

# Holy Cross

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
123 Gilkeson Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
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Fr. Michael Kallaur  
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Dn. Frank Dickos

## Weekly Bulletin for Sunday December 27, 2015



### Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr

Saint Stephen was a Jew, by race, and, as some say, a disciple of Gamaliel, the teacher of the Law mentioned in Acts 5:34 and 22:3. He was the first of the seven deacons whom the Apostles established in Jerusalem to care for the poor, and to distribute alms to them. Being a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, he performed great signs and wonders among the people. While disputing with the Jews concerning Jesus, and wisely refuting their every contradiction, so that no one was able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit whereby he spake, he was slandered as a blasphemer and was dragged off to the Sanhedrin of the elders. There with boldness he proved from the divine Scriptures the coming of the Just One (Jesus), of Whom they had become the betrayers and murderers, and he reproved their faithless and hardheartedness. And finally, gazing into Heaven and beholding the divine glory, he said: "Lo, I see the Heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But when they heard this, they stopped up their ears, and with anger cast him out of the city and stoned him, while he was calling out and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Then, imitating the long-suffering of the Master, he bent his knees and prayed in a loud voice for them that were stoning him, and he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," And saying this, he fell asleep (Acts 6, 7), thus becoming the first among the Martyrs of the Church of Christ.

## **Hymns of the Day**

### **Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Plagal First Mode**

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful, praising Him that with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved; for He was pleased to mount the Cross in the flesh that He assumed, accepting thus to endure death. And by His glorious rising, He also willed to resurrect the dead.

### **Apolytikion for Sun. after Nativity in the Second Mode**

O Joseph, proclaim the wonders to David, the ancestor of God. Thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; thou hast given glory with the shepherds; thou hast worshipped with the Magi; and thou hast been instructed through an Angel. Entreat Christ God to save our souls.

### **Apolytikion for Protomartyr Steven in the Fourth Mode**

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; for when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest Christ thy Saviour standing at the right hand of the Father. O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

### **Apolytikion for the Church in the First Mode**

Save, O Lord, Your people, and bless Your inheritance. Grant victory to the faithful against the adversaries of the faith. And, protect Your people by the power of Your Cross.

### **Seasonal Kontakion in the Third Mode**

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in essence; \* to the Unapproachable, \* the earth doth offer a small cave; \* Angels join in choir with shepherds \* in giving glory; \* with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; \* for our sakes is born a young Child, \* He that existed \* before the ages as God.

## **Epistle Reading**

Prokeimenon. Fourth Mode. Psalm 18.4,1.

Their voice has gone out into all the earth. Verse: The heavens declare the glory of God.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60.

IN THOSE DAYS, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child.

"But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?'

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

## **Gospel Reading**

Sunday after Nativity

The Reading is from Matthew 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

## **Welcome**

We warmly welcome all visitors and seekers in our midst today, trusting that your experience here will be an uplifting and enriching one. The Greek Orthodox Churches are the ancient and native Christian communities of the biblical world, with centers in the Holy Lands, Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor, and by extension in Greece, Cyprus and throughout the world. Like the ancient Christians, we engage the whole person, heart, mind and all senses in Divine Worship. This experience has been so powerful to seekers in the past that it was often said "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. We knew only that there God dwelt among human beings." (Russian Primary Chronicle) That communion experience of heaven on earth and God in our midst forms the heart of all Orthodox worship. It culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion, which not only unites us with the Divine, but also expresses the deep unity in faith and life between all Orthodox believers. Since Holy Communion expresses that deep unity in belief and practice alike, it is reserved for observant Orthodox Christians. This does not mean, however, that non-Orthodox are 'excluded' – rather, the Orthodox choose not to make an external display of unity when actual unity does not exist. While working to restore the full communion that did exist in antiquity, today we offer the sign of the blessed bread at the service's conclusion as a symbolic gift of hospitality and growing unity that is offered to all present. If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox way of life, or have any questions about worship or Holy Communion, please approach Fr. Michael or one of the clergy following services.

Thank you for joining us, and again, we welcome you all.

## **A Sacred Space**

The interior church is most importantly, both the background and the setting for Orthodox worship. The art and architecture are designed to contribute to the total experience of worship, which involves one's intellect, feelings, and senses. The Eucharist and the other sacramental mysteries take place in God's midst, and they bear witness to His presence and actions. Therefore, in the Orthodox tradition there is a very strong feeling that the church is the House of God and the place where His glory dwells. For this reason, all Orthodox churches are blessed, consecrated and set aside as sacred space. The whole church bears witness to God's indwelling among His people. As one old admonition says:

"Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church that he is entering another heaven. That same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in his church, and on this account the Christian must enter with reverence and awe."

Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald

## **This Week at Holy Cross**

Thursday	New Year's Eve 4 pm Vespers 5 pm Matins 6pm Liturgy of St. Basil - followed by: New Year's Eve Gala until 2 am
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*2016 Philoptochos Membership: It is time once again to join or renew your membership in Philoptochos. Please fill out the form below and return to the church or Connie Carahalis, 224 Mt. Lebanon Blvd., Pgh., PA 15234*

*Name*

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*Address*

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*Telephone*

----- *Email*

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 \*From your Philoptochos Stewardship donation, \$15 is sent to National Philoptochos and \$10 is sent to the Pittsburgh Metropolis Philoptochos. Anything over \$25 goes to Holy Cross Philoptochos

**Financial Snapshot**

November			January through November			Current Snapshot		
Income	Expenses	Net	Income	Expenses	Net	Chk. Acct.	Bills Due	12/20 Trays
\$56,383	\$63,705	-\$7,322	\$737,195	\$752,465	-\$15,270	\$5,037	\$7,500	\$10,243

	Pledged	Received	Balance
Major Donors	\$75,000	\$53,750	\$21,250
Parishioners	\$63,295	\$57,520	\$5,775
Total	\$138,295	\$111,270	\$27,025
Disbursements Made to Date			\$9,970
Building Fund Balance as of 12/17			\$126,492

## [Holy Cross Mini Capital Campaign](#)

### [Stewardship at a Glance](#)

As of publication, we have received 204 pledge cards, for a total pledge amount of \$247,553.00, making the average 2016 pledge thus far \$1,211.04.

Please submit your 2016 Pledge Card. Remember a signed pledge card is required to maintain your membership in good standing at Holy Cross each year.

You can submit your pledge card on-line at the church website at [www.holycrosspgh.org](http://www.holycrosspgh.org) or pick up a pledge card at the candle stands in the church narthex. We need the support of all our parishioners.

### [A Note from Philoptochos](#)

Thank you to Popi Hagelios, Dina Petrakis and the many volunteers who baked our fabulous Philoptochos Christmas bread!

Please join us for our next Philoptochos meeting on Tuesday, January 12 at 7PM.

Elaine Sofis Philoptochos President

### [Holy Cross Today](#)

**Today's Coffee Hour is sponsored by the Ladies of Philoptochos.**

Please sign up for coffee hour. Check the calendar online: [www.holycrosspgh.org](http://www.holycrosspgh.org), click "Events", then "Coffee Hour", then scroll down to

calendar, click on date to see if someone has taken it.

Then email

[holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org](mailto:holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org) or call the church office to request date

### [Save the Date](#)

GOLDEN CLUB: Lunch & Learn! Please join us on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. for a complimentary lunch served in the reception area of the Hall, followed by a presentation at 1:00 p.m. by Laura Ainsley of The Frick on "Cemetery Tales: Pittsburgh's Buried Art & History." Experience Pittsburgh's interesting and picturesque cemeteries in a colorful slideshow.

We will also be collecting dues that day of \$10 for 2016. The Golden Club is open to all Holy Cross members, age 50 and over. If you are not already a member, please consider joining our wonderful group of seniors (young and old), who enjoy fellowship, touring, cultural events, food and fun!

Please RSVP to Rene Koett at (412) 831-3142 ([rjkoett@yahoo.com](mailto:rjkoett@yahoo.com)) or Cynthia Kostelnik at (412) 833-9423 ([cakostelnik@yahoo.com](mailto:cakostelnik@yahoo.com)) by January 12th, so we can prepare ahead for our luncheon. We hope to see you there! Please Note: In case of inclement weather that day, we will reschedule this event.

### [Memorials](#)

Flowers on the Altar were donated in honor of loved ones from the Georges/Volakis/Pappas families.

Katherine Georges 2 years  
Michael Georges 3 years  
Spero Volakis 14 Years  
Maria Volakis Suka 19 Years  
Audrey Volakis 20 Years

## House Blessings

Every year, on the Feast of Epiphany, Orthodox Christians around the world have a blessing of the waters to celebrate the Baptism of Christ as well as the revealing of the Holy Trinity to mankind. We then receive the blessing of this Holy Water to renew ourselves in Christ and to remind ourselves that through Christ all things are again made clean. We also extend that blessing to the homes in which we live, to wipe away temptations and attacks that might lead us away from Christ.

If you wish to have Fr. Michael come and bless your home, please complete this form and return it to the Church office at your earliest convenience. Please **PRINT** clearly.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE SUGGEST THREE (3) DATES AND TIMES FOR HOUSE BLESSING  
**STARTING JANUARY 5TH**

(You will receive a phone confirming date and time of blessing)

**1** \_\_\_\_\_

**2** \_\_\_\_\_

**3** \_\_\_\_\_

Please prepare the following, to the best of your abilities, for the blessing:

- 1) Make an effort to have the entire family present.
- 2) Set out an Icon in a central area of the house where the prayer service will begin.
- 3) Write two lists of names, one of the living and one of the departed family members for whom you would like the Priest to pray during the house blessing.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out and return this form, either in the basket or to:

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