

January 30th, 2022
Three Hierarchs – Sts. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian,
John Chrysostom
Priest Report to the General Assembly

Holy Cross Mission Statement

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.

HOLY CROSS CHURCH VISION

The Holy Cross Parish, an extension of the Body of Christ and a microcosm of the Orthodox Faith, incorporates into itself all that reveals the Good News of Salvation to a fallen world. The spiritual power and dynamic energy that gives life to the Body of Jesus is our worship, whose center is the celebration of the Eucharist. To apprehend the mystery of our Faith that is found in Jesus, our lives are both Christ-centered and Spirit-inspired. After going within through worship and Christ centered living, we reach out to the whole “oikoumene” (universe) through active missions and philanthropic outreach to the “least of the brethren.” To go beyond ourselves to the other means that ours is a fellowship that is friendly, hospitable, and always seeking the one that is “lost.”

As witnesses for Christ, His very presence in the world, we always proclaim and embody Gospel values in all aspects of our mission, even when the outside world is not always in sympathy with such values. ***Believing that a church on a hill cannot be hid, we always let our light shine before the world, so that it may see our good works and give glory to our Father Who is in Heaven.***

Reflection

Good morning brothers and sisters in Christ, Christ is in our midst!

This morning’s assembly is only two months after our Fall General Assembly. Not much has changed in terms of our goals and our vision. We continue to make progress, slowly, but with much enthusiasm and persistence.

All of our reports that are given today will be available for review on the Holy Cross Website and please take the time to review them. Much effort and planning has gone into their creation.

Just three observations that I would like to share with you this morning.

1. The importance of the meeting! This week we celebrate the Great Feast of Ypapanti! The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. The feast itself is about Christ going to meet His people in the Temple. Simeon, the old man (perhaps as old as 150 years) is promised that he will not see death until he sees his Redeemer. The Prophetess Anna (84 years of age) also awaits this special moment. Here we see the mercy of God, the fulfillment of the OT Law, and the Light of the world all together in the person of Christ, a forty-day old infant. Having served the parish of Ypapanti for eight years, I truly was blessed to ponder the mystery of this great feast. Most people think it is Ground Hog day and are

worried about the weather. Christ is with us, comes to meet us, sanctifies us and draws us to Himself. Such simplicity and joy, promise and fulfillment, love and compassion. Every time we present a new born child, we cannot help but be uplifted by their presence and remember the encounter of St. Simeon and Jesus.

Perhaps what I have treasured most after these two long years of various regulations, mandates, and restrictions – is our meeting together. We are blessed to have a tradition of house blessings. For me, these are like drops of water in the desert. To sit with you, pray with you in your home, and to enjoy your company. What a blessing! I am so grateful and humbled by your faithful commitment to the Lord, our beloved parish of Holy Cross, and our ministry together. How necessary these meetings are – especially for our young people, our shut-ins, and for all of us. Let us make the time to meet together in the name of Christ our Lord!

Today we have called the General Assembly to do the necessary business of the Church - to pass a budget. Thanks to all of you, we continue to walk towards our goal of covering all of our expenses through stewardship. Today we also have a special presentation on the beautification of the grounds and how we must strive to beautify and maintain our facilities. We have many things to discuss, but I wanted to begin with expressing my gratitude and joy in being called to serve as your priest. There is always much to be done and we welcome the opportunities and the challenges that accompany our goals.

2. The second observation is that there are several of our families, especially those with children that have been hesitant to return to Church. For whatever reason, please encourage them, call them, reach out to them, and remind them that, here, in the Church is where we meet Christ, most especially in the Holy Eucharist.
3. Finally, another milestone at Holy Cross. In the past fifteen months between the efforts of our beloved Philoptochos, our Agape Fund, and the budgeted amount directed toward outreach in our annual budget, we have distributed nearly \$200,000.00 in assistance to various philanthropic organizations. 90% in our Pittsburgh area. Although we do not advertise our philanthropy, we should know that our Holy Cross Community is continually seeking opportunities to serve those in need and allow the Light of Christ to shine through these acts of love.

As I mentioned, please give us your attention for the next 45 mins. and we will be able to accomplish the necessary work of the parish. Thank you!

GOALS (Short term)

2022

#1. To aggressively address the necessary maintenance issues facing our community. We continue to move forward with the priorities of the maintenance issues that need to be

addressed. Although progress has been slow, materials scarce, we are now seeing some progress.

#2. Church services, ministries, and activities have returned to a more normal schedule. We continue to encourage our young people to be present for the various educational opportunities available.

#3. Holy Cross will be hosting a GOYA Basketball Tournament – February 25th-27th, 2022.

GOALS (Long term – not necessarily in this order)

#1. Finish the iconography of the Church.

#2. To cover the entire budget of the Church through our annual Stewardship

#3. To add an adult baptismal font (expand the narthex into Chapel).

#4. To have a place for our Holy Cross history to be viewed and displayed.

#5. Senior Day Program / Housing for Seniors

#6. Preschool/Kindergarten at Holy Cross****

UPCOMING EVENTS

January – HOUSE BLESSINGS

February 1st – Vespers 6:30pm

February 2nd – Ypapanti (Presentation of Christ) 9am Matins/ 10am Divine Liturgy @ Ypapanti

February 12th – Vespers – Triodion Begins

February 11-13th – GOYA BB (Steubenville, OH)

February 25-27th – GOYA BB at Holy Cross

February 26th – Saturday of the Souls (I)

March 5th – Saturday of the Souls (II) – BSA Pinewood Derby in CC

March 6th – Forgiveness Sunday

March 7th – LENT BEGINS – CLEAN MONDAY – Compline 6:30pm

March 9th – Presanctified 6pm

March 11th – Salutations (I) 6:30pm

March 12th – Saturday of the Souls (III)

April 16th – Lazarus Saturday – 8:15am Matins/ 9:30am Divine Liturgy

Palm Cross Making/ Cleaning the Church/ Confessions

April 17th – Palm Sunday

April 17th – April 23rd – HOLY WEEK

April 24th – PASCHA

April 30th – St. Photios Award Banquet

May 8th – Mother's Day

May 22nd – Last Day for Church School / Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

June 5th – Graduate Sunday

June 11th – Saturday of the Souls

June 12th – Pentecost

June 13th – Monday of the Holy Spirit – Holy Trinity North Hills

June 14th-17th – Holy Cross Food Festival

June 19-25th – CAMP Week I – 2nd – 4th Grades
June 26th – July 2nd – CAMP Week II – 5th-7th Grades
July 3rd – July 9th – CAMP Week III - 7th-9th Grades
July 10th – 16th – CAMP Week IV – 10-12th Grades
July 25-29th – VCS – Parables

Statistics for 2013

Baptisms – 14
Weddings – 8
Funerals – 12
Chrismations – 4

Statistics for 2014

Baptisms – 14
Weddings – 7
Funerals – 15
Chrismations – 3

Statistics for 2015

Baptisms – 14
Weddings – 8
Funerals – 21
Chrismations – 2

Statistics for 2016:

Baptisms – 15
Weddings – 10
Funerals – 12
Chrismations – 4

Statistics for 2017

Baptisms – 19
Weddings – 5
Funerals – 18
Chrismations – 3

Statistics for 2018

Baptisms – 11
Weddings – 10
Funerals – 16
Chrismations – 2

Statistics for 2019

Funerals - 20

Weddings - 9

Baptisms -14

Chrismations - 10

Statistics for 2020

Funerals - 18

Weddings - 5

Baptisms - 11

Chrismations - 1

Statistics for 2021

Funerals – 17

Weddings – 6

Baptisms – 16

Chrismations - 0

My gratitude to all the Ministries and Committees for their devotion and service to Christ and His Holy Church:

Clergy: Fr. John Chakos (always assisting and present when not in Guatemala), Fr. Daniel Korba and Deacon Photios Dickos

Pastoral Assistant – Elias Gustave Diamond (Now married to Maria Chariel)

Secretary - Nena Jovonovich

John Klimko and Bill - for their efforts to **maintain our facility**

Parish Council President - Constantine (Dean) Stambolis

Out-going Parish Council Members - Jennifer Liokareas, John Hoenig, & George Sokos
and New In-Coming Parish Council Members

Nicholas Tripodes, Chris Chaney, Frank Kalogeris, Mark Hummel, Anastasia Urso

Sunday School Teachers

Philoptochos President Thea Manos and all the officers & board members

Community Night Coordinator – Carol Halkias/ Sophia Milinkovic

Building Committee under the direction of John Conomos (numerous projects that being undertaken and executed)

Greek School – Dena Yamalis and the teachers

Choir

GOYA/JOY – Denise Melis / The Parents of the JOY

First Steps of Christ – Sophia Alfares

Book Store - Mary Portellos

Acolytes – Our Captains

Reader/ Chanter – Philip Yamalis

Greeters/ Coffee Hour Participants

Walk for Missions – Faith Williard and company

FOCUS (now the Neighborhood Resilience Project) - Kathy Pyros
Saturday Lunch Program – Cindy Heddaeus

And many, many others who step forward every week to fulfill the mission of Holy Cross.

Agape Fund Report 2021

INCOME

Non-designated Funds

Memorial Donations	\$5,920.00 (Only identified by checks, not through on-line donations)
General Donations	\$23,165.94 (\$9,955.00 - on-line donations)
Investment Account	\$15,000.00

Subtotal - \$44,085.94

Designated Income

Persons in need	\$3,000.00
Lunch Program	\$200.00

Subtotal - \$3,200.00

TOTAL \$47,285.94

DISBURSEMENTS

Non-designated Disbursements

Local Emergencies	\$19,612.80
Light of Life Mission	\$15,000.00
Lunch Program (FOCUS)	\$399.27
Scholarships/Education (youth)	\$2,950.00
Monastery	\$3,500.00
Missions	\$1,800.00
OCF	\$500.00
Camp Catanese Foundation	\$500.00
Funeral Expenses	\$3,000.00
Bank Fees (International Wire, checks)	\$175.25

Subtotal \$47,437.32

Designated Disbursements

Persons in need \$3,000.00

Subtotal- \$3,000.00

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$50,437.32

Net Income (loss) - (\$3,151.38)

Ending Balance 12/31/2021

Checking Acct. \$38,043.89 (Designated funds - \$14,510.00)

Investment Acct. (as of December 31st, 2021) - \$123,246.51

Assets

Cash

Non-Designated \$23,533.89

Liabilities

Memorials

Spanos- \$11,440.00

Shultz -\$2,050.00

Donation for Altar use \$1020 remaining

Total \$14,510.00

Fund Balance \$23,533.89

Investment Account \$123,246.51

TOTAL ASSETS: \$146,780.41

Outreach funded by the Holy Cross Agape fund and the annual Outreach budget

- Helped Fund the expansion of a free health clinic for the Homeless in the Hill District. (Neighborhood Resilience Project)
- Donated funds to an organization that provides support for Children with Cancer and their families. (Lending Hearts)
- Provided funds for housing support for immigrant families that lost their jobs because of the COVID pandemic (Latino Community Center)
- Provided funds for food and shelter for the homeless (Northside Common Ministries)
- Provided Funds for Food and shelter for Homeless Veterans (Veterans Leadership Program)
- Provided funds for food to the needy that were impacted by COVID (Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank)
- Sponsored Summer School and Camp for immigrant children who missed out on much of their school year due to the COVID pandemic. (Latino Community Center)
- Provided the Guatemala Mission with funds to help the underserved indigenous people in the Village of Aguacate Guatemala. (Holy Cross Mission Fund in honor of Fr. John Chakos)
- Funded the products used to assemble 400 personal hygiene kits that were distributed to the needy (Global Links)
- Helped fund a major expansion of the new Light of Life Mission Facility for feeding and housing the Homeless.
- Helped to fund the Orthodox Young Adult Conference in October 2021
- Provided funds for 100 feminine hygiene kits for indigenous village women in Aguacate Guatemala.
- (Proposed) Provide funds for upgrading the free clothing distribution center at the Neighborhood Resilience Project
- (Proposed) Provide funding for playroom for children of abused women in residence at the Light of Light Mission on Ridge Avenue.