

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Fr. John Retires After 22 Years



On December 30, Fr. John (center) gathers with the clergy and faithful of the State College community following his last Divine Liturgy celebrated as rector. His tenure here will be marked by substantial growth: in addition to the many who transferred to the parish over his 22 years here, Fr. John personally baptized and/or chrismated more than 180 souls. In the liturgy, we thanked God for Fr. John's pastorate and prayed that our Lord would continue to add daily those that are being saved, including a new rector.

Transition Team Completes Work; Submits Profile

AT THE REQUEST of Archbishop Melchisedek, the Holy Trinity-Chapel of the Holy Spirit Transition Team met before the end of the past calendar year to create a profile outlining the parish's organizational culture as well as a set of candidate interview questions for His Eminence to give to prospective rector candidates. The meeting was held on December 13; the group's work product was sent to His Eminence, our Chancellor, Fr. Bill Evansky, and our Dean, Fr. Mark Meholic and can be viewed on the parish website, holytrinity-oca.org.

Rather than attempting to list the characteristics and viewpoints of a diverse group of parishioners, the profile contains the parish's mission statement; list of core values; a comprehensive history; budgets for the current year and the previous four; vital statistics including average Sunday attendance and census data; and the 2018 Annual Report, which contains pertinent financial information and ministry reports. The Transition Team strongly believed that the mission and vision of the parish—and the stewardship that supports it—is the clearest demonstration of our organizational culture: The parish welcomes *anyone* to join the parish and participate in its shared vision, and the budget declares what we value most as a congregation. His Eminence received the submission and has promised an appointment of an interim or permanent rector by Annunciation. ■

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Schedules

| | COFFEE HOUR | GREETERS | TELLERS | SERVERS |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| January 6 | R. Schrauf and D. Patel | J. Pettengill and S. Pettengill | B. Haupt and M. Fiori | Team A |
| January 13 | M. Leathers and A. Ashmore | D. Patel and R. Patel | M. Fedkin and D. McNulty | Team B |
| January 20 | E. George and K. Oleynik | J. Cadman and J. Houser | M. Anthony and H. Torbic | Team A |
| January 27 | C. Swisher and D. Van Duin | J. Fryncko and M. Fedkin | E. Ashmore and G. Cartell | Team B |
| February 3 | J. Cadman and J. Rush | J. Cadman and B. Haupt | M. Fedkin and B. Haupt | Team A |
| February 10 | Russian Ladies I | J. Pettengill and S. Pettengill | M. Fiori and D. McNulty | Team B |

* Denotes switch/change
 ** Denotes fast

Team A: Z. Cadman, B. Oleynik, J. Torbic, E. Swisher, and J. Swisher.
 Team B: J. Cadman, N. McFarland, S. Patel, D. Stables, and I. Torbic.

Altar Server Captains:
 D. Torbic and S. Oleynik

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

When a Rector Leaves a Parish

When a rector leaves numerous relationships are broken, officially and personally. Since announcing my retirement this past July, a series of events were set in motion which are still having an effect in the parish as well as the Archdiocese.

A vacancy now exists in the rectorship of the parish for the first time. That is a new and daunting reality. Most parishioners do not remember a time when there was no rector. While I have attempted to have a graceful departure, taking care of pastoral and parochial matters, emotional detachments are more difficult.

There are certain protocols for all concerned to aid in this transition.

1. *I will not be making any personal contacts with clergy or parishioners for a minimum of one year: no phone calls, emails, texts, social media posts, etc.*
2. *You are asked to do the same in this regard. Personal cards (at Pascha, Nativity, births of loved ones, for example) are certainly appropriate. (My new address is 5012 Grampian Way, McKinney TX 75071, by the way). Otherwise, communication should be limited; criticisms of my successor or other members of the parish will not be tolerated.*
3. *Deacon Alex will share pertinent details about my health as warranted, by Holy Trinity's usual means of communication: the Trisagion, the website, etc.*
4. *Questions about the transition and a successor? Please see item 3.*

Following these protocols will help the whole parish cope with this phase of its life. ■

One last time from the Rector's Desk,
Fr. John

Feast Days this Month

The Circumcision of our Lord / St. Basil the Great

VESPERS: Monday, Dec. 31, 7pm

LITURGY: Tuesday, Jan. 1, 10am
(P. Doty, Prospora)



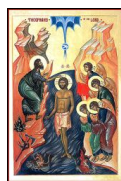
THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

R. HOURS: Friday, Jan. 4, 10am

VESPERS: Saturday, Jan. 5, 6pm
(A. Stickles, Litiya Bread)
(S. Pettengill, Icon)

MATINS: Sunday, Jan. 6, 9am

LITURGY: Sunday, Jan. 6, 10am
(P. Doty, Prospora)



THE MEETING OF OUR LORD

VESPERS: Friday, Feb. 1, 7pm
(A. Stickles, Litiya Bread)
(E. Loukachkina, Icon)

LITURGY: Saturday, Feb. 2, 9am
(A.T. Pelikan, Prospora)



Thank You, Beechan Family!

The six new handcrafted wooden stands now being used by the State College Choir were made available through the generosity of the Beechan Family. They were donated in memory of Chuck Beechan, who reposed in the Lord in 2017.

House Blessings Postponed for '19

Home blessings are postponed this year. You are still invited to bring Christ's sanctification home using water blessed on the Eve of Theophany (January 5). Bring a bottle or use the ones provided by the parish.

The Homeless Ministry Needs You

We are looking for four new volunteers to complete the year's schedule of serving monthly meals to the homeless. You'll be partnered with a veteran your first time. Email Samar at samaralmaalouf@gmail.com for details.

Visit the Library in the Parish Hall

The Holy Trinity Library, which operates daily out of the Trinity House Conference Room, will have a table in the Parish Hall during Coffee Hour on January 13 with books on the Orthodox Faith and Christian living available for you to peruse and check out.

HTOC Knitters Return in February

Join us in fashioning hats and blankets for a good cause! Experience in knitting is helpful, but not a necessity, as instruction will be provided. In 2018, the new ministry was able to donate one box each of baby blankets and baby hats to the nursery at Mount Nittany Medical Center. It meets the first Monday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Trinity House.

Young Adults to Eat Endless Pasta

The January Young Adult Fellowship get-together will feature "All-You-Can-Eat" pasta at the Corner Room in downtown State College on Monday, January 14 at 6 p.m. The ministry will sponsor the food. Participants can bring their own cash for drinks or dessert.

Remember the Budget this Year

In 2019, our budgeted expenses will rise by about eight percent to ensure the parish can fund the new rector's compensation package as well as his moving expenses. Prayerfully consider your response to the increased needs and ministry of the parish. In every case, do so cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver. Giving to the Lord gives us the greatest joy in return.

■ NEWS AND NOTES

Orthodox Mission Featured in Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PITTSBURGH [*via post-gazette.com*] — St. Moses the Black Orthodox Church, a new storefront church here in the Hill District neighborhood, was recently featured in the December 24 issue of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Their priest, Fr. Paul Abernathy, is a U.S. Army veteran of the Iraq War and a convert to Orthodoxy. He drew on his own experience recovering from post-traumatic stress to create FOCUS Pittsburgh, seeking to help residents respond to the trauma of violent crime, poverty and inequality. You can learn more about FOCUS at focusnorthamerica.org and read the full article at post-gazette.com.

Memorial Fund Created for Missionary Orthodox Bishop

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL [*via ocmc.org*] — The Orthodox Christian Mission Center here is seeking help to cover the memorial costs of Bishop Athanasios Akunda of Western Kenya. He fell asleep in the Lord last month after losing a battle to illness. Proceeds beyond the funeral cost will support his diocese during this difficult time of transition. You can donate online at ocmc.org.

For the Record

BAPTISM

➤ *David Witmer* was baptized December 22 at Holy Trinity by Fr. John Reeves. The service was attended by his parents, Mark and Cindy. Many years!

MONASTIC TONSURE

➤ *The former Sister Margarete, née Grete Roeber (PSU OCF Liberal Arts '05), was tonsured as stavrophore monastic Mother Macrina the Younger last month. May she be saved in the angelic life!*

ELECTION

➤ *Deacon Alexander Cadman* was elected as Chairman to the National Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) Board of Directors last month.

A Prayer for the Sanctity of Unborn Life

As the parish prepares for its pilgrimage to the March for Life in Washington DC on Friday, January 18 (see a member of the clergy to sign up), may these solemn words minister to those who pray them and to whom they are directed.

Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who in the beginning fashioned man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life so that he became a living soul, Who knowest the time of life and name of each even from his mother's womb, Who numberest even the hairs of our heads, and Who keepest a watchful eye over every living thing in Thy creation, do Thou now look upon Thy creation which Thou hast fashioned according to Thine own image, and grant to those who are in their mother's wombs and to their mothers the protection that Thou gavest Thine own Virgin Mother when she carried Thee, and fill them with the Holy Spirit even as Thou once filled Elizabeth such that John the Forerunner leaped in her womb at encountering Thee.

As Thou becamest incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became true man, hidden within the veil of Thy mother's flesh, joining Thy divinity with our humanity, join Thyself now with us and all Thy human creation through Thy grace. As Thou didst enter into the womb of Thy Mother, be present also in the wombs of all mothers, with them and with their children. Protect them from all assaults of the evil one and his foul spirits, that in due time all may come unto Thee, as Thou didst say, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

O Thou Who at Thy birth heard the weeping of Rachel in lamentation, who would not be comforted for her children were no more, crying out at the slaughter of the innocents by the wicked Herod for Thy sake, hear also the weeping of all those who lament the

deaths of Thy little children, who cry out for Thy love and peace in the midst of terror and inhumanity.

As Thou once granted true contrition of heart to David and to Manasseh and to Peter, Who sinned against Thee, grant true repentance to all who in malice or greed or desperation or hopelessness or ignorance sin against Thee and Thy creatures in the untimely taking of their lives. Receive their tears as the tears of the Publican, which flow from the depths of their hearts, as Thou didst receive David, who had taken life unjustly, and Manasseh, who had permitted the worship of idols, and Peter, who thrice denied Thee. Receive them as the Prodigal, with eagerness and rejoicing, clothing them with the robe of holiness and glory and celebrating with them the feast of faith.

Speak words of justice into the hearts of our rulers, that they may be guided by divine wisdom in protecting and nurturing life in every good way. Give strength and love to those who minister to all who suffer in desperation and need, granting through them every spiritual and earthly blessing. Protect the widows and orphans and the abandoned, be father to the fatherless, hope to the hopeless, raise the young, protect the bond of marriage in peace and concord. Remember the forgotten and bring them to mind in all of us who pray unto Thee. Grant eternal rest to the fallen, and raise them up at the last day.

O Christ our God, Who knowest all in our depths and receivest the supplications of Thy servants Who call out to Thee in our own transgressions and imperfection, hear this our humble prayer and give us all Thy divine blessing from on high, for Thou art ever glorified with Thy Father Who is from everlasting and Thine all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. ■

— *courtesy of Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick*

Why Can't We Just Pray at Home?

by
Abbott
Tryphon

Over the years I have met people who have chosen not to join a church, choosing, rather, to "worship" at home. Some have convinced themselves church is a waste of time, and feel they can be close to God while staying home on a Sunday morning. Others believe none of the churches teach the Bible according to their own interpretation, and choosing to worship in the privacy of their own home, assure themselves they "won't" have to hear any false teachings.

Some people have chosen to stay away from church because of past conflict with a pastor, or perhaps they grew tired of hearing pleas for money and have convinced themselves that giving to a charity is money better spent (in reality, church goers tend to outspend non-church goers in charitable giving).

In truth, God has given us the Church as the very place wherein we can grow spiritually, while enjoying the protection, and the blessings, of being in weekly contact with other believers. Just like an earthly family, we don't always enjoy the presence of other members, but it is often those difficult and uncomfortable moments that help us grow the most. As well, there are blessings that would never be experienced, should we remain apart from fellow Christians.

In Luke 4:16, we read that Our Lord Jesus Christ was regularly in the temple, for "He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom." It was Christ's regular practice to go to church, "As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place." If Our Lord Jesus made it a priority to meet together with other believers, how can we excuse ourselves from doing the same?

Perhaps the most important reason for weekly church attendance lies in the fact that it is only in the church where we can receive Holy Communion, for Our Lord

Extra Scoops...

Youth Retreat Next Month

The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania (OCA) will conduct a retreat led by Steven Christoforou (of the popular "Be the Bee" podcast) at Christ the Savior Church in Harrisburg on Friday and Saturday, February 8-9. The retreat is open to school children ages 12 and older.

To promote fellowship among our own students and to have the opportunity to engage with Orthodox students from other parishes, the parish's Sunday School and Orthodox Youth Association are inviting your children to attend the retreat. Participants will depart from Holy Trinity at 4:30 p.m., stay overnight at the parish in Harrisburg (bring your sleeping bags), and return following Vespers in Harrisburg on Saturday.

While the majority of the trip's costs will be assumed by the parish, the suggested donation is \$15 to cover part of the registration fee and transportation costs. If you are interested in attending, complete the registration form online at holyytrinity-oca.org or see Deacon Mark.

Parents Session and Youth Ministry Survey

Thanks for all who attended the Parents Session with Fr. John and for completing the survey on our parish's youth ministries. Your responses will be compiled and used to evaluate our ministries, looking for areas of improvement to better serve you and our children. For those who were unable to attend the session, it was recorded and posted to the parish website. The accompanying survey is also included there.

went so far as to say that unless we eat of His flesh, and drink of His blood, we will have no life in us (*John 6:53*). It is in the reception of Holy Communion where we receive the grace needed to grow spiritually, and where we are empowered to live in all holiness and truth.

Finally, the neglect of corporate worship grieves the Holy Spirit who lives within the individual believer and the Church as a whole, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (*Eph. 4:30*). ■

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 |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 30 Sunday After the Nativity and Before the Theophany Matins, 9am (No Sunday School) Divine Liturgy, 10am Oleynik Family Open House, 2pm-5:30pm @ 125 Wildercrest Ln., Port Matilda, PA 16870 | 31 Great Vespers, 7pm | January 1, 2019 Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil the Great Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours 9:40am) | 2 Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) | 3 Choir Rehearsal, 7pm | 4 Royal Hours of Theophany, 10am | 5 Eve of the Theophany Great Vespers/Litya/ Blessing of Water, 6pm (No Confessions) |
| 6 THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST Festal Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am | 7 Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner Penn State OCF at the PSU Spring Involvement Fair, 11am @ HUB Alumni Hall | 8 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave. Choir Rehearsal, 7pm | 9 Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) Parish Council Meeting, 7pm | 10 Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF): "Welcome Back" Dinner & Spring Preview, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center, University Park | 11 St. Theodosius the Great | 12 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 13 Sunday After the Theophany Sunday School, 9am (Locations vary; All classes begin in the Parish Hall.) Divine Liturgy, 10am (Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am) Jr. OYA (gr. 5-8) Activity, 12pm Orthodox Youth Association (OYA, gr. 9-12), 6pm @ Trinity House | 14 Young Adult Outing: All-You-Can-Eat Pasta, 6pm @ Corner Room, 100 W. College Ave., State College. | 15 | 16 Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) | 17 St. Anthony the Great Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center | 18 46th MARCH FOR LIFE (Church vans depart at 6:30am, return by 10pm.) | 19 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 20 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am) | 21 | 22 Choir Rehearsal, 7pm | 23 Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) | 24 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Prayer Night, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center | 25 | 26 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 27 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am) | 28 | 29 | 30 Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) | 31 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Center | February 1 Great Vespers/Litya/ Blessing of Candles, 7pm | 2 MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE Divine Liturgy or Obednitsa, 9am Altar Soc. Mtg., 10:30am @ Trinity House Conf. Rm. Great Vespers/Conf., 6pm |
| 3 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am) OCF Super Bowl Party, 6pm @ Trinity House Atty Lounge | 4 Knitting/Crocheting Ministry, 6:30pm @ Trinity House Conference Room | 5 | 6 Vespers, 5:30pm (No Confessions) Sunday School Teacher Meeting, 6:15pm @ Trinity House Conference Room | 7 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Game Night, 7pm @ Trinity House Atty Lounge | 8 | 9 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |

Chapel Calendar

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

| | |
|--|--|
| Tuesday 1 St. Basil the Great Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Molieben, following | Saturday 19 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following |
| Saturday 5 Great Vespers, Litya, and Blessing of Water (indoor) for Theophany, 6pm | Sunday 20 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Fellowship and Study of the Orthodox Faith, following |
| Sunday 6 HOLY THEOPHANY Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Outdoor Blessing of Water and Fellowship, following | Tuesday 22 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm |
| Tuesday 8 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm | Saturday 26 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following |
| Saturday 12 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following | Sunday 27 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Fellowship and Study of the Orthodox Faith, following |
| Sunday 13 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Fellowship and Study of the Orthodox Faith, following | Monday 28 Monthly "Hats & Blankets for Babies" Knitting Outreach, 6:30pm |
| Tuesday 15 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm | Tuesday 29 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm |
| Friday 18 March for Life 2019 (rides depart at 7:30am from the Duncannon Sheetz.) | Friday February 1 Great Vespers/Litya for the Meeting of the Lord, 6pm |
| | Saturday 2 Great Vespers/Conf., 6pm |

January 2019