

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Signs of the Nativity Season

by Dn. Mark Oleynik

I WAS SURE I MISREAD A SIGN as I drove along one day. But a few days later as I again approached the sign, I stopped to allow enough time to read it carefully and there it was: “No worship service on Christmas Day.” To me, this was a most foreign thought. Certainly, I know that there are many non-Christians who celebrate Christmas so a sign like this could be no big deal (growing up, I had some Jewish friends who celebrated Christmas). But this sign was at the entrance of a *church* and that year Christmas happened to be on a Sunday!

My mind was racing: What will those parents tell their children when they wake up on Christmas morning, wondering why they aren’t in church on Jesus’ birthday? What if somebody wanted to enter this church to say a prayer or to hear the Christmas story? What if someone who is troubled and is searching for Jesus shows up?

Christmas—the Nativity of our Lord—is the day when the entire Christian world goes back to Bethlehem to gaze upon the Child in the cave, joining in earthly cadence with angelic host in the celestial harmonies singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.” It is a day of hope and joy and gladness. Stirring history is wrapped up in six brief words: “Unto us a child is born” and we are carried into the light and glow of the Winter Pascha. They are the pulsating heart of the season which cast a stillness over us by their inward wonders and these wonders reassure us in our worship of Him.

(continued, see SIGNS OF THE SEASON, next page)



## New Every Morning

by Fr. John Reeves

*New Every Morning is the love  
Our waking and uprising prove  
Though sleep and darkness safely brought  
Restored to life and power and thought*

I OFTEN COME BACK to these words of John Keble, English poet and churchman. They begin with a paraphrase from Lamentations, “*His compassions fail not. They are new every morning,*” (3:22-23). During this past year of convalescence, mornings could be a struggle simply to rise. Some days I didn’t rise at all. Physical weakness and chemotherapeutics coupled to make life cloudy. It was trying to be sure.

(continued, see FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK, page 3)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH  
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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
December 3	Russian Ladies*	J. Petrengill and S. Petrengill	B. Haupt and M. Stevens	Team A
December 10	A. T. Pelikan and J. Miranda*	A. Ashmore and E. Ashmore	R. Patel and H. Torbic	Team B
December 17	H. Torbic and M. Thompson*	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	B. Haupt and M. Fedkin	Team A
December 24	M. Leathers and A. Ashmore	J. Fyncko and M. Fedkin	G. Cartell and M. Stevens	Team B
December 31	L. Rush and J. Cadman	J. & R. Cadman and J. Houser	E. Ashmore and R. Patel	Team A
January 7	A. Legaspi and K. Cartell	J. Petrengill and S. Petrengill	TBD	Team B

\* Denotes switch/change      Team A: Z. Cadman, B. Oleynik, J. Torbic, C. Schrauf, E. Scisler, and J. Scisler.  
\*\* Denotes fast      Team B: J. Cadman, C. Legaspi, N. McFarland, S. Patel, D. Stuckles, and L. Torbic.      Captains: D. Torbic and S. Oleynik

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

# Hoping Every Morning for What Awaits

The weekly ritual was much the same, a monotonous eleven month-long rhythm of injection, reaction, recuperation; injection, reaction, recuperation; injection, reaction, recuperation. Only the weekend provided a respite, with an extra day of rest: the Lord's Day.

Besides receiving Holy Communion, my joy on those Sundays were words from the creed, "I look for the resurrection of the dead." It was the Resurrection of Christ which gave significance to and sanctified my physical, emotional, and spiritual combat. Without it, my struggle would have ultimately been bereft of meaning. To begin to long for heaven brought a great peace, a tremendous comfort to my soul. So whatever happens now is merely preparation for what God has in store not only for me but for all who rejoice in the hope of His Coming (*cf. Romans 5:2*).

Part of my preparation for His Coming again was finding Him working in my life through the agony of a year of treatment. It allowed me ultimately to attempt to join my sufferings with those of Christ, imperfectly but attempted nevertheless. By uniting with Christ's sufferings, however, His glorious Resurrection became not merely words of creedal assent, but a hoped-for End.

When I frankly used the term "terminal illness" with brother clergy towards the beginning of my ordeal, they gasped for a second. I told them, "Yes. I am terminal, but so were they. We are all terminal." I continued, "But I know Who the Terminus is. That makes the rest of my journey all right."

For now, I'm back in the saddle, so to speak, I'm riding a slower moving horse. There is no need to nudge him into a gallop. In the meantime, there is a new luster in the world around me, as I hope more fervently for that to come, a hope that is new every morning.

*New mercies, each returning day,  
Hover around us while we pray;  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.*

*If, on our daily course, our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.*

— Taken from "Hues of the Rich  
Unfolding Morn" by John Keble

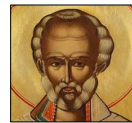
From the Rector's Desk,  
*Fr. John*

## Feast Days this Month

### St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

VESPERS: Tuesday, Dec. 5, 7pm

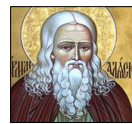
LITURGY: Wednesday, Dec. 6, 8am  
(A.T. Pelikan, Prosphora)



### St. Herman of Alaska

VESPERS: Tuesday, Dec. 12, 7pm

LITURGY: Wednesday, Dec. 13, 8am  
(A. Stickles, Prosphora)



### THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

R. HOURS: Friday, Dec. 22, 10am

VIGIL: Sunday, Dec. 24, 6pm  
(A.T. Pelikan, Litiya Bread)  
(E. Loukachkina, Icon)



LITURGY: Monday, Dec. 25, 10am  
(A. Stickles, Prosphora)

### Synaxis of the Theotokos

VESPERS: Monday, Dec. 25, 7pm

LITURGY: Tuesday, Dec. 26, 10am  
(A. Stickles, Prosphora)



## Budget Unanimously Approved

At the Parish Annual Meeting held November 12, a quorum of parishioners unanimously voted to adopt a growth budget for 2018 that continues to fund outreach and ministries from Holy Trinity and Trinity House in State College, and the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in Beavertown. For more on the budget, see the 2017 Annual Report posted at [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org).

## Join Us for Holy Supper

Holy Supper is a traditional Lenten meal on Christmas Eve, the last meal of the Nativity Fast. Continue this annual parish family tradition by bringing a favorite Lenten food and sharing it with all that are present. The meal begins on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. and leads into the Vigil at 6 p.m. If you have any questions, contact Matushka Kelly Oleynik at [obkellyoh@hotmail.com](mailto:obkellyoh@hotmail.com).

## Cookie Exchange Returns

All the women of the parish are invited to our annual Christmas Cookie Exchange! To participate, see the sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall, then bring a minimum of 3 dozen homemade holiday cookies and the recipe to Trinity House on December 17. We will have a time of festive fellowship there following the Christmas Play.

## Confessions Schedule

Fr. John will hear Confessions on first and third Saturdays (that is, December 2 and December 16) and during the daily pre-festal Vespers that begin December 18 at 5:30 p.m. Fr. David will be available for Confessions after Vespers on Wednesday, December 13. Confessions are also available by appointment by contacting the Parish Office. Please try to limit your personal observance to one confession this month.

## Participate in St. Nicholas Drive

Our St. Nicholas Tree in the Narthex is an opportunity for you to help those in our community who would otherwise not receive a gift this Christmas. Each tag on the tree has the person's age, sex, and wish. Bring the gift back to church by December 17 to help spread Christ's love this Christmas to the poor in our area.



## Dozens Receive Complete Meals

Last month, parishioners donated turkeys with all the fixings, sides, and desserts so that 26 struggling families (107 people in all) in our community could enjoy a complete Thanksgiving meal. It was made possible by an ongoing partnership between our Matthew 25 ministry (who collected the food) and Strawberry Fields (who distributed the food). ■

## ■ NEWS AND NOTES

### Register Today for College Conference Midwest

BROOKLINE, MA [*via ocf.org*] — Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) encourages all students to register for College Conference Midwest at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Wisconsin. The Conference theme is "Glory to God for All Things." From December 27-30, 2017, OCF will bring together hundreds of Orthodox college students from across the country. Incredibly, College Conference East at Antiochian Village filled to capacity in one week with 280 registered students. However, spots for the Midwest Conference, an eight-hour drive from here and convenient to all Chicago Airports—are still available at a discounted rate of \$200 per attendee. The keynote speaker is Molly Sabourin of Ancient Faith Radio. Visit [ocf.net](http://ocf.net) to learn more and to register.

## For the Record

### BAPTISMS

➤ **Kyra Quinn** was enrolled into the Holy Catechumenate at Holy Trinity on November 19. Many years!

## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# On the Love of Enemies

by Jean-Claude Larchet

Although it is natural and usual to love those who love us and to do good to those who do good to us (*Mt. 5:46-47; Lk 6:32-33*), to love our enemies is distasteful to our nature. One can say that it isn't in our power but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. This is why St. Silouan the Athonite writes, "The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies, and does not accept it."

[St. Silouan] repeatedly says that love of enemies is impossible without grace... This grace does not suddenly erupt in the soul, but rather shows itself in a divine pedagogy, where taking into account the weakness and the difficulties of man, the Holy Spirit progressively teaches him to love and teaches him all the attitudes and ways which will allow him to do so... The grace of the Holy Spirit shows to him who possesses it the way to love his enemies. But it also reveals to him the foundation of this love: the love of God for all people and His will to save them...

[B]ecause love of enemies is a fruit of grace, it is essentially through prayer that it can be obtained. Several times [St. Silouan] urges us to "ask the Lord with our whole being to give us the strength to love all men..." Yet obtaining the grace to love one's enemies presupposes other conditions.

The love of enemies is completely bound to the love of God: we have seen that the principal foundation for the love of enemies is the love that God shows to all His creatures equally and His will that all people should be saved, and Christ gave us a perfect example of such love throughout his earthly life. The love of God leads man to accomplish His will and to imitate Him as much as possible, and so also to love his enemies...

To love one's enemies is also tightly bound to humility... Almost all the difficulties we encounter in

loving our enemies are linked with pride: it is from pride that flows the affliction that follows upon insults, hated, bad temper, spite, the desire for revenge, contempt for one's neighbor, refusing to forgive him and to be reconciled with him. Pride excludes the love of enemies and love of enemies excludes pride... Indeed humility is the indispensable condition to receive and keep the grace that teaches us to love our enemies and gives us the strength to do so... God will not fail to respond.

For the person who feels discouraged by such a demanding task... think constantly of these words of the Apostle: "*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength*" (Phil 4:13)... for [in] Christ there are no enemies—there are those who accept "the words of eternal life," there are those who reject and even crucify; but for the Creator of every living thing, there can be no enemy. So it should be for the Christian, too, who "in pity for all must strive for the salvation of all." ■

## Seven Ideas to Disavow

Here are seven wrong ideas the spiritually immature have about the Lord's work:

- 1) *They see the church as a human institution belonging to them.*
- 2) *They see the pastors as their employees, there to do their bidding and be accountable only to them.*
- 3) *They see God's work as something the professionals do and their roles as volunteers when it's convenient and easy.*
- 4) *They see their contributions (money, service, teaching, etc.) as voluntary and not required.*
- 5) *They see their church's reputation in the community as irrelevant and unity as beside the point.*
- 6) *They see their [sinful] behavior as no one's business but their own.*
- 7) *They see themselves as the center of their own universe and think everything revolves around them.*

—Joe McKeever, *ChurchLeaders.com*

## ■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

# The Wondrous Signs of the Season

A first wonder of the Nativity is that of the Divine in the human. Can there be anything wonderful in simply the fact that a child is born? But here is a deep inward wonder. Often the common things are the rare things—more precious than all the jewels on earth. Is it not true that birth is a mystery and that even the wisest of men do not know the deep secrets of the mystery? God revealed himself to men in human birth and showed the closest of earth's closest relationships.

Another wonder is that God gave us a heavenly gift as a little child. Who would have conceived that God Almighty would appear among men in the likeness of a little child? It is not that He thought, or that He said, but that He gave, "unto us a child." Here is the wonder of wonders that the child born unto us became the Incarnation of the Eternal. As the story of His life begins with the angelic words, "Peace, good will towards, men," so it closes with his bequest, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you."

Finally, is the wonder of the reception by mankind. What a difference it makes when a child is born in our own home or next door. The coming of a child into the world may be silent as the gently falling snow or may be proclaimed in today's world in an instant. The King of Kings was born in the cave attached to the inn. There were simple, "shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night," who were not too dulled by the noise of the world to hear an angel say, "Fear not, for I bring to you glad tidings of great joy." In these days, we too may also be at the inn where Christ is born, yet know nothing of the Glory!

Christmas bells may ring, and the sweet music of the carols may fill the air and some others may be busied with merry making in the inn but let us fall on our knees and worship Him who as a little child came to save the world. Let us worship Him on the day He was born unto the world! ■

## Sunday School Scoops

### Feast of St. Nicholas: December 5/6

*The celebration of one of the most favorite saints for children begins with Vespers on December 5 at 7 p.m. (there are special treats for the kids). The Divine Liturgy begins at 8 a.m. on the sixth. Plan to attend these services. (Note: Attendance at religious services is a **legal** absence from school.)*

### Christmas Caroling and Service Project

*We will be Christmas caroling on the streets of downtown State College on Friday, December 8. We will begin with pizza at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall before caroling and preparing the IOCC Health Kits.*

### Celebrating the Forefathers

*On Sunday December 17, the Church celebrates the Holy Forefathers. All parishioners whose patron saint is a forefather/foremother are invited to bring an icon of their patron saint. There will be a table set aside so that all may venerate the icons.*

### Christmas Play

*Also, on December 17, our Sunday school will once again retell the Christmas story following the Divine Liturgy. Plan to stay and support our children and join in the singing of some traditional carols.*

## ■ WOMEN'S MINISTRY

### Join Our Online Study!

The Women's Book Study on *The Theology of Illness* has launched at [holymunity-oca.org](http://holymunity-oca.org) with participants adding to the discussion threads regularly. It is not too late to begin to participate. In fact, any time this winter or spring is a good time to sign into the forum and read the good ideas and insights of the contributors. I would invite all women to do so, whether you have time to read the book or not. I think you'll find some interesting insights into the topic and also into some of the inner lights of your sisters in Christ.

—Mary Lanser



# 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
26 <i>(No Sunday School— Thanksgiving Recess)</i> Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	27 <i>(Trinity House Open Late for Students, 7pm-11pm)</i>	28	29 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	30 <b>Apostle Andrew the First-Called</b> Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center	December 1	2 Reader's Workshop, 10am @ Trinity House Conference Room Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
3 <u>"St. Nicholas Tree" Drive Begins</u> Sunday School, 9am Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Sunday School Christmas Caroling Practice, 12pm-12:15pm	4 <i>(Trinity House Open Late for Students, 7pm-11pm)</i>	5 40-Day Memorial for Pdn. Keith Russin, 6:30pm Great Vespers, 7pm Men's Chorus Rehearsal, 8pm	6 <b>St. Nicholas the Wonderworker</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am <i>(Hours, 7:40am)</i> Vespers, 5:30pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>	7 Penn State OCF: End-of-Semester Game Night, and Christmas Party, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center	8 Sunday School Dinner, Christmas Caroling and IOCC Service Project, 5:30pm-8:30pm	9 Great Vespers, 6pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>
10 Sunday School, 9am Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Trisagion for Apr. John & Mka. Barbara Oleynik, 11:45am Sunday School Christmas Caroling Practice, 12pm-12:15pm	11 <i>(Trinity House Open until 11pm for Finals Week, tonight thru. Thursday)</i>	12 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave. Great Vespers, 7pm	13 <b>St. Herman of Alaska</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am <i>(Hours, 7:40am)</i> Vespers, 5:30pm/Conf. Men's Chorus Rehearsal, 6:15pm Parish Council Mtg., 7pm	14	15	16 Men's Breakfast, 9am Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Altar Soc. Decor'g, 4:30pm Sunday School Christmas Play Practice, 4:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
17 <b>Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ</b> Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Church School Christmas Play, 12pm Christmas Cookie Exchange, 12:45pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	18 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	19 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	20 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions Men's Chorus Rehearsal, 6:15pm	21 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	22 Royal Hours of the Nativity of Christ, 10am Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	23 <b>Saturday Before the Nativity of Christ</b> Great Vespers, 6pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>
24 <b>Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ/Eve of the Nativity</b> Matins, 9am <i>(No Sunday School)</i> Divine Liturgy, 10am Holy Supper, 4:30pm Nativity Vigil: Great Vespers, Litiya, and Matins, 6pm	25 <b>NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours 9:40am)</i> Great Vespers, 7pm	26 <b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours 9:40am)</i>	27 Vespers, 5:30pm <i>(No Confessions)</i> Men's Chorus Rehearsal, 6:15pm OCF College Conferences <i>(thru. Dec. 31) @ Bolivar, PA &amp; Kansasville, WI</i>	28	29	30 <b>Saturday After Nativity and Before Theophany</b> Great Vespers, 6pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>
31 <b>Sunday After the Nativity and Before Theophany</b> Matins, 9am <i>(No Sunday School)</i> Divine Liturgy, 10am Great Vespers, 7pm	January 1, 2018 <b>Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil the Great</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours 9:40am)</i>	2 <b>St. Seraphim of Sarov</b>	3 Vespers, 5:30pm <i>(No Confessions)</i>	4	5 <b>Eve of the Theophany</b> Royal Hours, 10am Great Vespers/Litiya/ Blessing of Water, 7pm	6 <b>THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST</b> Festal Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am

# Chapel Calendar

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

Saturday 2 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	Tuesday 19 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
<b>Sunday 3</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Fellowship and Study of <i>The Orthodox Faith</i> , following	Saturday 23 Great Vespers, 6pm
Tuesday 5 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	<b>Sunday 24</b> <b>Sunday Before/Eve of the Nativity of Christ</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Great Vespers/Litiya, 6pm
Saturday 9 Great Vespers, 6pm	<b>Monday 25</b> <b>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>
<b>Sunday 10</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Fellowship and Study of <i>The Orthodox Faith</i> , following	Tuesday 26 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Tuesday 12 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Saturday 30 Great Vespers, 6pm
Saturday 16 Great Vespers, 6pm	<b>Sunday 31</b> <b>Sunday After the Nativity &amp; Before Theophany</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Molieben for the New Year & Fellowship, following
<b>Sunday 17</b> <b>Sunday of the Forefathers</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Six-Month Memorial for Earl (Noah) Lyter, 11:30am Fellowship and Study of <i>The Orthodox Faith</i> , following	Tuesday Jan. 2 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm

**December 2017**