

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 XLII

March 2009

Pastoral Reflection

Fr. Mark Sietsema

Listen, Lent Is

Kali Sarakosti: A Blessed Great Lent to us all.

With March 2, Clean Monday, Great Lent is upon us once again this year. Lent is, we all know, the season of fasting. And yet fasting by itself is hardly what Lent is about. If Lent for you means nothing more than an extra couple of meatless days per week, you are experiencing something, but it's not really Lent.

In the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New, fasting is always accompanied by another activity—prayer. In fact, the more important one comes first: “prayer and fasting.” Fasting without prayer is an exercise in futility. Fasting without prayer is like setting the table but never serving the meal. Fasting without prayer is like putting a stamp on the letter but never mailing it.

Lent is for prayer—more prayer, deeper prayer. Lent is our scheduled vacation from those usual time-wasting activities of television, sports, games, and other soulless pursuits. In Lent our spirits bask in the sunshine of God's presence through prayer.

But what is prayer? Is it just the cosmic equivalent of sitting on Santa's lap and reading your wish-list out loud? This is most certainly not how Christ taught His disciples to pray. Prayer is not about jabbering endlessly to God about how He needs to change His world to better fit our expectations.

The purpose of prayer is not to get things from God. The purpose of prayer is to get God Himself.

In the Lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim, we are taught to ask for “the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love.” Why these things? These are the virtues that prepare our hearts for the experience of God. God is far from the proud, the impure, the self-willed, and the hate-nurturing man or woman.

God Himself is the goal of prayer. To reach the goal we need not pour out a multitude of words. Prayer is an act of communication, and the greater part of true communication is listening. Prayer is not just about talking to God, but even more about quieting down and listening to the still, small voice of the Almighty.

Do you want to know what *LENT IS*? Simply rearrange the letters and *LISTEN*.

Our Orthodox Lenten services excel in providing an opportunity for listening to God. There is no better place or time for this than the sweet, somber midweek services of Compline, Salutations, and the Presanctified Liturgy.

Skipping the cheeseburger in Lent does you absolutely no good if you are skipping the church services too.

Come to Church during each week of Great Lent. Open your heart and your ears. God will speak to you. And yours will truly be a Blessed Lent and a Good Pascha.

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.

Parish Council Update

- ✿ The Parish Council is looking at prioritizing facility repairs and improvements that are needed. We have tried to keep up our aging building and grounds and will continue to look at items that need immediate attention. We are still looking at options to lighting the sanctuary and iconography, and we are in the process of collecting information as to the costs involved in either resurfacing or replacing our front parking lot. We will move cautiously however in these uncertain economic times.
- ✿ To keep you informed as to our financial health, our treasurer, George Mansour will be providing a monthly update in each Lamplighter issue.
- ✿ There will be two additional question and answer "Town Hall" type meetings to address the Holy Trinity Endowment Agreement. The meeting dates are: Thursday, February 26 and Tuesday, March 10, both at 7 PM. All are welcome.

Stewardship 2009

- ✿ As of mid February, we have 170 pledge units who have pledged \$195,159.00 for 2009. During the same period last year we had 194 pledge units with pledges totaling \$226,739.00.

Mark Your Calendars

Endowment Question and Answer Meetings

7:00 pm

Thursday, February 26 and Tuesday, March 10

Spring General Assembly

Sunday, March 29

12 noon-1 PM

Prayers for Health

Ann Marston
Georgana Popoff

Jan Munk

Philoptochos

by Mary Volakakis

A big thank you to **Yvonne Joseph** who was the guest speaker at our **February 2nd meeting**; Her topic was Women's Safety; her talk was very informative with tips about safety in using firearms. She brought many guns to demonstrate how to handle them properly. Many of the members took advantage of the opportunity Yvonne provided to handle the guns.

The 39th Annual **Interfaith Day** took place **February 24th**. The Orthodox were allotted 25 tickets and Dee Vosovic reports these were snapped up immediately. Shaarey Zedek Congregation hosted the event with the day's theme being Repairing The World. The lunch menu consisted of traditional Purim food. The Orthodox speaker was our own **Mary Brown**.

Our **March General meeting** is scheduled to take place on the **2nd**, the beginning of the Great Lent. Friday Salutations begin March 6th and volunteers are signing up to host the evening repasts. Please check the Sunday Bulletin each week for the dates of Philoptochos events for March.

The Board is preparing a slate for our spring Elections. If you are interested in being a candidate, please submit your name to Eleanor Spalding or Koula Tzoumakas.

Condolences

to the family of Mark and Tina Stevens on the passing of Mark's mother Sandra Lee Stevens.

to the Kafantaris and Nicolaou families on the passing of nephew and cousin Elias Sarris.

to Goldie Heos on the passing of her sister Angeline Levas.

May their memory be eternal!!

Lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian

*Said every morning and
evening during Great Lent*

O Lord and Master of my life,
Give me not the spirit of sloth, despair,
lust for power, and idle talk;

But give rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love to me, your
servant;

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my
own transgressions
And not to judge my brother.

For You are blessed unto the ages of ages.
Amen

Holy Trinity's New Web Site is Up and Running

Thanks to Jim Kavalaris, our new and improved web site is ready to go. It looks great and is ready for your viewing. In the next few weeks you will find articles from Fr. Mark and all the parish organizations. Check back often as it will be updated regularly. To access the site go to:
www.holytrinity-lansing.org

Odyssey

by George Lafkas

Sunday, March 22 - Greek Independence Day Program. The Odyssey students from each class will perform a short and enjoyable program commemorating one of the most important holidays of Greece. The performance will take place at the large social hall right after the liturgy.

Students and parents, please mark your calendar. On Saturday, March 21, Odyssey students will have their rehearsal for the Independence Day Program at 12:00 noon.

Sunday School News

by Nonie Vsetula

There are many upcoming events for the families to participate in Parish life.

March 3rd. The Great Compline Service; Preceding the Great Compline service and there will be a Lenten Potluck supper. The young people will be asked to read parts of the service. The Sunday school teachers will be talking with the students about this opportunity to participate in the service. If your student has a desire to participate please have them let their Sunday school teacher know or contact Nonie Vsetula (517) 487-6528.

March 8th coffee hour

March 15th the Oratorical Festival will take place after Liturgy.

April 11th Lazarus Saturday will involve Liturgy; followed by the annual pancake breakfast and Palm folding as well as time for confessions. The children will be asked to come up to the front of the church and sing with the choir at this Liturgy.

April 18th Holy Saturday Liturgy; This Liturgy is a special teaching Liturgy. In this Liturgy the church gives us a preview of what is to come with the resurrection of Christ. The children are encouraged to come to this as Fr. Mark will be making the Proskedia out in front of the Holy Doors. This is a great time for the kids and adults to see what we don't normally see!

April 19th After the Paschal Vespers there will be an Easter Egg hunt on the Church lawn.

We are looking for volunteers to help with Vacation Bible School that is scheduled to be held June 22nd - the 25th, if you are interested please contact Nonie Vsetula (517) 487-6528.

AHEPA

by Phillip Frangos

AHEPA is hosting its annual Fish Plaki Dinner on Palm Sunday, April 12, in the Baryames Social Hall immediately after the Holy Liturgy. This event is much anticipated and enjoyed by members of the community. In keeping with past

practice, the Graduate Reception will be held in conjunction with the dinner. This year AHEPA is honoring the following high school graduates: Theodore Alexander, Kristi Bates, Amy Chammas, Michael Fragale, Jennifer Hogg, Sam King, Erica Krantz, Elenis Nicolaou, and Cristiellen Heos Zarvas. If there are any other graduates whose name does not appear on this list, please contact Phillip Frangos at (517) 351-0038 immediately with their name. The students are eligible for AHEPA grants in addition to being recognized at the dinner.

Once again, many thanks to everyone who supported the Village Feast Dinner. Everyone who attended had an enjoyable evening which was enhanced by the young students from Michigan State University who performed several dances.

Start thinking summer and baseball, hot dogs, and fireworks. AHEPA has reserved a bloc of tickets for the Lansing Lugnuts game on June 27. Past outings have been a great deal of fun. The game will be followed by a fireworks display. Tickets cost \$9.00 each. Contact George Lafkas for tickets or information at (517) 351-3121.

A warm welcome to Wolverine Chapter's newest members - Mark Millis and Harilaos Sorovigas. Anyone wishing to join AHEPA should contact Vackis Nicolaou or Tony Fragale.

Treasurer's Report

by George Mansour

Communication and awareness contribute to the health of a community, just as they do within a family. As Treasurer of the parish I have the responsibility to keep the Holy Trinity community informed about our financial situation. To carry out this responsibility I intend: to make the financials statements available monthly through *The Lamplighter*, to provide monthly a summary and commentary on the financials in *The Lamplighter*, and to post on the parish's bulletin board the financial statements after they are reviewed and approved by the Parish Council, and. The goal is to help keep parishioners aware of how their stewardship offerings and other contributions are being utilized.

The budget for 2009 that the General Assembly approved at its December meeting lists projected expenditures of \$321,452, a slight, but understandable increase over 2008's projected expenses. Based on this projection, an average of combined weekly receipts (i.e., from stewardship, loose offering in the collection tray, fundraisers and other donations) of \$6182 will be needed for the parish to meet the projected expenses. Stewardship pledges received to date bode well for attaining that portion of the budget. A number of parishioners have yet to make their pledge; their pledges will surely help ensure we meet our budget goal for 2009.

2008 Year-End Report.

As you will recall, a special appeal "No-Work Fundraiser" was issued for November and December. Parishioners responded and contributed \$6370.00 for this appeal, an excellent response to a relatively new idea at Holy Trinity. As on numerous previous occasions, the community steps forward when called upon.

The parish ended the year 2008 with both good and less-good situations. The total revenue received was higher than projected, but expenditures were also higher than projected and resulted in a bottom-line deficit.

Stewardship receipts consists of contributions from those who pledged as well as from those who did not pledge. Pledges for 2008 totaled slightly under \$250,000; however, the contributions received for those pledges totaled only \$243,500. Those who did not pledge contributed \$25,000, an amount that fortunately pushed total stewardship receipts beyond the budgeted amount. In addition, the cost of products and services for the church increased just like it did for many households.

The end-of-the-year financial statements will be posted on the bulletin board for parishioners to review.

**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, 2009

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: _____

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

March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 GOYA hosts Macaronada Luncheon Vespers of Forgiveness 5pm	2 GREAT LENT BEGINS Philoptochos General Meeting, 7pm	3 Lenten Potluck, 6pm Great Compline Ser- vice, 7pm	4 Presanctified Liturgy, 5pm	5	6 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm Salutations, 7pm	7 Metropolis Orthodoxy Vespers, St. Nicholas Parish, Ann Arbor, 7pm
8 Sunday School hosts coffee Sunday of Orthodoxy	9 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	10 Endowment Q & A Meet- ing, 7pm (?)	11 Presanctified Liturgy, 5pm	12	13 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm Salutations, 7pm	14
15 Oratorical Festival Philoptochos hosts coffee	16 OPA Meeting, 1-3pm	17	18	19	20 Odyssey Program Rehearsal, 12 Noon	21
22 One-Year Memorial, Michael Curtis Odyssey Independence Day Program	23 Lampighter Deadline	24	25 Annunciation of the Theotokos, Divine Liturgy 10am Philoptochos Luncheon follows	26	27 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm Salutations, 7pm	28
29 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING Vsetula Family Memorial OCF 'Helping Hands' Auction/Fundraiser	30	31				

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

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Presanctified Liturgy, 5pm	2	3 NO Odyssey Classes Salutations, 7pm	4
5 Choir hosts coffee	6 Philoptochos General Meeting, 7pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	7	8 Presanctified Liturgy, 5pm—Fr. Jim Bogdan, guest Priest and speaker	9	10 NO Odyssey Classes	11 Saturday of Lazarus, Liturgy 10am Pancake Breakfast & Palm Weaving: Confessional Time; Children's Choir Practice
12 PALM SUNDAY AHEPA Graduate Recep- tion & Fish Plaki Luncheon 1st Bridegroom Service, 7pm Western Easter	13 2nd Bridegroom Service, 7pm	14 3rd Bridegroom Service Hymn of Cassiane, 7pm	15 Holy Unction Service, 3:30-6:15pm	16 Institution of the Eucharist, 7:30am Twelve Gospels, 6:30pm MARSP Luncheon, 11-2pm	17 HOLY FRIDAY Royal Hours, 8am Vespers of Apokathelosis, 2pm Lamentations, 6:30pm NO Odyssey Classes	18 Divine Liturgy, 10am Paschal Vigil, 11pm Parish Council Dinner
19 HOLY PASCHA Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Agape Service 12noon Easter Egg Hunt	20 Lampighter Deadline	21	22	23 St. George, Divine Liturgy, 10am	24 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm	25
26 OCF hosts coffee Poikilia & Classic Movie Fundraiser, 6pm	27	28	29	30		