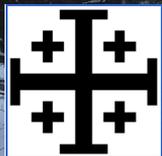


Holy Cross Crossroads



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστος Γενναται! Δοξασατε!

As we celebrate the twelve days of Christmas and prepare for our Lord's Theophany, we recognize that the Lord has come to reveal Himself to us! The Voice of the Father, the Light of the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and the Lord Himself entering His creation through the waters of the Jordan River.

Continued pg. 4 →



January 2022

Vasilopita
from the
Holy Protection
Monastery

Vasilopita Cutting
January 9



Beautiful
Christmas Card
designed by
Greg Frommeyer

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 22 Issue 1

Under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS of Pittsburgh

The mission of Holy Cross is to keep and proclaim, pure and undefiled, the Orthodox Christian faith and traditions in conformity with the doctrine, canons, worship, discipline and customs of the Church.

Fr. Michael Kallaur, Economos
Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter
Dn. Frank Dickos, Deacon
Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: holycrosspgh.org

Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

***Services:**

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm

**See monthly calendar for all services.*

Organizations & Committees

Church School		Elias Diamond
Philoptochos Pres.	Thea Manos	(412) 600-8640
Phil. Membership	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
	Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290
Garden of Love	Stacie Metrose	(412) 833-5164
	Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892
Greek School	Dena Yamalis	(412) 343-8355
Junior Dance	Kristina Gzikowski	(412) 257-5015
Senior Dance	Georgia Yamalis	(412) 728-2259
Choir	Thespina Christulides	(412)608-6418
First Steps	Denise Sokos	(412) 257-1610
JOY	Christine Chapas	(724) 986-2082
Young Adults	Thespina Christulides	(412)608-6418
GOYA	Denise Melis	(412) 341-9264
Golden Club	Cynthia Kostelnik	(412) 833-9423
	Rene Koett	(412) 831-3142
Bookstore	Mary Portellos	(724) 941-8699
House Committee	Konrad Mayr	(412) 877-7780
Building Comm.	John Conomos	(412) 831-7997
Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Interior Design Committee	Janet Conomos	(412) 831-7997

Parish Council 2022

Nicholas Chakos
 Christopher Chaney*
 Mark Hummel*
 Frank Kalogeris**
 Rachel Kartofilis
 Bob Kirschner
 Jordan Nicholas
 Deno Pappas
 Christine Picard
 Bill Poutous
 Dean Stambolis
 Donna Staub
 Nicholas Tripodes*
 Annie Urso*
 Constance Zotis

**new **reelected*

Thank you for your past service:

Dena Galie
 John Hoenic
 Jennifer Liokareas
 George Sokos

Funeral/Memorial information: Use of the Community Center is available for parishioner funeral lunches at no charge. Parishioners may contact any caterer they choose to purchase and prepare their **Makaria** (Mercy Meal). Contact the church office for suggestions if you need a referral. For **Kollyva**, you may bring your own or contact Denise Melis directly (412) 341-9264.

Coffee Hour fellowship is an extension of our Divine Liturgy! Please gather with family, koumbari or friends to sponsor/prepare one Sunday. See the calendar on website for open dates, and call the church office to confirm.



Each Matins service begins, after the reading of the six psalms, with the hymn, "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Ps. 117:27). This gift of the Incarnation of God has a purpose to help us understand who God is; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - One God, revealed in three persons. This is a divine revelation from the Son Himself.

St. Mark records the baptism of Christ: John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed in camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased." (Mk. 1:4-11)

Christ has come into the world to re-new all of creation; to cleanse it from within. At the center of this re-newal is the salvation of mankind! St. John the Baptist prepared the way for spiritual renewal through the baptism of repentance. "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" Our renewal begins at baptism where we are claimed by Christ and the Holy Trinity as belonging to the One God in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Repentance comes from the scars of living in a fallen world and reclaiming our baptismal garment, given to us at baptism. How often we are soiled by

the sins of this world! What can we do? The answer is to humble ourselves and repent (Confession)! We ask God to forgive us our sins and help us. God sends His Holy Spirit upon us to cleanse us and help us overcome our sins. This is the work of a lifetime. The journey to the kingdom, where expect temptation to our last breath and we are called to take responsibility of our sins (St. Anthony the Great).

The Word of God became flesh and through the Word, Jesus Christ, the pathway to salvation is revealed. The renewal we experience begins in baptism and is continued through Holy Communion and Confession. Through baptism (water) and chrismation (Holy Chrism - the Seal and Gift of the Holy Spirit), we are grafted/adopted into the Body of Christ. As members of the Body of Christ we are given opportunities to grow and renew our commitment and deepen our relationship with Christ. The feast days of the year and sacraments of the Church remind us of these moments of grace and mercy.

St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco (Maximovitch) gave us this description of the feast of Theophany. *St. John's body lies incorrupt at the Cathedral of the Holy Protection of the Mother of God in San Francisco - 25th Street and Geary, worthy of a visit:*

“Today the nature of the waters is sanctified. Today the Son of God is baptized in the waters of the Jordan, having no need Himself of cleansing, but in order to cleanse the sinful human race from defilement.

Now the heavens open and the voice of God the Father is heard: ‘This is my beloved Son.’ The Holy Spirit descends upon the Saviour of the world, Who stands in the Jordan, thereby confirming that this indeed is He Who is the incarnate Son of God. The Holy Trinity is clearly made manifest and is revealed to mankind.

The waters of the Jordan are sanctified, and together with them all the waters of creation, the very nature of water.

Water is given power to cleanse not only the body, but also man's whole soul, and to regenerate the whole man unto a new life through Baptism.

Through water all of nature is cleansed, for out of water the world was made, and moisture penetrates everywhere, giving life to everything else in nature. Without moisture neither animals nor plants can live; moisture penetrates rocks, into every place in the world.

The waters are sanctified and through them the whole world, in preparation for renewal and regeneration for God's eternal Kingdom which is to come.

Every year on this day (January 6th - Theophany) the glory of God is revealed, renewing, and confirming what was accomplished at Christ's Baptism. Again the heavens are opened; again the Holy Spirit descends. We do not see this with our bodily eyes, but we sense its power. At the rite of blessing, the waters which are thereby sanctified are transformed; they become incorruptible and retain their freshness for many years.

Those who with faith drink these waters and anoint themselves with them receive relief and healing from spiritual and bodily infirmities. Homes are sanctified by these waters, the power of demons is expelled, God's blessing is brought down upon all that is sprinkled with these waters. Through the sanctifying of the waters, God's blessing is again imparted to the whole world, cleansing it from the sins we have committed and guarding it from the machinations of the devil.

Today the Holy Spirit, descending upon the waters when the Cross of Christ is immersed into them, descends upon all of nature. Only into man He cannot enter without his/her will.

Let us open our hearts and souls to receive Him and with faith cry from the depth of our souls: 'Great are You O Lord, and marvelous are Your works, and there is no word which suffices to hymn Your wonders.'"

(Man of God, St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, pg.163-4)

Who could imagine that through the most basic element of life, water, the whole of creation is transformed and re-newed. Only the Wisdom, Word, and Power of God could have designed such a transfiguration. By partaking of the sanctified waters at Theophany we are cleansed from within! May God grant us this blessed cleansing and renewal of divine grace!

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who will to be baptized by St. John in the River Jordan for our salvation, have mercy upon us and save us. I look forward to blessing your homes and visiting with all of you!

With love and prayers for a blessed new (calendar) year,
Fr. Michael



Saints Mary & Martha Women's Fellowship

Everything Old is New Again:

The New Testament revealed in the Old Testament

January 25, 2022

**The Cross revealed
in the Old Testament**

Fr. George Callas, speaker
At the home of: Domenica Merante
43 Ridgewood Drive
McDonald 15057
RSVP Text 412-302-9093

February 22, 2022

**The Theotokos revealed
in the Old Testament**

Fr. Michael Kallaur, speaker
At the home of: Irene Zotis
76 Woodland Drive
Mt. Lebanon 15228
RSVP Text 412-721-0146



**Remember,
all meetings run
from
7-9pm.**

March 22, 2022

**Christ revealed
in the Old Testament**

Fr. Daniel Korba, speaker
At the home of: Vasso Paliouris
114 Hoodridge Dr.
Mt. Lebanon 15228
RSVP Text 412-606-4314

April 12, 2022

**Pascha revealed
in the Old Testament**

Fr. Paul Abernathy, speaker
At the home of Vasso Paliouris
114 Hoodridge Dr.
Mt. Lebanon 15228
RSVP Text 412-606-4314

May 24, 2022

**Baptism revealed
in the Old Testament**

Elias Diamond, speaker
At the home of: Adrienne Dickos
1840 Kent Road
Upper St. Clair 15241
RSVP Text 412-400-4290

RENEW OR JOIN PHILOPTOCHOS for 2022 online!

Or you can still send in a check using the

Philoptochos Membership form below:

TO RENEW OR JOIN PHILOPTOCHOS for 2022, please complete and return to church or to *Adrienne Dickos, 1840 Kent Rd. Pittsburgh 15241*

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!

Dear Parishioners and Philoptochos Baking Angels,
Thank you to all who donated an abundance of
koulourakia, paximadia, cookies, candy and bread
for our Circle of Angels Christmas Outreach.
Your generosity is gratefully appreciated.
Christmas Blessings to All, Carol and Christine



Thank you to all of our baking,
buying, packing & visiting angels!!

Thanks for the Donations

Thanks to all the parishioners that responded to the request for medical equipment by Global Links. In December, Holy Cross donated multiple wheelchairs, crutches, canes, walkers, shower chairs, orthopedic boots, and adult diapers. All the donated equipment was delivered to Global Links and will be distributed to the needy and underserved. A wonderful outreach by our Church to an urgent need.

Metropolis GOYA Basketball Tournament

Hosted by **Holy Cross**
February 25-27, 2022



AD FORM

Deadline: February 1, 2022

Please attach to this form or email your message to

ADGOYA2020@gmail.com

Quarter page \$25.00, Half page \$50.00, Full page \$100.00

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Ad size and amount paid: _____

Please make check payable to **HOLY CROSS GOYA** and mail along with this form to:

**Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
ATTN: Basketball Tournament
123 Gilkeson Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228**

Any questions, call Denise Melis at 412.341.9264

Please return no later than February 1, 2022.



Are you ready for some **BASKETBALL**?!!!



Holy Cross GOYA is honored to host the 2020 GOYA Regional Basketball Tournament February 25, 26, 27, 2022

This year, there will be over 300 GOYAns participating in our tournament. Hosting a Diocese Basketball Tournament is truly a community effort. Much help and many items are needed. Please choose to help in whatever way you can. In doing so, you will not only be supporting our youth, you will be helping Holy Cross be the best we can be in welcoming our young people from our Diocese.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Sponsor:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday Night Social Event Snacks..\$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Concession Stand.....\$200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday Night Paper Products.....\$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Breakfast Food.....\$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday Night Beverages..... \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Paper Products..... \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Night Event Snacks..... \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Beverages..... \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Night Paper Products\$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Supplies\$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Night Beverages..... \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water for all players.... \$125 |

Or for those desiring to make a substantially larger donation.... Various opportunities exist for underwriting the larger costs of renting gyms, paying referees, buying trophies and providing the DJ for the social events. Please contact Denise Melis 412.341.9264

All donors will be acknowledged in the Tournament Program Book.

Give of your time:

- Set up and Clean up**Help set up Thursday night at 6pm, Saturday at 5pm before dance, and clean up Sunday after breakfast
 - Monitor Gyms**....Spending 2 hours at gym representing Holy Cross to make sure everything goes as planned
 - Chaperone Dance**....Saturday night from 8:30pm in the Community to watch young people having a good time
 - Score Keepers**....3 hours of keeping the score book or time clock at local gyms
 - Hotel Security**...Walking halls at Crowne Plaza hotel Friday and Saturday nights
 - Registration**....Friday 4pm in the Community Center registering players
- Call Denise Melis if you would like to *volunteer your time* 412.341.9264

I have enclosed \$ _____ as a TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation to Holy Cross GOYA.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please return this form no later then January 30, 2022.
Holy Cross GOYA 123 Gilkeson Road Pittsburgh, PA 15228

ATTENTION High School Seniors and Parents! The application for the Popi Hagelios Memorial Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross is available in the Narthex beginning on Sunday, December 12, from Elaine Sofis, electronically, esofis@comcast.net or Denise Melis, electronically, dmelis@comcast.net. The application is due by Sunday, March 13, 2022. The award is available to a 2022 PLEDGED Holy Cross family member who is a graduating high school senior in 2022. A similar application is available at Mt. Lebanon High School. You may apply to both awards but will only be eligible for one \$1500 award.

First Steps
got a visit
from Santa
and his Elf!



Library renovation:
Our church library is
under renovation.
The tables are newly
refinished, and the oriental
rugs have been cleaned.

PLEASE:
NO FOOD
NO BEVERAGES
in the library



GOYA
More photos
next page



GOYA Christmas Party



Food, Fellowship and Outreach



Sacraments

Baptisms

August 22 ~ *Marcelino*, son of Lauren (Chaves) & Matthew Bills. Godparents are Anthony and Anastasia Ambeliotis.

September 12 ~ *David James*, son of Alena (Alkha) & John Keremes. Godparent is Samuel Harris.

September 12 ~ *Jessica Eleanor*, daughter of Alena (Alkha) & John Keremes. Godparent is Samuel Harris.

September 18 ~ *Anna Caroline*, daughter of Sarah (Kreinbihl) & Socrates Zacharias. Godparent is Penny Zacharias.

October 8 ~ *Luka*, son of Katie (Seagriff) & Matthew Luciani. Godparent is Stephanie Pantelas.

October 24 ~ *Elias Mateo*, son of Jennifer (Chakos) & Christian Kontul. Godparent is Tomasina Manning.

Marriages

August 28 ~ *Casey Michael Riedmann & Melina Corkos*.

Koumbaro is Anthony Corkos.

November 14 ~ *Elias Gustave Diamond & Maria Amalie Chiarel*.

Koubara is Sophie Deaibes.

Funerals

September 14 ~ †*Mary Z. Panos*, age 91, was an active member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Surviving Mary, her husband Peter of 61 years, two sons Michael (Joe) and Chris (Deb) and two grandchildren, Nicolas (Briana) and Zachary.



September 21 ~ †*Estelle Eleftheriou*, age 90, survived by her loving husband of 62 years, Stamos; son, Nicholas Eleftheriou; daughter, Chrisanne (Kevin) Burr; her cherished granddaughter, Kristen Burr; nephew & nieces, and numerous cousins. She had been an active member of the church choir, the church bowling league, the Golden Club, the Yassou club, and the Daughters of Penelope.



November 3 ~ †*Gustave Diamond*, age 93, survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Emma Scarton Yoney Diamond; daughter, Margaret Ann Diamond; grandson, Elias Gustave Diamond; and brothers, Nicholas Diamond and Stanley Diamond.



November 24 ~ †*Henrietta "Chickie" Kazalas*, age 96, beloved daughter of the late Nicholas and Athena (Moraitis) Kazalas; loving sister of Christ Kazalas and the late Mary Chakos and Irene Patrinos; also survived by three generations of nieces and nephews. Chickie was an active member of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, most remembered for her passion of collecting names for the Christmas Card.

December 3 ~ †*Christopher Fekos*, age 63, son of the late Irene and Peter Fekos of Dormont, PA. Loving fiancée of Annette "Xenia" Plishka. Loving father of 6 children and 5 step children. Cherished grandfather of many grandchildren.



December 7 ~ †*Peter G. Panos*, age 88, husband of 61 years of the late Mary Zoe Panos (Peters); surviving Peter are his two sons, Michael (Joe) and Chris (Deb) and two grandchildren, Nicolas (Briana) and Zachary. Brother of Dr. Charles (Thalia) Panos of Philadelphia.

Christmas Bread baking!



Philoptochos Christmas Party







Holy Cross

SUN	MON	TUE
<p>2</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Memorials: †Chris Fekos 40 days †Nitsa Hages 40 days †Takis Kontoulis 1 year</p>  <p>Coffee hour sponsored by family of Takis Kontoulis</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6pm Parish Council Orientation Meeting</p>
<p>9</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Memorials: †George Vassilaros 4 yrs †Popi Hagelios 5 yrs</p>  <p>Coffee hour sponsored by Vassilaros family</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:30pm Landscape Committee Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30pm Agape Fund Meeting</p>
<div style="background-color: #e0f0ff; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> ← → House Blessings </div>		
<p>16</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Memorials: †Peter Panos 40 days</p> <p>Coffee hour sponsored by Panos family</p> 	<p>17 St. Anthony the Great</p> <p>8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>18 Sts. Athanasius & Cyril</p> <p>8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
<div style="background-color: #e0f0ff; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> ← → House Blessings </div>		
<p>GOYA BB Reading, PA</p>		
<p>23</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>25 St. Gregory Theologian</p> <p>8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
<div style="background-color: #e0f0ff; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> ← → House Blessings </div>		
<p>30 Three Hierarchs</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>31</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	

January 2022

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
		31 December 4-7:30pm Vigil for St. Basil: Vespers, Orthros, Divine Liturgy	1 JANUARY 2022 St. Basil the Great
5 Eve of Theophany 8:30am Royal Hours, Vesperal Liturgy, Blessing of Water 4:30pm Greek School 6:45-8pm GOYA Basketball	6 Theophany 8:15am Orthros, 9:30am Divine Liturgy, Great Blessing of Water	7 St. John the Forerunner 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	8 5pm Vespers
<i>House Blessings</i>			
12 10am-Noon First Steps 4:30pm Greek School 6:45-8pm GOYA Basketball	13	14 GOYA BB Tournament Reading, PA	15 5pm Vespers
<i>House Blessings</i>			
19 4:30pm Greek School 6:45-8pm GOYA Basketball 7-8pm Bible Study	20	21	22 Wedding No Vespers
<i>House Blessings</i>			
26 4:30pm Greek School 6:45-8pm GOYA Basketball 7-8pm Bible Study	27	28	29 5pm Vespers
<i>House Blessings</i>			

Christmas Pageant



JOY ~ making gifts for shut-ins



-Elias Diamond, December 5, Feast of Saint Saabas the Sanctified

The story of early Christianity consists of two very different, yet ultimately very complementary streams of cultural influence - the Greek and the Judaic. These influences have shaped our Church's life and continue to do so to this day. The Greeks were great thinkers - from them we get the philosophical language we have used to articulate our theology, our understanding of God. From the Jews we received the revelations of the prophets, the belief in one God, and the forms of liturgical worship which still can be seen in our Church services. It's very interesting to think about how these two streams of culture came together to help shape the early Church. In my undergraduate years, I had one professor who I talked to extensively about many things. He had travelled the world, and though he was not a believer, he had some interesting thoughts about these two aspects of Christianity. Of the ancient Greeks he said that he could understand how they became philosophers, as they relaxed on the beach under a hot sun, staring out at the beautiful waves, their minds could drift to ask big questions. But on the other hand, speaking of the Jews, he says he understands how they found God in the desert. Standing beneath and endless ocean of stars, like a thousand million diamonds strewn across a blank blanket in the sky, with only the sand and the wasteland surrounding them in conditions seemingly inimical to life itself - in an environment such as this, one realizes how small one is in the scope of the cosmos, and one's heart yearns to reach beyond this veil of tears towards the ultimate truth and meaning found in the Creator Himself. The Prophet Isaiah writes that, "The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing." This passage is powerful, in part, because it expresses something very improbable, namely, the idea that a desert could blossom, for the deserts of planet Earth are environments so harsh and unforgiving, that one might have a hard time distinguishing between a photo of some parts of Arizona and a photo of the surface of the planet Mars. And yet, this promise given to us through the words of the Holy Scripture is but one of the miracles fulfilled through Christ's presence in our lives - Christ who turns water into wine, Christ who turns sinners into saints, Christ, who even can turn death into eternal life. Today we celebrate a great

saint, Saint Saabas the Sanctified, our Metropolitan's namesake. Saint Saabas was one of those special souls who was seeking Christ fervently from the earliest days of his life. By the time he was a teenager, he was an expert on the Holy Scriptures, and at the age of seventeen, he became a monk. Unlike most people, who instinctively seek comfort and security, Saint Saabas placed himself into some of the harshest conditions imaginable, living a life of prayer and fasting in the desert caves surrounding Jerusalem. Saint Saabas, through sacrifice, suffering, and struggle, made of himself an offering to God. It was as if his whole being was a piece of incense, which he himself placed upon the fiery coal of ascetic struggle, and in so doing, while his body felt the pains of deprivation, his soul nonetheless rose up through the world and towards God with the same sweetness as the incense filling our church. Saint Saabas did not stay an island unto himself, however. Many aspiring monks gathered around him, in order to acquire the holy discipline which Saabas had cultivated in himself. When I was in the Holy Land I actually got to see one of his monasteries, planted on a sheer cliff face a millennium and a half ago. I can describe what it was like to you, but that is only a fraction of how breathtaking it truly is to see. The monastery rests on a cliffside overlooking a Wadi, or a river valley carved into the desert stone over aeons of gradual erosion from the periodic rain. Besides the actual monastery itself, as you look over this ancient river valley, you begin to notice the numerous tiny little doors which have been carved into the high walls of this wadi, and you realize that each of these small doors amidst the stone and dust and dirt was a space created for a monk to dwell in their spiritual practice. A friend and I sat on the edge of this wadi, staring out at this all while the sun set, casting the whole scene in shades of violet, crimson, orange, and yellow. And at that moment I realized that monks like these were a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. They had made this desert, the most arid and inhospitable of environments, into an oasis. They had filled it with fruits of the spirit, which blossomed with everlasting grace. And this is not a phenomenon which is confined to the time of Saint Saabas - consider how in our age, in our country, Elder Ephraim planted monasteries in places as harsh as the desert of Arizona, which have now grown whole communities around them as witness to the transformative power of God. Truly, "the desert shall rejoice and bloom." But for us, here, in the

suburbs of Pittsburgh, where do we find the desert? Of course, we can always go for spiritual nourishment and retreat at monasteries, where we can be in the presence of those who are making their every moment a constant offering to the Lord. But for many of us, with families, with jobs and responsibilities in the world, how can this desert spirituality mean something significant to us? Well, I think we might have to begin by realizing that, in a way, we already do live in a desert, a desert that is, to borrow a phrase from a French philosopher of the 1980's, a "desert of the real." What I mean by this, is that the supposedly "real" things which the world offers us are anything but - corporate branding, non-stop media inundation, bottomless pits of social media where everyone is talking, but nothing is truly being said, this is a desert of the real, for all these things offered to us for supposedly satisfying our souls, are nothing but illusions, spiritual junk food which steadily makes us sick. Yet, if we can begin to see this world for what is, we can, perhaps, like Saint Saabas and the many monastic saints of our tradition, perhaps like them, we can turn ourselves away from these false realities towards what is Really Real, the eternal God who is present everywhere and filling all things. We grasp at the straws offered us by every media outlet available, but instead let us try to grasp the Imperishable Lord, like the woman with the flow of blood who had faith that even if she simply caught the edge of His garment, she would be healed. We can be healed too, but it takes struggle. Let us not despair or give up on that struggle because we are not in a literal desert like the monastics - after all, Saint Porphyrios said that one can become a saint anywhere! Even in Omonia square, a place in Athens known for many less-than-Christian aspects. The Lord is always working miracles, and his miracles are worked in such a way that they surprise and shock the world. How could a desert ever bloom? Well, we see that has happened and is still happening. How could a woman, like the one we read of in today's gospel passage, who was eighteen years bent over and crippled, ever hope to walk right again? Well, we know that through the Lord she indeed was healed! And the seemingly immutable fact of death itself has been put to shame by the Lord Almighty. The Lord is always working surprising miracles. Let Him surprise us too, for we who are seemingly so far from the deserts of Saint Saabas still can become saints, if we truly seek the Lord.

\$250,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

\$20,000 awarded to Music and Arts Majors

\$200,000

20 Awards of \$10,000 each
based on academic merit and financial need

\$50,000

20 Awards of \$2,500 each
based solely on academic merit



2021/2022 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Now Available - Apply Online!

Applications from eligible college students accepted through **January 31, 2022**.
The application and qualification criteria, requirements, and guidelines are available
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Greek School Christmas Party





Greek School Christmas Party

Youth Sunday ~ Co-President Speeches

Reverend Fathers and Parishioners of Holy Cross, I am Tyler Hartlep, the Co-President of Goya along with Anastacia Antonucchi. The reason I am up here is because today is youth Sunday, so let me talk about the youth.

Many people say that the youth are the most important part of society because they are the future. I don't want to put one bracket of people above all else, but the future is a very important thing to consider. Preparing for the future is a must, no one would go very far if we pursued instant gratification above all else. There are quite a few programs that aim to prepare youth for the more complicated life in the world, instilling morals, skills, knowledge, things that are useful. I am very hard

pressed to think of an organization that is better at this than Goya. Goya is wonderful, to say the least about it. Its existence is nothing short of a miracle for the youth, and I can barely comprehend how Father Michael, Denise and the other volunteers of Goya run it so smoothly, so thank you for your tireless dedication. The organizations in the world are great, but how many of them are Orthodox? How many of them teach the pure, unfiltered truth of the world? Where else will so many other young people be found who share your faith, to support you in fulfilling the will of your God? So many people are willing to be your friend, talk to you, strengthen your faith and be with you. I don't just mean the youth here. Even the coaches and volunteers of Goya, especially them, are always going to be there. The adults being so wonderful reflects almost the same on the youth. All the Goyans involved are friendly, no matter what age they are. No one is too young or old to be your friend. Something that is repeated a lot in Goya is that the friends made here last forever. I'm sure that many people here can attest to that. Goya has given me some of the best experiences of my life, not the least of which are those from Camp Nazareth. The best thing that Goya offers is the chance to journey to this camp. It might seem scary, spending a whole week away from the comfort of your normal life, but let me say that the time you spend there is worth all of that and more. If anyone here is on the fence about going, just do it. I've rarely been in a place that is more focused on the spiritual side of life than camp. The Camp is chocked full of miracles, it is life changing. Many of the other great experiences happen at tournaments. It would be hard for a weekend of running around with all the youth from the diocese with a party at the end to not be memorable. I'm not very good at basketball, in fact, I never liked it that much, but you can't help but enjoy anything you do with such good friends as are made here. The coaches especially have always done their best to help me play the sport better. I've been in groups with a bunch of other young people, but nowhere feels quite the same as Goya. The other groups miss something, and that thing is Orthodoxy.

Here's to many more years of the Orthodox youth!



Youth Sunday ~ Co-President Speeches

Hello and Good Morning Father Michael, Father Dan, Deacon Frank, parishioners, and fellow Goyans. My name is Anastacia Antonucci, and it is an honor to be speaking to you all this morning on behalf of my position as co-Goya president. 4 years ago, I would have never imagined myself up here speaking to all of you. Not so much because I didn't want to but mainly because I dreaded the thought of GOYA. So much so, I held off joining until I was in ninth grade. Little did I know, this would come to be one of my biggest regrets later on. Throughout my entire life, my mom spoke numerous times about how the friendships and memories she made while in GOYA had stuck with her forever. "Really?" I would think to myself. I was so nervous about coming into a group of people who had built such strong friendships with one another over many years and feared that I would feel left out. I had no idea what to expect. But I could not have been more wrong. Every single GOYAN welcomed me with no hesitation and made me feel like family. I had no idea the impact my fellow GOYANS and Denise would have on me. I never expected to be excited to participate in the many activities that came along with it. One of my favorites being our visits to Auberle Shelter around Christmastime. It is an indescribable feeling knowing that my youth group worked together to help a child in need and make their holiday unforgettable. I could go on about so many memorable memories I have made that will stick with me forever. Unfortunately due to the pandemic, I feel like my experience in GOYA was cut somewhat short. I missed out on a year of basketball practices and tournaments, holiday parties, community service events, church services, and so much more GOYA offers that makes it an experience like no other. Something I never thought I'd say a few years ago. When you come to GOYA, it is an outlet from anything else going on in your life. It is a place to grow spiritually surrounded by friends you will have forever. I would like to give one final thank you to everyone who's made Holy Cross GOYA the best experience possible and a very special thank you to Denise for all the time she has dedicated to our GOYA. She has helped change so many people's lives and without her, the program would not be what it is today. Before I hand this off to my co-president Tyler, I would like to mention one last thing. To those of you in the pews who are contemplating joining or not, if there's one thing I can tell you, it would be to not wait like I did. I understand the nerves and reluctance you may feel, but I promise you it will undoubtedly be one of the best things you will ever do. I look forward to my final year in GOYA and plan to take in every last moment. Thank you all.





GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Christmas, December 25, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

*You were born secretly in the cave, but Heaven proclaimed You to all, O Savior, using the star as its mouth, and led the magi to You, who worshipped You with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!
(Troparion from the Vespers of the Feast of Christmas)*

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we gather across our Nation to celebrate Christmas — the quintessential and most sentimental religious holiday of the American People — we Orthodox Christians are called to an experiential participation with the Nativity of our Savior in Bethlehem of Judea. Through the divine services, and most importantly, the Divine Liturgy, we are called to become the Cave where the Child was born in a secret, hidden manner. For each of us possesses a heart-cave in which God yearns to be born, and which He desires to fill with His presence. And each of us can become the place where Divinity takes shape through our actions.

Much like how an infant grows by absorbing its world and interacting with it, our growth in Christ is symbolized most profoundly by the worship experiences we share in the Church services. But the actual growth takes place everywhere and at every time in our lives. As we practice the virtues of patience and forbearance, humility and generosity, forgiveness and compassion, mercy and love, the Divine Life of the Holy Trinity takes hold in our hearts and grows, as the Apostle Paul says, “in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect person, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13)

My beloved Christians, Christ the Lord condescended to be born in the humble cave of Bethlehem. We are also caves where He desires to be born, but we must humble ourselves before Him. Let us become like the Shepherds and Magi who journeyed to meet Him. For He descended through the very ranks of the Angels to become like us in order to show us the way to a beautiful life on earth and eternal life in Heaven.

As we cry out: “Χριστός Γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!” – let us also welcome Him to be born anew in our hearts and minds. As we practice what we preach, we will experience a transformation in our lives that is the greatest Christmas gift of all – Emmanuel, God with us.

With paternal love in the Newborn King,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

✠ BARTHOLOMEW
BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME AND
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH
GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE
FROM THE SAVIOR CHRIST BORN IN BETHLEHEM

Brother concelebrants and blessed children,

Having once again arrived at the splendid feast of the Nativity in the flesh of our Savior Christ, who visited us from the heights, we glorify with psalms and hymns His all-heavenly name. The Incarnation of the pre-eternal Word of God is "the crowning of our salvation," the "eternal mystery" of divine-human communion that transcends all reason. As St. Maximus the Confessor says so eloquently, "as a loving God, He truly became human assuming the essence of humankind, although the manner in which He became human will always remain ineffable; He became human in a manner that transcends humanity." [1]

The divine Incarnation, along with the manifestation of the truth about God also reveals the truth and ultimate destination of man, our deification by grace. St. Nicholas Cabasilas proclaims so theologically that Christ "is the first and only One to show us the true and perfect man." [2] Since that time, anyone who honors God must also honor man, and whoever undermines man also dishonors God, who assumed our nature. In Christ, speaking theologically about God we speak at the same time about man. The incarnate Divine Economy definitively abolishes the image of God as tyrannical, punitive, and adversary to man. Christ is everywhere, always and in all things the denial of the denial of man and the defender of human freedom. The life of the Church, as the flesh assumed by the incarnate Son and Word of God,[3] represents, expresses and serves this all-saving mystery of divine-humanity.

With this "other fashioning" of man and renewal of all creation in Christ as its banner, the Church today offers the good witness before every development that threatens the sacredness of the human person and the integrity of creation. It lives and preaches the truth of authentic spiritual life and the culture of love and solidarity. Offering testimony "about the hope that lies within us" (1 Pet 3.15), the Church does not in any way regard contemporary civilization as another sinful Nineveh by invoking like Jonah the divine wrath on it and its abolition, but rather the Church struggles for the culture's transformation in Christ. In our age we need pastoral imagination, dialogue and not argumentation, participation and not abstention, specific deeds and not abstract theory, creative reception and not general rejection. All these do not function at the expense of our spirituality and liturgical life, but reveal the inviolable unity of what we call the "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions of the Church's presence and witness. Faithfulness to the tradition of the Church is not entrapment to the past, but employment of the experience of the past in a creative way for the present.

In this past year, too, the pandemic of the Covid-19 coronavirus has troubled humankind. We give glory to the God of mercy, who strengthened the specialists and scientists to develop effective vaccines and other medications in order to confront this crisis, and we encourage all faithful who have yet to be vaccinated to do so and everyone to adhere to the protective measures by the health authorities. Science, to the extent that operates as a minister of man, is a priceless gift by God. We must gratefully accept this gift and not be misled by irresponsible voices of ignorant and self-proclaimed as representatives of God and of the authentic faith "spiritual advisors," who, nevertheless, lamentably invalidate themselves through the absence of love for their brethren, whose lives they expose to grave danger.
Most honorable brothers and dearly beloved children,

With unshakable conviction that the life of each of us and the journey of all humanity is directed by the God of wisdom and love, we look forward to a happy 2022, which despite external factors and developments will be for everyone a year of salvation, inasmuch as during its course as well, the movement of history is guided by Christ, who loves mankind and cares for all things, "who desires that all people will be saved and come to the knowledge of truth." (1 Tm 2.4)

With God's will, during the upcoming Holy and Great Week, we shall hold the service of the Blessing of the Holy Chrism in our venerable Center. We regard it as a uniquely divine gift to our Modesty that we shall be deemed worthy to preside over this festive and moving rite for the fourth time in our humble Patriarchal ministry. Glory to God for all things!

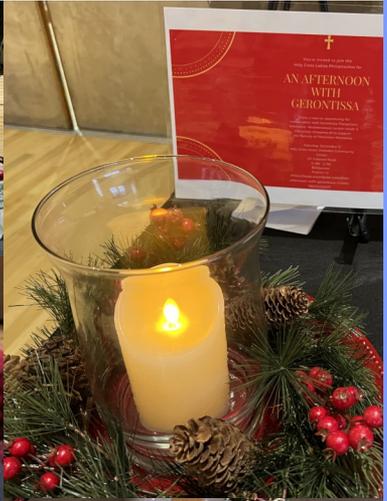
With these sentiments, respectfully worshipping the child Jesus born in Bethlehem, we orient our thought to our Christian brothers there and we pray for the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all those residing in the Holy Land.

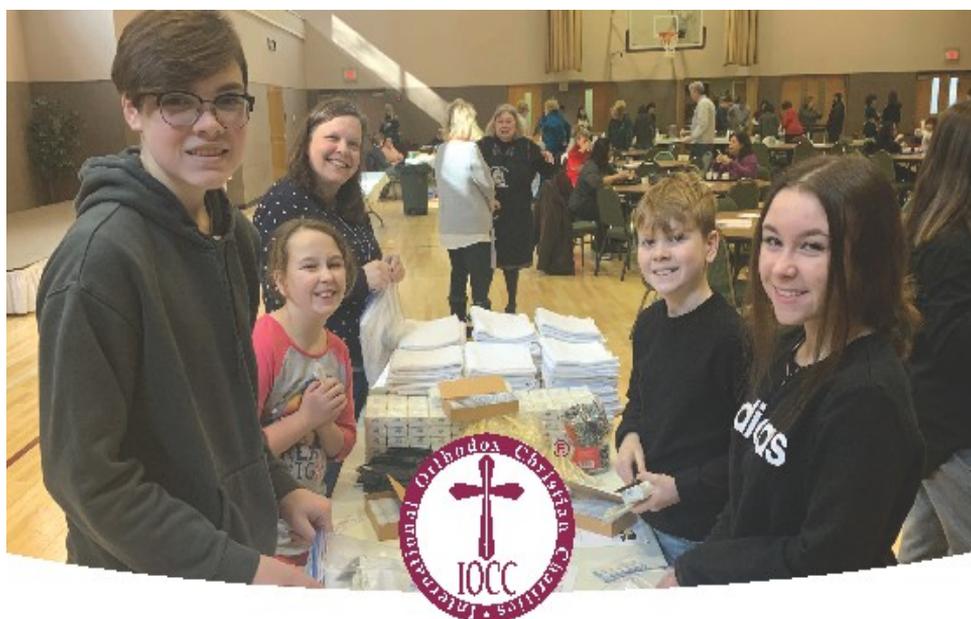
In this spirit, we wish to all of you, those near and afar, a blessed Twelvetide, as well as a healthy, fruitful in good deeds and filled with divine gifts new year in the Lord's favor, to Whom belong the glory and might to the endless ages. Amen.

Christmas 2021

An afternoon with Gerontissa







Youth Health Kit Drive and Assembly *Youth Volunteers and Monetary Donations Needed!*

February 5, 2022 | 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Kit assembly will take place during International Soup Sampling to Benefit IOCC.



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
 985 Providence Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237
 (North Hills, across from UPMC Passavant)

All Orthodox Youth Groups are asked to participate
 in a Pan-Orthodox Health Kit Assembly Project.

**OUR GOAL IS TO ASSEMBLE SEVERAL THOUSAND HEALTH KITS.
 DONATIONS ARE NEEDED TO PURCHASE BULK HEALTH KIT SUPPLIES.**

Please make checks payable to "Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church-AGAPE Fund"
 with "Health Kit Project" in the memo, and mail to
 Nick Terezis, c/o IOCC, 306 Marberry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Please contact Ava Terezis at 614.569.2414 or AvaT.Orthodox@gmail.com
 to coordinate your youth group attendance.

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

INTERNATIONAL

Soup Sampling

TO BENEFIT IOCC

Saturday, February 5, 2022 | 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sample five homemade soups for \$10,
and take your favorite quart home for a \$10 donation.
Experience tastes from around the world!

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
985 Providence Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237
(North Hills, across from UPMC Passavant)

Register at iocc.org/pittsburgh

For questions or to pre-order soup, contact Vera
at 412-833-0839 or croitv@verizon.net



Youth groups & children's ministries from all jurisdictions
will assemble health kits. All area youth are invited!
Donations are needed to purchase bulk health kit supplies.
Please help to sponsor kits. Call Nick Terezis at 740.282.5198.

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES



PLUS
South Hills residents making most of time in sky

See the full article at:

Brian and Milica Peltz check glazed donuts for consistent quality.

Harry Funk

https://observer-reporter.com/special/south_hills_living/page-a10/page_236ce56d-e5f4-5ac7-a770-1198e861d6cd.html

Congratulations to the Hartlep family at the Court of Honor Ceremony.

Tyler Hartlep achieved the Rank of Eagle Scout. He joins his brother Zachary who earned his a couple years ago.

Congratulations to parents Gregory and Dina!



Bourbon Tasting

TO BENEFIT IOCC



Thursday, February 10, 2022

7:00 pm | Tickets \$50

LEAF AND BEAN

3525 Washington Rd. | McMurray, PA 15317

Tickets include a Leaf & Bean gift, three bourbon samples, and light hors d'oeuvres

Register online at:

iocc.org/pittsburgh

Or mail checks (payable to IOCC) to Nick Terezis, 306 Marberry Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Questions? Contact Nick Terezis at nterezis@mstrategic.com or 740.282.5198



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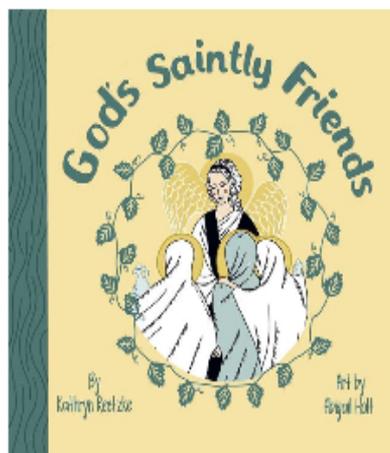
With Guest Speakers: Fr. Chris and Kh. Sophia Shadid

SAVE THE DATE



October 7-10, 2022

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH

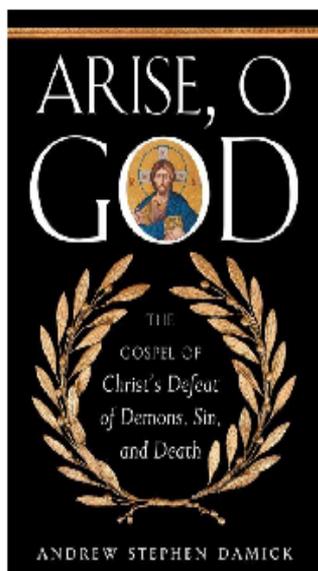


GOD'S SAINTLY FRIENDS

This beautiful board book is an introduction to Christian friendship with comforting illustrations to help young children follow the examples of Orthodox saints. Provide your little ones the gentle encouragement they need to practice being friends just like the saints whose true friendships helped to transform the world with God's love. Appropriate for ages 1 to 5 years.

ARISE, O GOD: THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST'S DEFEAT OF DEMONS, SIN, AND DEATH

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about what Jesus can do for your life. It is not even the answer to the question, "How can I be saved?" It is the declaration of a victory. In His coming to earth, His suffering, and His Resurrection, Christ conquered demons, sin, and death. In *Arise, O God*, author, and podcaster Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick introduces us to the spiritual war that Christ won by His victory, how we are caught in that war's cosmic crossfire, what the true content of the gospel is and how we are to respond.



Our Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore is located in the carpeted area of the Community Center. Please be sure to stop by any Sunday following Divine Liturgy. We offer a great selection of Orthodox Greeting Cards and Books for all ages. For additional information, please contact Mary Portellos at 724-941-8699 or maryportellos@comcast.net

**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
123 GILKESON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wednesday, January 5

Eve of Theophany

8:30am Royal Hours,

Vesperal Liturgy, Blessing of Water

Thursday, January 6

Theophany

8:15am Orthros,

9:30am Divine Liturgy

Great Blessing of Water



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