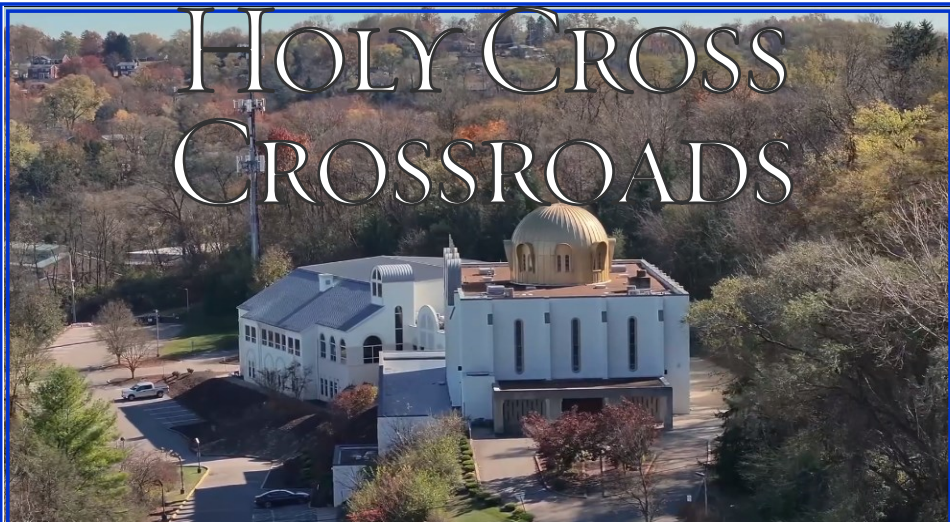


# HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS



## *New Era Begins for Orthodox Church in Guatemala*

February 20, 2024 by [Father John Chakos](#)

The Orthodox Church in Guatemala began a new era in its short history with the blessing of its newly completed Seminary/Mission Center in Huehuetenango, that will serve the spiritual, educational and administrative needs of the faithful. The project, which began some two years ago under the direction of Archimandrite Evangelos Patá, counted on the support of the Orthodox Mission Center, many generous donors and hundreds of volunteers from the church's many villages throughout Guatemala. The moment was made all the more poignant with the announcement



*Frontal view of Seminary and Cross visible from miles around*

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 25th</b>	 <i>TRIDION WEEKS</i> <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>MARCH 3rd</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>MARCH 10th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 17th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 24th</b>	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 31st</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10:2-3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 7th</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 14th</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 21st</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 28th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>MAY 3rd</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>MAY 5th</b> NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 24 Issue 3*

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

**\*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.*

**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
	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
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		
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	Eva Elderkin	(412) 969-1479

**Parish Council 2024**

- Constance Zotis, President  
 Nicholas Tripodes, Vice President  
 Mark Hummel, Treasurer  
 Nick Ambeliotis, Financial Secretary  
 Rachel Kartofilis, Secretary  
 Christopher Chaney  
 Anthony Cuneo  
 Frank Kalogeris  
 George Liadis  
 Sophia Milinkovic  
 Tom Mourtacos  
 Jim Mustakas  
 Jordan Nicholas  
 Annie Urso  
 Stephen Yamalis

**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



*More than 3000 gather to celebrate opening.*



of the retirement of their beloved archpastor – His Eminence Archbishop Athenagoras, who tearfully bade farewell to the faithful. With great nostalgia, he also invoked the memory of Father Andres Giron, a fierce advocate for the rights of the indigenous people and charismatic spiritual leader to his beloved flock, shepherding it into the embrace of the Orthodox Church. The more than 3000 in attendance,

***Hierarchical Liturgy brings representatives from all over Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico.***



together with the dedicated Guatemalan Clergy, His Grace Bishop Timoteo from Columbia, OCMC missionaries and San Andres seminarians, sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit, not only throughout the Divine Liturgy,

but also during the blessing of the new facility which followed. The palpable joy that filled this day reflected the vibrant Christian faith of the long suffering Mayan people who endured much throughout their tragic history, but never lost hope. May this new beginning be for them a lasting renewal of their life in Christ and a stepping stone to a blessed and glorious future for generations to come.



*Every priest takes a turn to bless the massive two story building.*



*View from a drone.*



*Athenagoras blesses new building.*

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

**Christ is in our midst! He is and shall always be!**

Receiving the email from Fr. John with the opening of the new seminary building in Guatemala, I was moved to think about all the new opportunities that it will afford the growing Church in Central America. This is a momentous occasion, and we rejoice with our brothers and sisters in Christ for their labor and efforts to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to raise up leaders – clergy and teachers to carry on this apostolic work. As we begin our Lenten journey let us consider an offering from our fasting efforts to complete the inside of the seminary building. I have reached out to Fr. John and he has shared with me that for \$10,000, we would be able to provide beds and necessary furnishings to further the completion of the seminary. May God grant us a joyous and fruitful fast.

Three weeks before the beginning of the Great Fast (this year Lent begins on March 18<sup>th</sup>), we enter a new liturgical season called the Triodion (February 24-25<sup>th</sup>). The three odes (tri-odion) refers to the number of canticles or odes in the weekly canon during the Lenten period. This season is both a great gift and an opportunity to “put aside all earthly cares” and focus on our spiritual life. The Church ushers in a period of teachings that describe for us the path of repentance and the possibility of forgiveness in an unending dialogue between humility and love. The source of all humility and love is God Himself, who created us and all of creation to be in communion with Him. God, who then after we betrayed this communion with Him, attempted to guide us again into a relationship of holiness with Him. After we failed God many more times and were unable to accomplish this movement toward holiness, God (The Father) sent His Only Begotten Son into the world. The Son of God, Jesus Christ (The Anointed One) took on our flesh and accepted to experience all manner of shame, deprivation, and betrayal for our salvation. Jesus, the Son of God, does this willingly and without hesitation in obedience and love to the will of the Father.

The Church reminds us that we are called to be in a continual state of vigilance and repentance. Before God, none one is without sin. What we do as followers of Christ and what we fail to do for others will be called into account at the judgment seat before God. God is not without mercy and forgiveness for those who seek it. A hymn that captures the spirit of the Lenten period is introduced into the Matins service (on Sundays) during the Triodion:

“Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life, for early in the morning my spirit rises and hastens toward Your holy temple; bringing the temple of my body all defiled. But as One compassion-

ate, cleanse me by Your loving kindness and mercy, I pray.

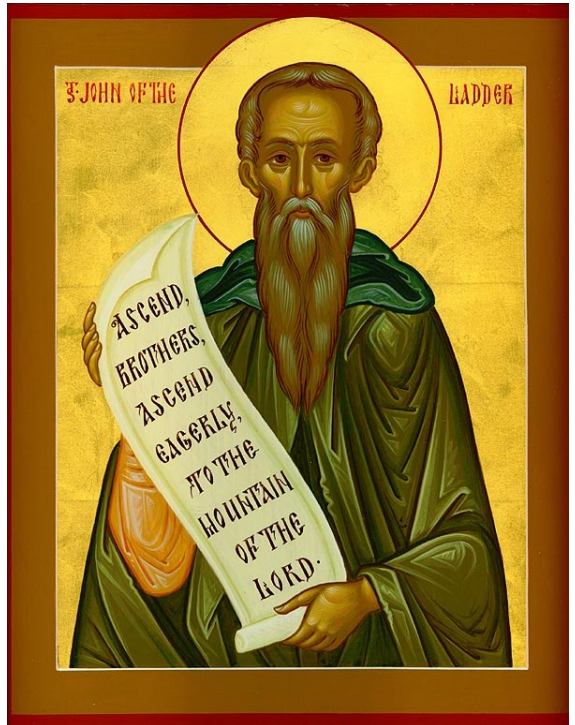
Guide me in the paths of salvation, O Theotokos, for I have defiled my soul with shameful sins and I have wasted my life in laziness. By your intercessions deliver from all impurity.

When I ponder the many wicked things I have done, wretch that I am. I tremble at the fearful Day of Judgment. But trusting in Your loving kindness, like David, I cry out to You, 'Have mercy on me O God, according to Your great mercy.'"

This hymn is immediately sung after Psalm 50 (the Psalm of repentance). Repentance means change. We have to be willing to change our minds and our hearts towards God. We have to examine our lives with extreme care and brutal honesty. This is not easy and requires courage. In order for our repentance to "bear fruit", we must live our lives in a sacrificial manner. This is the key to understanding fasting and the Lenten spirit. How can I do with less? How can I live more simply before God so that I might be able to do more for others? More for my family, my neighbors, my friends, even my enemies.

St. John Climacus (of the Ladder) described repentance in this way:

"Repentance is the renewal of baptism and is a contract with God for a fresh start in life. Repentance goes shopping for humility and is ever distrustful of bodily comfort. Repentance is critical awareness and a sure watch over oneself. Repentance is the daughter of hope and the refusal to despair. Repentance is reconciliation with the Lord by the performance of good deeds which are the opposite of sins. It is the purification of conscience and the voluntary endurance of affliction. The repenting person deals out his own punishment, for repentance is the fierce persecution of the stomach and the flogging of the soul into intense awareness." (The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 5)



During the Lenten period we have Great Compline on Monday evenings at 7pm. This service is a penitential service that has many readings from the Psalter and a selection from the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete.

On Wednesday evenings at 6pm, and on Friday mornings at 9am, the Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated. The Host (The Lamb – The Body of Christ) has been consecrated on the previous Sunday and sits on the Altar until Wednesday. It has already been sanctified, thus the name “Presanctified” Liturgy. We do not offer the Divine Liturgy during the Great Fast on weekdays, the only exception is the Feast of the Annunciation – March 25<sup>th</sup>. The Presanctified Liturgy allows us to partake of Holy Communion during the week to help strengthen us for our ascetical efforts. Preparation to receive Holy Communion on Wednesday evening (at the Presanctified Liturgy) is to fast completely from food and drink after the lunch meal.

On Friday evenings during the Great Fast we have the blessing of celebrating the services dedicated to the Mother of God. These Salutations are selections from the Akathist Service to the Mother of God, done in its entirety during the fifth week of Lent. These services are not Lenten in character but reflect the great joy of Christ coming into the world to save us. They also highlight the importance of the Mother of God in our salvation history. She is our great example!

On Saturdays, we have Divine Liturgy dedicated to the commemoration of our departed fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. We pray and do acts of mercy on behalf of our departed love ones asking for the mercies of God and forgiveness of their sins. These acts of love remind us that they are very much alive in Christ and sense our prayers and deeds done on their behalf.

Saturday evenings during Lent we have Great Vespers at 5pm. Confessions before and after Great Vespers are encouraged. The Sacrament of Confession during the Lenten season is especially encouraged.

There are prayers before and after we receive Holy Communion and are they found in most Orthodox prayer books. Please see our bookstore if you do not have one.

I ask for your forgiveness when I have offended you. Please pray for me.

Wishing you a blessed fast! (Kali Sarakosti!)

With love in Christ,

Fr. Michael



At every moment, “the earth is full of the mercy of God,” and nature itself is a lesson for all the faithful in the worship of God. The heavens, the sea, and all that is in them bear witness to the goodness and omnipotence of their Creator, and the marvelous beauty of the elements as they obey Him demands from the intelligent creation a fitting expression of its gratitude.

But with the return of that season marked out in a special way by the mystery of our redemption, and of the days that lead up to the Paschal feast, we are summoned more urgently to prepare ourselves by a purification of spirit.

The special note of the Paschal Feast is this: The whole Church rejoices in the forgiveness of sins. It rejoices in the forgiveness not only of those who are then reborn in holy baptism, but also of those who are already numbered among God’s adopted children.

Initially, men are made new by the rebirth of baptism. Yet there is still required a daily renewal to repair the shortcomings of our moral nature, and whatever degree of progress has been made there is no one who should not be more advanced. All must therefore strive to ensure that on the day of redemption no one may be found in the sins of his former life.

Dear friends, what the Christian should be doing at all times should be done now with greater care and devotion, so that the Lenten fast enjoined by the Apostles may be fulfilled, not simply by abstinence from food but above all by the renunciation of sin.

There is no more profitable practice as a companion to holy and spiritual fasting than that of almsgiving. This embraces under the single name of mercy many excellent works of devotion, so that the good intentions of all the faithful may be of equal value, even where their means are not. The love that we owe both God and man is always free from any obstacle that would prevent us from having a good intention. The angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.” The person who shows love and compassion to those in any kind of affliction is blessed, not only with the virtue of good will but also with the gift of peace.

The works of mercy are innumerable. Their very variety brings this advantage to those who are true Christians, that in the matter of almsgiving not only the rich and affluent but also those of average means and the poor are able to play their part. Those who are unequal in their capacity to give can be equal in the love within their hearts. (St. Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome +461 A.D.)

# Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh Sunday of Orthodoxy Service and Celebration

on **Sunday, March 24**, at 4:30pm  
at **Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**  
in the North Hills,  
**985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA**



## Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh

The homilist will be His Grace Bishop Andre of Cleveland of the Romanian Episcopate of the Orthodox Church of America.

The service of Great Vespers of the Annunciation will feature clergy from Orthodox jurisdictions followed by the annual Procession of the Holy Icons and a Pan-Orthodox Choir singing the hymns of the service under the direction of Fr. Tom Soroka.

Following the service, light refreshments will be served during fellowship time. Local representatives from Orthodox philanthropic ministries will be there with information on how to get involved.

Also, icons and other Orthodox Christian gifts and handmade items will be available to purchase from the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery (Saxonburg) and the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration (Ellwood City).

Come and celebrate Orthodoxy in Pittsburgh!  
"This is the Faith of the Apostles. This is the Faith of the Fathers. This is the Faith of the Orthodox. This is the Faith which has established the Universe."

# Metropolis Regional Lenten Mini Retreats

Open to all HOPE and JOY Kids (K-6th Grade)

**Northwest Region: April 6, 2024 from 11 am - 4 pm**

New Date

**Location:** Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
3352 Mayfield Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**Contact:** Ted Cherpas at [tcherpas@stsconstantine.com](mailto:tcherpas@stsconstantine.com)

**Registration Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/MiniLentCLE>

**Central Region: March 16, 2024 from 12 pm - 4 pm**

**Location:** Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
123 Gilkeson Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15228

**Contact:** Elias Diamond at [ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com](mailto:ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com)

**Registration Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/MiniLentCentral>

**Eastern Region: March 30, 2024 from 10 am - 2:00 pm**

**Location:** St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
1607 W. Union Blvd, Bethlehem, PA 18018

**Contact:** Isaac Lampart at [ilampart@stnicholas.org](mailto:ilampart@stnicholas.org)

**Registration Link:** [www.stnicholas.org/miniretreat](http://www.stnicholas.org/miniretreat)

**Southwestern Region: April 13, 2024 from 10 am - 1 pm**

**Location:** St. John Greek Orthodox Church  
3512 MacCorkle Ave. Charleston, WV 25304

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

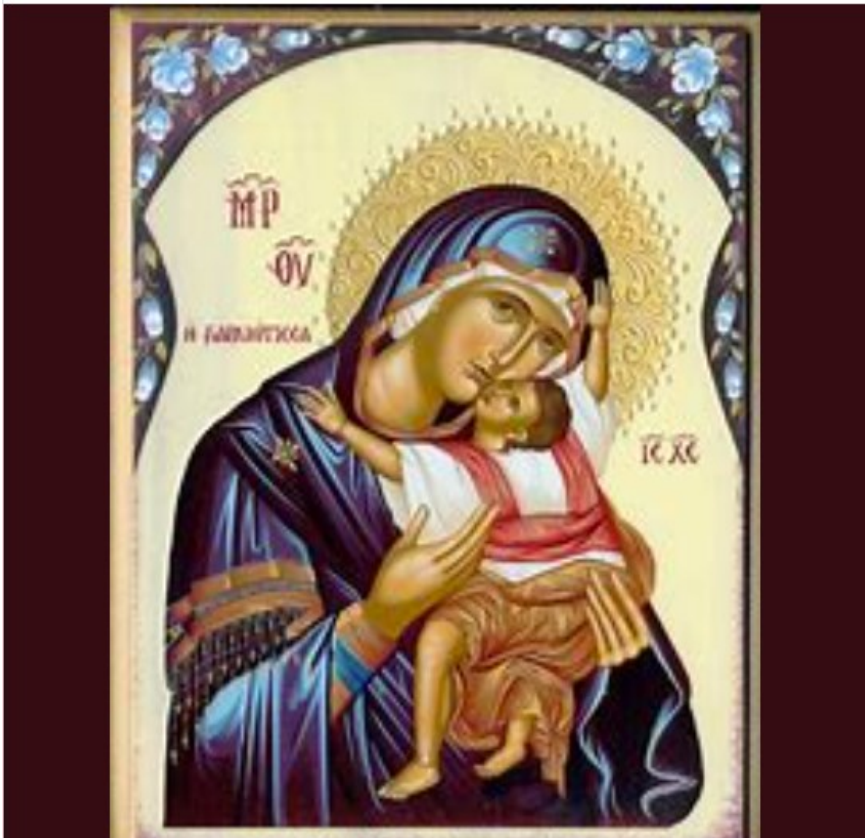
**Registration Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/MiniLentSW>

Participants will enjoy learning about the Triodion Period leading up to Lent. Lessons include crafts, service projects and more! Lunch will be provided.

**The miraculous Myrrh Streaming Icon of the Theotokos - Kardiotissa (Tender Heart) will be at St. Nicholas in Monongahela, Pa. on Friday, April 5 at 7 p.m.**

This icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been oozing large amounts of fragrant oil for the past 13 years. This has been witnessed by numerous Orthodox bishops, clergy and thousands of people of many Christian faiths.

Father Mark Leasure of St. George Church in Taylor, Pa, the custodian of the icon, will share many of the miraculous stories associated with the icon.



## Godparent/Godchild Sunday Sermon ~ *Elias Diamond*

The Gospel reading we heard today is known as the Parable of the Talents, one which I spoke about last year, but let me recap for a moment here. This parable is about what we do with the gifts we have been given by God. Three servants are entrusted by their master with a share of money. The first two servants take their portion and increase it. The third servant, however, being rather lax, hides his portion away, not increasing it. When the master returns, he commends the first two servants, but chastises the third servant. The lesson here is that God gives us all gifts, to different degrees perhaps, but whatever we have been given, no matter how large or small, God expects growth, God expects us to take what we have been given and be bold, to treat it as the most serious task we have to take care and use our gifts for the glory of God, and not to hide our light under a bushel, as the third servant does, because the when we are called to account, the Lord knows whether we gave our best effort.

This is our Gospel reading for today, but we also have on this day, in our parish, another important commemoration, and by that, I refer to Godparent/Godchild Sunday, a day on which we should read a prayer for the renewal and recovery of the special bond between Godparents and Godchildren, and since this falls on the Sunday in which we read the Parable of the Talents, I think of the connection these two have. You see, being a Godparent is a great gift but also a serious charge. As a Godparent, you in many ways are like one of the servants in the parable, entrusted with the precious gift of one of Christ's own children. Therefore, it is not enough to stand idly by and to simply safeguard what you have been entrusted with. Rather, you are expected to grow that gift, to help that child you have been entrusted with to walk the path towards God.

Well, yes, you might say, but what does that mean for us? Well, the simple answer is that those of us who are Godparents must actively be walking towards Christ as well. If our task is to illuminate the path for our Godchildren, how can we hope to do that if our own light is not shining? Godparent/Godchild Sunday is a beautiful day, but it should just be one day of many in the sacred relationship between Godparent and Godchild. On this Sunday, Godparents, I ask you to consider the precious treasure you have been entrusted with, to pray for, to teach, to love. We can be like any one of the three servants in the parable. We must decide with our actions which we will be. For as the scripture says, "To whom much is given, much will be required." So on this day, we have an opportunity to renew those bonds forged in the baptismal font, the destroy any barriers to it which the cares of this life may have created, and if we meditate upon it, we realize that this bond is a tri-fold bond, between Godparent, Godchild, and God Himself, that reminds us the Holy Trinity.

# JOY Bowling



So much of our lives is wrapped up in reputation. As a child, one of the greatest fears was that something bad would end up in my “permanent record”. When entering adulthood, dad emphasized the importance of earning and maintaining a good credit record. In our occupations, careers and salaries are made or broken on performance reviews. So much of our social stature is based on how others evaluate us that it should come as no surprise that we put so much emphasis upon our reputation. But is the measure of who we are simply a matter of our stature among our fellow men? Today, we should take the time to consider what it means to be of good stature, and whether or not it is truly important.

Today’s gospel focuses on Zacchaios, who was a chief tax collector, and according to the text, a wealthy one at that. Although modern day bill collectors and representatives of the IRS are not typically wealthy, in terms of social standing they are regarded in much the same way as they were in biblical times. As an indication of this, when Jesus goes to Zacchaios’ home, the crowd mumbles predictably, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” As if this weren’t enough, and as one of the great ironies in all of scripture, Zacchaios is not only small in social stature, but small in physical stature as well. He’s so short that he can’t even see Jesus through the crowd, and so he further humiliates himself by climbing into a tree to get a better view. Children might be able to climb trees without reproach, but not grown men. The scene is so embarrassing, that if it had been filmed, it would have been a wildly comic moment. Yet the Lord gave no indication of amusement; in fact, He does something quite unusual: He invites Himself to Zacchaios’ house for dinner.

From the standpoint of reputation, this is unthinkable. Jesus is at the height of His ministry; with such a cult of personality that crowds of people are following Him wherever He goes. And He publicly announces that He will be the guest of one of the least liked, least popular, least regarded men in the area. As concerns reputation, this is suicidal. And the murmuring of the crowd confirms it. Why would “Mr. Popularity” want to associate with such a “loser?”

Now at this point, you might think that Zacchaios humiliating himself is the act of someone who has sunk so low that he has nothing left to lose. What’s a little embarrassment mean when you have no stature anyway? And you might think that Jesus, being as well regarded as He was, could afford to risk the questioning of the crowd; in fact, the sheer audacity of it could actually help His reputation; after all, it is the very mark of



“cool” to seem ambivalent to things that most people wouldn’t dare to do. But then you would miss the broader point; one which both the Lord and Zacchaios grasped. Our actions cannot be constrained by how they will affect our social standing, because our preoccupation with reputation is an obsession with the wrong kind of stature. There is a measure of a man that has no regard for how he is viewed by others, and that measure is the one of his integrity. To truly “stand tall”, to really be of “good stature” is to be possessed of a strong and unflinching moral character. Jesus never lost it. Zacchaios discovered it when he repented of his ill gotten wealth and declared: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold.” Don’t think of this as someone trying to “score points” with God. That is an interpretation without merit and devoid of any salvation; rather, it is the declaration of a man who understood at that moment the importance of virtue. If he truly wanted to “stand tall”, Zacchaios knew that he could not live with anything that he had stolen from others. And he knew that his wealth was a gift from God to be used to help those in need. And he realized that both of these things were not the provenance of society; in fact, they had nothing to do with the opinions of men. They were matters of personal integrity, of a stature that only God can measure and one’s conscience can perceive.

Two saints we celebrate today show this, albeit in slightly different ways. Isaac the Syrian, one of the great ascetics, had been consecrated bishop of Nineveh, but only served five months in that position before asking to return to a life of solitude. And Ephraim the Syrian, noted not only for his ascetic discipline but also for his beautiful hymnography, left the obscurity of his cell during a famine not to feed himself, but to rebuke the wealthy in the area for not helping the poor and needy.

My brothers and sisters, why are we preoccupied with our stature among men? Why are we so concerned with the size of our houses, our cars, and our wardrobes? What good is our reputation if it only concerned with things that pass away? Should we not be more concerned with virtue, with the things that do not pass away? Don’t you see how foolish it is to let others define our integrity? Do not be like the crowd in today’s gospel, judging others by their social stature, but be like Zacchaios, who stood tall and acted with integrity even when disgraced by the society in which he lived. Live honestly and with integrity, never fearing to do what is right. For men do not and cannot measure the true stature of a man; rather, it is God Himself who measures it, and to Him is due all glory, now and forever. Amen. ~Deacon Frank Dickos

## GOLDEN CLUB MEMBERS/NEW MEMBERS:

On Tuesday, March 19th, Golden Club will begin Great Lent with our annual Lenten, covered-dish luncheon, starting at 11:00 a.m. in the Community Center. We will begin serving at 11:30 a.m. We're suggesting Lenten items/dishes, such as vegetables, salads, fruits and desserts (please NO nuts or seeds). Following lunch, we will welcome our own Vasso Paliouras, Founder/ Executive Director of Lending Hearts, whose mission is to provide emotional, social and physical support to those living with cancer, with a special focus on the needs of children and young adults, as well as their families and caregivers. Join us as we listen to Vasso's own personal family story and how it inspired her to lend her heart to those dealing with the same issues she and her family experienced—a story of love, strength, support, hope, joy and life! It's an honor to have Vasso join us during our Lenten journey—she is a true inspiration!



We will also be collecting dues of \$10 for 2024.

***Please RSVP by Tuesday, March 12th to Rene, cell 412-559-1721 or Cynthia, cell 412-722-9512.***

We hope you can join us!



# Golden Club Valentine Luncheon





# Holy Cross

Sun	Mon	Tue		
<p>O LORD AND MASTER OF MY LIFE!            TAKE FROM ME THE SPIRIT OF SLOTH, DESPAIR, LUST OF POWER, AND IDLE TALK.            BUT GIVE RATHER THE SPIRIT OF CHASTITY, HUMILITY, PATIENCE, AND LOVE TO            THY SERVANT. Yea, O LORD AND KING! GRANT ME TO SEE MY OWN TRANSGRESSIONS            AND NOT TO JUDGE MY BROTHER;            FOR THOU ART BLESSED UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.</p>				
<p>3 <i>Sunday of the Prodigal Son</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy            Coffee Hour sponsored by             Heddaeus/Plansteil/Aspiates families</p>	<p>4            6:30pm Paraclesis            7:30pm Landscape Committee            8pm YAL "Pickup" Basketball   in Community Center</p>	<p>5</p>		
<p>10 <i>Judgment / Meat fare</i>   <b>Sunday</b> <span style="background-color: yellow;">No Memorials</span>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy            Coffee Hour sponsored by             Diamond/Chirel families</p>	<p>11            6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>12</p>		
<p>17 <i>Forgiveness / Cheese fare</i>   <b>Sunday</b> <span style="background-color: yellow;">No Memorials</span>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy            5pm Forgiveness Vespers</p>	<p>18 <i>Clean Monday</i>  <i>Lent begins</i>            6:30pm Great Compline</p>	<p>19            11am Golden Club            Lenten Covered Dish            7pm <i>Sts. Mary &amp; Martha</i></p>		
<p>24 <span style="background-color: yellow;">No Memorials</span>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy            GREEK SCHOOL PROGRAM            4:30PM SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY            HOLY TRINITY N. HILLS              31            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>25 <i>Annunciation of the Theotokos</i>            8:30am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>26</p>		

# March 2024

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>Coffee Hour ☕☕ Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host one!</i></p> 		1 Fast free	2 5pm Vespers
6  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7pm Bible Study	7	8	9 <i>Saturday of Souls</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy  5pm Vespers
13  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7pm Bible Study	14	15	16 <i>Saturday of Souls</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy Noon-4pm HOPE/JOY Mini Lenten Retreat  5pm Vespers
20  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY 7:30PM COMMUNITY NIGHT/ LENTEN POTLUCK	21	22 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY  6:30PM SALUTATIONS I	23 <i>Saturday of Souls</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy  5pm Vespers & Confessions
27  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY	28	29 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY  6:30PM SALUTATIONS II	30  5pm Vespers & Confessions

GOYA Weekender in NYC

# First Steps of Christ Vasilopita



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

**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.**

Pascha is May 5.





# COMMUNITY NIGHT

## LENTEN POTLUCK

FOLLOWING PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY ON  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

PLEASE JOIN US AND BRING A COVERED  
LENTEN DISH OR DESSERT TO SHARE.

**\*\*\*PLEASE LIST ALL INGREDIENTS\*\***  
**TO DISPLAY FOR THOSE WITH FOOD ALLERGIES**

**PASCHA BREAD MAKING!**

Please save the date of Thursday, April 18, for Pascha Bread Making. Rolling and twisting in aluminum pans starts at 10am, bread egg washing about 11:30am, wrapping of bread at 2:15pm and selling of bread from 2:30-5pm. Lunch will be provided. ANY of your time is appreciated! The 1.5lb loaf of Pascha bread, \$12 a loaf, plain or with sesame seeds, will be sold on baking day, April 18, and on Sunday, April 21 after Divine Liturgy. Pascha bread will be sold on Palm Sunday, April 28, IF AVAILABLE. ~Elaine Sofis, [esofis@comcast.net](mailto:esofis@comcast.net)





FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

**Monday, March 4**

Paraklesis at Holy Cross  
Pittsburgh at 6:30 pm

Basketball in the  
Community Center gym  
from 8 pm to 9:30 pm

Fellowship and food at  
Primanti's in Mt. Lebanon  
starting at 9:30 pm

The **IOCC Ukrainian Relief Dinner and Prayer Service** was held on 10/24/2023 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA. Approximately 375 people attended (including volunteers), and net proceeds of \$35,438 were passed trough to IOCC!!



*The 97th Annual*  
**VLAHOKERASIOTIKI  
MAKARONADA**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH**  
ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

DINNER FOLLOWED BY OPEN GREEK NIGHT\*  
FEATURING, "THE FILARAKIA"

**DOORS OPEN: 6PM**  
**DINNER: 7PM**  
**LIVE MUSIC: 8:30PM**

Adults: \$40  
College Students: \$30  
Kids 12 & under: \$15  
Kids 3 & under: free  
\*NO COVER for "Greek Night"

**RESERVATIONS:**  
**NVLYKOS@GMAIL.COM BY 3/2**

# Our Philotochos Membership Social

Be a part of our wonderful philanthropic organization by joining or renewing your Philotochos dues this month.

Contact Dina Hartlep  
[dinahartlep@gmail.com](mailto:dinahartlep@gmail.com)







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

April 13, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

123 Gilkeson Rd. (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

All Orthodox Youth Groups are asked to participate.  
Students, please bring your volunteer forms for school credit.

**Our goal is to assemble several thousand health kits.  
Donations are needed to purchase bulk health kit supplies.**

To donate, please make checks payable to "Holy Cross AGAPE Fund"  
with "IOCC 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**



## Pittsburgh Helps IOCC Rebuild in TX & FL

Want to help your neighbors get back on their feet? In the wake of a disaster, families often need help rebuilding and repairing their homes. Volunteer for a week to help individuals and families move toward long-term recovery.

### REQUIREMENTS & COST

- You don't need to be skilled – just energetic!
- You must be 18 years old or older, but 16- and 17-year-olds may volunteer if accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Be able to deploy for a week.
- Provide your own transportation to/from the Homebuild Team location.
- \$100 covers all your costs on the ground (room/board & local transportation)

### DATES & LOCALES

- Homebuilds run Monday-Saturday, work days being Tuesday-Friday
- Locations are Houston, TX and various cities across Florida

Gather a team of at least 5 individuals, then contact Krista Hamann to book your group's selected dates.

Go to [iocc.org/homebuild](http://iocc.org/homebuild) for current build openings

For more information, contact Krista Hamann: 612-389-7278

[volunteercoordinator@iocc.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@iocc.org)



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

## The Next IOCC Committee Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, March 5, 2024

**Time:** 7:00 Meeting Starts

**Place:** [Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church](#)

123 Gilkeson Road (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

**All are welcome. Please join us. We need your help!!**

# Last GOYA Tournament, in Canonsburg















## GOYA Seniors, Class of 2024



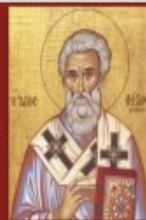






# A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX  
METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



**Central Region**  
Kimisis Tis Theotokou, Alliquipa, PA



**Northwest Region**  
Holy Trinity, Canton, OH



The Metropolis clergy came together at their respective regional parishes to celebrate the Feast of St. Photios the Great, Patron of the Metropolis on February 6th.



**Southwest Region**  
St. James, Balpro, OH



**East Region**  
Holy Trinity Cathedral, Camp Hill, PA

## New Metropolis Center Construction Update

Given the winter months and the heavy rainfall, our geotechnical engineers felt that the work that was done in November to provide an improved base in the elevator pit had to be revisited as the replacement clay had been water saturated for so long and compromised. After much testing of additional clay found on the site, and the dry weather we enjoyed all last week, the clay base was removed and replaced with flowable fill concrete and dry/compactible clay with footers poured. We're all done with that with a total incremental cost of \$36,000 to the project. In the meantime, scaffolding was erected and encased with plastic over the two-story stairwell so that masons could work in that area. At the same time, footers and piers were completed for the first floor and much work was done to continue building the foundation walls on the first floor and basement which will continue, weather permitting. To learn more about, donate or pledge for the New Metropolis Center campaign please visit: [pittsburgh.goarch.org/metropolis-center](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org/metropolis-center) Thank you!

Archon Nick Lekas - New Metropolis Center Project Manager



**Donate/  
Pledge  
Today!**





## Metropolis Regional Lenten Mini Retreats

Open to all HOPE and JOY Kids (K-6th Grade)

Northwest Region: April 6, 2024 from 11 am - 4 pm

Location: St. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
3352 Mayfield Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Contact: Ted Chrypas at tchrypas@stconstantine.com

Registration Link: <http://tinyurl.com/MinLentCleveland>

Central Region: March 16, 2024 from 12 pm - 4 pm

Location: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
123 Gilson Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Contact: Elise Diamond at ediamondhops@gmail.com

Registration Link: <http://tinyurl.com/MinLentCentral>

Eastern Region: March 30, 2024 from 10 am - 2:00 pm

Location: St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
1807 W Union Blvd, Bethlehem, PA 18018

Contact: Isaac Lampart at lampart@stnicholas.org

Registration Link: [www.stnicholas.org/miniretreat](http://www.stnicholas.org/miniretreat)

Southeastern Region: April 13, 2024 from 10 am - 1 pm

Location: St. John Greek Orthodox Church  
3512 MacCortle Ave, Charleston, WV 25304

Contact: Alyssa Kymbas at akymbas@pittsburghgoarch.org

Registration Link: <http://tinyurl.com/MinLentSW>

Participants will enjoy learning about the Tridion Period leading up to Lent. Lessons include crafts, service projects and more! Lunch will be provided.

## Metropolis of Pittsburgh Camp Presents...



Calling all of those who have been part of our changing identity! It is our goal to share Christ's love through His life-changing ministry of being by the people who love it the most... TOGETHER we'll spread the word with our new parties!



Further Information: [y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summertimecamp](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summertimecamp)

His Eminence  
Metropolitan Savas  
cordially invites you to  
celebrate the dedicated  
volunteers of our Holy and  
God-protected  
Metropolis of Pittsburgh



METROPOLIS OF  
PITTSBURGH

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

**MAY 18 2024 - 4:00 PM**

**DOUBLETREE BY HILTON  
PITTSBURGH-CRANBERRY**

910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 16046

ONLINE RESERVATION & SPONSORSHIP:  
[pittsburgh.goarch.org/st-photos-awards-banquet](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org/st-photos-awards-banquet)  
\$95/adult, \$25/child (under 12)

Reservation & Sponsorship

Deadline: April 28

No Refunds available after May 4

or mail reservations/sponsorships to:

St. Photios Awards Banquet

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

5201 Ellsworth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Please make checks payable to:

'Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh'

Banquet Co-Chairpersons:  
Archdeacon Ryan  
412 831 5819  
rjoklew@pittsburgh.goarch.org  
Moranne Stearns  
412 900 2787  
mlstearns@hilton.com.net



**St. Photios  
Awards Banquet  
Nominations  
Due:  
MARCH 31**

**NET PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT  
THE METROPOLITAN'S BENEVOLENCE FUND**  
[pittsburgh.goarch.org](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org) | 412 821 5524  
contact: [ken@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:ken@pittsburgh.goarch.org)

## Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp 2024

Week 1: June 16 - 22 *2nd-4th Grade*
Week 2: June 23 - 29 *5th-7th Grade*
Week 3: June 30 - July 6 *7th-9th Grade*
Week 4: July 7 - 13 *10th-12th Grade*

Registration will open March 25, 2024!  
More Information:  
[y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summertimecamp](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summertimecamp)

## 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)





**IONIAN VILLAGE** is the Summer Camping Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The mission of Ionian Village is to enrich the lives of its participants by bringing campers and staff into close contact with their Orthodox faith and Hellenic heritage.

Two **SUMMER CAMP** sessions offer Greek American high schoolers an incredible summer experience spent exploring Greece through a variety of excursions, participating in exciting Ionian Village activities across the beautiful seaside campgrounds, and forming lifelong bonds with other Greek Orthodox young people.

Ionian Village **SUMMER STAFF** Members are chosen via a selective application process from young adults ages 21 and up. IV Staff demonstrate a passion for Greek Orthodoxy and Hellenism, high energy, creativity, and a willingness to love our campers unconditionally as they bring to life our programs each summer.

**IV NEXT** is for young adults, ages 19-24, and presents a unique opportunity for participants to experience the IV Campus, travel to the traditional IV destinations, and connect to Greek Orthodox peers from across the country.

WWW.IONIANVILLAGE.ORG



**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



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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 2412  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Sunday of Orthodoxy**

**Sunday, March 24, at  
4:30pm**

**Holy Trinity  
Greek Orthodox Church**

**in the North Hills,  
985 Providence Blvd.,  
Pittsburgh, PA**