

TKJ Schematic

news & views for supporters and friends of



Autumn 2005

Summer is over. The guys on the street are looking for blankets again for the chilly nights.

This summer we had GREAT PARTICIPATION from the youth at St. Philip Orthodox Church. They started with a few of the young people coming down once. Then they came down again. Then they scheduled two more times to come. Some got their families involved to either come downtown or to buy or gather food and toiletries to bring to the city. They handled themselves with confidence and grace, even when the crowd got fairly rude and pushy. I am impressed by their maturity and sense of service.

Vacation Church School students and parents made wonderful power packs and sandwiches for us to give away. We were amazed by how many there were. We had goodies for two weeks.

The youth at Holy Ascension Orthodox Mission had a sandwich making party early in the summer and made hundreds and hundreds of sandwiches, which the McGraw's brought down to the city.

It is late October and we still have not run out of turkeys from "Turkeys 'R' Us" at St. Philip's. It's great to be able serve such good, hearty soup.

Evangelism

Last newsletter I said I would further elaborate on what Orthodox evangelism looks like. I am using the four sentence instructions that I received as my outline: "Keep the feasts and the fasts. Be faithful at the Liturgy. Live as a Christian. Pray."

"Keep the feasts and the fasts."

As Orthodox Christians we believe that our salvation is a group effort. We are "baptized by one Spirit into one body." It has been said that we go to heaven together, but one goes to hell alone. Keeping the feasts and the fasts is not a lonely practice. It is never undertaken alone. It is part of how we are knit together as a "new nation" in Christ. It is how we punctuate our lives with the rhythm of the Body of Christ. The fasts and the feasts instruct us to live liturgically. They instruct us that there is something bigger here than ourselves. They have been developed over millenia so they speak of a Kingdom more durable than our national heritage or destiny. Yet we participate to commemorate our common salvation history, present fellowship and future glory, with things as personal as menu choices and even sleep patterns, when you consider Nativity and Pascha.

How is this evangelistic? If we don't have anything to which to invite people, what's the use of extending the invitation? The Gospel is not a disembodied intellectual exercise. It was entrusted to the church to live out in the Great Commission. In this rootless

society of unpredictable careers, future shock and broken families, people are longing for a community of healing, permanence and stability. The church is that community. Keeping the feasts and the fasts together keeps the church strong.

"Be faithful at the Liturgy."

The Liturgy is how we are renewed and healed. To be faithful there provides grace and health to our souls that goes beyond ourselves. It is core to a life of peace and joy. A life that exudes peace and joy will attract others.

From a practical view: How should we expect other people to join us if we are not here? Part of evangelism is inviting people to church. First time visitors feel much more comfortable if they are not the first ones to arrive. Perhaps the least threatening of our services is Vespers. It is the easiest to invite people to as it doesn't seem as weighty as a Sunday morning commitment. (Vespers is liturgically considered to be part of Liturgy as it is preparatory to it.) If there are only two or three people standing in the nave other than the choir, visitors don't sense a welcome. Sometimes just showing up is evangelistic.

"Live as a Christian."

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) The people whom I have willingly chosen to follow, I did so because they seemed to be about something real. The people who "evangelized" me had a peace, a joy, a purpose, a steadfastness about them, or they were involved in helping people in tangible and loving ways. To truly and seriously live as a Christian will ultimately be attractive to others. Many of the martyrs were killed because the authorities were envious of the influence they had on people without coercion. Witnesses to martyrdom would confess Christ, because they wanted the assurance and faith that the martyrs had.

"Pray."

Whenever I tell my own story, the recurring theme is a series of devoted and faithful people who were praying for me daily. I think it is fair to say I would most likely not be a Christian today if it weren't for the prayers of Lois and Les Ericson. They were neighbors across the street from the time I was born until I was six. They connected with our family and Lois especially connected with me. She has prayed for me daily since I was born. She took me to vacation church school when I was four and five six. There and in her peaceful house was where I learned I could trust in Jesus.

I mentioned Jacob Kulp in the last newsletter, who prayed for me daily when I started in prison ministry and was faithful for nearly twenty years until he passed away. But before I met Jake, I met Father Boniface and Joyce, when we sold real estate for

the same agency. Father Boniface began to pray for me. That was about 14 years before I ever visited St. Philip's. This illustrates another important lesson for evangelism. It is not short term, exciting growth in crowds at church that we are looking for. Evangelism is laying the groundwork for eternity. Let us be about this good work.

Blankets Needed

We need blankets to give away, every week. Used blankets are best as they are less likely to be stolen and/or sold. Let your friends, coworkers and neighbors know to buy themselves new blankets, so they can give their old ones to us. It really is a win/win situation.

Men's Clothing Needed

We can always use men's in season clothing. We need functional clothing, not fashion. Ties and suits are generally not useful, unless it is a corduroy suit. (Have they made them since the 70's?) If you want to purchase something to give; tube socks and underwear are always appreciated.

Volunteers Needed

Thursday nights really go better with more folks along to unload and serve. Some of the guys help us, but that can put them in an awkward position. Sometimes they get accused of showing favoritism. Sometimes they are showing favoritism. If one of us is accused of that, we can leave when we are done serving, with no repercussions. This is not so for those who have to live there. Give me a call if you want to go along. I have limited room in my vehicle, but it is always nice to have someone sharing the ride.

News

There is not a whole lot of news. We are heading into the colder part of the year. When Garret McGraw drives, they somehow make it down to the city a whole lot sooner than when his dad drives. We continue to experience God's amazing provision. I do little to nothing to coordinate sandwich making, yet it seems that every week we have just the right number. That does remind me, if you make sandwiches, please use the turkey and chicken lunchmeats, if they are the same price or cheaper than pork. It would be helpful if you wrote with marker on the loaf bags what kind of sandwiches they are. This is not essential, but it would make our job a little easier. Thanks.

Last week, it rained on Thursday night. Years ago, it used to regularly rain on the night we served. Father noticed this and decided that we should pray more specifically for the weather. Since then, it has hardly rained at all while we were serving. It would rain while we traveled down and home, but not while we were there. Last week it was a soaker. I was surprised by how many people were waiting in the rain for us to show up. They were so grateful that we had come out in the rain.

One man went on in his thanks and surprise that we would venture out on a night like that to share food with so many strangers. I just replied, "I eat when it rains."

Tears of joy were in his eyes when he said, "You don't know how on time that is!"

All of you folks who share in this ministry (and I don't know who all of you are) make it possible for me, and the others who join me to serve, to share the love of God to people in need every week. If you gave a turkey last year; if you made sandwiches; if you cleaned out your closet; if you made a power pack; if you scavenged toiletries; if you gave money; if you gave fruit; if you came along and shared your smiling face; if you said a prayer: you have helped share the gospel of Jesus Christ' love without partiality.

Thank you! Keep up the good work.

"Come and See" Icons, Books & Art

Not everyone realizes that this is my full time job. It enables me to have a flexible schedule, so I can do this ministry. After over four years, the website has over 1,000 different icons on it. I have signed royalty agreements with more than a dozen iconographers of a variety of styles. The collection is growing all the time. I have shipped to all 50 states, every province in Canada and to about thirty other countries on all six inhabited continents, including South Korea, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Bolivia, Mexico, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England, N. Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Greece, Austria, France, Finland, Spain, Belgium, Egypt and, next week, Germany. We average over 8,000 hits per day on the website. Please come and browse our collection at www.comeandseeicons.com

The Appeal

We can only do what we do, because there are many others who share the resources God has given them with us. Donations are gladly and gratefully received. In addition to checks and cash, personal size shampoos, soaps & lotions are always welcome, as well as men's clothing in season, and blankets.

Checks can be mailed to:



216 W. Fourth St.
East Greenville, PA 18041-1629

Our phone is: 215-679-7563
email: TKJ@shoutforjoy.net

Thank you. May the Lord bless you as you bless the poor in Jesus' Name.

Peace,

Cranford Joseph Coulter