

## The Bride of God Enters the Temple



The Entrance of the Theotokos Into the Temple, November 21

## Father’s Annual Address: Being Built Into A Spiritual House

Glory to Jesus Christ! It is with great gladness and thanksgiving to God that I can once again give a positive report on the state of the life of our parish. By the testimony of the holy Apostles, we know that in life we will always “fall into diverse temptations,” both as individuals and as a parish family (Jas 1:2). But by God’s grace, even as we have been “tested by fire” in the past few years, we have been discovered to be those who are walking by a faith that is precious and holy, one that is drawing us up to “joy inexpressible” and filling us with the fervent expectation of an everlasting salvation at the coming of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:7-9). So we rejoice even now in the midst of struggles, both personal and corporate, knowing that victory in spiritual combat produces “patience, and patience produces character, and character produces

hope” (Rom 5:3-4). And the hope that is in us through Christ Jesus will not disappoint us. Rather, it will lead us up to “perfect love” for God and for His world, to wisdom, and to “mature manhood:” the fulness of the character of Jesus Christ (1 Jn 4:18; Eph 4:13). Therefore, let us rejoice in any difficulty or temptation that now besets us, knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28).

The great trial of the past from which we have emerged is the COVID-19 pandemic. But before us we now find another series of great challenges. Though these challenges are in the main happier, lighter, and full of joy and expectation, they are challenges nonetheless and will take spiritual, intellectual, and interpersonal effort as well as individual and community resolve for us to overcome.

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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS
November 6	L. Georgiou & K. Oleynik	J. Houser & D. Swisher	K. Cattell & M. Fedkin
November 13	Potluck	A. Stickle & K. Oleynik	G. Cattell & M. Fiori
November 20	H. Torbic & A.T. Pelikan *	J. Johnson & K. Oleynik	K. Cattell & C. Johnson
November 27	Basic Coffee Hour*	M. Fedkin & K. Bazilevskaya	M. Fiori & H. Torbic
December 4	C. Swisher & S. Hunter*	J. Houser & D. Swisher	M. Fedkin & C. Johnson
December 11	A. Ashmore & C. Pellock*	A. Stickle & J. Houser	G. Cattell & H. Torbic

# Rector’s Report (con’t)

Probably the greatest of these challenges is the challenge of overall community planning and discernment. In July we re-engaged K&W Engineers to begin work on our long-delayed site survey process. We are now several steps into the process and we have come to an impasse. On November 1, K&W and their partners at Hoffman Leakey presented their findings from the initial survey. The good news is that there are multiple feasible paths open to us to stay on our present lot and significantly expand our worship and fellowship space. The bad news is that the cost of either renovation or a new build is estimated at between 2.8 and 3.8 million dollars. Moreover, there is no scenario in which we would be permitted by the borough to modify our parking lot without significantly reducing its footprint. (That is, among other things, we will not legally be able to pave it, since it is presently far too large for code.) Additionally, no model of staying at our present location would allow us to create outdoor recreation space or a cemetery, both of which were ideas with significant support at the first K&W charette. To say it concisely, an addition or new-build can solve many of our “indoor problems,” but our “outdoor problems” are going to remain if we stay on our present site.

However, it should also be said that it was pointed out rather strongly by certain parishioners at the November 1 meeting that if we leave the downtown, the character of our community will necessarily change, and that, among other things, we will be less focused on the Penn State campus. This is an assessment that I agree with, and I would also add that the location we are at has been one that has been spiritually fertile for us; leaving it is a risk, though quite often God does call us to take risks in life, and there is no way forward for us in this that doesn’t involve significant risk. The only thing that I can say that I am sure would be unfaithful would be for us to do nothing, as we would become like the man from the parable who has received a talent and yet refuses to invest it. He believes his behavior to be without risk, and yet it ends in disaster (Mt 25:14-30).

Let us not be like such a man, then, and instead heed the Church’s call to “work diligently with the talent that is given to thee” (Kontakion of Holy Tuesday). I do not believe we are prepared to answer the big “stay or go” question at this time, though I am open to being convinced otherwise. One thing that I would say is that we should not fear the survey’s cost estimates, as we know in faith that “the cattle on a thousand hills” belong to the Lord, and that God can quickly and decisively turn the tables in the world, as when Israel passed over the sea with the precious treasures of the Egyptians in their hands (Ps 50:10; Ex 12:35-36). If we walk in faith, we can overcome these things. But the question before us remains, which way ought we to walk to please and glorify God and to bless our neighbors?

My suggestion in this matter would be that we form a property search committee at the Annual Meeting with a wide mandate to explore various options that may be open to us in the region including (but not limited to) undeveloped land and suitable existing facilities either in the downtown or on the outskirts of State College. In my conception, this committee would report to the parish council with regularity and then submit a larger report of its findings to the whole parish at least semi-annually. It may also be helpful for this committee to help us explore our financing options, including potentially a loan from the Archdiocese or from the Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF). Not matter what path we take, it is clear that we need to perform “due diligence” in a decision of this magnitude in order to be faithful stewards.

Moving on from the subject of site planning, another pair of challenges that need to be noted in terms of finances are our soft but stable stewardship giving in the past year and a looming medium-term threat from our existing mortgage. To put things in perspective regarding stewardship, in August 2021 our parish’s unrestricted “operating cash” balance was (\$2806) and this year in the same month it was (\$2116). So in regards to our main budget, things have not gotten

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## For the Record

On Saturday, October 22 immediately following vespers, Josephine Sarah Carrier was baptized by Fr. Ignatius at Holy Trinity. Her godmother was Leoni Georgiou. May God grant them both many years!

## Annual Meeting

Holy Trinity will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at noon. Agenda items must be submitted in writing to the Parish Council by November 6<sup>th</sup> (no motions will be considered from the floor). Parishioners in good standing who have fulfilled their Lenten obligations of Confession and Communion may and should attend.

## Adult Education

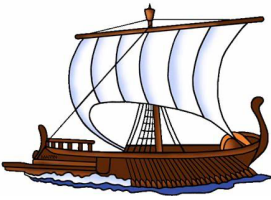
It is our great joy to once again welcome Fr. Theodore Petrides, rector of Ss. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Reading, PA to Holy Trinity. Fr. Theodore, the host of the popular Ancient Faith podcast "Signs in Our Times: Miracles for the Modern Age" spoke with us in May on the subject of contemporary miracles. On Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm he returns with a different set of accounts that are sure to encourage, edify, and inspire. Come join us to hear of the wonderful works of God in our time.

## Wedding Banns

On November 6 at 3pm, we will celebrate the wedding of Josephine Sarah Carrier and Cameron Andrew Johnson. All are welcome to attend!

*It happened one day that one of the brethren in the monastery of Abba Elias was tempted. Cast out of the monastery, he went over the mountain to Abba Anthony. The brother lived near him for a while and then Anthony sent him back to the monastery from which he had been expelled. When the brothers saw him they cast him out yet again, and he went back to Abba Anthony saying, 'My Father, they will not receive me.' Then the old man sent them a message saying, 'A boat was shipwrecked at sea and lost its cargo; with great difficulty it reached the shore; but you want to throw into the sea that which has found a safe harbor on the shore. 'When the brothers understood that it was Abba Anthony who had sent them this monk, they received him at once.*

*Sayings of the Desert Fathers, St. Anthony, #21*



■ FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK

# Rector’s Report (con’t)

encouraging fall Orthodoxy 101 attendance) has been to revive the ancient custom of sending out the catechumens at “all catechumens depart” (on some Sundays, anyway) and having Anna Stickles provide them with spiritual instruction during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. I would like to identify a second catechist for this effort, as God gives His Providence. As a community, whether we be new converts or lifelong faithful, it is imperative that we attempt to learn the faith more deeply at all times. I find myself every year in awe of that cryptic verse from Isaiah that is sung in the Bridegroom Matins of Holy Week: “jealousy shall grasp an untaught people.” I have never fully understood the meaning of this saying, but since it is parallel to “bring more evils upon those who are glorious on the earth,” I think it is something we probably want to avoid. “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes (Ps 118:12)!”

To round out my report, I want to mention some various other items in succession. Our OCF is on much stronger footing than in the last two years, but it seems to me that it is in need of some organizational guidance and support that I am not really able to provide due to pressures on my time. It has been a tremendous blessing to me to be able to eat with the students on campus on Thursdays, a custom that we started just this semester. But I think more needs to be done to support our students and help them in their efforts to grow in Christ and witness to Him on the PSU campus.

Our Matthew 25 ministry is working steadily, but we are still a long way off from having hands-on charitable events on a once-monthly basis. CommonFood has us covered for two months of the year, and Strawberry Fields has us covered for November and December in a way, but we need to think about organically developing more community partnerships so that we can serve more directly. Almsgiving, whether in the form of money or of service, is an essential and vital part of Orthodox Christian piety. Unfortunately, our web presence is still a weakness for our parish. The main website itself hasn’t been

significantly edited since Fr. Alex’s departure almost two years ago. I express my thanks to those who have been faithfully uploading bulletins and newsletters, updating the Realm system, and arranging our YouTube livestreams. However, it is clear that we need to move beyond maintenance mode and try to make the website a better tool both for our parish and for the inquirers and visitors who access it. In a similar vein, our social media accounts should be reactivated and used as tools of outreach and coordination. How to do this or who might do this remains a question, but is a need that we need to seriously think about addressing.

Finally, and in conclusion, I want to express my thankfulness for the re-bonding of our community following the pandemic. I said last year in this report that, “true love in a community is not something that can be mandated or programmed,” but instead that it must arise from our hearts as we seek to know and love Christ. It does my heart good to see you, my brothers and sisters, increasingly knowing one another, befriending one another, sharing joys and sorrows with one another, and working to build one another up in Christ. Our community is healing and growing, glory to God. I am proud of you, I am proud to be your priest, and I love you all deeply. Let us strive together to fight the good fight and enter the kingdom of heaven as brothers and sisters, co-laborers, and fellow-athletes.

With Deep Love in Jesus Christ,

— Fr. Ignatius



■ FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK

# Rector’s Report (con’t)

either noticeably better or worse, and they are still clearly in uncomfortable territory. I believe Fr. John would tell me (though of course I did not know the man), “remember, Father, the just shall live by faith.” To this I can only add my “amen.”

To speak regarding our Trinity House mortgage, we presently have just under \$350,000 left to pay on the principal and it is locked in at a very good pandemic-era rate until mid-2025. The problem may come for us in 2025 when the rate lock expires and we become exposed to then-current market rates. This is something that I think we need to work ahead of time to make sure doesn’t happen. But the good news is that we still have some time and likely a number of options which may or may not be related to a new site plan.

With these things said, I can move on to the happy news that in the past year attendance has risen steadily and significantly and that it is now a rarity for us to have less than 90 persons in attendance on a Sunday morning. We have been blessed with a number of

inquirers this year and the number of our catechumens presently stands at four, including one at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. By God’s grace, we have baptized four babes in the past year and received two adult converts. The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, similarly, has received three adult converts, so it would seem we are all on a path of slow growth, though Holy Trinity’s growth seems to be accelerating somewhat in recent months.

Regarding the subject of education, in my report last year I noted that we had a long way to go in terms of the continuing catechesis of adult members, and I think that this is still the case. We have added monthly “adult ed” lectures on various topics, and while these have been helpful and fairly well attended, I stand strongly convicted that we need to do more. It is certainly our hope that we can add an adult Sunday School class in 2023, and it seems likely that we can accomplish this. Beyond that, I am for the first time attempting to learn how to do catechesis with more than one catechumen. My initial measure (beyond

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*Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her: "Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."*





# Holy Trinity Calendar

**LIVE** Please note that at this time, all services at Holy Trinity are being live-streamed. To watch them online, please visit [holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube](https://www.holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Paraklesis to the Theotokos, 6pm Adult Education, “Struggles in Orthodox Prayer,” 7pm	31	November 1	2	3	4	5
6 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)  Holy Matrimony: Carrier/Johnson, 3pm	7  Vesperal Divine Liturgy @ St. Michael’s, (163 Hemlock St., Irvona, PA), 6pm; potluck following	8  Akathist to St. Michael, 6pm	9  Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Orthodoxy 102, 7pm	10	11	12  Great Vespers, 5pm
13 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Parish Annual Meeting, 12	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)  Vigil of Entry of the Theotokos, 6pm	21  <b>Entry of the Theotokos</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am	22	23	24	25	26
27 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	28	29	30	December 1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	Great Vespers, 6pm	St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Divine Liturgy, 8am	Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	By-Law Committee Meeting, 7pm	Sunday School Christmas Caroling, 9am	Great Vespers, 6pm Adult Ed, “OT Images of the Theotokos”, 7pm

# Chapel Calendar

All events take place at 145 North Kern Street in Beavertown, unless where noted.

- 11/1/22 6:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- 11/5/22 9:00 a.m. Archdiocesan Assembly in Pittsburgh
- 11/5/22 6:00 p.m. Reader’s Vespers (*Don’t forget to set your clock back one hour tonight*)
- 11/6/22 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately following; catechesis @ 1:30 p.m.
- 11/7/22 6:00 p.m. Synaxis of the Angelic Hosts Vesperal Divine Liturgy
- 11/12/22 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers; Confessions following
- 11/13/22 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately following; catechesis @ 1:30 p.m.
- 11/13/22 12:00 p.m. Annual Parish Meeting
- NATIVITY (St. Philip’s) FAST / ADVENT BEGINS
- 11/15/22 6:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- 11/19/22 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers; Confessions following
- 11/20/22 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately following; catechesis @ 1:30 p.m.
- 11/20/22 6:00 p.m. Entrance of the Theotokos Great Vespers with Litya
- 11/22/22 6:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- 11/23/22 6:00 p.m. Vespers; Moleben of Thanksgiving follows
- 11/26/22 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers; Confessions following
- 11/27/22 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy; Hours 9:40 a.m.; fellowship immediately following; catechesis @ 1:30 p.m. (SCCYS Christmass Distribution item deadline)
- 11/28/22 6:30 p.m. Knitting/crocheting “Hats and Blankets for Babies”
- 11/29/22 6:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal
- 12/3/22 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers; Confessions following

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.

November 2022