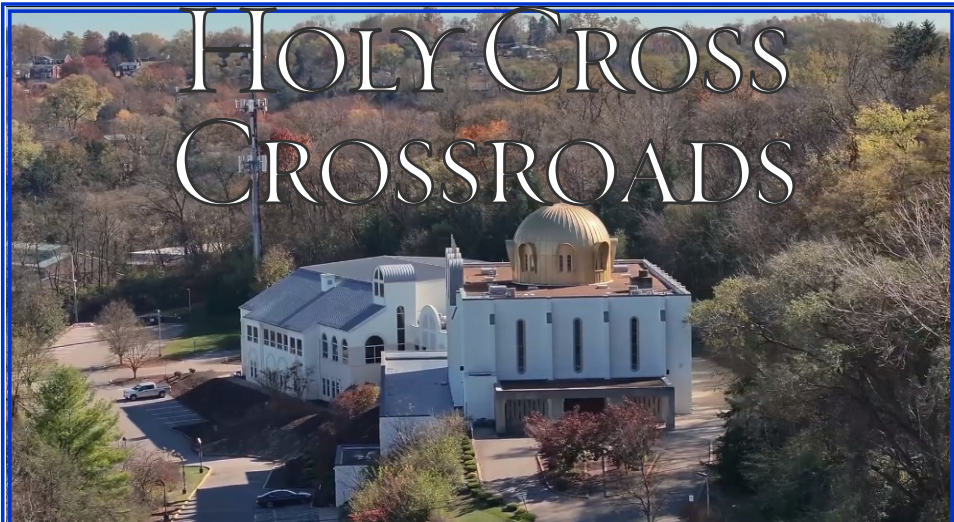


# HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

**Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστος Γενναται! Δοξασατ!**

*“The True Light has appeared and grants enlightenment to all. Christ, who is above all purity, is baptized with us; He brings sanctification to the water and it becomes a cleansing for our souls. That which is outward and visible is earthly; that which is inwardly understood is higher than heaven. Salvation comes through washing, and through water the Spirit. By descending into the water, we ascend to God.*

*Wonderful are your works, O Lord; glory to You!”  
(Matins Service, Jan. 7th)*

Have you bathed or showered recently? Have you cleaned your home, your bathroom, your dishes, etc...? How pleased we are when we clean something and its original beauty is restored. Our spiritual journey requires constant attention as well. Yes, we are baptized only once! However, we know our life is far from being pure and sinless. We constantly throw ourselves into the mire of sin and often turn away from God. Inner cleansing and forgiveness are both necessary and demanded of us. By humbling ourselves before God, we are raised up. By repenting, we are made clean and are capable, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to commune with God. For this very reason Christ descended, so that we might ascend with Him.

## House Blessings

Every year, on the Feast of Epiphany, Orthodox Christians around the world have a blessing of the waters to celebrate the Baptism of Christ as well as the revealing of the Holy Trinity to mankind. We then received the blessing of this Holy Water to renew ourselves in Christ and to remind ourselves that through Christ all things are again made clean. We also extend that blessing to the homes in which we live, to wipe away temptations and attacks that might lead us away from Christ.

If you wish to have Fr. Michael come and bless your home, please complete this form and return it to the Church office at your earliest convenience. Please **PRINT** clearly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please suggest THREE (3) dates and times for your house blessing  
**STARTING JANUARY 5TH**

(You will receive a call confirming date and time of blessing.)

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please prepare the following, to the best of your abilities, for the blessing:*

- 1) Make an effort to have the entire family present.
- 2) Set out an Icon in a central area of the house where the prayer service will begin.
- 3) Write two lists of names, one of the living and one of the departed family members for whom you would like the Priest to pray during the house blessing.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out and return this form, either in the basket in the narthex or to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
123 Gilkeson Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228



# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 24 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, Presiding Priest**

**Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter**

**Dn. Frank Dickos, Deacon**

**Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant**

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: [holycrosspgh.org](http://holycrosspgh.org)

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

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

## Organizations & Committees

Church School	Elias Diamond	(412) 833-3355
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	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
	Stacie Metrose	(412) 833-5164
Greek School	Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892
	Dena Yamalis	(412) 343-8355
Junior Dance	Kristina Gzikowski	(412) 257-5015
Senior Dance	Georgia Yamalis	(412) 728-2259
Choir		
First Steps	Sophia Alfaras-Melainis	(412) 251-3209
JOY	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
Young Adults	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
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.	Michael N. Zervos	(412) 833-6843
Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Interior Design Committee	Janet Conomos	(412) 831-7997

## **\*Services:**

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

*\*See monthly calendar for all services.*

## Parish Council 2023

Constance Zotis, President  
 Jordan Nicholas, Vice President  
 Nicholas Tripodes, Treasurer  
 Jim Mustakas, Financial Secretary  
 Rachel Kartofilis, Secretary  
 Nick Ambeliotis  
 Christopher Chaney  
 Mark Hummel  
 Frank Kalogeris  
 George Liadis  
 Tom Mourtaeos  
 Christine Picard  
 Dean Stambolis  
 Donna Staub  
 Annie Urso

**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). 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



**“Let streams of tears exhaust our eyes, let us cleanse the filth of our soul, O believers! We shall see Christ, the Light from the Three-fold Light, coming to be baptized. The Father will bear witness from heaven, and the Holy Spirit will come in the form of a shining dove.”**

**(Pre-feast of Epiphany, January 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

Christ comes into the world and St. John the Baptist identifies Him, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” (Jn. 1:29). The Lamb, The Christ, The Messiah, the Son of Man, all titles that reveal Jesus as The One to redeem Israel. Not the Israel of old, but the New Israel! All those who desire to know and love God. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, slave nor free, for we are all one in Christ.” (Gal.3:27-28), Christ shows no partiality. He came to save all people. He seeks not material wealth or earthly status from us, but rather an obedience of love. This love is expressed to God through our love for our neighbor and our desire to serve Him in any way that He calls upon us.

**“O Gracious God, grant that I may walk in Your steps! Grant that Your Holy Spirit may be my guide! Irradiate my soul with the eternal rays of love! Permit Your goodness to warm my soul! May Your justice pervade the souls of all people! May Your kingdom be our home! May Your glory shine upon mankind so that it may come to know You and everlasting love! May the song Your joy purr in our hearts! To You I pray, O God most great, hearken to my petition! AMEN!”**

**(A prayer of St. Savas)**

As we begin a new calendar year and seek to re-new our life in Christ, let us put away all that is impure, deceitful, and evil and allow ourselves to be cleansed in the waters of holiness. Let us wash and be made clean, that our garment of salvation, given to us at our baptism, may be unstained and prepared for the heavenly banquet and its Bridegroom, Christ our Lord.

I look forward to blessing your homes!

Wishing you a blessed New Year!

With love and prayers,

Fr. Michael



## "Every Divine Liturgy is a Theophany"

*By Elder Sophrony of Essex*

For us Christians the central point of the universe and the highest meaning of the history of the world is the coming of Jesus Christ, Who will not deny the archetypes of the Old Testament, but He will verify them, revealing to us their true grandeur and will give new dimensions to all things, eternal and endless. The new Covenant of Christ announces the beginning of a new period in the history of mankind. Now the divine sphere radiates into the uncharted greatness of the love and humility of our God and Father, and the coming of Christ will change everything, will bring the new revelation that will affect the fate of the whole creation, the whole world.

And so He appeared. He to whom the world owed its creation, except with rare exceptions, "the world did not recognize Him" (Jn. 1:10). The event was immeasurably above the perception of an ordinary man. The first who recognized Him was John the Baptist, which is why He said of him: "Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist" and that he is the end of the law and the prophets (Matt. 11:9-13).

He came "to save the world" (Jn. 12:47), to reveal to us the one true God. He revealed to us the Father's name. He gave to us the words He received from the Father. He revealed to us God as Light that dispels all darkness (1 Jn. 1:5). He acquainted us with the rarest mystery of all, that God is a hypostatic existence, though not one person but three in one: The Trinity. He gave to us the baptism "in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt. 3:11). In light of this knowledge we can now see the path to eternal perfection (Matt. 5:48). We feel His divine presence within us, outside of us, at the highest grandeur of the universe, in the face of man and in the radiant intellect. And in the hours that the unwaning light illuminates our hearts we realize that we will not die. We know this with knowledge that cannot be proved by the usual means, but which for us does not need proof, as long as the Spirit itself bears witness within us.

We Orthodox live Christ in the Divine Liturgy, or rather

*Continued pg. 6 →*

Christ lives within us during the duration of the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is the work of God. We say: "It is time for the Lord to act." Among other things, this means that now is the time for the Lord to act. Christ liturgizes, and we live with Christ.

The Divine Liturgy is the way we know God and the way God becomes known to us. Christ celebrated the Divine Liturgy once and this passed into eternity. His divinized human nature came to the Divine Liturgy. We know Christ specifically in the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy we celebrate is the same Divine Liturgy which was done by Christ on Great Thursday in the Mystical Supper.

The 14th through the 16th chapters of the Gospel according to John is one Divine Liturgy. So in the Divine Liturgy we understand Holy Scripture.

The early Church lived without a New Testament, but not without the Divine Liturgy. The first records, the written hymns, exist in the Divine Liturgy.

In the Divine Liturgy we live Christ and understand His word.

As Christ cleansed His Disciples with his word and said to them: "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3) and He washed the feet of His Disciples with water, during the Sacred Washing, so also in the first section of the Divine Liturgy He cleanses us that we might attend later His Table of love. The purpose of the Divine Liturgy is to convey Christ to us.

The Divine Liturgy teaches us an ethos, the ethos (mindset) of humility. As Christ sacrificed Himself, so also should we sacrifice ourselves. The type of the Divine Liturgy is the type of impoverishment for us. In the Divine Liturgy we try to be humbled, because we have the sense that there is the humble God.

Every Divine Liturgy is a Theophany. The Body of Christ appears. Every member of the Church is an icon of the Kingdom of God.

After the Divine Liturgy we must continue to iconify the Kingdom of God, keeping His commandments. The glory of

Christ is for Him to bear His fruit in every member. This explains His words: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8).

The Divine Liturgy took place once and forever. It has eternity. Every time the Divine Liturgy is performed, we ascend to its height. If we experience some aspects of the Divine Liturgy, then we will understand its grandeur, as happened with Saint Seraphim of Sarov who saw angels entering the church during the Small Entrance.

We follow the Divine Liturgy because we do not experience it, or until we do experience it.

When one observes the commandments of Christ, they are not just doing obedience, but they become united with Christ and acquire the mind of Christ.

*Source: I Knew A Man In Christ: The Life and Times of Elder Sophrony, the Hesychast and Theologian (Οίδα άνθρωπον εν Χριστώ: Βίος και πολιτεία του Γέροντος Σωφρονίου του ησυχαστού και θεολόγου) by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou. Translation by John Sanidopoulos.*



# Saints Mary & Martha Women's Fellowship The Holy Cross

**Tuesday, January 30, 2024**

**The Penitent Thief Speaker: Fr. George Callas**

At the home of Pres. Kassiani Callas  
1365 Craigview Drive, Mt. Lebanon 15243  
RSVP 330-604-2925

**Tuesday, February 27, 2024**

**The Suffering Servant Speaker: Fr. Theodosios Palis**

At the home of Adrienne Dickos  
1840 Kent Road, Upper St Clair 15241  
RSVP 412-400-4290

**Tuesday, March 19, 2024**

**History of the Cross post-Crucifixion to present**

**Speaker: Dn. Frank Dickos**

At the home of Irene Zotis  
76 Woodland Drive, Mt. Lebanon 15228  
RSVP 412-721-0146

**Tuesday, April 23, 2023**

**The Sayings of Christ from the Cross**

**Speaker: His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh**

At the home of Stellani Coleman  
105 Cedarbrook Ct., McMurray 15317  
RSVP 724-255-6178

**Tuesday, May 28, 2023**

**Modern Miracles of the Cross**

**Speaker: Fr. John Chakos**

At the home of Mary Zotis  
419 Longleaf Dr., Venetia 15367  
RSVP 412-835-2381

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

Thanksgiving is November 23.  
Pascha is May 5.



## Archebiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas

December 25, 2023

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

Thus says the Lord: a rod shall come forth out of the root of Jesse,  
and a blossom shall rise from that root.

*(Prophecy of Isaiah 11:1)*

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

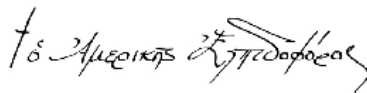
Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

Although He comes to us in humility, in swaddling clothes and in poverty, He is the powerful Rod of the Root of Jesse. In assuming our human nature from his Most Holy Mother the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, He bears all the suffering and sin of humanity across all the ages. What strength in this Rod! What glory in His powerful love for every creature!

He also comes as a blossom of inner and truthful beauty, to restore our human nature to its original shining loveliness. The Prophet Isaiah says elsewhere, “He had no beauty nor glory...” (53:2), but such was the humility that bowed down the Son of God to become the Son of Man. The flower of His virtues, His sinless life, His sacrificial love, is a bloom that will never fade. The root of His human nature is his Holy Mother, who bore him in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea. But from this root out of dry and virginal ground, there arose the first fruits of them that slept (I Corinthians 15:20)! For the Lord was born in cave in order to arise from another cave. He was wrapped as an infant in swaddling clothes in order to proclaim His own Resurrection by leaving behind the grave-linens set aside in the tomb (John 20:5). And He was laid in a manger — used to feed the mute beasts of burden — so that we might be fed with His Holy Body and Precious Blood and proclaim Him risen from the dead.

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us receive this Rod of glory and Blossom of beauty with gratitude and honor. Through his Holy Mother, His human nature is our human nature, and there is nothing that He cannot make whole and pure. Let us worship Him with all our hearts, and minds, and souls.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!



† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America



## **A Contemplation and a Prayer**

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

With the dawn of this new year, silence strongly draws me to You, and I prostrate in the stillness of the night, gazing toward Your radiant face, O Lord. I cherish silence, O Lord, not as an end in itself, but as the fullness of Your presence, and as a greater opportunity to listen to Your voice and observe Your work in my life.

Here I am, like all men, bidding farewell to one year and welcoming another. I know well that time moves on with or without me, gripping all of us tightly in its grasp, for we are at the mercy of time even if we try to escape and hide this fact.

Poor is man, O my Lord Jesus, and even poorer when he forsakes You and replaces You with more and more things. Poor and destitute he remains, because without You he is a prisoner of time and space, revolving around them, seeking liberation from their constraints, only to return and find himself once again under their dominion.

In vain, we bid farewell to and welcome the passing times with frivolity and worldly joys. Unless we taste the flavor of eternal life, which You alone bestow, we will not know true liberation. Your words, "For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past," (Psalm 89:4) will remain incomprehensible to us.

But, my Lord, how can I live in eternity while I am torn between various concerns, confined to an earthly life for years that, however long they may be, will not exceed seventy or eighty, as the psalmist says (89:10)?

In the tumultuous night of welcoming this year, I prostrate in silence to examine and scrutinize myself. I find that I am still seeking You, yet I falter on both sides of the path. At times, I desire You with all my being and sincerity, while at other times, this world ensnares me, causing me to forget You and neglect my true life. It seems that I have not yet broken free from the shackles of this world. As my sins lay before me, they tell me (in the manner of Your Saint Isaac the Syrian) that I still love them, as evidenced by my return to them from time to time.

This world no longer entices me with anything. My heart yearns to be filled with You alone. Everything in this world, from its fleeting joys to its passing pleasures "fades quickly, like the grass of the field," and only Your living and vivifying presence remains.

It is not in vain that Your peaceful saint, John Climacus, placed the virtue of asceticism on the first step of the ladder leading to heaven! How can one who desires eternity remain a captive of the world?

And how can I ask for eternity while being submerged, even to the point of drunkenness, in worldly affairs?

How can I live in renewal while not letting go of the bondage to which I have become accustomed?

\*\*\*\*\*

Our world is filled with gossip, complaints, criticizing others, and self-glorification. How can we understand that true peace, to which we aspire, is not achieved by pursuing and drowning in these things?

Your face, which extends through the Church's institutions, remains marred by our shortcomings and those of us who lead them. We often stain it with our desires, knowingly or unknowingly.

And how evident it is in us who bear Your name, that we are not what You truly are. We confine You within our narrow boundaries and veil Your love from everyone, except from those we claim for ourselves and choose according to our desires.

We, O my Jesus, continue to be preoccupied with other beauties, which come from You. We become captivated by beauty, assuming it is from You, and we forget that Your true beauty is only revealed in the soul that adorns itself with You after casting away its sins, to be replaced by everything that comes from You and You alone.

Your people are weary, O Lord. Sins, corruption, and wars have burdened them. They have become so exhausted that they seek joy in whatever is offered to them. Anxiety leads and drives them to indulge in pleasures and to misunderstand true happiness.

\*\*\*\*\*

May You guide us, O Lord, in the coming year, to the paths of salvation and quench our thirst with Your everlasting fountain of life.

May You open our hearts to abhor our sins, to cast them away, and to replace them with the fragrance of Your flowers.

May You grant us the courage to break free from what pulls us toward death and energize us to persevere in what gives us life.

May You enable us to see Your will in what happens to us and with us, recognizing that Your discipline is born out of pure love, and it opens new paths for us to walk towards You, away from futile vanities that do not benefit us.

May You bestow upon us a boldness that does not shy away from You, but steadfastly and tenderly testifies to Your love for all the world to know.

May You preserve us in Your peace, so that we may forget its imitations and carry it to those around us.

May You warm us with Your love, my Lord, in this coming year, so that we may prefer it over any love that opposes You.

May You help us love silence, O Lord, that we may listen to You. Make us new from within, O my Christ, so that the year may truly become new.

# WONDERFULLY MADE DAY RETREAT



“IN HER EMBRACE”

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024

10 AM TO 3 PM

OPEN TO THOSE KINDERGARTEN  
THROUGH 35 YEARS OLD.

**Wonderfully Made** is a new ministry through the Metropolis of Pittsburgh's Y2AM Office for those friends with moderate to intensive needs. Our prayer is that this program can become a welcoming environment for participants with disabilities and their families, reminding them that they are wonderfully made in His Image!

**ST. NICHOLAS**

220 N. Walnut St.  
Youngstown, OH 44503

**SAVE THE DATE**

Registration opening  
in December!

Questions? Contact Alyssa Kyritsis at  
[akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org)

Register at  
[y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/wonderfully-made](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/wonderfully-made)



### **What is the Jesse Tree?**

The Jesse Tree helps us unite the tradition of decorating Christmas trees with the biblical events that led to Jesus' birth. The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "*A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*"

Jesse was the father of King David. We decorate a Jesse tree with illustrated ornaments that symbolize the people, prophecies, and events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The Jesse tree ornaments tell the story of God in the Old Testament, linking the Advent season with the faithfulness of God through 4000 years of history.

### **Jesse Tree Origins and Significance**

The Jesse tree tradition originated in medieval Europe, inspired by Isaiah 11:1, which prophesies a "shoot" from the "stump of Jesse." This verse was interpreted as a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the lineage of David. Early depictions of the Jesse tree appeared in illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, and other forms of art.

The Jesse tree holds significant meaning for Christians during the Advent season. It serves as a visual reminder of God's faithfulness throughout history and his promise of salvation through the lineage of King David. As the tree is gradually decorated, it helps to build anticipation for the celebration of Christmas, marking the arrival of Jesus and the fulfillment of God's promises.

### **Advent Practice of the Jesse Tree**

During Advent, a new ornament is added to the Jesse tree each day, accompanied by a reading related to the corresponding symbol from the Old Testament. This practice helps Christians connect with the history of salvation and prepare their hearts for the celebration of Christmas.

The Jesse tree serves as a visual reminder of God's faithfulness throughout history and his promise of salvation through the lineage of King David. As we journey through the Advent season, the Jesse tree invites us to reflect on God's plan of redemption and anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind.



*Reverend Fathers, members of the Parish Council, fellow Goyans, and members of the Holy Cross Church, good morning.*

My name is **Eirene Paliouras**, and I am this year's GOYA co-president. As I stand here before you all, I am humbled by the love and compassion of our community. Growing up in the church, I have seen many in my family become presidents, work for festivals, or spend long hours helping out wherever they could. It is my hope and personal goal to follow in their footsteps to keep both my faith and family as the most important pieces of my life.

I will admit: I wasn't a fan of Goya growing up. *Really* not a fan. I wasn't much of a camp person either, come to think of it. I tried, but after a few bad experiences, my younger self chose to stay away from it. I was comfortable staying away. I believed what bothered me most of all was that nobody chose to engage with anybody outside of their friend group. Noticing this, I felt even more comfortable leaving the picture. When the world became all topsy-turvy, I was left with countless hours to reflect, think, and analyze what life previously was. It was then that I realized my decisions were being influenced by those negative experiences. And for what? Why was I so caught up in what was, rather than what is? Plagued by these questions, I tried to work on myself and my character to not let those mistakes happen again. With all that time just sitting around, I attempted to make use of myself by walking, going to church, developing different skills and hobbies and trying to find the peace and beauty of life.

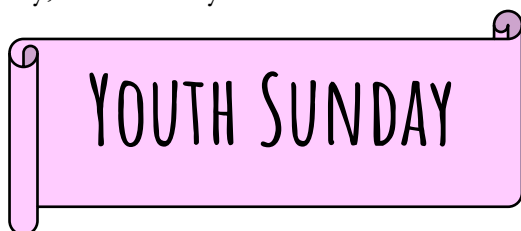
I realized that even when everything around us is gone within the snap of a finger, we always have one place to run back to: our church. Coming out of isolation after an army-crawl of life lessons, existential thoughts and excitement for what could be done, I decided to make change wherever I noticed I could. I made a point of trying to engage with new kids and make sure everyone felt like they had a place in Goya. What I realized from my personal situation is there is always good within the bad. I thought it was always cliché when people said "there's light at the end of the tunnel," or "it's always the darkest before the sunrise." That is anything far from cliché. When Goya's attendance was struggling, ambition fueled my urge to try to encourage people's return however I could. As for the new Goyans, I didn't want anybody else to go through the same disadvantages I endured. I wanted them to know the reality that goya wasn't so terrifying. Goya didn't have to be filled with struggles or insecurities. All it had to be was a good time and to understand each other with patience, love and respect.



Our church is our home and all of you are our family. This is where we all belong and to feel welcomed should not be a luxury. As I have grown and learned within myself and in Goya, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as co-president. I am grateful for the growth, the dedication and the hard work it has taught me over the years. My goal is to introduce new activities and invite everyone to participate. Camp or basketball may never be one person's go-to event. Participation and memories must not be limited by athleticism or one's ability to take a 3 minute shower. My family surely knows *I still* struggle with that. There is so much more we can do and offer so everyone feels they have a place at the table, and not to be forgotten at that infamous kiddie table. As your co-president, I intend to see these projects through. As much as these are for amusement and fun, there is also room to learn and grow in our faith to continue the incredible legacy of this church and the community. While on my journey to Greece, I was in awe of the sense of dedication and commitment that it took to not only build ancient civilizations, but to carry those values and stories through to today. It is within those values we find ourselves plowing through the test of time. The memories, stories, and morals of our Goya carry on with us through our lives like our ancestors carried.

It isn't easy to be a teenager. There is no person in this room who can go against that. It is a time of growth in every way whether it is within ourselves or engaging in the world around us. Even when something may seem like the greatest challenge or obstacle, it is really just another opportunity to widen our horizons. Just like in our families, we are here for one another; to help each other through the tough times and rejoice together in the good. That is the joy of Goya. We, as the children, understand each other during this ever changing time of our lives. It gives us more to help the other with whether it be a bad hair day or merely a friendly word of advice. With love and with gratitude, I'm very excited for this upcoming year and look forward to getting to know our newest members. I welcome back those who felt maybe they needed to take a step back for a little bit. For those who have felt the same distance I have felt before, I want to personally let you know you always have a place. You are welcomed with open arms and kind embraces. We are here to rely on and build each other up, we are here as a family, a community and as Greek Orthodox Christians.

Thank you.



Thank you to ALL who helped in the fun production of 270 loaves of our sweet, delicious Christmas bread on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you to all who purchased the Christmas bread and helped to support Philotochos!

Elaine Sofis, Chair







With the continued hostilities in Gaza it's poignant to remember that this past Friday commemorates the fifth anniversary of the shooting here in Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life synagogue during Shabbat services in Squirrel Hill. Eleven dead and six wounded in what was the deadliest attack on Jews in the history of the United States. Of all the things for which Pittsburgh is known, this should not be among them. But it is. And coupled with the hostility in the Middle East, the continued conflict in Ukraine, or even the ongoing political polemic in Washington, it seems the voice of hatred has been emboldened of late, and that is something which cannot be ignored, so this morning let us pause to reflect on how we should respond.

Hatred and discrimination are not new. Targeting a specific group as a scapegoat for one's troubles stretches back to the earliest history of man. Finding someone to blame for misfortune makes the cause concrete and gives a sense of empowerment in that a man is easier to overcome than the whims of fate. We learn to look at others as the source of our troubles, and fool ourselves into thinking that eliminating them will eliminate our problems. Once we cross this line, the more radical expressions of hatred and violence become possible. We look at the world as "us and them." Then the other is demoted in our minds as a lesser form of humanity, and thus it becomes permissible to dispose of our troubles by disposing of them.

There are still those here who remember a time where the voice of hatred was much greater than today, when ultra-nationalism and the spirit of "us and them" threatened to tear the world apart. And in the midst of their strongest influence how a tiny country stood strong and principled even in the face of certain defeat. For yesterday Greeks recall the day they were asked to capitulate to the Axis powers and instead shouted «'ΟΧΙ» in the streets of Athens. The actual reply of Ioannis Metaxas was a bit more wistful. He said simply "Alors, c'est la guerre" (Oh well, that is war). What no one expected is that the undermanned and under equipped Greeks would hold back first the Italians and then the Germans from late October through late April of the following year; a full six months. Their principles and valor earned the admiration not only of the Allies, but also of those who had defeated them. Hitler himself remarked that of all the nations Germany fought, the Greeks were the bravest and most gallant. We recall that Churchill famously said, "Hence we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks"; and lastly that Franklin D. Roosevelt stated "all free peoples are deeply impressed by the courage and steadfastness of the Greek nation", and "Greece has set the example which every one of us must follow until the despoilers of freedom everywhere have been brought to

their just doom."

Even after their defeat, Greeks continued to follow the difficult road. There was a small contingent of 275 Jews of the island of Zakynthos, all of whom survived the Holocaust. When the island's mayor was presented with the German order to hand over a list of the Jews there, he and Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos gave them a list of two names; their own. The island's population hid every single member of the Jewish community. Many years later after the great earthquake of 1953, the first relief came from Israel, with a message that read "The Jews of Zakynthos have never forgotten their Mayor or their beloved Bishop and what they did for us."

These are not the actions that reflect "us and them." To exhibit this kind of selflessness, and to show such bravery that both your allies and enemies admire you goes much deeper. To elicit such gratitude from those you have helped, these are the hallmarks of true Christianity. Should you doubt this and seek to ascribe earthly motives to it all, consider that the Greeks intentionally moved the feast of the Holy Protection of the Theotokos from October 1<sup>st</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>, the day of Ὀχλ. Ever mindful of the Kingdom of Heaven, they revealed the true source of their courage. They could and would make such sacrifices and show such courage because the source of their strength went even deeper.

The history books take little notice of this. Like the crowd in today's Gospel, they are skeptical of the power of God. They believe what they see and little else. Bravery is recognized and extolled but when it comes to its root cause, they see no reason to resort to the metaphysical. Just as when the crowd laughed at Jesus when He said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." For they knew she was dead, and so they could not see what else was possible. But to those with faith incredible things can happen. And thus, Jesus taking her by the hand says, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once.

My brothers and sisters, it is not easy to respond to hate with love. It is also difficult to respond with firm resolve. And yet we must do both. We must rise up against the spirit which seeks to divide us, for that is the literal meaning of the word diabolic. Instead, we should seek the One who seeks to unite us, and to heed the call that we are all His children. We must speak out against those who would set us one against the other, and choose the more difficult and honorable path of respecting others who have different viewpoints no matter their race, creed, gender, political party, or level of education; for this is what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves, and demonstrate our love for God. To Him be all glory, now and forever.

Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos



*Sermon given by Fr. John Touloumes*  
*(Holy Trinity North Hills)*  
*on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023*

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6.2).*

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Unless you are totally off the grid and haven't spoken to anyone else in Pittsburgh over the last few days, I will make the assumption today that you are aware of current events in the local Orthodox community. One of our beloved local clergy and a son of this blessed parish has been arrested and charged with theft. We are all wounded. We are all hurting. And we are all bearing a great burden.

I say "we" in the larger sense because this has affected so many: the parish where the events occurred; this parish where he grew up and was ordained; the families and the faithful who have walked together for so long trusting and believing that their church and their clergy are worthy of that trust. Him. His family, so faithful in the life of the Church. We are all wounded. We are all hurting. And we are all bearing a great burden.

It's so tempting to just listen, presume, judge and talk. However, Elder Thaddeus of Serbia, a great spiritual guide of the last century, challenges us to be careful when facing such burdens. Though he reposed in 2003, way before the era of social media, tweeting and click-baiting, he warned people facing such issues that they need to use compassion when listening and restraint when commenting. "We are oppressed by our own cares, worries and weaknesses," he says. This, I believe, was his way of lovingly cautioning us to check our attitude, our pride and blindness toward our own faults, just as Jesus did when he warned those were about to stone the adulteress woman, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw

a stone at her" (John 8.7).

So where can we turn? Certainly not to the news as it sacrifices souls for ratings. Not to Internet blogs and YouTube cheap shots seeking to profit from the suffering of others. Nor to the gossip corners we would like to say we don't take part in but sometimes cannot resist. Again, Elder Thaddeus sheds spiritual light to lead us out of that darkness. "If we have a burden beyond our bearing, we must turn to the Lord immediately, like this: 'O Lord, I cannot even bear my own infirmities, yet now I must bear the burden of another. I cannot cope with all this responsibility.'"

But it is a responsibility we cannot as a Christian community escape, for the opening quote from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians clearly lays out our charge: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6.2). And the law of Christ is love. So we must bear that burden, but Elder Thaddeus says we cannot do it alone. Where do we start?

Saint John Chrysostom, a fourth century Patriarch who was no stranger to suffering—being exiled three times—calls us back to home base as Christians and reminds us. "Of all the afflictions that burden the human race, there is not one, whether spiritual or bodily, that cannot be healed by the Holy Scriptures." And what do those holy scriptures say about one of us being wounded? The Epistle of Saint James makes it clear: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." Having now had his sins confessed publicly and even broadcast on TV, have we paid heed to the rest of that command, to pray for one another? We must, because the path to the healing we all need is paved with prayer. So I ask us all, in the last few days we may have been shocked, hurt, angry, disappointed, confused or weighed down by many burdens...but have we prayed? Have we asked for prayers over this? If any of us have had a conversation about the events of the past few days without saying, "Please pray for him. Please pray for his family. Please pray for the Church. Please pray for

our priests." That is what a Christian family does. We know our priests are on the front lines of spiritual warfare and some get taken down by the evil one. We are not immune. He has plenty of weapons in his toolkit: divorce, addiction, moral lapses and more. Do we walk by them as they lay bleeding or are we the Good Samaritans who bind their wounds?

Allow me to approach this from another direction you may not have considered, one that vests you with genuine power in the best sense. What if you are the one whose faith, forgiveness and compassion is the model that someone else needs to see to know that true Christians do not respond like others and that there is something genuinely deep and faithful in them that reflects a beauty the world cannot even mimic? What if trading gossip for grace leads someone else to Christ? Perhaps this story from the Desert Fathers might illustrate it well.

Once some thieves came to an old hermit in the sixth century and said, "We are taking everything in your cell." He answered, "Take whatever you need, my children." They took almost everything in the cell and left. But they missed a little bag of money that was hidden. The elder picked it up and went after them, crying, "Children! You forgot something!" The thieves were amazed. Not only did they not take the money, but they returned everything that they had taken. "Truly," they said, "this is a man of God." That moment of grace brought the thieves to repentance and they became Christians. The old monk did not read sermons to them. He did not rebuke them or threaten them, nor even converse with them. What caused the thieves to change their mind and correct their deeds and their lives? They found in this simple monk something that touched their hearts: a man of God who showed them the transformative power of Christian love.

This could not have happened if the monk's faith had been confined to rituals, collections of rules, and pretty words about God, without real experience of life in Christ. Here is my challenge to you today: What if we are that monk to others in this situation, called by God to have a love and faith that can trans-

form others? You have that power, because it is a gift of God, resting in the “Agape” that loves without judgement. He is calling us all to that greater response.

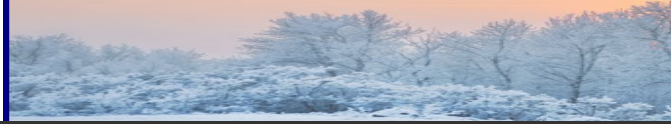
My dear Holy Trinity family, this is so difficult. We live in a world full of choices, and we all make bad ones. It’s hard when those choices affect those we love so painfully. I know that has pierced Father George’s heart. Imagine how heavy the burden is on his family. They have always been there for us. It is time to be there for them.

The days ahead are challenging indeed. The legal system will do its work, which we must respect. Of course there will be consequences and accountability. And true change. But he needs love, not shame; help, not hate; compassion, not condemnation. Like you would offer your own son. Or a member of your own family. Because he is.

The spiritual, emotional and relational healing must be given time, freedom and our prayers and love to do its work. In the words of His Eminence Metropolitan Savas to the affected community, “This news is deeply distressing for all of us; ‘If one member suffers,’ as St. Paul reminds us, ‘all suffer together’ (1 Cor 12:26). Fr. George is a beloved member of our families, and we must pray for him and for all those affected by this situation. May God guide us all in the difficult days to come, as we work together for the healing and advancement of our beloved All Saints community.”

In closing, I must add that it is not just our sister parish that is wounded, but Holy Trinity and the entire Church. The world is watching for our response. We cannot proudly proclaim a man a son of this parish one day when things are good, have him ordained at this very altar, and then in time of deep personal crisis disown him for having fallen into sin. Jesus asks, “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?” (Matt. 7.9). May we all drop the stone and reach out with the bread of mercy, love, kindness and forgiveness. Leave the rest to God. He will heal our wounds; He will soothe our hurt; He will make our burden light with the power of His love. Amen.

# HOLY CROSS



SUN	MON	Tue
	<b>1 St. Basil</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy New Year (Civil)	2
7 <i>St. John the Baptist</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy VASILOPITA	8	9
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
14 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	15	16
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
21 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	22 6:30pm Paracletics	23
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
28 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>GENERAL ASSEMBLY</b>	29 6:30pm Paracletics	30 <i>Three Hierarchs</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 7pm <i>Sts. Mary &amp; Martha</i>
HOUSE BLESSINGS		



# JANUARY 2024

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3</p> <p>4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 GOYA BBall</p>	<p>4</p> <p><u>Community Night</u> 6pm Vespers 6:30pm Dinner 7:30pm Speaker</p>	<p>5 Eve of Theophany 8am Royal Hours 9:30am Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil Blessing of Water</p>	<p>6 Theophany 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Water</p> <p>HOUSE BLESSINGS</p>
<p>10 St. Gregory of Nyssa 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 GOYA BBall 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>GOYA BB, CANTON, OH</p> <p>5pm Vespers 6:15pm YAL Bowling @AMF Lanes</p>
<p>17 St. Anthony the Great 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 GOYA BBall 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>18 Sts. Athanasius &amp; Cyril 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>24</p> <p>4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 GOYA BBall 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>25 St. Gregory Theologian 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>31</p> <p>4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 GOYA BBall 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>1 February</p> <p>6:30pm Vespers @Ypapanti</p>	<p>2 Meeting of the Lord @Ypapanti 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy</p>	<p>3</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>

Circle of Angels thanks all who baked, bought or donated to treats for our Christmas Outreach! Also, thank you to Elias Diamond for providing a craft made by the JOY children at their Christmas Party!



## *Coffee Hour*



*Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host one!*



A **BIG THANK YOU** to all the folks who signed up for our Holy Cross Blood Drive! We collected 28 donations and exceeded our goal.

An enormous thanks to our Drive Coordinator Cookie Lagios and Team Member Dknsa. Adrienne Dickos for all their efforts.

We are so deeply grateful to all those who tried to donate but were unable. Vitalant was so impressed with the enthusiasm of our donors that they want us to do TWO drives next year!

Thank you Holy Cross Family. Your donations will affect 84 lives.

*-In loving memory of Kathy Frommeyer*

## Blood Drive Results

From: Ferracano, Nicholas (nferracano@vitalant.org)

To: cphatures@gmail.com; frommeyer7@aol.com; akdickos@verizon.net

Date: Monday, December 18, 2023 at 09:02 AM EST

Good Morning Team,

Thank you all very much for a very successful blood drive. It has been a pleasure working with you all up to this point and I very much so look forward to setting something up in the summer. I have a snapshot below of how things went this weekend. From all of your support we were able to hit our goal and then some!!! FANTASTIC!

Total Registered Donors: 31

Total Donors: 26

Total Donations: 28

Blood Drive Goal: 26 (we were two over goal!!!)

Total Lives Saved: 84

It was a pleasure meeting all of the donors, it was a great atmosphere for a blood drive!

### **Nicholas Ferracano**

Account Manager

O: 412-209-7074

C: 412-715-4058

E-Mail: nferracano@vitalant.org

Pittsburgh, PA

**vitalant**

**Because of you, life doesn't stop.  
Donate blood.**

The Sunday after Thanksgiving stands at a juncture. For a brief moment we all paused to reflect on the multitude of blessings in our lives, to give thanks to God for a moment of calm thanks in the midst of the turmoil of everyday life, and now are poised at the beginning of what is known as the “holiday season,” a hectic flurry of activity that ironically culminates in the celebration of “peace on earth, good will to men.” The Church of course stands apart from the hubbub, for this is a period of preparation, a time of inner reflection and preparation for the feast of the nativity, appropriately anticipating that same peace on earth brought by the incarnate Logos. And so it behooves us to pause this morning to look at the distinction which in one case looks at the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas as islands of respite in the midst of a tumultuous sea; and in the other a continuity, with one flowing naturally and continuously from the other.

Perhaps it is a mere nostalgia that makes us believe that earlier times were less hectic, but an honest examination shows it was more likely the same. Consider that staple of the holiday season, “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” With its theme of hyper-commercialization it fits perfectly into our world, and yet it was written almost sixty years ago. The growing unrest between the United States and China has the world on edge, but is it any worse than the brinkmanship between the United States and the Soviet Union with the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960’s or the Doomsday Clock countdown to world nuclear destruction in the 1980’s? Oddly, we live in a world with a lower crime rate than in previous generations, and one where the world suicide rate has actually gone down. A world that in many ways is measurably safer than it has ever been. Yet we persist in harboring anxiety in the state of the world. It certainly *feels* like modern society is heading in the wrong direction even if much of the data indicates otherwise. That is not to say there is no crisis in the world, only to say that we perceive the current dangers more acutely.

Yet perhaps we have made ourselves victims of our own progress. Information which in previous generations was filtered by necessity because of the limited and time delayed distribution of news, now is disseminated constantly through online sources and social media. We are constantly barraged by bad news, and not just “fake news”, but also sensationalized news, or polarizing punditry and diatribe. The full weight of the world’s problems comes down upon us constantly, much of it real yet most of it sensationalized. Is it any wonder then that we should crave a respite from all this turmoil? And so modern society indulges this need for a break, a vacation if you will from the troubles of the world, so that we might recover

enough to resume the inundation of everything that's wrong once again.

But this approach is ultimately either disingenuous or hypocritical. Either we've been lied to and the world isn't as bad as we've been led to believe, or holidays are the lie, a moment where we collectively stick our heads in the sand and pretend all is well. Neither is an attractive proposition.

Fortunately there is another perspective, which allows the problems of the world to exist yet not overwhelm us. And it is that perspective which the Church preserves and gives to us. It is a message of hope, a message that allows us to see the beauty that is still in the world, and to both confront and transcend the problems within it. It is a message that is a cause for thanksgiving and an anticipation of what is to come; a message literally embodied in the Incarnation. For as Athanasios proclaims: "God became man so that man might become god." And this is our hope: that by placing our trust in the Son of Man, we too might overcome the world and become sons and daughters of the Most High.

That is the deeper message in today's Gospel. For most are so fixated on the wealth of the young man, and Jesus's commentary on how wealth is an impediment to holiness, that we miss the broader context of the futility of hope in what the world can provide. Wealth cannot save us, but more importantly, trust in wealth actually holds us back. But if our hope and trust is in God, then wealth is no longer an impediment because it is no longer of consequence. St. Katherine, whom we commemorated yesterday was a woman who had it all: wealth, beauty, privilege, lineage, and learning. But none of these were of any use to her when she encountered the wrath of the pagan emperor Maximinus. Nor did she appeal to any of these. She placed her trust solely in Christ, something the rich young man could not bring himself to do, and as a result courageously faced and endured all the tribulations the world could muster against her, and emerged victorious.

My brothers and sisters the world is tossed about by its own turmoil. You may be in the midst of it, but that does not mean you need to be overwhelmed by it. For ultimately the troubles of the world are distractions, created by people who themselves are distracted. In their search for power, wealth, fame, and influence, they have forgotten the far more important quest for virtue. Yet it is that very quest which holds the answer to the problems they have created. So having found the joy and peace of thanksgiving these past few days, use these next four weeks as a continuation of these blessings, and prepare your soul for the coming of our Lord, who comes to grant us real and lasting peace. To Him be all glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos



## Sacraments

**Baptisms:** August 26~ Evangelia Marie McLean, daughter of Garrett and Nicole (*nee Ambeliotis*) McLean. Godparents are George and Lana Malliaras  
November 19 Henry Theodore Kontul, son of Christian and Jennifer (*nee Chakos*) Kontul. Godparents are Nicholas Manning and Julia Chakos.

## Marriages:

July 30 ~ Jason Georgiades and Rosita Grigaite.  
Koumbaro is Alexander Georgiades.

September 23 Alexander McDeavitt and Christina Batis.  
Koumbara is Konstantina Devincentis.

October 6 ~ Jacob Hanley and Maria Carr.  
Koumbara is Eleni Carr Werner.

October 28 ~ Yianni Frangos and Anastasia Raftis.  
Koumbaro is George Parais.

## Funerals

July 19: Euffelia Serokis age 99, preceded in death by husband Peter.

September 23: George N. Terzis age 71, preceded in death by his father, George Terzis, mother, Katherine Terzis, brother, Chris Terzis, and sister, Alexis Terzis. He is survived by his nephew, Raymond, his aunt, Athena Terzis and a host of loving cousins.

November 3: James Kim Sappas, age 68. Surviving James are his sister, Maria (Sappas) Hanna and husband Harry; cousin, Christ Milienu, of Indiana (formerly of Youngstown, OH); nieces and nephews, Alexander Hanna, Dean Sappas and his wife Michelle, and Stephanie Sappas; and great-nieces and nephews, Fitzgerald and Reagan Sappas. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Harry Kim Sappas (wife Elaine Sappas survives), and his Aunt Anna Milienu.



November 13: Katherine Dickos “Tika” age 89, wife of



the late James Dickos. survived by her beloved family  
Dn. Frank (Adrienne) Dickos, her daughter Pamela (Peter) Countouris, and her grandchildren, Spencer (Jenna) Countouris, Dimitrios Dickos, and Makarios Dickos and her brother Dr. Anthony (Patricia) Stakis and her nephew Christopher. Tika had great love also for her husband’s family including her brother and sister-in-laws and their families.

November 16: Nicholas Lamprinakos age 99. Loving husband of 53 years to the late Joan (Conomos) Lamprinakos; father of Rozalia (the late Fr. George) Christulides, Louis (Debbie) Lamprinakos, and Marica (Bill) Mitsos; Papou of Thespina Christulides, Renee (Robert) Jaquette, Nick Lamprinakos, and Yana Mitsos; and brother-in-law of John (Janet) Conomos, and Theodora (John) Kladakis. He is also survived by many loved nieces and nephews.



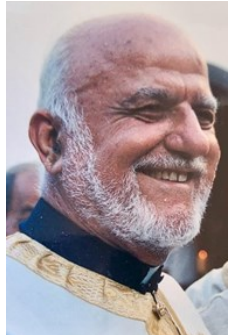
November 28—Jason J. Kalakos, age 52 He leaves behind his mom, Fotaine; an aunt, Judy; and cousin, Kristen. He was preceded in death by his Uncle John in April of this year.

December 2: “Ted” Theologus Nicholas Kyriazai, age 97 is survived by his two sons, Nick and Harold, sister Mary (Nick) Sezenias, sister-in-law Fannie (Chris) Kyriazi, and many nieces and nephews. Preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Betty (Zondos).



December 19: George Thiros age 89, survived by his beloved wife Tula (Gerasimo) of 59 years, sons James and Andrew (Melissa), grandchildren Nicholas and Sophia, brother Anthony, and many nephews, nieces and godsons.

December 20: Emmanuel K. Moissakis age 89. Surviving is his wife, Irene (Apostolakis) Moissakis, his son, Dean Moissakis and wife Olga (Sotiriou) Moissakis; his daughter, Kaleope (Moissakis) McKnight and her husband Michael McKnight.



At St. Nicholas Cathedral, December 16: Deacon Euripides “Rip” Christulides, age 99. Loving husband of the late Mary (Kapourellos); father of Elpi (David) Altum and the late Fr. George (Rozalia) Christulides; grandfather of Mary (John) Ellison, Thespina Christulides, Christopher Altum; great-grandfather of Elpi and James Ellison.

# GREEK SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY







Plans are underway to transform our Holy Cross Church entrance this summer and we need your help to close out our matching campaign. Every dollar is matched by our pledging donors so \$100 is \$200, \$500 is \$1,000 and \$1,000 is \$2,000! Each dollar takes us closer to our goal of \$100,000 and we only have **\$35,000** left to collect. **Please consider donating** to the campaign to beautify our Church entry gardens in your year end giving and thanks to all who have supported it so far!

## LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE MATCHING FUNDRAISER





Dear Fr. Michael, Constance, Bob and Holy Cross Parish Council,

We greatly appreciate your generous sponsorship donation for the IOCC Ukrainian Relief Event. It was a most successful event, over 300 people attended and we netted \$35,438. These funds will be used to help Ukrainian refugees in Ukraine, Poland and Romania.

We sincerely apologize for the delay in depositing the checks.

Many thanks and kind regards,

---IOCC Pittsburgh Metropolitan Committee



# JOY Christmas Party



Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, which we heard a reading from today, gives us an image of what we call spiritual warfare. Saint Paul urges us to put on what he calls "the whole armor of God" so that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." This passage should be a wake-up call to us. So often we go about our day to day business unmindful of the spiritual struggle which we all find ourselves in the midst of. In fact, many of us may even enter into the church itself unaware or vaguely aware of this struggle. Saint Paul, however, reminds us of the urgency of this struggle, and advises on us in how best to withstand it.

It's been said that the devil's greatest trick was to convince humanity that he did not exist, and there is a great deal of truth to this. Especially in these fasting periods, temptations lurk around every corner, always trying to lead us astray. However, temptations often are not obvious – the book of Genesis describes the serpent which tempts Eve as "subtle," and he ultimately deceives Adam and Eve by convincing them that the evil of their disobedience is actually good. It's much like a story we receive from over a thousand years before the time of Christ, the story of the Trojan war. The death blow to Troy came because the Greeks hid themselves within a wooden horse, disguising it as a gift to the Trojans. When the Trojans gladly received it and brought it into their walls, the Greeks sprung forth and commenced to slaughter the people of Troy. So it is with the devil – he often presents our overthrow in the form of a gift.

In C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*, he presents us with a fictionalized scenario in the form of letters written by an elder demon to his nephew, advising him in the task of tempting a human man and leading him away from God. What becomes clear while reading this book is that we face an adversary eons older than we are, with thousands upon thousands of years of experience in leading humanity astray. How can we, who, at best, live to a hundred years and some change, hope to contend against such an adversary with only the meagre and flimsy human wisdom we can gather in such a short time?

Well, Saint Paul tells us not to despair, for we have a defense which we find in the armor of God, for the power and wisdom of God is infinitely older than even the most ancient demons. This armor consists of the girding of truth, the acknowledgement of the reality of the Holy Trinity above all other false gods; the breastplate of righteousness, the virtues we acquire by following Christ; for our feet, the gospel of peace, which by following the scriptures guides our steps upon the right faith; the shield of faith, which is trust in God to defend us against the invisible assaults of the demons; the helmet of salvation, keeping our mind pure and centered in heaven; and finally, the sword of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, which cuts through all evil and illusion. We must acquire this equipment if we hope to withstand the assaults of such a foe. So let Saint Paul's letter be our reminder today to do so, and to fight the good fight. ~Elias Diamond

**Attention High School Seniors and Parents!** The application for the Popi Hagelios Memorial Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross Church is available in the Narthex, or from Elaine Sofis, [esofis@comcast.net](mailto:esofis@comcast.net) or Denise Melis, [dmelis@comcast.net](mailto:dmelis@comcast.net) electronically. The application is due by Sunday, March 17, 2024.

**NO EXCEPTIONS!** The award is available to a 2024 PLEDGED Holy Cross family member who is a 2024 graduating high school senior. A similar application is available at Mt. Lebanon High School. You may apply to both philanthropy awards, but will only be eligible for one \$1,500 award.



# BECOME A MEMBER!

BECOME A MEMBER AT HOLY CROSS AND...

- GET ADDED TO OUR MAILING + EMAIL LIST SO YOU CAN STAY IN THE KNOW OF UPCOMING EVENTS
- JOIN ACTIVITIES AND COMMITTEES
- HAVE YOUR CHILDREN JOIN JOY & GOYA
- BE A PART OF HOLY CROSS TODAY!

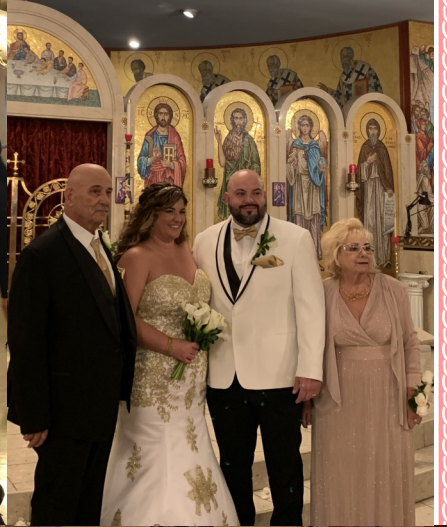
## HOW DO I JOIN?

Fill out a 2024 Stewardship card located in the narthex





# KOUTOUFARIS/BATIS WEDDING IN OAKMONT



# ST. SPYRIDON IN MONESSEN





# Ordination of Fr. Gregory Fedorchak



# Fedorchak/Galie family and friends





# Proposed 2024 Budget

## To be approved at the General Assembly Meeting Sunday, January 24, 2024 following Divine Liturgy

HOLY CROSS PITTSBURGH	2024 Budget
<b>Revenue</b>	
Stewardship	
5020 - CH Pledges - Previous Year	\$ -
5025 - Automatic Stewardship	\$ 346,000
5030 - Pledges - Current Year	\$ 346,000
5040 - Pledges - Next Year	\$ -
<b>Subtotal Stewardship Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 692,000</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>	
5110 - Food Fair Income	\$ 300,000
5120 - FF Foo Food Fair Ad Book	\$ 45,000
5210 - Candle Money	\$ 35,600
5230 - Holy Week Donations	\$ 3,500
Donations Special	\$ -
5341 Designated Donations	\$ -
5430 - Flowers	\$ 3,000
Communion Wine	\$ 1,000
5450 - Greek School Register	\$ 3,000
Greek School Donations	\$ 1,000
5451 - Socials/Special Projects	\$ -
5470 - Vacation Church School	\$ 1,840
50th Anniversary Appeal	\$ -
5545 - Golf Outing	\$ 30,000
5700 - Interest Income	\$ 12,000
5820 - Hall Deposits-Current Year	\$ -
5830 - Hall Deposits-Next Year	\$ -
5840 - Rental Income	\$ 3,000
5900 - Miscellaneous Income	\$ 13,000
<b>Subtotal Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 491,940</b>
<b>Total Fundraising/Stewardship Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,183,940</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
7000 - Wages	
7010 - Priest Wages	
7010a - Priest Salary and Housing Allowance	\$ 127,500
7010b - FICA Reimbursement	\$ 19,965
7303 - Priest Pension, Parish Contribution	\$ 21,192
7130 - Priest Medical Insurance	\$ 34,788
7141 - Automobile Expenses of Priest	\$ 1,200
7142 - Priest Car Payment	\$ 5,731
<b>Subtotal 7010 - Priest Wages</b>	<b>\$ 210,376</b>



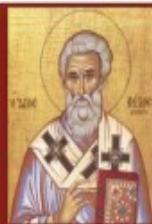
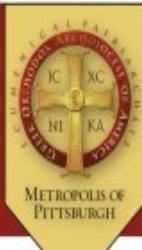
7011 - Deacon Salary	\$	12,000
7013 - Assistant Priest Wages	\$	15,000
7150 - Travel/Clergy Laity	\$	6,000
7015 - Pastoral Assistant	\$	45,000
7050 - Secretary Wages	\$	52,500
7070a - Secretary Medical Insurance	\$	19,968
7070b - Pastoral Assistant Insurance	\$	3,091
7071 - Cantor	\$	6,000
7072 - Organist	\$	6,000
GOYA Advisor	\$	6,000
7073 - Choir Director	\$	6,000
<b>Subtotal 7000 - Wages</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>186,234</b>
7125 - Insurance	\$	13,715
7160 - Payroll Taxes	\$	14,049
7165 - Property Taxes	\$	750
7200 - Utilities	\$	-
7210 - Columbia Gas	\$	19,000
7220 - Electric	\$	44,000
7230 - Water & Sewage	\$	13,500
7231 - Trash Removal	\$	4,000
7232 - Telephone & Internet	\$	6,150
7274 - Priest Cell Phone	\$	1,800
7276 - Website Maintenance	\$	3,500
7233 - Security	\$	6,000
7240 - Landscaping Maintenance	\$	6,000
7200 - utilities other	\$	-
7241 - Snow Plowing & Salt	\$	4,200

Continued pg. 44→

<b>Subtotal 7100-7200 - Utilities</b>	\$	<b>136,664</b>
7265 - CH Minor CAP Improvements	\$	-
7266 Major Improvements Funded	\$	-
7270 - Maintenance & Repairs	\$	11,883
7275 - Maintenance Contracts	\$	5,670
7300 - Church/Office Expenses	\$	1,500
7301 - Archdiocese Stewardship	\$	76,620
7302 - Metropolis of Pgh Stewardship	\$	6,480
New Metropolis Donation	\$	10,000
7309 - Communion Wine & Incense	\$	3,300
7318 - Background Check	\$	400
7320 - Candles	\$	16,000
7330 - Ecclesiastical Supplies	\$	4,700
7341 Finance charge	\$	250
7350 - Flowers Expense	\$	5,000
7352 - Office Supplies	\$	6,000
7353 - Postage	\$	2,000
7358 - Computer Software/ Outside Help	\$	9,760
7359 - Office Equipment	\$	17,500
7360 - Greek School Expenses	\$	2,500
7361 - Socials-Feast Day-Easter-Picnic	\$	8,300
7362 - Youth - GOYAYALJOY/Accolyt	\$	20,000
7363 - Visiting Clergy/Meetings	\$	600
7365 - Seniors Expenses	\$	2,000
7366 Memberships/Dues	\$	150
7370 - Sunday School Expenses	\$	1,600
7375 - Golf Outing Expense	\$	27,500
7379 Outreach	\$	30,000
7380 - Vacation Church School Expenses	\$	1,000
7381 - Bank Charges	\$	4,600
7384 - Late Fees	\$	-
7382 - Professional Fees	\$	14,200
7385 - Payroll Processing Fees	\$	2,500
Interior Design Committee	\$	15,000
7300 - Church/Office Expenses - Other	\$	-
<b>Subtotal 7300 - Church/Office Expenses</b>	\$	<b>306,995</b>



7800 - Hall/Event Expenses		
7315 - Bookstore	\$	1,000
7802 - Custodian Wages	\$	69,634
Supplemental cleaning	\$	7,800
7803 - Maintenance cell phone reimb	\$	600
7804 - Columbia Gas	\$	18,730
7806 - Electric	\$	8,100
7807 - Exterminating	\$	1,300
7808 - Water & Sewage	\$	7,300
7809 - Telephone	\$	300
7810 - Trash Removal service	\$	1,300
7816 - Landscaping	\$	14,000
7817 - Snow Plowing	\$	9,800
7819 - Medical Insurance	\$	16,302
7820 - Food Fair / Ad Book Expenses	\$	133,000
Ad Book Expenses	\$	3,300
7821 - Credit card machine fees	\$	3,800
7823 - Insurance	\$	4,630
7824 - Property Taxes	\$	4,700
7825 - Maintenance & Repairs	\$	27,685
7832 - Misc & Janitorial Supplies	\$	3,000
7861 - Chairs, Tables, Tents	\$	-
7864 - Sound System	\$	300
7881 - Permits, Licenses & Fees	\$	330
7800 - Hall/Event Expenses - Other	\$	-
7826 - Entertainment	\$	-
7833 - Website	\$	1,300
7879 - Farmers' Market Expense	\$	-
<b>Subtotal 7800 - Hall/Event Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>343,671</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,183,940</b>
<b>Budget Balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>-</b>



# A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

## NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

### New Metropolis Center Construction Update

At the writing of last month's report, we were introduced to unstable soils in the deepest portion of our excavating, at the elevator pit. Further testing in and around the entire site resulted in overall positive results except in and around the elevator pit. According to our geotechnicals, onus was upon us to over excavate the elevator pit by many feet and backfill with compactible clay. You'll see the huge difference in color in the first upper left picture where above is brown/tan compatible soil and at the bottom of the pit, the solid turns to a dark blue green color of carbonaceous shale containing pyrite. As adjacent soils to the elevator became suspect and tested poorly, footers within a dozen feet of the elevator had to be removed, soils replaced/compacted and footers redone. This interlocking effort cost us the month of November.

Incremental costs to date hover around \$20,000 with another \$10,000 anticipated in further soil remediation. By all accounts, the worst is behind us, and we have already begun replacing footers with the expectation of footers-completion before the holidays.



Notably, the Liokareas brothers have been a joy to work with as they were quick to point out the soil issues. Would every other GC be willing to forego a month's income waiting on engineers, testing, results, recommendations, over-excavating, backfilling, compacting, more testing, etc., or would another firm be quick to 'bury' the problems and move on with no regard to the integrity of the building in time to come? And for all of the delay, this month's construction costs are approximately \$135,000.

Again, don't be left out! Your family and your parish MUST be represented. Generations to come will look for their original connection to the center. With the advent of construction, more parishes and individuals are pledging.

As I always will, I ask that you seriously consider a pledge, or raising your pledge, or pre-paying your pledge so that we AVOID ANY DEBT! We will continue fundraising until we are there! Please help us such that this new home of work and worship and gathering and fellowship is only ever a blessing AND NEVER A BURDEN to our church. Please help. To get your pledge matched, please click on this link:-

<https://www.pittsburgh.goarch.org/pledge> or scan the QR code:



*Metropolis of Pittsburgh*

**Spring Retreat**  
at Camp Nazareth

**March 8-10, 2024**

Camper Registration & Staff Applications will open January 22nd  
[y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/retreats](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/retreats)

The Department of Greek Education for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh presents

**THE NINTH ANNUAL GREEK LANGUAGE FESTIVAL AND QUIZ BOWL**

Saturday, April 13, 2024  
 St. Demetrios Church, Rocky River, OH 11am - 3pm

1. Quiz Bowl on Greek Revolution of 1821 and Burning of Smyrna. Teams of three (3) students will compete in two levels. Eligible contestants are those currently or previously enrolled in Greek Language Studies. All the material needed to study for the Quiz Bowl is available to download at <https://www.dropbox.com/1u2/1o7y0H53d8t1c2ly4k4/v?dl=0&key=real4d0&sig=7D402y9v6v2>. Each team creates its own name. A large trophy cup will be placed at the winning team's church. Individual awards will also be given.
2. For students who are **really talented** we encourage you to perform either solo or with others an original Greek song or Greek instrumental selection or a selection from an existing Greek composer. This is open for all grades, K - 12th grade American School.
3. For students **who love to act** we encourage you to perform an original Greek act or one from an existing writer. This is open for all grades, K - 12th grade American School.
4. For students **who love art** we encourage you to submit your artwork for the Art Exhibit with the title in Greek on Greek Revolution of 1821 and Burning of Smyrna. This is open for all grades, K - 12th grade American School. In addition, there will also be various booths, food, and fun for all!

Registration forms available at the Metropolis website, facebook, and <https://www.dropbox.com/1u2/1o7y0H53d8t1c2ly4k4/v?dl=0&key=real4d0&sig=7D402y9v6v2>  
 Registration deadline is March 30, 2024  
 Questions contact Maria Stamos: [metamaria@jvexion.net](mailto:metamaria@jvexion.net)

*Mark your calendars!*

**10<sup>th</sup> ST. PHOTIOS AWARDS BANQUET**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

MAY 18TH 2024 • 4:00 PM  
 DOUBLETREE BY HILTON PITTSBURGH-CRANBERRY

[pittsburgh.goarch.org](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org)

Metropolis of Pittsburgh

*Summer Camp 2024*

Week 1: June 16-22  
 Week 2: June 23-29  
 Week 3: June 30-July 6  
 Week 4: July 7-13

Staff Applications OPEN January 1st!  
 More Information:  
[y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp)



**SUPPORT HIS EMINENCE AND OUR METROPOLIS MINISTRIES**

It costs approximately \$1,000 per day to operate our Metropolis - including Metropolitan Savas's Archpastoral visitations, preparations for summer camp and GOYA retreats, our vital registry, and more. Please consider sponsoring a day in the life of the Metropolis:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

412-621-5529 (Main) 412-465-0460 (Camp) 412-621-8543 (Youth)

[pittsburgh.goarch.org](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org) [info@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:info@pittsburgh.goarch.org)



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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Friday, January 5*

*Eve of Theophany*

8am Royal Hours

9:30am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil

Blessing of Water

*Saturday, January 6*

*Theophany*

8:15am Orthros,

9:30am Divine Liturgy

Blessing of Water



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