

The LAMPLIGHTER

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH of Lansing

"Yea, Thou dost light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness..." (Psalms 18:28)

Volume XLI

November 2008

***This issue is dedicated to the Glory of God
and the continued good health of my family.
Nick Siettas***

Pastoral Reflections

Fr. Mark Sietsema

A Parable for the Political Season

Every other November, when the campaigns are in full gear, my mind turns to an Old Testament story told by Jotham, son of Gideon. You may not be familiar with it, so I have taken the liberty of printing it here in full. (You can find the whole story in context in Judges 9.)

Jotham went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and called out. Thus he said to them, "Listen to me, O men of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!' But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my fatness with which God and men are honored, and go to sway over the trees?'

Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come, reign over us!' But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to sway over the trees?'

Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come, reign over us!' But the vine said to them, 'Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to sway over the trees?'

Finally all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come, reign over us!' The bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, may fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.'

This passage of Scripture needs no commentary. I will add only one thought, something I shared with parishioners four years ago. This thought elicited an outpouring of gratitude such as I rarely receive. What I have to say is an absolutely apolitical statement, in the sense that it supports neither side in this election year. It is a simple truth that we all learned in seventh grade Civics class.

Here goes: *You have more than two choices.*

"Aha!" someone will say, "He's telling us to vote for a third-party candidate!" No, I'm not. What I'm telling you is that you don't have to view your vote as a simple either-or proposition. I have heard too many political arguments over the years about which presidential candidate is the "lesser of two evils." My point is simply that you

should remember that you have more than two evils to choose from.

You can choose not to vote for any candidate for a particular office. Or you can cast a write-in vote. Or you can consider a candidate from one of the smaller parties. Exercising your voting rights in this way may not get someone elected, but it sends a powerful message anyway.

We have been brainwashed to think that we are wasting our vote if it is not for one of the two major candidates. This is not true. What great power there would be in a substantial bloc of voters who said in effect, “None of the above, please.”

Above all, it might end that most inane post-election game, declaring a “mandate” for the victor’s agenda ... based on the fact that the majority of Americans disliked the other guy more. In an election where 100 million Americans voted and the winner got only 10 million of those votes, a dose of humility would be administered to him along with his oath of office.

Too often our culture clings to a mentality that we have only two choices: Coke or Pepsi? Catholic or Protestant? Red state or blue? The beauty of a vibrant and free democracy is that there are almost always more than two choices. Likewise, Saint Paul’s warning to Timothy about ordaining church leader applies equally well to the voters of our great Republic: “*Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others*” (1 Timothy 5:22). If you don’t see a candidate whose policies you can endorse wholeheartedly, then vote for no one at all for that office.

So, this November, remember the parable of Jotham. If you’re looking for a place to find some political shade, you have options beyond just the bramble or the briar.

Experts-at-Everything

Recently I heard something that made me a little disappointed—disappointed but not surprised.

We have a Church Clean-Up Day coming this month on Saturday, the 15th. I hope you will consider coming for a little while and pitching in. Last year, happily, we had a nice turnout of young adults to help with the chores. Unhappily, a more experienced parishioner came along and started finding fault with the way the young people were holding their rakes, sweeping the floors, etc. The exchanges had the net effect of bringing discouragement to a new generation of church volunteers.

Every organization has them—the resident “experts-at-everything.” They and they alone know the right way to spread a tablecloth, direct a choir, cook a leg of lamb, manage investments, ... well, you name it! They can be marvelously entertaining: I once sat back and smiled while listening to an expert-at-everything pontificate on how salt was a diuretic. (It’s the opposite—it causes water retention.) These remarks were addressed to a professional dietitian: I get a chuckle every time I recall the bemused look on her face!

Such “experts” can be entertaining, but mostly they are enervating—they suck the life out of an organization by always insisting on their way as the one and only. I see this all too often at Archdiocesan meetings. People get up and start lecturing the Archbishop on how to run the Church. Mind you, these are often men who—by their own admission!—did not succeed in raising their own children to be churchgoers. Yet somehow in the course of making their first million they became experts in pastoral care, church growth, youth retention, and evangelism. Their bloviation saps time and energy from all who are exposed to it.

But they are more than a mere irritant. Experts-at-everything unwittingly discourage the next generation from stepping forward and assuming their rightful place in church work. Who willingly exposes himself to the slings and arrows of the chronic critics? I have seen repeatedly how the bullying of “experts-at-everything” causes other parishioners to quit committees, pass on leadership opportunities, and opt out of avenues for service. Just when the older generation should be passing the baton to the younger, some expert-at-everything pops

up and snatches the baton away because no one else knows how to hold it right.

I am not an expert-at-everything, but experience has taught me one thing: the “expertise” of such people does not extend to the subject of *happiness*. Experts-at-everything are, without exception, some of the unhappiest people one can meet. It is only by constantly cutting other people down that they can feel tall in the eyes of their peers.

So please: if you in the course of volunteering have found yourself on the receiving end of some expert’s disapproval, do not be discouraged. Saint Paul says rightly, “*Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men*” (Colossians 3:22). Your Father in heaven, the one true Expert at Everything, will reward you all the more for the Kingdom work you do in the face of rebukes from miserable people.

Busy in the Vineyard of the Lord

... speaking of the Archdiocesan Council, I am happy to inform you that I have been reappointed for a third two-year term by Archbishop Demetrios. When I mentioned this to the Parish Council, one of members suggested that I fill the parish in on the full set of Church duties that I have outside of my direct pastoral responsibilities at Holy Trinity.

I say “direct”: what I do for the Archdiocese and for the Metropolis of Detroit and for the Ecumenical Patriarchate is most definitely of service to you here in Lansing, albeit more indirectly than when I celebrate the Divine Liturgy. But to the extent that a priest supports the work of the whole Church, he supports the ministry of his own local parish (and every local parish in the jurisdiction, for that matter).

On the Archdiocesan Council I serve on the Religious Education Committee. I also have contact with the Youth Committee and the Outreach Committee.

Until very recently I served on the Metropolis of Detroit Council as the recording secretary. I

am very grateful to be done with taking the minutes ... and very grateful to those in our community who serve as secretary. It’s a thankless job! So thank you!

I am the treasurer of the Metropolis of Detroit Clergy Syndesmos, having recently been elected to my fourth two-year term. If you remember the fund drive for South American Missions a few years ago, you saw me at work in Metropolis business.

I am a member of the Metropolis Speakers’ Bureau, and for this reason I am occasionally called to give talks and lead retreats at other parishes.

I am a member of the Archdiocesan Committee on Liturgical Translations. In this cause I was very busy a few years ago when consideration of a new common translation for certain services was under discussion. I hope that we will be getting busy again to work on a new common translation of the Divine Liturgy.

I am an occasional ghostwriter and editor for texts produced at all levels of Orthodox Church life. The one recent project that I can actually tell you about is the new *Children’s Bible Reader* that our Church produced in conjunction with the American Bible Society.

And of course, like every priest, I am called on to assist the work of neighboring parishes, by covering for vacationing priests with hospital visits, conducting services in mission parishes, serving at the Summer Camp, helping with District Oratorical Festivals and youth retreats, representing the Orthodox Church in interfaith meetings, and so on. I do not receive payment for any of the tasks listed above.

It is my pleasure to serve the Lord and you in these ways and more.



Parish Council

by Stella Economy

The Parish Council strives to keep you informed on what is happening in and around the community as outlined below.

General Assembly

- ✿ At our October General Assembly the following business transpired: nominations for Parish Council, Board of Elections and Board of Auditors; Social wing bathroom renovations proposal; Endowment information; and information on Fundraising ideas.
- ✿ Nominees for the Parish Council include: George Mansour, Jerry Munk, Yvonne Joseph, Alexis Popoff and Angela Vlahakis. Statements from the candidates are included in this month's Lamplighter.
- ✿ Elected to the Board of Elections were Art Arvanites, Lou Stamatakos and Louie Vlahakis.
- ✿ Elected to the Board of Auditors were Francis Katsiris, Robert Stepanovich, and Mary Volakakis
- ✿ Parish Council elections will take place after services on Sunday, November 2, until 3 PM.

Stewardship

- ✿ To date we have 225 stewardship units who have pledged \$236,739.00 this year of which \$190,360.00 has been received.
- ✿ Our 2009 Stewardship campaign is chaired by Elaine Christofilis and Alexis Popoff. We have received 99 pledges for the year 2009. A blank 2009 pledge form is included in this issue for your convenience if you have yet to pledge or did not receive a pledge form in the mail. Our budget for 2009 will be based on the Stewardship Pledges we receive. We will have a General Assembly on Sunday, December 14 that will address the budget for next year. Please make every effort to make a realistic pledge so that a realistic budget can be presented.

Parish Council Update

- ✿ A fundraising plan is in the works. Look for details about a "Labor Free Fundraiser"

elsewhere in this issue. In a perfect world, our stewardship would support our operations, however due to rising costs; we have a shortfall between reality and a perfect world.

- ✿ Fr. Mark began using a newly purchased chalice in early October. The chalice was donated by; Mike and Lynne Karagoulis in memory of Lynne's mother, and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. The donation from the Karagoulis family was originally designated for new pew books, but due to a delay in publishing the books, the family requested their donation be used for the new chalice. The Parish Council overwhelmingly approved the donation.
- ✿ As with everything these days, prices are going up. This includes our beeswax candles. We switched to beeswax last year due to their clearer burn which helps preserve our iconography. They cost considerably more than the paraffin candles once used. It has been suggested that we price our candles as some churches do. We would prefer to leave the candles a free will donation, but would ask you to consider increasing your donation at the candle stand.
- ✿ Our 40th Anniversary Celebration of our current building was a huge success. Maria Alexander and Tula Frangos planned a lovely evening of good food, great music and fellowship. We thank Maria and Tula and their committee for all their hard work. Thanks also to Harry Saites who catered the meal, and also donated several lovely tall vases to the church. Music was provided by the band Ellas, with George Lafkas donating to their fee. The celebration brought to mind the pioneers of Holy Trinity who had the dedication to plan for the future and to insure that Holy Trinity would remain a presence in the Lansing area. Forty years later, these pioneers, many who have now passed away, can look upon our community with pride of where we were, where we are now and where we are going.
- ✿ A Fall Clean Up day has been scheduled for Saturday, November 15 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Both indoor and outdoor clean up will occur, so come dressed for the weather,

bring work gloves and a hearty appetite, as lunch will be served to those who serve! Contact George Lafkas for details.

- ✿ The Parish Council will sponsor a Brunch on Sunday, November 16 in lieu of their regular coffee hour. Please plan on attending.

Mark Your Calendars

November 2 - Parish Council elections
 November 15 - Fall Clean up day
 November 16 - Parish Council Brunch
 December 14 - General Assembly

Congratulations

to Adam Setas who along with his doubles partner won the Division 4 tennis state championship title. Adam is the son of Jim and Susan Setas and is a senior at Lansing Catholic Central.

to Anissa (Worthington) and Beau Montgomery, who were joined in Holy Matrimony at the church on October 4. Many years of happiness to them!

to Nick and Dana Gavrilides and older sister Ava on the baptism of their son Gus, as well as to grandparents Greg and Rosemary Gavrilides. *Na sas zisei!*

to George and Shelley Lahanas and older sister Eleni on the chrismation of their daughter Marina. *Na sas zisei!*

on the birth of Salem Lelia Lewis born September 25, 2008, to parents Glen & Mary Ann Abdallah Lewis. Mary Ann is the daughter of George & Lelia Abdallah.

to Eugen Popa and Crina Tarasi on the baptism of their son Eric Teodor Popa on October 25 at the church. Many years of joy together for them!

Parish Council Candidate Statements 2008

Jerry Munk

I was born in Lansing and have lived here all my life. I am employed by a national Christian organization and its local affiliate, the Work of Christ Community, where I handle accounting, administration, publishing, and a basket-full of related responsibilities. Although raised in the Protestant tradition, I converted to Orthodoxy nearly 32 years ago and have been a member of Holy Trinity ever since. Jan and I have three grown children: Ruthie, James, and Christina. Ruthie and Christina are active members of Holy Trinity, James attends St. Nicholas parish in Ann Arbor. I taught Sunday school at Holy Trinity for 25 years and served several years as the Sunday school director. As a parish, I would like to see us work on reaching out to new people, improving Sunday school attendance, and more actively bringing our Orthodox Christian faith into our homes and daily lives.

Yvonne Joseph

My name is Yvonne Joseph, and I have served two terms on the Parish Council Board. I acted as secretary, chaired the Agape dinner, and helped with several other committees. Although I am a relative "newcomer" to the Holy Trinity community, I have a deep commitment to this church. During these past years, I have been able to participate, along with the other members of the board, through the roof project, the iconography project, and the renovation of the social room, in addition to other improvements for our community. I am a member of Philoptochos Society and have helped with several of their projects. I take the position of board member very seriously. I am conscientious in my attendance of the meetings. I consider each matter before the board, and weigh my vote based on what I feel will best benefit the entire community. As important as the above activities are to the community, I hope that my dedication to regularly attending the services and partaking of the sacraments reflects my loyalty to God and Holy Trinity. I would be honored to continue to serve as a board member.

Ms. Angela Vlahakis

I grew up attending Holy Trinity and am a lifelong member of this church community. I have been involved with many Orthodox Church activities since my early youth. Growing up I was a member of JOY, GOYA, Daughters of Penelope and YAL. I am currently a serving board member of Philoptochos. I also volunteer for the Taste of Greece fund-raiser, the annual bake sale and when needed the Odyssey program.

I am running for Parish Council because being involved with Holy Trinity throughout my life has provided me a support system when one was needed. In return I want to give back to the community that has enriched my life in a more formal capacity. Now it's time to do my part for the church community. I currently reside in Lansing and work at Michigan State University.

George Mansour

My family joined Holy Trinity in 1981. My involvement has included service as a Sunday school teacher (jr. and sr. high), festival and event worker, fundraising organizer, editor of *The Lamplighter*, member and officer of the Parish Council, and participant in several renovation committees.

I will continue to work for the Holy Trinity community, devoting energy and time to such issues as:

- ✿ Youth. We must help our parish youth develop and retain their Orthodox Christian upbringing. They are the future, if not of our parish, of Christ's Church in the US.
- ✿ Non-participants. As a Christian community, we must reach out to our Orthodox brothers and sisters who no longer come to services and welcome them back home.
- ✿ Current crisis. Council members must keep in mind that the nation's economic crisis affects us all as they make budget decisions.
- ✿ Financial future. The parish's financial base for the near and distant future must be secure so that we can carry out the ministries involved in our mission as a Greek Orthodox parish

Alexis Popoff

My name is Alexis Popoff, I am a lifelong member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.

I am currently serving my third year on the Parish Council and my term will expire at the end of 2008. While on the Parish Council I served as Co-Chairman of the Stewardship Committee for the past two years, Co-Chaired the Agape Dinner, volunteered at the Taste of Greece and also attended a Clergy Laity Conference (to name a few). I am currently in my seventh year teaching Sunday school for the Kindergarten and First Grade class. Additionally, I have coached the GOYA girl's basketball team for six years. I served on the Iconography Pledge Committee. I am employed by Consumers Energy as a Team Leader in the Lansing Call Center, where I supervise and direct approximately fifty-sixty employees. I believe these leadership skills will enable me to continue to serve our parish effectively. My faith and beliefs have given me strength to endure many difficult trials in this life; as a result, I would like the opportunity to continue to serve the Lord and give back to our Church in a higher capacity. I have taken my responsibilities as a Parish Council member very seriously and have done a good job. I would greatly appreciate your vote for Parish Council at Holy Trinity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sunday School News

by Nonie Vsetula

A big thank you to all who donated their time and energy to make the Halloween party a success.

This month the Sunday School will start work on the Christmas Program. This years program is different than what we have been doing in the recent past. Please check with your kids as they will be bringing home information on this event from class.

Have a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving!



Philoptochos

by Mary Volakakis

October proved to be a very busy month with a lot of hard work preparing for the bake sale at the same time enjoying two very fun events: First, there was the Membership Tea. Co-Presidents Eleanor Spalding and Koula Tzoumakas welcomed the guests and spoke briefly about our activities and projects to the nearly 40 people attending, after which all enjoyed an evening of fellowship. Angela Vlahakis chaired the event ably assisted by Angelos and Betty Vlahakis. Second, thanks to the generosity of many volunteers who provided food for this year's student welcome dinner. About seventy people attended the feast.

Thank you to Manya Constant, a talented photographer, who was the speaker at the October 18th OPA gathering. Everyone enjoyed her photography presentation from her latest trip to Cypress and Athens.

For the November 18th OPA gathering a White Elephant Bingo is planned!

There won't be a general meeting in November due to the time constraints and heavy workload of the bake sale.

Remember November 12th is our annual Bake Sale and Gift Shop extravaganza Co-chairpersons of the bake sale are Glykeria Christofilis, Olga Pascalenos, and Soussana Tesseris.

It is not too early to calendar the Philoptochos Christmas Party on Monday, December 8th at 6 p.m.

Odyssey

by George Lafkas

Still looking for more school age students for Greek language classes

Our enrollment of younger age school children has grown this year, but we still have room for more. We strongly recommend that parents reconsider enrolling their children in Greek

classes this year. Three area school districts are now giving high school credit for attending our Odyssey Greek language classes for high school students. Giving your child an early foundation in Greek language could pay major benefits in few years. Call the church office at 482-7341, for more information,

OXI Day Program

On October 26, 2008, the Odyssey Program students presented a short program to our community during the after church coffee hour. Because of the enthusiasm and hard work of our students and teachers an enjoyable event was shared by all in attendance.

Keep up the good work

I also want to thank all the Odyssey Board members, teachers, students and Odyssey friends who have helped with coffee hours and supported our fund raisers. Without your time and effort we would not have this internationally recognized Odyssey program serving our Lansing Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Community.

Up-coming events

November 23 - Global Festival at MSU
January 11 - Pizza and Movie

Parish Council Brunch

Sunday, November 16. Suggested donation: \$5 Adults, \$3 Children

Prayers for the Sick

Richard Lycos Kathryn Menoutes

Special Thanks

Many thanks for the loving cards, phone calls and the mission donation sent in memory of my dear sister, Frances Kontos.
My gratitude to all. Goldie Heos

The Truth Shall Make You Free

by Nick Gavrilides

How many Orthodox Christians in America can watch an episode of CSI, understand the plot and peg the culprit before the conclusion of the show, yet can't coherently comment on the basic tenets of Orthodoxy?

Would you be able to explain the basic beliefs of the Orthodox Christian faith to someone who asked you? For example, why do Christians refer to God as the "Holy Trinity?" What is the Church's teaching about Jesus Christ: His divinity, His humanity, and His wills? What is the Orthodox view of the "Church," her liturgical life and the Holy Mysteries she administers? Is it important to have clear answers to these questions?

Christ said to His disciples—*"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32).

St. Paul exhorts the churches in Philippi about the value of knowledge of Christ—*"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ"* (Philippians 3:8).

How can someone enjoy the fullness of the Christian faith and learn the truths about Christ and His Kingdom? The answer is in the Holy Orthodox Church.

Divine revelation is safeguarded in the Orthodox Church, as promised by Christ—*"... and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven ..."* (Matthew 16: 18-19).

Orthodox teaching about the Holy Trinity, Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Church have been clarified throughout the centuries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—*"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."* (1 Corinthians 2:12)

The fullness of the faith is concisely laid out in the Sacraments, prayers, hymns, canticles and canons chanted during the Church services. It is visually represented in the iconography displayed in Orthodox buildings, homes and workplaces. A parishioner does not need a seminary to be proficient in Orthodox teaching; he or she only needs to pay close attention to the words and actions of the services.

How fortunate we Orthodox Christians are to have the beliefs of our faith so accessible and easy to understand. If we who dwell in Christ's Church are not clear on specific points of Orthodoxy, perhaps we should ask how important it should be to us to personally understand the knowledge brought to light by the Holy Spirit?

Again, **it is what we choose to pay attention to that makes the difference!** Life presents us with a never-ending stream of information, but we have choices as to where we focus. In the Orthodox Church, the truth about Christ and His Kingdom is available to everyone; through her teachings and the Holy Mysteries we can be assured the fullness of Christ's gift is offered.

Christ gives us the perspective and speaks to us all when He teaches Martha: *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her"* (Luke 10: 41-42).

Some recommendations for Orthodox commentary on the above topics:

The Holy Trinity: *On God and Christ: the Five Theological Orations of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*

The Incarnation and Divine Economy concerning Salvation: *On the Incarnation, St. Athanasius*

The Divinity and Humanity of Jesus Christ: *On the Unity of Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria*

The Church and Sacraments: *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

All titles available through St. Vladimir's Seminary Press: www.svspress.com.

Announcements

“Loaves and Fishes” is a local shelter for the homeless. They are looking for volunteers to help serve meals to their guests once or twice a month. If you would be interested in serving in this capacity, contact Fr. Mark for details.

Our Diocese Youth Director Eva Kokinos has an opportunity to take part in a mission trip to Kenya in 2009. In order to participate, she needs to raise over \$3000 to help cover her expenses. In November we will be passing second trays for this worthy cause which will in time bring a blessing to our own young people as well. Please be generous when the opportunity arrives to help Eva out with this mission work.

The parish is invited to attend a meal on Saturday, November 29, 2008, in loving memory of Roberta Schneiderman. The meal will begin at 5:30pm in the Baryames Social Hall. Please RSVP with your name and number attending to Helen Schneiderman at 517-372-7863.

Holy Trinity Contributes to the Community

On September 28, Holy Trinity presented a gift of \$1000.00 to Capital Area Community Services (CACs). The parish contributed a portion of the proceeds from the fundraiser “A Taste of Greece” to assist the CACS’s Expanded Homeless Program in the Lansing area, one way in which the church gives back to the community.



Pictured from left to right: Stella Economy, President of Holy Trinity; Juanita Mitchell-Chapman, Director, Emergency Services, CACS; Fr. Mark Sietsema; Marina Poroshin, Agent in the Expanded Homeless Program.

Condolences

to Bess and Lou Stamatakos on the untimely passing of Bess’ sister Elaine Makris-Daniels last week. May her memory be eternal.

to Fr. Dean Hountalas, pastor of Holy Cross Church in Farmington Hills and chancellor of the Metropolis of Detroit, on the passing of his father Christos Hountalas in Chicago. May his memory be eternal.

to Metropolitan Nicholas on the passing of his aunt Mary Fidopiastis in Glen Falls, NY. This aunt was the sister of His Eminence’s recently deceased mother. May their memory be eternal.

to the family of Paul and Mea Danigelis on the passing of Mea’s father Robert Baarda in Grand Rapids. May his memory be eternal!

to Mark and Alicia Hostetler and family on the passing of Mark’s father Robert Hostetler. May his memory be eternal.

to John Vlahakis and family on the passing of Sandra Vlahakis on October 29. May her memory be eternal.

Endowment Fund for Holy Trinity: Frequently Asked Questions

The Parish Council has often spoken about establishing an endowment for the parish. As reported at the recent General Assembly, the Council wishes to move forward with the idea and to that end a draft agreement is being prepared. In addition to the Council's discussion, an Endowment Planning Subcommittee has met and made recommendation about the matter as well. The Subcommittee includes Steve Binioris, Stella Economy, George Mansour, and Spiro Voutsaras.

Since the General Assembly, some parishioners have raised questions about this venture – What is an endowment? Why an endowment? How does that help us? Does that mean we change what we've been doing? Who controls the funds of an endowment? All are very good questions.

The purpose of the present article is to provide information to the community with a view toward responding to concerns. The intent here is to be clear, but brief. One could address each of the questions almost endlessly. That is not helpful here or at this time.

What is an endowment fund? An endowment fund is a means by which an institution may receive donated monies, securities or property according to an authorized agreement. It is usually understood that the amount donated – the principal – will be kept intact indefinitely or for a defined time period. Although the donated principal is not spent, a certain percentage of the interest income generated by the principal may be used according to agreed upon rules or policies.

How is this different than the way donations are handled now? Currently, the monies the parish receives are generally used to fund the planned or budgeted expenses for a given year. Monies received are generally not held indefinitely. The primary source of monies received is stewardship. The budget includes other revenue lines such as “loose offering” “hall rental” “prosforo.” Although considerably less than stewardship, monies in these categories are also directed to funding planned or budgeted expenditures.

Does this mean we have to change everything about the way we plan for expenses? No. It means that the parish will now have a mechanism separate from the regular flow of revenue and expenses that requires donations and gifts to be held or used according to rules agreed upon in advance by the parish. An endowment fund does not alter stewardship or the other ways in which the parish receives donations and pays its bills. The current system continues as usual.

How does this help the parish? Simply stated, an endowment gift is one that keeps giving. This type of fund allows for a donation to have a much greater impact over a longer period of time than if the donation were spent all at once. The gift remains unspent, but it helps to generate more funds. It helps ensure a financial base for the future.

Where does the money for this fund come from? Different sources: it may come from contributions of cash, securities, stocks, bonds, bequests, property, real estate, charitable trusts, insurance policies. A parish endowment fund can be named as the recipient of bequests specified in a parishioner's will, trust or other financial planning document. This fund also becomes a way to memorialize loved ones by having their memorial funds stay with the parish, rather than to have them used to pay monthly bills, thus ensuring an on-going memorial.

Who controls an endowment fund? Who decides how and when monies can be spent? An endowment fund must be completely separate from the current receipt and disbursement of monies which are now administered by the Parish Council according to a budget authorized by the General Assembly. An endowment fund must have its own Board of Directors or Council to administer it and

Endowment Fund for Holy Trinity

(CONTINUED from page 10)

to monitor that monies are invested according to parameters and policies set forth in an Endowment Agreement. The Endowment Board or Council provides regular auditing and reporting to the parish community and the General Assembly.

Who determines who serves on the Endowment Board or Council? In its discussion of this matter the Parish Council and the Planning Sub-Committee have talked about an Endowment Board or Council to consist of 7 members selected in the following manner: 5 members presented as a slate for approval by the General Assembly, which may also nominate candidates, and the Parish Council President and the Parish Council Treasurer or designate. The Priest shall be an *ex-officio* and non-voting member. Term of service of each elected member 4 or 5 years is yet to be determined.

Preserving Our Past By Building Our Future

by Hiram Fitzgerald
Treasurer

“Your own gifts, of Your own, we offer to You.”

Dear members of the Holy Trinity spiritual family. As treasurer of the parish I believe it is my responsibility to be sure that every member of our community is informed about the financial status of the community. As you know, the General Assembly approved an annual budget of \$321,069 for the current fiscal year. To date, we have received revenues of \$242,539, or roughly 76% of our projected budget. This is good news!

And now the reality check! An expense budget of \$321,069 requires a revenue of the same amount in order to balance the books. And just like the State of Michigan, we are required to balance our books. Our stewardship budget for 2008 is \$258,075 and to date we have received \$190,359. The difference between stewardship budget and stewardship received is \$67,716. I believe that the story is quite clear: we must bring out stewardship revenue in line with our stewardship budget.

Please review your stewardship pledge for the year and take actions to be sure that our community benefits from your generous offers at the beginning of the year. Holy Trinity repeatedly demonstrates its charitable will through second trays and responses to the needs of the broader community, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Please keep in mind: THE HOLY TRINITY BUDGET IS OUR CHARITY: YOUR GIVING BENEFITS YOU AS WELL AS ALL OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOLY TRINITY COMMUNITY. PLEASE BE GENEROUS IN SUPPORTING YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME! Everyone is aware of the serious economic times facing our community and our country, but I hope that each of you can bend just a little to assure that our fair share builds the positive budget outcome that we need to support the spiritual life of our community.

**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
1701 East Saginaw Street
Lansing, MI 48912**

2009 STEWARDSHIP

We invite you to become a Steward and Member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Lansing, Michigan. We ask you to please:

- Provide the information requested on this sheet about you and your family
- Write in the amount of your 2009 Stewardship Pledge at the bottom
- Sign the form
- Return it to the Parish office

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY is September 21, 2008

Family Name:

Your Name: Your Date of Birth:

Spouse's Name: Spouse's Date of Birth:

Orthodox- You?

Orthodox - Spouse?

Children under 21 years of age

Address:

Child #1:

City: State:

Date of Birth:

Zip:

Child #2:

Date of Birth

Telephone #1:

Child #3

Date of Birth

Telephone #2:

Child #4

Date of Birth

Email Address:

2009 Stewardship Pledge _____

By signing this pledge form, you affirm your wish to be a member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1701 East Saginaw Street, Lansing, Michigan, for the calendar year 2009.

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

STEWARDSHIP LIST 2008

- Abdallah, George & Leila
 Abood, Bruce
 Abood, David & Alicia
 Abood, David & Della
 Abood, Reva
 Alexander, Dimitri
 Alexander, Helen
 Alexander, Michael & Maria
 Alimonos, Tasos
 Arvanites, Art & Rhea
 Arvanites, Christopher

 Baryames, Art
 Baryames, Charles & Rosalie
 Bassos, Charles & Zoe
 Began, Barbara
 Binioris, Savvas
 Bontos, George & Athena
 Brancheau/Heos, Jeffrey & Pamela
 Branoff, Andrew & Andrea
 Branoff, Dennis & Alexis
 Brown, Alex & Mary

 Carantza, Gus & Bess
 Carey, Dena Despina
 Chamis, Chris
 Christofilis, Demetra
 Christofilis, Elaine
 Christofilis, John & Glykeria
 Christophill, James & Irene
 Cloumas, Martha
 Colovos, Nick & Karen
 Constant, Dimitri
 Constant, Erikkos & Maria
 Constant, Nadina
 Corey, Rita
 Curtis, Koula

 Danigelis, Paul & Mea
 Dart, Katina
 Deliyanne, Gregory
 Dellis, Diane
 DeRose, Anne
 Dines, Gregory

 Economopoulos, John & Christina
 Economy, George & Stella
 Esch, Andrea

 Fandrlick, Kate
 Farran, Richard & Pamela
 Fitzgerald, Hiram & Dolores
 Fournodavlos, John & Eleni

 Fragale, Tony & Georgia
 Frangos, Maria I.
 Frangos, Phillip & Tula
 Frangos, Themistocles
 Funtukis, Harry & Denise

 Garyet, Nickolas
 Gavrilides, Gregory & Rosemary
 Gavrilides, Nicholas & Dana
 Gazos, George & Irene
 Georgiou, Nicolas & Anna
 Geovanes, Pauline
 Gialama, Katerina
 Grimm, Alexandra

 Haynie, Eric & Stephanie
 Hayward, Ken & Nancy
 Heos, Goldie
 Heos, James & Cassie
 Hoag, Cynthia
 Hoffman, Toni
 Hogg, Daniel & Kathy
 Hostetler, Alicia
 Howell, Elaine
 Hruska, Maria

 Janis, Efstratia
 Jennings, Kay
 Jildeh, Katy
 Joseph, Yvonne

 Kafantaris, George & Maria
 Kaliyanakis, Andreas
 Kaliyanakis, Helen
 Kaplan, Bob & Georgia
 Karagoulis, Ellen
 Karagoulis, Michael & Lynne
 Karakitsos, John & Coleen
 Karakitsos, Vasiliki
 Kastos, George
 Kateyiannis, Christos & Vicki
 Katsiris, Peter & Frances
 Katsiris, Jim & Athina
 Kavalaris, Gus & Connie
 Kimbouris, Grigiros & Anastasia
 King, Joanna
 Kontis, Irene
 Kosal, Curt & Leslie
 Kotsifis, Mary
 Kotsifis, Marina
 Koukios, Jeannette
 Krantz, Gregory & Georgia
 Kritselis, Nicholas

 Kritselis, William & Elaine

 Lafkas, George
 Lahanas, George & Shelley
 Laskaris, Bertha
 Lewis, Mary & Glen
 Limber, Nicholas
 Litos, Alexander & Zana

 Malvetis, Nancy
 Malvetis, Anastasios
 Mangopoulos, Stavros & Maria
 Manolakoudis, Kostas & Sophia
 Mansour, George & Mary Ann
 Markakis, Pericles & Georgia
 Metros, William
 Millis, Mark
 Moundros, Kirk
 Munk, Anna Ruth
 Munk, Christina
 Munk, Gerald & Janice

 Nasif, Michel & Alice
 Neros, Donna
 Neros, Nicholas & Stacie
 Nichols, Elan
 Nicolaou, Vackis & Koula

 Osborn, Nathan & Sarah

 Pappas, George & Ann
 Pappas, Jim & Julia
 Pappas, Stephanie
 Pascalenos, Olga
 Pascalenos, Peter
 Pascalenos, Tom
 Peaney, Elise
 Pehlivanoglu, Nikolaos
 Peponis, Gus & Margaret
 Perentesis, Stephanie
 Pike, Shannon & Christine
 Platsis, George
 Pogoncheff, Methodi & Marcia
 Popoff, Alexis
 Popoff, Dan & Georgana
 Poulos, Presvytera Alexandra
 Pridnia, David & Liana
 Priggooris, Peter
 Putnam, Amy
 Putnam, Chuck & Debbie
 Putnam, David

 Rzepka, Ellen

Stewardship List 2008 (continued)

Sabbagh, George
Saites, Harry
Samra, Ted & Ina
Sarinopoulos, Sid & Irene
Scofes, George & Georgia
Scofes, Stephen
Seegraves, Attinas
Semerly, Stella
Setas, James & Susan
Sgouris, Katherine
Sietsema, Fr. Mark & Presv. Kathy
Siettas, Nick
Simmons, Nathan & Vyvien
Sinadinos, Charlotte
Sinadinos, James & Barbara
Sinas, George & Sheryl
Skorich, Dan
Skorna, Kris & Paul
Smith, Richard
Spalding, Eleanor
Spiridakos, Gregory & Effie
Stajos, Cynthia
Stajos, James
Stajos, Jan
Stamatakis, Louis & Bess
Stathopoulos, Dimitri & Martha
Stathopoulos, Stamati & Angie
Stavros, Christina
Stepanovich, Dennis
Stowell, David & Peggy
Strangas, Elias
Suzic, Ljubica & Milan

Takis, John
Tarpoff, Archie & Margaret
Tassopoulos, Andreas

Tassopoulos, Demos
Tassopoulos, Eleftheria
Tassopoulos, Maria
Tesseris, George & Soussana
Tesseris, Spiro & Sophia
Thodis, Peggy
Tolas, Petro
Tzoumakas, Angela
Tzumakakis, Spiridon & Krisoula

Underwood, Robert

Vanis, Alex & Antonia
Vanis, Stuart & Elizabeth
Vlahakis, Angela
Vlahakis, Angelo & Betty
Vlahakis, James & Susan
Vlahakis, Louis & Mary
Vlahakis, Marilyn Joan
Vlahakis, Nicholas
Volakakis, Mary
Vosovic, Sava & Dolores
Voutsaras, Spiro & Diana
Vsetula, Richard & Nonie

Webster, H. Richard & Joan
Willard, Patricia
Wirt, Joanne
Woods, Richard & Nicole
Wright, Tamara

Zabrodsky, Nicholai
Zachos, Terri
Zaransky, Julie
Zois, Evelyn

CHURCH CLEANUP DAY!!!!

Saturday, November 15

10am-3pm

(Lunch will be served)

Come work alongside your faithful brothers & sisters. This is a great 'Spiritual exercise' to prepare ourselves (and the church) for the Holiday Season.

"TO DO LIST"

Building Work

Wash Windows	Battery changes
Clean Kitchen	Repair Pews
Flush Roof Drains	Replace Light Bulbs
Plumbing Repairs	Cobweb Patrol
Light 'purging' of basement	

Yard Work

Fall raking	Prune ornamental
Weeding	Remove dead trees
Yard & Parking lot 'spiff'	

Questions? Please contact George Lafkas, 517-351-3121, glafkas@comcast.net or Yvonne Joseph, 517-281-1602, classarms@aol.com

HOLY TRINITY NEEDS YOUR HELP!!
An open letter to Parishioners from the Parish Council

BACKGROUND: For several years Holy Trinity has annually held two major fundraising events and a raffle. This year several parishioners who regularly contribute to the work teams for events indicated they needed a break. Other parishioners stated that because of their job, family, or other responsibilities, they were unavailable to work at events, but instead, they would be willing to help by donating money above and beyond their stewardship pledges. Thus in 2008, we had only one event – the successful “Taste of Greece.”

ISSUE: The Parish Council listened to parishioners and cancelled the second event - our booth at the August East Lansing Folk Festival. As a result, the parish will fall short of the amount budgeted for fundraising revenue. Fundraising events provide monies that are used to lower the principal of the parish’s loans; the funds allow interest-free payments to be made.

To help meet the 2008 fundraising budget, the Parish Council asks for your participation in a **“Work Free Fundraiser”** for this fall. It brings together the two items mentioned by parishioners: “no work” and “donations.”

PLAN: The goal is to raise \$10,000 before the end of the year. To accomplish this, the Council appeals to the more than 200 parish families for money above and beyond their usual stewardship.

IF each of our 200 families makes a special, one-time gift:

<i>An average of</i>	<i>would generate</i>
\$50	\$10,000
\$40	\$8,000
\$25	\$5,000

APPEAL: Please join us in supporting this “Labor Free Fundraiser.”

Submit the following form with your one-time gift by December 15, 2008

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

Amount: _____

Please state “Work Free Fundraiser” on the Memo line of your check.

The Parish Council thanks you for your collaboration.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
 1701 East Saginaw Street
 Lansing Michigan 48912
 Office: 482-7341 Fax: 482-8524

8:45 am ORTHROS SERVICE
 10:00 am DIVINE LITURGY
 Fellowship Coffee following Liturgy

November 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 ELECTION DAY-Parish Council OCF hosts coffee Daylight Savings Time ends	3 Philoptochos General Meeting, 7pm	4 Election Day	5 Bible Study, 7pm	6	7 Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm	8 St. Cosmas and St. Damianos
9 Choir hosts coffee	10 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	11 Veterans Day	12 ATHENIAN LUNCHEON & BAKE SALE Bible Study, 7pm	13 St. John Chrysostom Divine Liturgy, 10am	14 Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm	15 FALL CLEAN-UP DAY, 10-2pm Nativity Lenten Period begins
16 Parish Council hosts coffee	17	18 OPA Gathering, 1-3pm	19 Bible Study, 7pm	20	21 Entrance of the Theotokos to the Temple Divine Liturgy, 10am Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm	22 Great Vespers, 6pm OCF Multi-Ethnic Dance & Fundraiser, 7pm
23 GOYA hosts coffee Global Festival-MSU	24 Lamplighter Deadline	25 St. Catherine, Divine Liturgy, 10am	26 Bible Study, 7pm	27 Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed	28 NO Odyssey Classes	29 Roberta Schneiderman Memorial Dinner, Social Hall 5:30pm
30 One-year Memorial, Katerina Chilkoff NO Sunday School, "Open" coffee sponsorship St. Andrew the Apostle, Church Founder						

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
 1701 East Saginaw Street
 Lansing Michigan 48912
 Office: 482-7341 Fax: 482-8524

8:45 am ORTHROS SERVICE
 10:00 am DIVINE LITURGY
 Fellowship Coffee following Liturgy

December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Bible Study, 7pm	St. Barbara, Divine Liturgy, 10am	Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm St. Savas	St. Nicholas Divine Liturgy, 10am Philoptochos Social Hall & Christmas Tree Decorating St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Odyssey hosts coffee with Loukoumathes Baptism of James Poletes, 2pm	Philoptochos Christmas Party, 6pm		Bible Study, 7pm		St. Spyridon, Divine Liturgy, 10am Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING -Budget Philoptochos hosts coffee	Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	OPA Gathering, 1-3pm	Bible Study, 7pm	MARSP Luncheon, 11-2pm	NO Odyssey Classes	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sunday School Program & host coffee GOYA Caroling Event	Lamplighter Deadline	Eve of the Nativity, 10am Great Vespers of the Nativity, 5:30pm		Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Liturgy 9am	NO Odyssey Classes	St. Stephen
28	29	30	31			
"open" coffee NO Sunday School Classes		Vespers Divine Liturgy, 7pm New Year's Eve				