



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

**NOVEMBER 18, 2012
FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NOTICE, AGENDA &
PC NOMINATIONS FORM!**

QUICK NEWS



Oct. 25, 2012: Holy Trinity seniors visit and tour the Phipps Conservatory. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church, including new church progress? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pgs. 8-12 or visit our online photos and videos at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.



Saint Katherine the Great Martyr · Feast Day: November 25

Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
(www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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Stephanie Sedor

Troy Geanopoulos

Alex Trivilas

Louis Kort

Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



Protect us from all corruption, famine and every kind of destruction. As You are merciful and gentle, we pray that You will freely show Your tender mercy and compassion and deliver us all from danger. Illumine by Your grace everything under Heaven that the earth may bear fruit. Guide our life and hear us quickly, O Merciful Lord.

(From the "Book of Needs" of the Orthodox Church)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Christ,

How many times do you remember turning to God in times of need? If your answer is "countless," you are in good company. "But that doesn't make sense," you might say, "I thought Christians were a blessed bunch that God always takes care of?" Indeed, He does, but that does not mean a perfect life with no struggles. It means He sees and cares for us at every moment and we trust Him to do so. That is why I have encountered faithful Orthodox Christians turning to God for help of every kind: selecting schools, finding jobs, marital and relationship struggles and every other difficulty, even to the smallest things in life, for as the Morning Prayer of Saint Philaret of Moscow says, "In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all things are under Your care."

The need to turn to God has been vividly evident in the warnings and ultimate realities of destruction wreaked by Hurricane Sandy this past week. Many people have worried about and suffered losses of homes, properties and businesses. Thankfully, much help is one the way. We will be watchful for opportunities and I am confident the Holy Trinity community will step up as always, and in doing so we remind those in need that they are in His care.

For many, it will certainly be a challenging Thanksgiving, so as we prepare for the holiday, we might want to ask ourselves this year, "Have I been there for others as my Lord has always been there for me?" To answer that, we can look at three marks of God's presence in our own life which demonstrate His presence, especially in times of need: help, hope and love. We can bring those blessings to others if we allow God to use us to do so.

As Christians, we are never without God's help. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46.1). And so often that help comes through the hands of those around us whom He sends in our time of need. As we offer thanks for the many times He has done that for us, keep in mind that God also can use us to be that someone for others. We need only keep our eyes open and our senses aware. We will see them.

We are also never without hope. As Saint Paul exhorts us, "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thess. 2.16). Sometimes that hope comes through pure faith alone, but again other times it is through the encouragement of those God sends to remind us. Sometime we are that reminder for others in need. Sometimes a faithful message of hope is all they need.

And finally, in those times of need we tend to feel alone and abandoned. Saint John the Evangelist reminds us that we are the cure for each other's loneliness: "If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4.9). In my own times of need, that has meant the most, and even when help is near, we need love to get us through.

So as we prepare for Thanksgiving this year, may we be ever mindful not only of how many things we need to be thankful for, but may we also remember that God can—and does—use us to bring about thanksgiving that can lead to faith and salvation in others as they experience Him through the help, hope and love we bring.

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:
In Memory of Tom and Dora Morris
May their memory be eternal!

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services November

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days this month. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel (SG).

Nov. 1: Ss. Cosmas and Damian the Wonderworkers

Nov. 8, 10:00am: Holy Archangels (at Angel's Acres)

Nov. 9: St. Nektarios the Wonderworker

Nov. 14: NO Monthly Paraclesis Service (Second Wed. of each month at SG) due to the Metropolis Clergy Retreat

Nov. 21: Entrance of the Theotokos

Nov. 30: St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church SchoolStarts with Liturgy!

Attention parents and students: Church School is held on Sundays and starts at 9:30 with attendance at the Divine Liturgy and the children's sermon, followed by classes after Holy Communion. Please be there from the start to be blessed by the entire worship and learning experience. Thank you!

Church School Outreach: FOCUS on Feeding the Needy

On the first Sunday of November, each Church School student will receive a "FOCUS on Feeding the Needy" brown bag. Directions will be attached to the bag as to what is should be collected. All contributions will be donated to the St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry, a local outreach of FOCUS Pittsburgh. Please bring the filled bags back to the Church School classrooms. The class with the most items collected will receive a free "Pizza Party" courtesy of the GOYA. Go for it: take more than one bag. This is the work of the Gospel!



Saint Lydia Women's Study November

The St Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is now in its 13th year! If you have missed out on this wonderful time with fellow sisters in Christ sharing, learning and growing in faith, maybe this is the year you can join in!

This year the women are studying selections of spiritual guidance topics from Elder Paisios of Mount Athos (+1994), one of the most read and beloved elders of the contemporary Orthodox world. His works have only recently been translated into English. The materials will be distributed at the meeting. As always, participants are also encouraged to bring an Orthodox Study Bible as well. All women of any age are welcome. If you can't make every session, don't worry. Each topic is independent. Please try to attend as many as you can! Meetings are held every other Thursday beginning September 13 at St George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park. 9:30 - Coffee and Fellowship; 10:00 - 11:15 Study. For more information contact Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

Topics for the month of November are: November 15 -

"Simplify Your Life to Avoid Anxiety"; November 29 - "External Noise and Internal Peace." Give it a try...attend this month!

Orthodox Studies Forum November

The Orthodox Study Forum meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm at our interim location, 495 Browns Lane. The group, led by Father Radu, will continue to study the book, "Living the Beatitudes" by Father Thomas and Presvytera Kyriaki Fitzgerald. This ministry, which is open to everyone including those who have been Orthodox all their life as well as those seeking to embrace the faith, is open to everyone.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Meeting/Parents MeetingNov. 11

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a brief meeting following Church School on Sunday, November 11, following Church School. All GOYAns are asked to attend. Topics will include the Metropolis GOYA events, our 2013 Project Mexico Mission Trip and more.

Simultaneously on that day there will be a GOYA Parents Meeting to discuss the upcoming GOYA basketball season. All GOYA parents are asked to attend so we might all be well-prepared and informed regarding Holy Trinity tournament policies and Metropolis basketball rules.

Metropolis GOYA Retreat..... Nov. 16-18

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will host its annual GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA, from November 16-18. The theme will be: "Decision 2012 - For I Know the Plans I Have for You" (Jeremiah 29.11). Registration is now open online at pittsburgh.goarch.org under Event Registration. The code for the Holy Trinity GOYA discount is "FRHN075". Holy Trinity Teens must use the code when registering to receive a 50% discount off the registration fee. Sign up today!

GOYA Turkey Bowl Nov. 25

The GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Thanksgiving Weekend Football Game on Sunday, November 25, following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited: players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! The game will be played on the field at our Browns Lane interim location starting at noon. Players should bring a change of clothes and shoes for play. Sign up ahead of time with chairpeople Andoni Balouris or Alex Danis. The flag football game will be followed by hot chocolate, meatless "Walking Tacos" and pumpkin cookies. Yum!

HOPE/JOY Children to Provide FOCUS Hot Meals . .Nov. 28

The children of the HOPE and JOY ministries will extend an outreach of love on November 28 to feed over 100 needy people in the Hill District at the FOCUS Pittsburgh headquarters on Wednesday, November 28. This new opportunity will provide our children a way to get "hands-on" with the work of the Gospel as they prepare and serve hot meals to the poor and needy. For information or to confirm your participation, contact JOY parent Amy Aggelou at aaggelou@pitt.edu.

NEW CHURCH PROJECT NEWS

Keep Up With Construction Progress Online!

Want to keep up with the construction progress of the new Holy Trinity Church? Simply visit our website, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org, and click the Gallery link for lots of photos. There are also links to up-close walking tour videos with descriptions about construction progress and features of the new facilities. For direct access to the videos or to "Like" and post comments about them, visit [Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh](https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitypgh).

Historic Ground Blessing Liturgy Now on HT YouTube Channel

Holy Trinity Church is now on YouTube! Access it either through your web browser directly at [YouTube.com/user/holytrinitypgh](https://www.youtube.com/user/holytrinitypgh) or through our Holy Trinity website, www.holytrinitypgh.org/publications/youtube. The first item posted is the historic Ground Blessing Liturgy with His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos from October 19, 2008.

OPENING OF THE NEW CHURCH: JUNE 22, 2013!

It's still a while away, but when you start making your summer plans for 2013, keep the weekend of June 22-24 clear for the "Thyranoixia" (Official Opening) of the new Holy Trinity Church! His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will preside over a weekend including the Opening of the Doors service and Liturgy on Saturday and Pentecost Liturgy on Sunday. We will then continue with our first Feast Day Liturgy on the Monday of the Holy Spirit, June 24. Details will be forthcoming ... but save those dates!



Capital Campaign Reminder: We Still Need You!

With all the excitement of the new church progress, we are almost there but we still have a way to go. Please remember that without the continued stewardship of our members and on-going meeting of commitments to the Capital Campaign for the new church, none of this would be possible. Please remember to maintain your designated contributions schedule so we can move forward as planned, and if you have still not made your Capital Campaign pledge, the time to do it is now! Thank you, good and faithful stewards!

COMMUNITY NEWS

Philoptochos Sunday November 4

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will celebrate Philoptochos Sunday on November 4 with a special Coffee Hour reception in honor of the visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. Thank you for supporting our ladies' philanthropic ministry!

Fall General Assembly November 18

Please plan on staying after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 18, to attend the Regular Fall General Assembly. This is the Regular Fall Assembly to review parish life, nominate candidates for the Parish Council and hear reports on important parish matters. It is important that all members

attend, as these meetings are quite important in the day-to-day life of the parish. Please remember, to vote at an assembly, nominate or be a candidate for Parish Council or to vote in elections, you must be a member in good standing as defined in the Uniform Parish Regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, having a signed 2012 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge card submitted.

Holy Trinity Hospitality: Welcome to the Team!

Anyone attending Holy Trinity Church services in the past year could not have helped but notice the continual influx of visitors and guests, each one a potential new member! We are thankful for our active and constantly present Hospitality and Visitors Ministry as they stand ready to welcome these friends, introduce them to Holy Trinity Church and identify them with the now-familiar felt "Yellow Cross".

Welcoming these brothers and sisters into the life of Holy Trinity Church is, however, everyone's calling. Many people over the years have commented on the warmth with which they have been received, and many have also attributed their decision to remain here in great part to that hospitality. So, whether there are visitors from out of town, family members joining others here for worship or even soon-to-be members, please know that as a Holy Trinity parishioner you are called to share in welcoming them with open arms and hearts filled with the love of Christ. Find them at Coffee Hour and introduce them to the people and ministries of our parish. There is a place for everyone at Holy Trinity Church!

Holiday Hospitality Note: Also, as the holidays approach—or even just on a regular Sunday—please consider reaching out and having a new family join you for a meal or a family gathering. There is no better way to let them know they are an important part of the Holy Trinity family.

Thanksgiving Holiday

The offices of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church will be closed on Thurs. & Fri., November 22 & 23, in observation of the Thanksgiving holiday. May God bless everyone with a grateful celebration and safe travels!

Community Christmas Card Form Due Dec. 12

The current issue of the *Herald* contains a form for the Holy Trinity Community Christmas Card. If you would like to include your name in this annual community tradition, please be sure to submit your form and donation to the Church Office by December 12. Thank you!

Holiday Poinsettias Form. Due Dec. 12

The current issue of the *Herald* contains a form for the sponsoring of holiday poinsettias for use in the church during the Christmas and Theophany season. If you would like to donate one or more flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event, please complete the form and return it to the Church Office with your donation by December 12. Thank you!

Sign Up For the Holy Trinity Email!

Want to receive the Sunday Bulletin directly via email? Want to keep up to date with the latest Holy Trinity news or weather cancellations? Sign up at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Part of a regular series of contributions by our resident "Gheronda" (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos

NOVEMBER 2012 – THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL



Father John Androutsopoulos

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ: Rejoice in the Lord always!

The Fast of the Nativity: November 15–December 24

On Thursday, November 15th, the Fast of the Nativity begins. "Advent" is a Latin word which means "the coming". Here it is used to signify the visible coming of the Son of God into the world.

Advent is a time of spiritual preparation, a time of getting ready for Christmas, the great and Holy Feast of the Nativity of our Savior Jesus Christ. We can be ready to meet our Savior through prayer, fasting, through the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion and by attending Church services during the Advent.

Thursday, November 22: Thanksgiving Day

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

"Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, not we ourselves: we are His people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100: 3-5)

Let us give thanks to the Lord for every good thing He gives every day.

A Thanksgiving Prayer

"Our Heavenly Father, we worship Thee with thankful hearts for Thou art our God, our Creator, and giver of every good and precious gift. All that is within us today cries out to bless and magnify Thy holy name. In the midst of thanksgiving we do not forget our sins and shortcomings. May Thy great love and goodness ever lead us to repentance. We thank Thee that Thou has made us so that our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee. Amen."

Show Concern And Compassion

Compassion is a lovely word. It means to suffer with, or to stand in another person's place. The word was used of Jesus. When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion and therefore suffered with them. Read Matthew (14: 13-21), Mark (6: 30-44), Luke (9: 10-17) and John (6: 1-13).

Compassion leads to action. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is the classic example of compassion in action. The

Samaritan crossed the road to the wounded Jew. Not only did he bind up the wounds of the Jew, but also took him to an inn, and even involved the innkeeper in his concern. Read Luke (10:30-37).

In times of need, love and compassion will jump over barriers of race and tongue. That a man is in need is enough to bring goodwill into action.

How can we identify ourselves with our fellowman and go to his assistance? The answer is that God identifies Himself with us and comes to our aid. So out of love for Him, we go in love to our fellowman. It may involve us in costly service without material recompense; but it is the way the Master went, and He calls us to do likewise.

Beloved: Let us remember these two Holy days -- Thanksgiving and Christmas -- those who lost their jobs, homes, insurances and show them mercy and compassion by helping them. "He who shows mercy to the poor is borrowing God."

Ever Faithful

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2: 10) If we are to become good Christians, we must faithfully commit ourselves to God daily and perseveringly keep moving.

Jesus did not ask that we be brilliant, or better than someone else. He simply wants us to be faithful to Him.

In the Parable of the Talents, three men were given charge of their master's goods. The judgment of each was determined by the degree of his faithfulness. Read Matthew (25: 14-30)

When God calls, He calls us to serve without excuses and intermission. If we are faithful, God will supply us

with grace for our needs and abundantly reward us. Read Matthew (25: 20-28).

Humorous Incidents For Church Publications

A pastor, teaching a communicants' class, asked a boy, "What is the Trinity?"

The boy, who had a weak voice answered somewhat quietly, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Straining to hear, the pastor said, "I can't quite understand you."

To which the bright young lad replied, "Your not supposed to – it's a mystery."

Beloved, a mystery is a truth we cannot understand, but accept by faith.



With His love,

Rev. Fr. John H. Androutsopoulos, Protosphyter

Hello, my Precious Children!

Happy, Happy Thanksgiving to all of my precious little ones! Yes, it is I, Spero, here to chat to you about the spirit of giving thanks. When we think about being thankful, we often think about being thankful for things that we receive. We should also take time to give thanks for the person that gave those things to us. And you know what the Bible tells us about our blessings? It says that that every good thing comes from Our Heavenly Father, so we have Him to thank for all of them!



One way to thank Him is to say a prayer. Yiayia says, "Prayer is a good habit and that praying is a great way to show that we are thankful." Another way to thank Him is to be more like God in our everyday ways and to treat each other as He would like. So, before you speak or do anything, think first and thank God for everyday and every person in it.

My little ones, we have a new DVD from the Veggie Tales series called "Sumo of the Opera." In this DVD you will learn—along with Larry the Cucumber—a lesson in perseverance. To everyone's surprise, he turns pro wrestler as "The Italian Scallion." And as if he isn't silly enough as a cucumber in wrestling gear, his inability to take anything serious makes it all the more fun! Larry is a joking pro-wrestler who never manages to finish what he starts. But when he steps into the ring with "Apollo Gourd," will Larry, the "Quit 'n' Run Cuke," risk getting sliced and diced to finish what he has started? Larry stops and thinks that sometimes there is a good reason to quit, but he remembers that Our Heavenly Father asks each of us to do many things that are hard. They are things that make us a much better person. God loves us when we finish what we start, so do not stop. Just keep on persevering and this will make you feel good about yourself when you finish. If it is what God wants you to do, you will always come out a winner. Yiayia says, "Hebrews 10:36 teaches us we need to persevere so that when we have done the will of Our Heavenly Father, we will receive what He has promised". Yiayia also says, "He wants us to keep on going even when it is very hard. We must always to try and do what God wants us to do, for He cares about us and promises that when we finish running the good race, He has a special reward for each of us. Remember, God made each of us special and loves us very, very much."

We also have a book in my library, called, "Just Like Mama," by Beverly Lewis. This is a story that takes place in the Pennsylvania Dutch country of Lancaster County, where a girl named Susie Mae boasts that everyone says that she looks just like her mama. However, her brother Thomas, makes her so...o...o...o angry when he says, "Well you may look like mama, but I doubt that you can keep up with her all day." Susie Mae wants nothing more than to be just like her own loving mama. So one day she sets out to prove to her brother, Thomas, and herself that she is ready to do exactly that, from taking on the morning milking to egg-gathering and berry-picking, she tackles all of Mama's daily chores with gently amusing and genuine touching results. That evening, she watches her patient and kind Mama read the word of God from the Bible and she learns how important it is to be more like the Lord Jesus.

In Christ, Love Spero

An update on the news and activities of our local Holy Trinity chapter of the Philoptochos Ladies Society, a national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. and the Parish Council. Want more information? Visit their web site at www.philoptochos.org or contact a local member.

Philoptochos Report: November 2012

Philoptochos Activities

Holy Trinity Ladies Philoptochos society has spent this transitional year doing the things they do in a very low key manner. The Sunday coffee hours, memorial coffees, and meetings have all been affected by the move. Our membership has remained about the same with a few new members. Our meetings have been as needed and on the fly as we made necessary business a priority. We just concluded a very nice fundraiser led by one of our members which was the sale of Sabika Jewelry. Even so, the Philoptochos will also have busy months in November and December and we will need your support.

Philoptochos Sunday 2012

We will welcome the parish to the first Sunday in November when we celebrate 80+ years of service to our church, our community, our friends and families with an enhanced coffee hour. We will be honored with the presence of His Eminence Bishop Savas. Donations collected for this coffee hour are for the benefit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, an annual appeal of the National Philoptochos.

Philanthropy In Action

We have met all of our obligations to both the National Philoptochos and the Metropolis. We continue to answer the calls for help to our local charities for help as well. We also contribute to the KDKA Turkey Fund for the at large community. Our annual Christmas donations include: The Salvation Army, Childrens' Hospital, The Women's' Shelter, UNICEF, Allegheny Valley School, and USO.

Thanksgiving Turkey Fundraiser

November is the month for the annual Turkey Fundraiser which has been successful due to the generosity of Holy Trinity parishioners. What started out as a plan to win a turkey has evolved into what this fundraiser means to many people today. Instead of drawing a name out of a hat, we now have a list of organizations and individuals where a gift card to a needy family is provided. This allows them to purchase everything from a turkey to pumpkin pie for a nice dinner and more. It has also become one of our best fundraising events of the year through your generosity. If you know such a family please contact Tina Fiedler at 412-364-1545 or Father John.

Christmas Luncheon

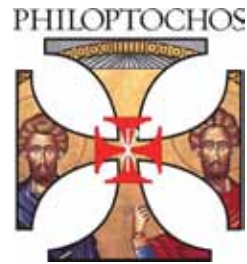
December is the month of the annual Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon hosted by Ladies Philoptochos as a tribute to honor the seniors for their years of service to our community. Please reserve December 4 this year for that day. Time & place will be available in the weekly bulletin as soon as it is confirmed.

Christmas Bake Sale

We are having our annual Christmas Bake Sale again this year, so you can make your Christmas baking worry-free by letting us do it! Order forms are available in this issue of *The Herald* and at the coffee hour. All orders must be placed by December 2, 2012. Orders can be picked up December 23. Please place your orders early!

Seniors Ministry Visits Phipps Conservatory

The Senior Fellowship Group went on a lovely excursion on October 25 to Phipps Conservatory, where they enjoyed a nice lunch and the very beautiful floral & fauna presentations that are only available to visitors. We were delighted to have the company of Loukas Savvidis whose knowledge about planting and growing things seemed boundless to those present. Thank you for sharing, Loukas! Is there anyone else out there who would like to share their expertise with us? If so contact Joyce Countouris at 412-366-1498.





Above: The Building of the Dome. From the placing of the steel support ring (humorously named the "Birthday Cake" by the construction crew), it took nearly four weeks. Starting at the top left, the workers place the steel beams, then install the aluminum ribbing to construct the convex shape, then apply a protective coat around the entire dome structure, and a black rubber roof completes the series of treatments to ensure that the dome remains protected.



WATCH CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ONLINE! BROWSE THE PHOTO GALLERY AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. VIEW CONSTRUCTION VIDEO



...n crew) on September 24 to the completion of the blue water-sealing and black rubber roof on October 18, the construction of the dome
 ...ex roof. After that, specially-bent plywood is placed on top of the ribs and around the vertical barrel. A blue water sealant is used to apply
 ...ns waterproof for the lifetime of the building (in Church terms, that would be until the second coming of the Lord!). Good work, crew!



VIDEOS AND TOURS AT [Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh](https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitypgh). SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. STAY INFORMED!







October 21, 2012: Holy Trinity teens gathered for the GOYA monthly fellowship at the home of Athena Petredis. They enjoyed a great homemade dinner and a discussion session with Father John afterward.



October 4, 2012: Members of "Jimmy's Team" participated once again in the annual "Light the Night Walk" in memory of Jimmy Hartig, a Holy Trinity parishioner of blessed memory. The walk, hosted by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, benefits cancer research and is held each year at Heinz Field and around the country. Thanks to the team for honoring Jim and supporting research!



October 20, 2012: HOPE and JOY children and families enthusiastically participated in the annual Fall Hayride at Reilly's Summer Seat Farm. After a ride through the fields on tractors, the group gathered around the bonfire for a lesson from Father Radu and toasty hot dogs and s'mores.



The excitement continues! Holy Trinity Church's exciting project continues to generate interest in news sources throughout the area.

NorthAlleghenyPatch

Holy Trinity Construction Progresses in McCandless Township

October 10, 2012 - Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church has made significant progress toward completing the new church project since breaking ground in December 2011.

After breaking ground in McCandless nearly a year ago, construction of the new Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church continues to progress while future plans shape up.

The Rev. John Touloumes, pastor of Holy Trinity, said Pittsburgh's good summer weather combined with a good general contractor helped keep the building timetable on course. The Byzantine-style church is being erected on 10 acres at the intersection of Babcock Boulevard and Cumberland Road in McCandless.

"Our construction is proceeding in some ways according to schedule and in other ways ahead of schedule," Touloumes said. "We're very blessed and so thankful."

He said one of the biggest concerns was getting the building enclosed before winter so that work could continue despite the weather outside. That's no longer a concern, now that the community center portion and administrative offices are enclosed. The entire structure will soon be enclosed, with the dome topping expected to be completed by November.

Much of the work will then involve exterior and interior finishes, such as the interior trim, and electrical and plumbing work.

Unless there are any unforeseen challenges, Touloumes said "Our construction will be very comfortably done before the official opening. June 22 is when the official first service and consecration of the church, or "Thyranoixia," a Greek word that means "the opening of the doors" will take place. The service begins outside the church and proceeds for a service indoors.

Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh will preside over the Opening of the Doors service and Pentecost Liturgy the fol-

lowing day.

Once settled, Touloumes said Holy Trinity plans to offer tours, sharing history and information about the new church.

Touloumes said the response from the community continues to be great and the faithful at Holy Trinity are quite enthused by the community's excitement.

Holy Trinity received lots of feedback at the recent McCandless Days, where Touloumes was invited to offer the invocation as a priest of the community. The church also just ended its annual three-day food festival.

"People are asking about it all the time," he said "A lot of people are commenting, even with the level of construction we're at right now, they're looking forward," he said.

Touloumes said there has also been some interest from people who aren't Orthodox inquiring about membership. Currently the church has about 250 member families. Touloumes said he hopes the new church will be a vibrant and spiritual attraction that adds to the substance and richness of the community.

"This really isn't about buildings," Touloumes said, "this is about building a community."

By Larissa Dudkiewicz (larissa.dudkiewicz@patch.com)



Photo: North Allegheny Patch - Cindy Cusic Micco
Source: <http://northallegheny.patch.com/articles/holy-trinity-construction-moves-forward-according-to-schedule>



Elder Aimilianos

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as “precious vessels of the Holy Spirit.” In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.

Gheronda, how to we communicate with God?

When we stand before God, we know that, in order to hear and be heard, we must enter into a personal dialogue with Him, and this can only take place by means of the intellect. God is spirit (cf. Jn 4.24), and He communicates Himself to man spiritually, addressing

Himself to man’s highest spiritual faculty: the intellect. When we open our mouths and cry out to God, God hears us, because He receives the waves of the mind which pulsate outward like sounds from the mouth. The intellect of course can generate such waves without the mouth. What is important is that it should speak to God.

What does is mean to “speak to God?”

Why do people engage in conversation? Because they want to communicate with each other, because one person wants to know the thoughts and feelings of an other, which is ultimately a desire to share in the life of the other. When I “speak” to God, therefore, it means that I communicate with God and am united to Him.

We must give our heart to someone; and if we give it to anyone on this planet, this person can harm us. We all seek boundless and unchangeable love, and infinite peace; but who can give it to us? ... Divine love is boundless and all-encompassing, whereas we are attached to [people] and the lifeless things of this world; and if those things are taken from us, our hearts are saddened and they suffer. One must love God first, and only then can one love one’s closest of kin and neighbors. We must not be as idols to one another, for such is not the will of God.

What happens when we speak to God?

Communication with God requires a movement towards God. It presupposes a passage of the intellect to the creator of the intellect, an exhalation of the mind to the source of inspiration (cf. Gen 2.7); a movement to Him from Whom the intellect came forth, and to Whom it naturally returns. To speak to God, then, means to turn towards God. It means that our intellect stretches forth to Him (cf. Phil 3.13). Our communication with God, our conversation with Him, our prayer to Him, is precisely this extension of our intellect, which is an extension of our entire being. It’s an effusion of my entire soul, the bending down of my intellect upon God.

My beloved, communicating with God requires that the intellect be kept in a certain tension, as if I were about to release it from a sling, and send it flying to God directly, without any deviation from its path.’ It requires, in other words, an exclusively dedicated movement of the intellect, in which the intellect is free from all thoughts, feelings, concepts, images, and indeed from anything whatsoever that might absorb it, attract its attention, and make it go astray.

Gheronda, how can I reach God so I can speak to Him?

Turning to God means that I stretch forth to Him with perseverance. Why? Because I’m down here on earth, and He’s in heaven above. Can I reach Him? No, I cannot ascend. He must descend in order to find me. When I want to receive Him and speak to Him, He has to come down from the heavens, empty Himself, and surrender His being to me (cf. Phil 2.7-8). Only thus can the exchange occur, namely, for me to enter Him, and for Him to enter me. And while I am awaiting His advent, the only distraction that I permit myself is the distraction of God.

Why, my beloved, do I call the arrival of God a “distraction”? Why do the Fathers use this term? Because we’ve become so egotistical, and our existence has become so false, we think that life consists in nothing more than our selfish, self-regarding behavior. As a result, our mind must abandon the place in which it’s become accustomed to dwell; it must break free from itself, and all its illusions, and turn to that which truly exists, that is, to God (cf. Ex 3.14). And this constitutes a “distraction” in the sense of a radical change of direction, a breaking away from our habitual self-centeredness. Viewed positively, “distraction” as communication with God means a resolute and stable orientation to God. It is a spiritual disposition that does not vacillate or change.

How do I know when I’ve truly found God?

When your intellect is focused in this manner, you’ll see that something strange happens. There, where you least expect it, in the foggy mists of your soul, in the gloom of your sins, your eyes will begin to shed tears. Like water from a spring, these tears will flow naturally, simply, and abundantly. And you’ll say: “What’s this? How is this happening?” It’s very simple. This is the support that God gives us to lean on as we begin the journey toward union with Him. It’s a sign of help from God, the first indication that He’s heard us.

Without my wanting it, then, without my seeking it, without my striving to achieve it; without any pressure, without me being put to any trouble, or being placed under any stress, God Himself sends me this sign. Think of these tears as the first bell that God rings to let us know He’s on His way. When such tears come, I know that help has arrived, and that God is somewhere in the vicinity.

Having received this help, we realize that, without any effort on our part, we have attained a measure of spiritual concentration. And this happened because our intellect brought into unity all that was divided within it, thereby creating a singular, unified orientation towards God. The intellect now ascends upward and is afraid of nothing. The more it contemplates the heights to which it must ascend, the more it is astonished, amazed, and encouraged, and thus nothing can halt its climb. Standing alone upon the heights, however, and facing the majesty of the invisible God, the intellect is seized with fear. It knows that it has arrived at the feet of God (cf. Ex 24.9-11).

Excerpted from “The Way of the Spirit”

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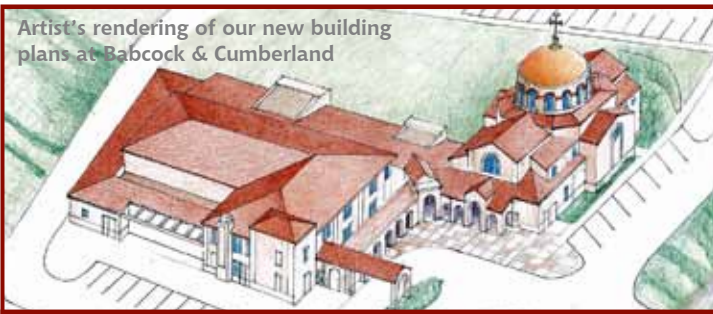
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INVESTING OUR BLESSINGS

This month's back page is offered in memory of the newly reposed priest of God, Father George Dimopoulos, a long-time clergyman of our Metropolis and a scholar who produced such works as "Patristic Orthodox Sermons on the Psalms," from which the commentary below was drawn. May God grant him eternal rest and a place at the Heavenly Altar.

Since man is a steward for God, he must treat money and wealth prudently. He should distribute it accordingly, for if he gives a little in this life, he buys much in the next; alms here purchase heaven; a gift of clothing buys the Kingdom of God; a drink of water or a slice of bread promises eternal blissful life (Matt. 10:42).

The farmer takes his filled bushel of wheat seed and goes out into his field. He grabs a fistful of seed and scatters it generously all over the ground. He does not consider if some of his seed falls upon stones, on weeds or infertile ground. He sows his field in hopes that at the proper time he will reap. Saint Paul beautifully illustrated this when he said: "He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. 6:9).

Scatter what is temporal in nature so that you may glean what is eternally real at harvest time. The Kingdom of Heaven for the merciful soul begins here and now. There are many who thirst: give them water to drink. There are multitudes that hunger: feed them with morsels of food. Hordes walk about naked and cold: clothe them with warm garments. Many are sick and imprisoned, stripped of dignity and pride: visit them and sow your seed of love. The Kingdom of Paradise starts here. Sow while you can. Winter lies just around the corner.

Scripture of the Month: "The righteous is generous and gives." (Psalm 37:21)