



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

ON THE MEND Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Anthony Dimitri, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—an 7-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 4-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Robert McKivitz, Marjorie Pershing, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Peter & Karen Special, Amy Boe, Doris Artman, Maureen Sams, Nancy Barylak, Shirley Tkacik, Carol Kowalcheck, Martin Golofski, Joe Paouncic, Anthony Yerace, Joanne Brodrick, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [3-year-old with cancer], Diane Waryanka, Nathan Forbeck, Joseph Baloga, Andy

Torick, Sarah Doyle, Carmella Berardesca, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Joe Pauncic, Bonnie Blair [Pani Gina's mother], Charles & Esther Holupka, Jill Paha, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

2010 Church Calendars and 2010 Envelopes are now available downstairs in the church hall. PLEASE NOTE—your envelope number may be different from this year's envelopes! Please put your name on the new envelopes when you start using them AFTER January 1, 2010! Any questions—please see Fr. Bob.

Please remember James John Logue George Senita, & John Kirkowski assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, Tonia Dec, Michael Repasky, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR "BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION" AND CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex's Seventh Grade and Matt's Fifth Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, Alex and Matt

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please **CALL FATHER BOB** at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, January 17	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	32 ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY	
	SYNAXIS OF THE 70 APOSTLES; SAINT EUSTATHIUS I-ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA; VENERABLE AQUILIUS-DEACON OF THE PERCHEVSKY LAVRA	
	Tone 7	
	I Corinthians 10:1-4	
	Mark 1:9-11	
	<i>Litany in Blessed Memory of Stephen Kuzman & Nicholas Vetosky—Fr. Bob</i>	
	<i>Parastas in Blessed Memory of Robert Vetosky—Cindy Vetosky & Family</i>	
Monday, January 18	Grand Compline and Great Blessing of Waters	7:00 PM
	STRICT FAST DAY	

Tuesday, January 19 THEOPHANY—BAPTISM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Sunday, January 24 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PAHRISEE—SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY
*****BEGINNING OF THE LENTEN TRIODION*****
VENERABLE THEODOSIUS THE GREAT; VENERABLE THEODOSIUS OF ANTIOCH; SAINT STEPHEN OF PLACIDIN
NEAR CONSTANTINOPLE

Tone 8

Ephesians 4:7-13 & II Timothy 3:10-15

Matthew 4:12-17 & Luke 13: 10-14

Litany in Blessed Memory of Stephen Kuzman & Nicholas Vetosky—Fr. Bob

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charles & Tillie Pawlyshyn—Fran Ferlin & Jean Stutchell

Sunday, January 31 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT & SAINT CYRIL-ARCHBISHOPS OF ALEXANDRIA, VENERABLE MARCIAN-MONK OF
CYRRHUS IN SYRIA

Tone 1

I Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

Litany in Blessed Memory of Hilda Holupka—Mike Holupka

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Steve Kuzman—Debbie & John Paouncic

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 17 JANUARY 2010
THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—SUNDAY BEFORE
THEOPHANY; SYNAXIS OF THE 70 APOSTLES; SAINT EUSTATHIUS I-
ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA; VENERABLE AQUILIUS-DEACON OF THE
PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

TROPARION—TONE 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise!
For the Myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy.
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 7

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
For Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers!
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:
The Savior has come to those in faith!
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 7

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His
people with peace!

PEOPLE: **The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless
His people with peace!**

READER: Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 7

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High!

To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

2010 Census to Begin...THIS IS PRETTY BASIC ADVICE: Be Cautious About Giving Info to Census Workers by Susan Johnson

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is—how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? BBB offers the following advice:

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

REMEMBER, NO MATTER WHAT THEY ASK, YOU REALLY ONLY NEED TO TELL THEM HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE AT YOUR ADDRESS.

While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, **YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION.** The Census Bureau will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers, nor will employees solicit donations. Any one asking for that information is **NOT** with the Census Bureau.

AND REMEMBER, THE CENSUS BUREAU HAS DECIDED NOT TO WORK WITH ACORN ON GATHERING THIS INFORMATION. No Acorn worker should approach you saying he/she is with the Census Bureau.

Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person at home. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by Email, so be on the lookout for Email scams impersonating the Census.

Never click on a link or open any attachments in an Email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS..

Some Really Good Questions

1. Does a clean house indicate that there is a broken computer in it?
2. Why is it that no matter what color of bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?
3. Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
4. Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?
5. On electric toasters, why do they engrave the message "one slice?" How many pieces of bread do they think people are really gonna try to stuff in that slot?
6. Why do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
7. Why is it that no plastic garbage bag will open from the end you first try?
8. How do those dead bugs get into those closed light fixtures?
9. Considering all the lint you get in your dryer, if you kept drying your clothes would they eventually just disappear?
10. When we are in the supermarket and someone rams our ankle with a shopping cart then apologizes for doing so, why do we say, "It's all right?" Well, it isn't all right so why don't we say, "That hurt, you stupid idiot?"
11. Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

12. Is it true that the only difference between a yard sale and a trash pickup is how close to the road the stuff is placed?

13. In winter why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?

14. How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?

15. If at first you don't succeed, shouldn't you try doing it like your wife told you to do it? And obviously if at first you don't succeed, then don't take up sky diving!

16. The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four Americans is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends, if they're okay, then it's you.

The old men used to say, "When we do not experience warfare, we ought so much the more to be humble. For God, seeing our weakness, protects us; when we glorify ourselves, He withdraws His protection and we are lost.

Ortho Thoughts for the Day (some things never change)

Ambitious men are ever spending, on self-indulgence and bribery, possessions that they hold in trust for the poor. *St. Basil the Great*

It is impossible, in this small space, to list all those Scriptures that declare not just robbery horrible, but also the grasping mind, and the tendency to meddle with what belongs to others. *St. Gregory the Wonderworker*

What can be more pitiful than this rich man whose daily prayer is that there may be famine so that he may have a little gold? *St. John Chrysostom*

Nothing is more fallacious than wealth. Today it is for you; tomorrow it is against you...It is a hostile comrade, a domestic enemy. *St. John Chrysostom*

He does not see, poor wretch, that his life is but a gilded torture, that he is bound fast by his wealth and that his money owns him rather than he owns it. *St. Ambrose of Milan*

You said it well, "I have nothing," not because you lack what another has, but because you think that things will make you happy. *St. John Chrysostom*

Riches are not forbidden, but the pride of them is. *St. John Chrysostom*

The rich man is not one who possesses much, but one who gives much. *St. John Chrysostom*

"The sport in Scouting is to find the good in every boy and develop it." Lord Robert Baden-Powell

SPECIAL REPORT: A FRAYED CONNECTION

Facing a New Schism

By David O'Reilly—Inquirer Staff Writer

In the resurgent neighborhood of Northern Liberties, among the smoked glass condos, hipper-than-thou restaurants, swank salons, and teeming cafes and bohemian tea shops, Old World holiness still flickers to life on Sunday mornings.

Hardly anyone notices.

The ages-old glow of Christendom's most elaborate, enigmatic liturgy no longer is a guiding light for the community. But inside St. Andrew's Russian Orthodox Cathedral, beneath four blue onion domes, the sanctuary is as luminous as the day it opened in 1902, if not nearly as brimful of youth and hope.

The Rev. Mark Shinn, bearded and gold-caped, appears through the "royal door" before the altar, an ornate chalice in each hand. Murmuring a prayer, he raises the goblets toward the worshipers, who bow and make the sign of the cross under the wide-eyed gaze of saintly icons. In a gesture of humility, some sweep their fingertips across the oak floor. A few prostrate themselves to kiss it.

They do not retake their seats. There aren't any. The congregants stand for a candlelit service lasting at least two hours and celebrated almost wholly in Old Church Slavonic, an archaic Eastern European tongue.

On a typical Sunday, about 80 people attend. For that, the archpriest is grateful.

"We keep no rolls and collect no dues," Shinn said. "If you come, you're a member."

If you come.

Therein lies the challenge for the five historic Eastern Orthodox churches in Northern Liberties, some hanging on for dear life on this one-third-square-mile patch north of Old City. Their very reason for existence - the Eastern European immigrant wave of the early 20th century - has come and gone from a neighborhood transformed into Philadelphia's trendiest avant-garde niche, population about 5,000 and climbing.

"I don't see much interest in religion in these people," said the Rev. Vincent Saverino of St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, which marked its 100th anniversary last month.

Attendance may swell to nearly 300 on holy days - including the Orthodox Christmas on Thursday - but on routine Sundays it is about 60. As in the other Orthodox churches, not one member is from the neighborhood.

"They come from all over, just not here," Saverino said, twirling a finger to indicate Northern Liberties.

Stop newcomers on busy streets and chances are they will say they aren't religious so much as spiritual. The faith described is free-form, unfettered by institutions.

"It just manifests itself in different ways than attending church," said Chris Clark, 33, who works in public relations for a pharmaceutical giant. "I try to be a good person. I try to treat others as I'd like to be treated."

Youth's increasing disconnection from organized religion has been well-documented among the urban educated nationwide. But the pastors of Northern Liberties have their own telling numbers.

The area also is home to a handful of Catholic churches that, like the Orthodox, took root in Old World ethnicities. The massive gold dome of the 1,810-seat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is a beacon on the city skyline - to about 40 people on a typical Sunday.

"We are barely surviving," lamented Msgr. Peter Waslo.

St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church is an anomaly, for it holds the body of St. John Neumann. Its six Sunday Masses pull more than 1,000 from all over the region, but the Rev. Bob Harrison said the church wasn't having a magnetic effect on Northern Liberties, where it was founded in 1842 for Bohemians (now Czechs).

Harrison and fellow clergy sometimes lunch at the voguish complex Piazza at Schmidt's. They dress in priestly blacks "so we can be a visible presence, so people know we're walking-distance away," he said, and joked, "We'd probably do better if we had a doggy day care."

The renaissance has inspired a few micro-efforts to reach souls. A start-up evangelical congregation, Restoration and Redemption Ministries, moved into a rowhouse. And Chabad-Lubavitch, an international Hasidic Jewish movement, began renting space four years ago in the old Ortlieb's bottling plant.

The Jewish Center's Shabbat services there draw 25 people from Northern Liberties and vicinity - once home to a dozen small synagogues and now just this one.

"Nowadays, people like to be different from their parents, [who] wanted to be members and belong to things," said the center's Rabbi Gedaliah Lowenstein. "Young people want to plug in and plug out."

Not that they lack a higher calling, observed Anne Waginger, a volunteer at the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association.

They are zealots for the environment, she noted. "Green Northern Liberties - that's the current religion."

Indeed, most neighbors "would rather go to a meeting about how to make the park better" than attend church, allowed Jennifer Slater, 25, who works for a jewelry designer.

She was passing by Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church on a Sunday morning. Had Slater slipped inside, she would have heard the Rev. Nicolai Buga explain to three dozen worshipers, in Romanian, how the bread and wine are prepared for consecration. Liberty Lands park was not on the agenda.

Two years ago, St. Michael's got a new next-door neighbor, the Random Tea Room. Over the tea bar hangs a picture of Indian deities, including Ganesh and Krishna, though the proprietress is not Hindu.

"Not that I don't believe in God," said Rebecca Goldschmidt, 30, who was raised in a Jewish-Methodist household. But "church is kind of out of fashion in its structure. People in our generation tend to make our own paths rather than follow someone else's."

A Russian commission

More than a century ago, the young residents of Northern Liberties also were making their own path, out of Eastern Europe to the "colonia," bounded west and east by Seventh Street and the Delaware River, south and north by Spring Garden Street and Girard Avenue.

In no time, Northern Liberties became "Slavic Europe in microcosm," as Shinn, of St. Andrew's, describes it.

Orthodoxy, which holds to be the most authentic Christian tradition and Roman Catholicism its offshoot, established a bailiwick after the Russian government commissioned two ships, the Retvizan and the Varyag, from the William Cramp & Sons shipyard in Kensington.

In 1897, 1,200 naval officers and crew were dispatched to Philadelphia to oversee construction. They invited the local Russian Orthodox community, heretofore without a priest, to join them May 9 for the city's first divine liturgy.

(The celebrant, Father Alexander Hotovitsky, later returned to Moscow, was ordered executed by Stalin in 1937, and ascended into the vast firmament of Orthodox saints.)

Before the Russian sailors steamed down the Delaware, they gave icons, candlesticks, and bells to their American friends, who in 1902 started St. Andrew's at 707 N. Fifth St.

It would not be Orthodoxy's lone outpost for long.

A major point of debarkation for immigrants, the Philadelphia port took in more than 600,000 from 1890 to 1914. Censuses gleaned only murky information on their origins, but the bulk appeared to have been from Eastern and Central Europe.

Many older Jewish newcomers settled below South Street; the younger crowd gravitated toward Northern Liberties, as did non-Jewish skilled laborers. Those with rural roots in the Old World headed deep into Pennsylvania, to mines and steel mills.

"Austrian" was a census catchall for a host of nationalities and ethnicities. But the houses of faith in Northern Liberties knew their finely differentiated flocks.

In Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Serbian, Albanian, Romanian, and other dialects, they welcomed the immigrants, blessed their homes, sang their songs, cooked their foods, found them jobs, married them, and baptized their children - all the while making them into Americans.

Those were the days, 90-year-old Helen Karnick recalled, when her family's rowhouse at 332 Brown St. was fragrant with cabbage and garlic sausages simmering.

On a recent morning, in a mink coat and heels, she showed the way down Brown past \$400,000-plus condos. Back when, it was a cobblestone alley, and she was Helen Kachmarchik, one of five children of a blacksmith. Packed tightly around them were Slovaks, Galician Poles, and, like the Kachmarchiks, Carpathian-Russians.

Pointing toward St. Michael's, she recalled "climbing the [church] fence when I was 4 or 5 to go to the Russian school" to learn Old Slavonic.

In the early 1930s, as her father prospered in his job at Baldwin Locomotive Works, he began moving his family away from the poor rowhouse enclave into the more expansive neighborhoods of North Philadelphia. Everyone around them, it seemed, was leaving, too, typically taking the beaten path of Germans drifting north through the city since the Civil War.

By the 1960s, the migration - largely to Elkins Park and Jenkintown in lower Montgomery County and into Northeast Philadelphia - had become a diaspora.

Synagogues, often in storefronts and homes, had little choice but to follow, for many members were compelled to walk to services. So, along Old York Road, seeds were planted for such present-day giants as Keneseth Israel and Adath Jesurun.

The grand edifices of Orthodoxy were a knottier matter.

St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church, which had grown to 5,000 members by World War I, broke into four congregations. One stayed; the others moved to Marlton, Bristol, and Gradyville in Delaware County.

"There was no anger," said the Rev. John Bohush, pastor of the Northern Liberties parish. "They felt it was time to put a church where the people lived."

Things were not so amiable at St. Michael's, where a Cold War-era dispute over its continued ties to the Moscow mother church led to flying fists and police visits. In 1968, most of the flock departed for the Northeast.

By then, a majority of the Romanian parish, Descent of the Holy Ghost, had picked up and gone - along with the priest, the parish records, the endowment, and select icons - to Elkins Park.

Those who stayed renamed themselves Holy Trinity. They "had to start all over," said Buga, the current pastor. "They so loved the church they did not want to move, but it was so difficult."

Remarkably, a new gilded dome appeared in 1966 just outside North Liberties, in the area known as East Poplar.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church - Orthodoxlike in its traditions and liturgies - poured \$6.5 million into constructing the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Philadelphia archeparchy's council of priests had voted against the locale, already in serious decline, and lobbied for Montgomery County. Their archbishop overruled them, insisting the neighborhood was the "center of Ukrainian life" for the region.

So up it went, 106 feet tall and modeled on the sixth-century Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, a jewel of Byzantine architecture. Philadelphia's version was the largest Ukrainian Catholic church building in use in the world - and doomed to become over decades one of the emptiest.

By the mid-1970s, Northern Liberties was a "bruised and battered neighborhood of run-down houses and boarded-up warehouses," a newspaper reported. Once alive with theaters, shops, and "oyster saloons," Second Street was so empty "you can shoot a cannon" down it, a barkeep observed.

The area was 50 percent white, 30 percent black, 20 percent Hispanic. The typical family made \$6,000 a year.

The words *urban renewal* were always in the air, recalled Bohush, who came to St. Nicholas in 1976. He found himself in a near-constant, and ultimately

successful, battle to beat back city plans for a prison, a bar, a drug program, and Section 8 subsidized housing around his stately Greek Revival church.

When the resurrection of Northern Liberties finally began in earnest about the turn of this century, it brought a wave of like-minded settlers.

The churches had seen something like it before - and nothing like it.

'Engaging the neighbors'

Rick Schroder moved to Northern Liberties two years ago, drawn by its "very cool bohemian" ambience. That includes the autumn Russian Festival at St. Michael's, in which his interest is "more cultural than religious."

Raised Lutheran, he doesn't attend church. "It's not that I don't have a spiritual dimension in my life," said Schroder, 49, a human-resources manager. But "organized religion isn't doing it for me."

Still, he said, he would "love to have a conversation with the Orthodox, but I'm not sure how to start it."

Religious leaders could "do a better job of engaging" the neighbors, he said. "That's the missing piece, the engaging piece . . . reaching out to the community, saying what you're about, and the community reaching back."

Chabad-Lubavitch seems to have gotten a bead on the new "NoLibs." One of the hottest nightspots is North Bowl, a bowling alley with two bars, Italian sofas in the lounge, an arcade - and now a Jewish bowling league.

The league, Chutz Bowl, "is just as important as the religious thing for creating community," said Lowenstein, the rabbi, adding that the Jewish Center's bonfire marking the minor religious holiday Lag b'Omer draws 600 to a vacant lot each May. "Not everybody likes praying."

The Orthodox churches have been far more circumspect in their concessions to modernity, if they care to make any at all.

The Serbian Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas is leaving.

"This used to be the nucleus of the Serbian community," the Rev. Milorad Orlic said as he awaited worshipers on the Feast of the Dormition, one of the holiest days.

Three people went to the Wednesday-evening liturgy, celebrated mostly in Old Slavonic. One was Orlic's wife.

The 60-member congregation has acquired a new site in Elkins Park.

Some pastors contend that hewing to tradition is the key to their future.

Holy Trinity Romanian Church, Buga assures, is "the church for the poor immigrants" of the 21st century, who typically grew up under communism and must be schooled in the faith.

Maintaining the landmark building, designed by William Strickland in 1815 for Episcopalians, is a "great strain," Buga said. "But we are very proud to be home for the newcomers."

At St. Andrew's, the highlight of 2009 was the elaborate reception Dec. 13 for a newly acquired relic: a bone fragment from the skull of the apostle Andrew, its patron saint.

The sanctuary was a sea of babushkas.

The two other Russian Orthodox churches, St. Nicholas and St. Michael, tried to widen their appeal decades ago by switching to English liturgies. "We wouldn't have survived otherwise," said the latter's pastor, Saverino.

Both also dropped *Russian* from their names.

But an infusion of young ecospiritual neighbors is not necessarily what they want.

At St. Nicholas, membership was 1,000 when Bohush arrived 33 years ago. Now it is 100, and the nearest congregant lives in King of Prussia. They are generous enough to keep the church alive, he said, and he would not want high-powered newcomers threatening "their authority, their prestige."

St. Michael's also endures, thanks largely to people like Helen Karnick.

Widowed and living in a Jenkintown retirement village, she and her sisters - Anna, 91, and Olga, 88 - go to church nearly every Sunday. Catching a ride from the suburbs with relatives is easy, for four generations of Kachmarchiks are members.

She was baptized and married there, and for 77 years sang in the choir as lead soprano. She and her husband commissioned two icons. She helped make 7,000 pierogi (served with 150 pounds of kielbasa) for St. Michael's most recent Russian Festival. And last month, she celebrated her 90th birthday with a big carrot cake at coffee hour.

"I would never go anywhere else," she said. "This is my life."



ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / Staff Photographer

The Rev. Mark Shinn leads a service at St. Andrew's Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Northern Liberties, a neighborhood that was once a magnet for arrivals from Eastern Europe. Its Orthodox churches survive, but demographic changes through the decades have left them struggling.