

# Holy Cross

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church  
123 Gilkeson Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
(412) 833-3355  
[www.holycrosspgh.org](http://www.holycrosspgh.org)

Fr. Michael Kallaur  
Fr. Dan Korba  
Dn. Frank Dickos

Weekly Bulletin

Sunday, December 11, 2016

The question, “What does Christmas mean?” has as many answers as people in our society. Opportunity for merchants, vacation days for school children, parties and exchange of gifts even for non-Christians, since it has become a national holiday even in a nation that forbids official recognition. All including Christians, even Orthodox Christians, define the event by their own understanding, and by doing so limit the meaning of Christmas. There can be no definition, because the birth of the Son of God transcends every attempt to explain the inexplicable or comprehend the incomprehensible. We can only thank the Holy Trinity for the nativity of the Messiah and celebrate His life on earth. Christmas is a mystery, a glorious event in history, the awesome phenomenon when *“Christ Jesus Who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant and coming in the likeness of men...”* (Philippians 2:5). The kenotic condescension of the Holy Trinity expressed by the evangelist John, “The Word became flesh,” can only be explained by the word “love.” Such a divine love for human beings transcends the ability to grasp with our limited capacity, which is why the Orthodox Church services for this season, filled with joy, wonder and gratitude, point to the inexplicable event without even trying to elucidate the wonder. *“Heaven and earth join in celebration...Wise men and shepherds welcome Him...Angels and humans sing with joy...”* The glorious hymn of laudation: *“God is with us!”* requires an explanation, because that phrase has been misused, wrongly applied and abused by some Christians through the ages. What it does not mean is that God endorses a nation or purpose against His other children.

“With us” is the joyous awareness of the awesome mystery that Creator became Creature, the Eternal condescended to human limits including death, love beyond all human comprehension has manifested itself in Christ Jesus the Son of God Who became the Son of Man for our sake.

Christ appears on earth as the most precious Gift that we cannot hope to recompense, certainly never earn or comprehend. Why does God love us so much, and how can we repay Him? Nobody, not even the Lord Almighty, offers gifts without expecting something in return. We know there is nothing we have as our own except the present of freedom. We are not robots, and even if *“our days are like grass...”* (Psalm 103:15), nevertheless, in our brief life span we have time to consider the gift of life and the Source of life. We can come to the realization that this lifetime may be short, but the promise of the gift of eternity is part of the reason for the incarnation of the Son of God. Salvation is Christ’s purpose for His birth. Christ is life, and yet He died so that we might share eternal life with Him. Yet another mystery. He offers us life everlasting, but He does not insist we accept it—or Him. He *“stands at the door and knocks,”* but it is for us to open to Him or leave Him outside. Such respect is almost too much; however, He treats us with a freedom that we feel we do not deserve or that we may not appreciate. We throw away our freedom with excess of passions, with some form of addiction to drugs, alcohol, overindulgence, wallowing in despair or foolish behavior—and Jesus remains standing outside the door of our heart, patiently waiting to be invited inside. How can He love us that much?  
([www.o.ca.org](http://www.o.ca.org))

## **Hymns of the Day**

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

From on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One; to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

### **Apolytikion for 11th Sun. of Luke in the Second Mode**

By faith didst Thou justify the Forefathers, when through them Thou didst betroth Thyself aforetime to the Church from among the nations. The Saints boast in glory that from their seed there is a glorious fruit, even she that bare Thee seedlessly. By their prayers, O Christ God, 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 cometh to the cave to give birth to \* God the Word ineffably, \* Who was before all the ages. \* Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing \* the gladsome tidings; \* with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him \* Who is willing to be gazed on \* as a young Child Who \* before the ages is God.

## **This Week at Holy Cross**

### **Today**

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal following Liturgy  
GOYA visit to Auberle Shelter following Rehearsal

### **Monday**

**Feast of St. Spyridon @ St. Spyridon's Monessen**  
9 am Matins  
10 am Liturgy  
6:30 pm Paraklesis/Bible Study

### **Tuesday**

**Feast of St. Herman of Alaska**  
8:30 am Matins  
9:30 am Liturgy

### **Wednesday**

4:30 pm Greek School

### **Saturday**

**Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths**  
8:30 am Matins  
9:30 am Liturgy  
5 pm Vespers/Confession

### **Sunday**

Christmas Pageant  
JOY Caroling following Christmas Pageant

### Memorials

*Mary Beth Kursturiss - 1 Year*

*John Manolis - 1 Year*

*Sophie Manolis - 12 Years*

Altar flowers are donated by Dennis Sr., Elizabeth, and Dennis Jr. Kursturiss in loving memory of Mary Beth Kursturiss.

The coffee hour today is sponsored by the Kursturiss and Manolis families in loving memory of Mary Beth Kursturiss and John and Sophie Manolis.

Altar Candles are donated by Presvytera Lia Christulides in honor of her cousin Charles Bon who is being recognized for 25 years of service at his job in Florida.

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

### Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11.

BRETHREN, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

### Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

## **Stewardship Reminder**

Thank you to those of you who have submitted your 2017 Pledge. To date we have not received most of the pledge cards. We are in the process of making our budget for next year. Please make every effort to turn in you 2017 pledge.

## **A Note from Philoptochos**

Fresh Christmas bread (\$10 per loaf, check payable to Holy Cross Philoptochos) will be available today, December 11, at the FOCUS Choral concert tonight, and next Sunday, December 18, if any loaves remain. Thank you to ALL our kneaders, bakers and wrappers!

Frozen Pastitsio is available at coffee hour for your holiday table. Please see Popi today!

Please attend the FOCUS choral concert tonight at 5:30 and join us for the Philoptochos reception following in the community center.

There is a misprint in the December Cross Roads for the 2017 Philoptochos membership form. It reads 2015. Simply cross the 5 and make a 7. Or use the membership form in today's bulletin. It is necessary to renew your membership every year or join as a new member! 112 members so far! You are a valued member!

The next Philoptochos meeting will be Sunday, January 8 at 12:30 PM following Vasilopita and coffee hour.

Elaine Sofis Philoptochos President

## **Community News**

### **Circle of Angels**

COOKIE TIME!!! Please bake an extra batch of your delicious Christmas cookies for our home-bound parishioners and those in nursing homes, who look forward to the goodies baskets that the Circle of Angels will deliver at Christmas time. We ask that the cookies have no nuts or powdered sugar. We also accept monetary donations toward the baskets. The cookies will be packed on Tuesday, December 13th at 10 AM. Please bring your cookies to the church office before then. Thank you! Blessed Christmas to you and your families!  
Thank you, Carol Halkias

### **Parish Council Elections**

TODAY there will be elections to fill five spots on Parish Council. Those up for election to the Council are:

Joanne Asvestas*	Chris Pfanstiel*
Gus Grekis	Joy Polonis
Carrie Kepzig	Peter Teris
Deno Pappas	

The five people who receive the most votes will be the newest Parish Council members.

(\* indicates this person would be serving a second term.)

### **NOTICE FOR THOSE ELECTED**

A mandatory parish council seminar will be held during December Parish Council meeting on December 13 at 7PM.

## **Save the Date**

### **Christmas Pageant!**

The Church School will be presenting the Christmas Pageant Sunday December 18th. Please come and enjoy their explanation of the Icon of the Nativity of Christ. Practice will take place today after Liturgy.

## New Years Eve

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is having a New Years Eve celebration.

6:30 pm Vespers for St. Basil

7:15 - 8:15 pm Cocktail Hour with one hour of complimentary cocktails and appetizers 8:15 pm Dinner

9:00 pm Dance

Complimentary Breakfast at Midnight

\$85 for Adults

\$30 Youth (5-18)

For reservations call Harry Athanasiou (412) 292-4205 or HVACGREEK@Hotmail.com

GAPA is also hosting a New Years Eve celebration at Olympia Hall (at Ypapanti)

9:00 pm Appetizers, Buffet Dinner, Dessert, Music and Dancing

\$40 for Adults

\$20 Children 5-12 (Children under 5 enter free)

Cash Bar

For reservations call Tina Russhe` at (412) 244-3215

\*\*\* All information for the Sunday Bulletin should be submitted to Jonathan McClish by 11:59 pm of the Wednesday prior for inclusion. Submit to [mcclish.jonathan@gmail.com](mailto:mcclish.jonathan@gmail.com)

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*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 Carahalís:*

*224 Mt. Lebanon Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15234*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

December 4, 2016 Deposit	
Account Name	Deposit
<b>Pledges from 2016</b>	\$10,780
<b>Pledges for 2017</b>	\$2,600
<b>Bulletin</b>	
<b>Candles</b>	\$555
<b>Donations – Unspecified</b>	

Flowers/Communion Wine	
Loose Offerings	\$165
Greek School	
Sunday Church School	\$14
Vacation Church School	
Special Envelopes	\$21
Holy Week Envelopes	
Christmas Cards	
Baptismal Candles	
Socials/Special Projects	
Hall Deposits – Current Year	
Hall Deposits – Next Year	
Hall Rental Income - 2016	
Christmas Card	\$1,420
<b>Total Deposit</b>	<b>\$15,555</b>

### Financial Snapshot based on \$2,075.33 per day operating cost

Date	Weekly Collections	Weekly Collections Total	Estimated operational needs to following Sunday	Difference
<b>Total through Nov.</b>	\$498,595.07	\$498,595.07	\$718,064.18	-\$219,469.11
<b>12/4</b>	\$15,555	\$464,644.84	\$674,482.25	-\$209,837.41