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**Right: Icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church, Stamford, Conn.**

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*Finding God in the Unknown***Priest Sergius Halvorsen**

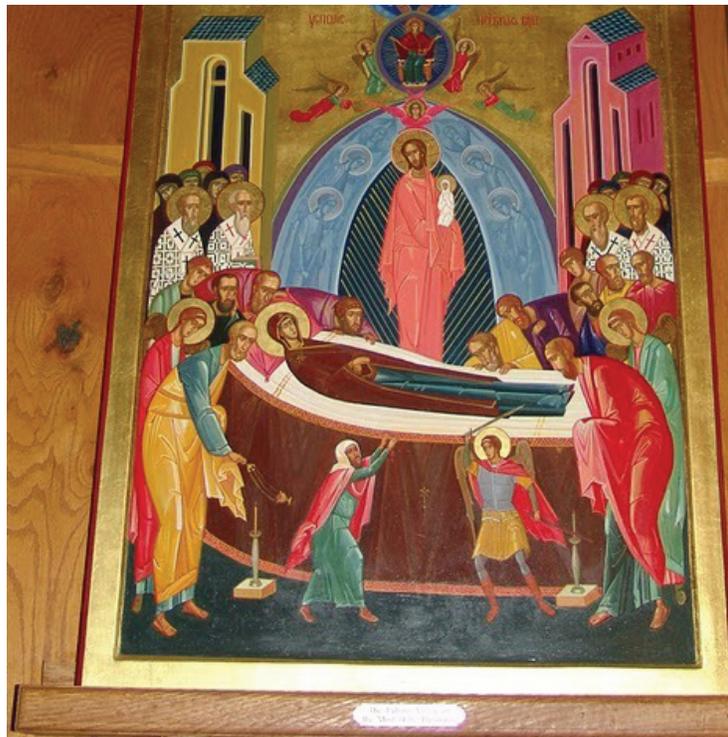
The end of the summer; the beginning of a new Church (and school) Year; the change of the seasons; these are all familiar transitions. Yet, in every transition there is an element of the unknown. Every fall the leaves change colors, but every year is different. Some years the colors are subdued, crimson embers with yellow sparks burning slowly over the course of several weeks. Yet, other years, it seems that the woods ignite in a flash of brilliant, reds, oranges and yellows, and in a blink of the eye they are replaced by the ashen grays and

browns of winter. With the change of the seasons, we take comfort in the knowledge that summer always gives way to fall, and though each year is different, the cycle goes on fundamentally unchanged.

But some transitions are much more dramatic: a job is lost; a relationship is forever changed; someone we love is taken from this life. With transitions like these we don't know how things will work out. With some transitions, we stare straight down into the void of the unknown, and when we truly face the unknown, it can be deeply frightening.

*Finding God to 7*

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*Translation from Earth to Heaven, Life to Life*

From the Feast of the Dormition (“Falling–Asleep”) of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, Aug. 15:

**Troparion, Tone 1:**

In giving birth you preserved your virginity.

In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos.

You were translated to life O Mother of Life, //

and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

## *Axios! Ordinations in the diocese*

### His Grace, Bishop Nikon

We will have an exciting beginning of the Church year in all three of our Deanery families:

#### **Northern Deanery**

Saturday–Sunday, September 4–5: Ordination of Alexis Rastorguyeff to the Holy Diaconate at Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, N.H.

#### **Connecticut Deanery**

Saturday, September 18: Ordination of Deacon Steven Hosking to the Holy Priesthood

at St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church, Clinton, Conn.

#### **Boston Deanery**

Sunday, September 26: Ordination of Jeffrey Frate to the Holy Diaconate at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston, Mass.

AXIOS!

AXIOS!

AXIOS!

## *Pastoral transitions in the diocese*

### Priest Joshua Mosher

Within the diocese, a few of our parishes are experiencing pastoral transitions this summer. At St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church, Clinton, Conn., Deacon Steven Hosking will be ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Grace, our Bishop Nikon on Sept. 18. He is to be assigned as the priest of that parish thereafter.

His Grace has also blessed Fr. Dennis Rhodes to serve as rector of St. George Albanian Church, Trumbull, Conn., releasing him from his prior assignment as rector of the Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, Waterbury, Conn.

Fr. Theophan Whitfield has taken up his assignment to St. Nicholas Church, Salem, Mass., which was reported last issue.

Pastoral searches are underway for Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, Three Saints Church, Ansonia, and Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, Waterbury—all in Connecticut. Parishes with vacancies are continuing to hold regular services and receive pastoral care through the coordination of Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Connecticut Dean. His Grace, Bishop Nikon, with the aid of diocesan chancellor Fr. John Kreta and Fr. Vladimir are working closely with the parishes to assess their needs and identify suitable candidates for rector.

## *Northern Deanery hosts 47th Annual Assembly of the Diocese of New England— Oct. 29–30, 2010*

### Alexia Tassmer

The 47th Annual Assembly of the Diocese of New England is coming soon: Friday and Saturday, Oct. 29–30. This year's assembly is hosted by the Springfield, Vt., and Claremont, N.H., parishes of the Northern Deanery.

Forms and planning information for participants in this year's assembly will be distributed and posted on the diocesan website as soon as possible: <[www.dneoca.org](http://www.dneoca.org)>.

Key items from the previous two diocesan assemblies—approved minutes, the report of His Grace, Bishop Nikon, and the budget—are already posted on the website. The minutes of last year's assembly are not posted because they need to be approved by the upcoming assembly.

All reports from deans, officers, departments, and committees are due by September 15. Reports should be submitted by email to Alexia Tassmer <[atassmer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:atassmer@sbcglobal.net)>.

## *Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, Conn.*

### Arlene Potter

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in New Britain hosted Bridegroom Matins for the Connecticut Deanery. This was an opportunity that we have not had for several years and we were delighted to share prayers and fellowship with our Orthodox brothers and sisters.

To the delight of the young children in our New Britain Parish, our annual Easter Egg Hunt was held. The Easter Bunny was very busy and very generous. Plastic eggs filled with many surprises inside were well-hidden around the grounds of Holy Trinity. Squeals of happiness and glee could be heard as our children found them all!

His Grace, Bishop Nikon visited Holy Trinity and a warm reception awaited him. It is always a delight when his Grace is able to attend Vespers with our congregation. His visit culminated in the celebration of a wonderful Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

The Great Feast of Pentecost has an extra special meaning for our parish: our parish feast day! This was celebrated with a Festal Vigil and a Festal Divine Liturgy, followed by Kneeling Vespers. A procession followed with a lavish coffee hour.

May God grant Holy Trinity Church many years!

## *Saint Alexis Church, Clinton, Conn.*

### Vincent Melesko

On Feb. 7, St. Alexis, under the direction of Susan Egan and the church school, again conducted their “Souper Bowl” fundraiser/canned food drive. This is the seventh year that the church school has done this. The canned food is donated to the Clinton Food Bank. Since its inception, St. Alexis has collected and donated 1,552 cans to the food bank. The “Souper Bowl” consists of parishioners making chili or chowder and the votes being made for their favorite chili/soup based on cash donations. All monies collected are sent to IOCC, with this year’s donation designated for Haiti.

We were blessed to have Bishop Nikon visit our church on March 7. His annual visit during Lent is always a highlight of our church year.

Deanery Mission Vespers were celebrated on March 14, 2010 at St. Alexis. We were blessed to have many visiting priests and deacons as well as members of other Orthodox churches in Connecticut. After Vespers we all enjoyed the delicious Lenten food prepared by parishioners and a panel representing several Orthodox Churches, which discussed the wonderful volunteer work their parishes perform.

**Top:** Father David Koles checking out some of the goodies from the **New Britain Easter Egg Hunt.** **Middle and bottom:** Scenes from **His Grace, Bishop Nikon’s visit** to New Britain.

*Photo: Paul Salina*



## *Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn.*

### Barbara Ann Dixon

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Police Department, on May 19, held an awards ceremony at the Grand Central Terminal, Vanderbilt Hall, NY. These awards are given by the Railroad Presidents to members of the Department for their contributions in law enforcement and work specifically related to their agencies. Officer Kevin Pimpinelli, a 15-year member of the MTA Police Department received his third Excellent Police Duty commendation and has also been recognized for saving the life of a twelve-year-old boy who had fallen into the East River.

For the past three years, Kevin has served as a member of the Special Operations Division-Canine Unit with his faithful canine partner "Mullen." May God keep you safe in your public safety service and may He grant you many years.

On Sunday, June 13, children under the direction of Tatiana Prys performed "The Little Prince." We thank our young performers Robert Sergeyenko (age 10), Katya Kazachkova (age 9), Alexandra (Sasha) Suvorova (age 8) Masha Sigul (age 8), Juliette Savarino (age 5) Sofia Sergeyenko (age 5). Their talent, dedication and enthusiasm was felt and enjoyed by everyone in the audience.

Our senior group had a kielbasa luncheon on Tuesday, May 18, and a pizza party on June 15 in the Church Auditorium.



**Above:** Performers of "The Little Prince," with director Tatiana Prys  
Photo: Sasha Prys

**Below:** Stacy Piminelli saying farewell to Three Saints.



On June 20, following Liturgy, the choir held a farewell agape meal for their departing choir director, Stacy Piminelli. The choir will greatly miss her.

A Baccalaureate Service was held on Sunday, June 27. Congratulations to all our graduates, Andrew Jiminez, recipient of the Smerznak, Medak & Kidwell Scholarship; Kristin Mooney, recipient of the Three Saints Church Scholarship; Alexander Kavall and David Vizzo.

Father Steven Voytovich said special prayers for Alexander (Sasha) Kavall on his acceptance to the U.S. Naval Academy as a member of the Class of 2014. Sasha was sworn in on the campus of the Academy in Annapolis, Maryland on July 1, 2010. May God grant you many years! Following Liturgy, the traditional Baccalaureate Luncheon was held at the City Buffet in Derby.

Finally, congratulations go to Mallory Krupa, granddaughter of Nancy Krupa, recently graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Fairfield University with a degree in Engineering.

## *Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, Conn. Baptism of Theodosia Weiss*



**Above: Fr. Vladimir Aleandro** signs the baptismal waters with the Oil of the Catechumens.  
*Photo: Suzanne Aleandro*

**Below:** Altar server Ephraim Mosher holds the service book for **His Grace, Bishop Nikon** during the Divine Liturgy.  
*Photo: John Barone*

## *Fr. Steven Voytovich reflects on his return to Episcopal Health Services*

With Bishop Nikon's blessing, I have returned to Episcopal Health Services (EHS), based in Long Island—a full circle for me. I began my supervisory Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training at EHS in 1995, shortly after having joined the mission in Clinton, Conn. (now St. Alexis Church). I began the Doctor of Ministry program at St. Vladimir's at the same time. My supervisor at EHS was Rev. Dr. Richard Liew.

In 1999, now a chaplain and supervisor-in-training at Norwalk Hospital, having just moved our congregation into a newly constructed church building and completed my D.Min. degree, Rev. Liew and I began work with a group of Korean chaplains interested in building CPE indigenously in Korea.

For the past decade, I contributed to building indigenous CPE in various contexts with Rev. Liew and others. A high-point was sharing my journey in CPE as a Slavic Orthodox Christian at the International Congress for Pastoral Care and Counseling, in Poland in 2007.

In Dec., 2009, Rev. Liew retired. I was Director of Pastoral Care at the Hospital of Saint Raphael and pastor of St. Alexis, feeling the pressure of both these demanding roles over 15 years. After much discernment, I asked Bishop Nikon's blessing to pursue succeeding Rev. Liew. So I have returned to EHS, located in Far Rockaway, Brooklyn, and at the Episcopalian diocesan center at Garden City, Long Island, developing the clinical model of learning that proved life-giving in my own vocational journey.

I am overjoyed that St. Alexis has committed to supporting a full-time priest, which they deserve. My prayers will remain with the St. Alexis community as our bond will always be unique in traveling the road to establishing a mission parish together. I am grateful to God, and I anticipate future possibilities for partnerships concerning chaplaincy and ministry in the Orthodox Church. Cindy and I have been attached to Holy Trinity Church in New Britain, and I will continue to serve as Director of Institutional Chaplaincy for the OCA.

## *Book Review: David Hart, *The Story of Christianity: An Illustrated History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith**

Susan Papademetris

How's your knowledge of Church History? Yeah, mine too. Which is why I am so grateful for a new, single-volume, illustrated history of Christianity written by Orthodox scholar David Bentley Hart. This large (9" x 11", but not too thick), attractive book would be just as at home on your coffee table as it would be on your reference shelf. It's entitled *The Story of Christianity: An Illustrated History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith* and is available either in hardcover or paperback format for quite reasonable prices at many online bookstores.

Hart has produced a comprehensive overview of Christian history—East and West, early and late—complete with timeline entries, copious artwork (including a few photographs), and quotes from key historical figures. Another underlying goal of the book, admirably carried out, is to provide ample argument to correct the narrative—simply and erroneously

assumed by many in our time—that Christianity and the Church have been regressive forces in society, discouraging scholarship, science and innovation, all the while inciting religious wars and perpetrating various forms of persecution on non- or heretical Christians.

Hart also manages to include things that are often left out: the Russian missionary presence in Alaska, for instance. Saint Seraphim of Sarov gets a full page, as an example of a *staretz*. We learn that the Ethiopian Church preserves what it believes to be the original Ark of the Covenant, and how important that is to Ethiopian Christianity even today. And how much do you know about the most widespread Christian communion in the Early Middle Ages, the Syrian Nestorian Church?

A pleasure to peruse and an aid to serious study, Hart's book would be a welcome addition to any home or church library.

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## *Orthodox Education Day at St. Vladimir's Seminary: "Many Cultures, One Faith"*

On Sat., Oct. 2, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Crestwood, N.Y.) will hold its annual open house, Orthodox Education Day, featuring Archpriest Michael Oleksa as the keynote speaker, who will set the tone for this year's theme, "Many Cultures, One Faith."

Father Michael has spent the last forty years in Alaska, serving as village priest, university professor, and consultant on intercultural relations and communications. He has authored several books on Alaskan native cultures and history. He is recognized as an "Elder" by the Alaska Federation of Natives and has been honored by the University of Alaska, the Alaska State Legislature and the National Governors Association.

The rest of Ed Day includes hands-on and how-to workshops, Q&A with SVS Faculty, entertainment by musical groups and dance troupes, and ethnic dishes and delicacies. Various chapel services will be celebrated, and all are invited to take a prayerful pilgrimage through the display of icons and reliquaries.

Orthodox Education Day will be an opportunity to explore the multicultural facets of peoples and lands that have embraced the Orthodox Christian faith. The event is free and open to all.

More details and a full schedule of the day will be posted at the seminary website <[www.svots.edu](http://www.svots.edu)> in September.

## *Finding God from 1*

Fear of the unknown begins early in our lives, “Daddy, don’t turn off the light, I’m afraid of the dark.” Fear of the dark is fear of the unknown, fear of the dangers—imagined and real—that lurk, hidden by the veil of darkness. When Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ took Peter, James and John up the high mountain and was transfigured before them, the disciples were in the midst of a time of great uncertainty. In the days immediately preceding the Transfiguration, Jesus had foretold to his friends that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, even death on the Cross. For the disciples, Christ was saying that He must go to Jerusalem and face the unknown, the dark unknown of sin and death, and the disciples did not like this message.

In fact, Peter directly rebuked Jesus saying, “No Lord, this shall never happen to you!” (Matt 16.22) But Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ knew God’s will, and He knew that suffering and death on the Cross would be the consummation of His saving work. Jesus told Peter, in no uncertain terms, that anyone who tried to dissuade Him from His Saving Passion was doing the work of Satan.

But yet, some doubt must have lingered in the mind of Peter and the others. “Surely, it not as dire as all that. Surely there must be a way that Jesus can do what He needs to do without all of that suffering and without dying.” So, when Jesus was transfigured on the high mountain, and when Peter, James and John beheld him standing there, His face shining like the sun, and His garments white as light, speaking with Moses and Elijah, it is not surprising that Peter reacted as he did. If the Transfiguration happened today, Peter might have said, “Now this is what I’m talking about!” There stood, Jesus in His divine glory, and Peter suggested that they build shrines, places to worship and venerate Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

For this course of action was something that they could understand. This made sense. This is how Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had worshipped in days gone by. They would encounter God, build an altar and make sacrifice. This was not unknown or mysterious this made perfect

sense. But Peter’s reverie is interrupted by God’s voice from the cloud, “This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased, listen to him.” (Matt 17.5) and everything changes. Peter, James and John fall on their faces in fear.

Why were they afraid? Nothing about “this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased” would make them fearful, but the last part, “listen to him” this is serious. It means that Jesus’ prophecy about going to Jerusalem, and being betrayed, and facing death is serious. God leaves Peter, James and John no wiggle room: if they are going to follow Jesus, if they are going to be with Jesus, then they must follow Him into the unknown.

And it is the same for us. We don’t find God in wealth, comfort, or power, at least not the wealth, comfort or power of this world. Rather, Christ calls us out of this world, into the unknown. Yes, there are times—often many times—when we face the darkness, and like little children we cry out, “Lord, I’m afraid of the dark!” Even Christ himself, at the culmination of His Earthly ministry, at the very threshold of death on the Cross, called out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27.46)

But Christ faced the unknown, with perfect faith in complete obedience to His Heavenly Father, and in facing the unknown, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ opened the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven. For that which is unknown to us, is known by God. And in the famous words of St. John the Evangelist, “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Peter, James and John, on that high mountain, cowered in fear as they faced the unknown. And maybe we do our share of cowering. But Jesus came to them, and He comes to us in the moments we face the unknown. He touched them and said, “Rise, and have no fear.” And in our moments of fear, when we face the unknown, Christ is there to touch us, and say “Rise, have no fear.” He calls us to rise, for Christ frees us from the paralysis of fear. He touches us in the deepest recesses of our being so that we can be certain of God’s presence. For we find God as we do His will, facing the unknown in faith, and entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

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## Upcoming Events

- Aug 25** Diocesan Council in Springfield, Mass.
- Sept 4-5** Ordination of Alexis Rastorguyeff to the Holy Diaconate at Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, N.H.
- Sept 15** Deadline for next issue of the *ONE*
- Sept 18** Ordination of Deacon Steven Hosking to the Holy Priesthood at St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church, Clinton, Conn.
- Sept 26** Ordination of Jeffrey Frate to the Holy Diaconate at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston, Mass.
- Oct 2** Orthodox Education Day, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y.
- Oct 3** Fellowship of Orthodox Churches in Connecticut (FORCC) Benefit Dinner— keynote speaker: Fr. Justin Mathews, Exec. Dir. of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) North America
- Oct 10** Dinner honoring Fr. Michael Westerberg's 35th anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood, 30th anniversary as rector of Holy Transfiguration, New Haven, Conn.
- Oct 29-30** 47th Assembly of the Diocese of New England Claremont, N.H./Springfield, Vt.