



THE HOLY TRINITY

# HERALD

*Faith. Family. Community*

September 2025  
Volume 33 | Issue 8

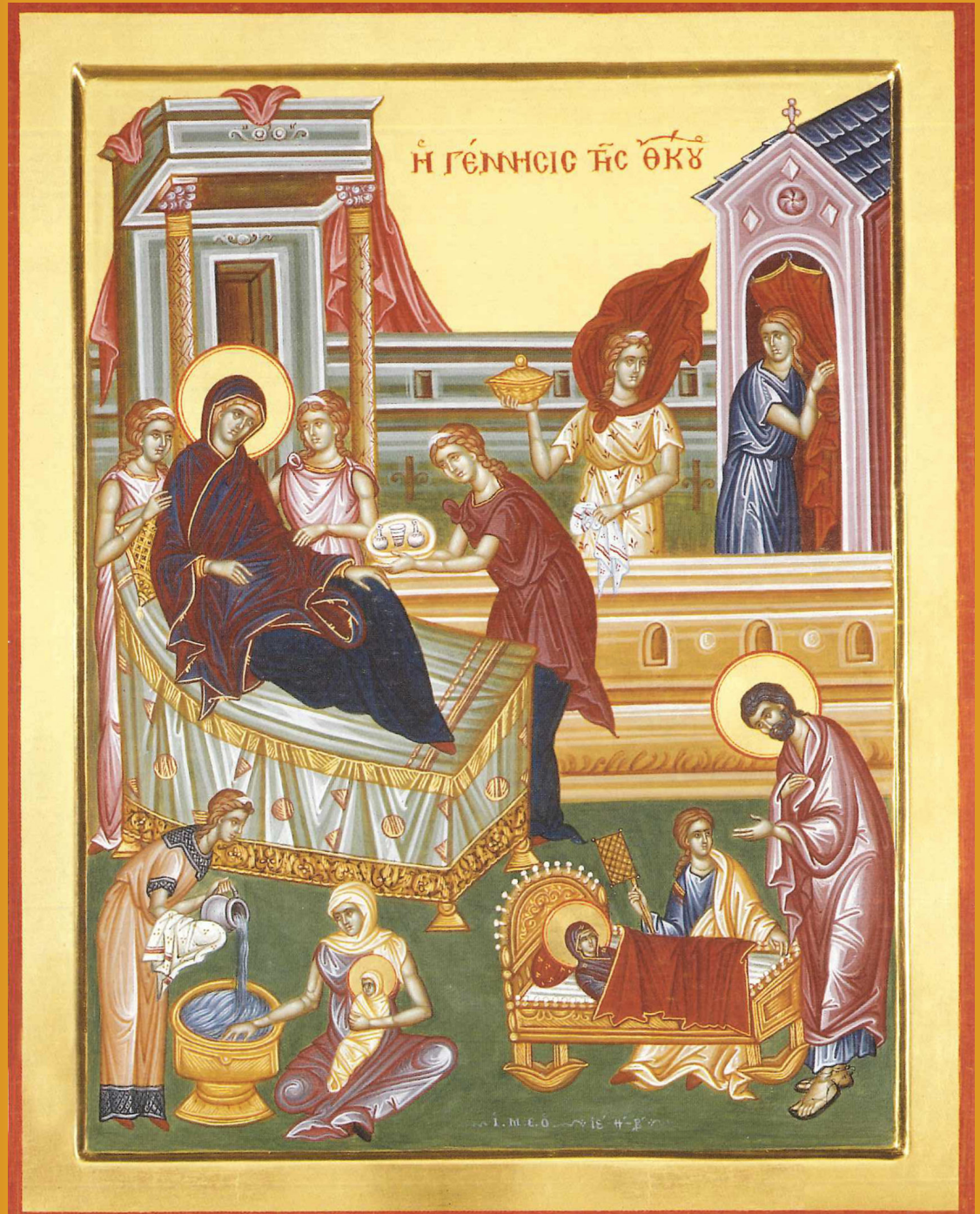
## INSIDE

- Father John's Message | 2
- News & Events | 3
- The Orthodox Bookshelf | 5
- Homily: Gerontissa Taxiarchia | 6
- Homily: We Hold These Truths | 8
- Faith & Family Weekdays: Fall 2025 | 10
- 2025 House Blessings | 12
- Community Life Photo Journal | 13
- Intense Athos: Reflections from the Holy Mountain | 16
- 2025 Stewardship Roster | 20
- 2025-2026 Church School Calendar | 22
- Ask the Elders | 26
- Why We Should Read the Bible | 28

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Holy Trinity GOYA honors its 2025 Graduates at the annual Senior Recognition Dinner. See more Community Life Journal Photos on pages 13-15.



**The Nativity of the Theotokos — September 8**

**“Your birth, O Theotokos, brought joy to the whole world,  
for from you dawned the sun of righteousness, Christ our God.”**



Father John Touloumes  
Proistamenos

Now in our 102nd year!  
1923-2025

**OUR VISION**  
Faith. Family. Community.

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

**This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

**1 Timothy 2.3-4**

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

This month we begin another Ecclesiastical New Year and we are so thankful to God that He has continued to grow the flock of this blessed community so wonderfully. As new families join and new members seek ways to get involved as active members and stewards contributing to the life of this parish, I thought it would be good to take the opportunity to update for them and refresh for all of us the Vision and Mission of Holy Trinity Church as we strive to share the "knowledge of the truth" as proclaimed by St. Paul above.

**The Vision of Holy Trinity Church** are three simple but powerful and defining words you see on the front of the *Herald*, the *Bulletin*, our Holy Trinity letterhead and the signs on the corners of our property: **"Faith. Family. Community."** Those three words concisely capture the essence of what is at the core of our Christ-centered lives here, simultaneously proclaiming who we are and what we do.

The **Mission**, unanimously adopted in 1999, speaks more to **how** we implement that Vision through our day-to-day life and ministries: **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.** This sacred mission is fulfilled in the Holy Spirit through the following expressions of ministry:

- **A worship ministry** which nurtures the faithful through regular participation in the Sacred Services and Holy Mysteries of the Church.
- **A teaching ministry** which strives to educate and inspire the faithful through the Sacred Scriptures and Holy Tradition of the Church.
- **An outreach ministry** which fulfills the command of Jesus Christ to reach out to the sick and needy, to serve the least of our brethren, and to spread the Gospel both locally and throughout the world.
- **A hospitality ministry**, which welcomes visitors and new members to the community with love and respect, and which actively embraces the parish's involvement with other churches.
- **A fellowship ministry**, which provides a variety of opportunities for all members of the parish to share in activities with one another through appropriate cultural, social and educational events that reflect the life, faith and cultural heritage of the community.
- **A stewardship ministry** which engenders the faithful dedication of the time, talents and treasures of parishioners in support of the ministries of the Church to the glory of God.

It is important to occasionally review and refresh all this from time to time because it helps us to remember that the Holy Trinity experience is neither accidental not incidental, but **intentional**. If the Creed of our Faith says, in essence, **"This is what we believe"**, these Vision and Mission statements allow us to say to one another and the world, **"This is how we live it."** And it takes anyone who walks through the door of this church only a few minutes to know whether we are true to those words. Thank you for helping make that all real by the grace of God, because even though it is we who live it, it is truly all about Him, the Lord, to Whom all glory and honor are due.

Pastorally and thankfully yours in Christ,

**WORSHIP LIFE**

**Weekday Services - September**

The following weekday services will be offered this month at 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy unless otherwise indicated. Please visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (Note location: SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Thursday, Sep. 4, 6:30pm - Paraclesis to St. Paisios** (SG)
- **Saturday, Sep. 6, 9:00am - Nativity of the Theotokos** (Services held at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, 121 St. Elias Ln., Saxonburg)
- **Saturday, Sep. 13, 5:00pm - Great Vespers - Exaltation of the Holy Cross** (Service held at Holy Cross Church, 123 Gilkeson Rd., Mt. Lebanon)
- **Tuesday, Sep. 23 - Conception of St. John the Baptist** (SG)

**Nativity of the Theotokos (Saxonburg)..... Sep. 6**

Gerontissa Theophano and the Sisters invite you to attend the Feast Day services of the Nativity of the Theotokos on Saturday, September 6, beginning at 9:00am; Hours, Divine Liturgy and Lunch to follow. Home-made pastries, frappes and items made by the sisters will also be available for purchase. Please RSVP, so that the Monastery can be prepared to provide adequate hospitality. Send an email to info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org or respond by phone at 724-352-3999. Please remember that visitors to the Monastery should be dressed modestly as a sign of respect for this sacred place, located at 121 St Elias Ln, Saxonburg, PA 16056. If you are unable to attend, please consider helping the Sisters to complete their new Monastery Church. You can make an online charitable contribution at www.nativityofthetheotokosmonastery.org/ donate or mail your check to the address listed above.

**Blessing of the Animals..... September 6**

Attention all pet owners: Bring your pet to Holy Trinity Church on Saturday, September 6 at 2:00pm (promptly please - pets don't usually wait patiently!) for the Blessing of the Animals service. It will be held outside the front of the church in honor of the Feast of St. Mamas, one of the Orthodox patron saints of animals. All kinds are welcome! The service is brief and always full of animal energy, so please be sure to leash dogs and hold all others to help keep the peace! See you and your pets there!

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS**

**Church School Resumes..... September 7**

Church School will resume the week after the Festival, on Sunday, September 7. This year's theme is "Follow the Truth" from 3 John 1.34: "No greater joy can I have than

this, to hear that my children follow the truth." We look forward to seeing all the children of this community, age 3 and up, participate.

**Church School Starts with Church!**

With thanks to our enthusiastic and dedicated staff—all of whom volunteer their time and talents to help you raise your children in the faith—we look forward to another great year of Church School ministry at Holy Trinity Church. Thank you to the parents who place this as a high priority in their children's lives by bringing them on time, discussing what they have learned afterwards and taking the time to thank the teachers and staff for their offerings of love for the children of this community.

Remember, **Church School begins with Divine Liturgy**. So please be sure to have all our students there at 9:30 am each Sunday. The youth sermon—a special time for your priests to teach and connect with our youth—takes place early in the service after the Gospel, so they won't want to miss that.

Also, parents and young people: please remember that **all youth ministries at Holy Trinity Church begin with Church School**. All HOPE, JOY, GOYA and Greek Dance children start by being regular attendees at worship services and Church School as part of the Holy Trinity family, together in Christ. Thanks for your faithful participation and witness.

**Church School Class Times - Please note**

Attention Church School students and parents: please note the following times and locations for classes:

- **Classroom Locations**
  - Pre-School through Eighth Grade classrooms are located on the upper level of the Education Center
  - Ninth through Twelfth Grade classrooms are located on the main floor of the Education Center
- **Dismissal Times**
  - Important: Please note that all classes—Pre-School through Twelfth Grade—**conclude at 11:30am**. All students will be dismissed to the Church School snack area. Parents, please give the teachers time to finish class every Sunday.
- **Student Pick-up**
  - Pre-School parents should meet their children outside the Pre-School classroom.
  - All other parents are asked to wait on the main floor level to reduce upper level traffic.
- **Church School Snack Area**
  - The Church School snack table is located on the main floor Education Center hallway outside the Fireside Room. Be sure to volunteer to help by signing up to provide the snacks!

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

### Youth Ministries Kick-Off ..... September 6

Holy Trinity Church will be hosting a combined Youth Ministries Kick-Off Picnic on Saturday, September 6 from 3:00-7:00pm at the Willows Pavilion on Babcock Boulevard in North Park. Volunteers are needed to bring food and help with activities. See the flyer in this issue for details and to volunteer.

## COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

### Hospitality Hour Hosts Needed

Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to host our reformatted "Hospitality Hour" following our Sunday Divine Liturgies. Remember, these do not happen on their own, but rather are an expression of the intentional hospitality of the members and families of this community. And they are not just for memorials. Celebrate a special event like a birthday or anniversary. Honor a loved one. There are still lots of Sundays available throughout the Fall. Contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or send an email to [hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org) to reserve your dates.

### Stewardship Independence: Let's Keep It Up in 2025

Thanks to the dedication and offerings of so many faithful stewards, 2024 was a record year for Holy Trinity Stewardship. As we strove together for "Stewardship Independence" we reached levels never seen before. As the Stewardship message in this issue notes, we have been able to realize our vision and mission in ways we could have never dreamed of before: growth of our ministries, support of our youth and offerings of love to ministries and philanthropies local and beyond. Stewardship independence has allowed our light to shine brightly as we share the love of the Gospel as commanded by the Lord. Glory to God and many thanks to the faithful

stewards who stepped up to the challenge to make this all possible. So where do we go from here? Upward! Together, let's maintain and grow as our theme for 2025 calls us to be "Stewards of God's Blessings." You can pledge using a 2025 Stewardship pledge card or by going online at [HolyTrinityPgh.org/pledge](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org/pledge) or via your Holy Trinity Realm account. And there are many ways to give: in person via cash; in person or by mail via check; online at [HolyTrinityPgh.org/give](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org/give); via text by texting HOLYTRINITYPGH to 73256; via the Realm app on your phone; and the giving kiosk in the Narthex. However you choose to support our ministries, thank you!

### Active Older Adults (AOA) Tour ..... September 29

Holy Trinity Active Older Adults (AOA) is sponsoring a trip to two iconic Pittsburgh sights on Monday, September 29th. Our first stop will be the St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church in Millvale, featuring the murals of Maxo Vanka; hauntingly beautiful with a message about both the divine and humanity. Combines traditional religious themes with social themes, showing the horrors of war, social injustice, and scenes of the Old and New Testament. Then we will visit the Hartwood Acres Mansion, located in Hampton Twp, completed in 1929 for John and Mary Flinn Lawrence. Lunch is included. Bus will depart from Holy Trinity at 10:15am and return at 4:30pm. Cost is \$65.00 per person. Everyone is welcome to take the trip. For more information, or to make your reservation by Sept 22, please call or text Tasy McCann at 724-612-9145.

### Holding a Ministry Event? Reservations Required!

Our community and its ministries are growing! If your ministry is planning a meeting or activity at the church, please note that reservations for rooms and event spaces are required. Please call the Church Office at 412-366-8700 or email [office@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:office@HolyTrinityPgh.org). Your cooperation helps ensure every group that needs a space has one. ❖

## INTRODUCING THE HERALD QUARTERLY

After 32 years of continuous publication, this issue of *The Holy Trinity Herald* marks the last monthly issue of our community news magazine. Starting in October, *The Herald* begins its new life as quarterly news magazine, with 4 issues per year: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

*The Herald Quarterly* issues will continue to feature color photos, news and articles on the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church. In between issues, news, events and updates will continue to be communicated through the Weekly Bulletin as well as other new information update systems.

Thank you to all our contributors, photographers, mailing volunteers and our Office Administrator, Mary Portellos, for all the work it takes to produce and get this essential offering into the hands of our community members and supporters. We couldn't do it without you!



# Surprised by Christ

An autobiographical account of the spiritual journey of Fr. James Bernstein and his quest for spiritual truth. It accounts his beginnings as a Jewish boy growing up in Queens, New York to an Orthodox Christian priest.

“The Orthodox Bookshelf” is a *Holy Trinity Herald* column by Rick Paese focusing on books of Orthodox Christian interest for everyone. Many of the books highlighted will be available for purchase at the Three Hierarchs Bookstore in the Gallery.

## Starting Jewish; Finding Christ

As a boy Father James Bernstein was interested in God and religion. But, as a Jew, he found God to be distant. To be discussed, but not known personally. Surrounded by Christian friends, he became interested in the New Testament and Jesus. He was surprised how the Bible portrayed Jesus; as a model of faith, love, wisdom, and restraint. He was intrigued. After much prayer he had a personal encounter with God which deeply influenced him.

After this encounter, he passionately sought after Christ by reading the Bible and joining various Protestant Christian denominations and groups. He portrays his encounters with Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholicism, and several Protestant denominations. As he recounts these experiences, he discusses how he wrestled with their theology and how this process led him to realize the Orthodox Church was the one true Church.

## His Exposition of the Faith

His unique presentation of interweaving his personal story with theological teachings is an interesting way to explain the tenets of the Orthodoxy. As

a convert to Orthodoxy myself, I found his struggle for spiritual truth very relatable. His exposition of the faith is one of the most accessible and easily understood of all the books I've read. He thoroughly discusses many Orthodox beliefs without over complicating them. He covered the following topics:

- **Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)** - Fr. James wrestled with the Protestant belief that Christians only need scripture to understand and practice the faith. However, he soon realized the difficulty in this approach. For one, there was no “New Testament” in the early church and no finalized Old Testament canon. In fact, the 27 books of the New Testament we have today were not decided on by Church leadership until the 4th century. This was his first clue there was more to the Christian life than just the written word. It was the Church that gave birth to, and preceded, the New Testament. Once he realized this, his task was to find the true Church that determined the biblical canon.
- **Church Services** - He found that the historical record showed universal alignment on the form of worship. It was liturgical, sacramental, and hierarchical. Early church was not a “do your own thing” affair.
- **The Fall** - In the Orthodox view, when Adam and Eve fell, the image of God was distorted but never destroyed. According to Saint Irenaeus, man's original state was one of spiritual innocence and simplicity, joined to moral purity. Man was to gain divine likeness through a slow process. Man's fall was not a full-blown rebellion, but rather an impulsive desire to grow before his time. Unlike the Protestant idea that humanity became completely corrupt and helpless after the Fall, the Orthodox view says the image of God was damaged but not destroyed.
- **Salvation** - The Protestant views of Christ's crucifixion focus on a “ransom” or “debt” to be paid to God or the devil. Orthodoxy focuses less on this type of juridical view and more on how he died to heal us, to change us into something better.

## Rekindling Our Own Flame

For those who have been Orthodox for many years, it can be easy to forget the passion we felt when we first discovered the faith or made it our own. A memoir like *Surprised by Christ* helps to remind us of our own story and fan our flame that may need a little rekindling. Along the way, it also deepens our understanding of our faith and why it matters. ❖

*Rick Paese*

# GERONTISSA TAXIARCHIA: A WOMAN PLEASING TO GOD



Gerontissa Makrina and Gerontissa Taxiarchia

**T**here was once a woman pleasing to God and loved by Him. And while living among sinners she was taken up... She was made perfect, for in a short time she fulfilled long years, for her soul was pleasing to the Lord. Therefore He took her early from the midst of evil." (Wisdom of Solomon, 4.10, 13-14). In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

That passage from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon is a standard reading in the Orthodox Church at Vespers services for certain saints, especially those who were "taken up" early. I made just one modification in that passage today: it originally read, "There was once a man pleasing to God. Today, I changed that to a woman. And I did that referring to a particular woman. Some of us here today knew her. She was called by God for a very special mission here in the Pittsburgh area. She changed the face of this Metropolis. She has had a deep and lasting impact on my life and the life of Holy Trinity Church. And she was taken up early by the Lord, 41 years ago today. So today please join me in honoring Gerontissa Taxiarchia of blessed memory.

I am a firm believer that names have a lot to do with our lives, either reflecting who we were born to be or shaping who we eventually become. Either way, Gerontissa's names were quite fitting. She was born on April 30, 1938 in eastern Greece and given the name Afroditis. That name in the ancient Greek pagan culture evoked the goddess of love and beauty, two characteristics that would come to the fullness of their spiritual reality as this young woman grew up. And one of the symbols of beauty associated with that name is roses; keep that in mind, because we'll return to it later.

When she was only five years old, her father was executed by communist rebels following World War II. Her mother and her three siblings, having lost their husband and breadwinner, fell into poverty. At age 12, Afroditis contracted rheumatic fever, which would affect her for the rest of her life. One positive effect was that as her activities were limited, she was drawn to a quiet life, contemplative life, through which she was drawn close to the Church. As she grew in her faith, she became especially close to the Panagia, the Theotokos, a woman above all women who was completely dedicated to God and became a model for Afroditis's life.

Her health problems continued into adult life and she had to come to America for heart valve replacement surgery. She promised the Panagia at that time that if she became well, she would serve in her monastery for six months as an act of thanks. She did indeed recover, and in 1971, at age 33, she entered the Holy Monastery of "Panagia Odigitria" in the nearby village of Portaria. Presvytera Becky and I had the blessing of visiting that sacred place during our Sabbatical in 2021, and to this day Gerontissa is fondly remembered and greatly revered there. For Afroditis, those six months never ended and she remained a monastic for the rest of her life.

She was taken under the spiritual guidance of Gerontissa Makrina, a very holy woman and well-known spiritual giant of her time. On August 28, 1972, she was tonsured a full monastic and given the name Taxiarchia. Again leaning on the significance of a name, it refers to the orders of angels and heavenly hosts, and it became an inspiration for the angelic life and witness she would bear all her days.

In 1989, Sister Taxiarchia was called by her spiritual father, Geronda Ephraim, to leave her beloved Portaria and come to America and, under the spiritual authority of then Bishop Maximos, to begin a woman's monastery in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania. All that was there was a large undeveloped property and a small, run-down three-room farmhouse. But that was all she needed. She was the divine seed planted by God that has blossomed into the spiritual center our beloved monastery is today.

As it is written in the history of the monastery, "There it all began. Visitors started coming to see for themselves the first monastic presence from Greece in this country... Many priests and people were drawn because they heard of the quiet, humble and discerning nun and sought her out for spiritual counsel. They experienced an authentic and unconditional love." I was one of them, and by extension, you are also recipients of that love, blessings and presence.

Back to our story. When she left Greece she was given one other nun to assist her in this sacred task. Soon two became three. On July 20, 1991, Sister Taxiarchia was enthroned Gerontissa Taxiarchia, first Abbess of the Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery. I was present for that God-inspired moment and can remember and picture it to this day. During her installation, she said, "It appears that God wants to show His strength in giving this responsibility to one as weak as I." Yet in truth the monastery grew through her spiritual strength from three to ten to even more today. They went from that small farmhouse to the first monastery building and a pavilion; and now Gerontissa Theophano and the sisters are about to open a larger and grander monastery as they continue to invoke the prayers and blessings of their founder.

Within the three short years following her enthronement, her health struggles, including cancer and a failing physical heart, were too much to overcome. She reposed on August 3, 1994, 41 years ago today. She was buried on August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. In his eulogy, her spiritual father noted, "Blessed Taxiarchia, you have not abandoned us in soul, for your wonderful counsels remain in the souls of your children."

My dear Holy Trinity family, a little over a year before her repose, I also received a call from Bishop Maximos, who said I was going to leave my position as the assistant priest at Holy Cross and become the priest of Holy Trinity Church. As a 33-year-old father of two with one on the way, I was terrified, along with Presvytera Becky. I spoke to a number of trusted friends, but there was one place I found peace in that struggle: Gerontissa Taxiarchia. In her beautiful voice and angelic spirit, she put all my fears at ease and prophetically predicted, "Do not worry, Father John, the Panagia will bring you many blessings at Holy Trinity Church." She was right then and continues to be now.

But when I got to Holy Trinity Church, there was no Panagia! That is, for those of you who remember the old church, it was four glass walls and there was no Playtera icon of the Virgin Mary above the altar as most traditional Orthodox churches have. In keeping with the spirit of Gerontissa's words, that situation changed soon. It just so happened that there was a large Platytera icon from the YAL conference a few years before that...sitting in the storeroom of the monastery, and within a few months of my arrival, we were blessed to have it mounted above our altar.

Earlier I mentioned her influence, but I also used the word presence. And I meant that literally. Years after her repose, I was given a most sacred gift by her



+ Gerontissa Taxiarchia  
1938-1994

successor, Gerontissa Theophano: a small Cross reliquary with a sacred relic from my beloved friend, spiritual mother and inspiration, Gerontissa Taxiarchia. And today, at the end of the Liturgy, I will bring it from the altar table where it usually resides, out for all to venerate and be blessed by her presence.

Oh, yes, and remember the symbol of roses associated with her birth name? On the day of her enthronement she was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers – red roses! A photograph was taken of her holding them that was later turned into a painting. And today it has become an iconic presentation, her gentle smile greeting us with both spiritual beauty and angelic grace, two names reflected so purely in one holy soul. A soul I and many will never forget.

In conclusion, as her legacy continues to burn bright with love and grace, "Through the prayers of our Holy Mother, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us. Amen." ❖

Delivered August 3, 2025

# WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT



We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Declaration of Independence  
July 4, 1776

**W**e hold these truths to be self-evident." You surely recognize these words from our nation's Declaration of Independence, dated the Fourth of July, 1776. This was "The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America," as the first line reads. As a celebration of our nation's birth, I highly recommend that you re-read the Declaration in its entirety. It is uplifting to see the unified voice with which our Founding Fathers spoke for equality, life, liberty, and the right of each person to pursue happiness in this land. Again, this declaration

was "unanimous," and they consistently said, "we ... hold these truths to be self-evident." They were united.

This is not a history lesson, but a sermon, so let us focus on the American genius described in this Declaration (that of equality, life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness) based on the fact that we are all created equal and, therefore, God has endowed us with these unalienable rights. Our Archbishop wrote an encyclical for this national holiday, in which he affirms:

The Fourth of July is much more than the American celebration of liberty. It is the memory of that moment of the turning of the tide, when a people who were abused by the powerful chose to stand up for themselves and grasp for the freedom that their conscience told them was their "unalienable right." And this is the very same liberty that we constantly strive to preserve and ensure in this blessed American land for the liberties of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin. However, a true freedom that is equal for every human being can only come from God, in the inner person.

Notice how true liberty comes from God, and God bestowed this gift to all people, all being created equal. In the context of the Declaration of Independence, this meant that the King is not above the other people, and therefore he is not allowed to oppress them, since "all men are created equal." Liberty stems from equality.

I first read the Declaration of Independence when, together with my family, we became American citizens, many years ago. It was one of the proudest moments of our lives. We, too, came here "in pursuit of happiness." We were embraced, we were supported, and so we made it. As I re-read the Declaration of Independence this week, its words resounded with new vigor so, again, I recommend that you all read it as we still celebrate the Fourth of July. It is striking that the biblical message that all people are created equal was so spread out, that the equality of all people was a self-evident truth in that society. Its origin is in the book of Genesis, where, in the first chapter, we are told how human beings were created in the image of God:

**God created humans in his image,**



**in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen. 1:27).**

Being in the first chapter of the Bible, this passage refers to all human beings, regardless of how we now differentiate them. This is the greatest dignity that each human being enjoys: they are the image of God. From kings to their subjects, all are equal. From CEO's to the most humble employees, all are equal. From our relatives to the strangers who live in our communities, all are equal. We are all the image of God,

and there is no greater dignity in the world, than being created in God's image. Therefore, it is self-evident that all people are created equal.

Throughout the short history of our country, we have struggled to stay true to this principle. Our own Founding Fathers, when they wrote "that all men are created equal," meant only males (women did not gain right to vote until a little over a century ago), males who were white (not other races), and who owned property (not the poorest of the poor). Gradually, as a nation, we got better. In 1963 we were still not there, so Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I have a dream" speech, in which he said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Are we there yet? Perhaps the journey will never end, but our Founding Fathers sent us in the right direction; we have a good beginning, one that is worthy of celebration.


So, today, as we continue this weekend of celebrations, let us remember the words of the Bible, that God created all human beings in his image and, as such God made us all equal, with a great dignity that gave birth to the American genius of equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Let us cherish, keep, and enrich this genius. Let our faith—especially the way we live it—inspire the same kind of attitude in our society as it did in 1776, where all would say that it is self-evident that all are created equal, therefore "they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Happy Fourth of July! ❖

Delivered July 6 , 2025

# Faith & Family Weekdays

Grow Your Knowledge and Practice of the Faith!

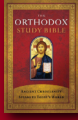
## JOM



**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. Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Feb. 3, Mar. 3, Apr. 31, May 5.


## ETW



**Explore the Word**  
Wednesdays, 6:30pm

Father Radu continues his exploration of the Holy Bible with the greatest adventure book of the New Testament: The Book of Acts. Learn about the history of the early Church and how the Good News was spread. Fall dates: Oct. 22, 29; Nov. 5, 12, 19, Dec. 3, 10.

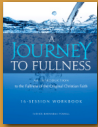
## MPS



**Monthly Paraclesis Service**  
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 6:30pm

Join in hymns and prayer, to honor the Theotokos, Saint Nektarios and Saint Paisios of Athos at our beautiful Saint George Chapel. Ask for the prayers of these powerful saints. Pray for those in need. Thu. Sep. 4; Tue. Oct. 28, Thu. Nov. 20; Tue. Dec. 16.


## 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. Sep. 22, 29; Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27. Repeats in the Spring.

## P&P



**Prayer & Panera**  
1st & 3rd 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. Fall dates: Sep. 4, 25; Oct 16; Nov. 6, 20; Dec. 18.

**AND SAVE THE DATE FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE! WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

The entire community—adults and youth alike—are invited to this special evening of Christian holiday outreach to our neighbors at the Sisters of Divine Providence on Wed. Dec. 17. Meet at Holy Trinity at 6:30pm, then head over to bring Christmas blessings and cheer to the sisters!

Orthodox Christian life happens every day, not just Sunday! Faith and Family Weekdays offers many ways during the week to grow in our faith and share in the community life of the Church. Ready to learn more about the Bible, about your Faith, about navigating life's challenges as a Christian, a woman 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**. Learn more about Orthodox faith, history, and worship on the **Journey to Fullness**. And for the younger guys, there's the new **Orthodox Dudes of Tap**. There are lots of other opportunities to learn about the Faith, the Bible, marriage and Christian living. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at [HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar) for details and locations.

## NEW!



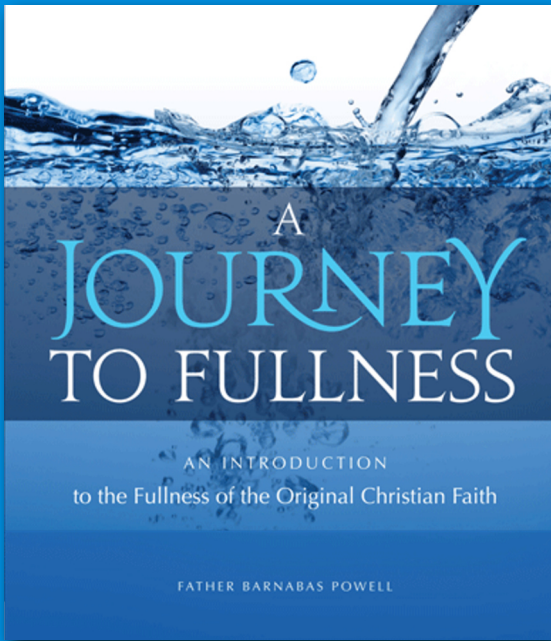
**Orthodox Dudes on Tap Meets Periodically**

This new casual men's ministry is for guys, single and married, to just enjoy a few hours of conversation, snacks, brews and great company with other Millennials and Gen X'ers. Meets from time to time. Laid back. Informal. Want to be notified? Email [OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org).



A  
JOURNEY  
TO FULLNESS

The Holy Spirit's goal is to remake us into being like Jesus Christ.



**New to the Orthodox Faith? Ready to dive in and learn how to live it fully?**

**Born and raised Orthodox? Ready to deepen your understanding of the Church you love?**

Either way, please join us for a 6-week series of video lessons, live Q&A and engaging discussions about the Orthodox Christian Faith. This series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in the Orthodox Church. Father Barnabas Powell is sincere, straight-forward and he is not afraid to raise and speak to the tough questions. Come. Learn. Grow.

**CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO KNOW AND GROW YOUR FAITH!**

**ATTEND THIS 6-WEEK SERIES - MONDAYS AT 7:00PM**

**SEPTEMBER 22, 29; OCTOBER 6, 13, 20, 27**

# 2025 House Blessings

Reserve online to have your house blessed this September!

House blessings are here! We encourage all our parishioners to request a blessing. See below for dates, times and how to reserve.

## Why do we bless homes every year?

In Orthodox Christian families, it is customary for the priest to visit the homes of parishioners to bring Holy Water to bless the house and all those living in it. Although previously offered in January, this tradition has been moved from the beginning of the civil new year (Jan. 1) to the beginning of the Church's Ecclesiastical New Year (Sep. 1) and in proximity to the Feast of the Holy Cross (Sep. 14). This practice has been blessed by the Metropolis and adopted by many parishes, especially those in cold weather climates, such as Pittsburgh, resulting in fewer weather cancellations and safer travels.

## What happens during a House Blessing?

Preparing: A House Blessing is a brief service offered either in your living room, 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, so they can experience the tradition and take part in the blessing. Please be sure to have an icon and a list of the first names of all the members of your household. The priest will offer the blessing service and offer prayers for the names of the people present and those contained on the family names list. As the service concludes, please lead the priest throughout the house to sprinkle the holy water.

## HOLY TRINITY 2025 HOUSE BLESSING SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	AREA	ZIP CODES
Tue. Sep. 2	4pm-7pm	Bellevue, South Hills	15102, 15216, 15202, 15228
Wed. Sep. 3	4pm-7pm	Gibsonia, Treesdale	15044
Thu. Sep. 4	4pm-7pm	Cranberry, Mars, Butler, North	16066, 16046, 16002
Fri. Sep. 5	4pm-7pm	Wexford	15090
Tue. Sep. 23	3pm-7pm	McKnight, Ross, McCandless Twp.	15237
Wed. Sep. 24	3pm-6pm	Allison Park, Etna, Glenshaw	15101, 15116, 15223
Tue. Sep. 30	3pm-6pm	Make-up/Other areas not listed	Call Church Office

Please schedule your house blessing online in the time slot listed for your area. You will receive an email confirmation upon reserving. You will also receive an approximate time the day before the visit.

If your area is not listed, contact the Church Office at 412-366-8700.

**DEADLINES TO REGISTER: SEP. 1 FOR SEP. 2-5 DATES; SEP. 20 FOR SEP. 23-30 DATES**

**EASIEST WAY: REQUEST A HOUSE BLESSING ONLINE AT [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events)**



**Holy Trinity 2025 Graduates (L-R): Steffie Bounos; Ella Bounos; Ari LeDuc, Chris Willow, Yianni Giannoutsos, Andrew Stepanow, Nia Marsh, Rebecca Bordeianu, Lena Drapas**

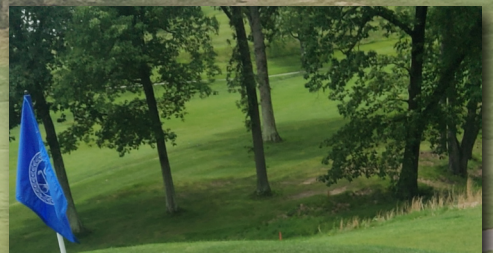




MANY THANKS TO  
AND SPONSORS WH  
ANNUAL EVENT A

# THE HOLY TRINITY C





**ALL THE PLAYERS  
TO HELP MAKE THIS  
GREAT SUCCESS!**

# **GOLF CLASSIC - JUNE 9, 2025**





In front of "Panagouda"—the Keli of Saint Paisios

# INTENSE ATHOS

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

### How Pilgrimages Bless

Father John Touloumes

We had planned on flying from Pittsburgh International Airport on May 5 to catch a connecting flight at Dulles International Airport in Washington, DC, but early in the morning hours as we were finishing packing, our flight from Pittsburgh was canceled. By the grace of God it all worked out, and instead of flying to Dulles we rented a car and drove there to catch our outbound flight. It was just another of those pilgrimage moments the Lord says, "Trust me...You're in my hands."



Having had the blessing and honor of leading various pilgrimages for the faithful of Holy Trinity Church to the Holy Land, Greece and Mount Athos, it seems to be a recurring experience. We plan, and God surprises. And that is perhaps one of the best parts of these trips. As we trod the paths of saints and history, we do so as pilgrims, not

tourists, so opening our hearts to Him along the way is an important part of the transformative experience. As the Book of Proverbs reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." The paths of Mount Athos, and of all our lives!

The theme for this pilgrimage was "Intense Athos," owing to the company of young and energetic adventurers who wanted the hiking-boots-and-backpacks kind of experience that has been a hallmark of the Holy Mountain for centuries. And indeed it was. Hours and miles of trails and rocky paths took us to some of the most hidden corners and blessed encounters with the men of this sacred land, known by tradition of the "Garden of the Panagia."

On all pilgrimages, the primary experience is had by the pilgrims themselves, but the duty of a pilgrim is to also share the blessings to inspire others. Below are the personal reflections and stories of these young men as they relate what Mount Athos meant to them and how it continues to be a spiritual force whose prayers sustain not just the monks, but us and the entire world.

### The Timeless Light

Deacon Matthew

As we carefully made our way toward the glow of a single beeswax candle, the only source of light in the front of the chapel, I was able to slowly feel my way through the darkness to an open stasidia (wooden pew/seat) where I could prayerfully participate in the service. The Psalms were quietly read and, as more candles were lit, light slowly illuminated the faces of the many monks seated around me, each wearing long black robes and a veiled kalimavkion (hat). As the Hours service turned into Orthros and then into the Divine Liturgy, rays of light from the rising sun revealed the ancient icons lining the iconostasis, a forest of hanging oil lamps, and a massive bronze and silver chandelier hanging overhead.

It was then, amid the monks practicing ancient rubrics, the smell of incense, and the sound of powerful Athonite Byzantine chanting, that I had a realization. If a man were to step out of a time machine into that moment, there would be absolutely no way to distinguish whether they were in the 9th, 15th, or 21st century. Like God Himself, Athos is a place that seems to exist outside of time. And it was moments like these, praying in the dark stillness of the morning at the Iviron Monastery, that renewed my deep gratitude for the timelessness of our Orthodox Faith and Church and, correspondingly, the never-changing, unconditional love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



### Bringing Athos Back

John

Throughout our journey, one question that consistently hummed in our hearts was “how can we bring the spirit of Mount Athos back home with us?”

It was a question we’d ask many of the monks who graciously sat with us, always drawing a smile to their face with a faint hint of sympathy, since our time on the mountain was measured in days, not years. “Pure prayer from the heart can bring the peace of Mount Athos to anywhere you are,” advised Fr. Iakavos of the Simonopetra Monastery. On Athos, we felt a shared spirit of peaceful urgency to pray for our loved ones back home, our fellow pilgrims, the benevolent monks, and the broader world. Our time on the mountain was precious and not to be



wasted idly out of prayer. And what a lesson that was—to bring Athos home with us means to realize the preciousness of the time we have, to pray with simplicity and fullness of heart, and not leave that sense of peaceful urgency on the mountain.

I’d started the pilgrimage more than a little intimidated by the spiritual stature of the Athonites. But while we visited with Father Cherubim, a soft-spoken monk tending a keli in New Skete, we studied an icon of the road to Golgatha, noticing with surprise that Simon of Cyrene has not been formally canonized as a Saint. It was surreal at that point in the trip to see an icon of a “regular” person, surrounded by the holiest saints and



On the Agia Anna Ferry to Mount Athos

martyrs and Christ himself, being called to the honor of carrying the cross. And as we departed that beautiful conversation, carrying our own crosses alongside the holiest and most devout spiritual warriors of our time, the weight of intimidating comparison just melted away, leaving space for a more serene sense of spiritual self-acceptance.

**Unexplainable Fullness**

*Kullen*

I remember an auspicious dawn the morning of our twilight departure from Ouranoupolis on the ferry, which was met with a tranquil veil of fog surrounding the enshrouded Holy Mountain. As the sun continued to climb into the sky, the Aegean Sea glimmered as the veil dissipated, and then we saw it—Mount Athos. From this moment onward, I was never so speechless which persisted the entire pilgrimage. Mount Athos was the most incredible yet arcane place I have ever been in my life.



We saw the mountain emerging from of the fog, the sun adorning the peak, as it appeared to literally ascend from the depths of the sea, and I reminded of the image from John 8:12: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” We were all drawn to the mountain, and maybe some aspects of our lives are obscured, and we may not even know it. Yet one of the many truths I’ve seen on Athos is how many pilgrims depart—or sometimes remain for life—with an unexplainable sense of fullness. At the beginning of the voyage I felt like a lost wanderer in a dark wilderness, but as we journeyed I was granted reassurance by Christ my Savior. At a few monasteries, we went to Orthros and Divine Liturgy at 3:00am, walking the dark halls and paths to the church in awe and solemnity. As the clattering and clanking of metal and wood echoed in the stone corridors, at dawn, the monks chanted like Cherubim, and as the morning dawned, it bore witness that Christ, the Light of the world, has come.

**The Generosity of Love**

*Rick*

I grew up in a very tight knit Italian family. As the youngest, and only, boy I know what it’s like to be “taken care of.” As you can imagine, I was always well fed. We were taught the importance of looking out for our family. It was God first, family second. I had a similar experience

when marrying into a Greek family. I have been blessed with a family, both through birth and by marriage, who has shown me great love, kindness, and hospitality.

All of us pilgrims experienced this same familial care while visiting the monastics throughout Greece. They truly welcomed us like family. They prepared simple but generous meals for us, told enlightening stories, shared spiritual insights, showed us relics of the great saints, gave us blessings, and even took the time to ask us about our own lives. I have never been so moved by such genuine care, especially from people who didn’t even know us. And you could tell they genuinely loved to do it (though, we did have some “tough love” moments!). I could not miss the lesson. It was a clear model for how I should be treating others, even strangers. This really touched me more than I expected and it is what sticks with me most these months after the trip.



**Sharing the Lifetime Journey of Growth**

*Sam*

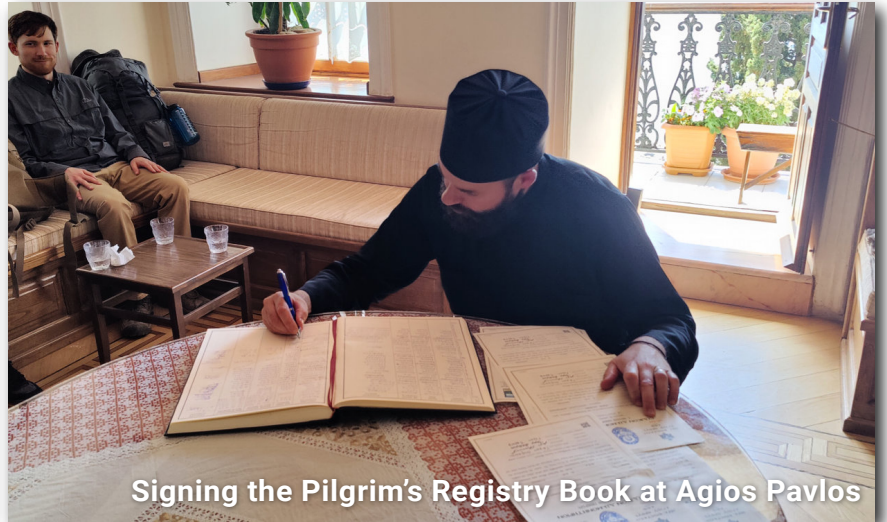
On our first day on the Holy Mountain, at our second stop at the Monastery of Saint Gregory, we saw something fascinating: two clocks side by side, set to different times, but they were both correct. How was that possible? One of the clocks was operating on Byzantine time! In this time system, the day always begins



at sunset, so when the sun goes down, the clocks are set to 12:00. This means if a service is scheduled for 10:00, there are two hours of daylight left when it begins.

While briefly living by this time system on Athos, I thought of Father Barnabas Powell’s *Journey to Fullness* catechism

series. A recurring theme in it is that our Orthodox Christian way of life is a journey of growth, communion, love, and salvation that never ends. Although we were visitors and pilgrims on Mount Athos, meeting some of the monks there, I felt that we were in the company of fellow travelers on this journey, with plenty of experience to share. Living by Byzantine time, participating in midnight vigils, and greeting visitors with warmth and hospitality are just a few examples of ways our fellow travelers on the



Signing the Pilgrim's Registry Book at Agios Pavlos



# Stewardship 2025 Roster

Rev. Fr. John & Presvytera Becky  
Touloumes  
Rev. Fr. Radu & Presvytera Loredana  
Bordeianu  
Rev. Fr. George & Presvytera Evangelia  
Daskalakis  
Dn. Matthew & Diakonissa Nina  
Palamara  
Dn. Theodore & Diakonissa Mary Ellen  
Stewart

Dr. & Mrs. Andrew Abboud  
Fayez & Maria Abboud  
Eleni Valliant Abdalah & Joseph Abdalah  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Adamczyk  
Mr. & Mrs. Sotiris Aggelou  
Mr. & Mrs. Justin Ambrose  
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Amurgis  
Ms. Georgiana Anargyros  
Mr. Michael Andromalos-Dale  
Ms. Victoria Andromalos-Dale &  
Mr. Frank Blakemore  
Dr. Alexander & Dr. Katherine Anetakis  
Tiffany Ann  
Mrs. Lynda Areheart  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Armanious  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Athanas  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Athanasiou  
Mrs. Desi Austin  
Mr. & Mrs. Alvin Backeris  
Douglas & Jessica Baker  
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Balouris  
Dr. & Mrs. Christ Balouris  
Dr. & Mrs. Constantine Balouris  
Dean & Lisa Balouris  
Ms. Eleni Balouris  
Mr. & Mrs. James Balouris  
Ms. Polyxeni Balouris  
Mr. & Mrs. Lynn Barker, III  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Barron  
Mrs. Olga Beckas  
Mr. & Mrs. Adam Bishop  
Mrs. Athena Bober  
Mr. Michael Bober, Jr.  
Michael Bogdanovich  
Ms. Pamela Bolkovac

Helen Bonaros  
Dr. & Mrs. Reggie Bonfield  
Dr. Dennis Bossick &  
Mrs. Penny Fakles-Bossick  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bounos  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bournias  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brewer  
Mr. David Brittain  
Dr. Clifford Brubaker & Dr. Sondra Balouris  
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Cameron  
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Caromano  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chapas  
Mr. & Mrs. William Chapas  
Mr. & Mrs. James Chapas  
Mr. Thomas Chapas  
Ms. Sherry Clayton  
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Cole  
Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Copeland  
Ms. Cynthia Criss  
Ms. Kate Csontos  
Alexander Danis  
Mr. Demetrios Danis  
Mr. & Mrs. Evan Danis  
Mr. & Mrs. George Danis  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Dedousis  
Mrs. Helen DeMoss  
Mrs. Christine Dickos (+)  
Mr. & Mrs. George Dickos  
Mr. Samuel Dickson  
William & Jennifer Dickson  
Mr. & Mrs. Nikolas Doris  
Theodore & Jennifer Drapas  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Erdeljac  
Mike & Casey Erdeljac  
Mr. & Mrs. Christian Farmakis  
Mr. & Mrs. William Fiedler  
Mrs. Carol Fiffas  
Mrs. Angela & Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick  
Mr. & Mrs. John Fitzpatrick  
Thomas Fitzpatrick  
Mr. Todd Fleming & Ms. Melissa Karidis  
Penny Folino  
Mr. & Mrs. Andreas Fournaridis  
Mr. Andrew Fournaridis & Ms. Anna Mamo  
Mr. & Mrs. John Franciscus

Mrs. Tessie Frankos  
Mrs. Constance Fries  
Miss Diana Fries  
Mr. John Fries  
Dr. & Mrs. Peter Gagianas  
James & Erica Gambieris  
Mr. & Mrs. Markos Gambieris  
Mrs. Stacy Gambieris Skrba &  
Mr. Josh Skrba  
Mrs. Joan Gatsiopoulou  
Mr. & Mrs. George Geanopulos  
Mr. Gregory Geanopulos  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Geanopulos  
Ms. Efthalia Geanous  
Mrs. Fabiola Georgallis  
Mr. & Mrs. George Georges  
Mr. & Mrs. Gus Georgiadis  
Dr. & Mrs. Mark Georgiadis  
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Georgiadis  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Germanos  
Alex & Marina Giallonardo  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Giannoutsos  
Mr. & Mrs. Jason Gidas  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Glew  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Glyptis  
Mrs. Eugenia Graser  
Mr. George Gregorich  
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Gross  
Mr. & Mrs. George Halkias  
Ms. Pennie Hareras  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Heinz  
Mr. & Mrs. George Hulse  
Mrs. & Mr. & Mrs. Zita Iasella  
Dr. & Mrs. Brian Jewell  
Mr. & Mrs. James Johnson  
Dr. Kristina Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. George Kachulis  
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Kakavis  
Mr. & Mrs. Evangelo Kaparakos  
Dr. & Mrs. Greg Karabin  
Mrs. Irene Karavolos  
Mr. & Mrs. George Karpakis  
Dr. & Mrs. James Kermes  
Ms. Zelfa Khalil & Dr. Imad Alizray  
Mr. & Mrs. Gus Kilantonis

Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted a 2025 Stewardship pledge. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2025 "Stewardship Independence" Pledge today by card or using Realm online or in the Realm app! Or click the QR code below.

Mr. & Mrs. Dan Klimko  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Kolovos  
 Mrs. Fanny Kostos  
 Mr. Steve Kostos  
 Ms. Elenie Kourouklis  
 Mrs. Vasiliki Kourouklis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dean Kraniou  
 Dr. & Mrs. Dimitris Kraniou  
 Mr. & Mrs. Marios Kritiotis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kritiotis  
 Paul & Ashley Kukunas  
 Mr. Stephen Kukunas  
 Mrs. Despina Ladakos  
 Mr. James Lakes  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chris Lamorey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Philip LeDuc  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Leist  
 Dr. Nektarios & Dr. Jill Leontiadis  
 Mrs. Mary Lolis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Loomis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chris Loomis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Loomis  
 Mr. Nicholas Loomis  
 Mr. John Lowman  
 Mr. Douglas Lupnacca &  
     Mrs. Vaia Kolovos-Lupnacca  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Mackrell  
 Mr. Curtis Magnuson  
 Mr. George Maier &  
     Mrs. Anita Sinicrope-Maier  
 Mrs. Anne Manis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Manis  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Markanich  
 Mrs. Maria Mason  
 Mr. & Mrs. John McCann  
 Mr. Marc McMullen &  
     Ms. Alexandra Valliant  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Mellis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Mercadante  
 James & Judith Mermigas  
 Mrs. Mary Mermigas  
 Mrs. Arlene Metropulos  
 Mr. Herb Miller &  
     Mrs. Georgia Beckas Miller  
 Mr. & Mrs. Meno Mitaras  
 Mr. Gregory Morris

Mr. & Mrs. George Nakis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Opacic  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Paese  
 Mr. Michael Pagonis  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Pagonis  
 Mr. Constantine Panagulias  
 Mr. George Pantelakis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Pantelas  
 Mr. Ronald Pantelas  
 Mr. & Mrs. Danny Papakalos  
 Dr. & Mrs. Haralambos Robert Papas  
 Dr. Loukia Papatheodorou  
 Dr. & Mrs. Orestis Pappas  
 Mr. Anthony Pappis  
 Mr. Michael Pappis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Orestes Paras  
 Mr. & Mrs. Constantine Passodelis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Passodelis  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Pastor  
 Mr. Chris Patsilevas  
 Thomas & Georgia Perry  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Petredis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Petredis  
 Mr. Christian Petredis  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Petropoulos  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Phaturous  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Phillips  
 Mrs. Elizabeth Pickios  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Pickios  
 Ms. Rania Pontikos  
 Ms. Christine Pusateri  
 Mr. & Mrs. Salvatore Re  
 Mr. Matthew Reed & Mrs. Amy Brock-Reed  
 Mr. & Mrs. Evan Rigas  
 Elvis & Sophia Rodriguez  
 Ms. Julianne Rogozewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Roman  
 Mrs. Afaf Saikaly  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sarandou  
 Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Schall  
 Dr. & Mrs. Dean Scoumis  
 Presvytera Eileen Sedor  
 Ms. Stephanie Sedor  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nick Sfamenos  
 Emmanuel & Joanna Sideris  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jeffery & Georgea Spires

Ms. Theone Stateson  
 Mr. & Mrs Robert Stearns  
 Mr. & Mrs. Craig Steiner  
 Mr. Dave Steiner &  
     Mrs. Christine Metropulos  
 Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Stepanow  
 Luke Stephen  
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Stephenson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jon Stipanovich  
 Mr. Brian Tabb & Mrs. Elaina Balouris Tabb  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Terezis  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Thomas  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Thomas, III  
 Jessica Thomas & Erik Francken  
 Mrs. Georgia Touloumes  
 Irene Tsironis & J. Peter Roll  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Tzanakakis  
 Ms Constance Bistolas-Walters  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerri Valliant  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chad Vomer  
 Mrs. Joanne Ladakos Watson  
 Mrs. Elaine Weaver  
 Miss Mary-Magdalene Welsh  
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Willow  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zagnacky  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Zappas  
 Dr. & Mrs. Antonios Zikos  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Zozos  
 Ms. Deborah Zuniga

(+) = Reposed



**PLEDGE NOW!**

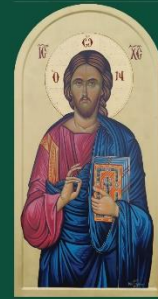


# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH SCHOOL

A TEACHING MINISTRY OF HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

## 2025-2026 Theme: "Follow the Truth"

"NO GREATER JOY CAN I HAVE THAN THIS,  
TO HEAR THAT MY CHILDREN FOLLOW THE TRUTH." (3. JOHN 1.4)



### 2025-2026 CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
Sun. Aug. 24	Blessing of the Backpacks
Sat. Sep. 6	Youth Ministries Kick-Off Picnic
Sun. Sep. 7	Class / First Semester begins
Sun. Sep. 14	Class
Sun. Sep. 21	Class
Sun. Sep. 28	Class
Sun. Oct. 5	Class
Sun. Oct. 12	Class / Youth Sunday / GOYA Fall Fest
Sun. Oct. 19	Class
Sun. Oct. 26	Class / Thanksgiving Food Drive begins
Sun. Nov. 2	Class
Sun. Nov. 9	Class
Sun. Nov. 16	Class / Holy Trinity hosting Metropolis Greek Dance Festival
Sun. Nov. 23	Class / Metropolis Fall GOYA Retreat
Thu. Nov. 27	Thanksgiving
Sun. Nov. 30	Class
Sun. Dec. 7	Class / Pageant Scenes Rehearsal / Food Drive ends
Sun. Dec. 14	Class / Pageant Scenes Rehearsal
Sat. Dec. 20	Full Pageant Rehearsal
Sun. Dec. 21	Christmas Pageant / Semester ends
Thu. Dec. 25	The Nativity of Christ
Sun. Dec. 28	Christmas Break / No class

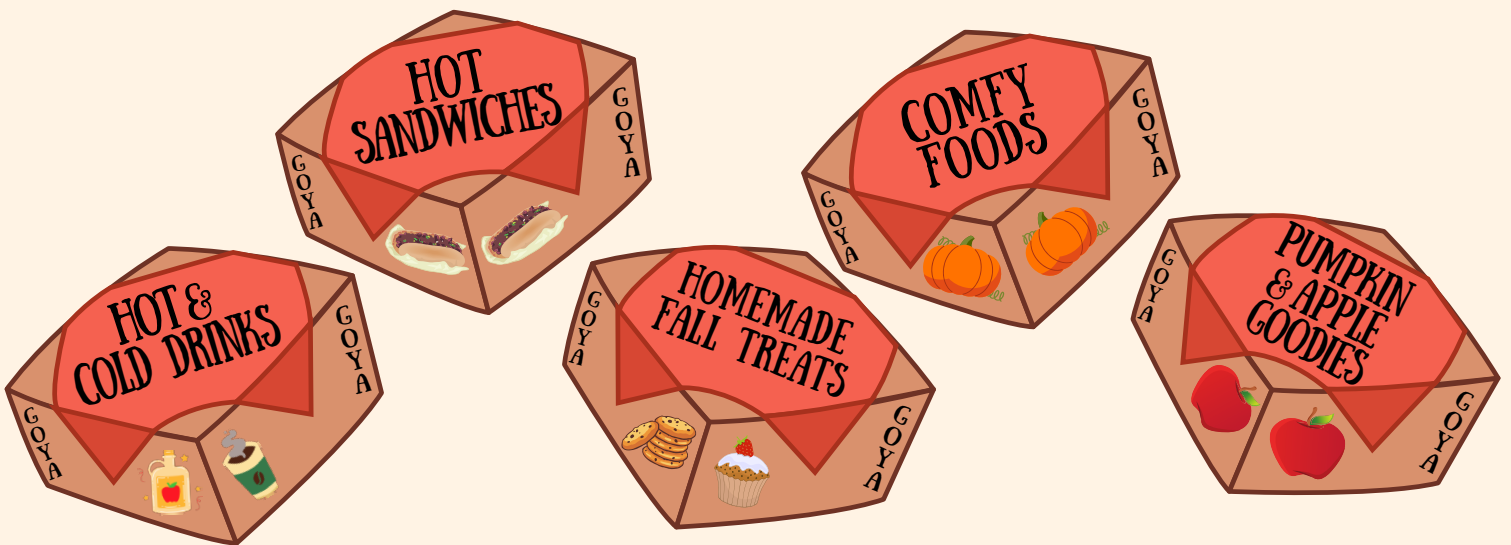
DATE	EVENT
Sun. Jan. 4	Class / Vasilopita Celebration
Sun. Jan. 11	Class
Sun. Jan. 18	Class / Metropolis Basketball Tournament (away)
Sun. Jan. 25	Class
Sun. Feb. 1	Class / Metropolis Basketball Tournament (away)
Sun. Feb. 8	Class / GOYA Outreach Brunch
Sun. Feb. 15	Class / Metropolis Basketball Tournament (away)
Sun. Feb. 22	Class / Lenten Project Begins
Mon. Feb 23	Pure Monday - Great Lent begins. <i>Note: Grades 5-12 Readers every Wednesday of Lent</i>
Sun. Mar. 1	Class / Sunday of Orthodoxy (bring an icon for the procession)
Sun. Mar. 8	Class
Mon Mar. 15	Godparent/Godchild Sunday No class - Attend worship together
Sun. Mar. 22	Class
Sun. Mar 29	Class / Metropolis Spring GOYA Retreat
Sat. Apr. 4	Sat. of Lazarus / Lenten Breakfast / Palm Crosses and Candle Preparation
Sun. Apr. 5	Palm Sunday / No class
Sun. Apr. 12	The Great & Holy Pascha / No class / Egg hunt following Agape Vespers
Sun. Apr. 19	Class
Sun. Apr. 26	Class
Sun. May 3	Class
Sun. May 10	Last class session / Semester ends / Mother's Day
Sun. May 17	Graduation Sunday / Picnic

*"Let all your life, all your works, all your thoughts, and all your desires be founded upon truth."  
(St. John of Kronstadt)*



# GOYA FALLFEST

YOUTH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12  
IN THE GALLERY FOLLOWING LITURGY



A HOMEMADE TASTE OF FALL  
FROM OUR GOYA FAMILIES!

PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE GOYA TEEN MINISTRY





# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

985 PROVIDENCE BLVD,  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15237

INVITES YOU AND YOUR PETS  
TO THE ANNUAL



## BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS SERVICE

**SATURDAY, SEP 6, 2:00PM**

**IN FRONT OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH MAIN ENTRANCE**



A BRIEF PRAYER SERVICE IN HONOR OF SAINT  
MAMAS, PATRON SAINT OF ANIMALS, WILL BE  
OFFERED. ALL PARISHIONERS ARE WELCOME  
TO BRING THEIR FAMILY PETS.  
PLEASE BE PROMPT! ANIMALS DON'T WAIT!





HOLY TRINITY YOUTH MINISTRIES



# KICK-OFF PICNIC

2025 Theme: "Follow the Truth"  
"No greater joy can I have than this, to hear that  
my children follow the truth." (3 John 1.4)

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2025**  
**3:00-7:00PM**

**SESQUI PAVILION AT  
NORTH PARK**

## What To Bring

- HOPE- Desserts
  - JOY- Drinks
  - GOYA- Appetizers
- Main course will be provided

**RSVP by Sep. 4**  
Vicki Ambrose 412-720-5094 or  
vambrose817@gmail.com

# Feeding the Soul with Spiritual Writings

**Q: Geronda, how does “spiritual study” differ from other kinds of reading?**

Beginning from childhood, most people spend a lot of time reading. And today, in the age of science, literature, and progress, you have to read a lot. All this is useful. But it isn't enough, and neither can all of us read and study such books. And here we are speaking of the spiritual life, and thus about books which we must necessarily read, because we need them on our journey to heaven. When you read these books, you sense at once that God is speaking to you. They are tools for the spiritual life.

**Q: What kind of books are these, which are so central to living the Christian life?**

They exist in great numbers. They are those which we call, in a word, spiritual books. It isn't possible for me to deal with them all, but only those which the Church has singled out—based on her history, her life, and her blood—and given us for our daily pleasure and delight. These are books in which you don't read human thoughts, human criteria, or human logic, but rather encounter the judgment and the logic of God, the Spirit of God. God speaks in these books. Who wrote these books? The authors were divinely inspired instruments who became the servants of the Holy Spirit.

I will focus on those books given to you by the Church. You open them up, and right away you realize that God is talking to you. You feel at once the beating of the Spirit's wings. You feel God answering your questions. You

see him dispersing your darkness, clearing away old obstacles, opening up new pathways. Then, filled with joy, you cry out: “Behold, I have begun to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes” (Gen 18.27). I have begun to converse with God, with my Christ. And who am I to speak with God? I am ashes, I am clay. But God does me this favor.

It is through these books that he shows you where to go. He says to you: “Come, my child, ascend to the heights.” You feel this. You feel it like the holy man who would excuse himself from company by saying: “Someone is waiting for me in my room.” They didn't know who it was. They thought it was a person, but he went to his books, where God was waiting for him.

**Q: Where can I find such spiritually enriching writings?**

First and foremost are those which are called patristic books, that is, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, those men, who we said, were the instruments of the Holy Spirit, and who were like fire when they spoke and lightning when they wrote. Thanks to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have left us their immortal masterpieces. They loved God with all their soul, and God loved them unreservedly, deeming them worthy to leave us their immortal writings, more precious than all the gold in the world. This is more or less how all the Fathers of the Church wrote their books, through which they take us by the hand, and lead us from one summit to another, from one peak to another, passing beyond the stars, to



Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra

the throne of God, and to the friends of God, the saints.

Let's turn now to another category of books, the lives of the saints, the friends of the Church. When you read the lives of the saints, you have before your very eyes living translations of the Gospel, and you will be greatly inspired. When you read their lives, you'll have the feeling that they're with you, that you can hear them breathing. It's as if we're all sitting around somewhere, and at one point I say: “Let's go for a stroll.” And so we walk, and talk, and were all very friendly, just like a family. That's how you'll feel with the saints, when you get to know them, when you read their lives.

One more type of book, which I purposely left for the end, is the most important of all. Which one is that? Holy Scripture. The New Testament. The Old Testament. Do we read these books? I fear that we don't. But that is precisely where God speaks the most clearly: “Thus says the Lord.” God is speaking. Holy Scripture is the greatest gift which God has given to man. ❖

Excerpted from  
“The Church at Prayer”

THE HOLY TRINITY  
**HERALD**

*Faith. Family. Community*

**About the Herald**

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

**Editor**

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

**Production**

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

**Photographers**

Peter Gagianas                      Theanne Gagianas  
Sherry Clayton                      Lucy Klimko

**Copyright Notice**

This magazine contains copyrighted material of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and third party copyright owners, including, without limitation, text, photos, and graphics, and the contents of the newsletter are protected under the United States and international copyright laws. You may not copy, modify, publish, transmit, display, participate in the transfer or sale, creation of derivative works, or in any way exploit, any of the content, in whole or in part. No copying, redistribution, retransmission, publication or commercial exploitation of any material in this newsletter is permitted without the express written permission of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and any applicable third party copyright owner.



**About the Parish**

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

Phone: 412-366-8700 | Fax: 412-366-8710

Web site: 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  
Deacons: Dn. Matthew Palamara, Dn. Theodore Stewart

**2025 Parish Council**

Anthony Balouris, President (pcpresident@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Alexander Anetakis	Evan Danis	Dean Passodelis
Eleni Balouris	George Dickos	Michael Passodelis
Penny Balouris	Tom Germanos	Chris Sarandou
George Danis	George Mellis	Jeanne Willow

**Ministries**

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at 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!

**“FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.”**

Thank you for supporting our Sponsors

 Eye Physicians & Surgeons, Ltd.

Christ A. Balouris, M.D.

Comprehensive Medical and Surgical Care  
Three Convenient Locations in the Pittsburgh area  
www.pgheyemds.com

North Hills/Wexford: 7000 Stonewood Drive, Suite 200, Wexford 724-940-4001  
Aspinwall: 200 St. Margaret Medical Arts Bldg., Suite 2020 412-784-9060  
Shadyside: Aiken Medical Bldg., Suite 103, 532 S. Aiken Ave 412-621-9060



**BALOURIS EYE CENTER, PC**

CONSTANTINE A. BALOURIS, M.D.  
H. ROBERT PAPAS, M.D.

102 TECHNOLOGY DRIVE, SUITE 120  
BUTLER, PA 16001  
OFFICE: 724-482-0090  
FAX: 724-482-0093

Visit us at... [www.BalourisEyeCenter.com](http://www.BalourisEyeCenter.com)

**H & A HEATING  
AND AIR CONDITIONING, INC.**  
412-366-2990  
Sales, Service & Maintenance  
Harry G. Athanasiou, President



**Chris T. Balouris**

3509 Smallman St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201

Phone: 412.682.2700 [www.salonika.net](http://www.salonika.net)

Retail Store Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-4pm | Sat 9am-2pm

 **HearingLife** (724) 719-2304  
WEXFORD  
1500 Village Run Rd., Ste. 315

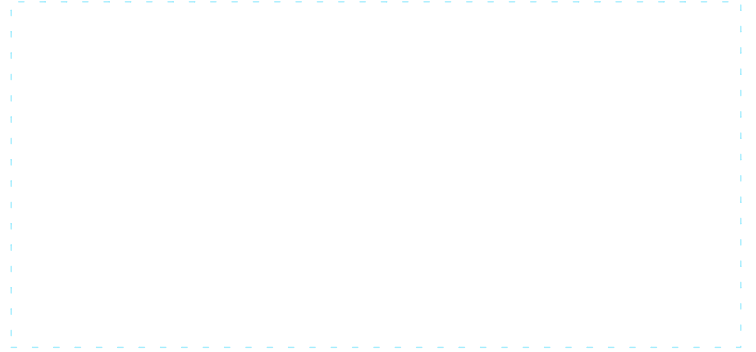
**Tammy Backeris**

H.I.S. Hearing Instrument Specialist | License #F03293  
[efba@hearinglife.com](mailto:efba@hearinglife.com)

**HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
985 PROVIDENCE BLVD, PITTSBURGH, PA 15237  
HOLYTRINITYPGH.ORG



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 1463  
PITTSBURGH, PA



## WHY WE SHOULD READ THE BIBLE

“Like a tree planted by streams of water” [Psalm 1:3], the soul is irrigated by the Bible and acquires vigor, produces tasty fruit, namely, true faith, and is beautified with a thousand green leaves, namely actions that please God.

The Bible, in fact, leads us towards pure holiness and holy actions. In it we find encouragement to all the virtues and the warning to flee from evil.

The Bible is a scented garden, delightful, beautiful. It enchants our ears with birdsong in a sweet, divine and spiritual harmony, it touches our heart, comforts us in sorrow, soothes us in a moment of anger, and fills us with eternal joy.

Let us knock at its gate with diligence and with perseverance. Let us not be discouraged from knocking. The latch will be opened.

Excerpted from “On the Orthodox Faith”  
by Saint John of Damascus

