

Icons 365 Update



All 30 of the September icons laid out together in preparation for installation on the walls of the fellowship hall.

A hearty “thank you” to all those who have donated so far to our Icons 365 project, which aims ultimately to provide our parish with at least one “proper” icon for each day of the liturgical year. We have made a great deal of progress since the project was announced in December, having raised over \$2000 for the initial batch of September icons, identified suppliers, and purchased all of the icons for the month. Currently we are in the process of installing them in the parish hall, and when that is complete, we will bless them all together on a Sunday after liturgy. We are also planning some general artistic beautification of the areas where the icons are being hung with hand-painted floral motifs. Overall, we are expecting the project to greatly enhance the appearance of our fellowship hall, alongside its primary

goal of providing icons for the liturgies and daily services of the parish.

Additionally, we are very happy to report that the initial funding carried us much further than anticipated, since we were able to procure all of the September icons from commercial suppliers and didn’t need to get anything done by hand. So we have actually already purchased 15 icons for October, with an additional hand-painted one on order. That means we are relatively close to being able to start hanging October icons as well. However, our funding for the project is starting to run low, and we really need some additional funds to keep things going. If you would like to help us advance this project, please give towards it by designating a donation on our website

(continued, see ICONS, next page)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
119 S. Sparks Street
State College, PA 16801
ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
STATE COLLEGE, PA
PERMIT NO. 289

Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS
July 5	Russian Ladies Group B (Elena G.)	M. & K. Fedkin	K. Cattell & B. Haupt
July 12	C. Swisher, T. Chambers, C. Pellock	Mka. K. Oleynik, R. Patel	H. Torbic & M. Fedkin
July 19	M. Jenkins, S. Gleeson, M. Stevens	Mka. A. Stickle, C. Pellock	M. Fiori & G. Cattell
July 26	N. Troyan, R. Nissly, S. Parkhill	A. & J. Cassar	K. Cattell & B. Haupt
Aug 2	E. Emigh, E. Al-Sulaimani, E. George	A. & J. Cassar	H. Torbic & M. Fedkin

■ FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK

Icons (con’t)

to “Icons 365 Donations” or write “Icons 365” in the memo line of a check. If you might be interested in personally purchasing an October or November icon or in sponsoring a hand-painted icon, please speak directly to me on the matter.

“The founders, the benefactors, the builders and the beautifiers of this holy house, may the Lord our God remember in his kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.” Amen.
~ Fr. Ignatius

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Keeping Prayer Alive Through Every Season of Life

Marriage. Children. A new job. Illness. Moving house. Long commutes. Exhaustion. Days that seem too full to hold one more thing.
Few Christians consciously decide to abandon their prayer rule. More often, life simply changes, and what once seemed steady and natural gradually begins to unravel. Morning prayer becomes hurried. Evening prayer is postponed until we are too tired to stand. Little by little, the familiar rhythm disappears almost without our noticing.
And yet we do notice.
Somewhere within, we sense that something precious has been lost.
Prayer is our conversation with God, and its heart is sincerity and attention. Yet neither our spiritual condition nor the circumstances of our lives remain unchanged. Marriage, children, work, illness, travel, old age—each season places different demands upon us. The form our prayer rule takes may therefore need to change as well.
Its purpose, however, never changes. A prayer rule exists to preserve our daily meeting with God.
How, then, can we safeguard that meeting when life becomes crowded, unpredictable, or simply exhausting? How do we find the time and strength to pray when our circumstances seem to leave no room for it? I cannot offer a universal formula. I can only share something of my own journey—years of searching,

stumbling, losing the thread, and, by God’s mercy, learning to find it again.
A Prayer Rule Takes Different Forms
I came to know that God exists when I was nineteen, and I was baptised a year later. I am now sixty-seven. During those decades, my prayer has taken many different forms. At times it was rich and steady. At others it became so small that it seemed almost to disappear.
There were seasons when prayer came naturally and the daily rule seemed firmly established. Then, without warning, everything would collapse. I found myself unable to rise even for the simplest prayers, let alone any serious spiritual struggle. Sometimes such periods lasted not for days but for years. Looking at those who faithfully prayed morning and evening, read the Psalter, or regularly turned to akathists and canons, I could only marvel. They seemed almost like saints.
Not long ago I came across a saying that struck me deeply: “There is no typikon for the cell.”
In church, we pray according to the Church’s liturgical order. At home, however, there is no single prayer rule that fits every Christian in every circumstance.
That does not mean our personal prayer is left entirely to our own preferences. Rather, unlike the Church’s common worship, the form of our private prayer rule must be shaped with discernment according to the circumstances of our life.

(continued, see PRAYER, facing page)

■ NEWS & NOTES

America 250 Molieben & Cookout

Please join us as we celebrate America’s 250th birthday with a potluck and a molieben! The potluck will be held at the Torbic’s home (2332 Raven Hollow Rd.) on July 2nd at 5pm. The molieben will be at 5:30pm on July 4th, immediately preceding Saturday Great Vespers. Please join us for one or both!

Summer Camp Fundraiser: The Fields

Our Sunday School students, who are trying raise money to attend local Orthodox summer camps, are partnering with The Field Burger and Tap (One Country Club Lane, State College) for their monthly “The Field Gives Back.” Mark your calendars, because on Monday, July 6 from 11am-9pm, 10% of all proceeds from The Field will be donated back to our kids! Enjoy dinner while supporting our Sunday School kids. It’s a win-win!

Hunter Family on Vacation

Father will be on vacation from July 21st - August 4th as he and Matushka celebrate their 10th anniversary. For pastoral emergencies or other needs, please contact Pdn. Mark Oleynik at (814) 380-6031 or dnmark@holyltrinity-oca.org.

Jenkins Baby Shower

Announcing a baby shower for Boone and Anna Jenkins! All parishioners are invited to celebrate the upcoming birth of the Jenkins' first little one. The baby shower will be held Saturday, July 25 at 11 a.m. in the parish hall. RSVP Meg Jenkins (570-360-9575 or lovetobehome@gmail.com) by July 18.

CommonFood

Our friends on CommonFood have recently purchased a new building to further their mission of providing nutritious food to our neighbors here in Centre County. Jim and Sheryl Lehmann will be speaking to us immediately following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 19th about how our parish can help with their current needs. Additionally, we are looking for twelve to fourteen volunteers to fill boxes with dry goods on Friday, July 17, at 6:30pm at their new building at 102 Plank Rd., Port Matilda. If you are interested in volunteering, please sign up in the narthex or contact Leoni Georgiou at leomcfar@comcast.net.

Archpastoral Visit

Please join us as we welcome our archpastor and father in Christ, Archbishop Melchisedek, on Sunday, July 12th. He will be serving Resurrectional Matins at 8:45am and Divine Liturgy at 10am. Please join us!

O our Master and Lord, we supplicate at this present time that thou wilt continue to show mercy upon us and upon this land and its people, that thou wilt fill our hearts abundantly with gladness and joy that we may do thy holy will in all things. Give to the leaders of this nation, its president and congress, its governors and judges, its military commanders, all wisdom and guidance and direct them to discharge their duties in the manner commanded by thee. Grant them reason and understanding, that they may judge justly and act rightly, preserving the commonwealth in harmony and peace. Kindle in their hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness on the poor, to aid the homeless, to help the helpless. Grant them to be defenders of the defenseless and terrible to evil-doers, gracious to those who are good and worthy to be trusted. Guide them in all things that they may govern the nation and care for its people in righteousness and truth, putting aside all deceit and corruption, that they may maintain the confidence of all people of this land, and all others. *-Excerpt from the Moliben for the 250th Anniversary of America, OCA Synod of Bishops*

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Prayer (con’t)

When I was twenty, my husband and I shared a single room in a communal flat with my mother. She was not a believer and found our newly embraced faith difficult to understand. There was nowhere we could pray in private except the bathroom. We would turn on the tap to disguise why we were there, though the neighbours, impatient to use the bathroom themselves, often knocked loudly on the door. My husband was never bothered by it. I, however, found it deeply distracting.

Years later, I heard a priest speak about his time in the army. On Pascha night, the only place he could find to pray was the barracks latrine. There, of all places, he celebrated Christ’s Resurrection in prayer—and the Lord granted him a Pascha filled with genuine joy.

The Orthodox writer Sergey Fudel recalled a similar experience from his years in prison: “In prison, prayer is both difficult and easy. Difficult because, at first, the whole cell is watching your back, and whatever others may be thinking of you becomes your own thought as well. Easy because, once you overcome that feeling of being watched, you truly stand, if only for a few moments, at the very gates of the Kingdom.”

These stories differ in every outward respect. Yet they bear witness to the same truth.

There are countless circumstances to which our prayer must adapt if it is not to disappear. But there are no circumstances in which prayer itself becomes impossible.

The place may change. The hour may change. Even the form of our prayer rule may need to change. What must not change is our desire to keep turning towards God. We often imagine that prayer requires ideal conditions: a quiet room, an uninterrupted schedule, an untroubled mind. Sometimes God grants us these gifts, and we should receive them with gratitude. But when He does not, we need not imagine that the door to prayer has been closed.

The saints teach us otherwise.

Prayer has been offered in deserts and cities, monasteries and family homes, hospitals, prison cells, military barracks, crowded trains, and lonely bedrooms. Wherever the human heart sincerely turns to God, He is



already there. For that reason, never despise small beginnings.

If all you can offer today is five faithful minutes, offer them wholeheartedly. Those few minutes become an anchor. When we let go of them altogether, we gradually lose the habit of turning to God. But when we preserve them—even imperfectly—they keep alive the thread that binds us to Him.

Life will continue to change. New responsibilities will come. Old strengths may fade. Our prayer rule itself may grow or become simpler from one season to the next.

None of this need discourage us.

The purpose of a prayer rule has never been to measure our spiritual success. Its purpose is to preserve a living relationship with the Lord—to ensure that, whatever else changes, we continue to make room each day to stand consciously in His presence.

So guard that daily meeting with God as you would guard a treasure. Adapt it wisely to the realities of your life. Be patient with yourself when circumstances require changes, but do not let go of prayer itself. Keep returning, again and again, with sincerity, attention, and hope.

We may discover that, even when our prayers seem small and fragile, God faithfully receives them—and quietly teaches us, through them, to remain close to Him.

How we can grow in attentiveness and learn to pray with greater depth is a conversation for another time.

Taken from the Catalogue of Good Deeds, <https://catalog.obitel-minsk.com/blog>, July 1, 2026, article by Elena Trostnikova

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Prayer (con’t)

Yet one thing remains indispensable. Unless we establish some personal “rule of the cell”—however simple and however modest—it becomes remarkably easy for prayer itself to disappear.

Alongside the Church’s common prayer, there must be some part of our life that belongs to God alone: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret” (Matthew 6:6, KJV). It is this hidden, personal prayer that I would like to speak about first.

When There Never Seems to Be Enough Time

Many working people simply cannot pray in the morning as they once did. The alarm rings, the day begins immediately, and before long there are children to care for, trains to catch, patients to see, lessons to teach, meetings to attend. Some mornings there is scarcely time even for breakfast.

In seasons like these, one simple principle has often helped me:

Let your first thought belong to God.

It sounds easy. In reality, it takes practice.

Even before getting out of bed, quietly turn your heart towards Him. It may be nothing more than, “Glory to Thee, O Lord,” or, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Let that become the foundation upon which the rest of the day is built. Everything else can follow according to your circumstances.

The truth is that time for prayer often has to be won back. Yet even in the busiest of lives, it usually exists. The question is whether we recognise it.

Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the countless minutes we surrender to our phones and screens. Most of us know the struggle well. We promise ourselves to spend less time scrolling, watching, or filling our minds with distractions, only to discover how quickly they reclaim our attention.

Some measure of relaxation is natural, especially in a world that leaves so many people exhausted. But it should not quietly consume the time that belongs to the soul.

Prayer does not always require us to find more time. Often it begins by redeeming the time we already have.

Five minutes here, another five minutes there—even these small fragments can become moments of prayer. Today, many prayer books are available on our phones. The same technology that so often distracts us can also remind us to turn our thoughts back to God.

Over the years, I have learned something else.

A personal prayer rule should always include what I think of as “places of return.” If my morning prayer has been reduced to the sign of the Cross and a heartfelt “Lord, have mercy,” then I know I must make room later in the day for a fuller offering.

For many people, that may be a lunch break, a quiet walk, or another regular pause in the day’s rhythm. If your schedule changes from one day to the next, begin the morning by asking yourself where such a pause might be found. Even this kind of planning can become part of your prayer rule.

Simple reminders—a note on your desk, an alarm on your phone, or any small prompt that gently redirects your attention—can, over time, help these moments become second nature.

Sometimes the busiest parts of the day become the very places where prayer quietly takes root.

Praying When Circumstances Get in the Way

If possible, it is a great blessing to have a place set aside for prayer.

Even the simplest prayer corner has a way of drawing the heart towards God. Over the years, my own collection of icons gradually grew, but from the very beginning the central place belonged to reproductions of Rublev’s Holy Trinity, Christ the Saviour, and the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God. Long before I became a Christian, I found myself returning to these images again and again, unable to look away from them. In time, I wanted somewhere to place the books I read while praying—the Gospel, a prayer book, or other spiritual reading. I considered buying an analogue, but even the simplest models were beyond my budget. Instead, I discovered that an ordinary tabletop music stand served the purpose perfectly well. Sometimes it is the smallest practical arrangements that help make prayer a natural part of everyday life.

Yet life does not always allow us even this.

(continued, see PRAYER, next page)

Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, except where noted.
Events listed at **Trinity House** take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

All services at Holy Trinity are currently being live-streamed. To watch them online, please visit holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube

SUNDAY		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JULY	28 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Great Vespers, 6pm	29 Sts. Peter & Paul Divine Liturgy, 8am	30	July 1  Confessions, 4pm Great Vespers with Litya, 6pm Confessions, following	2 St. John of San Francisco Divine Liturgy, 8am America 250 Cookout, 5pm (2332 Raven Hollow Rd., State College)	3 	4 Molieben of Thanksgiving, 5:30pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	5 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Great Vespers, 6pm	6	7  Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	8	9  Adult Ed: "Reflections on Cyprus," 6pm	10	11 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	12 Resurrectional Matins, 8:45am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, 10am	13	14  Confessions, 4pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	15	16 	17	18
	19 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) CommonFood Presentation, 12 noon	20	21  Vespers, 6pm	22	23 	24	25 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm
	26 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	27	28  Vespers, 6pm	29	30 	31 	Aug 1
AUGUST	2 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am)	3 	4  Confessions, 4pm Vigil of Transfiguration, 6pm	5  Transfiguration of Our Lord Divine Liturgy, 8am Blessing of the Grapes, following	6 	7  Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	8