



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

JANUARY 2020 VOLUME 28 • ISSUE 1

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Philoptochos 2020 Stewardship

"Men Who Cook" Flyer

**February 14-16 Holy Trinity
Basketball Tournament
Donations and Volunteers Form**

QUICK NEWS



Members of the Visitation Ministry prepare gifts for shut-ins and the elderly. 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 8-12 or browse through our thousands of pictures in the online Photo Gallery at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Our Vision: "Faith. Family. Community."

Holy Theophany: "He is God And He Appeared To Us"

Icon from Stavronikita Monastery, Mount Athos. By Theophanes the Cretan, 1546 AD



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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Pittsburgh, PA 15237

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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

2019 Parish Council

George Danis, President

Alvin Backeris Dean A. Balouris

George Dickos Tom Germanos

Karen Georgiadis Richard Paese

Michael Passodelis Stephen Stearns

Ted Stewart Alex Trilivas

Gerri Valliant Jeanne 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."



Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4.6

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

Here we are at the opening of another year in the Lord, and the question we are often asked—by others or by our own conscience—is, "What are your plans for the year?" For many of us, that question alone is enough to incite the anxiety Saint Paul speaks of above. After all, planning a day or a week can be stressful enough, let alone a year!

Much of that anxiety is born from a sense expectations that we have "a plan." I mean, doesn't everyone, from careers to personal wellness to projects and more? And then we get busy with that plan and need to come up with ways to figure out if we have succeeded or failed. It's a product of our results-driven culture, and it has worked itself into every area of life. But it often leaves little place for God.

We are blessed by our Creator with a sound mind and the ability to make responsible plans. And indeed, the Lord expects us to use them. "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance" (Prov. 21.5) teaches us about the need to plan; And Jesus warns that a lack of plans can foil our work: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" (Luke 14.28). Then what's the problem?

It is when we think it's all up to us that plans tend to fall apart. As Al Rossi quotes from Metropolitan Anthony Bloom in his book, "Becoming a Healing Presence."

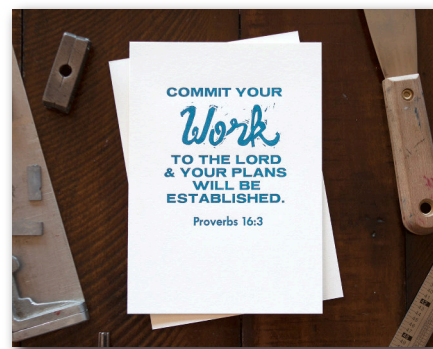
So long as you hold on to even a little hope of achieving something by your own powers, the Lord does not interfere. It is as though He says, "You hope to succeed by yourself—very well, go on trying. But, however long you try, you will achieve nothing."

What does that mean? "Plan...but not too much?" Not at all. "Plan, but start with God". Let's put it this way: rather than head off by ourselves to design our own "master plan," it is our calling to seek the revelation of "Master's Plan" in big and small ways for our life. In that sense, true Christian planning is more about discovery than invention. That is, it is about discovering the will of God for our life rather than inventing a plan on our own without even seeking divine guidance.

How can we make plans in the coming year for work? For relationships? For finances? For commitments? For fitness? For anything? Start with prayer and seek the plans and blessings of God in all we do. On Mount Athos, where we recently traveled to visit many monasteries, it is not unusual to hear the monks talking about plans and responding, "Να είναι ευλογημένο" ("Na einai evlogymeno" or "May it be blessed"). If we make that a foundation of all we do, we will protect ourselves from the pride of self-will and always put God's will first. And in doing so we seek the plans of Him "who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2.4). Give it a try. Whatever you desire, whatever you plan, say "May it be blessed!"

May the Lord bless you with a divinely-inspired and guided New Year, and the revelation of the plans to live it out according to His will!

Paternally yours in Christ,



WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday ServicesJanuary

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days this month. Orthros is at 8:30am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am. Guide to locations for services: **HT** = Holy Trinity Church; **SG** = St. George Chapel.

- **Dec. 31, 6:30PM: EVENING Orthros & Liturgy - Saint Basil the Great (SG)**

Open the New Year with the Lord's blessing in prayer at the Divine Liturgy in our beautiful Saint George Chapel for the Feast of Saint Basil. This is an evening Liturgy, so those wishing to receive Holy Communion should refrain from eating or drinking after their noon meal.

- **Jan. 3, 9:30am: Royal Hours of Theophany (HT)**

This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret Holy Theophany.

- **Jan. 5, 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy: The Forefeast of Theophany (HT)**

This is the first of two Theophany Liturgies and services of Great Blessings of the Waters. Please note that this is also a strict fasting day in preparation for Theophany (wine and olive oil allowed).

- **Jan. 6: The Holy Theophany of our Lord (HT)**

This is the main Orthros and Divine Liturgy of this great Feast. We will again offer the Great Blessings of the Water at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

- **Jan. 7: St. John the Baptist and Forerunner (SG)**

- **Jan. 17: Saint Anthony the Great**

Service to be held at St. Anthony Church in Clairton.

- **Jan. 30: The Three Hierarchs (SG)**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

No Church School Class.....Dec. 29

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 29 due to the Nativity celebrations, so please join together to worship as a family on that day.

Theophany Blessing of Waters.....Jan. 5

On the Forefeast of the Great and Holy Feast of Theophany, all Church School students will remain in Liturgy following Holy Communion to participate in the Blessing of the Waters and celebrate the feast as a community.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

HOPE & JOY Ice SkatingJanuary 25

The HOPE and JOY ministries will be going ice skating at North Park on Saturday, January 25 at 2:00pm. Please let Nicole Gross (tnpalmer113@gmail.com) or Eleni Dedousis (eadedousis@gmail.com) know if you are able to attend by January 23. Pricing will range from \$5-6 depending on the group size. The Lemeiux Center in Cranberry is the backup location if inclement weather is in the forecast.

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY.....Jan. 19

Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) will continue to meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after their Church School lesson. 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 a combined "Ten Minutes of HOPE" and "Ten Minutes of JOY" session on January 19.

GOYA Basketball Practice.....Jan. 9, 13, 27

GOYA will hold basketball practice in preparation for the 2020 basketball tournament season on January 9, 13 & 27. Please check the GOYA email list for times and locations.

GOYA Teens and Parents Meeting.....January 5

GOYA will hold a **very important meeting** for all teens and parents in the Conference Room following church services on Sunday, January 5. This meeting is regarding the upcoming basketball season, winter and spring GOYA events and the upcoming Holy Trinity-hosted Metropolis Basketball Tournament. On February 14-16. All GOYA teens, parents, chaperones and coaches are asked to attend.

GOYA Basketball Tournaments.....January

Our Holy Trinity GOYA families will be participating in two away Metropolis Basketball Tournaments in January this year and hosting one in February. They will participate in the Archangel Michael Church tournament in Campbell, Ohio, from January 17-19, for the first tournament, and the Annunciation Church tournament in Akron, Ohio, from January 31-February 1. The final tournament of the season is being hosted right here at Holy Trinity Church from February 14-16. May God grant them good skills, safe travels, protection from injury and the joy of fellowship in Christ with their friends in our sister churches near and far. God bless you all!

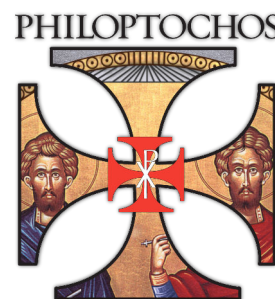
PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS AND EVENTS

Philoptochos MeetingJanuary 19

The Philoptochos will hold a meeting on Sunday, January 19, in the Fireside Room following Divine Liturgy. New members are always welcome!

2020 Philoptochos Stewardship

It is time for current Philoptochos members to renew their memberships for 2020. Suggested Annual Stewardship Donation is \$30.00. Checks should be made payable to "Holy Trinity Philoptochos Omonia." Please return the enclosed Stewardship Form and your Stewardship Donation to Pam Bolkovac, Membership Chairperson, or mail to Holy Trinity Philoptochos, Attn: Membership, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. If you aren't a member, we would love for you to join us! It is only through your gener-



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

ous commitment of time, talent and support that we are able to pursue our philanthropic mission.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

New Year's Holiday Office ScheduleJanuary 1

The offices of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church will be closed on Wed., Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

Parish Council Election Results/Installation.....January 5

Thank you to all those whose names were submitted for Parish Council elections this year. The results from the vote have placed the following members on the Council for the 2020-2021 term: Alvin Backeris, Anthony Balouris, Ashley Bournias, George Dickos, Dean Passodelis and Steven Stearns. Continuing on for the remainder of their two-year term through 2020 are: George Danis, Karen Georgiadis, Tom Germanos, Michael Passodelis, Jeanne Willow, and Gerri Valliant. Parish Council installation will be held on Sunday, January 5, followed by the election of officers. Thank you to all those whom you have selected to serve in this important ministry, and remember: they serve for you and with you, not instead of you, so when they call for support, please answer, "Yes, here I am!" Thank you.

Vasilopita Celebration and Appreciation Lunch.....Jan. 12

Holy Trinity Church will hold the annual Vasilopita Celebration on Sunday, January 12. As usual, a special tray will be passed by the Philoptochos at the end of the Liturgy to benefit St. Basil Academy, the young people's philanthropic institution run by the Archdiocese in Garrison, NY. Then, we will once again hold will be a Vasilopita Luncheon in the Grand Room following Divine Liturgy, where the cutting of the community Vasilopita will take place and a complimentary lunch can be enjoyed by all. Leaders and/or representatives from all

parish ministries are asked to be present at the luncheon to receive the Vasilopita on behalf of your ministry. The luncheon is being hosted by the Parish Council and in part by the families of Nicholas Kaparakos and Peter Valliant, who will be holding one year memorial services for their departed loved ones that day.



This is also an opportunity for the Parish Council and the Festival Committee to thank all our dedicated volunteers for their sacrificial and valued help for our most-successful-ever Taste of Greece Festival last year. Thank you for your participation! It is community labor of love that can't happen without you!

House BlessingsJanuary

Services for Holy Theophany and its surrounding feasts will be held as usual on January 5-7. An important part of that celebration is the Great Blessing of the Waters service. In order to bring the blessings of the feast and the Lord into our homes, Orthodox Christians traditionally invite the priest to bless their home with the Holy Water from the feast. Please see the enclosed information and schedule your visit by January 3. Never had your house blessed before? This is a great year to start! House Blessing Request information can be found on page 13 and on the back page of this issue. The easiest way to schedule is online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events. Please note and be available for the dates in your area. Rescheduling will only be done for cases of inclement weather.



IT'S HOLY TRINITY TOURNAMENT TIME and **YOUR** support is needed!



The GOYA teens of Holy Trinity Church once again have the honor of hosting a Metropolis GOYA Basketball Tournament. It is the third time we have been able to host this event in our beautiful new Holy Trinity Church. Our teens and their families will be working hard to represent our community well as always, but they can't do it alone!

Please take a look at the enclosed Basketball Tournament Donations and Volunteers flyer and support this community-hosted event. Thanks for inspiring and supporting our youth!

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 yearning for what really matters in life, answers on how to face daily challenges and simply a deeper experience of your faith. “Faith and Family Weekdays” is your opportunity to live your life in the Church between Sundays! From worship to fellowship to learning to sharing to serving, these faith and growth experiences provide rewarding points of encounter with your Church and Church family. Check it out this week and every week! There is something for you!

“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: WINTER/SPRING 2020

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 8:00pm	“Discover Orthodoxy” Introduction and Refresher Series on the Orthodox Faith	Mondays: Spring Series Mar. 9, 16, 23, 30 Apr. 7, 28 (Repeated from the Fall)	An all-new teaching series for anyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Interested in becoming an Orthodox Christian? This is for you. Just want to refresh your knowledge of the Faith? This is for you, too! Informative, interesting and interactive.
SECOND TUESDAY 7:00pm	“Journey of Marriage” Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-May Jan. 14, Feb. 11, Mar. 17, May 12	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.
FIRST & THIRD TUESDAY 9:30am	“Women’s Book Club” Reading and Discussion	1st & 3rd Tuesday Oct.-May Jan. 7, 21; Feb. 4, 18; Mar. 3, 17 Apr. 7, 21	This new “Women’s Books Club” ministry takes a “for women, by women” approach to providing time for prayer, fellowship and discussion that is geared toward the lives and hearts of women. The group will be studying “The Screwtape Letters” by C. S. Lewis to start. All women are welcome.
WEDNESDAYS 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Study	“Explore the Word” Worship and Bible Study Ministry	Wednesdays Oct.-May Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29; Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26; Apr. 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27	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.-Apr. Jan. 16, Feb. 20, Mar. 19, Apr. 30	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 Oct.-May Jan. 16, Feb. 20, Apr. 30; May 21	The Paraclesis, also known 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.
THURSDAYS as Advertised 7:00pm	“Orthodox Movie Night” Special Feature Edition Entertainment/Fellowship	Watch for announcements for dates and titles	This ministry is transitioning from a monthly show to a “Special Feature” format, with limited screenings in the fall and the spring. Watch for dates and titles. As before, it’s free to all, a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the “same old stuff” and a great night of Holy Trinity fellowship.

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

Planning for Stewardship in the New Year

With the start of any new year comes the annual time to make plans for the next twelve months. Time to pick up with that gym membership again, to break out the healthy recipe book, and to cut back on the daily trips to the coffee shop.

Whether or not you are a resolution-maker, a good approach to the start of the new year is to set a goal for your stewardship contributions. Just as you plan your financial budget and carve out portions for your living expenses, your food, and whatever else you need, it also is wise to carve out a portion for your stewardship. Your contribution, no matter the amount, helps the church. Even if you feel that you can only give – in your eyes – a small amount, in God's eyes, he sees a good and faithful steward.

Your stewardship contribution is more than just a monetary donation. You can make a goal to give your talents as your stewardship to the church. If you are a master present wrapper after wrapping up your family's Christmas gifts, bring that skill to festival cooking at the church and wrap up trays of food to freeze for the festival. If you have a creative side and love to come up with fun crafts and projects, consider joining the Sunday School staff and teach a class. You love to sing, but you do not know how to speak or read Greek? That is perfectly fine; the choir welcomes you with open arms and will help you learn the lyrics to liturgical hymns! If you enjoy the competitiveness of sports, look no further than volunteering to do the clock for the GOYA basketball tournament in February. (Do you see where we are going with this?)

Your Stewardship Ministry is more than willing to help you identify an area in need of stewards if you are unsure of where you can use your times, talents, and treasures. Whether you come to church solo, with your family, with friends – the church needs all of your stewardship to thrive. When we come together as a community to give to our church, we sustain the life of the church and its ability to provide for all those who attend.

What is Stewardship?

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed.

An Orthodox Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept the Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. Each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support the Parish and her Ministries, which in turn support the National Ministries of our Archdiocese, Metropolises, and institutions.

Effective stewardship ministry is not a single event or project. Rather, it is going out to our people wherever they are in their walk with Christ, listening to their concerns, helping them to realize their importance as branches of the True Vine and encouraging them to offer their gifts in His service. We use various resources to support our efforts, but unless we meet with our people personally, sincerely listen to their ideas and concerns, and share a vision for the future of the parish, our efforts will not reach their full potential.

Stewardship is devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as a Parish, as a Metropolis, as a National Church, and as the Church Universal. Stewardship is our active commitment to use ALL our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ's redeeming love.

Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.

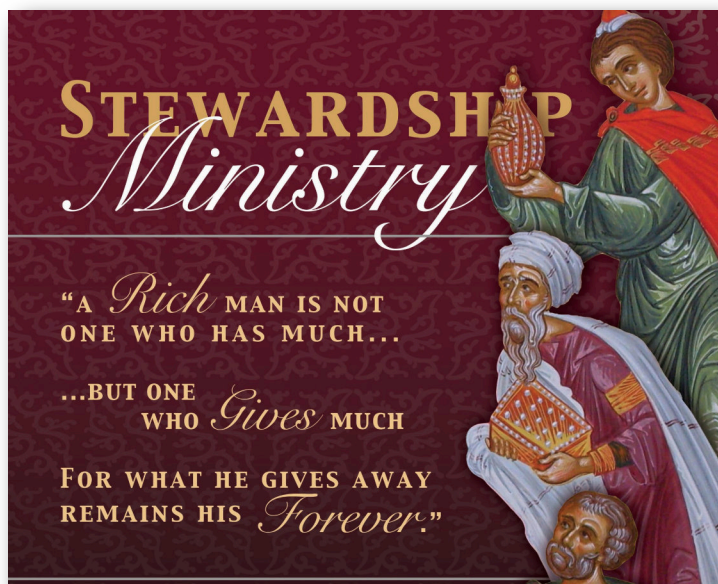
Stewardship is offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.

Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I believe..." as proof of that belief.

(Williams and McKibben, "Oriented Leadership")

In the words of Fr. William Chiganos of Holy Apostles Church in Westchester, Illinois, "...people don't give to need; they give to vision.... Church people don't stretch their giving because of need to meet the budget; they give more because they are able to see a vision of people being reached and God's purposes being accomplished in the life of the church and its ministry." Parishes with successful Orthodox Christian Stewardship Programs have found that incredible support is unleashed from Stewards who unselfishly and joyfully offer their time, talent and treasures, which in turn enhances the spirituality and ministry of the local parish.

Source: www.goarch.org/departments/stewardship



2019 Nativity Flowers Donor List | Thank you

Many thanks to the following parishioners and friends for sponsoring the beautiful poinsettias for the decoration of the church during the Christmas holidays. May the Lord remember them and those whom they have honored!

DONORS

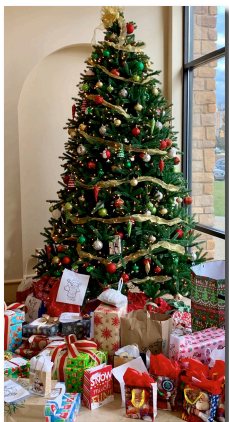
COMMEMORATIONS

Anonymous	For the health of her family (5 plants)
Victor Amurgis & Family	In memory of their loving parents William & Harriet Amurgis (3 plants)
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	For the health of the Athanasiou Family
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of Stella Athanasiou
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of George Athanasiou
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of George Bertos
Art and Christina Avlon	In memory of Stella Kalaris
Anthony Balouris	In memory of his wife Helen Balouris (2 plants)
Chris & Kathy Balouris	In memory of Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos (3 plants)
Chris & Kathy Balouris	In memory of Helen C. Balouris (3 plants)
Dean & Diane Balouris	In memory of Helen Balouris (5 plants)
Pamela Bolkovac	In memory of her father Nick Bolkovac (3 plants)
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	In memory of John & Helen Chapas
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	In memory of John & Mary Bonfield
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	For the health of family & friends
The Chapas and Bonfield Families	In memory of Frank & Anne Chapas
Bill & Sophea Chapas	In memory of John & Helen Chapas
Sherry Clayton	For the health and happiness of her Holy Trinity Family
Joyce Countouris	In memory of Andrew Countouris
Joyce Countouris	In memory of Peter Countouris
Cynthia Morris Criss	In memory of Tom & Dora Morris (5 plants)
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of Demetrios & Evdokia Danis
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of George V. Gatsiopoulos & Vasiliki Gatsiopoulos
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of John & Sophia Regas
Helen DeMoss	In memory of John DeMoss & family and Steve & Anthoula Pefanis
Christine Dickos	In memory of her husband Dinios Dickos
Frank & Katina Erdeljac	In memory of Mike & Theologia Alexiades
Frank & Katina Erdeljac	In memory of Mary Alexiades
Andreas and Valori Fournaridis	In memory of Steve Cocheres
John & Georgia Franciscus and Family	In memory of George & Betty Beckas (2 plants)
Tessie Frankos	In memory of her husband James and daughter Demitria Frankos
Connie, Diana and John Fries	For the health of family & friends
Diana Fries	In memory of Olga Regakis (5 plants)
Peter & Theanne Gagianas	For the health of Peter, Theanne, Yianni, Georgia, Dimitri and Georgia
Peter & Theanne Gagianas	For the health of their Godchildren: Douglas Paul, Nicholas, Maximus, Melina, Anastasia, Anastasia and Michaela
Peter & Theanne Gagianas	For the health of John & Mary
Peter & Theanne Gagianas	In memory of John-Peter Iakovos
George & Phyllis Geanopulos	In memory of Harry & Helen Geanopulos (2 plants)
George & Phyllis Geanopulos	In memory of John & Erma Haas (2 plants)
Dr. Mark & Karen Georgiadis	In memory of Mary & Peter Georgiadis and Don Lorenz and for the health of Marlene Lorenz & all our family
Toula Giannoutsos	For the health of Toula Giannoutsos and in memory of John Giannoutsos
Eugenia Graser	In memory of her husband Robert Graser and parents Michael & Mary Patsalos
Brian & Debbie Jewell	In memory of Samuel G. Booras
Brian & Debbie Jewell	In memory of Georgia K. Booras
Brian & Debbie Jewell	In memory of Marsha L. Booras
Brian & Debbie Jewell	In memory of Jody Menni
Brian & Debbie Jewell	For the health of Jan Hartman
Brian & Debbie Jewell	For the health of Diane Morse
Brian & Debbie Jewell	For the health of Marie Fiduccia
Brian & Debbie Jewell	For the health of Janine Schillinger
Stella Johnson, Dr. Kristina Johnson, James & Michele Johnson	In memory of Homer J. Johnson
Stella Johnson, Dr. Kristina Johnson, James & Michele Johnson	In memory of Augustina Makris
Gus G. Kalaris	In memory of Stella Kalaris
Gus G. Kalaris	In memory of George & Pauline Kalaris
Gus G. Kalaris	In memory of Gus & Panagiota Bistolas
Irene Karavolos	In memory of Charles Siebott
James & Bettina Kermes	For the health of family & friends
Mike and Julie Kritiotis	In memory of Maria Kritiotis
Mike and Julie Kritiotis	For the health of family and friends
Gregory and Susan Manesiotsis	In memory of Louis and Nikki Manesiotsis
Gregory and Susan Manesiotsis	In memory of Victor and Audrey Mus
Michael Manesiotsis Jr and Family	In memory of Michael & Georgia Manesiotsis
Michael Manesiotsis Jr and Family	In memory of James Hartig
Arlene Metropoulos	In memory of her beloved husband Dean
William J. Pagonis	In memory of James & Mary Pagonis (2 plants)
Matt & Nancy Palamara	For the health of the Palamara family & the Anh family
George & Rhea Pantelakis	In memory of John & Maria Pantelakis and John & Stavroula Scopelitis
Orestes & Arlene Paras	In memory of John & Maria Paras and Michael & Diana Paras
Orestes & Arlene Paras	In memory of Albert & Rose Russell and Arthur Russell
Eleftherios Parikakis & Family	In memory of Sophie, Michael, Virginia, Helen, Danielle, Murat, Anastasia, Zoy & Peter
Steve and Electra Roman	In memory of the departed members of the Amurgis and Roman Families
Tresa Roman	In memory of the Paul Makris Family
Tresa Roman	In memory of the George Roman Family & the Mikan Family
James F. Sicalias	In memory of his mother Bessie Cocheres-Sicalias
Jon Stipanovich	In memory of George, Stella and Greg Stipanovich
Katrina Tanner	In memory of Nick Tanner and George Alahouzos
Elaine Weaver	In memory of her husband Robert Weaver
Elaine Weaver	In memory of her parents Anthony & Anna Beckas
Elaine Weaver	In memory of her sister Marie Kourakos
Elaine Weaver	In memory of Louis, Peter & Sophia Tsaconas
Mary Magdalene Welsh	In memory of my mother Julia Welsh
Antonios & Susan Zikos	For the health of our family members
Dorothea K. Zikos	In memory of Peter J. Zikos
Anthony & Aspasia Zissis	In memory of our Parents (2 plants)







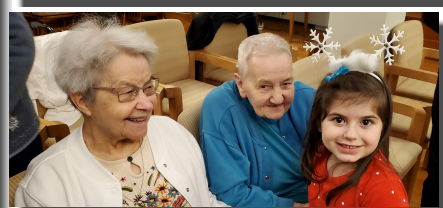


Top Row: The teens of Holy Trinity GOYA gathered for their annual Christmas Fireside Chat at the Mellis home on December 8. The topic for the event was "Fear not."

Second Row: The Visitation Ministry assembled and distributed gifts for the shut-ins, elderly and others on their list of prayer-and-care recipients. They also coordinated the community's signing of giant Christmas cards to send to them all.

Third Row: The annual Angel Tree Christmas gift drive for the needy yielded over 100 gifts, including bicycles! And the generous members of the Holy Trinity community also donated **1,348 food items** to the food drive for the needy of the area. Thank you!

Below: Adults and children of all ages gathered on Wednesday, December 18, for Christmas caroling across the street at the Sisters of Divine Providence. The sisters of our neighboring Roman Catholic monastic retirement center look forward to our visit each year. This year featured carols in English, Greek, Romanian and German!



Philoptochos Seniors Christmas Luncheon | Community Life Photo Journal

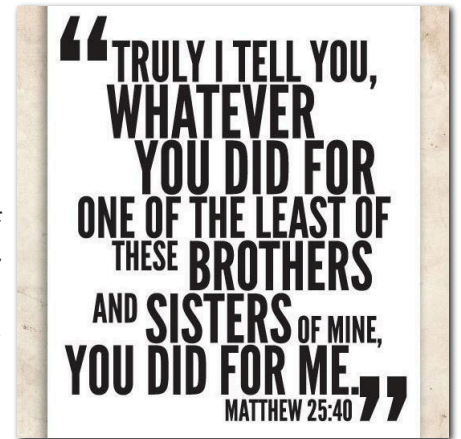


Our Holy Trinity Philoptochos Ladies Society is a chapter of the national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The mission of the Philoptochos is: "to aid the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widow, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of the impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church through fund raising efforts; to promote the charitable, benevolent and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through instructional programs, presentations, lectures, seminars and other educational resources; to preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian Family, and through them, to promote the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs; and to promote the participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council." Want more information? Visit their web site at www.Philoptochos.org or simply attend a meeting!

Philanthropy Offered by Holy Trinity Philoptochos in 2019

Through the support of Holy Trinity's parishioners, our Ladies Philoptochos Society was blessed in 2019 to donate \$21,601 to the worthy causes and organizations listed below. In addition to these monetary donations, the Ladies supported more than 20 families in need at both Pascha and Christmas with donations of grocery store gift cards.

The Ladies also sponsored the annual Christmas Party for the seniors of our parish, which is free to the attendees. The weekly Sunday Coffee Hour was also organized & sponsored by the Philoptochos. The Ladies would like to thank all of the parishioners that have made this philanthropy possible through their generous support of the Philoptochos' fundraisers throughout the year. God bless all of you!



PHILOPTOCHOS NATIONAL MINISTRIES

- 75th Anniversary Founders Fund
- Autism Assistance Fund
- Cancer Fund
- Ecumenical Patriarchate
- Emergency Fund
- General medical fund
- HCHC Lenten Appeal/Scholarship Fund
- IOCC
- National Sisterhood of Presbyteres
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)
- Orthodox Christian Missions (OCM)
- Retired Clergy/Widowed Presvyteres Benevolent Fund
- Social Services
- St. Basil's Academy
- St. Photios Shrine
- UNICEF

TOTAL NATIONAL DONATIONS\$5,164

METROPOLIS PHILOPTOCHOS DONATIONS

- Emergency Fund
- Good Samaritan Fund
- Metropolis Building Fund
- Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp
- Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery
- Metropolis Seminarians
- Social Services Special Care Fund
- Youth Activities

TOTAL METROPOLIS DONATIONS\$3,275

LOCAL DONATIONS

- Allegheny Valley School
- Brother's Brother Foundation
- Christmas Gift Cards and Donations
- Easter Gift Cards and Donations
- FOCUS – Pittsburgh
(Food Bank & Backpack Program)
- Holy Trinity Capital Campaign
- Holy Trinity Cemetery Fund
- IOCC
- KDKA Turkey Fund
- Leukemia Society
- Mars Youth Home
- Meals for Needy (FOCUS Lunches)
- Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery
- North Hills Community Outreach Food Bank
- North Hills Food Bank
- North Hills Foundation (Backpack Initiative)
- Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration
- Shaler Area Middle School (Backpack Initiative)
- Shut Ins/Visitation Ministry
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- USO
- Women's Center & Shelter of Pittsburgh
- Women's Shelter of Beaver County

TOTAL LOCAL DONATIONS\$13,162

TO THE GLORY OF GOD!

"At Your Epiphany, the whole creation sang Your praises. For You, our God, have appeared on earth and dwelt among men. You have sanctified the streams of the Jordan, sending down from on high the most Holy Spirit."

From the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters



"What is Theophany?"

Every year on January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of Holy Theophany, which is the baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church and is also known by the name, "Epiphany." The Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan at the hand of St. John the Baptist sets the example for our own baptism by water in the Holy Spirit.

"How do we celebrate Theophany?"

The main celebration is, of course, found in the Church with the holy services on January 5th (the Forefeast), January 6th (Theophany) and January 7th (Synaxis of St. John the Baptist). We also take the feast home with us by having our homes blessed with the Holy Water.

"What happens during a House Blessing?"

You will receive a call or email to confirm your appointment a day or two ahead. When the priest arrives, he will conduct a brief service either in your dining room or at the place where your family usually offers its prayers. It is best to have the entire family present if possible, especially children. Please be sure to have an icon and a list of the first names of all the members of your household. If you have a home censer, you may prepare it also. A bowl of water is not necessary, as the priest will bring the holy water sprinkler from the church.

The priest will offer the blessing service and offer the names of the people present and those contained on the family names list in prayer. As the service concludes, please lead the priest throughout the house to sprinkle the holy water while chanting the hymn of Theophany. He will bring a copy of the service so you can follow along and chant the hymns. When the service is over, please understand the priest needs to keep the visit brief in order to cover all the homes scheduled on that day.

"Should I Have Our House and Business Blessed Every Year?"

Yes! In the Orthodox Christian tradition, homes should be blessed each year to bring the blessings of the Feast of Theophany into the home and to rededicate ourselves and our family to the Lord. It is an annual commitment, celebration, thanksgiving and family prayer. It is also a pious way of asking God's blessings on our business and livelihood as good stewards of all His gifts.

2020 House Blessing Schedule

Date	Time	Area	Zip Codes
Mon. Jan. 6	3pm-8pm	Northside, South Hills	15102, 15216, 15228
Tue. Jan. 7	2pm-5pm	Allison Park, McKnight, Ross, McCandless, Glenshaw	15101, 15116, 15223, 15237
Thu. Jan. 9	2pm-9pm	Allison Park, McKnight, Ross, McCandless	15101, 15237
Fri. Jan. 10	3pm-8pm	Gibsonia, Treesdale	15044
Mon. Jan. 13	4pm-8pm	Cranberry, Mars	16066, 16046
Tue. Jan. 14	3pm-8pm	Cranberry, Mars, Butler & North	16066, 16046, 16002
Mon. Jan. 20	3pm-8pm	Wexford	15090
Thu. Jan. 23	3pm-8pm	Wexford	15090
Tue. Jan. 28	12pm-8pm	All other areas not listed/Make-up date/Snow date	Various

Important note: Please be available at the time scheduled for your area. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thank you for your help!

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST ONLINE at our website, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events (PREFERRED), OR BY FORM **BY JANUARY 3rd** TO SCHEDULE YOUR HOME. YOU WILL RECEIVE A CALL TO CONFIRM YOUR TIME. THANK YOU!

EASIEST WAY: REQUEST A HOUSE BLESSING ONLINE AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events

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, formatted in a question-and-answer interview approach.



**Saint Theophan
the Recluse**

Gheronda, why is it important for us to understand God's grace?

Those who are seeking God's favor must especially know about and recognize the extraordinary actions of God's grace because in them, more clearly and distinctly than anywhere else, the characteristics of a grace-filled awakening are manifested. We must be fully aware of these characteristics and understand them, so that we can evaluate what we experience.

How does that grace manifest itself in our daily life?

The true Christian life is the grace-given life. Self-made life—however beautiful in appearance it may be and to whatever outward forms of the Christian life it may adhere—can never be Christian. The beginning of the true Christian life is established in a grace-given awakening. The one who responds to this action of grace is not deprived later of the guidance of grace or the communion with this grace during the time that he is faithful to its inspirations. That is why we must make clear to ourselves whether this grace-given awakening has occurred in us.

Gheronda, how do we know we are experiencing that grace?

When a grace-given awakening takes place in the consciousness of a man, there is an instantaneous destruction of the whole order of his willful and sinful life, and simultaneously the revelation before his consciousness of another divine order which is the one true and spiritually soothing order.

Briefly one may depict this order as follows: God, who is worshiped in the Holy Trinity, who created this world, who sustains and providentially cares for it, saves us fallen sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and under the guidance and supervision of the Holy Church. God leads us in the way of the cross, tests us in this life, and brings us to the eternal life of everlasting bliss. This divine order includes and contains all people, events, and institutions, and even the very principles by which everything runs. This entire order, through the action of grace, vividly engraves itself upon the spirit of a sinner.

By contrasting this divine order to everything that he previously lived and delighted in, the sinner is then obliged to be in absolute accordance and harmony with this divine order. All this strikes him. Every feature of the divine order condemns and rebukes him with his former unreasonableness and carelessness. This impresses him all the more because, at the same time, his spirit sees the obvious insignificance of the former sinful order, which deserves his contempt.

By this action the heart is released from its former bondage and becomes free. So it is free to choose its new kind

of life. This is the limit of the action of a grace-given awakening. It destroys in the consciousness and feeling of a man everything he formerly valued, and vividly shows him what is better. It leaves the stricken and startled man in this state free to choose the new or to revert again to the old.

This sounds like it could be quite a dramatic experience?

It is remarkable that this grace-given awakening is always accompanied by a startling and by some kind of a fright. This startling and fear occur perhaps because of the suddenness of the awakening. This awakening is like grabbing a sinner at the crossroads of life as if he were a criminal, and placing him before the inexorable judgment of God. Or this startling may take place because the new order which is being revealed to his consciousness is so absolutely new for him and so strikingly opposed to his former order. And this new order is not only new, it is also perfect in all its parts and bliss-giving. In the former state, there is only a sense of sorrow in the heart and the destruction of the spirit.

How can we prepare ourselves for this grace?

Our spirit, as we have seen, is closed and stifled by many coverings. But by its nature, the human spirit is a spectator of the divine order. This capacity for contemplation is immediately ready to manifest its power, and it really does manifest itself as soon as the obstacles which have bound this capacity are removed.

Therefore, in order to awaken the slumbering spirit in a man and to introduce it to contemplation of the divine order, God's grace acts either:

- directly upon the spirit, filling it with strength and power, giving it the opportunity to tear loose from the bonds which bind it; or
- indirectly, as if gradually shaking off these covers and nets from the spirit and by this, giving the human spirit the freedom to be in its own order.

In its direct action, this omnipresent and all-penetrating divine grace invisibly inspires and guides a man's spirit by imprinting on the spirit the thoughts and feelings which separate it from finite and mortal things. This turns the spirit towards the other, better world, though it is invisible and unknown. Common features of these awakenings are dissatisfaction with oneself and with everything about oneself, and a vague sorrow. A man becomes dissatisfied with everything that is around him. He is not satisfied with his abilities and accomplishments, nor with what he has, even if it were incalculable wealth; and he is as if brokenhearted. Not finding consolation in anything visible, he turns towards the invisible, accepts it with willingness and readiness, and sincerely assimilates it into himself and himself into it.

Excerpted from "Turning the Heart to God"

By Saint Theophan the Recluse
Bishop of Tambov in Russia (+ 1894)



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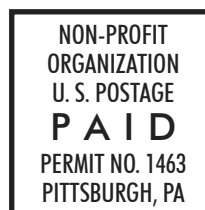
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2019 Holy Trinity House/Business Blessing Request Form



Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Daytime phone: Evening phone:
Notes, directions or special information

A schedule and description of the House Blessing tradition can be found inside this issue of The Herald. If you would like this special annual Theophany blessing for your family, home or business, please request a visit before January 3 either ONLINE or by returning this form. Your date and time will be confirmed by the day before your visit.

EASIER & FASTER: REQUEST ONLINE AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be available during the time range indicated on the schedule.
Rescheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thanks!

Scripture of the Month: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isaiah 12.3)