

When We Attempt to Help God



When he was 99, God gave Abram a new name based on the covenant He made with him, “Abraham” (father of many nations). Shortly thereafter, he provided hospitality to three holy men (depicted above), a type of the Holy Trinity. One of them correctly told an incredulous Sarah that she would give birth the following year. The couple did not need to take matters into their own hands after all.

AS WE AWAIT WORD regarding the status of a new rector to be assigned to us, I am reminded of the ancient story of Abram and Sarai. If you recall, Abram had been promised by God that He would make of him a “great nation” and a “blessing” so that “in you,” God vows, “all the tribes of the earth [shall] be blessed” (*Gn. 12:1-3*). Now, when God spoke all of this, let us remember that Abram nor his beloved wife, Sarai, were spring chickens! At the giving of this divine promise, Abram was 75 years of age.

A couple of chapters later in Genesis, God revisits His promise. The aging Patriarch laments that he still has no heir of his own flesh and blood, but that the son of a slave in his household would apparently be his heir. But the Almighty reaffirmed the Covenant.

(continued, see FROM FR. DAVID’S STUDY, next page)

A Word from Your Parish Council

by Justin Houser

SEVERAL OF YOU HAVE RECENTLY approached members of the Parish Council asking us about the status of our transition to a new rector to shepherd us at Holy Trinity. We appreciate your prayerful concern and join in your desire to continue moving forward in this process. We also understand the importance of knowing where things stand. For this reason, we recently requested—by way of a formal resolution—that His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek provide an official update to the parish.

(continued, see A WORD FROM THE COUNCIL, next page)

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Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
September 1	A.T. Pelikan and H. T orbic	L. & M. Radomsky, and L. Swisher	M. Anthony and D. McNulty	Team A
September 8	J. Miranda and D. Van Duin	J. Cadman and J. Houser	M. Fiori and B. Haupt	Team B
September 15	E. George and K. Oleynik*	J. Pettengill and S. Pettengill	G. Cartrell and M. Fedkin	Team A
September 22	Russian Ladies II	D. Patel and R. Patel	D. McNulty and H. T orbic	Team B
September 29	I. Andzhievskaya & L. Radomsky*	E. Bazilevskaya and M. Fedkin	M. Anthony and M. Fiori	Team A
October 6	Orthodox Christian Fellowship	B. Haupt and A. Stickle	M. Fedkin and B. Haupt	Team B
* Denotes fast				
** Denotes switch change				
	Team A: Z. Cadman, B. Oleynik, N. Patel, E. Swisher, J. Swisher, and J. Torbic.		Altar Server Captains:	
	Team B: A. Buyanskiy, J. Cadman, N. McFarland, S. Patel, D. Stickle, and L. Torbic.		D. Torbic and S. Oleynik	

■ FROM FATHER DAVID’S STUDY

Don’t Help God like Abram and Sarah

(continued from pg. 1)

Despite God’s promise to Abram that his own seed would number like that of the stars of Heaven, “Sarai the wife of Abram bore him no children.” (*Gen. 16:1*) So, obviously getting older with no reasonable end in sight, Abram and Sarai—shades of Adam and Eve in the Garden are at work here—decide they will help God along by assisting Him with obtaining and fulfilling the promise which, by all appearances, was becoming less and less likely given their advancing ages.

Knowing how children are made, they devise a plan to give Sarai’s handmaiden to Abram in order to help God keep His promise. Of course, we know the rest of that story: The birth of Ishmael complicated matters to the that Ishmael became a source of conflict because he would be, as the Angel of the Lord told Hagar, “a wild man, his hands against all, and the hands of all against him...” Abram is now 86 years old and the hope of a son with Sarai is greatly diminishing (*Gn. 16:1-16*)!

At age 99, God reaffirms the promise He had made to Abram 24 years before, reassuring the aging man that he and (now) Sarah would, in fact, have a son together and that God would establish His Covenant with Isaac and his kin (*Gn. 17:1-27*). Indeed, 25 years after the initial promise, “the Lord visited Sarah, as He said, and...she conceived and bore Abraham a son...at the set time; ... Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born to him” (*Gn. 21:1-7*)!

Isn’t it so easy for us to want to help the Almighty out—to assist Him in remembering us, especially when we exchange eyes of faith for those of an earthy perspective? In many ways, we can well empathize with the elderly couple. Just like Eve in the Garden, the choice before them appeared good, reasonable, logical, and wise (*Gn. 3:6*). But, as noted above, when they forced the hand of God, other lingering consequences—albeit unintended—came into play. He provides for us according to *His* divine time (*Ga. 4:4*).

We can only see as far as the horizon; God sees well beyond what we cannot! It is for good reason, then, that the Sacred Scriptures teach us not to rely upon the feeble human engineering of the will of God, but rather “Be still, and know that I am God” (*Ps. 45 [46]:10*). This is the ancient wisdom of Moses to Israel in the Exodus when their back was against the advancing army of Pharaoh. What might we (or Israel) have been tempted to (reasonably) do given those circumstances? They wanted to return to the land of bondage. But, what does God say through His Prophet? He says, “Be of good courage: stand [still] and see the salvation which is from the Lord, which He will work for us this day;... The Lord shall fight for you...” (*Ex. 14:1-31*). Thank God, that His mother did not try to help God out when He approached her to be the Ark and Tabernacle of His Son! What the Almighty proposed defied all human logic! Had she felt the need to help God, we might all still be in our sins!

None of this is to say it’s easy. But, God is faithful! Let us continue to trust God’s mercies made new every morning and walk in the path He has laid out for us. God has His time when, if we wait with perseverance and in faith, He will bless us—God does not disappoint. Let us continue to be the Church, richly blessed with a whole host of spiritual gifts, ministering the Name of the Lord. Life in Christ continues on with or without a stated Rector. There is no hiatus in the Holy Spirit. The choir continues to sing, the Readers continue to read, Confessions continue to be heard, the Body and Blood of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ continues to be offered, Baptism continues to be administered, the Council continues to meet, decisions continue to be made, all the various ministries of the parish continue to minister. All of this is to say, our life in Christ God goes on... richly... because we are blessed in the Holy Spirit! We await together the will of God. ■

— Fr. David

■ PARISH COUNCIL

Sunday School Begins This Month

Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 15 at 9:00 a.m. with prayer in the Parish Hall. If you have children in Kindergarten through the twelfth grade, register online at holytrinity-oca.org or in the Parish Hall by September 14. See Dn. Mark or call (814) 231-2855 if you are interested or have questions.

Archdiocese to Fund CHS Addition

At its August meeting, the Archdiocesan Council overwhelmingly accepted the Chapel of the Holy Spirit’s proposal for a refinanced mortgage of \$150,000 at 0% for 25 years (a \$500 per month payment). The goal is to pay off its current mortgage and use the remainder to build a 12’ x 10’ addition on the Chapel’s east side to house its altar. If approved by the parish in its 2020 budget, the mortgage would start January 1 and there would be a Spring groundbreaking. Details on this and the proposed budget will be in the November *Trisagion*.

Discover September’s Book Feature

In *Lights on the Mountain* by Cheryl Anne Tuggle, love, loss, and the memory of an otherworldly encounter haunt the days and nights of a Pennsylvania dairy farmer. Barely old enough to vote when he loses his parents and inherits the family farm, Jess Hazel struggles to find meaning in the life he has always loved. Through events both tragic and joyous, he is led on a journey of self-discovery through ancestral sin, unexpected love, loss, holiness, compassion, forgiveness and redemption. “This novel glows with quiet beauty... Tuggle may well have birthed a new genre, a decidedly American Eastern Orthodox literary fiction,” reviewed Dr. Leslie Baynes, N.T. Associate Professor at Missouri St. Univ. This and other “featured books” can be found on the shelf to the left of the entrance to the Bookstore.

For the Record

BAPTISM

➤ **Vivienne Arina (Irene) Chawla**, daughter of Tarun and Erica Chawla, was baptized on August 31 at Holy Trinity, sponsored by **Rdr. Matthew and Jill (Anna) Finke**. *Many years!*

Council Update on the Rector Transition

(cont. from p. 1)

As a reminder, the appointment of a rector is the sole prerogative of our bishop, and as a Council we do not purport to speak in his stead nor make decisions on his behalf. We do well to heed the apostolic injunction to “[o]bey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (*Heb. 13:17*)

In a communication to the Council dated August 31, His Eminence confirmed our supposition that while potential candidates have been actively considered, the person who will succeed Fr. John has not been identified and the search therefore continues. Anticipating this possibility, your Parish Council approved an up-to-six-month extension for Fr. David Smith’s service as Interim Priest at Holy Trinity (in addition to his duties at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit) so that we might have uninterrupted pastoral care. Deacon Alexander Cadman continues to serve as Acting Administrator, Dn. Mark Oleynik continues as Director of Christian Education, and Fr. Mark Meholick, our Dean, continues to regularly counsel us. We thank our clergy for their continued sacrificial service to our parish.

We must continue to pray for His Eminence in his truly unenviable task, that he may send us the man whom God has called to serve us in these times. Before he retired, recall that Fr. John admonished us that the Evil One can surely use the uncertainty of this season to tempt us away from our mission to build up the Church beyond our parish. To resist this temptation, therefore, “let us put on the armor of light” (*Romans 13:12*). In that spirit, be assured that we will continue to update you with the facts as we have them, and we always invite you to share your questions and concerns with us. ■

■ BUILDING UP THE CHURCH BEYOND OUR PARISH

Supporting Theological Education

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York, will match dollar-for-dollar all funds received from a parish that are designated for an enrolled student. Zachariah Mandell, an alumnus of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Penn State and a former director of the Choir has received qualifying support from our parish the last two years. Now entering his senior year of the graduate school, Zach wrote this to the clergy, council, and faithful of Holy Trinity:

Through the grace of God, I am entering my final year at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, a fact that I find rather hard to believe. I feel like just yesterday I was beginning this process, and now the end draws near. It is incredible how much growth I have experienced here as a Christian and as a man, and how much more growing there is to do. I thank God for my experience so far, and look forward to this final chapter.

This past year brought new challenges and new avenues for flourishing. In the classroom, I maintained my 4.0 GPA. The community garden that the Saint Herman's Society began last summer expanded this year, and I pray that it continues to bloom beyond my time here. In addition, I raved about my musical experience here during my first year and could not have anticipated how much my expectations were exceeded this past year! As a part of the Seminary Chorale, I was blessed to perform a number of wonderful concerts this year, one Nativity focused, and the other a Tenebrae-style affair, highlighting the music of Holy Week. I have never felt more alive or inspired as a musician.

With great thanks to all I have learned at Saint Vladimir's, I had the honor of joining the St. Tikhon's professional choir for their debut of Benedict Sheehan's liturgy this spring, something that I could not at all imagined myself being able to do before my time at St. Vladimir's.

All of these beautiful experiences were in great part thanks to you and your support, through finances and prayers. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything that you have done for me thus far. I pray that someday I can repay you for your kindness, generosity and love.

One last time (God-willing!), I now humbly inquire as to whether you would be willing to offer another year of financial support toward my continuing seminary education and experience... I was blessed to again receive a \$6,000 outright grant from the seminary, covering half of the \$12,000 tuition, along with a \$3,000 matching grant, which is only obtainable if it is matched by donations from [parishes like Holy Trinity]... I pray that you will be able to replicate the generosity that you displayed these last two years; my thanks would be without measure.

At its August meeting, the Parish Council pledged a minimum of \$2,000 for Zach's final year. Should your contributions to Holy Trinity with the memo line "Mandell" exceed that amount, the parish will send Zach any overage. Thank you and thank God for raising up another servant for His Holy Church. ■

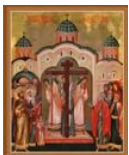
Holy Days this Month



NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

VESPERS: Sat., Sept. 7, 6pm
(A. Stickles, Litiya Bread)
(K. Bazilevskaya, Icon)

LITURGY: Sun., Sept. 8, 10am



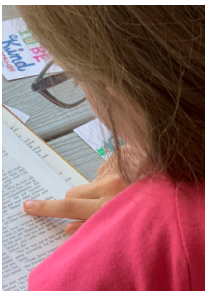
EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

VESPERS: Fri., Sept. 13, 7pm
(P. Doty, Litiya Bread)
(L. Radomsky, Icon/Cross)

LITURGY: Sat., Sept. 14, 9am
(I. Andrzhevskaya, Prosphora)

Kids Have a Great Time Learning the Fruits of the Spirit

Last month, more than a dozen children aged 4-12 had a fun time at Vacation Bible School (VBS). Throughout the week there were activities to help children learn the nine attributes of a person that is full of the Holy Spirit, according to Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. ■



View more photos and daily recaps from VBS at holytrinity-oca.org/!

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
September 1 Church New Year (Indiction) Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am)</i>	2 <i>Labor Day</i> <i>(Parish Offices Closed)</i>	3 Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) at Penn State: Freshman Social, 8pm-10pm @ Berkey Creamery	4 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions, following Sunday School Teacher Meeting, 6:15pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	5 OCF at Penn State: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	6	7 Saturday Before the Elevation Great Vespers with Litiya for the Nativity of the Theotokos, 6pm
8 NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS Sunday Before the Elevation Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am)</i> OCF at Penn State: Fall BBQ and NFL Watch Party, 12:30pm @ Trinity House	9 Knitting Group: “Hats and Hugs Made with Love,” 1pm @ Wyndtree Court Commons, 200 Wyndtree Ct., Bellefonte	10 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	11 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions, following Parish Council Meeting, 7pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	12 OCF at Penn State: “Stump the Priest” Night, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	13 Great Vespers with Litiya for the Elevation of the Cross, 7pm	14 ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS Divine Liturgy, 9am <i>(Hours, 8:40am)</i> Great Vespers, 6pm
15 Sunday After the Elevation First Day of Sunday School, 9am <i>(All classes begin in the Parish Hall.)</i> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Sunday School Photo Day, 11:45am Orthodox Youth Association (gr. 9-12) Event, 6pm @ Trinity House	16	17 Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	18 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions, following	19 OCF at Penn State: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	20 Orthodox Christian Fellowship Mid-Atlantic Region Retreat <i>(through Sat. 9/21, departs 5pm from Holy Trinity.)</i>	21 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions , following
22 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am)</i> Sunday School Family Picnic, 4pm @ Circleville Park—Pavilion 4 <i>(use Valley Vista Road Entrance)</i>	23 Conception of St. John the Forerunner	24 New Martyrs of Alaska: Ss. Juvenaly and Peter the Aleut	25 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions, following	26 St. John the Theologian OCF at Penn State: Service Night, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	27	28 Choir Rehearsal, 3:30pm-5:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm
29 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am)</i>	30	October 1 Protection of the Theotokos	2 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions, following	3 OCF at Penn State: Dinner and Discussion, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	4	5 Great Vespers, 6pm
6 St. Innocent of Alaska Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Third & Sixth Hours, 9:40am)</i> 40-Day Memorial for Sylvia Pelikan, 11:45am	7 Knitting Group: “Hats and Hugs Made with Love,” 1pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	8 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	9 St. Tikhon, Enlightener of North America Great Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions Parish Council Meeting, 7pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	10 OCF at Penn State: Dinner and Prayer Night, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Center	11	12 Great Vespers, 6pm

Chapel Calendar

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

Sunday 1 Church New Year (Indiction) Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i>	Sunday 15 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> End of the Summer Picnic at the Rectory, following (bring a chair and dish) CHS Outreach at the Beaver Community Fair <i>(thru 9/21)</i>
Tuesday 3 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Tuesday 17 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Saturday 7 Great Vespers/Litiya, 6pm Confessions, following	Saturday 21 Reader Vespers, 6pm
Sunday 8 NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS Sunday Before the Cross Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Fellowship and Study of Orthodox Spirituality according to St. Silouan the Athonite, following	Sunday 22 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Fellowship, following
Monday 23 “Hats and Blankets for Babies” Outreach, 6:30pm	Monday 23 “Hats and Blankets for Babies” Outreach, 6:30pm
Tuesday 10 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Tuesday 24 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Friday 13 Great Vespers/Litiya, 6pm	Saturday 28 Selinsgrove Market Street Festival Outreach, 8am-4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
Saturday 14 ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Great Vespers, 6pm	Sunday 29 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> Fellowship/Study, following

September 2019