



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

QUARTERLY *Faith. Family. Community*

Fall 2025
Volume 33 | Issue 8

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PHOTO SPOTLIGHT



The Holy Trinity AOA (Active Older Adults) ministry group enjoys an outing to local historic Pittsburgh sites. See more Community Life Journal Photos on pages 14-31.



Icon of Jesus Christ from the Great Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

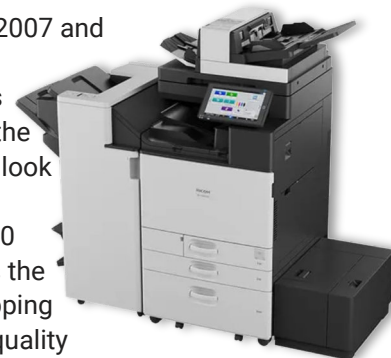
The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5.17

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

Welcome to the newest development in the 32-year long life of the *Holy Trinity Herald*. Since its first issue in 1993, *The Herald* has been bringing news, information and photos on the life, ministries and growth of Holy Trinity Church. And as the community has evolved, so has *The Herald*.

It went through major template redesigns in 2002, 2007 and 2020, each benefitting from new technologies and progress in the digital age. The look and feel of this generation of *The Herald* builds on the success of the 2020 revision and will continue to evolve, but it will look better in its printed form as this is the first issue printed on our newest-generation leased Ricoh 6010 MFP machine, pictured here. The machine receives the digital file, prints, collates, folds and staples it, dropping each issue fully ready to mail. It is printed on high-quality Hammermill Premium Color Copy paper, 28 lb., 100 bright. We produce it in-house at a greatly-reduced cost over sending it out to a commercial printer.



For those interested in the technical details (we get a lot of those requests from other communities!), the publication is produced using the Affinity Suite software from Serif, Inc.— Affinity Publisher, Affinity Photo and Affinity Designer, with digital filters from JixPix and Filter Forge. Photos are mainly from the iPhone and Android devices of our dedicated volunteers, and the hundreds of images are organized using ACDSee Photo Studio Ultimate. The parishioner data and stewardship information is drawn from our Realm church management software. Each issue is posted to our Holy Trinity website in Adobe pdf format for universal access on computers and mobile devices.

The entire publication would not be possible without the countless photos, articles, flyers, news, regular features and other submissions from our volunteer parishioners who so generously make *The Herald* part of their Holy Trinity stewardship time and talents contributions, as well as the dedicated office staff and volunteers who prepare it for bulk mailing. I cannot thank them all enough.

So why now switch from monthly issues to quarterly? In a word, it's all about optimizing...optimizing time, resources and technologies. Even with all the help we receive, as the editor it still takes me nearly a week to put an issue together, and optimizing my time by doing that quarterly instead of monthly will better balance my abilities to serve you more effectively as your priest and shepherd. Believe me, I greatly look forward to spending more time being a pastor and less being a publisher. Second, with costs increasing, four issues a year will help reduce the financial burden of production and the time required of our volunteers at the monthly level. And finally, as we further leverage our Realm and new Constant Contact technological capabilities, you will see more timely and helpful interim communications in the near future to close the gap and provide more parish life information between issues. I believe it will be a "win" for all.

Thank you for your understanding, compassion and love as we make this transition. May the Lord continue to bless and grow the life and fruits of this parish as we move forward into "the new!"

Yours in Christ,
F. John

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 Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ.

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - October-December

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

- **Sat., Oct. 18 - St. Luke the Evangelist** (SG)
- **Mon., Oct. 20 - St. Gerasimos of Kefalonia** (SG)
- **Tue., Oct. 21 - St. John of Monemvasia** (SG)
- **Tue. Oct. 28, 6:30pm: Paraclesis to St. Paisios** (SG)
- **Sat., Nov. 1 - Ss. Cosmas and Damian** (SG)
- **Sat., Nov. 8 - The Holy Archangels** (At the Archangel Michael Chapel, 291 Mosier Rd, Eighty Four, PA)
- **Thu., Nov. 13 - St. John Chrysostom** (SG)
- **Tue. Nov. 20, 6:30pm: Paraclesis to St. Nektarios** (SG)
- **Fri., Nov. 21 - Entrance of the Theotokos** (SG)
- **Tue., Nov. 25 - St. Katherine the Great Martyr** (SG)
- **Thu., Dec. 4 - St. Barbara the Great Martyr** (HT - Service held at Holy Trinity Church because relics of St. Barbara are in the Holy Altar Table of the Church)
- **Fri. Dec. 5: St. Savas the Sanctified - Nameday of Metropolitan Savas** (9:00a Orthros/10:00a Liturgy at the Metropolis Chapel, 5201 Ellsworth Ave.)
- **Fri. Dec. 5: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker** (6:30p Great Vespers at St. Nicholas Cathedral)
- **Sat. Dec. 6: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker** (9:00a Orthros/10:00a Liturgy at St. Nicholas Cathedral)
- **Tue. Dec. 9: Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos** (SG)
- **Fri. Dec. 12, St. Spyridon the Wonderworker** (9:00a Orthros/10:00a Liturgy at St. Spyridon in Monessen)
- **Tue. Dec. 16, 6:30pm: Paraclesis to the Theotokos** (SG)
- **Wed. Dec. 17, St. Dionysios of Zakynthos** (SG)
- **Wed. Dec. 24-Thu. Dec. 25:** See page 6 for the schedule of services for the Nativity of Christ.
- **Wed. Dec. 31 - 6:30PM EVENING Orthros/Liturgy - St. Basil the Great** (SG) (Note: EVENING service begins at 6:30pm)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Starts with Church!

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.

Fall Food Drive: 5,000 Items for Those in Need

From November 1-30, the Holy Trinity Church School ministry is once again holding its Fall Food Drive...and again it's **Church School vs. the Community!** Here's how the contest works:

- For **Church School students**, each Sunday bring your bags to the Conference Rooms - please be sure the nametag is on your bag.
- For the **community**, there will be a bin in the Gallery to drop your bags.

You do not need to have children in Church School to participate. Food items will be donated to the Orthodox Christian ministry at the Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. Our goal this year is to **collect 5,000 food items for those in need**. A shopping list of can be found attached to the provided collection bags, at the church office window or on our website. Choose the Documents menu, then All Documents, then Ministries.

Christmas Pageant Full RehearsalDecember 20

The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 20 from 9am-12pm. Please check the Church School email for details.

Church School Christmas Pageant.....December 21

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 21. As always, ALL the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, the students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for Hospitality Hour hosted by the Church School Alumni parents. Then, enjoy another Holy Trinity original Christmas Pageant production!

PHILOTOCHOS NEWS

Fall Philoptochos Meetings Oct. 19 & Nov. 9

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will hold monthly meetings on Sunday, October 19 and Sunday, November 9 in the Fireside Room following the Divine Liturgy. All members are invited to attend and new members are welcome to join as we empower the mission of our Ladies' Society! What is Philoptochos? It is a dynamic national organization of 25,000 members which responds immediately to needs and crises, with its philanthropic outreach extending to each area of the country and throughout the world. Note: There will be no December meeting. Contact philoptochos@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Playtime and Parea.....Fall

We're excited to kick off another season of Playtime & Parea! Join us for a fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents, caregivers, and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. For ages 0 to 4. Fall Friday sessions will take place at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room on Oct. 3, 17 & 31, and Nov. 14. See the enclosed flyer. Questions? Contact Helena Kraniou and Marika Gagianas at playtimeandparea@HolyTrinityPgh.org

HOPE and JOY Pumpkin Patch Oct. 26

The Holy Trinity Pumpkin Patch event for families of HOPE & JOY (PreK-6th grade) will be held on October 26, 2025, from 4:30-6:30 PM at Yeck's Farms, 568 Baker Rd, Freedom, PA. Families can enjoy a hayride and campfire, with hayride participation limited to those who RSVP. The event is free of charge; however, please note that Yeck's Farms is cash only for any personal purchases made during your visit. RSVP by October 16 to Eleni Balouris at 412-773-0491 or embalouris@gmail.com for HOPE children and Renee Caromano at 412-715-9503 or rcaromano@hotmail.com for JOY children.

GOYA MeetingsOct. 5, Nov. 2

Holy Trinity GOYA will hold its monthly meetings in the Conference Room following the conclusion of Church School classes on October 5 and November 2. All teens are invited to attend.

GOYA Field Trip to Saxonburg Monastery..... Oct. 11

Holy Trinity GOYA will take a field trip to the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg on Saturday, October 11. Watch the GOYA email list and GroupMe for details.

Holy Trinity Youth Sunday..... Oct. 12

The Holy Trinity community will celebrate Youth Sunday on October 12, with parish responsibilities being fulfilled by our teens and with inspiring messages being offered by our youth during the youth homily and GOYA officers will be installed. Please be there to support them.

GOYA Fall Fest..... Oct. 12

Holy Trinity GOYA will host its annual Fall Fest on October 12 in the Gallery following Liturgy, with hot sandwiches, comfy fall appetizers, salads, pumpkin and apple treats and more for sale. A homemade taste of Fall from our GOYA families! Thank you for supporting our teens!

GOYA Paintball Outing Oct. 19

Holy Trinity GOYA invites all its teens to take part in a fun paintball outing on Sunday afternoon, October 19. Watch the GOYA email list and GroupMe for details...and watch your back, too!

GOYA Bagged Lunches for the NeedyNov. 7

Holy Trinity GOYA will sponsor the bagged lunch program for the needy on November 7. Lunches will be prepared in the Holy Trinity kitchen and distributed at the Neighborhood Resilience Project the following day. Watch the GOYA email list and GroupMe for details.

Metropolis GOYA Retreat Nov. 21-23

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its annual GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth on the weekend of November 21-23. Thanks to the generosity of our parish family and the support GOYA receives for its fundraisers, a 100% scholarship will be given to any Holy Trinity GOYA who is *active in Church School and GOYA* and signs up by the Retreat deadline. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend a weekend with your HT friends, and meet other GOYAs from around the Metropolis, and grow stronger in your faith as an Orthodox Christian. See the GOYA email list for the discount code, which **must be entered at the time of registration**.

Regular Fall General Assembly/Elections.....Nov. 23

The Fall General Assembly and nominations for Parish Council and other offices will be held following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 23. And agenda and form will be sent via Holy Trinity email in advance of the event.

HOPE and JOY Thanksgiving OutreachNov. 23

HOPE and JOY children will meet after Church School while their parents attend the Fall General Assembly on Sunday, Nov. 23, to make gifts of Christmas crafts to distribute for the December 17 Christmas Caroling event and to enjoy the seasonal movie, *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving!*

GOYA Turkey Bowl November 30

GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Football Game on Thanksgiving Sunday following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited, players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! JOY children are invited to cheer on the teens. See you there!

HOPE and JOY Metropolis RetreatDecember 6

The Saint George parish in Huntingdon, WV, will host a Metropolis HOPE and JOY retreat on Saturday, December 6. Watch the HOPE and JOY emails for details.

GOYA Christmas BreadOrder by December 13

Our GOYA teens will once again offer their delicious and popular Greek Christmas Bread this year. Orders must be placed by December 13 for pickup following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 21. Orders may be placed at the GOYA bread table during Coffee Hour in December, directly with any GOYA teen OR ONLINE at HolyTrinityPgh.org/goyabread. See the flyer in this issue for more information.

GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat.....December 14

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday, December 14 from 4:00-7:00pm, at the home of Davia and Gia Gross. Watch the GOYA email list and GroupMe for details.

GOYA Christmas Bread Prep December 19-20

All GOYAnS are asked to help prepare Christmas bread on Friday, December 19, after school and Saturday, December 20, 9:00-11:00am. Parents’ help is also needed all day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. See Presvytera Becky for info and to sign up.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Holy Trinity Choir Rehearsals.....October/November

Holy Trinity Choir will hold rehearsals on Sundays, Oct. 5, Oct. 19 and Sunday, Nov. 2 following Hospitality Hour. No previous choral experience is necessary, however a musical background is welcomed. To join or learn more, email choir@HolyTrinityPgh.org,

Orthodox Dudes on Tap November 2

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. Laid back. Informal. Want to find out more? Email OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org for times and places.

AOA Movie - “David” November 4

The “Active Older Adults” (AOA) ministry will be having an “Afternoon at the Movies” at Holy Trinity Church on Tuesday, November 4, at 2:00pm. We will be showing the majestic Sight and Sound production of “David.” With its panoramic stage, original music, spectacular special effects and outstanding actors, it is a performance of the biblical story of David beyond compare.

Military Appreciation Day 2025..... November 9

The Visitation Ministry and the Bereavement Support Ministry are hosting Hospitality Hour for Military Appreciation Day on Sunday, November 9th (Veterans Day is November 11th). We will be honoring all veterans as we are so grateful for their service to our country. There will also be a memorial service for our veterans who have fallen asleep in the Lord. We will have our display monitors in the Grand Room and Gallery with our honorees’ names. Feel free to bring framed photos of your family members and friends who have served our country. For new parishioners who want to add their loved ones’ names to our display monitors, see Amy Armanious by Sunday, November 2 or email at visitation@holytrinitypgh.org.

Metropolis Folk Dance Festival Nov. 14-16

On the weekend of November 14-16, Holy Trinity Church is

hosting the Metropolis Folk Dance Festival. This annual event is a learning and performance weekend during which dance troupes from across the Metropolis will be attending dance classes and performing for one another on Saturday. On Sunday, during Hospitality Hour, our community and all who are attending can enjoy a meal and some additional performances by our Holy Trinity Troupes and other local dance groups.

This is a community-hosted event, and our dance groups will need some assistance to host this wonderful event. Please be on the lookout in the gallery for sponsorship and volunteering opportunities. Contact the committee at GreekDancers@HolyTrinityPgh.org for info or to volunteer.

Fall Hospitality Hour Dates Available to Sponsor

Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to host our Hospitality Hour following our Sunday Divine Liturgies. There are Sundays open throughout the Fall. Remember a loved one. Celebrate a special event. Share your hospitality with the community. Additionally, all ministries are asked to host two Hospitality Hours each year. Please be sure you have reserved your dates. Contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or email hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Hospitality Hour Team: Are You Being Called?

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13.2). One of the foundational ministries of Holy Trinity Church is Hospitality. You can see it listed as one of the six pillars around our parish logo. It also serves the dual purpose of welcoming newcomers in a friendly environment and providing a regular opportunity to live our parish vision: “Faith. Family. Community.” Hospitality Hour is where that happens every Sunday, but it doesn’t happen on its own. It is intentional and it takes a team!

Every other ministry of this parish happens because people respond to the Lord’s call to use their God-given gifts for the life of the Church. The Hospitality Ministry is no different. The need is there. The question is, “Are you being called to serve on the Hospitality Ministry Team?”

This wonderful ministry has grown to the point that we need a larger team to manage it. Many weeks there are hosted Memorials or Sundays sponsored by ministries, but there are also other “Open Table” Sundays that need to be coordinated and staffed. We really need a team of at least 4 to 5 people to share the tasks of scheduling, stocking supplies and, on “Open Table” Sundays, set up and clean up. Please prayerfully consider making this one of the ways you serve your church and contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or send an email to hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org to volunteer.

CHRISTMAS SEASON NEWS & EVENTS

Christmas Card FormsDue December 7

If you would like to include your name in this annual community tradition, please be sure to submit your form and donation to the Church Office by December 7. The card will be mailed with the Christmas/New Year bundle.

Holiday Poinsettias Form.....Due December 7

Please consider sponsoring holiday poinsettias for use in the church during the Christmas and Theophany season. To donate one or more flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event, please complete the form and return it to the Church Office by Dec. 7.

Choir Members Needed for Christmas Concerts

Do you like to sing? Do you enjoy Christmas carols? You are invited to sing with the Choir at two upcoming events: the Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concert on Sunday, Dec. 14 (see below) and the annual Christmas Eve program at Holy Trinity on Dec. 24. You do not need to be a member of the choir to participate, however you must attend the majority of the bi-monthly Sunday rehearsals, the next of which is Sunday, Oct. 5. Interested in learning more? Email choir@holyltrinitypgh.org.

Annual Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concert Dec 14

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh invites you to attend the Annual Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concert to be held on Sunday, December 14 beginning at 4:00pm at St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church (2110 Haymaker Rd, Monroeville, PA 15146). The concert will feature choirs from multiple Orthodox jurisdictions and the Pan-Orthodox Choir of Greater Pittsburgh. A freewill offering will taken to benefit various Orthodox Charities.

Community Christmas Caroling Dec. 17

The entire community—adults and youth alike—are invited to this special, joyful evening of traditional Christmas carols sung by members and youth of our Holy Trinity community to our neighbors across the street 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 our neighbors! This event has become a deeply-appreciated annual feature of our relationship with the sisters, from whom we were blessed to purchase the land for Holy Trinity Church back in 2007. Everyone is welcome!

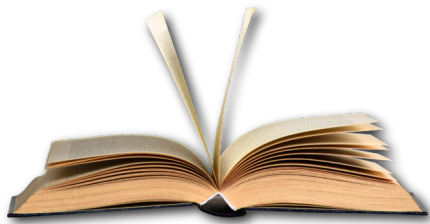
Services for the Nativity of Christ Dec. 24-25

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family. Please note that all Christmas services will be held at Holy Trinity Church (HT).

- **Wed. Dec. 24, 8:30 am: Royal Hours of the Nativity**
This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Incarnation.
- **Wed. Dec. 24, 6:30pm: Vespertal Liturgy of the Nativity**
This service “opens the liturgical day” and begins the celebration of the Nativity. Also, the Holy Trinity Choir will be offering a selection of beautiful Christmas carols following the service. (Note: Those wishing to receive Holy Communion need to observe proper fasting and spiritual preparation during the day)
- **Thu. Dec. 25. 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy**
This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! And let’s keep Christ at the center of Christmas and the center of our lives! ❖

STEWARDSHIP INDEPENDENCE: LET’S KEEP IT UP!

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 on-line at 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; 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!



Saint Paul the Pharisee

A good resource for a richer understanding of the New Testament, of the early Christian communities, and how Saint Paul shaped our faith

“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.

Saint Paul of Tarsus

St. Paul is one of the earliest and well-known Christians of the first century. We know about him from the letters he wrote and the Acts of the Apostles contained in the New Testament. He was a Jew, a Pharisee to be exact, who became radicalized. His original life mission was to persecute another sect of Jews who believed Jesus was the predicted Messiah. While traveling on the road to Damascus to further this mission, Jesus miraculously appeared to Paul in a vision, causing him to accept Christ and completely change his life’s mission. After this event, he spent the rest of his life traveling the world to share the gospel and plant and foster Christian communities.

In “St. Paul the Pharisee: Jewish Apostle to All Nations” by Stephen De Young, we get a chronological account of St. Paul’s life and works, along with pertinent background information on the cities he visited during his four missionary journeys, the people he encountered, and the letters he wrote. Most interestingly, we get a clear (and maybe surprising to some) picture of the state of

Christianity in the first century world in which Paul lived and his mission within this environment.

The State of Early Christianity

The early Christian communities in Paul’s time made up one of several sects of Judaism in the first century. They were not looking to form a separate religion. Their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah was consistent with the Pharisaic messianic expectations. These Jewish Christians continued to follow the Torah and go to the temple on Saturdays as usual. However, in addition they would also celebrate the Eucharist on the Lord’s Day, Sunday.

There was also a growing population of non-Jewish Christians within this community. As we see in a few places in the New Testament, the question became: What should be done with the non-Jewish Christians who never followed the Torah commandments, such as circumcision? Paul and other early church leaders decided that the non-Jewish Christians should not be burdened with these Jewish requirements. However, the Jewish Christians should continue in their adherence to the law in the Torah.

Saint Paul’s Mission

The integration of Jewish and non-Jewish Christians into a single community was an issue throughout the world. Addressing this challenge became a priority for St. Paul. More broadly, Paul’s mission was one

meant to bring the nations back together in Christ. As De Young explains, seventy nations were created after the people were scattered following the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis). Abraham was called out of the seventy nations to receive the special blessings of God and be the father of the nation Israel. Paul’s mission was to bring all the nations back together in Christ, while at the same time preserving the various national identities.

Authorship Questions

De Young also spends time discussing the fact that Paul’s authorship of certain letters (e.g., Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews) is challenged by some scholars. However, De Young challenges this notion by noting that the sample size of Paul’s writing is not large enough to conclude whether a given text meets his style or not. Paul also used different secretaries to help him write his letters, each of which could have added their own style to the text. De Young even observes that the letter to the Hebrews shows convincing signs of being an oral sermon, not a traditional letter written by Paul.

A Richer Understanding of the New Testament

There are many insights to gain about St. Paul from “St. Paul the Pharisee.” It is a good resource for a richer understanding of the New Testament, of the early Christian communities, and how St. Paul shaped our faith. ❖

Rick Paese

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH: A HISTORY OF GREAT ENDURANCE, AFFLICTIONS AND HARDSHIPS



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

“As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities” (2 Cor. 6.4).

Almost a year ago during our 2024 Pilgrimage to Greece, we stood at the foot of the Acropolis below an elevated outcropping known as Mars Hill and read a passage from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles with the very words of Saint Paul as he – at great risk – preached the Good News of Jesus Christ. Though as the greatest missionary of the Church he brought this new faith to not only the Greeks of Athens but to many others, we know how his story ended: in martyrdom, like every other Apostle of Jesus Christ except Saint John the Evangelist. When we make

ourselves familiar with what challenges they faced in the Jewish and pagan world in which they preached, how can we not admire, appreciate and be inspired by their courage in the midst of so many threats and so much persecution? But for them, we would have no church, no faith and no way to know of salvation in Jesus Christ.

It's a good thing, we tell ourselves, that we live in a so much more modern and civilized world of tolerance, respect and religious freedom, right? Well, perhaps in some corners, but not in the Phanar district of Constantinople (modern day Istanbul), where the seat of the ancient Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, established by the Apostle Andrew, has been forced to relocate over a half a dozen times. And maybe that freedom is true for our own hierarchs here in America who can come and go with ease, but not for our very own Ecumenical Patriarch, whose life is at risk each time he leaves the gates of the Patriarchal compound. And maybe we have the freedom to build and maintain beautiful churches like the one we worship in this morning, but not for the hundreds of churches destroyed by the Ottomans and Turks, and certainly not for the greatest cathedral in Christianity, Hagia Sophia, which stood for 1,000 years in glory before being turned into a mosque, then a museum, and then a mosque again.

Why share all this today? Having just returned from Constantinople with a group of pilgrims from Holy Trinity Church, I can assure you that the spirit of apostolic witness amidst persecution did not die with Saint Paul and the others; it is lived by our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew today just as described by Saint Paul in the opening of this message, “through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities.” Drawing from the spirit of today's Epistle as it relates to the life of our Ecumenical Patriarch, please allow me to share a few gleanings from our recent pilgrimage as I enjoin you to support and pray for His All-Holiness and all those who continue to preserve and defend the historic foundations of Orthodox Christianity against all odds and unyielding pressure. His All-Holiness may have just completed a historic visit to

America, including a visit to the White House and receiving the Templeton Prize, but make no mistake, he will return to the same persecuted life from which he came.

Rather than make this a lengthy string of historical facts about Constantinople and the Patriarchate, I think it would be better if you understood what life is like for the canonical leader of worldwide Orthodox Christianity and those with him who preserve the historical and living foundations of our faith in some of the most difficult circumstances. We saw it with our own eyes. If you previously lived under the misconception that our Patriarch lives the honored and respected life akin to the Pope of Rome and his internationally-recognized Vatican state, get ready for a reality check.

According to ancient apostolic tradition, our Ecumenical Patriarch is elected by the Holy Synod of Bishops in Constantinople. But not without secular interference. By Turkish secular law, the Ecumenical Patriarch must be a Turkish citizen, which greatly diminishes the potential pool of candidates. And even if properly elected, his appointment must be approved by the Turkish government. Imagine the future of the papacy being suffocated by such restrictions.

During the twentieth century's first decades, entire Orthodox Christian populations throughout Southeastern Europe, Asia Minor (including Istanbul) and Crete were extinguished. Hundreds of bishops, tens of thousands of priests, monks and nuns, and millions of other Orthodox faithful were executed or condemned to slow death. Though the Greek Orthodox Christian population of Constantinople historically ranged in the millions over the centuries, persecutions, treaties and ethnic cleansing have whittled that population down to only around 2,000 Christians, thus further restricting future prospects for the Patriarchate.

Because of religious restrictions, the only resident of the Patriarchate allowed to wear clergy attire outside the walls of the Patriarchate is the Patriarch himself. All the other Metropolitans and Bishops, Priests and Deacons are forced to wear secular business suits and ties. No Crosses. Nothing outwardly demonstrating their faith identity, especially as Christians. As a foreigner, I was legally allowed to wear my traditional Orthodox clergy robe, and I did, especially when we visited the great Hagia Sophia. But I was not allowed to wear my Cross. Persecuted and watched though I felt, it paled in comparison to what I had heard the day before from His All-Holiness himself about that Great Cathedral. In the 34 years since his enthronement as Patriarch, he has not once visited that sacred spot, where the throne of his predecessors sat. It is simply too heart-breaking.

And what of the churches of Istanbul? On Taxim Square, where our hotel was located, there is a very large open plaza with lots of shops, restaurants, hotels and tourist facilities. There is also a tremendously large, illuminated mosque, doors wide open for people to pass in and out freely. But just off the square is the historic Holy Trinity Church, the largest remaining Greek Orthodox Church in Istanbul, as most others have been destroyed or converted into mosques. It is said to have only 150 parishioners. And unlike the neighboring mosque with its spectacular evening lights and open doors, it is surrounded by a large wall topped with

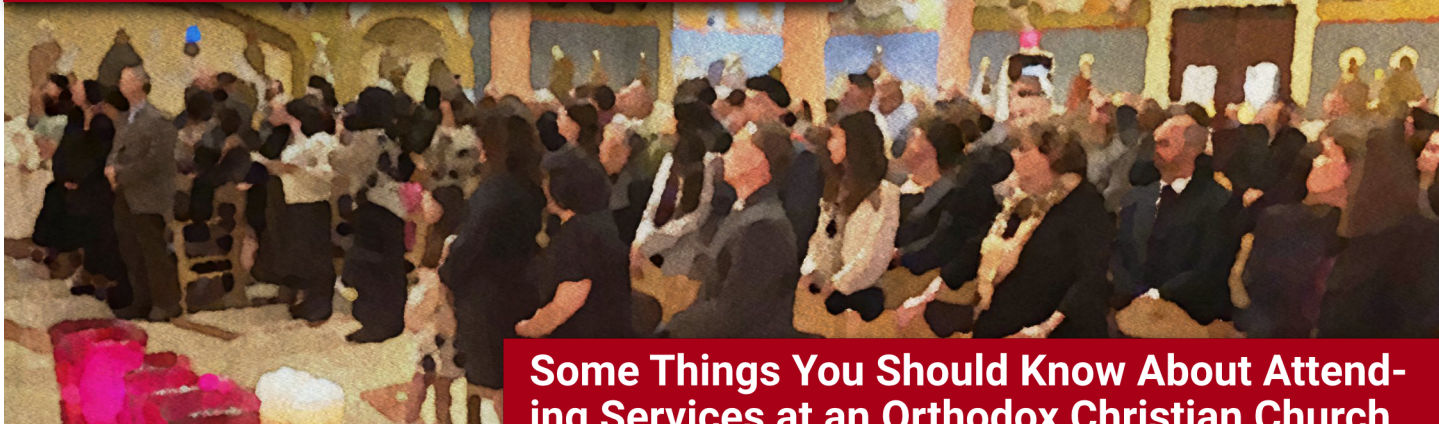
razor wire to prevent the constant threat of attack. It is a stark Orwellian reminder that in this supposedly secular state, some faiths are more equal than others, with Islam operating freely, and Christianity – the former beating heart of the Byzantine empire – forced to live under such conditions.

Despite all that, the mission and witness of the Ecumenical Patriarchate continues without fail. During his 34-year tenure as the longest-serving Ecumenical Patriarch in the history of Orthodoxy, Patriarch Bartholomew has been a transnational and transformative light of Orthodoxy throughout the world. He has received and been received by many heads of state, addressed many national parliaments, and received many awards, including the Gold Medal of the United States and being named as one of the world's most influential people by Time Magazine. He has been a champion of ecumenical relations, interfaith dialogue, and environmental issues, even being referred to as the "Green Patriarch." Despite the very persecution under which he lives every day, his initiatives to advance religious tolerance among the world's religions, together with his work toward international peace have justly placed him at the forefront of global visionaries as an apostle of love, peace and reconciliation. And in his love and humility as a true shepherd for even the least of his flock, he was able to host our group of pilgrims not only for a private audience, but also for lunch. Truly amazing!

Allow me to conclude with two requests. First, please keep His All-Holiness in your regular prayers, as I do. Second, get to know him. Visit our Archdiocese website, goarch.org, where you will find extensive coverage of his Apostolic Visit to America and much more. May our merciful Lord continue to send His divine protection upon His All-Holiness and all those who continue to bear apostolic witness even in the midst of regular and persistent "afflictions, hardships, calamities." And may God grant them all many more years. Amen. ❖

Delivered Sep. 8, 2025

CHURCH ETIQUETTE



Some Things You Should Know About Attending Services at an Orthodox Christian Church

In the Orthodox Christian Church, there are a lot of customs and traditions that play a role in our worship services. Some are essential; some are not. Some are universal; others are local pious customs. From time to time, it is good address these various etiquette issues to remind long-term members and to inform newcomers of these practices so we all understand how they help build and sustain the reverence and respect we should offer to the Lord during worship. Please feel free to further discuss any questions with any of our clergy.

Entering the Church

The church as the house of God is a special place and should be entered with reverence and respect.

The Narthex: When entering the narthex it is customary to reverence the icons on the stands. Also on Sundays the Holy Gospel is brought into the narthex and placed on the stand. There are also often icons of the current feast or season. Venerating (kissing) icons should always be accompanied by prayer. Also, when venerating an icon, pay attention where you kiss. It is not proper to kiss an icon in the face. When you approach an icon to venerate it, look to see what is there, then kiss the Gospel, scroll, or hand Cross in the hand of the person in the icon, or kiss the hand or foot of the person depicted. As you venerate an icon, show proper respect to the person depicted in the icon—the same respect as you would the person by venerating him or her in an appropriate place. [Reminder: please remove your lipstick before kissing an icon! See below.]

Lighting Candles: It is also traditional to light a candle by taking one from the candle stand, lighting it and placing it in the candle sandbox. As with so many other actions, it should always be accompanied by prayer, as the burning

flame represents the vigilance of our prayers. And the physical light of a candle is a witness to Jesus Christ as the “light of the world” (John 8.12). Please remember, candles are an expense for the church, so please leave a donation at the candle stand if you are able. These days that may be in the form of cash or various other methods, such as your Realm app, the narthex kiosk or your Realm account. The large 7-day vigil lights are also available for a donation and can be taken to the candle stands in the church by yourself or by a Parish Council member.

Entering the Service

The Orthodox Divine Liturgy begins when the priest intones, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” That is the first line, so to experience this blessing we need to arrive on time. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, the most important thing to remember is...try to do better next time! Then, as always, please be aware and respectful of the service and others around you by not entering at inappropriate times. And be aware of what is happening in the service when you enter. These are a few of the times during which **we should not enter:**

- The Small Entrance with the Gospel
- The readings of the Epistle and Gospel
- The Great Entrance
- The Creed
- The Consecration of the Holy Gifts
- The Lord’s Prayer
- The Homily
- Special processions

If in doubt, ask the Parish Council or Hospitality Ministry volunteers in the narthex.

Standing and Sitting

This is probably one of the most confusing aspects of Orthodox worship for newcomers and visitors. The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church is standing. In the Orthodox “old countries,” there usually are no pews in the churches. Chairs or benches (called “stasidia”) on the side walls are usually reserved for the elderly and infirm.

In churches in America with chairs or pews, people often sit and stand as an entire congregation, with those familiar with the customs leading by example. So it’s usually safe to “follow the crowd.” But perhaps a physical limitation does not allow you to sit and stand often or stand for long periods at all; that is not a problem and you are fully welcome to participate in the services as you are physically able, sitting or standing.

When should you **definitely stand**? The Divine Liturgy book and other service texts often offer direction, but standing is most appropriate during the entrances, the Gospel, the Creed and Lord’s Prayer and Holy Communion. Your priest will also provide other instructions.

“In N Out”

Yes, it’s a famous hamburger chain in California, but it should not be used to describe the traffic patterns in the church during services. Though exceptions need to be made for children and other medical or physical needs, it’s best to stay in your place for the duration of the service so as not to disturb others. You shouldn’t need to get a drink of water during the service, especially if you are receiving Holy Communion. In general, come to pray ... and stay!

Leaving the Church

Divine Liturgy worship has a beginning (“Blessed is the Kingdom”) and an end (“Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers...”). The most respectful practice is to leave the church only after the final blessing and receiving anti-doron. If you have Parish Council or Hospitality duties and must leave, please exit the church quietly and refrain from conversing until after you have exited the church and narthex so as not to disrupt those who wish to hear the remainder of the service. Also, staff and students or the Church School ministry properly depart following Holy Communion during the school year so they have time for classes. No matter when we leave, when exiting the church, it is customary to turn to face the altar, and make the sign of the cross before walking away.



Church Attire

Remember the time when people put on their “Sunday best” to go to church? Times may have changed and we might be less formal in many areas of life, but dress in some churches has become so casual it seems the goal is to demonstrate that we have made no special preparation whatsoever because the Lord accepts us as we are.

Indeed He does, and we will not be ranked on fashion at the final judgment, but if we outwardly demonstrate by our lack of preparation that church is an everyday “pedestrian” experience, what witness does it demonstrate concerning our respect for and relationship to our God? The house of God is not “just another place.” We believe that when we enter the Divine Liturgy, we are stepping into the Kingdom of God on earth, and how we prepare and present ourselves to Him should reflect that. We should honor him with our “Sunday best” preparation, not our everyday common approach or apparel. This is not about fashion, and we do not need to spend lots of money or impress anyone with our clothes. Our dress should simply be becoming of a Christian. By choosing our clothing wisely we model what is important

to us by how we dress. Here are some specific guidelines we use in our parishes. This may vary from place to place:

- **Children:** Let children be children in their children’s outfits, but start by teaching them respect for the Lord and His church while they are young. Let them know the church is a special place. Athletic shoes, cut-offs and the like are not appropriate for church. T-shirts with any kind of messages on them should be avoided.
- **Women:** Dresses or skirts and tops have always been the traditional attire for women, but some prefer pants due to age or personal discretion. Either way, clothing should be modest. Tank tops, strapless dresses, very short skirts and very tight dresses are not appropriate. (Hint: If you cannot bow down to do a “metanoia” prostration in it, it is probably too short or tight!)
- **Men:** Men should also dress modestly. Coats and ties are welcome but not mandatory, and shirts should either have collars or should be appropriately “dressy” (in other words, avoid very casual styles). Jeans are usually too casual for church and shorts are not appropriate church wear for adults.
- **Acolytes:** Young men serving as acolytes in the altar should have long pants, dress shoes and, preferably, a collared shirt. Ties are nice but optional.

- **After-Liturgy Activities:** If you're going someplace after church where you need to dress casually or for sports, it's best to bring a change of clothing with you and change after Liturgy.

Lipstick

Have you ever looked at an icon and seen the lip prints on it? Yuk! Lipstick may look fine on people, but it is a desecration to icons, crosses, the Communion spoon and the priest's or bishop's hand. Please be aware that lipstick can also severely and permanently damage icons and liturgical objects. If you choose to wear lipstick to church (which is not necessary, no matter what fashion dictates), please blot your lips well before 1) venerating an icon or holy object; 2) receiving Holy Communion; 3) venerating a Cross; 4) kissing priest's or bishop's hand. Even better, wait until after services to put it on.

Talking During Services

We celebrate community, and it's great to come to church and see friends and family members. Many people appreciate the opportunity for fellowship as an important part of being involved in parish life. But please, other than the Kiss of Peace, wait until Hospitality Hour to greet them and carry on conversations. Instead, talk to God while in church through your prayers, hymns and thanksgiving ... and to your friends and family in the Hospitality Hour afterwards!

Greeting Clergy

Did you know that the proper way to greet a priest or bishop is to ask his blessing and kiss his right hand? How do you do this? The traditional Orthodox manner is to approach the priest or bishop with your right hand over your left, palms up, and, optionally, say "Father, bless" (or in the case of hierarchy, "Master, bless.") In this way we "receive" the blessing. When you kiss their hand you show respect for their office and receive the blessing of Christ which they have been ordained by God to offer. It's not about the person; it's about the grace of ordination. They are the ones who bless us in the name of Christ, lift the Holy Gifts for Consecration and who offer the Body and Blood of Christ with their right hand to us. (Note: this applies only to hierarchs and priests, not deacons, whose hand should not be revered.)

Chewing Gum

This is one of the most disrespectful habits in church and should be avoided at all times. Chewing gum is inappropriate during Liturgy or any other service of the church, or for that matter, anywhere in the church proper.

Also, for anyone who has received Holy Communion, chewing gum (and brushing teeth) should be abstained for at least 3-to-4 hours (and preferably all day) following Liturgy, so as not to have the Body and Blood of Christ chewed and spit out or thrown away.

The Sign of the Cross

Anyone who has looked around on a Sunday morning will notice that different people cross themselves at different times (and sometimes in different ways). To a certain extent, when to cross oneself is according to personal piety and not an issue of dogma. But there are times when it is specifically proper to cross yourself and times when you should not. Here is a brief list of when to cross and when not to cross.



- **When to Cross:** When you hear one of the variations of the Trinitarian phrase "Father, Son and Holy Spirit;" at the mention of a saint's name to invoke their intercessions; at the beginning and end of liturgical services; to start and finish your own private prayers; before venerating an icon; when entering or exiting the church; when passing by the church or a holy place; when walking behind the holy altar table (acolytes); before venerating an icon, the cross or Gospel book; when doing a "metanoia" (a physical reverence by bowing down to the ground).

- **When Not to Cross:** Immediately in front of the Holy Chalice (you might hit the chalice with your hand; instead, reverence before approaching the Chalice while the person in front of you is receiving); when being censed (simply bow your head); when the priest or bishop blesses saying "Peace be to all" (bow slightly to receive the blessing rather than repeating the blessing by doing your own cross); when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (simply kiss the right hand of the bishop or priest to receive the blessing, but do not make the sign of the cross to repeat it).

How to Make the Sign of the Cross: In all cases, please use care to correctly form your hand for the sign of the cross, with the thumb, index finger and middle finger joined together at their tips to represent the three persons of the Holy Trinity, one God; the ring finger and little finger joined together and bent down toward the palm, representing the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ our Savior; and the palm representing the earth to which He came as our incarnate Lord. It is done with the right hand, first going up to touch the forehead, then down to the bottom of the abdomen, then up to the right shoulder, and finally over your body to the left shoulder. Some

conclude and placing an open palm over the chest, and that is ok but not required. A simply and humble cross as an offering of prayer is best. Large and demonstrative gestures are both distracting and unnecessary.

One Cross or Three Times? It is generally sufficient to make the sign of the cross only once each time it is offered. There are some who have been raised in a tradition of doing it three times. Even though only once is adequate, both practices are acceptable, but what is not proper is to rush to make the sign three times sloppily to get it done. The sign of the cross should be made carefully and intentionally with prayer, not out of habit or mechanically. It is the instrument of our salvation and you are proclaiming that when offering it.

Receiving the Holy Bread (“Antidoron”)

After receiving Holy Communion and at the end of the Divine Liturgy, it is traditional to consume a piece of holy bread or antidoron. While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread, and as such, should be eaten carefully so that crumbs don’t fall all over. After receiving Holy Communion take one piece from the tray, or at the end of the Divine Liturgy, receive your antidoron from the priest. It is also taught in some places that you should not receive antidoron at the end of the service if you received it after Holy Communion, but there is no official prohibition against this and, in fact, it is the general practice in the Archdiocese for everyone to receive antidoron at the dismissal from Liturgy. So please follow the directions of your clergyman on this issue.



Children in Church

We **LOVE** having and seeing children in church. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14). It is possible for young children to remain in church throughout a service if they are taught to be quiet and respectful. But children are children, and they are often seen *and* heard, so be kind!

Loving Children as Children: Though adults fully understand the behavior expected of them in church, children learn as they grow by example and by lessons. As parents know, it doesn’t always go smoothly! We all have a part to play in helping the children of our community grow in piety and respect as they get older. Parents, if a child becomes extremely fussy, especially during the homily or a solemn part of the service, please have the courtesy to take the child to the Family and Pastoral Care Room or the Gallery and give them time to settle, returning when ready.

Everyone else, **be kind and merciful to parents** who are doing their best to raise their children in the ways of the Lord. The last thing a self-conscious parent of a fussing child needs is to have someone give them a look or make a critical comment. Offering to help would be nice! Working together and respecting each other, we can provide a welcoming and nurturing environment that all the children of this church come to know as their spiritual home.

Snacks for Children: Parents sometimes bring snacks or a drink for very young children (0 to 2 years old) during services. This can be helpful in keeping young children settled and is fine as long as it is discreet and quiet and the parent sees to cleaning up any leftovers. By the time

the children are 3-to-4 years old, they should be able to make it through the Liturgy without eating or drinking anything (except in special need circumstances). By the time they reach 7, they should also be fasting on Sunday morning for Holy Communion. For specific guidance, talk to your priest about this. But even with young children, feeding them while in the line for Holy Communion is not appropriate; they need to come to Communion without food in their mouths as part of their personal preparation.

Physical Posture

Keeping in mind the holy place we are in (the House of God) and the purpose for which we are here (to worship Him), our physical posture should reflect both. Slouching back, crossing our legs and the like should be avoided. Be comfortable, not casual. Offer the honor and respect due this holy place.

Mobile Phones and Technology in Church

Technology is everywhere these days, and if there is a good way for us to experience and teach that church is not like everywhere else, refraining from using phones and technology in church is it. It also helps us train our children to free themselves from technology for a time and to learn from the spiritual sights and sounds of the beautiful services and surroundings. After all, the church is the original “multimedia experience!” Let that be enough.

Conclusion

Learning and growing together in our Orthodox Christian faith is a life-long process. Understanding what we do and why we do it adds purpose and meaning to every practice. Read, ask, learn and adapt. Focus on your choices and refrain from judging the practices of others, that every word and deed prayerfully offered to God be accepted as a humble gift of love to Him. That is true worship! ❖

















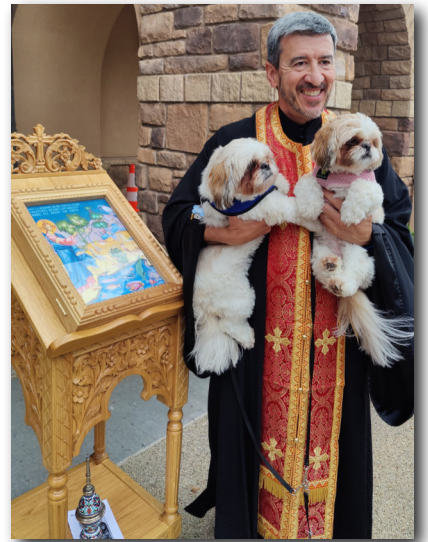


(August 8) Young people and clergy from around the Central Region of the Metropolis gather at Holy Trinity Church's Saint George Chapel for the annual Regional Paraclesis Service to the Theotokos. Joining Father John are (L-R): Deacon Ted, Fr. Eleftherios Constantine, Fr. Michael Gavrillos, Fr. Radu, Fr. Theodosios Palis and Deacon Matthew, with the beautiful chanting led by Alyssa Kyritsis and Eleni Valliant.



(September 6) Children from HOPE, JOY and GOYA, along with their parents, gather for one of the largest-ever annual combined Holy Trinity Youth Ministries Kick-off picnic at North Park to share in fellowship and organize the upcoming year. Thank you to all those who organized and participated!







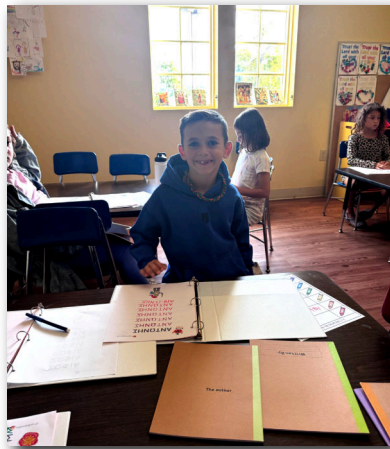
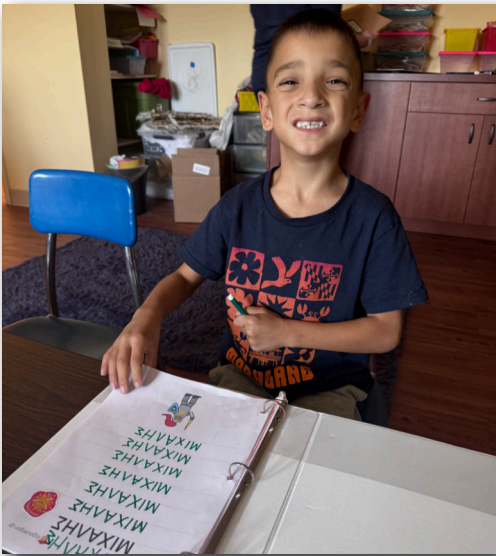
Above (August 24): GOYAn Christopher Ramaley presents his Eagle Scout project to the community. It is the first stage in the new Prayer Garden and part of his requirements to earn his Eagle Scout Award. Below (September 30): Our AOA (Active Older Adults) group took a trip to two Pittsburgh historic sites - St. Nicholas Croatian Church and Hartwood Acres Mansion.





“Playtime and Parea” is a fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents, caregivers, and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ, as these pictures demonstrate. See the flyer in this issue for information on attending.

Greek School is back! After a years-long hiatus, we are so pleased to once again offer Greek language instruction at Holy Trinity Church. For 2025-2026 there are two classes with highly-qualified professional teachers for ages 4 through 2nd grade. Classes for this academic year are full, but for information and interest for future years and ages, contact GreekSchool@HolyTrinityPgh.org.





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)



With 117 students registered, our Church School ministry is off to an enthusiastic start! Top: Children bring their backpacks forward for a back-to-school blessings. Bottom, opposite: classroom scenes from the first day of Church School on September 7.







(September 21) A busy day of ministry meetings at Holy Trinity Church! Top: Holy Trinity Philoptochos meets with a full house to discuss their philanthropic activities as they serve the needy and support the church. Bottom: Holy Trinity GOYAn plan their fall season, including the Fall Fest, Youth Sunday, the Metropolis Retreat, paintball and more.




(September 21) Top: Team members from the 2025 Orthodox Volunteer Corps (OVC) ministry, based in Pittsburgh, make their annual visit to Holy Trinity Church to introduce themselves and the philanthropic volunteer work they offer to the greater Pittsburgh areas. Bottom Left: GOYAns Daniel Willow and Ilia Peregoncev carry some of the 120 backpacks, filled and donated by parishioners, to the Conference Room. Bottom Right: Marianne Stearns is honored for her 7 years of service as Philoptochos President.



Faith & Family Weekdays

Grow Your Knowledge and Practice of the Faith!

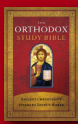
JOM



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.

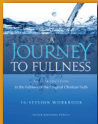
MPS



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. 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. 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: Oct 16; Nov. 6, 20; Dec. 18.

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. Next get-together is Nov. 2. Laid back. Informal. Want to be notified? Email OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

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? Want to enjoy fellowship with others in your Christian family and community? It's all there. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for details and locations.

NEW!



Byzantine Chant Classes
Schedule to be announced

Want to learn Byzantine Chant? Enroll in this new offering from Holy Trinity Church. Expert instructor and chanter Dr. Stefan Esper will be teaching this centuries-old foundation of Orthodox worship. No prior experience needed. Want to sign up? Email chant@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

AND SAVE THE DATE FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE! WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

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!



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
PLAYTIME & PAREA*
fellowship for little ones and their parents/caregivers

10:00AM – 11:30AM

Begins Friday, Sept 19
(Every other Friday)

FIRESIDE ROOM - AGES 0-4

Join us for a fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents (or caregivers) and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ.

Activities Include:

Playtime for babies and toddlers

Story time and music

Light snacks and fellowship

Questions?

Contact us at PlaytimeandParea@HolyTrinityPgh.org

*"Parea" is Greek for "a group of friends who gather together to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the everyday joys of life"

HOLY TRINITY

**Pumpkin
Patch**

FAMILIES OF HOPE & JOY

PreK-6th Grade

October 26, 2025

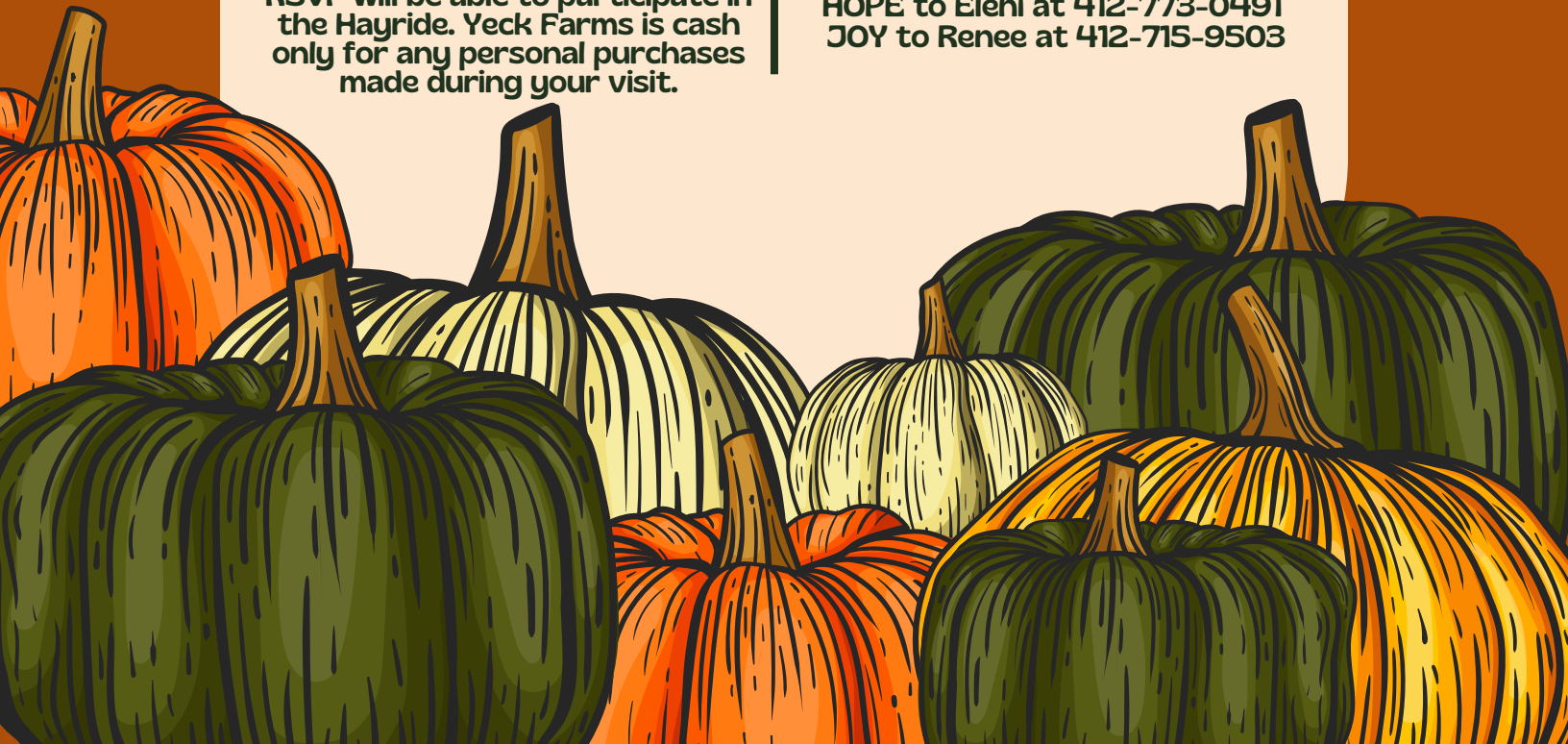
4:30pm- 6:30pm

**HAYRIDE &
CAMPFIRE**

Event is free! Only those that RSVP will be able to participate in the Hayride. Yeck Farms is cash only for any personal purchases made during your visit.

**Yeck's Farms
568 Baker Rd
Freedom, PA 15042**

**RSVP by October 16
HOPE to Eleni at 412-773-0491
JOY to Renee at 412-715-9503**





IOCC Health Kit Drive and Assembly

Youth Volunteers and Monetary Donations Welcome!

November 8, 2025 | 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
123 Gilkeson Rd. (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

All Orthodox youth groups are encouraged to participate.
Students, please bring your volunteer forms for school credit.

**Our goal is to assemble several thousand health kits.
Donations are needed to purchase bulk health kit supplies.**

To donate, please make checks payable to “Holy Cross AGAPE Fund”
with “IOCC Health Kit Project” in the memo, and mail to
Nick Terezis, c/o IOCC, 306 Marberry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Please contact Nick Diamant at 412.596.8850
or DiamantNP53@gmail.com to
coordinate your youth group attendance.



Holy Trinity GOYA is pleased to take your order for



Homemade Greek Christmas Bread



Now available in two styles!



Traditional Round



Holiday Multi-Colored Loaf

Both available with or without Sesame Seeds. Still only \$12 per loaf.

**Order deadline: Saturday, December 13th
Bread will be available for pick-up on Sunday Dec. 21st
following Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church**

Order in-person from any Holy Trinity GOYA teen - OR -

Place your order online starting Nov. 15 at HolyTrinityPgh.org/goyabread

Homemade with love by Holy Trinity GOYA

985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 GOYA@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Thank you for your support of the Holy Trinity GOYA Ministry!



ALL HOLY TRINITY SENIORS ARE INVITED TO JOIN
TOGETHER FOR AN ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TRADITION:

Philoptochos Seniors Christmas Luncheon



THU. DECEMBER 4, 2025

8:30 ORTHROS/9:30 LITURGY

SAINT BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR
(THIS SAINT'S RELICS ARE PRESENT
IN THE HOLY TRINITY ALTAR TABLE)



11:00AM LUNCHEON

Enjoy the company of your Holy Trinity friends!
Dress in your Christmas best! Celebrate the season!

For reservations, contact Yvonne Balouris
at 724-316-2847 by November 29

Hosted by Holy Trinity Philoptochos

Anxiety

How it is created. How it is healed.

Q: Geronda, can you speak to us about anxiety?

As you know from the fathers of the Orthodox Church, evil is the absence of good. Evil cannot exist in and of itself. It is the same with darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. Wherever there is light, it would be impossible for us to say that we could gather darkness in order to darken the light. If there is light, darkness has no hold; it is non-existent because it only exists in the absence of light. This is also how evil exists in the absence of good.

The situation is the same with anxiety. Anxiety is non-existent. People create anxiety for themselves, as they do with so many things. We must be careful of this. People create their problems by having the wrong attitude before God. Generally speaking, a person could have a mistaken perspective of themselves, of others, of reality, and truth. But it is specifically when a person has the wrong attitude before God that they create thousands of issues for themselves.

Q: What if my anxiety is caused by the actions of others?

Many times, the way in which you react when you worry, have some pain, or are wounded looks like this: Someone stabs you and you take the knife and begin to twist it inside the wound. Fine, someone hurt you. Remove the knife and look at how you are going to heal your wound. But no, you do not remove the knife. Instead, you hold it there and even if someone wants to remove it you do not let them. And as if that is not enough, you even twist it inside the wound. It is true that the evil began from what

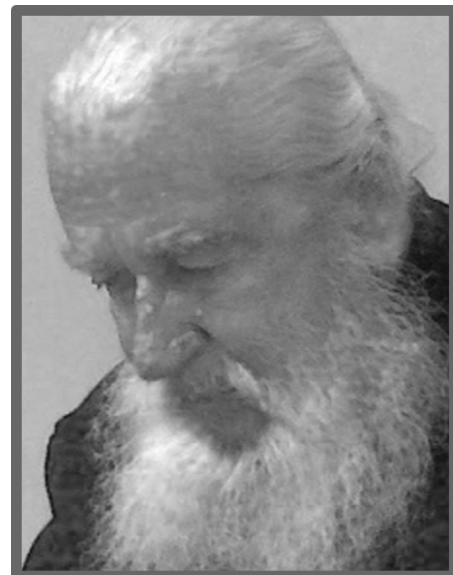
the other person did in the beginning. But if we analyze this and look deeper, we will see that we also contributed to the situation. No one is completely innocent.

God loves us, He protects and covers us. He does not leave us at the mercy of others. If God allows us to suffer something, it means that we need it and we can take this situation and say, "Lord, since this situation happened, I must have needed it. Something was not going right in me. So, I am the deeper cause. Forgive the person who hurt me and what they did." From then on, we will confront things correctly and not turn the knife inside our wound.

Q: What does my anxiety say about my faith?

The person who trusts God has no trace of anxiety. We must be certain of this. You might be thinking, "But there are Christians who get stressed out to the point that they have to go to the doctor and take medicine, etc." What exactly should we conclude from this? That these people do not trust in God and we do?

It's true, there are unhealthy situations. There are people whose framework and psyche are such that they tend to get anxious, agitated, and worried; they cannot relax, and everything annoys them. However, for these people, if ever they truly find God and truly trust in Him, these tendencies disappear, even though they are part of their framework or from whatever other cause. They are healed, and they relax. I really wonder how much money people today would give to ensure this rest, this peace, this serenity, this absence of anxiety.



Elder Symeon Kragiopoulos

They do not need to give money, though. What they need to give is themselves. This is what God wants. If we do not give ourselves to God but operate and conduct ourselves as though we are lords over our lives, we will never find rest but only anxiety.

If you have peace and rest in your soul, anxiety disappears. If you have God within you, if you trust in Him, anxiety disappears. It has no room. In other words, it does not exist. As Christians, we especially have no excuse to be anxious. The secular world has no clue about these things, so how can it help you? You see how people go out on the town to find some joy? They try to forget a little, to escape a little from themselves and to become intoxicated with this. But what kind of joy will they find this way? Is it ever possible for this to bring joy or peace? Is it ever possible for a person to be saved from worry in this way? Eventually they will have to face themselves again. It is only when a person reconciles with himself that things will go well, and they will be able to live with themselves. ❖

Excerpted from
"Anxiety"

THE HOLY TRINITY
HERALD
Faith. Family. Community

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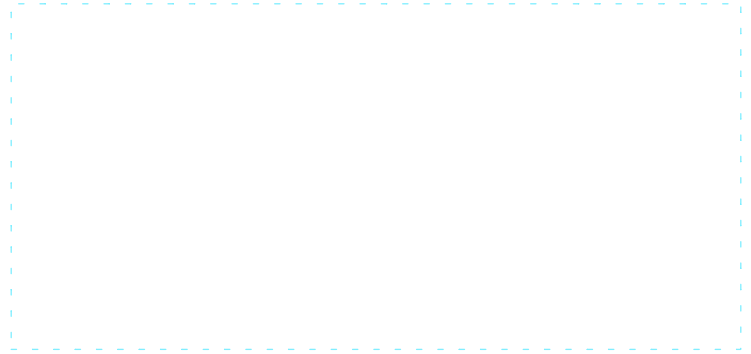
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THE BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE



The Christian is neither like wood nor like dough. If we put our fingers into dough, they will leave an impression on it, and the marks will remain there; they will not go away. Likewise, anyone who is “made of dough” is extremely sensitive. On the other hand, if you touch wood, nothing will happen to it, because it is hard, unfeeling.

A Christian should be like a rubber band. You touch it, your fingers sink in for a moment — the Christian’s soul is affected — but then it returns to its original state, to balance. This is the sentiment of the Christian, the redeemed man — that is, the man born again in Christ.

Excerpted from “Transending the Self in Our Everyday Lives”
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