has brought perfect praise (Mt. 21:16, Ps. 8:12). He also has brought from there good theology as well. ■

Ten Principles of Christian Giving

The Lord expects and requires us to give. Jesus said to His disciples, "when you give" not "if you give" (Mt. 6:2)! Hence, Christian giving is not optional, but rather essential...

The Lord wants us to give for the right reasons. Jesus warned [us] not to give for the sake of being admired by men... We must desire His approval of our giving, rather than the praise and admiration of people... (Mt. 6:1)

The Lord wants us to practice benevolent or charitable giving. Jesus is specifically teaching about "alms" in [Mt. 6:2,3]: aid, charity, or benevolent offerings for the needy...

The Lord reminds us that our giving is ultimately to the all-seeing heavenly Father. When we give, we

are not simply adding to the Church budget, we are giving up a thank offering to the Father Himself. Thus, we must all give "as unto the Lord." Our ultimate goal in giving is to please Him... (Mt. 6:3-4)

Giving is an act of worship... [St. Paul] teaches the Corinthians that their taking up of the collection is an act of worship which is to be a part of their regular Lord's Day worship...

Giving should be done in light of the incarnation... Our giving is to be inspired and instructed by Christ's inexpressible gift. In light of such a challenge, who could possibly satisfy himself with asking "how little a percentage is acceptable for me to give?" (2 Cor. 8:9)

Giving should be done in accordance with our means. [St. Paul instructed] those who have more money are expected to give more

(we who are particularly blessed materially must remember this); and the Lord never asks us to give what we do not have, or contribute beyond our means. (2 Cor. 8:12, 1 Cor. 16:2)

The liberality of God's blessings to us is connected to the liberality of our giving... There is a relation between our giving to the Lord and he Lord's giving to us. The Lord has given you much, so that you can give much. (2 Cor. 9:16)

Giving must be willing and free. True Christian giving is both mandatory and voluntary. It is required by God, but always willingly given by the believer. (2 Cor. 9:17)

Giving ought to be cheerful... [St.] Paul assures us that the Lord takes a special delight in those who are joyful, energetic, merry givers... (2 Cor. 9:6)

— Ligon Duncan

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

The Lessons from the Unborn (Continued from page 1)

The unborn and the newly-born, by the very fact of their being, can teach us a thing or two...

First of all, the unborn teach us that we enter into this world already loved, wanted, and valued. As my own dad says, "Babies bring their love with them." I remember seeing a young baby wearing a little shirt bearing the words "Another little tax deduction." That is true, of course (thank you, Caesar), but it is not why the child is loved or valued. No one loves the child because of its utility. Babies cannot help cook the meals, or clean the house, or even clean themselves. Strictly speaking, apart from such tax deductions, they have no immediate utilitarian value whatsoever. We love them not because they are useful, but simply because they are. They enter the world pre-loved, even though they may not be self-consciously aware of it (or of much else).

In cases of abortion, of course, there is, shall we say, a deficit of such parental love. But even here they are still loved and valued, if not by their parents or by those in the abortion industry, then by God Himself. It is as the Psalmist sings: "Though my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will take me up" (27:10). A Planned Parenthood slogan proclaims, "Every child a wanted child!" As a matter of fact, every child is a wanted child, for God wants and loves every child conceived.

By this the unborn teach us that God loves every one of us regardless of our behavior, loving the worst sinner equally along with the greatest saint. That is because the source and quality of His love is not rooted in us, but in Him. He loves not because of what He sees in us, but simply because He is love. If we refuse to respond to this already given love and choose to spurn Him, doing what He hates and hurting our fellow man, we will receive no benefit from that love. If we choose to love Him in return and strive to live in a way that pleases Him, then we will benefit from this love, and will save our souls. But the love remains nonetheless.

Help Fill Our Vans to the 44th Annual March for Life

Holy Trinity will provide free transportation to the 2017 March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Friday, January 27. The trip is sponsored by our campus and Sunday School ministries. Our goal is to fill two 15-passenger vans with parishioners of all ages.

The rally is held on the National Mall beginning at noon. Our delegation will join fellow Orthodox from around the country in marching up to the Supreme Court where a prayer service will be led by Metropolitan Tikhon and other hierarchs.

The pilgrimage departs from the church (parking is available in the gravel lot) promptly at 6:30 a.m., and returns by 10 p.m., stopping each way at the Sheetz near Duncannon at about 8 a.m./p.m. to pick up and drop off Chapel members. Participants should wear warm clothing, pack a lunch, and bring money for a dinner stop on the way home. RSVPs to events@holytrinity-oca.org are appreciated.

As St. John said, "We love because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). We enter this world already loved; our task is simply to respond to it and love God in return.

The second thing that the unborn teach us is that we are completely dependent on others, starting with God. People in the abortion debate sometimes talk about "the viability of the fetus", debating when a child is capable of living life on its own outside the womb. Is the fetus viable at 39 weeks? At 35 weeks? Earlier? But this debate, reasonable in medical terms, is misleading if translated into a theological principle. For, strictly speaking, the baby is not viable even after a full term birth. If the baby is not cared for, and fed, and kept warm, even outside the womb, then it will die—as will you and I. If I am not cared for, and fed, and kept warm, I will die too. We are none of us viable in that sense, for we are all mortal, and only survive because we are part of a vast network of mutual support.

New Parish Directory Photo Shoot

Holy Trinity will be updating its Parish Directory in time for Pascha 2017, and our goal is for all individuals and families in the parish to be included. Unlike three years ago, photography will be professionally done and all participants will get a free copy of the directory along with an 8" x 10" portrait. Photography will take place in the Parish Hall February 9-11. Appointments are required. To schedule them, visit holytrinity-oca.org and click on the "Sign Up Now" link in the top slider or "Latest News" sections of our home page. You may also call the church office at (814) 231-2855 for assistance.

Grief Documentary to be Screened

How can we be helpful to someone who is grieving? How do we move through grief ourselves? *Voices of Grief* is a critically acclaimed documentary film that helps answer these questions. On Sunday, February 19 during Coffee Hour, we will have the opportunity to see the film and learn from contemporary authors, grief experts, and individuals with personal stories of loss. A time for a conversation will follow led by Holy Trinity clergy and guest facilitator Jackie Naginey Hook of Koch Funeral Home, coordinator of the "Helping Grieving Hearts Heal" program. Save the date.

Prosphora Baking Workshop

The Altar Society will sponsor a prosphora baking workshop on Saturday, January 21 in the Parish Hall. Instruction will begin at 1 p.m. and last for approximately 2½ hours. For information, see Anna Stickle.

House Blessings Postponed for '17

Home blessings are postponed this year. You are still invited to bring Christ's sanctification home using water blessed on Theophany Eve (Jan. 5 at 7 p.m.). Bring a bottle or use the ones provided by the parish.

For the Record

BAPTISM

➤ **Anna Elisabeth Van Duin**, daughter of **Adri and Diana Van Duin**, baptized December 24, sponsored by **Mark and Katya Fedkin**. Many years!

■ WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Usher in New Year with Study, Growth (cont. from page 1)

In very concrete terms, we will be able to share with one another the moments where we realize that the Kingdom is with us but not a part of this world. Throughout the study, we'll examine the building of walls and the necessity for gateways leading in and out from those wall, and the important choices we are called to make in going out and coming in.

As noted before, the study will lead us toward and culminate in a women's day retreat day on Saturday, March 11, 2017, with Mother Christophora of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City. Lord willing, the occasion will also give us an opportunity to interact with the newly professed nun, Mother Seraphima, nee Sister Helene (Krenitsky), who was just tonsured at the end of last month and who plans to accompany her. (You may remember Mother Seraphima from when she was a student here at Penn State. In fact, both women are Penn State graduates!) Mother will build on the themes of the study and teach us about prayer, laying a foundation for future ministry opportunities.

Please consider coming to some or all the sessions. As always, we look forward to your presence! ■



Mother Christophora (bottom right) presents Sister Helene to Archbishop Nathaniel for tonsuring to the little schema on December 31, 2016. She received the name "Seraphima" in honor of our Lord's angels who ever sing the thrice-holy hymn.

Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.
 Events listed at **Trinity House** take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
January 1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great Sunday After the Nativity and Before Theophany Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	2 St. Seraphim of Sarov	3	4 Vespers, 5:30pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>	5 Eve of the Theophany Royal Hours, 10am Great Vespers/Litiya/ Blessing of Water, 7pm	6 THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST Obednitsa with Holy Communion, 9am <i>(Hours, 8:40am)</i>	7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist Vespers, 6pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>
8 Sunday After Theophany Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> OYA (Orthodox Youth Association, gr. 9-12) and Jr. OYA (gr. 5-8) Monthly Outing, 6pm-8:30pm	9 Penn State OCF at the PSU Spring Involvement Fair, 11am @ <i>HUB Alumni Hall</i> Clergy Staff Meeting, 6pm	10 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ <i>Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.</i> Women's Bible Study, 7pm @ <i>Trinity House Conference Room</i>	11 St. Theodosius the Great Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions Parish Council Meeting, 6:30pm	12 Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF): Welcome Back Dinner and Social, 7pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Center</i>	13	14 Baptism of James Swisher, 3pm <i>(Reception follows in Parish Hall)</i> Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
15 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> One-Year Memorial for Jordan Swisher, 11:45am	16 Young Adult Potluck and Game Night, 5:30pm @ <i>Trinity House</i> Penn State Student Night, 7pm-8:30pm @ <i>Atty Student Lounge, Trinity House</i>	17 St. Anthony the Great Women's Bible Study, 7pm @ <i>Trinity House Conference Room</i>	18 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	19 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Center</i>	20	21 Men's Breakfast, 9am Prospora Workshop, 1pm @ <i>Parish Hall</i> S.S. Teacher's Mtg., 5:15pm @ <i>Trinity House Conf. Rm.</i> Sunday School Teacher Meeting, 5:15pm
22 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Parents Session, 12pm @ <i>Trinity House Lower Level</i> Church School Pool Party, 2pm @ <i>Ramada Inn, 1450 S. Atherton St.</i>	23 <i>(Trinity House Open Late for Students, 7pm-11pm)</i>	24 Women's Bible Study, 7pm @ <i>Trinity House Conference Room</i>	25 St. Gregory the Theologian Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	26 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Prayer Night, 7pm @ <i>Eisenhower Chapel and 122 Pasquerilla Center</i>	27 44th MARCH FOR LIFE <i>(Church vans depart at 6:30am, return by 10pm.)</i>	28 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
29 Sunday of Zacchaeus Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	30 Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom <i>(Trinity House Open Late for Students, 7pm-11pm)</i>	31 Women's Bible Study, 7pm @ <i>Trinity House Conference Room</i>	February 1 Great Vespers/Litiya/ Blessing of Candles, 7pm Confessions	2 MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE Obednitsa with Holy Communion, 8am <i>(Hours, 7:40am)</i> OCF Dinner & Discussion, 7pm @ <i>122 Pasq. Ctr.</i>	3	4 Altar Society Meeting, 10am Choir Rehearsal, 4:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
5 Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (Fast Free Week) Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> OYA (Orthodox Youth Association, gr. 9-12) and Jr. OYA (gr. 5-8) Monthly Outing, 6pm-8:30pm	6 Penn State Student Night, 7pm-8:30pm @ <i>Atty Student Lounge, Trinity House</i>	7 Women's Bible Study, 7pm @ <i>Trinity House Conference Room</i>	8 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions Parish Council Meeting, 6:30pm	9 2017 Parish Directory Photography Session, 2pm-9pm @ <i>Parish Hall (Reservations Required)</i> Penn State OCF: Dinner and Game Night, 7pm @ <i>122 Pasquerilla Center</i>	10 2017 Parish Directory Photography Session, 2pm-9pm @ <i>Parish Hall (Reservations Required)</i> Penn State OCF: Father's First Friday Film Series: <i>Ostrov</i> , 7pm @ <i>T. House</i>	11 2017 Parish Directory Photography Session, 10am-5pm @ <i>Parish Hall (Reservations Required)</i> Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions

Chapel Calendar

All events take place at the new building (145 North Kern Street) in Beavertown, unless where noted.

Sunday 1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great Sunday After the Nativity and Before Theophany Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	Sunday 22 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>
Tuesday 3 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Monday 23 Monthly Women's "Hats and Blankets for Babies" Knitting/Crocheting Outreach, 6:30pm
Saturday 7 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	Tuesday 24 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Sunday 8 Sunday After Theophany Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Outdoor Great Blessing of Water, 12:30pm @ <i>Beaver Creek, Beaver Springs</i>	Friday 27 44th MARCH FOR LIFE <i>(Church vans stop at the Sheetz on US-22/Benvenue Rd. at 7:30am, return by 9pm.)</i>
Tuesday 10 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Sunday 29 Sunday of Zacchaeus Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Chapel Family Bowling Outing, 3pm-5pm @ <i>Best Bowl, Selinsgrove</i>
Sunday 15 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	Tuesday 31 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Tuesday 17 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Thursday Feb. 2 MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE <i>(Hours and Obednitsa, 8:40am @ Holy Trinity)</i>
Saturday 21 Great Vespers, 6pm	

January 2017