



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

SEPTEMBER 2018

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

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QUICK NEWS



The Holy Trinity Outreach Ministry collected 48 backpacks for needy children with the help of GOYA. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 10-13 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

SAINT EUSTATHIOS THE GREAT MARTYR - FEAST DAY: SEPTEMBER 20



O blessed one, since you emulated Christ's sufferings and drank His cup with eagerness, you became a partaker and joint-heir of His glory, O wise Eustathios; and since He is God of all things, He gave you divine power from Heaven's heights.

(Kontakion of St. Eustathios the Great Martyr)

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 (pittsburgh.goarch.org) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org) under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2018 Parish Council

Gerri Valliant, President

Dean A. Balouris	Michael Passodelis
George Danis	Joyce Athanasiou
George Dickos	Stephen Stearns
Alvin Backeris	Karen Georgiadis
Tom Germanos	Alex Trilivas
Ted Stewart	Jean Willow

Ministries

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

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

1 Peter 3.15

My beloved spiritual family,

There comes a time in every Christian's life that the faith becomes their own. When did that happen for you? And who was there to help make it happen?

If those questions made you pause, they were meant to. If you have been baptized and raised in the Orthodox Church from birth, you might interpret the question to mean, "I have been given the gift of being a member of the Body of Christ from childhood, but when did I really learn to embrace and appreciate that gift fully and who helped me do it?" Or, if you have come to the Orthodox Church from another place as an adult, you might interpret it to mean, "Who first introduced me to Orthodoxy and when did I accept the call to enter the Church?" Either way, it happened as part of God's plan for you.

Underlying your response is a basic premise of faith made by Saint Paul in discussing the idea of our role in bringing others into a right relationship with God. Though we may have been given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven through the Good News of Jesus Christ and the immersion through Holy Baptism into the promise of eternal life, sometimes we simply fall short of truly embracing those gifts for the eternal treasure (Matthew 6.20) and "pearl of great price" (Matthew 13.46) they are. So the Lord sends messengers, representatives, or "ambassadors," if you will, into our lives at just the right time to help us "wake up" to the fullness of that truth. Saint Paul puts it this way: "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5.20).

When I take grateful inventory of my own personal spiritual journey, I count with deep thanks and warmth many important guideposts and people. Each of us have our own and we need to give thanks for them. But the more challenging look at Saint Paul's concept of "ambassadors for Christ" is when we look at it in reverse: who is God sending me to as His ambassador? And will I be prepared and equipped to live up to that opportunity and call?

Saint Peter offers a three pieces of advice above: 1) Revere Christ as your Lord. It is not possible to bear witness of what Jesus Christ should be in anyone else's life if He is not already that in yours. 2) Be prepared to give an answer. Learn your faith so your mind will be able to relate to others what your heart already knows. There are lots of opportunities to do so here at Holy Trinity Church. See "Faith and Family Weekdays" on page 5. 3) Do so with gentleness and respect. "I'm right and you're wrong" is simply wrong. "This is the hope I have" works so much better. That also makes you an ambassador, not an adversary.

These are challenging times that have many people wanting to believe, hoping to find the faith for which their heart yearns. Though Orthodoxy does not proselytize (dictionary definition: "to try to persuade someone to change his or her religious beliefs, political party, etc., to your own"), we live in a world where more and more people claim no affiliation with a church at all. That does not mean they don't want one. It is incumbent on us to be ready for that conversation, question or plea for rescue. Whether they stumble upon Orthodoxy, or—better—are invited in, let's be there as the ambassadors of love, hope and faith they need. We're here because someone else was there for us. Now we need to "pass it on." Others are depending on us. Christ is depending on us. Let's be there for them both!

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services September

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies and services this month.

- Sept. 7, 6:00pm:** Nativity of Theotokos Vespers & Vigil
- Sept. 8, 9:00am:** Nativity of Theotokos Divine Liturgy
The above two services will be held at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA,
- Sept. 13, 5:00pm:** Exaltation of the Holy Cross Vespers
- Sept. 14, 8:30am:** Holy Cross Orthros/10:00am Liturgy
The above services will be held at the Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Classes Begin/Kickoff Picnic. Sept. 9

The first day of classes for Church School is Sunday, September 9 at **9:30am** with **Divine Liturgy and the children's sermon**, followed by classes after Holy Communion. Please be sure to register your returning child(ren) during Coffee Hour in the Gallery. Following class on that day, there will be an ice cream social for all the students on the lawn.

Church School/Youth Ministries Parent & Volunteer Signup

All Church School families are asked to sign up for hosting one Church School snacks Sunday. Even if there are multiple children in a family, each family is asked to pick just one Sunday. A list is available in the Gallery following Divine Liturgy. Help is still needed in all areas, including assistant teachers and volunteers for special events and projects for Church School and other youth ministries. (*Youth Protection Policy Note: All adults involved youth ministry contact will need to complete the youth safety and protection requirements of the "Policies for the Safety of Youth and Children" of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church.*)

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA Kick-Off September 16

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its annual Fall Kick-Off at the home of Jim and Yvonne Balouris on Sunday, September 16 following the Steelers game. Parents are asked to also attend for a parents' meeting at that event.

Youth Sunday/GOYA Fall Fest. September 23

Holy Trinity Church will highlight and feature the young people of our community on Youth Sunday, September 23. In addition, the GOYA will be offering baked goods and food for their Fall Fest during Coffee Hour. Please support our youth.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

"Faith and Family" Ministry To Resume September

Holy Trinity Church's expanded "Faith and Family" ministry for 2018/2019 will resume starting in September and

continue through May. Building on the fruits of this ministry since 2014 and taking into account the constructive feedback of the participants, each year offers something new. This year we are adding a Paraclesis Service on the second Thursday of each month. And we are always open to new ideas. See a great program, class or learning opportunity somewhere else you would like to try here? To submit ideas or feedback, please see Spiritual Life Ministry Chairperson Joyce Athanasiou (412-292-4205) or Father John. Please see the "Faith and Family Weekdays" 2018/2019 guide on page 5.

"A Second Helping of Holy Trinity" Event September

Are you new to Holy Trinity or just want to find out more about our Faith, Family and Community? Have you been wanting to introduce someone to our Church? This is the perfect opportunity! On Monday, September 17 from 6:30-8:00pm we will be hosting a casual evening in the Gallery. It will include a Meet and Greet with members of Holy Trinity, information about our Orthodox faith and highlights of some of our Ministries and Activities. We will offer light snacks along with our loving Holy Trinity Welcome! Come and join....bring someone along. For more information email Stacy at hospitality@holytrinitypgh.org. (Below is the flyer handed out at the Festival to invite people back.)

If you like our Festival, there is a lot more to our Church.

Come And See!

....John 1:46



Join us for:

- Church Tours**
12:00-8:00pm every hour on the hour during the Festival in the Church
- Brief Worship Service during Festival**
Every evening of the Festival 8:30-8:45 pm in the Church
- Weekly Sunday Worship:**
Divine Liturgy Every Sunday 9:30 am
- A "Second Helping" of Holy Trinity:**
Come talk to us and learn more about our Faith, Family, and Community
Monday, September 17, 6:30-8:00 pm

For questions and more info contact Stacy at hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org or visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org



985 Providence Blvd. • 412-366-8700

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

SEPTEMBER 14 The Elevation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

On Friday September 14th, the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Elevation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord. This is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. The miraculous appearance of the Cross to Emperor Constantine the Great and the discovery of the Cross of Christ by his mother, St. Helen, gave the first occasion to the Feast.

"Thy Cross, our Master, we adore, and thy Holy Resurrection do we glorify."

"O glorious and venerable Cross! O precious wood! O wonderful sign, by which sin, the devil and hell were overcome, and the world was redeemed, through the blood of Christ. Thou art exalted above all the cedars of the forest, for on thee hung the life of the world! On thee Christ gained the victory, and by His dying overcame death forever."

"O Lord Jesus Christ, we adore and bless Thee; for through Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

Why Do We Make The Sign Of The Cross?

To confess openly: 1) That we are Christians and adore Christ crucified. 2) That we are redeemed by the Cross, and that all blessings come to us from God through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ upon it.

The Child And The Sunday School

Parents have a great responsibility and a great privilege. They are responsible for the welfare of their children. From infancy, the parents must nourish the tender body with the best foods. Parents nourish the mind of the child with stories, poems, pictures and books. They nourish the child's emotions with love. But how do parents nourish the soul of the child?

In Holy Scriptures, we read "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Since a child possesses a soul, it must be nourished as extensively as the body and the mind. A child

must be trained in the spiritual life. Just as loving, caring parents teach children manual skills, so the parents must start training children from infancy by bringing them to the Divine Liturgy, having the child partake of Holy Communion, praying with the children at home.

When the child is old enough, he or she should be sent to Sunday School to learn about his or her faith and Orthodox Catholic Church. The child will grow closer to God. In Holy Scripture there is a verse that reads, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." What about your child? Do you want him to be pure and to do what is right? He must be trained in the Orthodox Church.

At a certain age, the child is ready for public school, and the parents do not hesitate to send him whether the child desires it or not. The parents do want the child to learn about the world, how to live in it, and how to work in it. As Christians, the parents should be even more eager to have the child grow in faith. Living the life the way in which God intended us to live it will bring us a great reward.

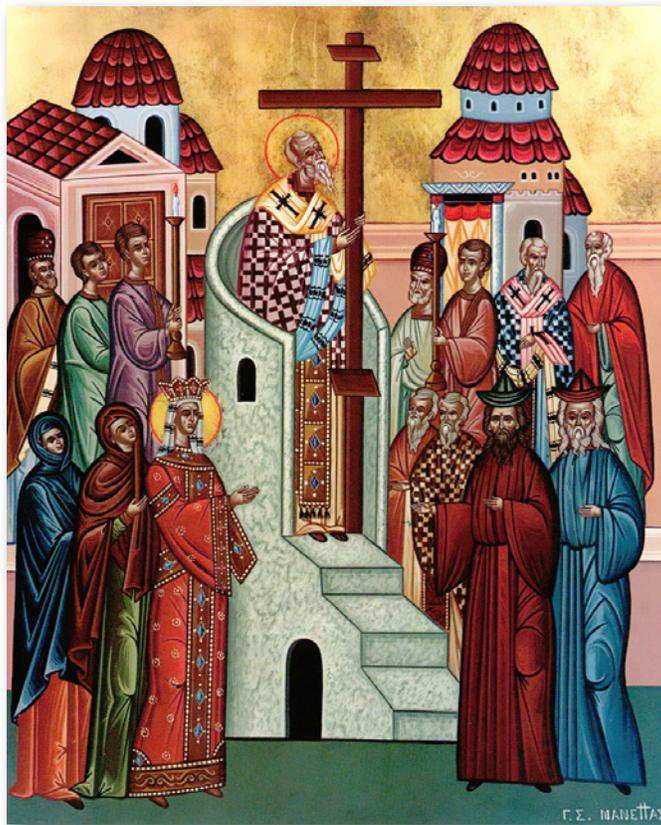
By attending Sunday School regularly, the child will learn in detail about the duties he or she must perform here on earth. The child will grow spiritually and the soul will be nourished.

Remember that the Sunday School is a handmaid of the Church. Its work is to lead the children to worship regularly in God's family. Its work is to train the children to be practicing members of Christ's Church. The teachers are there to help the children. They are there because they love God, His Church. And

His children. To each teacher, it is a privilege of serving God in teaching the Faith to the children, training them to seek the more excellent way, and leading them in the knowledge and obedience of God's Word so that in the end, they may attain everlasting life.

Beloved, Sept. 1st, marks the beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year. May we all have a blessed and fruitful New Year For the Glory of God and His Church. with His love and blessings,

*With the love of the Lord,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protosphyter and Internal Missionary*



☑ WORSHIP ☑ LEARN ☑ GROW ☑ PRAY ☑ SERVE
 ENGAGE YOUR SPIRIT BETWEEN SUNDAYS! SEE YOU THIS WEEK!

FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Sometimes once a week is just not enough to satisfy your spiritual yearning for a deeper experience of God. "Faith and Family Weekdays" is your opportunity to live your life in the Church between Sundays! With presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services, there are opportunities for Christians to "grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3.18). These faith and growth experiences can even make your Sunday Liturgies more powerful. Check it out this week and every week!

"Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." (Acts 5.42)

"FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS" MINISTRIES GUIDE: 2018-2019

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
DAILY	"Prayer Partners" Prayer Support Ministry	Every Day: In your personal prayers	EVERYONE can participate in this vital ministry. On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for daily!
MONDAYS 7:00pm	"Journey to Fullness" Faith Growth Ministry	Mondays: Fall and Spring Series Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26 / Apr 1, 8, 15; May 6, 13, 20; Jun 3, 10	This excellent video teaching series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the "fullness of the faith" found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Each segment offers an interactive question and answer period. Same series repeated in fall and spring.
SECOND TUESDAY 7:00pm	"Journey of Marriage" Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-May Sep. 11, Oct. 9, Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 12, Mar. 12, Apr. 9, May 14	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive "Journey of Marriage" materials developed by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. From "Hello!" to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian married life. It's fun, interactive and a great way to prepare.
WEDNESDAYS 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Study	"Explore the Word" Worship and Bible Study Ministry	Wednesdays Oct.-May Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; Nov. 7, 14, 28; Dec. 12, 19; Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30; Feb. 6, 13; May 8, 15, 22	Prayerfully read the Bible! In Deuteronomy 11, it says, "Lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul." Each Wednesday, come and open your heart in prayer in the Church and then meet in the Conference Room for the study of the Gospel of St. Matthew led by Father Radu Bordeianu.
THIRD THURSDAY 7:00am	"Prayer and Panera" Men's Ministry	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Sep. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 29, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16 Jun. 20	The Saint Nikodemos Men's Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then moves up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee, breakfast and Christian men's conversation.
THIRD THURSDAY 6:30pm St. George Chapel	"Monthly Paracletis Service" Worship	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Sep. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16 Jun. 20	The Paracletis, also know as the Service of Supplication, is offered monthly at St. George Chapel. It contains hymns and prayers asking the Lord for guidance, personal strength, and healing. The most popular form invokes the prayers of the Holy Theotokos. We will alternate that service with two others, one for St. Nektarios and the other for St. Paisios.
SECOND THURSDAY 7:00pm	"Orthodox Movie Night" Entertainment/Fellowship	2nd Thursday Sep.-June Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 9, Jun. 13	A monthly offering of inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it's a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the "same old stuff" on cable TV. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment? Watch for the monthly flyer with a description of each offering.

Watch for weekly updates, special events, guest speakers and youth activities in the Bulletin. Find more info at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/ffw

The Visitation Ministry... Agape Love in Action!

There is no doubt that love is and always will be a powerful force that crosses lines of race, ethnic backgrounds, cultures, and diversity. People have willingly gone to great sacrifice even to their death in order to save someone they love and care for deeply. Our Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed His all out of love for humanity, and that includes each one of us in the here and now.

My life story is pretty common... nothing spectacular. I grew up in a Christian home with parents who loved and guided me at an early age to serve in my little Presbyterian church. Ministry and service were at the core of my being. In return, I discerned God's calling to become a registered nurse and to offer my gift of compassion care to those in need... the sick poor, illiterate, and dying I have been in nursing for 31 years and feel blessed that I have experienced several specialty areas of hospital care, home health hospice and end-of-life, and currently health ministry. In 2000, I began to pray about converting to the Greek Orthodox faith tradition. My Chrismation occurred in 2002 before I married my husband Mark at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Mt. Lebanon.

As the years passed, we desired to participate more in church life, but the drive from Cranberry to South Hills became a challenge especially in the winter months. One Sunday, in September 2012, my husband and I walked into Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in the school house on Browns Lane. I will never forget how we were embraced by two special parishioners. They were strangers to us, but they chose to share their agape love with us in a mighty way. The smiles on Joyce Athanasiou and Leo Loomis were so warm and caring. I knew in an instant that God's love was in the Holy Trinity Church Family... and I wanted to be a part of

what they shared.

Over the past six years, I have served in our children's church school program and currently coordinate the Visitation Ministry. I cannot express enough how grateful I am to Father John and the Parish Council in supporting our Visitation Ministry efforts. This great team shares agape love, the unselfish, sacrificial love to our parishioners who are sick, homebound, and/or grieving loss of a loved one. Visitation Ministry is truly stewardship of talents, time and treasure... agape love in action. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, the Apostle Paul describes

love. I believe that he is explaining to us that we may not feel love for everyone who comes our way in life. However, we are to live in a manner that God's love fills us and overflows to others especially those in the most difficult of times. Our agape love is patient, kind, grounded in

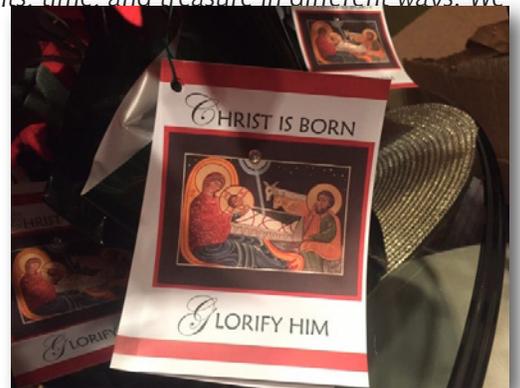
our Orthodox faith, and rooted in hope for those seeking God's healing presence. As Visitation Ministry team members, we usually don't have the answers to why people suffer or experience various hardships. Yet, we do know that we are called to obey God and share God's agape love. Troubles and life challenges will not overpower God's agape love flowing through us. We offer His hope, care, and helping hands to those in need.

This fall, the Visitation Ministry Team is inviting parishioners to offer their talents, time, and treasure in different ways. We have four mini-teams that are described below:

- 1) Cards/ Phone Call Ministry: This team works from their own homes by mailing cards every month and conducting regular phone calls to those who are hospitalized or homebound. Our very own Corinne Russell designs and crafts lovely greeting cards. When needs are shared over a phone call, then we get into action for accessing community resources. We also coordinate our annual honoring of Veterans in November. If interested in participating on this team or wanting to add a family member to our card/phone call list, then see Jan Petredis or Sherry Clayton.
- 2) Home Visitation: A team visitor schedules a visit ahead



PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION



of time with a sick or homebound parishioner to offer encouragement and support. Twice a year (Christmas and Pascha) a gift is delivered as a symbol of agape love from our Holy Trinity Church Family.



Amy Armanious and Sondra Balouris are always seeking home visitors.

3) **Creative Team:** These team members design and create beautiful gifts such as flower arrangements, Pascha baskets, icons,

Banners of Faith, greeting cards, crochet crosses, lap blankets, and much more. Parishioners who enjoy expressing their love through art and color are strongly encouraged to contact Mary Ellen Stewart. All are welcome... no special experience is necessary. We have fun, spiritual, and hands-on craftwork sessions!

4) **Bereavement Support:** These team members have specific skills in assisting parishioners who are end-stage in their illness as well as offering supportive listening to family caregivers. We offer bereavement follow-



up care to the families who desire a helping hand as they grieve the loss of their loved one. Remember, a normal grieving process is two years. A team member will offer companionship along the bereavement journey. A special program called GriefShare is used to assist one with individualized support. To learn more, contact Amy Armanious.

Lastly, agape love endures and stands firm... showing acceptance and understanding of others when they need it the most. Our Holy Trinity Church Family is a group of believers who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within and is not shy in asking Him for extra capacity to love and give to those in need. Love is not only in words, but is action via our talents, time and treasure. Let us be committed to another person's well-being by putting the Good Samaritan story in action by first starting in our Holy Trinity Church Family.



In Christ's Love,
Amy Armanious
Visitation Ministry Coordinator



Holy Trinity Stewardship 2018 Pledge Progress

Goal: 335 pledges. Actual: 245

Have you submitted yours yet?



Holy Trinity
20

Four-Person Scramble
Diamond Run Golf Club
132 Laurel Oak Drive
Sewickley, PA 15143
412.741.2020

Date:
Schedule:
Proceeds:



Greek Orthodox Church
2018 Golf Outing



Monday, June 25, 2018
10:45—11:45 a.m. Check-in
11:00—Noon Lunch
12:15 p.m. — Shotgun Start

Benefit Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church



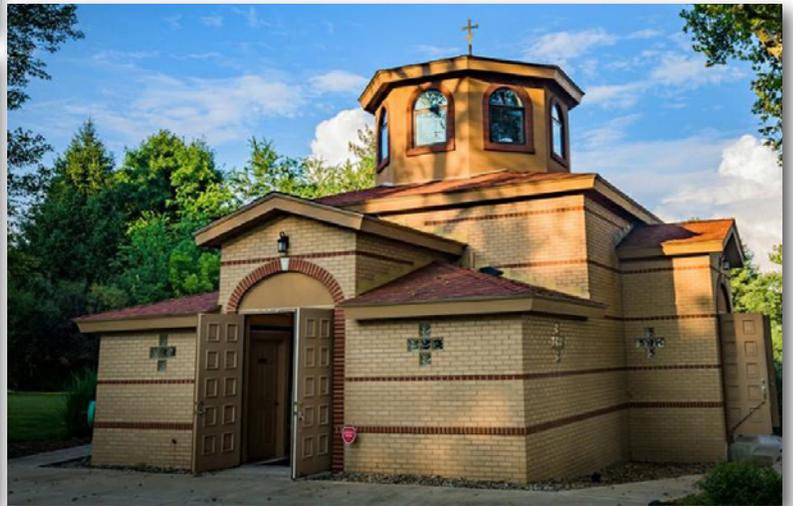
Community Life Photo Gallery | Summer Camp and Summer Services



Summer 2018: Camper and staff from Holy Trinity Church attended our Metropolis Summer Camp in great numbers once again! Top left: JOY (Week 2); Top Right: GOYA (week 4); Left: Members of the Summer Camp Core Staff were welcomed and thanked for faithful service to the young people of the Church following Divine Liturgy on July 15.



August 2018: (Below) Paraclesis services to the Theotokos were held at our beautiful Saint George Chapel during the first fifteen days of August. Special prayers were offered on August 13 for the Holy Trinity students returning to school and heading off to college, invoking God's divine protection on them and praying for blessings in their studies.



Summer Missions, Games and Feasts | Community Life Photo Gallery

July 16/17 2018: Holy Trinity teens participated in the annual GOYA summer trip to Cedar Point and St. Gregory Palamas Monastery, both in Ohio. The first day featured hours of fun and rides at the "Roller Coaster Capital of the World." The second day the GOYANs offered help with work projects around the monastery and enjoyed a talk and discussion session with the Abbot, Father Joseph.



July 29: (Right) GOYANs attended a Pirates game for a fun day at PNC Park. The Mets won 1-0 but split the four-game series with the Pirates.



August 6: (Above left) 36 clergy participated in the Holy Transfiguration Monastery 50th Anniversary Festal Liturgy.



August 19: (Above right) The Holy Trinity FOCUS outreach drive for needy students collected 48 backpacks for the Manchester Charter School.

Holy Trinity Church's Stewardship Ministry has been getting national attention! At the request of the Archdiocese Department of Stewardship, our parish was one of three featured at the 44th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in Boston. These two pages are the actual handout prepared by Archdiocese, shared here for our community to appreciate the historical progress and good work of our Stewardship team.

TRANSFORMING THE HEART OF A COMMUNITY: *from Dues to Stewardship*

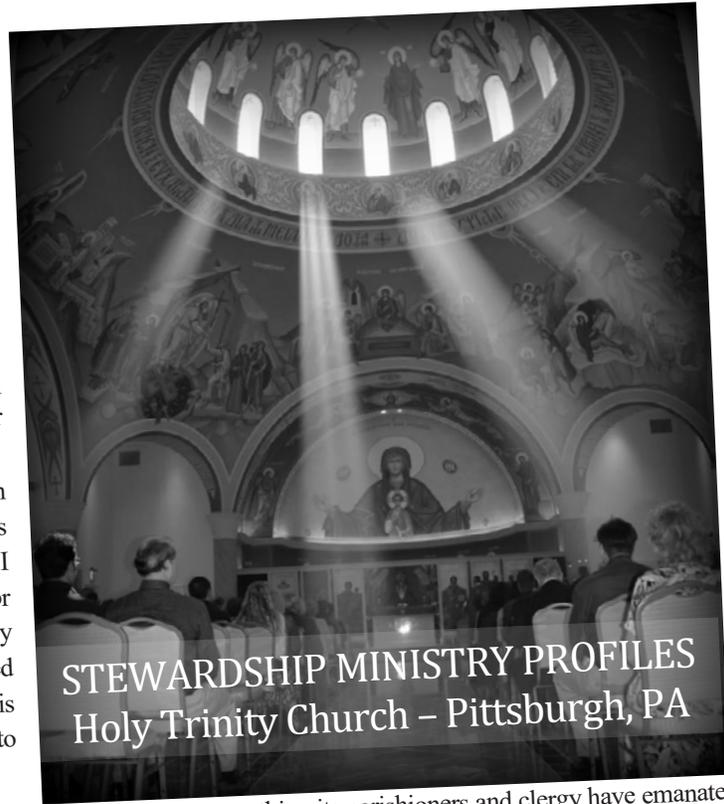
Fr. John Touloumes arrived at Holy Trinity in August 1993 with a mandate from then Bishop (later Metropolitan) Maximos: Transition the parish of almost 200 families from dues to stewardship. Within four months, the team built its stewardship ministry – in Greek and English – and the parish has never looked back. After 88 years on Pittsburgh's north side, Holy Trinity broke ground in December 2011 on a new complex that Metropolitan Savas opened on Pentecost weekend in June 2013 (the 90th anniversary of the parish). The parish is on target to pay off its mortgage by 2020 – or sooner.

Today, Holy Trinity is over 270 families and, in 2018, it celebrates its 95th anniversary as well as 25 years of Fr. Touloumes' ministry. "In truth, I believe the best days and years still lie ahead for this parish," said Fr. Touloumes. "When Holy Trinity first adopted stewardship, it was applied at the most basic level. Now, stewardship is entirely organic in our parish. It's integrated into everything in the life of the community."

Embracing stewardship at Holy Trinity began by recognizing that everything its parishioners and clergy have emanates from God – their very lives, their health and all worldly possessions. In recognition of this, the parish gives its time, talents and treasure (the three Ts) as thanks to God and *does not* view stewardship as an obligation, dues or a tax. "Our stewards are energized are energized and committed to the mission of the church," added Mike Kritiotis, stewardship committee member.

That commitment stems from the personal nature of the stewardship program, which is most effective according to Stewardship team members. When people are approached and asked in a one-to-one manner about giving their time and talent to Holy Trinity they almost always respond in the affirmative. "We have spent years building trust within our parish – they trust our council, our ministry leaders and our clergy," said stewardship committee member Charlie Petrides. "And people respond to trust and to the personal nature of our stewardship program."

In return, parish and ministry leaders are open about their annual goals (not just financial) and they report on progress against those goals to the entire parish. Further, Holy Trinity surveys its parishioners (anonymously) and is open to suggested changes and responsive to criticism. This, too, is part of the personal approach Holy Trinity takes to stewardship and another way it engages parishioners of all ages and backgrounds. "Stewardship is personal," said stewardship committee member Ted Stewart. "It's about connecting and engaging people. The face of our parish is many faces and many stories. Successful stewardship shows people a familiar story they can connect with, whether they are a millennial, a young family or senior citizens whose children and grandchildren are part of the parish. Stewardship is not just about numbers or need, it's about our relationship with God."



(continued)

Stewardship Lessons Learned from Holy Trinity Pittsburgh:

1. Build on, and recognize, the successes of the past;
2. Learn from successful models;
3. Harvest the talents of individuals who believe in – and can develop and promote – stewardship;
4. Uses existing resources and adopt them to fit your parish needs;
5. Engage all constituencies of your parish – leave no one out so you get buy-in from the community;
6. Use outside resources and professional talent whenever possible;
7. Promote and build enthusiasm while also being open to feedback and answering questions;
8. Stewardship is stewardship, not dues in disguise;
9. Stewardship always works when done properly and will increase parish income over dues;
10. In your church, everything is stewardship;
11. Change the language to stewardship;
12. Adopt new technologies and workflows that integrate a stewardship mindset;
13. Stewardship is a synergistic process of clergy **and** laity;
14. Stewardship is an act of faith, not a gamble or just a way to balance the books;
15. Keep stewardship fresh and continuously build momentum – or it will die;
16. Celebrate stewardship on a community level; and
17. Build a stewardship team. There are laborers The Lord has sent to the vineyard and they are ready to plant along with you. We plant. He will make it grow.

Many thanks to Holy Trinity Stewardship Team Leaders:
Mike Kritiotis, Ted Stewart, Charlie Petrides and Fr. John Touloumes



DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM
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Additional note: The Metropolis also hosted a live webinar featuring the Holy Trinity Stewardship story on February 5 and March 1, 2018. The recording of that webinar is available on the Holy Trinity YouTube channel at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/videos. Search for "Stewardship" and it will be one of those listed.



St. Theophan the Recluse

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 inspired by their wisdom.

Gheronda, how can reason be used to strengthen our faith?

If sound ideas are kept and preserved in the mind, then there still is something on which the man who has begun to think about his salvation can gain a toehold.

But most sinners do not lose their faith, or according to the Apostle, the pattern of sound teaching, they only become morally corrupted. For such people it is enough to cleanse the thoughts which were darkened by forgetfulness, and to restore their weakened conviction, which arose from negligence and lack of attention towards every good. Sit, and by yourself scrutinize everything: what you must believe, how to live, and what to expect—according to the Creed of the Orthodox faith and the commandments of the Lord. If you find this difficult, then look in the Catechism. If you cannot even do this, then talk with someone; it would be best to speak most intimately with your spiritual father.

When you do this, the sovereign truth will arise victorious within you. With authority and power, it will start to press back the wrongness of your actions, your inward dispositions, and the feelings which have taken possession of you. Then it will be easy for your reason to expose your blindness, to strike your deadness, and to drive away your carelessness.

Does this mean reason can lead us to God?

Anyone can reason with himself about salvation, even a child. This is not the same as scientific reasoning. Every truth which is taken into the mind immediately and by itself inspires a person with that which it requires. Just be conscientious and restore within yourself a genuine desire for good, with a willingness to follow the instructions of the truth. In every way possible, you must aim your reasoning towards the goal of acting on your soul in order to awaken and mobilize it to work for salvation.

What are some specific ways we can use reason to support our faith?

When you are considering a matter, do not philosophize, making up all sorts of questions for yourself. But having understood the subject of your reasoning, put the part that moves you the most into your heart and meditate upon it.

Do not skip quickly from one idea to another. This will distract your thoughts rather than collecting them so that they can have an effect on the soul. The sun, for example, would not warm any creature on the earth if it moved over the face of the earth too quickly. Let the sympathy of your heart to an idea be the full measure of your reasoning about this or that subject. Lead every idea to your deepest feelings and sensibilities, and do not retreat from it until it penetrates your heart.

If possible, do not leave an idea naked, in a rational form only. Clothe it in some kind of image and then carry it in your

mind as a constant stimulus. Best of all—if it is possible—concentrate and focus in one image several striking presentations. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk writes in this vein, so that a sinner might impress upon his mind the danger of his situation. “Above you is the sword of truth, under you is hell which is ready to devour you, in front of you is death, behind you is the great multitude of your sins, on your right hand and on your left are crowds of malicious enemies. Do you wish to stay in carelessness?” An image is easier to remember and keep in mind, and it acts more powerfully, making a more vivid impression.

It seems like a good start, Gheronda, but how do we move from reason to faith?

Do not remain with reasoning alone, however, but alternate it with prayer. Now you must know that here we do the same as when we want to uproot a tree which has grown deep into the earth. We come to a tree and begin to shake it; exerting the strength of reasoning with ourselves, we urge and persuade ourselves. We shake it, but are not able to uproot it, because its roots have grown deep into the earth. We cannot uproot it because there is no strength within us of our own; consequently we have no power to cut off these roots. So, seek for help!

If, during your reflection, a certain feeling sinks into your heart, or if at any other time a certain deep warmth and tenderness awaken by themselves, then arise and pray. Pray, so that God may sanctify your work with your stony petrified heart; so that He may give this reflection the strength which both destroys and creates; or so that He may, by Himself, come and soften, awaken, and wound.

In this prayer, pray by yourself; speak about that which lies heavy upon your heart, and reveal your urgent needs in all confidence, with plain, childlike, and short words. But even better, fall down before God without words, in a painful appeal to Him.

Do not philosophize; do not compose your prayers. Draw near in simplicity with your need only—as a sick one draws near a doctor, as a prisoner to his deliverer, as a paralytic to the Lord—with a sincere and candid confession of your illness and your weak inability to overcome yourself, and entrust yourself to God’s all-powerful action.

How can we tell if this is working?

What are we seeking through this work? We are seeking the activating grace of God. To influence us, God’s grace is in the habit of choosing certain indirect means, as it was described above in the section on the extraordinary actions of God’s grace. Walking in the midst of these and similar exercises, you will touch the vessels and bearers of grace. Perhaps upon you too, from somewhere or other, its life-giving dew will descend and revive the sprouts of the spiritual life which have become frozen within you.

*Excerpted from “Turning the Heart to God”,
(Conciliar Press, 2006)*



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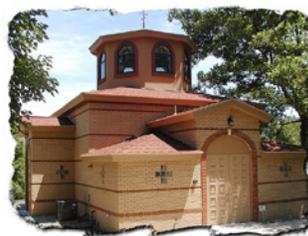
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THE THERAPEUTIC LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Orthodox Church is a hospital for the soul and a living, therapeutic organism that can make us whole and bring healing of body and soul. It is not a legalistic or juridical institution wherein we are expected to plead our case before an angry judge, trying to convince him we are worthy of mercy. The Church is not about rules or ritual, but about participating in the spiritual therapy intended to cure us of the sickness of sin and to restore us to spiritual wholeness and health.



This spiritual therapy is to be found in the ascetic and mystical (sacramental) life of Orthodoxy. Just as a hospital treats physical health and sickness with the individual in mind in order to maximize the benefit, so does the Church offer her therapy in a way that meets individual needs. This therapy leads to the transformation of self and restoration to holiness.

It's all about becoming, not being; it's about transformation of ourselves and our restoration to holiness, not making God keep a bargain with us to give us what we want or expect. This is because each one of us has a different complex of illnesses, and we respond in different ways to the various spiritual, therapeutic regimens available to us in the Church.

The bottom line is that we avail ourselves of the healing, therapeutic life of the Church. Just as a hospital would be worthless to us if we failed to show up for a scheduled surgery, so too must we avail ourselves of the therapy the Church of Christ has to offer us.

Excerpted from "The Morning Offering" by Abbot Tryphon (2014, Ancient Faith Publishing)

Scripture of the Month: "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases." (Psalm 103.3)