

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Vacation Bible School: **Got Fruit?**

This month our Sunday School will host its annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) and Afterfeast of Pentecost (Trinity Week) our theme this year is “I’ve Got the Fruit of the Spirit in Me.” The instruction will focus on the fruits of the Spirit as described by St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians (5:22-23). Although VBS is for children, it also is a time of learning and sharing for parents (yes, parents, there may be homework for you.)



Throughout the Bible, there are references to many types of trees such as almond, apple, cedar, chestnut, fig, olive, palm, pine, and willow. In his letter, Paul presents the Spirit in the symbolism of a fruit tree. He does this so with the psalmist in mind where it is said that man is like a tree (*Psalm 1*) and also Jesus’ statement that men are like good trees and bad trees (*Matt. 7:16-20*). The illustration is used to help us understand the nature and function of the Holy Spirit.

In today’s world, we sometimes for purposes of décor place artificial plants, greens, etc., here and there for the best total effect. In the same way, when we survey our *spiritual* houses and discover something is lacking, we go out and fill the gaps by putting out our “artificial” trees, becoming which we are not or should not be. We do this hoping to improve our appearance and gratify our own longing to look better.

In other words, we try to substitute our own dry arrangements for the living fruit tree of the Holy

Spirit! However, we do not have to play such a game of make-believe. When the tree of the Spirit thrives within us, we can point to both the tree and its fruit and say, “this is the real thing.”

The fruits that Paul speaks of are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are lovely and such fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit but trees can and do die. This is not to suggest that the life of the eternal Spirit is in danger. It is to remind us that the tree of the Spirit has enemies. So far as we are concerned, the diseases are jealousy, lack of forgiveness, indifference, worldliness, and a score of other sins which can make their attack so that the result is the same: the tree is not permitted to flourish and bear fruit.

It is no accident that the fifth chapter of Galatians begins, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand

(continued—see “GOT FRUIT?”, page 3)

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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
June 5	Judy Fyncko and Holly Torbic	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team A
June 12	Bob Schrauf and Leslyn Radomsky	Beth Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B
June 19	Russian Ladies	Leslyn and Mark Radomsky	Team A
June 26	Elaine Files and Dee Patel	Melody Thompson and Mark Fedkin	Team B
July 3	Julianne Vaughan and Beth Roberts	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team A
July 10	Ellen George and Maria Stevens	Beth Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team B

* Team A: C. Doty, N. Fedkin, M. Haupt, A. Miranda, S. Oleynik., and Jo. Strickles
 Team B: J. Cattel, M. Doty, P. Doty, J. Miranda, S. Peilkan, and Je. Stickers.

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Parishioners to Attend Architecture Seminar

On, Saturday, June 25, Andrew Gould, well-known for his design of several Orthodox churches, will present an overview of the history and development of church architecture at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. To further their own journey towards the construction of a new temple in Snyder County, Chapel of the Holy Sprit faithful will join Holy Trinity members in taking a weekend retreat to the seminary, attending the daylong seminar and worshipping on campus.

Participants will depart from Holy Trinity at 4 a.m. on Saturday, stopping in Beaverton at 5:15 a.m. before heading to New York. The group will then attend the two-part presentation focusing on trad-

itional Byzantine architecture and its practicality in American culture today, examining church aesthetics, iconography, and furnishings. It culminates with a discussion geared to help attendees devise solutions for designing and decorating an Orthodox church today. The day will end with Vespers, dinner, and fellowship. Before arriving home late Sunday afternoon, the group will also attend the Divine Liturgy together at St. Vladimir's.

This trip is open to everyone. Holy Trinity will sponsor transportation, registration, and overnight accommodations. Travellers will be responsible for meals, except Saturday lunch, which is included. Register by June 11 by contacting Dn. Alexander.

■ NEWS & NOTES

The Orthodox Church Beyond Our Parish

IOCC VOLUNTEERS COORDINATE RELIEF IN STORM-RAVAGED AREAS

BALTIMORE [IOCC] – From Joplin to Tuscaloosa, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is working to deliver relief items, such as clean up buckets and blankets, to tornado victims. IOCC and its partner agency, Church World Service, are working with local churches to identify and meet immediate needs such as food and shelter, and services like laundry and property clean up. As of May 27, almost \$500,000 in donated recovery materials have been shipped by IOCC partners to the region for distribution. To donate or learn more about the relief effort, visit ioccc.org.

KOSOVO MUSLIMS MAKE CHRISTIANS "LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR"

[PERSECUTION.ORG] – The Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Irinej recently said that Christian Serbs in Kosovo live in "constant fear." The ethnic Albanians residing in Kosovo, who are overwhelmingly

Muslim, have been pursuing relentless violence toward Serbian Christians. Just before Pascha this year, a land mine was discovered in a cemetery in Kosovo. In the last decade alone, some 150 Kosovo Christian churches and monasteries, and hundreds of tombstones, have been destroyed or vandalized, unearthing the bones of many buried Christians, including that of Serbian Orthodox Saint Joanikije.

ALASKAN GRAVES BLESSED IN CARLISLE

CARLISLE – Last month, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and members of his Mechanicsburg mission blessed the graves of several Native Alaskan Orthodox children buried here. In all, 186 of the 10,000 students who were enrolled in the "Indian Boarding School" died while government officials attempted to violently strip them of their spiritual and ethnic heritage. The names of the departed are commemorated at Holy Trinity each Sunday. To view pictures from the memorial, visit holytrinity-oca.org or watch HTOC-TV, Holy Trinity's digital bulletin, this June.

and women are more zealous believers than I will ever be, given their struggle. Beyond that, I'll not patronize anyone by offering unrealistic expectations of moral revisionism.

Even within marriage, there is no free license to do as you wish when you wish. As anyone subject to the discipline of monogamy can affirm, sensitivity to your spouse sometimes means not getting your way. Force and coercion are acts of exploitation that can only lead to division, rather than union. Rape is rape.

Monogamy also is a matter of thought as well as deed. "Mental porn" violates the marriage bed, and includes not only conventional pornography, but memories of unions with previous partners. These destructive images may come unbidden, which must have something to do with the studies indicating that virgins enjoy better relations than those who enter marriage with notches already carved into their bedposts.

■ ORTHODOX NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Council Begins Five-Year Strategic Planning

To ensure Holy Trinity has a "roadmap" in place to guide its mission and ministry to 2016 and beyond, the Parish Council held a special planning session last month. The four-hour meeting opened with a thorough review of the current mission statement. After evaluating its effectiveness and proposing modifications, each participant had an opportunity to share his insights of what the parish would be like in five years if God's Will was truly accomplished. Among the six common themes identified was the need to remove all obstacles that could curb our current rate of growth and a clear vision to expand Holy Trinity's visibility in our community through the broadening and increasing of its social outreach and evangelical ministries. After completing the group exercises, the positive and progress oriented assembly ended with an overwhelming vote of support to the Chapel of the Holy Spirit faithful to

As with eating and drinking, sexual temperance isn't meant to keep people from getting their jollies, but to make the joy of sex real by liberating it from slavery to passion. Sex shouldn't merely be illicit. It should be sacred. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fr. Barnabas Powell, a 2004 graduate of St. Vladimir's (and former roommate of Dn. Alexander), has spent six years ministering in Colorado, regularly contributing in the Pueblo Chieftain. This month his family will move to lead a mission in Kirkland, WA.

Marriage is a Divine Vocation

Why are you blushing [about my mention of sexual intercourse]? Leave that to the heretics and pagans, with their impure and immodest customs. For this reason I want marriage to be thoroughly purified, to bring it back again to its proper nobility. You should not be ashamed of these things. If you are ashamed, then you condemn God who made marriage... [It] is a mystery of the Church!

— St. John Chrysostom

proceed with their plans to purchase property in Beavertown. The Council will continue its analysis and the planning process at its June 8 meeting. ■

For the Record

BAPTISMS

➤ *George Thomas Biberdorf, son of Fr. Basil and Mat. Dea Biberdorf, baptized May 8, sponsored by Fr. Christopher Ignatius Rigden-Briscall.*

TRANSITIONS

➤ *Julius D. "Bud" Wilbur, step-father to Anne and David Swisher, passed away May 12 at the age of 81. May his memory be eternal!*

YOUR GENEROSITY

➤ *\$700 from a benefit breakfast held May 29 for Christopher McNulty's upcoming mission trip serving orphans in Ukraine. Thank you!*

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Sex Isn't Sin!*

by Fr. Barnabas Powell

As we enter a month popular for marriages, Fr. Barnabas Powell explains that sex isn't sin... as long as it is practiced within a sacred context.

Few topics are more guaranteed to offend than sex. I probably needn't go any further. Merely seeing the word in print has surely offended someone already. That squeamishness is a good place to begin.

Negative views of sexuality in Western Christendom go back at least as far as Augustine, who reacted to his own, youthful transgressions with a Manichaean starkness that filtered into Latin positions and impacted doctrines as wide-ranging as original sin, clerical celibacy and birth control.

Eastern Christianity, by contrast, doesn't view sex as inherently profane. Opponents of homosexuality cheekily observe that God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. Let's not overlook the fact that God didn't merely create Adam, either. If sex were inherently tainted, a good God would have created us to reproduce asexually, like snails.

Far from such Puritanism, Genesis refers to God's handiwork nine times as "good." The first "not good" refers to man being alone. Enter Eve. Leaving little room for subtlety, God tells the new pair to "be fruitful and multiply" (and not with a calculator). He says this before they sin, so none can claim sex is merely a manifestation of the Fall.

Nevertheless, since the world is fallen, sex has become subject to corruption. Probably the best definition of idolatry I've heard is "the worship of

something good rather than the God who made it good."

Given the amount of time, effort and emphasis we devote to sex, it has become one of the most worshipped idols in our culture. Treating the topic as taboo will no longer suffice as responsible Christian teaching. Progressives attempt to compensate for historical Puritanism by claiming that anything's permissible as long as there's mutual consent, but this policy is no less distorted.

The East gave Christianity monasticism, but our parish priests are usually married. We venerate the Virgin Mary, but also celebrate her Conception by Joachim and Anna (whose icon includes a bed). These aren't inconsistencies, but a continuum whose common theme is chastity.

Chaste sexuality begins with a proper context, and the Eastern Church has only ever recognized one—heterosexual, monogamous marriage. Enlightened minds will no doubt be repulsed by the first of these three conditions, but bear in mind that in the Eastern tradition, homosexuality isn't singled out for any greater condemnation than premarital or extramarital sex (i.e., fornication and adultery, to dispense with euphemisms).

In fact, biblically speaking, adultery is the quintessential symbol of apostasy and betrayal of sacred covenants. Homosexual advocates are right to point out the hypocrisy of opponents who ignore the child abuse and extramarital escapades rife among Christians (the clergy being "Exhibit A").

There are and always have been priests, monks, bishops and even saints who've struggled with attraction to members of the same sex. These men

Renowned Choir to Present an Evening of Sacred Russian Music

Holy Trinity will host an evening of beautiful sacred music performed by the Konevets Russian Quartet on Thursday, June 16 at 7 p.m. The selections sung by the quartet range from chants and hymns by 20th-century composers such as Chesnokov, Grechaninov, Stravinsky to ancient chants and hymns in their original one-, two- and three-part arrangements.

Founded by graduates of the St. Petersburg Music Conservatory in 1992, the ensemble travels around the world with the goal of sharing the rich Russian vocal tradition with its audiences.

The performance is free of charge. A free-will offering will be accepted to support the Konevets Monastery (from which the group takes its name), a 600-year-old religious community located 100 miles northeast of St. Petersburg on Lake Ladoga.

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Got Fruit? Register Today for VBS!

(continued from page 1)

fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1). Thus, there is the liberating fruit of the Spirit. Love begets freedom from hate. Joy brings freedom from gloom. Peace displaces conflict. Goodness triumphs over evil. Faith brings freedom from confusion. Gentleness delivers from arrogance. Self-control liberates us from excesses.

From a practical perspective, in order to harvest the right fruits, there must be the right roots. Parents must make sure the right tree is planted. And to insure spiritual health, the tree must be given daily attention and nourishment to have a ready response to the Spirit. Remember the words of our Lord: "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8). Let us all gladly let the tree of the Holy Spirit bear fruit through us.

Young Adults to Hold Social

To encourage summer fellowship among the "18-35" demographic, the Young Adult Fellowship and OCF will host a social on June 15 (a Fast Free Wednesday) at 8 p.m. at Champs on N. Atherton. **Be there!**

New Arrival at the Bookstore

The Holy Trinity Bookstore is pleased to announce the arrival of the newest edition of *St. Elizabeth the New Martyr* from St. Nikodemos Press. The Bookstore, open after the Sunday Divine Liturgy in the Parish Hall, regularly expands its diverse selection of titles. All new arrivals are now placed on the bottom shelf of the center bookcase.

Join the Lawn Rotation

The Grounds Maintenance ministry is looking for more volunteers to cut the grass around the temple each week. **Interested?** Contact Shane Stevens or see the Ministries page at holytrinity-oca.org.

Extra "Scoops"

ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE

Register your child(ren) as soon as possible by logging on to holytrinity-oca.org. You can also view galleries from previous VBSes. See you this June 13-17!

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY DEVOTIONS!

With school ending this month, the daily family routine transitions. Although the pace is different, regular prayer, Scripture reading, and attendance at Church services should remain constant. Why not set a goal with your child and work on this together over the summer months? Some suggestions: Memorize an entire Psalm (or a couple), study of one of the books of the Bible, complete a service project in our community, or plan to attend a full cycle of services for an entire week or two (i.e., daily Vespers, Saturday Great Vespers, Sunday Matins and Divine Liturgy).