Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers
June 6	Karen Cattell and Diana Van Duin	Melody Thompson & Mark Fedkin	Team A
June 13	Leslyn Radomsky and Megan Leathers Megan Leathers & David Swisher	Megan Leathers & David Swisher	Team B
June 20	Melody Thompson and Jean Miranda	Andreas Artemiou & Rachael Cattell	Team A
June 27	Judy Fryncko and Holly Torbic	Beth Roberts & Ed Miranda	Team B
July 4	Mike & Jenny Anthony and Bob Schrauf Leslyn & Mark Radomsky	Leslyn & Mark Radomsky	Team A
July 11	Russian Ladies	Melody Thompson & Mark Fedkin	Team B

Team B: J. Cattell, M. Doty, P. Doty, J. Miranda, S. Pelikan, and Je. Stickles.

?

Fedkin,

Haupt,

A. Miranda,

Oleynik., and

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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Conversing with God to Grow the Church

ast month, I reported that our Chapel of the Holy Spirit was pursuing the purchase of a building and property in Middleburg. In the end, the seller accepted another offer. However, as you read this, keep in mind that this does not mean God is telling us "no," but rather that God is telling us, "not this one, right now."

If we want to establish strong foundations for a Christian community, we have to start with ourselves: the development of our community follows our spiritual development as persons. Thus, all mission activity, whether in the established parish or in the house church, is built on a strong personal Christian life. The first part of that is prayer.

Prayer is many things, but, above all, it is having communion with God. At the most basic level, it is a personal conversation with our Creator. We often think of it as working our way through our prayer books, "saying" our prayers, talking. But a good conversation goes in two directions. Thus, a prayer book should guide us in our approach to that conversation rather than leading us to be chatterboxes in God's presence. We must be willing to *listen*.

"Listening" is not just hearing the words; it's about receiving them and acting on them. (If you have children, think of the difference between telling the kids to "watch out" and having them hear and respond to it.) And, when it's God doing the talking, it means we should desire our will to be subjugated to His. As He says to the prophet

If God Had His Way With Us, What Would HTOC Be Like?

For Holy Trinity Orthodox Church to sustain its Godgiven growth, we must be willing to listen to God—and each other—to determine His Will and to remove any obstacles that might stand in His Way. To do this, our parish will begin an 18-month process of careful evaluation (and re-evaluation) of church ministries through Orthodox Natural Church Development (NCD) with a goal of removing any barriers that might hinder overall parish health and growth.

Our guide through this process is Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff, who will begin consulting and training members of the Parish Council and ministry leaders on Saturday, June 26. In addition to helping us identify what we as a parish can do to remain strong and healthy, Fr. Jonathan's guidance will also serve as the basis for Holy Trinity's next five-year strategic plan, taking us through 2015 and beyond. It will be fully funded by a special portion of Fr. John's Sabbatical Grant that was specifically earmarked for congregational renewal during his absence.

Isaiah, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (*Isaiah 55:9*). Only wicked, foolish men declare to God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" (*Job 21:14*).

Thus we pray for ourselves the same prayer read by the priest before the Gospel in the Divine Liturgy: "Open the eyes of our mind to the

(continued—see GOD'S WILL, last page)

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Walking in God's Sight

What a great day it is when a baby takes her first steps! For some time she has been able to stand when she holds onto something. Then, with someone holding her up, she is able to move her feet in a way to enable her to walk across the room. But at last, when she stands alone, what a shout of triumph goes up! Soon thereafter, she is able to take a step or two all by herself and how proud are her mother and father. Before you know it, she is toddling everywhere without stopping.

The young child knows when she is learning to walk that she can turn to her parents for help because she is walking before them. But she cannot always have her parent's hand to hold; she must learn to walk alone. For parents, this movement towards independence brings feelings of both joy and apprehension.

In Genesis, God talks to Abram and gives him this command, "Walk before Me" (*Genesis 17:11*). God is referring to the way we are all to "walk," the very way we live our lives every day. He wants us to do as He commanded Abram to do. We can heed God's command, giving our children the example of trusting in God in our every step, knowing that we walk in His sight.

Yes, we will stumble, as do children, as we walk before Him and He knows this. He has given us the power to do right or wrong, and has put us on our honor to do right. Let us show Him and our children that we are worthy.

- Dw. Mark

Extra "Scoops"

THANK A TEACHER

Our teachers offer a wonderful and enduring form of stewardship for our parish. For nine months they prepare a weekly lesson, teach for almost an hour each week, and then often spend more time with their students after Liturgy. They are able to teach in such a way that keeps their students' attention and helps them remember the idea and topic for the rest of their lives. They help organize and supervise many additional activities (and some go on weekend retreats). And they do this while juggling their own family lives. If you are parent or student, please remember your teacher in your prayers and don't forget to thank them for their dedicated work.

- Primary: Sheena Sands, Natalie Roberts, and Celinda (Anna) Stickles
- ➤ Intermediate: Katie Radomsky and Sarah Rauterkus
- > Secondary: Gary Cattell.

WANTED: YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

In any endeavor or program it is always beneficial to assess what is working and areas where improvements can be made. If you have some ideas that may benefit our Sunday School, please see Deacon Mark.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

Don't forget our VBS will be conducted August 16-20 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteers for all positions (teachers, helpers, musicians, crafts, etc.) are welcomed and needed.

Consecration Committee Looking for Volunteers

Interested in lending a hand? We are looking for volunteers with diverse backgrounds and talents to help plan and prepare for the Consecration of Holy Trinity's new altar on Saturday, October 16.

Examples of tasks include hands-on activities ranging from embroidery to construction, as well as sending out invitations and banquet planning. See Dn. Alexander if you would like to learn more.

Women's Ministry Kicks Off This Month with Luncheon

Women's Ministry returns on Saturday, June 12 with the first of many events aimed to increase opportunities for women of all ages to fellowship with one another. It will be a luncheon for all women, girls, and baby girls at Holy Trinity. We will begin with lunch at noon in the Parish Hall followed by a few fun activities. An informational session regarding future plans for the ministry will follow. Drinks and main dishes will be provided. Please bring a Fast-friendly side dish or dessert.

As Women's Ministry grows and evolves we plan to have age-specific events on a regular basis and then semiannual inter-generational events for all involved. For more information, please contact Becca Ziegler at <code>bziegler124@gmail.com</code>.

Fr. John's Blog Premieres

Packed with maps and postcards—but much more than a mere travelogue—Fr. John's new blog, *In the Footsteps of St. Herman: A Pilgrim's Journey*, premiered last month. As he retraces the missionary journey of St. Herman from Valaam Monastery to Alaska, Fr. John offers his readers a glimpse of Orthodoxy many do not get a chance to witness, offering poignant spiritual reflection mixed with humor. You can access his blog through a link from the Holy Trinity Web site or by pointing your Internet browser to *frjohn.holytrinity-oca.org*.

Archdiocesan Youth Retreat to Explore Monasticism

"Monk and Nuns: Soldiers of Christ" is the subject of a daylong retreat for youth of all ages to be held on Saturday, June 26 from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City. The cost is only \$5 per child. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Patricia Lear at pnlear@verizon.net.

Orthodoxy 101 Continues Throughout the Summer

Orthodoxy 101, Holy Trinity's bimonthly class for inquirers, continues this summer with a focus on Church History. The group meets every first and third Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

God's Will (continued from page 1)

understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee." We pray that God's Will becomes our will.

In light of that, the bumps and little disappointments—such as losing a bid to acquire property—become more understandable and even desirable to us. Each of them offers the opportunity to return to God in prayer, again seeking His Will. As each of us makes this return on our own, we build up, collectively, our will and wisdom to move our missions forward by the grace of God. - Fr. Basil

For the Record

MARRIAGE

Megan Mitchell and Andre Wagner, crowned in marriage May 2 at Holy Trinity, sponsored by Vincent and Camela Mazeski.

ORDINATION

➤ John Diamantis, former parishioner and OCF president, ordained to the Holy Diaconate by His Grace Bishop MICHAEL of New York and New Jersey on May 8. Axios!

DEATH

➤ Gennady Belih fell asleep in the Lord peacefully at his home on May 10, after succumbing to lung cancer. Most of all, he will be remembered for his love, dedication, and hard work in beautifying our church. He was 77. Memory eternal!

■ FROM THE DESK OF DEACON ALEXANDER

A New Era for Campus Ministry

It's time to pack my boxes! This month, the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Penn State moves into a new home at the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center at the heart of the University Park campus.

Thanks to the hard work and determination of our students over this past school year, OCF has been transformed from a mere club into a real ministry dedicated to reaching out and serving the campus. They knew that in order to continue the growth of fellowship (which has doubled this year), getting the word out about Orthodox Christianity was essential.

So the group—who already had the vision to begin meeting regularly at Pasquerilla, a hub for spiritual activity and dialogue at Penn State (not to mention one of the few places that allows food at meetings!)—made it their goal to apply for office space. On March 18, 2010, after filling out all the necessary applications and surpassing all the weekly attendance requirements required for consideration, Penn State awarded OCF a place to hang out its shingle.

Having an office is a blessing from God that allows OCF to become a permanent part of Penn State and to increase our participation in the active spiritual community there. Students will now be able to visit their chaplain and receive valuable guidance and support at a location much closer to where they live and study. They will have a home base to begin exploring their vocation. And Holy Trinity, who has been faithfully sponsoring this indispensable ministry (thank you!), moves one step closer to supporting a full-time campus ministry that more effectively witnesses Orthodoxy to the next generation of America's leaders.

■ NEWS & NOTES

The Orthodox Church Beyond Our Parish

EPISCOPAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES

NEW YORK - The first Episcopal Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs in North and Central America was convened May 26, 2010. The Assembly is the direct result of a decision of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference that met in Switzerland in June 2009, which called for the gathering of such assemblies all around the world where there is no single Orthodox presence.

The meeting laid the groundwork for a stronger, more administratively unified Orthodox Church in this continent by creating a single registry of canonical bishops, clergy, and congregations. More importantly, the Assembly called for the

creation of several committees chaired by three bishops each that will explore all the "liturgical, pastoral, financial, educational, ecumenical and legal issues" that must be hammered out to forge an encompassing American Orthodox Church.

ANOTHER PRIEST MURDERED

CHEBOKSARY, RUSSIA - The body of Hieromonk Vadim (Smirnov) was found in his home May 5. He was the Superior of St. Michael the Archangel Church, one of the largest parishes in the Chuvashia region of Russia. This is the third murder of an Orthodox priest in Russia this year, and the second in two weeks in Chuvashia. Memory eternal!

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY Astrology is "Astrolatry" by Father Alexander Karloutsos

A sin in the Orthodox Church is understood in the spirit of the Greek word amartia. In Ancient Greece, when a person aimed to hit the bull's eye and failed, they called it "amartia," "he missed." Falling short of the mark, not reaching your goal, not attaining your purpose is sin... When we do not live up to our goal—being the image and becoming the likeness of God—then we sin.

When we allow the stars of heaven to guide our actions and not God, Who created the stars, then we are sinning. When we run to the newspapers to look up our horoscopes and our futures, and do not seek wisdom and learning from the Bible, then we are sinning. When we do, or don't do, this and that because astrologers say so, and close our ears to God's Commandments, then we are sinning. We are sinning when we pray to our Christian God and, simultaneously, take somewhat seriously the zodiac. We are not Aguarians, Pisceans or Librans, sons and daughters of stars; we are men and women, sons and daughters of God.

The Church has always preached against astrology; our Canon law prohibits people from believing in [it]. In fact, Canon 36 of Laodecia in 369 casts out of the Church people who make, sell, buy or wear the zodiac signs.

The Church Fathers, like the Ancient Greeks, felt that there were "many wonders in the universe, but none more wonderful than man." Man is God's personal image according to Psalm 8, "man was made a little less than God and crowned with glory" in order to have complete dominion over the whole world-stars included.

St. Gregory the Great writes: "Man was not made for the stars, but rather the stars for man; and if a star can be called the ruler of man, then man must be considered the slave of his own servants." God did not create the planets and stars with the intention that they would dominate man, but that they, like other creatures, should obey and serve

St. Gregory of Nyssa, summing up the essential aspect of human dignity, rightly says if we are but instruments of heavenly rotation, then we do not have free will. "And if man loses freedom, he loses everything." If man is not free, man is not

Working on Sundays

Normally, we must cease all work before the Vespers of Sunday or of a feast day. If arrangements can be made, it is better to work more on the previous day... *It is a different matter, if, in the event of an* emergency, some light tasks need to be taken care of in the afternoon of a Sunday or a feast day. But even in such cases, the work should be done with discretion. In the old days, when farmers out in the fields heard the church bell announcing Vespers, they would do the sign of the cross and cease all work. The women of the neighborhood would do the same. And God would bless them. They had their health and enjoyed life.

Once, a man came to my kalyvi and said, "My boy gets sick very often and doctors cannot figure out what's wrong with him." "Stop working on Sundays and things will change," I told him. He followed my advice, and his little boy recovered.

Even if a particular solution is to our disadvantage, and we suffer a loss, in the end we'll be twice blessed. But so many people fail to understand this. They do not even attend the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy sanctifies. If a Christian will not go to Church on Sunday, how will he be sanctified?

— Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain (Athos)