

Visitors, please read

We warmly welcome all visitors and seekers in our midst today.

Holy Communion is the greatest gift on earth. It is given by God to baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians, who have prepared themselves with regular prayer, fasting (from midnight, unless there is a medical condition), and confession, and who have the blessing of their spiritual father or confessor to receive it.

We welcome anyone visiting for the first time, and we trust that your experience here will be an uplifting and enriching one. The Orthodox Christian Church is actually a community of local Churches, whose roots are the ancient and native Christian communities of the biblical world, with centers in Jerusalem, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor, and by extension in Greece, Cyprus, Russia, North America, and throughout the world.

As a continuation of the ancient Church, we engage the whole person, heart, mind, and all senses in divine worship. This experience has been so powerful to seekers in the past that it was often said "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. We knew only that there God dwelt among men" (Russian Primary Chronicle). That experience of heaven on earth and God in our midst forms the heart of all Orthodox worship.

Our worship culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion, which not only unites us with the Divine, but also expresses the deep unity in faith and life among all Orthodox believers. Since Holy Communion expresses that deep unity in belief and practice alike, it is reserved for practicing Orthodox Christians, who have properly prepared themselves with prayer, fasting, and recent confession. This is because the Orthodox choose not to make an external display of unity with other Christian groups when actual unity of faith and practice does not exist.

While working to restore the full communion that did exist among Christians in antiquity, today we offer the blessed bread (*antidoron*) at the conclusion of the Liturgy, as a gift of hospitality and of growing unity that is offered to all present. If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox way of life, or have any questions about worship or Holy Communion, please approach Fr. Michael or one of the other clergy following the Liturgy.

Thank you for joining us, and again, we welcome you all.

We hope you enjoy your visit with us here at Holy Cross, and we thank you for joining us today.

We formally invite you and/or your guests to join us for coffee hour in the community center next door. If you can stay, we would love to have you!

Sunday, December 15, 2019

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 1:8-18

Timothy, my son, do not be ashamed of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesos.

The Gospel According Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

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Fr. Michael Kallaur
 Fr. Daniel Korba
 Dn. Frank Dickos

Coffee Hour sponsored by Jim and Georgina Callas and Alex and Ria Kartsonas today.

THIS WEEK:

Monday – December 16 6:30pm Paraclesis/Bible Study
Tuesday – December 17 *Prophet Daniel*
 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy
 Circle of Angels baskets filled
 7pm Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday – December 18 4:30pm Greek School Christmas Party
 7:17pm **MANDATORY** GOYA Basketball Meeting
Thursday – December 19
Friday – December 20 *St. Ignatius*
 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturday – December 21 *Saturday before Nativity*
 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy
 5pm Vespers/Confessions

The **Angel Gifts for FOCUS** have been delivered. We had 3 SUVs full of gifts including 2 bikes. Your generosity and kindness was overwhelming. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, to all who donated and helped deliver the gifts as well. This project took a village, and I am grateful for all of your cooperation and assistance.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Healthy New Year to all! ~Kathy Pyros

Christmas bread, \$10 a loaf, will be sold TODAY after Divine Liturgy! Thank you to ALL who participated in the Christmas bread making on Monday. Thank you to the bakers, rollers, twist-ers, egg washers and wrappers! 360 loaves were prepared! *Thank you for supporting Philoptochos!*

Circle of Angels Needs Cookies: Please bring your home-baked cookies to the church by **Tuesday, December 17th** before 10:30 AM for the Christmas visitations to our home-bound parishioners and those in the nursing homes. Our friends are so appreciative of the baskets of goodies prepared with love and delivered with love by the Holy Cross Philoptochos Circle of Angels. Thank you so much and God bless you for caring!

Ministry Opportunity: We have a Holy Cross Parishioner coming to completion of incarceration. The parishioner has the possibility to finish their sentence and transition to a home setting with a stable family. If you are willing to open your home to this parishioner, please see Fr. Michael for the details.

ATTENTION graduating High School seniors and parents! Applications are now available in the narthex, Elaine Sofis or office for the Popi Hagelios Memorial Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross Church. The application is due by Sunday, March 22, The application is available to a PLEDGED Holy Cross family member who is a gradu-ating high school senior in 2020. A similar application is available at Mt. Lebanon High School. You may apply to both awards. You will only be eligible for one \$1500 award.

TO RENEW OR JOIN PHILOPTOCHOS for 2020, please complete and return to church or to *Connie Carabalis, 224 Mt. Lebanon Blvd, Pittsburgh 15234*

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

*From your Philoptochos Stewardship donation, \$15 is sent to National Philoptochos in NYC and \$10 is sent to the Pittsburgh Metropolis Philoptochos. Anything over \$25 goes to Holy Cross Philoptochos. **Or see any Board Member to pay your dues!**