

Holy Trinity Newsletter

December 2009



Icon of Nativity from Mt. Sinai

Homily on the Nativity of our Lord, by St. John Chrysostom

I behold a new and wondrous mystery! My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn.

The Angels sing!
The Archangels blend their voices in harmony!
The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise!
The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised. Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side the Sun of Justice.

And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed, he had the power, He descended, He redeemed; all things move in obedience to God.

This day He Who Is, is Born; and He Who Is becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became he God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassibility, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His Incarnation has he departed from the Godhead. And behold, Kings have come, that they might adore the heavenly King of glory;

Soldiers, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven; Women, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of child-birth into joy;
Virgins, to the Son of the Virgin, beholding with joy, that He Who is the Giver of milk, Who has decreed that the fountains of the breast pour forth in ready streams, receives from a Virgin Mother the food of infancy;
Infants, that they may adore Him Who became a little child, so that out of the mouth of infants and sucklings, He might perfect praise; Children, to the Child Who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod;
Men, to Him Who became man, that He might heal the miseries of His servants;
Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd Who has laid down His life for His sheep;
Priests, to Him Who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech;
Servants, to Him Who took upon Himself the form of a servant that He might bless our servitude with the reward of freedom;
Fishermen, to Him Who from amongst fishermen chose catchers of men;
Publicans, to Him Who from amongst them named a chosen Evangelist;
Sinful women, to Him Who exposed His feet to the tears of the repentant;
And that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.

Since therefore all rejoice, I too desire to rejoice. I too wish to share the choral dance, to celebrate the festival. But I take my part, not plucking the harp, not shaking the Thyrasian staff, not with the music of pipes, nor holding a torch, but holding in my arms the cradle of Christ. For this is all my hope, this my life, this my salvation, this my pipe, my harp. And bearing it I come, and having from its power received the gift of speech, I too, with the angels, sing: Glory to God in the Highest; and with the shepherds: and on earth peace to men of good will.

November Sacraments

Baptisms – Να Σας Ζήσουν!

Katherine Darsinos, daughter of Antonios and Jaima Darsinos, with Anna Maria Horner being the Godmother.

George Habil, son of Rafik and Suhair Habil, with Salma Khshaiboun and Ziad Mutlak being the Godparents.

James Coleman, son of Christopher and Theodora Coleman, with Maro Yuanidis being the Godmother.

Sinna Elias, daughter of Elias Teclesenbet and Yodi Tewelde, with Ghirmay and Dahab Ghebreyeses being the Godparents.

Chrismations

Trina Cokinos was received into the Orthodox Church by Chrismation and was named after St. Katerina the Great Martyr (November 25th).



Weddings Congratulations!

Wayne A. Shultz and Renee Copeland were married by Fr. Gregory with Janet Kapelle being the Koumbara.

Young Adult League:

- **Soup Wagon:** YAL will be joining the Salvation Army's Soup Wagon on **Friday, December 4th** to serve dinner to the homeless under the Jefferson Street Bridge. Please contact Nick Saway for details. (rnsaway@uno.edu)
- The **YAL Holiday Pot-Luck** will be at the home of **Anna** Petcu on **Friday, December 18th** at 6pm. Please join us for fellowship, food, games, and holiday cheer! Please contact **Anna** Petcu for details. (annapetcu@gmail.com, 293-0798)

JOY

Look forward to the JOY craft extravaganza and Christmas Pageant Practice on Sunday, December 13th.



CHURCH DIRECTORY 2010

Holy Trinity is excited to announce our new church directory project for 2010. We are doing this in-house, but it will be fun to update our pictures and contact information... making us a closer congregation in the process.

A table will be set up in the social hall, beginning on Sunday, November 8th and ending on Sunday, December 6th, for you to sign up for a photo appointment.

Pictures will be taken on the following dates:

Sunday, December 13th, 12:00 – 6:00 PM
Monday, December 14th, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
Tuesday, December 15th, 6:00 – 10:00 PM

Sunday, December 20th, 12:00 – 6:00 PM

Monday, December 21st, 6:00 – 10:00 PM (if necessary)

At that time, we'll ask you to fill out a form to update your *preferred* contact information.

If you cannot sign up after church, please call the church office, 333-1047 to pick a time.

If you are unavailable on any of the dates listed above, you can email a picture to project coordinator Tim Weeks at timweeks@att.net. Also if you want to submit an informal picture, in addition to your sit-down photo, please email to Tim. You can also call him on his cell phone, 293-8178.

The directory will be completed in early 2010. You can elect to have your pictures printed on-line.

All organizations like the Philoptochos, Ahepa, GOYA, etc., should contact Tim with publishing information.

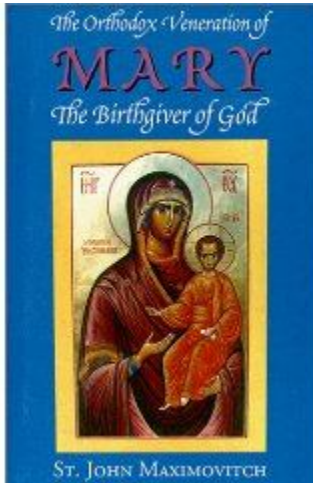
We appreciate everyone helping make this project a success!

Greek School Program

Over the past few years there has been some interest shown in starting up an afternoon Greek School program again. I would like to know first of all, how many children and families would be seriously interested in committing to an afternoon Greek School program at Holy Trinity. I would also be interested to know if there would be any qualified person(s) who might be interested in being the Greek School Teacher for Children at Holy Trinity. Please contact me and let me know either at the Church office: 615-333-1047, or at fathergh@gmail.com. Thank you!



The Orthodox Book Group will hold its 2nd meeting on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009 at 7pm at the home of David and Carol Tabor, 509 Park Center Ave, Nashville, TN 37205. The group will study "The Orthodox Veneration of MARY, The Birth-giver of God" by St. John Maximovitch. Copies are available at the Church Bookstore for \$7. Everyone is welcome to attend for a robust discussion. We also need someone to select a book for the February meeting and to host the group. Thank you.



A Special House Blessing

On November 13th of this year I drove out to Hendersonville for a New House Blessing. In our Holy Orthodox Church we see the world as God's creation and we understand that the life saving birth, crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ not only is for the benefit of mankind, but for the whole cosmos. That is one of the reasons why we bless new homes, rivers, streams, lakes, even oceans every year at the time of the Holy Feast day of Theophany. We recognize that the Baptism of Christ sanctified the waters and "crushed the evil spirits that were lingering there." Those sanctified waters are then spread throughout the world, at every Baptism, at every Holy Water blessing, that great event of Christ descending into the waters under the hand of John the Baptist is remembered, is invoked, *is made present* and real for us through the prayers of the Church! It is hard for us to understand sometimes the

phrases in baptisms and holy water blessings of the “evil powers lingering.” If you ever take a close look at the Icon of our Lord’s Baptism, you will see in many of them little weird looking guys riding on dolphins with tridents and what not. People back in the day (and probably today) actually worshipped the rivers, the lakes, the oceans. They saw something in them powerful and majestic, something to be feared and respected. Of course this is idolatry, and our Lord through His actions clearly spells out that He is the God of creation, who has brought all things into being out of nothing.

This same God of creation preserved his Holy Images in a fire recently. On April 8th of this past year, Toney and Joanna Hodges lost everything in a fire. Just before Pascha last year their home incinerated in a fire taking all their clothes and everything they owned. A loving neighbor who was suffering from injuries fought off the pain when he saw the fire in the house and ran over to rescue the dogs. After inspecting the ash heap, they found a few articles completely untouched by the fire; their icons and their Bible. The Bible only had the cover slightly singed, but the icons which were in a place that should have burned them up completely, were unscathed by the flames. The Hodges shared with me when I went to bless their new home in November that it was an affirmation of the belief they uttered to one another sometime before. With tears in their eyes they told me that before the fire, they had always reassured each other that no matter what would happen in life, they would trust that God would be with them and take care of them; He would get them through it. When they saw the ash heap that was their home they said to each other that the statement of faith that they had made so many times was now being put to the test.

The Lord is faithful always; no one was hurt most importantly. They were able to close on a new home and they are putting their lives back together slowly. Those icons will be placed in their new home again in a place of prominence, as a reminder that Christ is victorious, and that He is the God of all creation, the water, the fire and the entire cosmos.



Toney and Joanna holding an icon left untouched by the flames.

A Parish Assembly was called on November 22nd and was attended by a quorum of members in good standing. This assembly:

Approved an Operating Budget for 2010

Appointed two audit committees: one for 2008 and another for 2009 with the understanding that the 2008 audit will be complete for approval in January and the 2009 audit will be complete for approval in the Spring of 2010.

Approved the Parish Council to spend up to but not to exceed another 25,000 in addition to the previously approved 105,000 in order to make ready the documents for bidding out to other contractors as the community has shifted from a Design-Build method to a Design-Bid-Build method.

Appointed an Election Committee.

Received Nominations from the committee and from the floor, and set the Parish Council Election date for December 13th. Absentee ballots will be available in the Church office. According to current ruling, you may only absentee vote if you will be out of the State on December 13th and your vote must be received by December 13th for it to be counted.

Christmas and Theophany Schedule

December 24th Royal Hours 9 am – 10:30 am
Vesporal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 4 pm

December 25th Matins 8:30 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

December 26th Great Vespers 5:00 pm

December 27th Matins 8:50 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

January 1st Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

January 2nd Great Vespers 5:00 pm
January 3rd Matins 8:50 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

January 5th Royal Hours 8:30 am
Vesporal Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 am
Followed by the Lesser Blessing of Waters

January 6th Matins 8:00 am
Divine Liturgy 9:00 am
Followed by the Great Blessing of Waters

January 7th Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Father Gregory will begin blessing homes from January 6th until February 2nd.



House Blessing Form

Name_____

Date(s)* available for House Blessing_____

Preferred Time(s)* _____

Home
Address_____

Phone Number_____

*Please note that being flexible with dates and times increases the opportunities for Father to bless as many as homes as possible so that no one is left out that desires a house blessing.

Please tear off and mail or turn into the Church office. Thank you.

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