



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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

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QUICK NEWS



The GOYA Boys Junior team celebrate their championship win in the Metropolis Cleveland tournament. 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 page 7 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

SAINT THEODORE OF TYRON - FEAST DAY: FEB. 17



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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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

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Alvin Backeris Dean A. Balouris

George Dickos Tom Germanos

Karen Georgiadis Richard Paese

Michael Passodelis Stephen Stearns

Ted Stewart Alex Trilivas

Gerri Valliant 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."



We know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1 John 4.16

My beloved spiritual family,

Here we are in February, known popularly as the "month of love" because of the observance of the secular holiday of Valentine's Day. Jewelers, card companies and all manner of merchandisers flood the media with advertisements of ways to express "perfect love." But is that the whole story of love? While Valentine's Day and other relationship-focused exercises are good reminders of the need to nurture and grow the wonderful bond of love in marriage so couples do not take it for granted, any definition of love that is limited to those in a romantic relationship with another person is simply too small.

As Christians, every form of love we experience in this life starts with God, Who "is love" (1 Jn. 4.8) and the author of "perfect love." And that love does not require us to "fall in love" with another romantically, but to believe in love, live love and share love, not just with one other person but with all people. Saint John the Evangelist captures that view of love this way: "If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jn. 4.12). That is a definition which includes everyone, married or not.



In our Holy Trinity Vision Statement ("Faith. Family. Community."), each of the components is made possible by love, and in that love we are all called to live. As Bishop John Abdallah writes, "We are not self-sufficient; rather, we are made to be in relationships. These relationships need God's love to envelop us continually, which is accomplished through Christ in the Holy Spirit." Likewise, the Russian author Father Alexander Elchaninov says, "Faith originates in love; love, in contemplation. It is impossible not to love Christ...We have only to yield to Him, to the contemplation of His image—in the Gospels, in the saints, in the Church—and He will take possession of our hearts." And that contemplation draws the focus of our love away from ourself and towards God and others. "The more a man gives up his heart to God," continues Father Alexander, "to his vocation and to men, forgetful of himself and of that which belongs to him, the more lighthearted he will feel, until he attains peace, quiet, joy—the attributes of a simply and humble soul."

As we pass through this "month of love," then, let no one be left out. May those called to the unique and wonderful love of marriage continue their shared walk to the Kingdom of God, hand-in-hand with hearts filled with love. And may all of us, in the many ways the Lord provides through this community and those around us, heed the words of Saint Paul in 1 Cor. 14.1 in every relationship we have: "Make love your aim."

Pastorally and paternally yours
in the love of Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday ServicesFebruary

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. Guide to locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

- **Fri. Feb. 1, 7:00pm:** Great Vespers of the Presentation of the Lord at the Presentation Church ("Ypapanti") in East Pittsburgh.
- **Sat. Feb. 2, 9:00am Orthros/10:00am Liturgy:** The Presentation of the Lord at the Presentation Church ("Ypapanti") in East Pittsburgh.
- **Sat. Mar. 2:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)

Saturdays of Souls March 2, 9, 16

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" to commemorate those who have fallen sleep in the Lord. Services are held at the Saint George Chapel located at Holy Trinity Cemetery. See the enclosed flyer to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA Basketball Practice February 5, 11, 20

GOYA will hold basketball practice during the remainder of the 2019 basketball tournament season on February 5, 11 & 20 from 6:30-8:30pm at Hosack Elementary School, 9275 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101.

GOYA Basketball Tournament February 22-24

Our Holy Trinity GOYA families will be participating in one more Metropolis Basketball Tournament this season. The last tournament is February 22-24 at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Pittsburgh. May God grant all our teens, coaches and chaperons good skills, safe travels, protection from injury and the joy of fellowship in Christ with their fellow teens in Christ.

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOYFebruary 10, 17

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY: Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after Church School class. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE" on Feb. 10 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Feb 17.

IV On-The-Go March 16

Attention teens: Save the date because Ionian Village is coming to you! "IV On-the-Go" is a traveling retreat program that promises to give the young people of our community a taste of the unique and interactive approach to youth ministry from the Office of Ionian Village. IV On-the-Go provides

the opportunity for even more young people to interact with the amazing Ionian Village ministry right here in America. Just like at camp, participants will encounter our Orthodox faith in an up close and unforgettable way. See the enclosed flyer for details and sign up today!

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos Meeting February 3

Attention Philoptochos current and new members: The Philoptochos Regular Meeting, Sunday, January 20, 2019 has been rescheduled to Sunday, February 3, 2019. Also, the Sunday, February 17, 2019 meeting will not take place, since a meeting will have already taken place for the month of February. There are many new things going on. Please come be a part of a wonderful ministry having fun and working with your fellow parishioners to help those in need! We will be meeting in the Fireside Room after Divine Liturgy.

Philoptochos Cookbook Submissions.Due March 31

Holy Trinity Philoptochos is calling for submissions of recipes for their new cookbook. Recipes are due March 31. See the enclosed flyer/form for information. Thank you!

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Valentine's Day Community Breakfast February 10

Holy Trinity GOYA is hosting its annual Valentine's Day Breakfast on Sunday, February 10, following Liturgy. Our very active GOYA will be using a portion of the funds from this event for their outreach ministry, so your freewill offerings are greatly appreciated. Please plan on staying after Liturgy for this delicious homemade meal. See the enclosed flyer.

Saint Photios Awards Nominations Due February 17

The Sixth Annual Metropolis of Pittsburgh Saint Photios Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday, May 11. See the enclosed flyer. Nominations for two recipients from Holy Trinity Church are due on Sunday, February 17 and must be submitted using the enclosed form. Thank you for your input.

George Athanasiou Ordination February 18

By the Grace of God and by the laying on of hands of His Eminence Metropolitan Savas, George Athanasiou, a son of our own Holy Trinity Church, will be ordained to the HJoly Diaconate on Monday, February 18, at Holy Trinity Church. An invitation to the entire community was included in the last *Herald*. All are welcome, but reservations are required for the lunch and are going quickly. Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org to make online reservations today while space is available.

Saint George Chapel Consecration Weekend ...May 4 & 5

Please mark your calendar for the historic event of the Consecration of our community's Saint George Chapel on Saturday, May 4. Also, a Consecration Banquet will be held on Sunday, May 5, following the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church. Watch for more information in the coming weeks, but please save the dates from now so you don't miss it!

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

Rich in Good Works

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

"Do good, be rich in good works, be generous and willing to share." (1 Tim. 6:18)

St. Paul offers a variety of practical advice to Timothy and the church he is responsible for in the chapter 6 of his letter. But much of his advice touches on the Christian's

attitude toward wealth and his use of it. A Christian should be content to have the necessities of life. It is dangerous to want to become wealthy: "The love of money is the root of all evils" (verse 10).

St. Paul does not, however, teach that money itself is evil, or that Christians cannot be rich. Verses 17 to 19 are addressed to wealthy Christians, instructing them in the right use of their wealth. Yes, wealth has its dangers, but the wealth of this world also offers a way to lay up eternal wealth, if it is used properly and generously.

It Says "Do Good, Be Rich In Good Works."

Question: Which Works Are Good?

Those works are good, which are done according to God's will. We perform good works, if we, with good intention, do those things which please God, and abstain from those displeasing Him.

So, which are the principal good works?

- 1) Prayer, by which we keep in communion with God.
- 2) Fasting and self-denial, by which we restrain ourselves from sin and evil inclinations.
- 3) Almsgiving, by which are understood all works of mercy, which we do to our neighbor as an outcome and proof of our dutiful love for him.

How many kinds of works of mercy are there?

Two: Spiritual and Corporeal.

Which are called spiritual works of mercy?

Those that are done for the good of the soul of our neighbor, namely:

- 1) To correct sinners;
- 2) to counsel the doubtful;
- 3) to instruct the ignorant;
- 4) to comfort the afflicted;
- 5) to forgive offences;
- 6) to bear wrongs patiently;
- 7) to pray for the living and the dead.

Which are called corporeal works of mercy?

Those that are done for the temporal welfare of our fellow men. They are:

- 1) To feed the hungry;
- 2) to give drink to the thirsty;
- 3) to clothe the naked;

- 4) to harbor pilgrims or strangers;
- 5) to visit the prisoners;
- 6) to visit the sick;
- 7) to bury the dead.

Are all works that are good in themselves acceptable to God?

No; only those are acceptable to God—and will be rewarded by Him—which are done in the state of grace and a good intention; that is, in order to please God, or because it is His Holy Will.

Can anyone be saved without good works?

No: God rewards everyone according to his works. It is not enough for a Christian to abstain from evil in order to be saved; he is also obliged to perform good works. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20).

"Be generous and willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:18). Beloved, our religion—that is Christianity—is a religion of caring and sharing with others.

Sundays of Preparation

Before Great Lent (The Great Fast) begins, our Church prescribes for the faithful a period of preparation. We are not simply dropped into the fast suddenly, but lovingly and pastorally walked right up to the doorstep of Lent by the wisdom of the Church. The hymns and teachings of this season are found in the book of hymns called "The Tridion."

The first Sunday of the Tridion and preparation this year is February 17th, the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee. From this parable we learn the power of humble prayer, humility. Read Luke 18:10-14.

The second Sunday of preparation (February 24th this year), is called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son or the Loving Father. This parable is a picture of repentance (the younger son) of forgiveness, of envy (the older brother), and of God's love. Read Luke 15:11-32.

The third preparatory Sunday (March 3rd this year) is "Meat Fare" Sunday. It is called "Meat Fare" because as the Church eases us into the fast, it is the last day of consuming meat until Pascha. The Gospel lesson for this Sunday, from Matthew 25:31-46, describes the Second Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgement.

The theme of last Pre-Lenten Sunday (March 10th this year) is forgiveness, so it is called the "Forgiveness Sunday." It is also the last Sunday before Great Lent/Fast begins and the last day of consuming dairy products until Pascha, so it is also known as "Cheese Fare" Sunday. The theme teaches about the expulsion of mankind from Paradise and ways to regain it: to forgive, to observe the laws of fasting humbly, and to "lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth." Read Matthew 6:14-21. Every Orthodox Christian is called upon to prepare himself during this pre-lenten period of four Sundays for the GREAT FAST which starts Monday, March 11th.

*Have a blessed Pre-Lenten Season!
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protosphyter and Internal Missionary*

The Many Forms of Stewardship

Well, Holy Trinity the New Year has arrived and has gotten off to a quick start. We first want to thank each and every Steward of the Church who has given of their time, talents and treasures to God, His church and the community at large. As the needs continue to grow within our parish we are calling on everyone who calls "Holy Trinity" their church to join us in meeting the ever-increasing demands that we face throughout the year.

One goal that each and every one of us should always maintain is to teach our youth the importance of serving God with their time, talents and treasures. One is never too young to learn these treasured virtues and it is up to us to teach the younger generations. The Book of Proverbs is filled with guidance on how to teach our youth and one specific reference is found in Proverbs 4:1-8, (OSB).

The question to ask yourself is who has God placed on your heart to share with them the virtues of Stewardship in serving God? It may be someone you don't know or you know very well. Through life experiences one thing is certain is that for sure, and that is we are "helpers" to one another. We are never too old or too young to learn and God always provides instruction for both the teacher and the student.

In this monthly edition, the following article was provided from one of our own, Demetri Germanos. Most of you have watched Demetri grow up from a little child into the young man he is today. I have only been in Demetri's life for a short period of time but the impact he has made on my life has been nothing short of amazing. He has been an active member of this parish for many years in a variety of capacities; his parents ensured he along with his siblings were taught how to become responsible and active Christians in the life of God's church.

Currently, Demetri has been placed in a new role where he can further employ his time, talents and treasures. He is currently undertaking more responsibility by furthering his education in college as well as preparing to become an Officer in the United States Military. This a great opportunity for Demetri to continue to employ his Stewardship on a greater scale for God.

We are proud to see all that God is doing in his life and many of you have played a significant role in helping to shape him into the man God is calling him to be. Let us continue to be used by God not only in the life of Demetri but in the lives of those He has set before you each and every day.

Demetri Germanos: In His Own Words

"One of the hardest and most important decisions I made up to this point in my life was joining the United States Army with the goal of one day becoming an officer. This is a difficult honor to achieve and is a path taken by few. When the interest first came to me I was completely lost and had very little direction on how to begin my path on joining the United States Military.

One day after church my mother introduced me to a fellow parishioner whom she knew that had served in the military as an officer. Ted Stewart and I became quick friends as he took the time to share his life and military experiences with me. Along the way he also encouraged and challenged me. The time he spent with me laid the path for my decision. An important part of being an officer is also being a good leader and Ted is a great example of a leader and a steward of the church. Listening to his experiences allowed me to see how serving God is an important part of serving our country. With his guidance I decided this is where I fit.

Being a part of this great parish has allowed me to surround myself with many people who have touched and influenced my life. I appreciate the fact that our Church allows all ages to work together as God's stewards and I really appreciate my good friend, Ted. Having Stewardship in the parish requires us to share our God given talents with others, and Ted demonstrated this directly to me. I hope to continue to be a steward of God, our church and our country. God Bless America."

*In Christ's Love,
Ted Stewart*

Stewardship Ministry Co-Chairman



The Stewardship of Mentoring at Holy Trinity in action: Ted Stewart and Demetri Germanos

Editor's comment: I am so thankful to Ted and Demetri for collaborating on the inspiring article above. It is a wonderful demonstration of the relationships and integration of all ages in the life and ministry of Holy Trinity Church. Just a few days after catching Ted and Demetri for their photo, I noticed this touching moment during Coffee Hour. I suppose it's never too early to start mentoring!



- Fr. John

Community Life Photo Journal | Vasilopita 2019

January 6, 2019: Holy Trinity Philoptochos sponsored its annual Vasilopita celebration for the Feast of Saint Basil. After the prayer, representatives from each ministry of the parish were brought forward to receive a slice of the blessed bread. A collection was also taken that day in support of the Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, New York, a Philoptochos-supported ministry that serves children in need.



Acolyte Ministry St. Nikodemos Men's Ministry Photographers Longest Member Present



Capital Campaign Parish Council Spiritual Life Ministry Holy Trinity Choir Visitation Ministry



Church School Ministry HOPE Ministry Cemetery Committee Outreach Ministry Seniors Fellowship Ministry



Philoptochos Herald Assembly Team Young Adult Ministry Stewardship Ministry



St. Spyridon Library Greek Festival Committee Parish Development Committee Chanters Three Hierarchs Bookstore



GOYA Teen Ministry Hospitality Ministry Longest Married Couples Present Newest Member Present JOY Ministry



January 25-27, 2019: Holy Trinity GOYA sent three teams, along with their coaches, chaperons, advisors and fans, to the Metropolis GOYA Regional Basketball Tournament in Cleveland. The Boys Junior team won the championship game and the Boys Senior Girls teams both took second place. Thank you to the entire GOYA family!





“Like Mother, Like Daughter”

Church School Teachers Continue the Tradition from Generation to Generation

A Holy Trinity Herald Feature Article by Anita Sinicrope-Maier, MSW

There was no Church School in my church when I was a child. I had to rely on my mother, my extended family, or sometimes the translation from my Yiayia, who only spoke Greek, to learn the teachings of my faith. Even then, the beliefs that all espoused were not always uniform, and the Bible was almost never mentioned. Another problem stemmed from the fact that we were told that my Yiayia followed the “old calendar,” and so we thought of her practices as more strict. My mother, however, was very devout and did her best to pass on what she had garnered from her own teachings of the church. Since the Liturgy in those days was entirely in Greek, I did not know what the words in the service actually meant. So I learned the practices by rote and followed the rituals my mother modeled such as when to make my Cross and when to say the few prayers that I had learned in Greek. I always wondered though what my Protestant and Catholic friends were learning in their Church School and CCD classes. It all seemed so mysterious to me!

Today, over seventy years later, I realize how fortunate we are here at Holy Trinity to have our weekly Church School and the amazing dedicated teachers that help our children learn the teachings of the church, the services, the Bible and how to live as a good Greek Orthodox Christian. Faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 13.13) are a cornerstone of our faith, but in a world that is often chaotic, sometimes hateful, often cruel and full of doubters, we need to teach our children the other

side of the coin. Through our faith, we can adopt an attitude of hope and love which can indeed help to change the world.

Just as I learned about my religion from generation to generation, we have Church School teachers here at Holy Trinity who handed down this concept of service to the church and community to their daughters who then in their adulthood began teaching Church School. Many are teaching the next generation of children, such as children and grandchildren, of their very own teachers! As I did the interviews for this article of the four families who exemplify this phenomenon, I was opened to a whole new world of creativity, dedication and enlightenment that I had missed myself as a child. The foundation that is laid in the process of attending Church School accounts for a great deal of the extraordinary character and achievements of the children in our parish.

As a psychotherapist, I am quite aware of the process and results of “modeling” that occurs in families. The old saying, “do as I say and not as I do” is not half as effective in raising children as the modeling we provide from our own lives. Children pick up on the good and the bad that parents display as they are growing up. In these four families, none of the mothers said to their daughters that they also “should teach Church School.” However, through their experiences with their own classes and teachers, the daughters developed a desire to give back and be a part of the process of helping shape children into good citizens and people of faith.

Mother: Penny Georgiadis

Penny Georgiadis began teaching Church School soon after she got married and came to Holy Trinity. Except for a brief time that she took off to raise her children, she has continually been teaching Church School all these years (which probably is about 40 plus!). She grew up in the Camp Hill area of Pennsylvania and said, "I didn't really learn much in my Church School. We never even opened a Bible". She wanted to be able to give more to the children she would teach. "I thought it was important to be connected to the youth of our church. I especially loved teaching the 8, 9 and 10 year-olds



Penny and Maria Georgiadis

because they really want to learn and are truly interested in answering the questions we ask."

One thing in her own life that has significantly changed Penny, and how she understands her faith, is her two trips to Jerusalem. She says, "It is a Holy place for everyone—Christians, Jews and Muslims. Things in the church mean so much more now that I have visited that holy place. I only wish that when I was growing up there was someone to teach me and others about what I saw." So she shares those trips with the children she teaches and shows them things that she brought back from there. She also imparts what she learned there to her students and they really love these lessons.

Other creative things that Penny does with her children are skits. They love to act out the Bible stories they have heard. "This is a happy age," she says, "and they bring me joy when they are listening to what I say". A long time ago, she created "Holy Trinity dollars," which are worth one dollar each, and when a student answers a question quickly, he or she gets a dollar. Once a month, the one who has the most dollars gets to pick from a basket of prizes. "It provides an encouragement to listen and answer questions as well as love Church School. I also love that as I am teaching, I am also still learning things that I didn't know about the church and Jesus", she replies.

Daughter: Maria Georgiadis

Penny did not ever tell her daughter that she should teach, but Maria wanted to become a Church School teacher to give back to the church. She describes her mom as a "phenomenal role model. I watched my mom teach throughout the

years and I decided I wanted to teach the younger kids. I love the kids who are in 1st and 2nd grade." She often used her mom's lessons and adapted them to a younger age. When she taught with her close friend, Alexandra Valliant, it was an added bonus. "It is really rewarding. The



Maria Geogiadis and Alexandra Valliant

younger kids are just like sponges. They listen so intently," she says. She teaches church etiquette—like the way to do the cross—and other things that are relevant to the Bible. The Lord's Prayer, how to use the Ten Commandments, who were the Apostles, when are the feast days, what are the sacraments and what is really going on in the church service are some of the topics in her teaching. They do a mock baptism, a mock wedding and a mock confession, and everyone wants to play the role of the priest! At this age, she must also incorporate games and fun things to do in order to hold the children's interest.

Mother: Tina Fiedler

Tina Fiedler also loves little kids. She was working at a preschool as an aide and really enjoyed the interaction with the 2½, 3 and 4 year-olds. She decided that she wanted to start a toddler program in Church School since there was not one in existence. There was no curriculum so she used her experience and creativity to make one for her classes. She used a book for older children and adapted it for the younger group. Because the children were so young, Tina needed to



Tina Fiedler (right, in blue top)

be really prepared for each class. Each activity needed to be only between 5-10 minutes, because the attention span is so short at that age. They also needed a snack to be incorporated to keep them happy. She used things from her preschool training at her job and tried to create a routine. They sang songs, told stories, did crafts that related to the story, and for a whole month did a topic such as Adam and Eve, Moses, Joseph, Christmas and Easter. For their graduation, Tina put together a book for them with the pictures they drew. "It was a very rewarding experience. You get so attached to the kids. You watch the children learn to interact and know each other", she said with enthusiasm. " But, most people don't know how much you have to put into each class. There is a lot of preparation. And children can't be put into the class when they are too young, because it will disrupt the whole class," she said. Tina emphatically wanted to recognize the help of the assistants who aide the teachers—especially with the little kids. "We just couldn't do it without them."

Daughter: Nicole Steiner

When Tina's daughter, Nicole Steiner, was a teenager, she used to help her mother prep lessons. "I would work with two other ladies and cut things out and then go help the children when they did their crafts. I always enjoyed hearing how my mom presented the material to kids, then told a story and then did a craft that went with it. She had so many ideas and did so much with limited resources," she said. When Nicole graduated high school, she went to college to be an art teacher. She had always enjoyed arts and crafts as a kid. She remembers her own Church School experience and being taught by Penny Georgiadis and Mary Magdalene Welsh. She had Mary Magdalene as a teacher for many years since she kept being moved to teach an older group of kids. "She was a wonderful teacher and it was a great experience as all the teachers put their hearts and souls into teaching."



Nicole Steiner and her class

It was a great blessing, Nicole recalls, to be able to come home on weekends during college to teach the kids. She was teaching 1st and 2nd grade. It was an opportunity to

test out teaching ideas that she herself was learning in school. They did games, science lessons and many of the lessons her mom did which she adapted to the different age groups she taught as she was moved from one age group to another over her teaching years. She loved the 3 and 4 year-olds and echoed Maria's statement that they absorb everything like a sponge. She relates a story of a child that cried every time he came to her class. Then one day she did a science experiment connected to the story of Jonah and the whale. She had the little boy drop the plastic Jonah into the water, which represented the ocean, and pointed out how he sank to the bottom. But when she added an Alka Seltzer tablet, Jonah floated up to the top of the water! The little student was mesmerized and delighted and from that day forth, he did not cry but instead looked forward to coming to Church School! Nicole teaches preschool as a career and currently is with 4 and 5 year-olds. She no longer is teaching Church School but is instead working with the library at church. Her own children are being taught by her former teacher, Penny, and Penny's daughter Maria!

Mother: Presvytera Becky Touloumes

Presvytera Becky Touloumes has been teaching Church School for about 24 years. Her slot is the teenage kids from 7th to 12th grade. She is the "Interim Director" (a title she made up on the spot!) and she emphasized 'interim' because our previous director move away some time ago and she is hoping that someone new may step up to take that administrative role sometime soon! She loves working with the kids and marvels at the enthusiasm and love for the faith that emerges through the years. "Pres



Presvytera Becky Touloumes and Maria Constantine

Becky" (as the kids call her) has professional experience as a middle school and high school teacher and currently teaches college math at Community College of Allegheny County. The Church School curriculum she and the other teachers have developed is a 6 year plan that rotates by year, not grade. The classrooms are 7th and 8th grades, 9th and 10th grades and 11th and 12th grades. This year all students in the 7th through 12th grades are being taught about the Creed. The lessons are modified by the grade level.

The primary teaching venue of the church for children, she says, is Church School. Everything else stems from this. Children attend Divine Liturgy, which is the essentially the first part of the Church School experience, then they depart for class following Holy Communion. The primary goal of our faith is the body and blood of Christ so the children must be in church to experience this. In class, lessons and teaching formats are geared to be age-appropriate. The younger students use art and experiential work for their lessons, whereas the



“Pres. Becky” and the Senior Class

classes for the older kids are aimed at discussion. Besides the teachings on the Creed, the other topics of discussion include: the sacraments, marriage, the holy trinity, euthanasia, dating, parenting, working with parents and creation versus evolution, to name a few. No matter the topics, however, lessons from the Bible and stories of the saints are included in some way every Sunday at every level, from Preschool to 12th grade. We cannot describe Pres Becky’s work, however, without mentioning the Christmas Pageant. Although she rolled her eyes when I brought up this topic, she humbly does a fabulous job of writing and directing this performance each year for the enjoyment of the entire church community. It is a lot of work! Seniors get first pick of the roles they want to play and get very excited about participating. With the rehearsals, costumes, singing and music that it takes to put on this play, it might be said that “it takes a village” to pull off the Holy Trinity Christmas pageant!

Daughter: Maria Constantine

Presytera Becky and Father John’s daughter, Maria Constantine, says she really loved Church School while growing up. She also loves working with kids in general. After marrying her husband, Demetri, and moving to Boston to pursue a degree as a Physician Assistant at Tufts University, she decided she wanted to get more involved in the church where her



Maria Constantine in class

husband is a chanter. She also wanted to give back for all she has received from the church over the years. “It was a great life growing up,” she said. She made a list during this past summer of all the things she wanted to do and accomplish and teaching Church School was one of them. This education was so ingrained in her and she observed how the children got so much out of it therefore she believed it would be great to be able to impart to others all that she had learned from her mother as a teacher and her father as a priest. “Mom was a great role model,” she said, “but she never mentioned to me to teach because she knew how busy I was. Then one day while I was bouncing ideas off her, I mentioned Church School and she told me that I absolutely should do that.” When a teacher in her church that taught 1st grade had to step down for surgery last Fall, she had the opportunity to begin teaching. Although that teacher had a curriculum, she didn’t pass it down to Maria, so she has used the Archdiocese curriculum plus her own creativity in teaching. “They’re young but they understand a lot. Sometimes the work is intimidating, but I know if they get to like Church School, it is very important and a really good thing.”

Mother: Presytera Eileen Sedor

Our last mother and daughter team is unique in the collection because it involves a mother and not just one daughter, but two! Prevytera Eileen Sedor knew that being a priest’s wife often carried with it an expectation of teaching Church School. I asked her what she liked about teaching. “I really enjoy having contact with the kids. It is a good way to share what I know and have learned over the years. I enjoy being with them and want to help them to continue to grow and stay good kids,” she replied. She has been teaching at Holy Trinity for 10 years with Presytera Becky and continues to do so.



Presytera Eileen teaching children to making Palm Crosses on the Satuday of Lazarus

Daughters: Stephanie and Charissa Sedor

Presvytyera Eileen’s first-born daughter, Stephanie, was also a teacher in her career so it seemed to naturally be a thing to do. “I taught for 8 years and tried to use my creativity to figure out what the kids needed and enjoyed learning,” she said. She loved using different techniques that other teachers used while she was teaching 1st and 2nd grade. She would follow Presytera Becky’s lead whenever she needed help with what she was teaching. “When I taught the Old Testament classes, I used a children’s Bible and sometimes even



Charissa (left) and Stephanie (right) Sedor co-teaching the First/Second Grade Class

used materials created by other churches while adapting it to the Orthodox faith. Using the content of the Bible reading, I would then add music, games and skits to go along with it.”

Charissa, Stephanie’s younger sister, also followed in the family tradition and joined the Church School staff. “I really enjoyed getting to take things you hear about in Church to the children in ways they would understand and enjoy. I tried to make it fun and engaging,” she said. “I liked finding activities and crafts that allowed the younger student to build and draw. It helped them remember the details about the stories we heard in the Bible.” Father David, the Sedor family’s husband and father of blessed memory, was a college professor, would certainly be proud of the wonderful ways Presvytera and his daughters have carried the teaching torch.

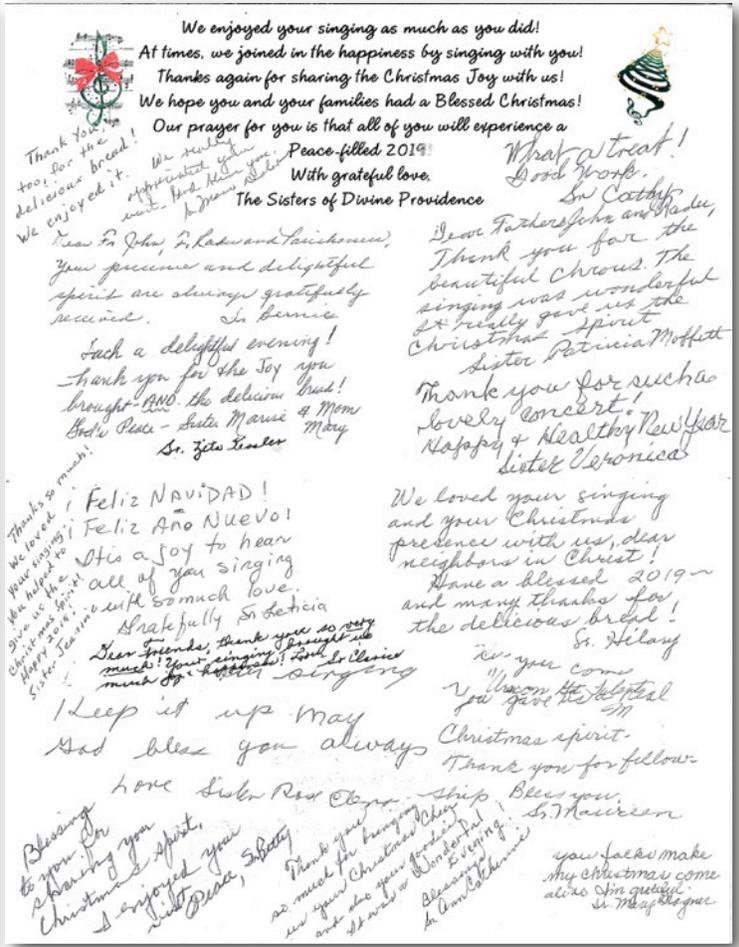
Mothing, Modeling and Inspiring

I don’t think there is gene that is passed down by our parents that is dedicated to the “drive to teach Church School!” But, in researching and writing this article, I can see that the modeling of this action by not only one’s mother but also a whole community of people who make our Church School program possible can have a lasting effect on our children and the way they see the world and live their lives.

Comments or thanks about this article, or suggestions for a future feature? Contact Anita at pened1@aol.com.

Community News | **Special Thanks from Our Neighbors**

On December 19, dozens of Holy Trinity parishioners of all ages continued the tradition of heading across the street to bring Christmas joy and love to our neighbors by singing carols for the Sisters of Divine Providence. Below are the beautiful thank you notes they sent.



☑ WORSHIP ☑ LEARN ☑ GROW ☑ PRAY ☑ SERVE
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FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

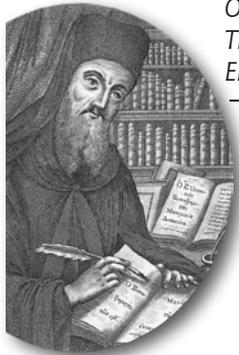
Sometimes once a week is just not enough to satisfy your spiritual yearning for a deeper experience of God. "Faith and Family Weekdays" is your opportunity to live your life in the Church between Sundays! With presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services, there are opportunities for 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)

UPDATED "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 / Apr 1, 8, 15, May 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. 26, 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; Nov. 7, 28; Dec. 12, 19; Jan. 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 23 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 Paraclesis Service" Worship	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Sep. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 23 Jun. 20	The Paraclesis, 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



Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain

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.

All Orthodox Christians are commanded to receive Communion frequently. First, by the orders of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Second, by the Acts and Canons of the Holy Apostles and the sacred Councils and by the testimonies of the divine Fathers. Third, by the very words, the order, and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Fourth, by Holy Com-

munion in and of itself.

Gheronda, where does the Bible say the Lord commands us to receive Holy Communion?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, before He handed down the Mystery of Communion, said: “And the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn. 6:51). This means that, for the faithful, divine Communion is a necessary constituent of the spiritual life in Christ. This spiritual life in Christ is not to be extinguished or interrupted as the Apostle says: “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Th. 5:19)— but must be continuous and uninterrupted, “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15), according to the words of the same Apostle.

And in another place the Lord says imperatively: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn. 6:53). These words make apparent that divine Communion is just as necessary for the Christian as Holy Baptism. For He used the same double expression when speaking about Baptism and about Communion. Concerning Baptism, He said: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). Concerning divine Communion, He likewise said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn. 6:53). Therefore, just as without Baptism it is impossible for one to live the spiritual life and be saved, it is impossible for one to live without divine Communion.

When the Lord handed down this Mystery to His disciples, He did not merely make a recommendation, saying: “Whoever wants to eat My body, and whoever wants to drink My blood”—as He did when He said, “Whoever wants to follow Me,” and, “If you want to be perfect.” Rather, He commandingly cried out: “Take, eat; this is My body” (Mt. 26:26), and, “Drink of it, all of you, this is My blood” (Mt. 26:27-28). That is, “You must absolutely eat My body, and you must unfailingly drink My blood.” Again He says: “This do in remembrance of Me” (Lk. 22:19). That is, “I am delivering this Mystery to you so that you might celebrate it, not one, two, or three times, but every day (as the divine Chrysostom interprets it),” unto the remembrance of My sufferings, My death, and My whole incarnate economy.”

Behold how these words of the Lord clearly present the two requirements respecting Communion, the one by the fundamental command they contain, and the other by the frequency signified by the words “this do;” and this clearly means that we are strongly commanded not only to commune, but also to commune often. Everyone, therefore, can now see that an Orthodox is not allowed to transgress these things, no matter his order. Rather, he is absolutely obligated and required to keep them, and to receive them as commands and ordinances of the Master.

What was the Apostolic practice regarding receiving Holy Communion?

The divine Apostles, following this commanding directive of our Lord, at the beginning of their preaching gathered together as soon as they could with all of the faithful in a hidden place, for fear of the Jews. There they taught the Christians, praying and celebrating the Mystery, and they and all gathered there with them communed, as the sacred Luke bears witness in the Acts of the Apostles. There, he says that the three thousand people who believed in Christ on the day of Pentecost and were baptized were with the Apostles in order to listen to their teaching and to benefit from it, to pray together, and to commune of the immaculate Mysteries in order to be sanctified and to be more firmly established in the faith of Christ: “And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, and in Communion, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

And in order for later Christians to keep this mandatory tradition of the Lord, and in order for it not to be forgotten over time, that which the Apostles practiced they also wrote in their eighth and ninth Canons, commanding in exact detail... that no one is to remain uncommuned of the divine Mysteries: “If anyone...does not receive Communion when the offering is made, let him declare the reason; and, if it is legitimate, let him be excused. But if he does not declare it, let him be excommunicated.”

Following the sacred Apostles, the Council in Antioch first ratifies the above Canons, and then adds:

Any who enter the Church of God and listen to the sacred Scriptures, but do not participate in prayer with the people, or who turn away from the Communion of the Eucharist, by reason of some disorder, are to be cast out of the Church until they have made confession, and shown fruits of repentance, and made entreaty, and then they will be able to be forgiven.”

My brothers, do you now see that all Christians...must receive Communion frequently? And that they are required to [prepare to] do so at every Divine Liturgy, in order that they not be [out of communion] by the [tradition of the] sacred Apostles and by the Holy Council?

Excerpted from “Concerning Frequent Communion” by Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain (18th/19th c.)



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Excerpted from "Building and Orthodox Marriage, Abdalah and Marney, (SVS Press)

Scripture of the Month: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Eph. 4.2)