



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

The Lamplighter is the official publication of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Lansing. It has been published monthly since 1967. Visit us at www.holytrinity-lansing.org.

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January 2005

Encyclical of Archbishop Demetrios for The Nativity of Christ

“For to you is born this day...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:11-12)

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you on the joyous occasion of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, an event of cosmic proportions that marked the very entry of salvation into our world. The significance of this event rests in the awesome truth that our God, in His perfect love for us, chose to enter our world not as an adult clothed with earthly authority, but as “a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger”. It is truly incredible to contemplate such a tender and humble image in view of the incomprehensible might and majesty of God.

This act of Divine condescension suggests the bestowal of a tremendous dignity upon humankind. This dignity reveals itself most directly in the awesome duty of care that God placed upon the most Holy Theotokos and Virgin Mary and upon Joseph in caring for His only-begotten Son, the newborn Messiah. We must remember that Jesus, in his human infancy, was dependent upon Mary and Joseph for the basic necessities of food, shelter, and clothing. Here, we behold but a glimpse of the limitless nature of God’s love for humanity. By becoming a human being from the moment of infancy, God revealed His desire to partake in the entirety of the human experience, beginning with a humble birth and proceeding even unto death on a Cross, so that we in turn might enjoy an everlasting life with Him.

Viewed from this perspective, God’s entry into

our world as “a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” was an indicative sign with wider implications: In an age where many looked toward emperors and kings for their security, God deigned to herald the salvation of humanity with the birth, under humbling conditions, of an infant. This was no accident; rather, it was an act with a declaratory significance. Beyond the importance of these humbling conditions, the appearance of God in the world as a babe, as a child, strongly affirmed the centrality of the child in God’s plan for the salvation of the human race. This affirmation is fundamentally important in our modern age, particularly in view of social conditions within our world that compromise the supreme value of children and their inalienable right to be nurtured within the security of a family and to live in dignity as God intended.

Brothers and Sisters,

This year it is fitting that we place special emphasis upon the vital role and care of children and their families during our celebration of Christmas, for we will inaugurate as an Archdiocese in 2005, *the Year of the Family*, a period of intensified ministry to families across America. Our principal aims for this year will be to enhance the spiritual lives of families, to grow in our appreciation of Greek Orthodox families in America as we minister to their particular needs, and to make available to families more and more resources that communicate the abiding presence of Christ and His Church. What beautiful and worthy aims for us to consider this year during this glorious Feast of the Nativity, which embodies the true essence and potential of family like no other holiday!

Therefore, as we celebrate this blessed occasion, let us do so as loving and caring families. Let us come together in prayer and worship of the Almighty God, Who entered our world as an infant for our

Encyclical, Cont.

salvation. As we gather in fellowship with one another this holiday season, let us particularly reflect upon the fact of the Incarnate God lying in a manger as a babe, thus establishing forever the paramount importance of children as precious members of our families.

I offer to you my fervent wishes that the joy of this Christmas season fills your hearts, your homes, your families, and your parishes and that the very same joy may accompany you throughout the dawning New Year. The Prince of Peace has come as a child; and He has promised to be with us all the days, to the end of time, even to the end of the world (*Matthew 28:20*).

With paternal love in Christ,

+DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

PARISH COUNCIL

By . . . George Mansour

The Parish Council extends to the Holy Trinity community best wishes for a Happy Healthy 2005.

Annually the beginning of the new year is a time for 'resolutions,' a time to renew and to strengthen commitments and priorities or to establish new ones. For our parish 2005 is a time to strengthen our commitment to work together as a united community.

Owing to the community's commitment, much has been achieved towards the goal of repairing and renovating our facility. We began a couple of years ago by shoring up and stabilizing the office and education wing. New carpet was installed in the sanctuary. Exterior brick work was repaired. The roof has been repaired and resurfaced. The iconography project is well under way. And a new steeple has been designed. Clearly quite a few accomplishments!! In 2005, we will have other opportunities to renovate our 37 year-old facility.

At least two other areas need to be addressed in 2005 — the Large Social Room and the east wing, both of which require some serious modification to improve their appearance and their usability. Pro-

posals will be presented to the community for each of these.

Working together our community can make the commitments needed to plan, to fund and to implement the completion of Holy Trinity's renovation projects.

PHILOPTOCHOS

By . . . Soussana Tesseris

I wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year in 2005. I hope that all of you enjoyed being with family and friends over the holidays and that all had a safe journey.

Our annual Christmas dinner on December 6 was enjoyed by all who attended, and we had a great evening. Our hosts Diane Dellis and Betty and Angie Vlahakis did a superb job in providing an elegant and warm evening for everyone and I know we all appreciate the work and effort that goes into putting this event together. After dinner we were honored to have Christmas music played on the piano by Fr. Mark for our listening and singing pleasure. We thank Father Mark for making the evening so memorable and enjoyable. Philoptochos raised \$150 from the evening's donations, matched it, and sent \$300 to the Southside Food Kitchen.

On December 18 and 19 a few ladies got together and made Vasilopitas which were sold the next day at the coffee hour along with items at our Grocery Store. Thank you to everyone for their support and a special thank you to Glykeria Christofilis, Olga Pascalenos, Ton Vanis, Mary Volakakis, Manya Constant, Eleanor Spaulding, Martha Stathopoulos and Francis Katsiris for helping to make the Vasilopitas. Francis also has been working very hard to have the grocery store with the various specialty items there for all of us. We are very fortunate to have so many people willing to help.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

January 3: 7:30 Philoptochos General Meeting
January 9: Vasilopita Coffee Hour
January 31: 7:00 Philoptochos Board Meeting
February 6: Foreign Mission Coffee Hour
February 7: 7:30 Philoptochos General Meeting
February 22: Interfaith Day
February 26: Zorba Dance
February 28: 7:00 Philoptochos Board Meeting

Please come and support your friends in all that can be done so that we can help others.

Pastor's Report - 2004

For the sake of time, this report was not read at the last General Assembly, with the understanding that it was to be published in this issue of The Lamplighter. Fr. Mark

I give glory to God for the work of grace that He has built in this community, and for the lives of every one of our parishioners. His blessings engulf our lives, and His salvation secures our joy.

In the year 2004 that has passed, our record books show that in our community there were nine baptisms, four members received into the Church by the mystery of Chrismation, three weddings, and five Christian burials. There is nothing unusual in these numbers for a parish of our size.

I do not believe, however, that mere numbers can be any sort of gauge of the spiritual welfare of a parish, especially in times like ours and in a society such as surrounds us. Spiritual growth and maturation are not tangible items to be counted like coins in a pocket. Progress in faith is detected by changes in quality rather than quantity, and cannot be perceived over short periods of time like just a year. Nevertheless, I believe that we have seen in recent times clear indications of spiritual progress in our community, and I would like briefly to assess these with you.

First, in terms of our liturgical life, I perceive an enthusiasm within our community. If you want a peg to hang this sentiment on, consider this: there is now a rotating schedule of three altar boy teams, each one with a good mix of experienced acolytes and up-and-coming younger servers. They serve with precision and with piety. I am deeply grateful for their service, and I hope in the coming year to find an appropriate way to acknowledge this service. I am grateful especially to my senior acolytes: Charlie Pizanis, James Munk, John Karagoulis, Samuel Vsetula, and Curt Kosal, who are so helpful to me in many ways.

Our liturgical life is also marked by the stewardship of a wonderful choir under the direction of Anna Ruth Munk. The choir has grown in size recently due to Ruth's efforts, and we are especially blessed by the addition of so many vibrant *young* voices. They sing with en-

thusiasm and with joy. They have taken on the project of mastering new compositions, and they have sent participants to the regional Choir Federation conferences.

Second, in terms of the educational ministries of our parish, there is also much to give thanks for. Under the vibrant direction of Stephanie Haynie and Zana Litos, our Sunday School and Greek School programs are well run, well staffed, and well attended. Every year brings new activities and creative ideas for learning by our teaching staff. Enrollment is at new highs in both programs, and the parish is supporting these ministries with the purchase of new electronic equipment and computers for instructional use.

The beginning of any education is found in the thirst for knowledge. I have consistently found here in our parish that thirst for spiritual knowledge, as evidenced most recently on November 21, the Sunday when I opened up the sermon time for questions from the congregation. The high level of the questions asked, and the seriousness of the audience in considering the answers, are clear indications of a desire to know and to grow on the part of many of you. As you know, I take very seriously the educational aspects of my priestly ministry, and I am particularly gratified by your responsiveness to sermons, classes, and articles in newsletters. You manifest this responsiveness through questions directed to me, discussions with one another, and patronage of our parish bookstore. This bookstore, by the way, is one of the finest new ministries of the church, and I am grateful to Curt and Leslie Kosal for their excellent stewardship in managing this ministry. God brought you to us, and we thank Him. A discussion of the education ministries of this community would not be complete without acknowledging the efforts of our local AHEPA chapter and their ongoing work in support of our teaching ministries here.

Again, let me say that I am eager for your feedback—positive or negative; those few of you who have come to me with a point to pick about an article or a sermon know that I am open to such discussions, and I would be grateful for more questions, more challenges, more ideas for topics to address.

Third, in terms of the administrative ministries of this parish, I am especially thankful. I call administration a ministry, because it truly is,

Pastor's Report, Cont.

although clearing snow, counting money and negotiating contracts have none of the glamour of liturgizing and teaching, it is nevertheless a necessary part of the work of God in this place—and without it, there could hardly be a liturgy or a sermon given. I am grateful for a Parish Council in 2004 that has accepted the mantle of parish leadership precisely as a spiritual endeavor, as an act of stewardship and a work of ministry. I have been blessed every year here by the happy alliance of hard-working council members and presidents, but I must say that there is something exceptional about this past year's crew — exceptional both in terms of the spirit in which they serve and in terms of the number of big-ticket items they have taken on: major roof repairs, iconography, contracting a line-of-credit, initiating more fundraisers, assessing the needs of the parish, overseeing the parish employees, investing in new equipment, and managing the funds of the parish.

I know that many of you appreciate the teaching ministry I bring to this parish. Please know that this ministry would not be possible without the active and cooperative council that I have, who shoulders so well the administrative burdens of the parish. I am especially grateful to your Parish President, Dr. George Mansour, for his tremendous leadership in this regard. I must also acknowledge with deep gratitude the outstanding service of our parish office manager, Mary Heiderson, who goes weekly above and beyond the call of duty for our community.

And now, an all too brief word about the pastoral ministries of the parish: Here I must immediately mention the hardworking women of our Philoptochos Society, under the leadership of the President, Soussana Tesseris. Philoptochos is growing and thriving under the direction of a dynamic board, and I have found them eager at all times to assist me in pastoral labors—eager and even insistent, with a good insistence. These women care about this community, and they care about all the families that make up this community, and their hearts are open and ready to serve. God bless you all for your years of committed love.

I want also to thank and recognize the work of our youth group leaders for JOY and GOYA. Things are in full swing with both groups keeping an active and interesting schedule of activities. I am most grateful to the parents who di

rect our youth groups: Harea Bates, Kat Costianes, Koula Nicolaou, and Maria Alexander. Their love for our young people is evident in the care and enthusiasm they bring to their ministry.

Along with the many parishioners I have already identified, I would like to acknowledge the marvelous efforts of our many volunteers who decorate our building for Christmas or maintain the archives or assist with the maintenance or help with a thousand other tasks big and small that keep our church in operation. You know who you are, and you know that you continue to contribute your time, talents, and treasures without adequate recognition. I thank you for your humble service to the Lord. May He reward your labors on the Last Great Day. If you feel that I should have recognized you by name in this report, please forgive me.

What is the greatest challenge to our community? Fostering a community spirit of optimism and hope. In any situation of change and uncertainty, there will always be personalities that cling to the past. While the past is valuable as a school of experience, it should never be a prison. The prophets of old warned the people not to look down on the humble beginnings of the Lord's work (Zechariah 4:10). Two steps forward and one step back is still progress to him who has eyes to see. We should rather say continually, "I can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

There are, I'm sorry to say, some negative people in this world. They seem to have no joy in life but to spray the acid of their anger on everything and everybody. While they claim to be upset at what's going on in the present, in fact they are prisoners of the past, chained to some trauma or disappointment of long ago. Instead of dealing with their own problems, they project their hurts and fears on other people, other ethnic groups, authority figures, and the like. Occasionally this attitude pops up in parish life. For negativistic people we extend our sympathy, our prayers, but not our minds or hearts. Please be on guard against "the nattering nabobs of negativism" (to borrow a line from that famous Greek wordsmith, Spiro Agnew). We have many challenges ahead as a community, but God's grace has also been abundant towards us, and has already equipped us to overcome the obstacles ahead—or rather, to turn obstacles into opportunities to glorify Him.

JOY

By. . . .Harea Bates & Kathleen Costianes

JOY is ending our year 2004 with many activities.

December 12--We put together four food baskets to feed needy families in our area. Thanks to Marina Poroshin for helping distribute these for us. We also gathered some clothing for a middle-school student. Donations came from within the JOY group.

December 19--We enjoyed Christmas caroling to parish members' homes and shut-ins. Then it was off to the home of Pam Heos for our annual party. We made ornaments, under the direction of Nikki Lennox, and decorated cookies. Many thanks to Pam for letting us make a mess in her kitchen! Of course, there were goodies for us to eat, as well! Ho-Ho-Ho!

Our activities will resume in January and we plan to serve at the Rescue Mission and enjoy an out-

GOYA

By. . . .Maria Alexander & Koula Nicolaou

We hope that all of you had a very Merry Christmas and that 2005 is a wonderful year for us all. GOYA has been very busy with basketball practices, our annual Community Christmas card, caroling, and fund raisers. We thank the entire community for supporting us.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU to Andrea and Gene Esch for their fantastic donation of purchasing our new GOYA basketball uniforms. Everyone has been working hard towards this goal and Gene and Andrea have made it all possible this year.

Our two tournaments are fast approaching. January 14-16 we will be off to Cincinnati and February 18-20 we will be in Dayton. These weekends are so much fun, and all GOYANS and their families are welcome to attend. Please let us know a.s.a.p. if you plan to attend. If you need additional information, please contact Maria Alexander at 323-9564 or Koula Nicolaou at 675-5776.

ODYSSEY

By. . . .Liana Pridnia

I can't believe that the end of 2004 is upon us already! The first half of the school year is almost over, and I want to thank the teachers and parents for a great first half! We have had many wonderful events. First of all, I would like to congratulate the dancers who participated in the Global Festival at MSU; they were a huge hit! I would also like to thank the many people who attended the program; we had a great turn out! It's the commitment of the families that make these events fun. Next, I would like to thank everyone who made our Christmas Tea the most successful one yet! The tables were amazing due to the many creative women who hosted them. The company was fascinating because of those who attended, the music festive thanks to Georgia Fragale, and the room was decorated beautifully by the women of Philoptochos. Our AHEPA men even hosted a table! In short, it was a blast!

Not only are our children doing well socially, but they are doing remarkably well academically. We have had a huge increase in our student population, both children and adults. I commend all of you who put forth the effort to learn the Greek culture and language. We even have several non-church members in our classes! The good word is spreading.

I look forward to more exciting events in 2005. Thank you again to the many people who have support Odyssey...all education and fellowship within our church adds enrichment to our lives! May your New Year be filled with love, health and happiness.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By. . . .Stephanie Haynie

Congratulations to all the children who participated in the Christmas pageant! They did a wonderful job. And thank you to all the adults who helped make it happen. Celebrating Christ's birth is a joyous occasion; thank you for joining us us.

This month we have a movie time with Fr. Mark for the 2nd and 3rd grade class. Please mark your calendar for Saturday January 29, from 10-11am. We will watch a film, with a lesson to go with it, a craft, and snack. People who have attended other movie times say they are a good opportunity to have fun with church friends and to spend time with Fr. Mark!

Report on the Archdiocesan Council Meeting

By . . .Fr. Mark

As was recently announced, I was appointed by Archbishop Demetrios to the Archdiocesan Council, a group of laypeople and clergy who act as the “parish council” of the entire Archdiocese. My first meeting as a Council member took place on December 9 and 10 in Chicago. I took some notes to share with all of you.

Our meeting was held in conjunction with a board meeting of the National Philoptochos Society at the same hotel. We began our work with a joint prayer service led by the Archbishop, assisted by Deacon Panteleimon, a remarkable young man who replaced my successor as the deacon to the Archbishop. He serves His Eminence beautifully, and it is a joy for me to see the tremendous benefit that the Archbishop enjoys from his deacons since my time at the Archdiocese. Deacon Panteleimon and his associate, Deacon John, are married. Please offer a prayer for their strength and for their families as they continually offer this ministry for our benefit in caring for our Archbishop.

The Gospel reading for the day was the Beatitudes from the Gospel of Luke. This reading about the blessedness of the poor, the weeping, the hungry, and the persecuted set the tone perfectly for the Archbishop’s remarks on his recent travels to our Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey). The Christian population has been undergoing tremendous oppression by the Turkish authorities for a century. They have instituted a systematic program of pressure on the Church and the faithful, intending to whittle the body of believers down to nothing. The Turks are close to succeeding. Recently they have begun confiscating properties of the Orthodox Church, buildings that have been in the hands of our people for eight hundred years or more. Every promise of a lightening of restrictions on the Christians has been broken by the government, which, though it is nominally a secular administration, clearly favors the Muslim majority. Anything we can do to support the welfare of our pan-Orthodox leaders in Constantinople would be welcome. I hope to have more to report down the line about appropriate measures that we can take in support of our fellow Christians in Turkey.

Archbishop Demetrios also went on to describe the transfer of relics that recently took place. He showed us a video of the ceremonies in Rome and Constantinople in which Pope John Paul II returned relics of Saints John Chrysostom and Gregory the Theologian to Patriarch Bartholomew and the Orthodox Church. The video, along with the Archbishop’s commentary, was deeply moving. I hope to procure a copy to show in our parish before too long.

The meeting broke up into committees. I was assigned to the Religious Education Committee. This department of our Archdiocese is directed by Fr. Frank Marangos from its offices on the campus of Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. The range of ministries and products offered by this department is outstanding.

In fact, the next day as I sat and listened to the various committee reports, I was impressed all over again with the tremendous talent and output of our Archdiocesan departments, running as they always do on a “shoestring budget” with a “skeleton crew.” I see clearly now that one of my chief tasks as a parish priest is to communicate to all of you the wonderful things going on in every department of our Archdiocese. You need to know what a wealth of ministries is available to you as an Orthodox Christian. I hope to find ways to do just this in the year to come.

I was also struck by the enormous spiritual energy of our Archbishop. He finds a way always to accentuate the positive. This is a great blessing to our Church in these troubled times. I wish all of you could have more opportunities to benefit from his direct presence.

One of the main themes of the discussion on both days was the need for an expansion of the budget of the Archdiocese. Stewardship in our Church simply does not reflect the level of material blessings that our Orthodox parishioners enjoy. Many individual parishes in the Protestant camp have budgets larger than that of our Archdiocese. Every dollar counts. We need to learn how to support our Church as a response to the great gift of salvation that is offered to us in Christ.

I look forward to having more to report in months to come.

Odyssey Program offers Greek Dancing Classes

By. . . Zana Litos

The Odyssey Program has announced it is offering free Greek Folk Dance Lessons to anyone in our parish who is interested. It is open to parishioners of all ages. The Odyssey Cultural Liaison, Niko Kritselis, who has volunteered his time with the Odyssey school youth for the past few years, will be directing the lessons.

The Odyssey students have successfully performed at Greek Independence Day, OXI Day and MSU Global Festival programs, as well as other church sponsored events.

Classes will be divided into two four-week sessions. The first section will feature the three traditional dances most commonly played at social functions: Kalamatiano, Hasaposerviko and Tsamiko. The second session will include the Sirtaki (Zorba), Macedonian Hasapiko and the Kritiko Sirto. If there is future demand Niko is open to conduct a third session, which might include Nisiotiko, Marinella, Pendozali, Ikariotiko, and Zeibetiko.

Interested parties may sign up with the Odyssey Secretary, Olga Pascalenos, 485- 7092 or Niko Kritselis at 351-6501, or Director Zana Litos 349-2966

Beginning classes will be held on Friday during Greek School (4.30-6.30) or Sunday after Church, beginning 9 January 2005.

The second session will begin 13 February 2005 for four weeks. Day and time will be decided to fit people's schedule.

CHOIR

By. . . Anna Ruth Munk

The choir is resolving to continue our quest for excellence in the new year! Practices will resume on Thursday evenings in January, beginning January 6, from 7:30 to 9. We will begin working on some new music for Communion this month.

We would love to have new members join us! All are welcome to participate.

New Adult Beginner Class at Odyssey Program

By. . . Zana Litos

The Odyssey Program is offering a New Adult Beginner Class starting in January. There is an open spot available for anyone interested in learning the Greek Language and Culture. Anyone from high school and above is applicable to be a student in this class.

The high school students participating in this class will have the option of participating in all Odyssey cultural programs. So far Odyssey has three high school students and a college student who started in a beginner's class in September 2004.

Please note: The class beginning in January is a Brand New Class with students starting from the Beginning.

Odyssey classes are made of small groups and lessons are best attained to individual needs. During class students are trained to read, write, comprehend and speak in daily language. A variety of instructional methodologies are used in class as well as extra material will be provided for those interested in applying their Greek at home.

Adult classes meet for two hours on a weekday (Monday- Thursday). Students have the option of choosing where to have class either at Schuler's Book Store in Okemos or at the Church.

So far Adult Classes have progressed very well. A very friendly environment is created with a lot of enthusiasm and cooperation between the students to help each other. Part of this pleasant atmosphere is due to the fact that students are encouraged from the beginning level to speak only Greek.

For more info, please contact director Zana Litos at 349-2966, or the Odyssey Secretary, Olga Pascalenos at 485-7092.

Material for the February issue of *The Lamplighter* is due on 17 January, the third Monday of the month. Material may be submitted electronically to mansour@msu.edu or hard copy may be left in the Parish Office.

Greetings from South Africa !!

(Editor's Note: During part of December and part of January, the Brown family --Alex, Mary, Elizabeth and Mark-- and Alexandra Slezak, daughter of Kathleen Costianes are in South Africa. Alex, Michigan State University distinguished professor of Physics and Astronomy and the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory, was going to South Africa as part of his work for close to two months. His family and Alexandra accompanied him to carry out missionary intentions. To that end, before they left for South Africa, they collected items for children, medical supplies, and funds through coffee hours and other solicitations which they wanted to distribute to the needy and children afflicted with HIV/Aids. What follows is an account of some of their experiences during their first week gleaned from an email message authored by Mary Brown.)

Greetings from South Africa! Today, Thursday, December 16, is a national holiday here, "Reconciliation Day," to celebrate the new government, constitution and integration of races (i.e., the end of apartheid) with concerts and ceremonies. For us it means Alex and his colleague and close friend, Werner, don't have to work, so we are going to head north for a "holiday weekend."

Tonight we'll stay in "wooden tents" right on an Atlantic ocean beach in a nature reserve. We will see a large bird colony (gannets & other ocean birds) and also lots of ostriches on the way. Friday & Saturday we will all stay at a citrus farm and guesthouse called "Gifberg." We've been there before; the terrain is more like Arizona, with the farm being a green oasis in its midst. We'll take beautiful hikes where we can stop and cool off in natural pools, swim under waterfalls, see "Bushmen" paintings on caves, giant anthills, and interesting flowers.

The farm has a great pool with a slide so the kids will be quite happy. Our pool here is also nice, but has a bit of "slime/algae" on the sides which grosses out the girls. Alex, Werner and Mark have had many nice swims in it though (I've usually been busy preparing dinner while they're swimming).

The house we're renting is lovely and has a balcony overlooking a mountain and beautiful gardens (I'm enjoying the view now as I'm using the laptop out on the balcony). The fragrant flowers and vivid colors are a constant treat for me. Every room has a view of either gardens or mountainside.

To update you on our adventures so far-- our first

few days were challenging as we didn't have our luggage. Our plane from Detroit to Amsterdam was late. We had them delivered to Werner's wine shop in Stellenbosch while we went sightseeing in Capetown, but unfortunately got back to town too late to get them! Finally, the next morning we were able to retrieve them from the shop -- all but my suitcase which someone from Capetown had taken by mistake. It was delivered Sunday afternoon. It was wonderful to wear clean clothes when it finally arrived!

While we waited for luggage and adjusted to the time change, Werner kept us pleasantly busy. Friday night he had a "braai" (barbecue) for us at his house and Saturday night took us to his wine-tasting group's gathering...so Laurie & Alexandra got to see how very seriously the South Africans consider and evaluate their wines! The hostess had lived in the far east so she prepared an outstanding Malaysian--Indonesian meal for us which even the kids enjoyed tasting.

The kids at first were a bit annoyed they had to be dragged to this wine-tasting party, but were rewarded by meeting an 18-year-old boy named "Jacque" who turned out to be a most delightful, polite, true gentleman. Tuesday he took Elizabeth and Alexandra sightseeing to a beach where they swam in the Indian ocean, to see a penguin colony and to watch him and a few friends surfing. He also showed them the big shopping mall so they finally got to see the "teen" sights.

Jacque stayed for dinner after he brought the girls back and he was also great with Mark. Mark is in charge of keeping the pool clean and Jacque too pronounced the pool great for swimming and laughed at the girls' disgust. Jacque brought a video of his school's year-end activities so the kids could see how high school students do a few things here.

The girls got a different taste of teen life through Werner's son Danie, also 18, who is into rock music and hopes to be a rock musician. They went to a rock festival in Capetown for a few hours with him. After picking up the girls, we headed down the coast to see the Atlantic side of the Cape Peninsula (those of you not familiar with South Africa can consult a Map, look at the southern tip of Africa, find the Cape of Good Hope and you'll see where we are! Stellenbosch is about a 45 min. drive inland from Capetown.)

The drive along the cape peninsula was just spectacular and everyone was oohing and ahing while

GREETINGS, Cont.

Alex and I concentrated on driving on the wrong side of the road and navigating the mountain curves. We ended our tour at the gemstone “scratch patch” where everyone was thrilled to get a large paper cup (1 gram) of polished gemstones like amethyst, tiger’s eye, malachite, agate, etc. for 33 Rand or about \$6.00!

Sunday, since we needed to fetch our luggage about 10 a.m., to our great disappointment we weren’t able to go to the Greek church in Capetown, but we will be there Christmas Day. We had a little family service in our dining room here, said many of the prayers from the Liturgy and sang special hymns, read the Epistle and the Gospel. Our friend Laurie enjoyed our singing — Alexandra and Elizabeth sing alto together in our church choir and have lovely voices. It felt good to have some extensive prayer and worship together which we will do again this Sunday in Gifberg, but I am looking forward so eagerly to attending Liturgy here in South Africa.

Yesterday was another big sightseeing day - we went to the top of Table Mountain by cable car. The view of Capetown, the ocean and the peninsula was spectacular. The girls were happy that we had enough time to go to the waterfront and do some shopping.

Probably the events and sights that affected us most profoundly were when we went to the black township, or informal settlement, called Guguletu where a half a million people live at a level of poverty we Americans can’t even imagine. Unfortunately there are many, many more of these settlements of tin shacks, some with almost a million people, where at least 1 in 5 people have HIV/Aids and very little or no medical care. We met the minister, Spiwo and his wife Zethu, a nurse, who are devoting great time and energy to trying to alleviate these conditions.

We went to the “Brown’s farm clinic” which Zethu established to give just basic medical care to people who otherwise would have none. It is built out of metal shipping containers and covered with a tin roof. The four nurses who see over 300 patients a day (a doctor comes only once a week for four hours) looked very sober and somewhat tired. We left a good portion of the medical supplies that we collected at church and school here (band-aids, pain relievers, latex gloves). We met a little girl who had never before seen white people and was staring and pointing at us in amazement.

We gave her and her parents each a candy cane which they seemed to enjoy so we left 2 boxes of the candy canes with the nurses to give to children who go there.

We then went to an AIDS hospice ward of a hospital and gave stuffed animals to some of the patients. One young woman was going to be able to go home the next day to celebrate her son’s third birthday. She took a stuffed animal for him too. We also gave the nurses stuffed animals to take to their children. All were very grateful.

As we drove back to the church and community center, our guide Bandalay, pointed to all the children on the streets and said “Probably none of them have even a stuffed animal as a toy.” We still have many stuffed animals to distribute and will do so either next week when we hope to visit an orphanage, or in January when children return to the community center’s programs after the summer/Christmas vacation.

At Rev. Spiwo’s church and the community center we gave out the calculators, laser pointers and dry erase markers. These will be used for the many educational programs they conduct there. A main one is an after school tutoring program to help the black children with homework and to prevent them from dropping out from the “multi-racial” schools where they have much difficulty because their parents are often illiterate and unable to help them with schoolwork. When this program starts again in January, Mark and I hope to visit and show them the education games (like Triominos and Tangrams) we brought. Spiwo would also like Alex to give them a little talk about being a scientist and try to motivate them to work a bit harder at math and science.

On the drive out of Guguletu the girls would often remark about the squalid living conditions saying “people at home just wouldn’t believe how many live this way.” Laurie said she was on the verge of tears most the day, and I wished there was some way we could do more to help, but glad we had brought even a tiny measure of comfort and hope we can do more while we’re here.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would continue to pray for us, that God would guide us in our efforts to help and protect us as the crime rate here is very high. THANK YOU! Much love,

Mary and family

CONGRATULATIONS TO . . .

Sarah Grimm who as a member of the Greater Lansing Ballet Company performed recently in the Nutcracker Production at the Lansing Center. Sarah, an Apprentice to the Senior Company, is the daughter of Garry and Ann Grimm.

NOTES FROM THE DESK OF Fr. Mark. . . .

■ House blessings may be scheduled after January 6th by filling out a “House Blessing Request Form.” Fill one out at Church and leave it at the Church Office, or call the office and give your information. A time should be chosen at which all the members of the family can be present, insofar as this is possible. Also, if you are able to have the blessing during the daytime hours, please try to arrange one then, since the evening and weekend times will be in highest demand. The service takes about half an hour. Your hospitality is always appreciated, but please do not feed the priest—a cup of herbal tea is enough! You will need to provide a crystal bowl with spring water, two taper candles, an icon of Christ, and a white hand towel.

■ I need your help! I am not always informed of parishioners in the hospital, recovering from surgery, or in need of a pastoral visit. If you think there is someone I should be made aware of or be reminded of, please do not hesitate to call with the information. I will be grateful.

■ Announcing the “*Lectio Divina Book Club*.” This semester our adult religious education will take the form of a book club meeting. I will pick a book for interested parishioners to read and come for discussion on one evening. To start us off, I am going to hold the first meeting on Wednesday, January 19, from 7:30-9:00 pm in the Small Social Room. The book to read is *Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul* by Tony Hendra. This book should be available at any of the local booksellers. Warning: This book is a fascinating spiritual biography on the order of the Confessions of Saint Augustine. However, it contains some adult language and themes. If you are particularly sensitive to these matters, please wait for the next book on the reading list. Come to the meeting with your comments, questions, and ideas for future readings.

Dignity Memorial® Senior Care Seminar featuring the Five Wishes® by Aging With Dignity

—an educational and enrichment program for
members of the

Area Orthodox Churches

Tuesday, February 1, 2005,

7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

in the Small Social Room of the

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

1701 E. Saginaw, Lansing, MI 48912

Please call the Church Office at (517) 482-7341
to reserve your place.

Refreshments will be served.

Family, Friends and Guests are all invited.

Members of the area Orthodox Churches, family, friends and guests are invited to the Dignity Memorial Senior Care Seminar which will feature the Five Wishes® by Aging With Dignity, commonly called the first living will “with a heart.” The seminar provides valuable information relating to the awareness of important life decisions like advanced funeral planning, Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare, Medicare and Medicaid qualifications, two free simple planning instruments and introduces the Dignity Memorial Benefits program to participants. During the 45-minute presentation, participants may complete a confidential worksheet that outlines some simple decisions, a copy of which is kept for safekeeping with important family documents. The worksheet also allows attendees to secure their Dignity Memorial savings and benefits, which are provided for Church members and their guests. The seminar will be Tuesday, February 1, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Small Social Room of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1701 E. Saginaw, Lansing, MI 48912. You are asked to please call (517) 482-7341 by Monday, January 31, to let the Church know how many will be in your group. All members and their guests are invited and encouraged to attend this valuable session. Refreshments will be provided and there will be drawings for door prizes.

This program is brought to you by the Dignity Memorial Network, represented locally by the Estes-Leadley Greater Lansing and Delhi Chapels, Randy Baugh, Manager. For more information, please contact Tony Lauri, Presenter, (248) 561-2910.

**THE LAMPLIGHTER IS NOW
ON THE WEB. . .**

Beginning with this month's issue, *The Lamplighter* will now be available on the parish's web page - www.HolyTrinity-Lansing.org. It will appear monthly at this site, and each month's issue will be archived there as well so one may easily refer back to previous issues.

One advantage of this electronic version is that items no longer have to appear in only black and white. Take a look, for example, at the pictures from the Christmas pageant in the electronic version; this is but only one benefit. An even more important advantage is that the electronic version does not have to rely exclusively on the postal service to deliver *The Lamplighter* to its readers in one to 10 days; it is available instantly on-line.

Some parishioners -- both current and former ones -- have been receiving *The Lamplighter* through electronic mail. By posting each month's issue on the web page, all parishioners can have access to the electronic version by accessing the parish's web page.

PRAYERS FOR THE HEALTH OF

- Pauline Geovanis
- Lynne Karagoulis
- Sophia Koutozos
- Sonya Lewis
- Sava 'Sam' Vosovic

Thoughts on Aging

- One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.
 - When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.
-

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Many thanks to Philoptochos, JOY and GOYA who so generously donated funds to help the needy children in South Africa. We will see that the funds go to the neediest orphanage, school and hospice.

Thanks also to all who donated money at the coffee hours sponsoring this cause, and to the many anonymous donors who filled the collection baskets with stuffed animals and medical supplies.

Thanks to everyone, we have full suitcases of items to distribute to the needy.

We sincerely thank all the parish for making this an even more rewarding trip, and we ask your prayers for guidance and protection while there.

Sincerely,

Alex, Mary, Elizabeth, Mark Brown and Alexandra Slezak.

PROSFORON - Reminder

JANUARY PROSFORON

- Sunday, January 2.....Georgia Kaplan
- Tuesday, January 4.....Lynne Karagoulis
Great Blessing of the Waters
- Thursday, January 6.....Coleen Karakitsos
Great Blessing of the Waters
Theophany-Baptism of Jesus Christ
- Sunday, January 9.....Athina Katsiris
- Sunday, January 16.....Frances Katrisis
- Sunday, January 23.....Connie Kavalaris
- Sunday, January 30.....Mary Kavalaris

FEBRUARY PROSFORON

- Sunday, February 2.....Marlene Khlif
Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple
 - Sunday, February 6.....Anaastasia Kimbouris
St. Photios the Great
 - Sunday, February 13.....Catherine Koncar
 - Sunday, February 20.....Irene Kontis
Triodion begins
 - Sunday, February 27.....Leslie Kosal
-

OPERATIONS FUND - November 30, 2004

	<u>Jan - Nov 04</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Fundraising	-84.80	0.00
Hall Rental	925.00	1,000.00
LAMPLIGHTER	1,050.00	1,800.00
Loose Offering	16,407.02	18,000.00
Memorial Donations	9,370.55	2,000.00
Other Donations	1,679.41	4,000.00
Restricted Donations	679.71	
Stewardship Donations	180,916.84	229,795.00
Total Income	210,943.73	256,595.00
Expense		
ACCOUNTING SERVICES	1,811.99	2,825.00
Advertising & Recruitment	520.45	900.00
Altar Expense	73.25	600.00
Archive Expense	0.00	350.00
Bank Service Charges	75.27	150.00
CHOIR	1,214.26	2,000.00
Computer Expense	520.37	800.00
Conferences	7,741.98	4,500.00
Donations	0.00	500.00
Equipment Purchases	844.23	2,200.00
Fundraising Expenses	310.14	
Iconography	0.00	
Insurance	8,683.00	9,800.00
Interest Expense	922.33	8,000.00
Kitchen Expense	1,420.19	2,200.00
Lampighter	556.71	2,400.00
LIBRARY	19.00	1,000.00
Maintenance & Repair	11,176.62	8,200.00
Miscellaneous	762.20	
National Ministries	23,549.97	31,000.00
Odyssey	125.39	3,500.00
Oratorical Festival	50.00	
Outside Clergy & Expenses	939.00	1,000.00
Parishoner Support	2,910.18	3,000.00
Payroll-Cantor & Choir Director	5,823.37	7,300.00
Payroll-Custodian	10,941.15	11,450.00
Payroll-Odyssey	135.00	
Payroll-Office	16,089.63	15,800.00
Payroll Tax Expense	3,365.94	3,000.00
Postage	1,637.16	1,900.00
Priest Auto Allowance	4,820.00	4,800.00
Priest Housing Allowance	20,166.52	27,500.00
Priest Medical & Life Insurance	15,916.00	16,500.00
Priest Payroll Expense	8,866.10	11,000.00
Priest Pension	3,800.00	4,100.00
Priest Salary	32,961.50	29,070.00
Property Tax Assessment	643.08	700.00
Seventh Diocese of Detroit	2,000.00	4,000.00
Sunday School	2,805.81	3,500.00
Supplies-Church	3,354.56	6,600.00
Supplies-Office	3,013.97	5,000.00
Taxes-State of Michigan	20.00	100.00
Telephone	2,350.77	3,300.00
Utilities	10,880.86	13,200.00
Youth Activities-GOYA & JOY	1,375.00	2,750.00
Total Expense	215,242.95	256,595.00
Net Ordinary Income	-4,299.22	0.00

2004 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT -- The Icon of the Nativity
(These and other photos are available on our web page,
www.HolyTrinity-Lansing.org under 'Past Events')





*Thank you for welcoming us
to the community!
We welcome YOU to. . . .*



We are open for

Breakfast - Lunch - Dinner

Also serving home-made Greek dishes daily

Now under new ownership

We open daily 7:00am - 9:00pm

**1010 Charlevoix Drive
Grand Ledge**

(On Saginaw Hwy. West between Sundance & M-100)



672-3222

or

628-3232

Zorba Dance

2005

Saturday, February 26, 2005

8 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Adults: \$ 18.00 Students: \$ 12.00

Tickets can be purchased Sundays after Church Services
And at the door the evening of the dance.

Buffet Served

Sponsored by Ladies Philoptochos Society
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

1701 E. Saginaw Street
Lansing, Michigan 48912
517-482-7341



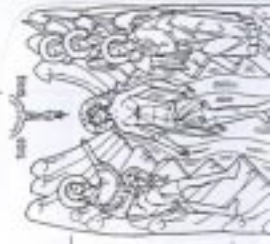
COME ENJOY THE FOOD
COME DANCE TO THE MUSIC
IT'S MARDI GRAS TIME

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

January 2005

8:45 a.m. ORTHROS
 10:00 a.m. DIVINE LITURGY
 Fellowship Coffee following Liturgy

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Choir Coffee Hour (No Sunday School)	3 Philoptochos General Meeting, 7:30pm	4 Vespers Liturgy & Great Blessing of the Waters, 7pm	5	6 Liturgy & Great Blessing of the Waters, 10am Theophany: The Baptism of Jesus	7 St. John the Baptist	8 New Year's Day The Circumcision of Jesus Christ; St. Basil the Great
9 Philoptochos Vasilopita & Coffee Hour	10 Parish Council, 7pm	11	12	13	14	15
16 5 Year Memorial, John Thodis AHEPA Coffee Hour	17 Martin L. King Day St. Anthony the Great Lampighter Deadline	18	19	20	21	22
23 JOY Coffee Hour	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Odyssey Program & Coffee Hour Three Hierarchs, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. John Chrysostom	31 Philoptochos Board Meeting, 7pm					



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Lansing, MI 48912

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