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THE TRISAGION

The Monthly Newsletter of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
119 S. Sparks Street, State College, PA 16801 814-231-2855
www.holytrinity-oca.org **November 2009** Volume 14, Number 11

HTOC AWARDED NATIONAL CLERGY RENEWAL GRANT

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church has received a grant of \$47,492 to enable Fr. John to participate in the 2009 National Clergy Renewal Program funded by the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. We are one of only 149 congregations across the country and the only Orthodox parish this year to be awarded such a grant. Its purpose is to allow pastors to step back from their busy lives and renew their spirits for the benefit of their ongoing ministries.

Now in its tenth year, the program invites Christian congregations to consider and plan a period of intentional reflection and renewal for their pastors. It provides a time for ministers to take a break from their daily obligations and gain the fresh perspective and renewed energy that a carefully considered time of travel, study, rest and prayer can provide.

Fr. John's will have the opportunity to draw inspiration from the original Orthodox missionaries to America by retracing their journey of 1793-94. Following their 7,000 mile journey—the longest overland journey in Orthodox history—he will trek through Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railway, stopping at key points along the path of the Saints' journey. The sabbatical will begin in the spring of 2010 and last until fall.

Crossing the Bering Sea to begin the next leg of his sabbatical, Fr. John will travel to St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, where he will spend the majority of his renewal program. During his stay there, Fr. John will take a weeklong



Fr. John's sabbatical retraces the same journey that Orthodoxy's great missionaries traversed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to bring the Faith to America.

opportunity to meet the indigenous population and pray in the same churches established by native Alaskan priest Jacob Netsvetov during his nearly twenty year mission (1845-1863) up the river.

Fr. John’s sabbatical will also be timed to coincide with the annual Spruce Island Pilgrimage during the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 8-9, 2010. The island is the home of St. Herman, one of the greatest Orthodox missionaries to Alaska, who spent the last forty years of his life living ascetically there. Fr. John will also have an opportunity to stay at Bishop Innocent’s historic house, one of the few surviving examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

Following his itinerary, those of us back home will “travel” with Fr. John each step of the way. During his trip and upon his return, by means of maps, his daily journal, and interviews recorded en route, Fr. John’s journey will be shared and studied by inquirers of all ages in the months that follow. In addition, a full \$15,000 of the grant allotted to us will go directly to Holy Trinity to fund supply clergy, special theological residence programs, and other expenses related to the renewal of the congregation at large.

Holy Trinity looks forward to 2010 when we can further the Lilly Endowment’s goal “to bolster the good work that America’s pastors and congregations accomplish day in and day out and to reinforce and build upon important work being done” by our clergy and laity alike.

Why I’m Going...

Using today’s benchmarks, the initial works of the early American Orthodox missionaries could be deemed failures. The outward measure of contemporary success: building programs, stewardship drives, and ever-increasing Sunday attendance escaped them. They left the relative comfort of their homes and civilization for the unknown: a land filled with strange peoples who spoke strange tongues. The climate is still harsh, the geography no less daunting. Many of the priests and faithful still hunt for food in the summer, endure the endless nights of winter, and cope with isolation. Yet because of their efforts and faith, a strong church lives and grows in Alaska to this day.

I have fancied myself a missionary, a church-planter, and a credible speaker on the topics of mission and evangelism. But I ask myself, “Am I really?” I “missionize” in the relative safety and familiarity of mainland American life: If I need to move my family across country or across town, I call the moving van. I have food on the table with no need to fish or hunt to provide it. In the summers, I enjoy air conditioning; in the winters, I never worry about the cold. Relatively speaking, my experience is easy and routine.

But my body and mind needs a break from the routine. I need to absent myself from my parish schedule to ponder deeply what a life in Christ really is, how it has sustained a people for over two centuries, and how this faith

(continued, last page)

HOLY DAYS AND FASTS DURING NOVEMBER			
Synaxis of Archangel Michael Vespers—Saturday, Nov. 7, 6pm Liturgy—Sunday, Nov. 8, 10am		The Entry of the Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple Vespers—Friday, Nov. 20, 7pm Liturgy—Saturday, Nov. 21, 9am	
Nativity Fast —Begins Nov. 15 <i>Omit meat and dairy (all days), and fish (Wednesdays and Fridays).</i>			
NOVEMBER SCHEDULES			
	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
Nov. 1	Holly Torbic Diana Van Duin	Melody Thompson Mark Fedkin	Team A
Nov. 8	Russian Ladies	Megan Leathers David Swisher	Team B
Nov. 15	Beth Roberts Elaine Stewart	Shane Stevens Maria Stevens	Team A
Nov. 22	Ellen George Anne-Therese Pelikan	Beth Roberts Ed Miranda	Team B
Nov. 29	Anne Swisher Corene Swisher	Mark Radomsky Leslyn Radomsky	Team A
<i>* Team A: Dan Andresen, Chris Doty, Nikita Fedkin, Michael Haupt, Addison Miranda, and Samuel Oleynik. Team B: Joshua Cattell, Matt Doty, Pete Doty, Jonathan Miranda, Stefan Pelikan, and Jeremiah Stickles.</i>			

WHY I’M GOING... (continued from page 2)

affirmed native cultures and sanctified a multicultural society with a vision of the Kingdom of God. By praying my way through Russia and Alaska—two places I have never been—I hope to understand more deeply the obvious love these American missionaries had, such that they would traverse difficult terrain by carriage and on foot, by river boat and sea vessel.

By giving my “lower 48” mentality of church success a shake-up, my parish will get in return a more psychologically rested priest—one who is no longer physically, spiritually, and emotionally drained. By giving my presumptions about mission work and church-planting a thorough review, my parish will enjoy a priest less preoccupied with contemporary standards of church success and effectiveness. (I am my own harshest critic. So much of ministry is a mystery, hidden with Christ in God.) Moreover, my congregation will be led by a better-equipped pastor who will bring awareness of his parish’s own participation in the same evangelical movement begun in Russia in 1793, continuing this day. This will enable Holy Trinity to draw on their wealth of missionary experience and determination in spite of daunting odds, drawing strength from them and their witness—not as objects of history lessons, but real people whose legacy is still important to us today.

– Fr. John

DEANERY CHORUS

The next rehearsal of the Deanery Chorus for Wednesday, November 11 at 6:30pm at the Harbor House Preschool and Kindergarten, located at 113 Byron Avenue in Altoona, PA. For details, email Fr. Andrew Matychak at garymatychak@hotmail.com.

BABY SHOWER

All the women of the parish are invited to a baby shower for Maria Stevens on Sunday, November 8 from 3-5pm in the Parish Hall. Please RSVP to Becca Ziegler: bziegler124@gmail.com.

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

There will be no Sunday School on November 22 or 29 because of the Thanksgiving holiday. Sunday School returns December 6 at 9am.

OCMC ANNOUNCES 2010 TEAMS

There will be at least 14 opportunities to participate on an OCMC Mission Team in 2010. Team applications and more detailed information are available online at <http://teams.ocmc.org>.

YOUR PRAYERS REQUESTED

Please fervently pray for the sick and suffering servant of God, Clay (Mark) Bond.

For the Record

BAPTISMS

- *Camela Mazeski, October 3.*
- *Andre Wagner, October 3.*
- *Zachariah John Cadman, son of Dn. Alexander and Mat. Jennifer Cadman, baptized October 3, sponsored by Paul Sidebottom.*

CHRISMATIONS

- *Vincent Mazeski, October 3.*
- *Megan Mitchell, October 3.*

DONATED

- *100 pounds of baby items and \$155 for the OCMC mission in Cluj, Romania, to help care for impoverished mothers and babies. Thank you.*
- *\$701 was raised for Housing Transitions from the OYA / Sunday School Soup Kitchen Luncheon. Thank you.*
- *\$690 from the sale of baked goods for Lara Haluszczak's winter mission trip to Ukraine. Thank you.*

CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT NEWS

With great joy and enthusiasm, 20 people packed the home of Pastor David and Brenda Smith last Sunday (November 1) to participate in the first Divine Liturgy ever celebrated in Snyder County. Fr. Basil Biberdorf, who presided over the service, noted in his remarks the historic nature of the event and reminded everyone present that despite the Chapel of the Holy Spirit's humble surroundings, they had transcended time and place and had joined the one Eucharist eternally celebrated at the heavenly altar. Most stayed well into the afternoon enjoying their first "Coffee Hour" and learning how to bake *prospora*.



Word is getting out about the new group throughout the county. Only 10 days prior to their first liturgy, Fr. John spoke on "Searching for the New Testament Church" at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove an outreach event coordinated by members of the Chapel. Several inquirers attended, including a retired Lutheran minister, who learned about the event from reading the local paper.

With His Grace Bishop MELCHISEDEK's blessing, the group will gather together for one Divine Liturgy per month for a trial period of six months at the Smith's residence (350 Old Orchard Road in Beavertown). Great Vespers will also be served there the evening before (at 6pm). The Chapel community will continue to commute to State College one Sunday a month to keep them connected with Holy Trinity and our liturgical life. *Typika* (Readers' Service) will be chanted on the remaining Sundays. All Sunday services will be held at 10am.

The next Divine Liturgy in Snyder County will be Sunday, December 6 for the Feast of St. Nicholas. In addition, the Liturgy of St. Basil will be celebrated on the afternoon of December 24 to offer the community their very own Nativity Eucharistic service. For more information, visit the Chapel's Web site: holyspirit-oca.org. To learn how you can get involved, please see or send an email to Fr. Basil: frbasil@holyspirit-oca.org.

ORTHODOXY 101

Orthodoxy 101 continues its exploration of the fundamentals of the Christian Faith on first and third Wednesdays at 7pm in the Parish Hall. Topics to be covered in November include the Resurrection, Ascension, Kingdom God, Sacraments and Eternal Life. All sessions are open to all members of Holy Trinity, especially newcomers and inquirers. Free child care is also provided.

Quarterly Financial Update

To support and grow the ongoing mission of our parish, a goal of \$3,200 per week was budgeted. Your sacrificial giving is greatly appreciated.

