

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Parish Faithfully Looks to 2020



Father Mark Meholick, Dean of the Eastern Deanery of the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, presides over the 2019 Parish Annual Meeting in lieu of an assigned rector. Though not without some technical difficulty, Fr. David Smith, Interim Priest and Priest-in-Charge of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, joined with Chapel faithful from Beavertown for the first time via teleconference.

**A**FFIRMING GROWTH in both attendance and giving this year despite being between rectors, members of Holy Trinity and the Chapel of the Holy Spirit passed a modest growth budget for next year (2.5 percent year-over-year). The nearly \$350,000 combined 2020 Budget maintains the increase passed in 2019 for the new rector’s compensation package and increases the parish’s outreach and fellowship funding by 27%. This expansion reflects the parish’s ongoing support of the Chapel, which has taken on added responsibility for its portion of the Archdiocesan assessment and half of the monthly payment for a new mortgage to fund a planned altar addition. “The continued outpouring of your prayers and your gifts for the ministry and mission of the Church—your answer to the Lord’s call—sustains us in this time and helps us to continue to ‘build up the Church beyond our parish,’” said Justin Houser, Council President. “It is impossible to state in a few words how truly special and ‘trend-breaking’ your support has been.

Our parish is strong as it continues to serve Christ in Central Pennsylvania.” In their reports, treasurer Michael Stickle announced a 11% increase in liquid assets in 2019 vs. 2018 and Interim Priest Fr. David Smith highlighted the return of several priest-led foundational ministries including Orthodoxy 2.0 and the Adult Study Group. For more on the meeting, visit [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org). ■

### New Online Giving System Debuts

**T**O LOWER COSTS AND ADD FEATURES, Council activated online and text giving through Realm, the parish’s donor database, last month. Now when parishioners visit [holytrinity-oca.org/give](http://holytrinity-oca.org/give) they are able to donate by checking account, savings account, or payment cards as before, but through a new secure portal that seamlessly integrates with the parish’s existing directory and giving records. Check it out today! ■

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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
December 8	I. Andzhievskya & L. Radomsky**	J. Petrengill and S. Petrengill	M. Fedkin and M. Fiori	Team A
December 15	Russian Ladies II**	D. Patel and R. Patel	G. Cattell and D. McNulty	Team B
December 22	E. George and K. Oleynik**	E. Bazilevskaya and M. Fedkin	M. Anthony and B. Haupt	Team A
December 29	R. Schrauf and D. Patel	B. Haupt and A. Stickle	M. Fedkin and H. Torbic	Team B
January 5	J. Cadman and J. Rush*/**	J. Cadman and J. Houser	G. Cattell and D. McNulty	Team A
January 12	Russian Ladies I*	J. Petrengill and S. Petrengill	M. Anthony and B. Haupt	Team B

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

# Advice on Abstinence this Advent

Excessive consumption of information is the scourge of modern era, and that is why there isn't anything about it in the rules of fast. This is not to say that consuming too much information has a lesser impact on our souls than overeating.

A Christian man shared how he had decided to refrain from watching TV for a month. In spite of his not having been too much of a TV fan previously, he felt so much pressure to switch on the TV that he likened it to drug addiction: he would even wake up in the middle of the night to watch TV secretly. Honestly, what do you personally crave more: boiled food or online entertainment? (I'm not speaking of work-related computer use. I'm speaking of using gadgets for entertainment, that is, for useless chatting and satisfying one's curiosity). Needless to say, a TV or a tablet is nothing but a tool, which can be a source of either good or bad knowledge. Reasonable amount of information is as important as quality of that information. Here is some advice:

➤ *Stop using gadgets and TV for the duration of the fast and turn to spiritually edifying books. It will help you realize how much we rely on mass media.*

➤ *At least, stop following the news. If that sounds impossible, try to recall the hottest topics in the news from three days ago. Are you sure you really can't live without that information vapor?*

If you are afraid that you'll miss something really important, don't worry: people around you will never give you a chance not to learn about the important event that happened while you were unplugged. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared on St. Elisabeth Convent's blog (blog.obitel-minsk.com) and was reprinted with permission.

## THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

R. HOURS: Tues., Dec. 24, 8am

VIGIL: Tues., Dec. 24, 6pm

(A. Stickle, Litiya)  
(E. Loukachkina, Icon)

LITURGY: Wed., Dec. 26, 9am

(I. Andrzhievskaya, Prosphora)



### Additional Liturgies:

DATE/TIME	FOR	PROSPHORA
Thurs., Dec. 6, 8am	St. Nicholas	I. Andrzhievskaya
Tues., Jan. 1, 10am	St. Basil	I. Andrzhievskaya

# Be Filled with Joy this Nativity Season

As in years past, there are several ways for you and your family to prepare for the Birth of our Redeemer this month—quietly, prayerfully, and intentionally redeeming time:

➤ **Children are especially encouraged** to bring their parents to Great Vespers on Wednesday, December 5 at the new Vespers time of 6 p.m. The customary evlogia from St. Nicholas will be distributed.

➤ **The Sunday School** will spread the news of Christ's birth by caroling in the Holmes-Foster neighborhood and by performing their annual Nativity play. For more details, see the next page.

➤ **Vespers in preparation for the Nativity** begin December 21 and continue daily through the 24<sup>th</sup>. Confessions will be heard after Sunday's Vespers and before and after Monday's Vespers. The Nativity Fast is one of the four periods during the church year when frequent communicants are expected to confess.

➤ **Our St. Nicholas Tree in the narthex** enables the disadvantaged in our community to receive gifts through Matthew 25's partnership with Strawberry Fields. Please take a tag if you are able. Each tag has the child's age, sex, and wish. Return gifts to the narthex or Trinity House (open daily) by Sunday, December 22 to spread Christ's love to the poor. ■

## The Season's Four Levels of Mission

Since the beginning of the November the parish has been reflecting on four levels of missionary activity—to oneself, to one's family, to one's community, and to the world. Evidences of each abound this season: Ascetical disciplines of fasting and almsgiving during the forty days preceding the Nativity of the Lord profit the soul; children raised \$4,000 for summer camp at a Mexican-themed dinner in November; *Matthew 25* conducts drives to support those in need in our community—most recently, through its Thanksgiving and St. Nicholas Tree appeals (see next column and page 2, respectively); and the Sunday School is supplementing the Orthodox Church's outreach to Kenya (see page 3). May God richly bless you and your generosity as you invite Christ within and share Him with those around you.

## Choir Mini-Workshop this Month

In addition to the two regularly scheduled rehearsals (December 12 and 21 at 7 p.m. and 4 p.m., respectively) the Choir will conduct a mini-workshop on Saturday, December 14 at 2 p.m. to continue the training started by Benedict and Maria Sheehan this summer. The three-hour workshop will be led by our very own Phil Graybill and will include two 90-minute sessions with a break in the middle for snacks and drinks. Participants will work on breathing and intonation skills and learn how to sing together in an ensemble with proper direction and response. These events are open to current and prospective members; see Karen Cattell or email [choir@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:choir@holytrinity-oca.org) to RSVP or learn more.

## December Bookstore Feature

From the series "Orthodoxy for Children" and translated from the Russian by Fr. John Hogg, *The Great Feasts* by Alexander Moiseenkov explains in a clear and concise way the twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Liturgical year, as well as Pascha. Each feast is accompanied with beautiful illustrations to help engage children's attention. This \$13 book is designed so that it can be used either by parents to read to their children or for children to read themselves. You can find in the Bookstore, located at the east end of the Parish Hall.

## Knitting Ministry to Return in April

Ministry Leaders Anne Swisher and Leslyn Radomsky thank everyone who participated in the "Hats and Hugs Made with Love" ministry in 2019—thank you for your time, talents, monetary support, assistance, and prayers! This year we have been blessed to create and donate over 200 hats, 50 blankets, and 20 sets of burial clothes for UPMC Harrisburg's Labor and Delivery and Neonatal Intensive Care units. As the cooler weather approaches, we are returning our attention to creating hats and scarves of all sizes for the Centre County Winter Clothing Drive. Although the ministry goes on hiatus from January through March, it will return the first Monday of April at 1 p.m. (and each first Monday thereafter), alternating between the Trinity House Conference Room and Wyndtree Court Commons in Bellefonte. All are welcome to join in the efforts; contact Leslyn Radomsky at 814-234-3038 with any questions.

## For the Record

### BIRTH

➤ **Lucia Anne Kerstetter**, daughter of Rdr. Evan and Elya (Irene) Kerstetter, born November 13, weighing 7 lbs. 8 oz., measuring 20 inches long. Many years!

### ELECTION

➤ *Elected to the Parish Council at the 2019 Annual Meeting were* **Michael Stickle**, Treasurer; **Leslyn Radomsky**, Secretary; and **Daniel McNulty**, Building Chair. The parish also confirmed the appointment of **Holly Torbic**, who will complete a two-year term as Vice President. The parish thanks outgoing members **Jay Rush**, **Samar Maalouf** and **Brandon Stodart** for their many years of service.

### YOUR GENEROSITY

➤ **\$4,018.98** was raised through a fundraising dinner and two matching donors to provide full scholarships for eight children wishing to attend an **Orthodox Summer Camp** in 2020. Thank you.

➤ In addition to donated food items the **Matthew 25 Thanksgiving Drive** raised **\$2,672.75** to provide full meals (including turkeys) and \$10, \$20, and \$30 Walmart cards for 24 families (91 people). Thank you.

## ■ NEWS & NOTES

### Miraculous St. Anna Icon to Visit Archdiocese this Month

WAYMART, PA — Originally gifted from the Mount of Olives Convent outside of Jerusalem and enshrined in a parish in Philadelphia, an icon of St. Anna containing a relic of the grandmother of Christ began to miraculously stream myrrh in 2014 and continued to do so for over five years. The icon is now enshrined at St. Tikhon's Monastery here and has become widely known as a help for those struggling to conceive children, and in aiding the healing of those suffering from cancer.

While the icon no longer weeps myrrh, it continues to exude a heavenly, sweet fragrance, as a testimony to its miraculous quality. Many miracles and graces continue to come from this holy icon, consoling all those who seek St. Anna's intercession. The icon will be accompanied by Fr. Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery, on a trip to the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania. On December 6 at 6:30 p.m., it will be in St. Nicholas Church in Donora; at St. John's in Canonsburg on December 7 at 10 a.m.; and at the Cathedral in Allison Park for the Vespers and Liturgy of December 7-8. Presentations, homilies, and services take place at each visitation. All are welcome.

### 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture Celebrates 50 Years of Autocephaly

CRESTWOOD, NY — A special edition of the Father Alexander Schmemmann Memorial Lecture will commemorate fifty years of autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in America here at St. Vladimir's Seminary. His Eminence, Archbishop Michael will headline events on January 30, the Feast of the Three Hierarchs. As part of the special celebration, three more distinguished speakers will be featured in workshops throughout the day along with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, Mid-Year Commencement, the launch of a special fiftieth anniversary commemorative book (published by SVS Press), and a reception. Each event is free and open to the public. Learn more [svots.edu](http://svots.edu).

### Homeless Ministry Prepares for '20

Thanks to current and past volunteers, the Homeless Ministry was able to cover 12 meals to residents of Centre House this year. Two slots (June and July) are open for new volunteers in 2020 as Anne Cramer, a long-time volunteer, retired from the ministry this year. Email [homeless@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:homeless@holytrinity-oca.org) or see ministry leader Samar Maalouf if you are interested in participating.

### 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. If you have any questions, including food ideas, contact Matushka Kelly Oleynik at [obkellyjob@hotmail.com](mailto:obkellyjob@hotmail.com).

### It's Time for the Cookie Exchange

Bakers will enjoy a Christmas Cookie Exchange on Sunday, December 22 at 12:30 p.m. in the Trinity House Conference Room. To participate, bring a minimum of four dozen homemade holiday cookies and the recipe. A portion of the baked goods will be donated to Housing Transitions. See the signup sheet in the Parish Hall to participate.

### Archbishop Job's 10-Year Memorial

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Archbishop Job's passing and a memorial Divine Liturgy will be held at St. John's Orthodox Church on Wednesday, December 18, 2019. (Archbishop Job is interred behind the altar of St. John's.) The Liturgy will begin at 10 a.m. with Archbishop Melchisedek presiding. An Advent luncheon will follow at the Black Lick Volunteer Fire Department. All are welcome to attend: Driving directions may be found at [stjohnsorthodoxpa.org](http://stjohnsorthodoxpa.org).

### Oops!

The 2019 Annual Report, which can be viewed at [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org), did not originally contain the "Hats and Hugs Made with Love" ministry report (see related story, last page). It has been corrected on the website.

## ■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

# Always Loved: No One is Ever Alone

by Fr. Rodney Torbic

Loneliness or feeling alone can lead to depression and despair. Suicide has become all too common in today's world. [But] Christians need never consider themselves alone. God is always present. Believers can pray to the Holy Spirit, "Who is everywhere and filleth all things!" Hope in the Lord God always has a place in life. For the young and the old, and all persons in between, the good, loving and merciful God is present and in reach.

The Holy Apostle Paul said centuries ago: "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (*Acts 17:27-8*). Individuals with afflictions, those feeling abandoned, perhaps in a prison cell or hospital ward can always reach out to the Lord in prayer. Parents of a troubled son or daughter have reason to hope. Teenagers feeling confused or the elderly seeing many relatives and friends departing this life always can draw strength from the Lord God. Faith, hope, and love in the Lord God makes a decided difference in life.

Believers are the constant recipients of prayers around the clock and from around the world. Prayers are offered in monasteries and churches at all times for believers. Individuals need only open their hearts and minds to draw strength from prayers offered in their behalf from near and far. Individuals living in remote rural areas or in the midst of the city, always have prayerful support in God's Church.

Faith, hope and God's love change the way life is lived. The Crucified and Resurrected Christ is a constant source of hope. God is always willing to listen to hardships, heartaches and tears of pain. [He] suffered excruciating pain on the Cross. Christ always listens. Saints and martyrs having suffered through the centuries are available intercessors before the Lord.

### Extra Scoops...

**Mission to Kenya.** *As the Advent charity activity of the Sunday School, students will be collecting monies to support Fr. Parthenios Eliakim Kullali of the Orthodox Church of Kenya in his efforts to provide craft supplies, establish a feeding program, build a school for the needy, and treat disease. Collection jars are in each classroom. This is the fourth and final level of mission the parish is attending to this season. Thank you for your help.*

**Joy to the World.** *Families will Christmas carol around town on Friday, December 6 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. We will begin with a light meal and end with some delicious hot chocolate. All are invited to share the Good News of Christ's birth. (Dress warmly and bring flashlights and bells if you have them.)*

**Forefathers Sunday.** *All parishioners with O.T. patron saints (not just children!) are requested to bring their forefather/foremother icons for veneration during Vespers and Liturgy the weekend of December 14-15.*

**Play Time!** *After Liturgy on December 22, students will present the annual Nativity Play. A rehearsal will be conducted on December 21 at 4:30 p.m. Instrumentalists, please see Dn. Mark, and plan to arrive at 4:15.*

The Mother of God has a singular relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. She stands alone among all women of all centuries in her relationship with Jesus Christ. She watched her only Son suffer and die on the Cross. She knows what it is to be alone and to suffer.

Christ's Resurrection changed suffering into the greatest of joys. Persons of every century suffering in any way benefit from Christ's Resurrection. She is always present for comfort, support and prayerful intercession. Feeling alone or lonely is overcome through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[This holiday season] and everyday are the days to be united with Christ. Faith, hope and love go together in God's Holy Church. No one is ever alone. ■



# 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
December 1 <b>MATTHEW 25</b> "ST. NICHOLAS TREE" DRIVE BEGINS Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) (No Sunday School)	2 Knitting Group: "Hats and Hugs Made with Love," 1pm @ Trinity House Conference Room Penn State Student Movie Night, 7pm @ Trinity House (T.H.) Atty Lounge	3	4 Confessions, 4:30pm Vespers, 6pm Adult Study Group, 7pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	5 Great Vespers with St. Nicholas Gifts for Children, 6pm <b>NEW TIME</b> OCF at Penn State: Dinner at Holy Trinity, 7pm @ Trinity House	6 <b>St. Nicholas the Wonderworker</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:35am) Dinner and Christmas Caroling, 5:30pm @ Parish Hall (P.H.)	7 Great Vespers, 6pm
8 Sunday School, 9am (All classes begin with prayer in the Parish Hall) Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) Sunday School Teacher Meeting, 12pm @ Trinity House Conf. Rm.	9 <b>Conception of the Theotokos</b>	10 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	11 Confessions, 4:30pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	12 Choir Rehearsal, 7pm Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) at Penn State: Christmas Party, 7pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Spiritual Ctr.	13 <b>St. Herman of Alaska</b>	14 Choir Mini-Workshop: Technique, Intonation etc., 2pm-5:30pm Altar Society Decorating for the Nativity, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm <b>Confessions</b> , following
15 <b>Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) Orthodox Youth Association (gr. 9-12) Lunch and Charitable Activity ("Toys for Tots"), 12:30pm-4pm	16	17	18 Archdiocesan Memorial Divine Liturgy for Archbishop Job (+2009), 10am @ St. John the Baptist Church, Black Lick Confessions, 4:30pm Vespers, 6pm	19	20	21 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Church School Christmas Play Practice, 4:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm
22 <b>Sunday Before the Nativity</b> "ST. NICHOLAS TREE" DRIVE ENDS Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) S.S. Christmas Play, 12pm @ P.H. Cookie Exchange, 12:30pm @ T.H. Vespers and <b>Confessions</b> , 6pm	23 Confessions, 4:30pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	24 <b>Eve of the Nativity</b> Royal Hours, 8am <b>NEW TIME</b> Holy Supper, 4:30pm Nativity Vigil: Great Vespers, Litiya, and Matins, 6pm	25 <b>NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR</b> Divine Liturgy, 9am (Hours 8:35am) <b>NEW TIMES</b> (No Vespers)	26 <b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b>	27 <b>Protomartyr Archdeacon Stephen</b>	28 Great Vespers, 6pm
29 <b>Sunday After the Nativity of Christ</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) (No Sunday School)	30	31 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>NEW TIME</b>	January 1, 2020 <b>Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil the Great</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours 9:35am) (No Vespers)	2	3 Royal Hours of Theophany, 8am <b>NEW TIME</b>	4 Great Vespers, 6pm
January 5 <b>Sunday Before the Theophany</b> <b>Eve of the Theophany</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:35am) Great Vespers/Litiya/Blessing of Water, 6pm <b>NEW TIME</b>	6 <b>THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST</b> Festal Matins, 8am Divine Liturgy, 9am	7 <b>Synaxis of St. John</b>	8 Confessions, 4:30pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	9	10	11 <b>St. Theodosius the Great</b> Great Vespers, 6pm

# Chapel Calendar

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

<b>Sunday 1</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	<b>Sunday 22</b> <b>Sunday Before the Nativity</b> Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Christmas Caroling, then Fellowship at Rectory, 6pm
Tuesday 3 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Tuesday 24
Saturday 7 Great Vespers/Conf., 6pm	<b>Eve of the Nativity of Christ</b> Great Vespers with Litiya, 6pm
<b>Sunday 8</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	Wednesday 25 <b>NATIVITY OF OUR LORD</b> Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)
Tuesday 10 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Saturday 28 Baptism of Lucia Anne, 10am Great Vespers, 6pm
Saturday 14 Reader Vespers, 6pm	<b>Sunday 29</b> Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)
<b>Sunday 15</b> <b>Sunday of the Forefathers</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	Tuesday 31 Great Vespers, Litiya, and New Year Molieben, 6pm
Monday 16 "Hats and Blankets for Babies" Outreach, 6:30pm	Wednesday, Jan. 1 <b>St. Basil the Great</b> Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)
Tuesday 17 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Saturday 4 Baptism of Wesley, Naomi, Noa, and Elias, 10am Great Vespers, 6pm
Saturday 21 Chapel Cleaning/Preparation for the Nativity, 6pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	<b>Sunday 5</b> <b>Eve of the Theophany</b> Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Vespers/Water Blessing, 6pm

December 2019