

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
STATE COLLEGE, PA  
PERMIT NO. 289

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church  
119 S. Sparks Street  
State College, PA 16801  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# ***THE TRISAGION***

The Monthly Newsletter of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church  
119 S. Sparks Street, State College, PA 16801 814-231-2855  
January 2009 Volume 14, Number 1

## **THIS NEW YEAR**

**T**his New Year is like any other. It portends of new things. Optimism is part of this season. Hope carries us forward. The old is past. The future awaits.

Of course, it does not take long for the future orientation to subside. We find ourselves doing much the same things in the new year that we did in the old. Resolutions made are resolutions soon forgotten along with *Auld Lang Syne*. And the New Year begins to seem much like the one just past. It becomes just more of the same.

New Year resolutions are so soon swept into the dust bin because they require change. Sure, we might like things to be different, only if we did not have to change ourselves as part of the bargain. We are sedentary creatures in the main. Things that we do, we tend to keep doing, even if they are painful, even if they are damaging or self-destructive.

There is an axiom worth pondering: Keep doing what you've always done and you'll keep getting what you've always got. The same is true about personal habits, or prayer lives, or performance on the job, or relationships with others.

Is parish life any different? Parish life at Holy Trinity is pretty positive. Newcomers keep coming in the doors, marriages and babies and baptisms tend to fill the parish schedule. Sunday worship services tend to feel comfortably full and at times, packed. The financial tallies at year's end finish in the black. The church building still has that new feel. Do we just keep doing what we've always done thinking we will keep getting what we've always got?

Actually, behind each one of these "good things" was the fact that changes took place. Things just didn't happen. We just didn't keep doing what we had always done. Several key changes, over the years, brought us where we are today. One was the widespread adoption of financial stewardship as the means of church support. Time at Holy Trinity is not spent making ends meet by fund raisers. Time can be spent in prayer, in ministry, in fellowship. (Can we still use our time together better? Yes, but we can't use the excuse that we don't have the funds to do so.)

*(continued, page 3)*

**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA:  
VISION, VOCATION, MISSION, IDENTITY**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the second part of a four-part series on Metropolitan JONAH's vision for the Orthodox Church in America. This article was first published in Divine Ascent, the journal of the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco.*

**Part II: The Vision of the Kingdom**

So, what is the vision of the Orthodox Church in America, and thus her identity, vocation, and mission? It is nothing other than Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. This vision is revealed to us when we celebrate the Eucharist, and the Eucharist, in turn, sends us on our mission: to bring Christ's Gospel to America in all its Orthodox integrity. We do not need the ways of the corporate world... [To determine this] we need prayer and discernment—together as the body of the Church, and in particular on the part of our Holy Synod of archbishops and bishops—in order to renew the vision of the Kingdom and to preach and proclaim the unity that exists in Christ by the Holy Spirit and constitutes us as the Church.

---

*It is the Liturgy that gives us our identity and sends us on our mission, renewing our vocation to be the Body of Christ...*

---

This vision is not about programs, institutions, administrations, budgets, or bureaucrats. Even less is it about the personal ambitions, agendas, or self-aggrandizements of bishops, clergy, lay leaders, or anyone else. It is only about Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. All the concrete projects we undertake, all the offices and positions of authority and responsibility, flow from this source. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33).

If as an organization we had lost our vision, then we would have ceased to be the Church. But this is not the case here. That vision, and the grace to actualize and incarnate it, is bestowed at every Eucharist.

The blessed and ever-memorable Father Alexander Schmemmann clearly saw and clearly articulated the Kingdom of God, imparted in the Eucharist, as the focal point of the Church's life. It was this clarity of vision which gave such great strength to his leadership. We need to get back in touch with that vision. We must return to our first love. It is the Liturgy that gives us our identity and sends us on our mission, renewing our vocation to be the Body of Christ—the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in the world.

*(continued, see Part III in February's Trisagion)*

**THIS NEW YEAR** *(continued from page 1)*

The second change was the commitment to expand and remodel the church's facilities. Financial stewardship and a vision toward the future enabled us to meet our needs for new space both for worship and fellowship, and still keep our eye on campus ministry at Penn State. (Again, can we use our space better? Yes, but it's not because we don't have the space.)

A further change was bringing Deacon Alexander on board during 2008 to focus his efforts on campus work as well as ministry to youth and young adults. Thus, change has begotten change. And it was all because along the way we have looked to the future with realistic optimism. We have not merely made resolutions. We accepted the fact that change requires hard work and determined to do things differently.

As we face not only this New Year 2009, but as we look toward the future at Holy Trinity, we need to press on with the same realistic optimism. Things can be better still, if we work hard at the changes needed to make them better. The space we have will, with time, become insufficient again. The ministry models will, with time, need adaptation to meet the needs of even more in our community. The opportunities for service will continue to grow.

So, let us ask ourselves one question and focus on it this whole year: If God has his way with us, what will our parish be like in another five years? What changes would he have us make? What changes will we be willing to make? Truly, if we keep doing what we've always done, we will keep getting what we've always got. But will that be God's will for us? — Fr. John

**YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES TO EXPAND IN 2009**

This month will mark the premier of exciting new expansions to our parish's young adult outreach. The first addition will be "Holy Trinity Student Nights," which open the church to all students and their guests Thursdays from 7pm to midnight for personal and group prayer, fellowship, moderated meditation, and study. We also hope to offer coffee and light refreshments, as well as a safe and convenient Wi-Fi hotspot for accessing the Internet.

Graduates and Professionals (GAP) also returns in January with more opportunities for fellowship and spiritual reflection when its meetings transition into members' homes, making it more convenient for couples or families with young children to enjoy camaraderie and lively discussion. If you are able to host one of our Monday meetings, please let Dn. Alex know.

Also beginning in January, the two groups will have the occasion to interact with one another at monthly socials for all young adults and their friends. Check the parish calendar for more details.

### HOUSE BLESSINGS

January is set aside for House Blessings for the entire parish. Because of the rapid growth of our parish, several days have been reserved by ZIP Code to allow Fr. John to bless all of our homes expeditiously. Please sign-up for one of the days that corresponds with your home's location using the sheet located in the narthex.

Regretfully, invitations to dinner are especially difficult to accommodate, and may have to be declined if any homes remain in a given area that day. Instead, everyone is invited to attend the blessing of the Rectory on January 8 from 7pm-9pm at an Open House in celebration of Fr. John's namesday. Desserts will be provided.

Your cooperation and understanding is greatly appreciated!

ZIP Code(s)	Available Time(s)	
16801	Friday, January 9	10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm
	Saturday, January 10	10am-4pm
	Thursday, January 15	10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm
	Tuesday, January 27	10am-2pm
16803, 16870	Sunday, January 11	3pm-7pm
	Tuesday, January 13	10am-2pm
	Thursday, January 29	10am-12noon, 2-4pm
16803, 16827	Saturday, January 24	10am-4pm
16823, 16853	Sunday, January 25	3pm-7pm
Any ZIP Code	Friday, January 23	10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm
	Friday, January 30	10am-12noon, 2-4pm, 7-9pm

### JANUARY SCHEDULES

#### Coffee Hour

January 4 — Russian Ladies  
 January 11 — Anissa Ilie, Anne Swisher, and Corene Swisher  
 January 18 — Karen Cattell and Melody Thompson  
 January 25 — Anne-Therese Pelikan and Lina Eid-Saleeby

#### Greeters

January 4 — Anne Swisher and David Swisher  
 January 11 — Beth Roberts and Ed Miranda  
 January 18 — Mark Radomsky and Leslyn Radomsky  
 January 25 — Melody Thompson and Mark Fedkin

### HOLY DAYS AND FASTS DURING JANUARY

#### Circumcision of Our Lord

Liturgy, January 1, 10:00am

#### Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner

Vespers, January 6, 7:00pm  
 Liturgy, January 7, 9:00am

#### Theophany of our Lord

Royal Hours, January 5, 10:00am (*Strict Fast—January 5*)  
 Vespers, January 5, 7:00pm  
 Matins, January 6, 9:00am  
 Liturgy, January 6, 10:00am

### 2008 HOLY TRINITY AUDIT CONDUCTED

The 2008 audit of the financial records of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church was conducted in December and no discrepancies were found.

Two impartial parish members, Mark Radomsky and Sam Leathers, were selected by the treasurer and approved by the Council to conduct the in-house audit. Using the 2007 independent financial review as a guide, thirty account payables and twelve bank deposits were randomly selected for the year commencing January 1. All the transactions were verified as accurate.

The Parish Council is committed to a policy of fiduciary responsibility and openness. The monthly updated financial statements are posted on the bulletin board in the church hall.

### ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE

Holy Trinity is teaming up with Citizens Concerned for Human Life, Centre County Chapter, which is sponsoring inexpensive transportation to the annual March for Life Rally in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, January 22.

You are invited to join thousands of other pro-lifers to mark the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the infamous Roe vs. Wade decision of 1973 that resulted in the killing of more than 50 million innocent unborn children. Our bus will leave at 7:00am from Fullington Auto Bus Company, 2101 Alexander Drive, in State College (near the University Park Airport) and return that evening at about 10:00pm. The price is \$20 adults and \$10 for students. There is no limit to the number of people who can participate, so please bring a friend.

Dn. Alexander will be coordinating our group from Holy Trinity. For more information or to RSVP, please email him at [deacon.alexander@gmail.com](mailto:deacon.alexander@gmail.com) or call 814-321-4473. Please reserve your seat early, and no later than Sunday, January 18.