



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

February 2023
Volume 31 | Issue 2

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Iconographer Dr. George Kordis works on the icon of Saints Kyrikos and Julitta, mother and child saints from the 3rd century. See more Community Life photos on pages 8-13.



**Icon of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple
Feast Day: February 2**

One of the many new icons adorning the walls of Holy Trinity Church as Dr. George Kordis and his team complete our iconography project



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

Our life needs to be a journey to Christ, and being in Christ and through Christ, we go to the Father.

+ Bishop Gerasimos of Abydos

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

As our Centennial Year at Holy Trinity Church has launched, it certainly bears all the marks of a journey. We are giving thanks for those who launched us on the journey 100 years ago; we are working, completing and celebrating in many ways; and we are progressing. But to where?

We are celebrating our Centennial, but it is not just about turning pages in a calendar. We are completing the interior and repairing the exterior of our beautiful church, but it is not just about a building. What holds it all together as its origin, purpose and goal?

The beloved former Bishop Gerasimos of blessed memory served as the Bishop of Pittsburgh for 10 years, from 1967 to 1977. He has been revered by all for his gentle spirit, strong faith and Christ-centered life. His quote above is a grounding force for us as we progress forward this year at Holy Trinity Church, because he reminds us that all progress in the Church and indeed in our life as Christians has a single and unifying goal: Jesus Christ. HE IS where we are from, where we are now and where we are going.

Our community's Vision Statement, "Faith. Family. Community." reflects that so beautifully because it reminds us that all we do and everything we are is grounded in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Our Faith is in Christ. We are a Family in Christ. And this is the Community of Jesus Christ, His Holy Church.

It is to that same Christ, then, I offer my personal and pastoral thanks for the many faithful members and offerings of love and faith that make everything that happens here possible, by the grace of God. The photos of our Parish Council installation and Vasilopita Celebration with our ministry leaders on pages 10 and 11 make it abundantly clear that the life of this community is built day by day in a multitude of ways by many people who offer their stewardship of time, talents and treasures in every aspect of the life of the Church. We are indeed blessed, and I hope you will find the time to thank them for their selfless efforts ... and most importantly offer your prayers and your help!

As we progress forward through this 100th year, please continue to remind yourself from where it all comes and where it is all going. The celebrations will be filled with joy and the challenges will be filled with work. But as Saint Paul reminds us, it is all possible: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4.13). That belief runs strong through the veins of our faith. It is what raised this community from its humble beginnings on the North Side with the sacrificial offerings of our Greek immigrant forebears. And it is what will guide us to the fullness our calling to become what we must be for those who will some day also look back at us as well and give thanks for the torchbearers of the light of Jesus Christ for a world in need of faith, light and hope.

Pastorally and paternally yours in Christ,

CELEBRATING
100
YEARS
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OUR VISION

Faith. Family. Community.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is to proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ.

FEBRUARY

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - February

In addition to regular Sunday Orthros at 8:15am, and Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, the following weekday services will be offered this month at the same time unless otherwise indicated. Please see the online parish calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (Location code: HT=Holy Trinity Church; SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Tue. Feb. 1 - 6:30pm Great Vespers - Presentation of the Lord (Ypapanti)**
- **Wed. Feb. 2 - 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy - Presentation of the Lord (Ypapanti)**
Both the above services will be held at the Presentation of Christ Church in East Pittsburgh for its nameday.
- **Thu. Feb. 10: St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr (SG)**
- **Sat. Feb. 18: Saturday of the Souls (SG)**
- **Sat. Feb. 25: Saturday of the Souls (SG)**
- **Sun. Feb. 26, 6:30pm: Forgiveness Vespers (SG)**
- **Mon. Feb. 27, 6:30pm: Great Compline (SG)**

Saturdays of the Souls.....February 18, 25, March 4

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" at St. George Chapel to commemorate those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Orthros is at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am and the Memorial Service. Download the names form at HolyTrinityPgh.org/documents/worship to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones. All those able to bring "kollyva" memorial wheat for offering during the memorial prayers are asked to do so. Thank you!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Reminder: Bring Your Children!

Attention Church School parents and families: **Remember, "Church School" starts with "Church!"** All families are asked to attend Divine Liturgy each Sunday, starting at 9:30. The Youth Sermon, a special feature of our Sunday Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church, is offered following the Gospel, so be sure to arrive on time for a message created for the students. Thank you, parents!

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA Basketball Tournament February

Our Holy Trinity GOYA families will be participating in the final Metropolis basketball tournament of the season hosted by Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon from

February 17-19. Thank you to our GOYAns, coaches and parents for representing Holy Trinity Church with such honor and respect. May God grant them the joy of good fellowship in Christ with their friends on and off the court.

HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini-RetreatMarch 4

Holy Trinity Church is honored to host the 2023 Metropolis Central Regional HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini-Retreat on Saturday, March 4, from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Registration is required but is free. Lunch will be provided. Registration deadline is February 28. Visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/events.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Parish Council Elects Officers for 2023

Congratulations to the newly-elected Parish Council officers for 2023. They are: President - George Dickos; Vice-President - George Mellis; Treasurer - Michael Passodelis; Secretary - Jeanne Willow. God's blessings on them and the entire Parish Council as they set the model of servant leadership for the entire parish!

Holy Trinity on Pittsburgh Faith & Family Channel

Holy Trinity Church services have been on the Pittsburgh Faith and Family Channel for a number of years. Our services are broadcast on Sundays at 2pm, Tuesdays at 4am and Fridays at 11am. They can be found on Armstrong channel 95, FIOS channel 472 and Comcast has been added at channel 1185.

Reminder for Church Facilities: Reservations Required

As parish activities resume their full schedule, please remember that if your ministry or committee is planning a meeting or activity to be held at the church, reservations for rooms and event spaces are required. Contact Office Administrator, Mary Portellos (412-366-8700 or office@HolyTrinityPgh.org). Thank you for your help!

REALM NEWS

Activate Your Holy Trinity Realm Account Today

With the adoption of Realm, Holy Trinity Church's membership and stewardship databases have been converted and imported in the new system. That means every parishioner now has a Holy Trinity Realm account. But in order to access that account and use its features, it must be activated by responding to the invitation sent to all our parishioners by the office. Are you a member of Holy Trinity Church but did not receive your invitation? Contact by the Church office by sending a request to realm@HolyTrinityPgh.org or call 412-366-8700. ❖

The Days of Pre-Lent

A Time of Preparation

The Sundays of Pre-Lent

Before Great Lent begins this year – on Monday, Feb. 27th – our Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church tries to prepare us for this time of spiritual renewal. For four Sundays prior to the Great Fast, we are prepared for this great spiritual experience. The Church, through the Gospel lessons, guides us along the path of repentance to Christ.

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (Feb. 5): What is the Triodion? A sacred book of the Church used for pre-lent and the Great Lent. On the first Sunday of the Triodion we learn the power of humble prayer and humility. (Luke 18:10-14).

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Feb. 12): The second Sunday of Triodion offers us a picture of repentance (the younger son) of love, of forgiveness and of envy (the elder son). From this parable we learn that for the repentant soul, spiritual joy is never too late to be found; the Church always welcomes those who sincerely repent of their evil ways and seek to walk the path of righteousness again (Luke 15:11-32).

Meatfare Sunday (Feb. 19): The lesson from the third Sunday of the Triodion is the Last Judgment. It reminds us of the terrible day of the Last Judgment when all who have lived from the beginning of man will face the righteous King and Judge. We are also reminded of our need to perform acts of virtue, to be

compassionate, merciful and charitable. (Matthew 21:31-46).

Cheesefare Sunday (Feb. 26): On the fourth Sunday of the Triodion and the last Sunday before the Great Lent, the theme is the lost 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 (Matthew 6:14-21).

A Call For Renewal

This Pre-Lenten period of four Sundays is a time of invitation to each of us. The Church calls each of us to make good use of the coming time for spiritual renewal. The Church offers us these Gospel lessons as examples of God’s great mercy. The Church encourages us to be repentant and implores us to obey God’s Commandments if we desire to be reconciled with Him. Let us accept humbly the invitation that the Church extends to us. Let us deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him, as He commanded us to do – thus we will receive from Him the Divine Grace which He has in store for those who are faithful to Him and His Holy Church.

How Can We Prepare Ourselves?

SET A GOAL: First of all, set a goal for yourself – a spiritual goal. Then through daily prayer, fasting, repentance, confession, Holy Communion and continuing thoughtfulness, strive to reach it.

ATTEND SERVICES: What else can we do during this period of preparation? To reach your spiritual



“Geronda’s Corner” was a regular feature of the *Holy Trinity Herald* for many years. It was a ministry of our beloved “Geronda,” Father John Androutopoulos of blessed memory (+2019). His pastoral guidance and wisdom are still relevant today.

goal, resolve to participate in the services of the Church. The Divine Liturgy on the Lord’s Day is a solemn obligation.

PRAY: Pray and meditate daily. Prayer and meditation are food for the soul. Read the Holy Scriptures and think about what you have read. Also, read other spiritual books. You will find inspiration and spiritual uplifting in reading religious books.

GIVE: Give of yourself and of your material resources. How can you give of yourself? Visit the sick, the aged and the lonely. Volunteer to undertake Church projects; with God’s help, they are easy and rewarding.

RESOLVE: Resolve to raise your contributions, your Sunday offering to the Church. Give up a pleasure or an entertainment so that you can do this. Every Orthodox Christian is called upon to prepare himself for the Great Lent, which this year begins on Monday, February 27th. ❖

Faith & Family Weekdays

Something for Everyone

JOM

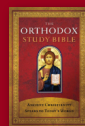
Journey of Marriage
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm



Marriage seminar aimed at preparing couples for their wedding. Based on the "Journey of Marriage" course by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Conducted as group sessions with couples to share and grow together. Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, May 2.

ETW

Explore the Word
Wednesdays, 6:30pm



Father Radu continues his exploration of the Holy Bible, this time with a survey of the Old Testament. Learn about prophets, biblical history and the story of God's chosen people in their journeys and struggles. Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, May 10, 24, 31. (Not held during Lent)

MPS

Monthly Paraclesis Service
Monthly on Tuesdays, 6:30pm



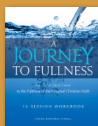
Come and spend an hour in hymns and prayer, honoring the Theotokos, Saint Nektarios and Saint Paisios of Athos at our beautiful Saint George Chapel. Pray for those in need. Renew your spirit in peace and prayer. Feb. 21 (5:30); May 9, June 13.

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JTF

Journey to Fullness
Mondays (6-week series), 7:00pm



An overview of the Orthodox Christian Faith for newcomers interested in joining or life-long members yearning to deepen their understanding. Format: Videos and Q&A/discussion. Spring series dates: Apr. 24, May 1, 8, 15 & 22, Jun. 12.

P&P

Prayer & Panera
2nd & 4th Thursday, 7:00am



Prayer and Christian fellowship for men. 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 45 minutes of coffee & conversation. Feb. 16, Mar. 2, 16, Apr. 6 & 20, May 4 & 18, June 1.

Faith and Family Weekdays offers something for everyone to grow in their faith and share in community. Ready to learn more about the about your Faith, about navigating life's challenges as a Christian, a women or a man? It's all there. Newly engaged? Prepare for Christian marriage at the **Journey of Marriage** sessions. Share the journey and grow together with other couples.

Spend quiet time in prayer and fellowship time over coffee at the **Saint Nikodemos "Prayer and Panera" Men's Prayer Fellowship.** (Pictured at right) Want to get to know the Bible better? Attend Father Radu's excellent Bible Study. Learn about the Faith, marriage and Christian living through other opportunities. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for details and locations.



The Beauty of Your House

“O Lord, I love, the beauty of Your house; and the place where Your glory dwells.” (Psalm 26.8)

Today, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our Holy Trinity Church is more beautiful than the last time you were here. And every time you enter over the next two months, it will be more beautiful than the last time. Why? As you all know and have supported, we are - by the grace of God - completing the iconography of this sacred space.

We could simply sit in awe and wonder today, but there will be many more years to come for that. Today, the first Sunday of our iconography completion project, it seems fitting that we should spend a little time understanding just why we are doing this, then meet our wonderful friends from Greece who, through the divinely-inspired talents they have brought with them, are actually completing this work for us and for the glory of God.

What is an icon? The word icons comes from the Greek word “εἰκῶ”, which means “to imitate” or “to be like.” According to Saint Basil, the essence of an icon is the imitation of its prototype, or the original person or scene it represents.

How do icons communicate their message? “Icons...speak a ‘new’ tongue, a most perfect tongue which is simultaneously the language of the Gospels and the Church’s liturgical



life...It is important that we all learn and attain an appreciation of this language so we can enter into the otherworldly realm of the Spirit, the place of Sanctity and Holiness...so we can enter into the transfigured world of

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God to which the icon points” (What Do You Know About Icons, xi).

Let’s look at a few more things that icons are...and are not.

Icons are religious art, but they are not just religious artwork. There are many kinds of religious forms throughout the art world. Icons are for Orthodox Christians indispensable liturgical elements that sanctify believers and raise our intellect to the mystical knowledge of God. By means of the inspiration icons bring into our life, we progress “toward the new earth in mystery” according to Saint Basil.

Icons are spiritual invitations.

They invite us to communicate on a spiritual level with the archetype, or the person they represent. Icons inspire hymnographers to compose hymns; they inspire theologians to teach, they inspire clergy to preach and they fill our hearts with the remembrance of the miracles, saints and wonders they proclaim.

Though it is often said that one of the uses of icons in the early Church was to teach through images the lessons of Christ, His salvation and His saints to those who were uneducated, Iakovos Mainas says “The icon is not simply books for the uneducated, as if the educated have no need for them. They teach us all not because they inform us, but because they lead us to



January 23: Our team of God-inspired iconographers arrive from Greece to begin the sacred work of completing the iconography of Holy Trinity Church, starting with a blessing service. L-R: Alkis Pappas, Polychronis Vichos, Father John, Team Leader and Master Iconographer Dr. George Kordis, Maria Panou, Kanellos Kanellopoulos.

Heaven."

Icons are also windows, through which the people of God, His Holy Church, are drawn to contemplate the Kingdom of Heaven. That is why true Orthodox iconography is governed by tradition and discipline which holds it true to the teaching, history and theology of the Church. The colors, lines, clothing, expressions, objects and every other aspect of Orthodox iconography carries the great responsibility of "the inheritance of the truth and the duty to proclaim it evangelically to the world."



We may stand in awe of the beauty and the artistic aesthetic of icons, but Father Vasilios of the Holy Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos says we need to go beyond that. "Let us stand in worship. Let us receive life. Let us nurse; let us take in; let us drink from

them, insatiably, because what nourishes us now can never be exhausted. Those who show veneration [to the holy icons] and those whom [the holy icons represent] are alike in the power and sanctifying grace of the Spirit who has neither beginning nor ending."



So now that we better understand the purpose, tradition and language of icons, let's move on to the phenomenon at hand: the icons of Holy Trinity Church.

Thanks to the great and sacrificial love the members of this parish family have for their mother, the Church, we were blessed to be able to open this new sacred space ten years ago with a large part of the iconography completed. That, dear ones, is a rarity

in Orthodox churches, especially in America. Parishes often wait 20, 30 years or more to even begin their iconography, and many never do because iconography was not "baked into" their projects as it was for ours. But you loved your Church so much and the supporters of our building fund were so generous we all said, "We will not open with nothing but white walls staring at us for years to come."

Once we as a community committed to making that happen, by God's grace we found the man who could make that possible. The Lord sent us a true servant of Christ, Dr. George Kordis, a master Iconographer from Greece, along with a team of divinely-inspired co-workers, who were amazingly able to complete the upper icons and the Holy Altar area in only six weeks. Thousands of people who have worshiped, toured and visited this sacred space since then in the



last ten years have been awed, inspired and blessed by that holy work.

When I asked Dr. Kordis back then what his impression of the space was when he walked in to begin his work, he said of our architect, Christ Kamares, "He has given us a good canvas to work with." Indeed, George, you have done well with that canvas and are well on the way to completing this holy masterpiece.

Delivered January 29, 2023

(The homily concluded with the introduction of the iconography team and Q&A with Dr. Kordis. View the entire session on our video archive).❖



Two new members were recently received into the life of the Orthodox Church through the Mystery of Holy Christmation. Left: Eric (Luke) White, pictured with his wife, Kit, and his sponsor, James Stamatelos. Right: David Brittain, pictured with his sponsor, Christopher Sarandou. May God grant them both many years of progress in faith, wisdom and the life of salvation in Jesus Christ!

Middle rows: Holy Trinity Church offered its thanks, prayers and respect for the members of our military on our annual Military Appreciation Day on November 13.
Bottom row: During dome reconstruction, the Cross was removed and brought into the Gallery by a team of volunteers for repairs being done by Bill Fiedler.







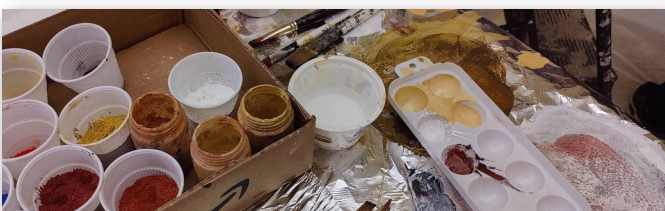
January 8: Philoptochos hosted the annual Vasilopita celebration, which was held in the Grand Room following Divine Liturgy. Representatives from all the ministries of Holy Trinity Church received a piece from the Saint Basil bread. Happy New Year!

January 8: The Holy Trinity 2023 Parish Council was installed following the Divine Liturgy. Pictured with Father John and Father Radu are (L-R): Christopher Sarandou, Tom Germanos, Andrew Fournaridis, Jeane Willow, Anthony Balouris, Ashley Bournias, George Dickos, George Mellis, Evan Danis, Michael Passodelis and George Danis. Not pictured: Dean Passodelis. Congratulations and thank you to all our Parish Council members, who have been elected by the community as servant leaders. May God bless their offerings of love, and may we all be available to help them when called upon!





January-March, 2023: A team of expert iconographers from Greece under the direction of Master Iconographer Dr. George Kordis began working on completing the iconography of Holy Trinity Church on January 23 and will be in residence through the end of March. As seen here, they start by using charcoal pens to sketch the images directly on the wall, then they build the images with color. Watch their progress online with regular updates at photos.holytrinitypgh.org/Iconography/Church/2023





GOD GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

What God desires from us is to have a little humility, in order to have kinship with Him, and then all His gifts come abundantly, one after another.

Geronda, why is humility so necessary for our spiritual life?

Humility is the single most important virtue; but since this is not easily understood, then I would also add love.

Abba Isaac says, "What salt is for any food, humility is for every virtue."

In other words, without humility...the virtues will be "inedible"! The saint wants to emphasize how necessary humility is in working on virtues. If a person does not have humility, no virtue can come near him.°

Geronda, which virtues are needed for one to be overshadowed by the Grace of God?

Humility alone will suffice. If one becomes humble, he can instantly be immersed in divine Grace, become an angel and find himself in Paradise. On the contrary, if he becomes prideful, he can turn into a devil in a moment's time and find himself in Hell. In other words, one can become a lamb if he wants to; he can also become a goat if he wants to. The poor goats can never become lambs, even if they want to; but God has given us humans the ability to change from being a goat to being a lamb — it is enough that we want to do so.

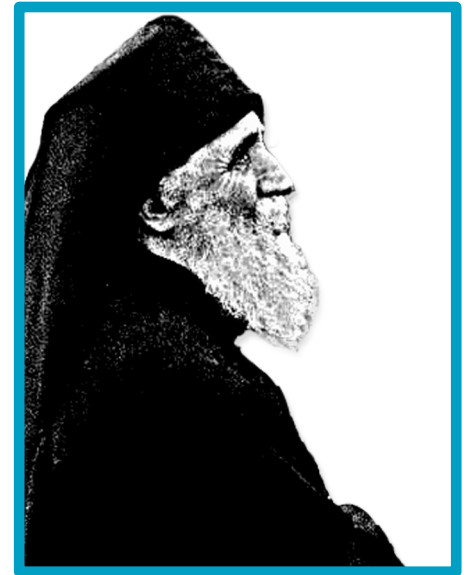
The Grace of God is extended only to the humble and meek person. That is where the Spirit of God finds respite.

Do you know what Prophet Isaiah says? "But to this man will I look: even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word."

What God desires from us is to have a little humility, in order to have kinship with Him, and then all His gifts come abundantly, one after another. For, in a way, God owes much Grace to the humble person, and so He gives it to him as a gift, without being asked to do so. This is a spiritual law. "God resists the proud, but gives Grace unto the humble; is this not written in the Gospel? This is how God has arranged it. "To be humble" means, "I have divine Grace."

A very humble person receives much Grace from God, for the humble person absorbs divine Grace like a sponge.

Humility opens the doors of Heaven and then the Grace of God comes to people, whereas pride closes them. Father Tychon used to say, "One humble individual has more Grace than many persons together. Each morning God blesses the people of the world with one hand, but when He sees a humble person, He blesses him with both hands. He who has greater humility is the greatest of all!"



Saint Paisios of Athos

Everything depends upon a humble frame of mind. When one has a humble frame of mind, then earth and Heaven come together naturally.

What did Christ say? "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." One humble thought immediately generates the Grace of God.

I have noticed that one humble thought makes a person shine, makes him beam.

Geronda, if one is prideful and places one humble thought in his mind, will God help him?

Well, if he thinks one humble thought, then he will not be prideful; he will be humble, and God will help him. People fluctuate; they go one way and then another — depending on what kind of thoughts they have. The proud person can be helped by thinking a humble thought. And the humble ceases to be humble by thinking one proud thought. In order for humility to become one's permanent condition such that the Grace of God remains within him, spiritual work is required.

Excerpted from
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THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD*Faith. Family. Community***About the Herald**

The Herald is the Monthly Newsmagazine of
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Editor

Father John Touloumes, Protosphyter (fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org)
Church: 412-366-8700 | Home: 412-831-3574

Production

Mary Portellos, Office Administrator (office@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Photographers

Peter Gagianas Theanne Gagianas
Mary-Magdalene Welsh Sherry Clayton

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**About the Parish**

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
985 Providence Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-366-8700 | Fax: 412-366-8710 Web site: www.
HolyTrinityPgh.org | Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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

**Parish Administration
Clergy**

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos
Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2023 Parish Council

George Dickos, President (pcpresident@holytrinitypgh.org)

Anthony Balouris	Andrew Fournaridis	Michael Passodelis
Ashley Bournias	Tom Germanos	Chris Sarandou
George Danis	George Mellis	Alexandra Valliant
Evan Danis	Dean Passodelis	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! Everyone is welcome!

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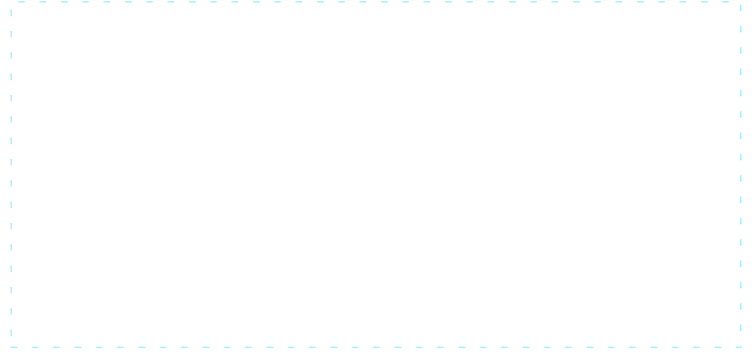
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CHOOSE JOY

Joy is what makes life worth living, but for many joy seems hard to find. They complain that their lives are sorrowful and depressing. Strange as it may sound, **we can choose joy.**

Two people can be part of the same event, but one may choose to live it quite differently from the other. One may choose to trust that what happened, painful as it may be, holds a promise. The other may choose despair and be destroyed by it. What makes us human is precisely this freedom of choice.

(Henri Nouwen, Bread for the Journey)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace”
(Romans 15.13)

