

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall always be!

ALMOST THERE!!!! We are pleased to announce that the iconography has been installed in our beloved Church. We are currently replacing the electrical lights and concluding the necessary painting and other work to finish this historical project. As soon as this work is completed, the scaffolding will be removed and the Church will be cleaned and we anticipate being back in the Church for services on Sunday, August 10th. The excitement is palpable and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to the Church shortly. We appreciate your patience.

As we move forward into August, the final month of the summer season and final month of the liturgical year, we reflect on the two feasts given to us; the Transfiguration of Christ and the Dormition of the Theotokos. Both feast days remind us of how our lives are connected to Christ and how, at some moment, we will leave this life and enter into eternal life. Our preparation for that moment of physical death and our desire to be united with Christ all come together in the most extraordinary way.

The feast of the Lord's Transfiguration reveals to us what it truly means to be a human being. We are called to enter into communion with Christ and literally become the Light of Christ. This

Vacation Church School

2025



Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 25 Issue 8

Under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS of Pittsburgh

The mission of Holy Cross is to keep and proclaim, pure and undefiled, the Orthodox Christian faith and traditions in conformity with the doctrine, canons, worship, discipline and customs of the Church.

Fr. Michael Kallaur, Presiding Priest

Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter

Fr. Frank Dickos, Economos

Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant

Philip Yamalis, Cantor

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: holycrosspgh.org

Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Church School	Elias Diamond	(412) 833-3355
Philoptochos Pres.	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
Phil. Membership	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
	Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290
Landscaping	Frank Kalogeris	(412) 855-4155
	Rebekah Krakora	(412) 728-4842
Greek School	Dena Yamalis	(412) 343-8355
Junior Dance	Marina Bouzos	(412)-736-7455
Senior Dance	Rachel Facaros	(412) 323-6298
Choir		
First Steps	Sophia Alfaras-Melainis	(412) 251-3209
JOY	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
Young Adults	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
GOYA	Denise Melis	(412) 341-9264
Golden Club	Cynthia Kostelnik	(412) 833-9423
	Rene Koett	(412) 559-1721
Bookstore	Mary Portellos	(724) 941-8699
House Committee	Constance Zotis	(412) 736-7145
Building Comm.	Michael N. Zervos	(412) 833-6843
Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Interior Design Committee	Laura Zervos	(412) 287-5679

Coffee Hour fellowship is an extension of our Divine Liturgy! Please gather with family, koumbari or friends to sponsor/prepare one Sunday. See the calendar on website for open dates, and call the church office to confirm.

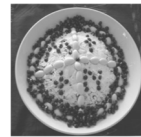


*Services:

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study and via Zoom
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm
*See monthly calendar for all services.	

Funeral/Memorial information:

For **Kollyva**, you may bring your own or contact Denise Melis directly (412) 341-9264.



Use of the Community Center is available for parishioner funeral lunches at no charge. Parishioners may contact any caterer they choose to purchase and prepare their **Makaria** (Mercy Meal).

Parish Council 2025

President: Nicholas Ambeliotis

Vice President: Rachel Kartofilis

Fin. Secretary: Socrates Zacharias

Treasurer: Anthony Cuneo

Secretary: Stephen Yamalis

Bryan Elderkin

George Liadis

Eleni Maneta

Sophia Milinkovic

Tom Mourtacos

Jim Mustakas

Jordan Nicholas

Ted Sofis

Sadie Stang

Constance Zotis

manifestation of glory is what awaits us. The Light of Christ must first overcome the darkness within us and then be reflected out to our neighbor. Moses and Elijah, living over a thousand years before Christ became the God-man, were present on Mt. Tabor to bear witness to this high calling. We are overwhelmed by God's mercy and love.

The feast of the death of the Theotokos is a source of wonder. Why would we celebrate the death of the Panagia? The answer is simple, because as the Mother of God, she enters death and is translated from this life to eternal life with her Son. Death becomes the bridge, the passageway to eternal life. We rejoice that death, often filled with sorrow and physical separation, can be experienced with hope and love. We are called to prepare for our own death. In preparation for that moment, we must fight against the passions that can separate us from Christ. Please read the following homily from the Elder Ephraim (of Arizona) on fighting against the passions.

A blessed conclusion to the summer season! We look forward to seeing everyone in our (more) beautiful Church soon!

With love and prayers,
Fr. Michael

WAREFARE AGAINST THE PASSIONS

The holy Fathers teach that man's heart is entangled with the prickly roots of various passions, which are lodged very deep within it. When a person, through the enlightenment of God, attempts to uproot (in essence, transfigure) a passion, he grips and removes the roots with forceps. However, as he attempts to uproot each passion, he simultaneously lacerates the heart. When the heart is cut open, it bleeds and hurts. If a person decides not to bear the pain, he gives up at this point, he abandons the struggle and thus remains passionate and sinful. If however, he patiently endures the pain, he removes the root of the passion and is set free.

The holy Fathers (through asceticism, prayer and God's enlightenment) struggled and forced themselves to remove gradually all the roots of the passions. They uprooted them one by one until they attained dispassion. At that point they were no longer battled by pride, vain glory, jealousy, impure thoughts, hatred, or any other passion.

The saints performed miracles, and yet they were not pride-

ful at all, "How was this possible?" we wonder, for these people not to be prideful? When we do even the slightest good thing, a little demon immediately begins to advise us, "You are great, you are spectacular! You did what no one else can do. Yes, you accomplished it! You are more enlightened than others, you struggle more than anyone else...." The devil feeds our ego in an attempt to deprive us of the profit we acquired through our struggle. If a person submits to vainglory after accomplishing something, he loses his reward; all that remains is the external action. If he repents, he will receive his payment again. How is payment regained? Only when a person reproaches himself and blames himself.

A certain Patriarch of Alexandria named Theophilus once visited the mount of Nitria in Egypt, where the most renowned hermits dwelled. O reverend Mt. of Nitria! He went to the superior of the mountain, to the most spiritual and accomplished elder and asked, "Father, above all, what have you discovered since becoming a monk and dwelling on this mountain? What is the greatest virtue you have found? Which virtue is more valuable than all the others?"

The elder responded, "I discovered self-reproach; that is, to blame myself and to cast the burden upon myself- that I am at fault. The axiom, 'Accuse yourself.'"

St. Anthony the Great affirms, "If a person places the burden on himself, he finds rest. The moment he casts it on someone else, he will feel troubled internally."

Try it when an opportunity arises. If during a temptation you blame the other person, internally you will feel troubled, distressed- a mess! On the other hand, as soon as you think, "The other person is not at fault, I am to blame. Why am I speaking about another person? Have I forgotten who I am? I have made so many mistakes and sins.... Hence, I should not speak at all," you will feel as if you are landing on solid ground and are no longer in danger of falling. Whereas previously, when you were soaring high, you are fearful and uneasy: "I am about to fall at any moment." Once you descend low and set foot on solid ground, you no longer have anything to fear.

Sometimes we find ourselves at odds with another person, and we stubbornly insist, "He is at fault. He is the one who became angry, he is the one who spoke to me rudely. He must humble himself. If he had spoken to me calmly and addressed

me with respect, I would have been patient and not have been offended. Hence, he is to blame." Behold the passion of egotism! We must oppose such thoughts by responding, "No, no! If I did not have egotism, I would not be bothered. Hence, I am to blame. My brother is not at fault. If I had humility, I would take this opportunity to gain a crown, and I would view this person as Jesus' cauterizing instrument. He is cauterizing my passion so I can become healthy. He is helping me now. He is my benefactor! I must embrace him, love him, and pray for him because he actually did me a favor by revealing my sickness. If he had not spoken to me in this manner, and if this temptation had not transpired, I would have remained unaware of the extensive egotism within me, and I would have never realized that I need to struggle against it. The sting of this temptation uncovered my sickness. Now that I see it, I will make sure I apply the medication in order to be healed."

When a person comes to grip with this theoretically, he must make an effort to apply it internally. He must locate the evil within his heart and wage war against the associated passion, the bitterness, the difficulty, and the pressure of the devil, who relentlessly argues, "Do not back down! Do not humble yourself! Do not do it!" At that moment, we must pray and beseech God for the strength to trample our ego and to respond with determination, "Be quiet! Get out of my way, I must fulfill my obligation." We must go to the other person and ask for forgiveness. We as monks, for example, will prostrate ourselves before another monk. A person living in the world, however, will conduct himself differently. He will say, "Good morning! Happy Name's Day! Forgive me....." and so on. In this manner love is restored.

When someone takes the first step to reconciliation, he immediately feels joy, peace, and relief. Why? Prior to this, hatred, enmity, separation, and alienation laid like a heavy burden on his shoulders. There was also pressure from the devil who wanted his way. God, on the other hand, is love and humility. All of us, nonetheless, and I first, are fooled by our egotism and seek to erect our own will. We believe that we are correct, that we are good, and that others are at fault. What does it indicate when we criticize others and consider ourselves flawless? This is why the Lord commands, "Judge not, that you be not judged." And He adds, "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged." (Mt. 7:1-2)

To criticize others is an extremely serious sin, although we indulge in it like bread and butter, and as a "sin which so easily besets us." (Hebrew 12:1). A besetting sin is one that takes place at every opportunity and all the time.

Even though we all hobble along with a limp and are filled with wounds and sins, we like to speak about others. When we visit a hospital, we observe that all the patients have some type of illness. However, we will not see anyone criticizing another sick person. Have you ever noticed this? No one says to another patient, "Why are you laying in bed?" Whereas we are all sick spiritually, and yet, we criticize one another. We have a problem with our eye, and we like to occupy ourselves with someone else who has lung disease. Unfortunately, we wretched people fail to realize this.

Sin and the devil darken us, so that we are always occupied with criticism. "Soon they will die, and I will securely snare them in the trap," sneers the devil. Christ, Who is just, will ask us, "Why did you criticize and condemn others? What did I tell you in My Gospel? I told you not to judge. Who are you to judge? How did you become a judge? I am the Judge." Thus, He will condemn us according to the measuring stick we use to assess others. We wretched people fail to understand this, and we open our mouth to gossip about others. We are quick to cast the stone of anathema without realizing that we ourselves have the anathema (Jn. 8:4-5).

Many people whom we consider worthless and sinful may end up in the Kingdom of God; we, on the other hand, who assume the judge's seat and convict others may be condemned and sent to Hell!

We must pay close attention to everything we do, and struggle to uproot the ferocious beast of egotism that eats away at us. Our ego! When it erupts within us, we become enraged, we criticize, we make demands, we curse, we ridicule and humiliate others. It is a beast! This is what impels us to criticize. This is what inflates us with the idea that we have accomplished great things, that we are good, that we possess virtues, and thousands of other things.

The origin of all good things is humility and conversely the origin of all evils is egotism (pride).

(Taken from the book, *The Art of Salvation*)



PARISH PLANNED GIVING

An Offering of the



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Melpomeni N. Murdakes, CPC
Director, Parish Planned Giving

Ms. Murdakes comes to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America following a 30-year career in faith-based philanthropy, serving parishes, dioceses, metropolises, and educational institutions across the country, through her independent practice, MUSEone, and as a Vice President for Ruotolo Associates Inc, a national philanthropic consultancy based in New Jersey.

As a parishioner at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church in Minneapolis, Ms. Murdakes' has served in leadership for their endowment and parish council, contributing to their stewardship endeavors as well.

- Northwestern University
~ *BS in Psychology*
- Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching
~ *Certified Professional Coach (CPC)*
- The Fletcher School at Tufts University
~ *Program in Strategic Leadership & Transformative Action*

Save the date! On Sunday, October 19th there will be a special coffee hour with the Archdiocese Director of Parish Planned Giving, Melpomeni Murdakes.

Have you ever wondered how you can give more to Holy Cross aside from stewardship or volunteering? Would you like to leave a lasting legacy to the church and to future generations? Come to this special coffee hour to find out more!

SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 6TH 2025

THE 11TH ANNUAL
HOLY CROSS GOLF OUTING
SOUTH HILLS COUNTRY CLUB



Vacation Church School







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Congratulations to the 2025-2027 Philoptochos Board



Officers:

President - Dina Hartlep
Vice President - Katina Galie
2nd Vice President - Rita Manganas
Recording Secretary - Angela Panos
Corresponding Secretary - Elaine Sofis
Treasurer - Ria Kartsonas
Assistant Treasurer - Dena Yamalis
Advisor - Thea Manos

Board of Directors:

The above officers &

Andrea Asvestas, Lia Christulides, Mary Kladakis, Rene Koett,
Jane Kokanos, Christine Picard, Denise Raftis, Denise Sokos,
Mary Jo Weinheimer

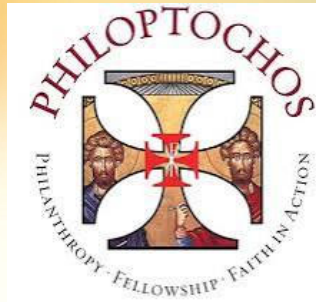
Thank you to the following outgoing Board Members:

Demetria Danielides, Terpsie Katsafanas, Vasso Paliouras & Irene Zotis

And thank you to Thea Manos for serving as President for the
past four years.



Save the Date!



Philoptochos

Autumn Food Fair

& Yia Yia Joan's Treasures & Market

**Wednesday & Thursday -
October 1st & 2nd
11:00 AM to 8:00 PM**

**Donations of Jewelry, Books, and Purses
accepted beginning September 21.**

















OPA!

YOU'RE INVITED TO A GREEK VILLAGE-STYLE **GLENDI!**

Get ready for an unforgettable night in Pittsburgh with
GREEK MUSIC, DANCING, FOOD AND KEFI!

FEATURING NEW YORK CITY'S
Apollo Orchestra

- Traditional dinner, dancing and a vibrant Greek atmosphere
- Celebrate culture, community, and connection!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH
beginning at 5:30 PM

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Visit www.HolyCrossPGH.org for more
information and to purchase your tickets.



HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

begins its new academic year!

**Registration and first class on
Wednesday, September 17th at 4:15pm**

Greek School meets every Wednesday from 4:30-6:30 pm. There will be classes for beginners in the Conversational Class and our traditional First thru Sixth Grades.

The adult class meets Wednesdays from 5-6:30pm. Registration and first class is also on September 17 at 5pm. Bring your children to learn our language and enjoy wonderful fellowship.

On the first day, there will be a beginning of the year blessing (*Agiasmos*), class assignment and book distribution.

For further information, call Dena Yamalis at (412) 343-8355.

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms

April 27 ~ Mario, son of Jason and Jessica (Davide) Makrinos.
Godparent is Demetrios (James) Makrinos.

April 29 ~ George Stephen, son of Michael and Nia (Romanowicz) Pateras. Koumbara is Adelphi Ephramia.

May 3 ~ Chloe Catherine, daughter of Christopher and Alison (Waddle) Passodelis II. Koumbara is Katina Fanelli.

May 17 ~ Ela (Pelagia), daughter of Erol and Julia (Tezyilmaz) Gunes. Koumbaroi are Theodore and Elaine Sofis.

May 31~ Evalina (Evangeline) Werner, daughter of William and Eleni (Carr) Werner. Koumbaroi are Maria Hanley & Vasilios (Bill) Carr.

June 14 ~ Emelina, daughter of Jordan and Elena (LaQuatra) Bukowski. Koumbara is Athena Patitsas.

Chrismations

April 12 ~ Rosita Grigaite Georgiades
Sponsors are Michael and Anna Epitropoulos

May 20 ~ Jason Pry
Sponsor is Frank Moore

May 20 ~ Domenica Merante
Sponsor is Monica Moore

Marriages

May 10 ~ Jason Pry and Domenica Merante
Koumbari are Peter and Theanne Gagianas.

May 11~ Jason Makrinos and Jessica Davide
Koumbara is Denise Melis.

May 24 ~ Theodore Teris and Nathalie Kiyobe
Koumbaroi are Dimitrios and Linnet Kakollis.

Funerals

April 8 ~ **Dionysios Alexios Asvetas, age 72**, survived by grandson of Niko Kouknas.



April 23 ~ **Robert Louis Zanakis, age 70**, survived by sister Sharon Zanakis Pajak.



May 19 ~ **Irene Petrides, age 92**, survived by daughter Angelica Fotos (Pete) of Louisville, KY, and Charles John Petredis (Jan) of Gibsonia, proud grandmother of six and great-grandmother of six. (Funeral service at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church, Oakmont).

June 7 ~ **William J. Eliopoulos, age 92**, leaves behind a loving family including his wife, Christina, daughters Maria Nevala (David), Alexandria Copetas (Dino), son

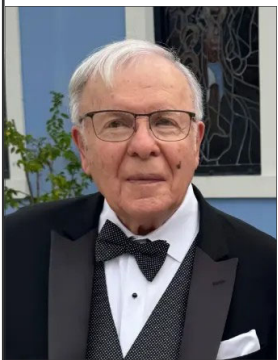


John Eliopoulos (Kristen), and grandchildren Vanessa Bennett (Taylor), Peter Copetas (Bailey) and William, Peter and Chris Eliopoulos.




June 9 ~ **Irene J. Kristakis, age 84**, survived by nephew Michael (Ann) Kristakis and preceded in death by husband John Kristakis.

June 14 ~ **Maria D. Gianaris, age 83**, survived by son Nicholas (Jody) Gianaris, daughter Elaine Gianaris and granddaughter Alexandra.



June 28 ~ **Phokion (Frank) M. Triopodes, age 91**, survived by wife of 61 years Joanne, son Nicholas (Maria) and daughter Sophia (Stephen) Grgan and grandchildren Constantine, John, Francesca, Alexandra and Maria. (Due to construction ant Holy Cross, funeral was held at St. Nicholas, Oakland.)



Sun	Mon	Tue
3 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	4 6:30pm Paraclesis	5 <i>Feast of the Transfiguration Vigil</i> 4pm Vespers 5pm Matins 6pm Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Fruit</i>
<i>Dormition fast</i>		
10 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	11 6:30pm Paraclesis	12 6:30pm Paraclesis
<i>Dormition fast</i>		
17 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>YAL Cookout after church @ Diamond Residence</i> 	18 6pm Office Hours Youth Safety Training	19
24 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <hr/> 31 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	25 6pm Office Hours Youth Safety Training	26

August 2025

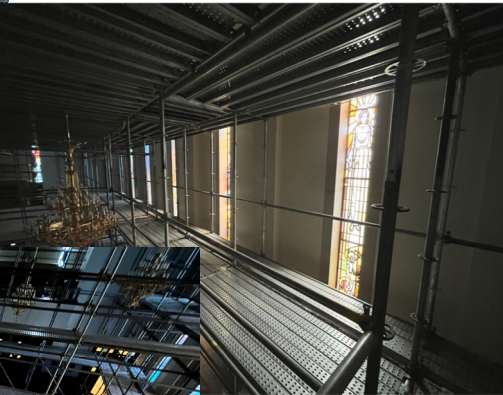
	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 August Dormition Fast begins 6:30pm Paraclesis	2 5pm Great Vespers
			Dormition fast	
	6 Transfiguration @ Monastery in Ellwood City 9:30am Div Liturgy	7 6:30pm Paraclesis	8 6:30pm Paraclesis	9 St. Herman of Alaska 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers
	13 6:30pm Paraclesis	14 7pm Vespers in Aliquippa or Oakmont	15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy	16 Wedding/No Vespers
	20	21	22	23 5pm Great Vespers
	27 St. Phanourios 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 6:30pm Church School Teacher Meeting	28 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy	30 5pm Great Vespers

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9:00 i



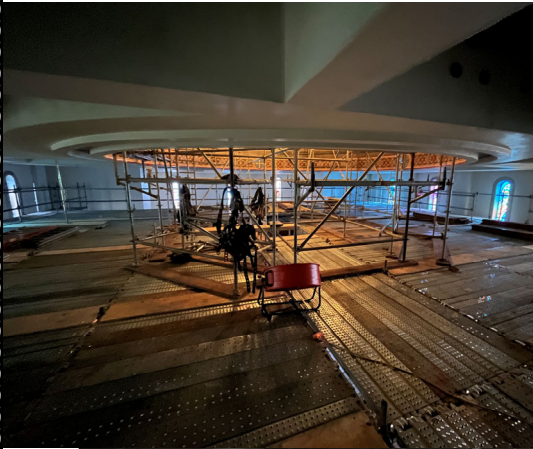


ICONOGRAPHY PREP FROM THE RAFTERS





AND INSIDE THE DOME...





ICONOGRAPHERS LAST DAY AT HOLY CROSS



*Gerontissa Theophano and the Sisters warmly welcome you to the
Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery*

Summer Feast Days



31st Memorial Commemoration for Gerontissa Taxiarchia

August 2nd - Saturday

9:00 am: Hours, Divine Liturgy, Memorial Service - Lunch Follows

**Nativity of the Theotokos
Feast Day**

September 5th - Friday
5:00 pm: Vespers, Orthros

September 6th - Saturday
9:00 am:

Hours, Divine Liturgy - Lunch Follows

**Philoptochos Philanthropy Award Recipient,
Grace Myers**



Save the date!
Walk for Missions

Sunday,
October 12, 2025

**HOLY CROSS PHILOPTOCHOS
AUTUMN FOOD FAIR FOOD LINE
VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR
WED, OCT 1st & THURS, OCT 2nd, 11am-8pm**

Shifts are: Lunch, 10:45am- 2pm or 4pm,
Lighter shift, 2:00pm-4:00pm and Dinner from 4:00pm-8:00pm
ANY of your time is MUCH appreciated!

Runners are also needed to carry food from the kitchen and from
the gyro grill (outside the kitchen door) to the food line at lunch
and dinner!

Please contact Food Line chair, Elaine Sofis, cell, 412 327-7017, home
412 344-7046 or esofis@comcast.net to volunteer a shift or two or
BOTH DAYS! Thank you for volunteering to help support your Holy
Cross Philoptochos in its Philanthropic endeavors.

Oratorical Festival ~ Sergio Raftis

TOPIC 2: *The Seven Ecumenical Councils are regarded as seven of the most important parts of Church History, which came after the completion of the Bible. Pick one of the Councils and explain why it is important.*



“Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, His Grace Archbishop Athenagoras, Metropolitan Savas, Reverend Fathers, honorable judges, parishioners, fellow speakers, Good morning.” In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christ Has Ascended!

The 4th Ecumenical Council known as the Chalcedon Council is a confirmation – without a doubt – that Jesus Christ is a perfect man and perfect God.

In 451 AD, this was to the Orthodox hierarchy challenging that Jesus Christ has two natures, divine and human, that function together without confusion. They also issued canons that govern our church administration and authority. It is a significant mark of our church today.

When I have an internal challenge, who do I turn to? The saints, Jesus, the Theotokos or my closest – Saint Nektarios. It is all through the Holy Spirit to whichever we turn to.

It was about truth vs false teaching that led us to this 4th Council, which clarified that Jesus Christ is one person by two natures. Some other groups were challenging the Orthodox proclamation. He was divine and human, with no division or separation. Our Orthodox faith has stood the test of time in that it does not change without a doubt.

Think about what our Orthodox Church is saying. We are confessing a most crucial teaching because it allows us to make a perfect sacrifice for humanity’s sin. Only a fully divine Christ could bear the weight of God’s wrath, while only a human could identify with it and suffer death on the cross.

How would we be able to strive to become saints if Jesus was not a perfect human? Who would we be able to model after? Jesus says in John 24: 22 Jesus speaks to the Father, “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me ... that they may behold My glory which have given Me.” He took on our sins through suffering and dying on the cross. The divine nature was a sacrifice of all of our sins.

The 4th Ecumenical Council was held in the church of Saint Euphemia. Then, a miracle happened. A sign from our Saint Euphemia answered the prayers. Each side wrote their confession of faith down on a scroll and placed them on her relics. They prayed to the Holy Spirit for answers. The tomb was sealed and watched for 3 days. When the tomb

was opened, it was revealed that Saint Euphemia was holding the scroll of the Orthodox writings in her arms, and the opposing side writings were at her feet. This was a sign confirming Orthodoxy was and is the one and only Truth. “The only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father begotten, not made.” The 630 wise hierarchy were humbled by the message given by Saint Euphemia. The Orthodox Council turned to the saints to reveal the truth.

The truth is only in our Orthodox faith. John 14:6: “I am the way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” We always need to turn to God to reveal the Truth, that is Jesus Christ. Even in today’s times, God has provided modern saints offering us the same message of Truth that has never wavered from the time of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I turn to the saints constantly to intercede, revealing the Truth. It is the same Holy Spirit that gives us the same answer. It was a unanimous decision, and so we know the Holy Spirit was present. The next time you visit the ecumenical patriarchate in Constantinople, remember to venerate Saint Euphemia’s relics.

May the prayers of our Holy Great Martyr Euphemia and the Holy Fathers, intercede for us. Amen.





Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Day of Remembrance of Hagia Sophia

July 24, 2025

*Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons,
the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos
Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of
the Sacred Archdiocese of America:*

*Ἡ Σοφία γὰρ ἀληθῶς τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀνφκοδόμησεν ἑαυτῇ σαρκώσεως οἶκον,
καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ νοῦν....*

(Κοντάκιον Ἐγκαίνιων τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας 562 μ.Χ.)

*For truly the Wisdom of the Father built for Herself a House of Incarnation
and tabernacled among us beyond understanding*

(Reconsecration Kontakion of Hagia Sophia 562 A.D.)

My beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

This fifth year since the re-conversion of the Great Church of Holy Wisdom to a mosque should remind us all how — in our world of increasing conflict — the inversion of Her purpose has become almost matter-of-fact. The great dome of Hagia Sophia, which for centuries was the largest the world had ever known, was designed to manifest the pleroma of God's creativity and the possibility for humanity to conceive within ourselves and within our society the grace of transformation, of theosis. After 1453, Her dome was reduced to mere architecture and then replicated throughout the Ottoman world as a sign of heavenly beauty, but a beauty hollowed out by lack of understanding.

The Great Church, as She was rightly called, is an image of the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, Who, in the fulness of the Divine Plan for Salvation (*οἰκονομία*), came forth as a perfect Human Being from the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, uniting and perfecting both male and female — Logos and Sophia — in Himself, the Theanthropos, Jesus Christ. Hagia Sophia did, and still does — despite the alien function to which She is now subject — manifest the "House of Incarnation," bearing witness to the embodiment of God Who recapitulates in Himself all the potentiality and capacity of humanity for Divinity, so that we, as Saint Peter says, "might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

Our Day of Remembrance for Hagia Sophia remains a bittersweet reality for all Orthodox Christians, and indeed for every Christian of any historical awareness. The day and memory are bitter because spiritual error and lack of consciousness fail to ascribe Her full meaning. And yet sweet, because we have the Great Church incarnate in our Venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate, which abides as a spirit-filled space leading the Faithful to embody in their own lives the Mystery of the Incarnation and the reality of God. May the Great Church continue to always give birth to Her spiritual children throughout the world, so that the Tabernacle of Holy Wisdom continues to proclaim the glory of Logos and Sophia, our Savior Jesus Christ.

With paternal love and prayerful consolation in the Lord,

† Ἐλπιδοφόρος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος

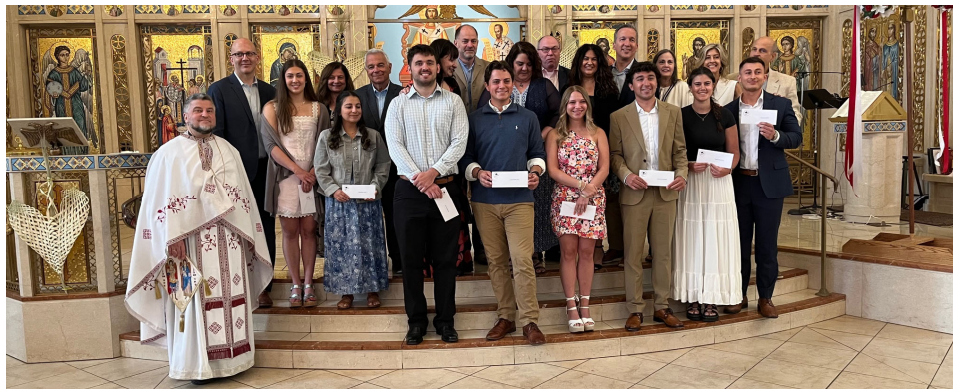
† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

GREEK SCHOOL RECOGNITION



Graduate Sunday



Graduate Sunday



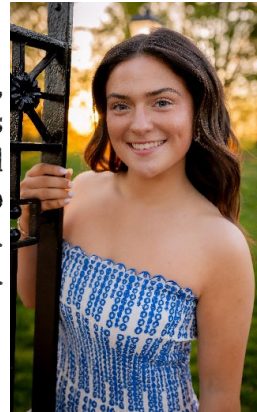
High School Graduates

Athena Maria Chakos, daughter of Heidi Matalas Chakos and Nick Chakos, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and attending Miami University of Ohio to major in Political Science/Pre-Law and minor in English.



Jeffrey Friedel, son of Dina and Jeff Friedel, is graduating from Mount Lebanon High School and is going to Miami University of Ohio. He intends to study Business.

Anastasia "Tessie" Frommeyer, daughter of Kristin & Andy Frommeyer is graduating from South Fayette High School and will be attending John Carroll University to study Sports Leadership & Exercise Science. She will also play lacrosse.



Stephen Peter Gdovic, son of Bob & Tina Gdovic, is graduating from Keystone Oaks High School. He plans on studying Math and Mathematical Science. Stephen is attending Slippery Rock University in the Fall.

Niko Gidas, son of Michael Blackson and Victoria Gidas, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and will be attending Saint Vincent College to study business and play basketball.



Noah Gidas, son of Michael Blackson and Victoria Gidas, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and will be attending Washington & Jefferson College to study psychology.



Sophia Guna, daughter of John and Holly Guna, is graduating from Peters Township High School and attending Florida Atlantic University to study Biology.

Ela Gunes, daughter of Hulya Gunes, plans to study Nursing to become a NICU nurse.



Anastasia Gzikowski, daughter of Kristina Anetakis and Deacon Ryan Gzikowski, is graduating from Upper St Clair High School and plans to study Interior Design at Kent State University.

Elliana Hajnosz, daughter of Christopher and JoAnn Hajnosz, is graduating from Peters Township High School. She will be attending Auburn University and is planning to study pre-med.



Sofia Margarete Jahn, daughter of Arne & Ponny Jahn, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School with honors. She intends to study Biology or Pre-Law as a Bell Tower Scholar at Furman University.



Luke Kallaur, son of Fr. Michael and Presvytera Eleni, is graduating from St. Nektarios Home School and will be taking a gap year.

Grace Myers, daughter of Keith Myers & Stephanie Kladakis, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and going to the College of William & Mary, to study for a dual Major in Psychology & Elementary Special Education.



Eleni Maria Suher, daughter of Chrisie Kalas Suher and Jeffrey Suher, is graduating from Bethel Park High School and will be attending Ohio University to study Criminology.

John Nicholas Tripodes, son of Maria and Nicholas Tripodes, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and will be attending University of Maryland to study Business where he was the recipient of a President's Scholarship.



Athena Renton, daughter of Vickie & Jay Renton, is graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School and will be studying biomedical engineering at Clemson University.



Johnny Urso, son of Mark and Annie Urso, is graduating from South Fayette High School and plans to study Film Production at the University of Central Florida.

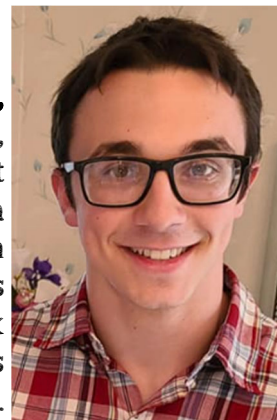
College Graduates

Christopher Conomos Jahn, son of Arne & Ponny Jahn, is graduating from Elon University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and minor in Leadership Studies. He has accepted a position with PNC Bank in Corporate and Institutional Banking here in Pittsburgh.



Demi Kucherawy, daughter of Chris and Tessie Kucherawy, received her Bachelor of Architecture from Auburn University and will work for LM Consulting in Atlanta, GA.

Matthew Szymanowski, son of Elena Avlon Jones, graduated from Robert Morris University with a Bachelors of Science in Business & Finance. He is currently working at a bank and will begin his Masters program at RMU in the fall.



Alex Tambouratzis, son of Dr. Thomas & Sophia Tambouratzis, is graduating from Carnegie Mellon University and has earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, graduating with University Honors, and will be starting his career in Banking at Raymond James in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Constantine Stephen Tripodes, son of Maria & Nicholas Tripodes, has graduated magna cum laude from University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts with a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Television Production and a Minor in Business. He will be working in the film industry in Los Angeles.

Sarah Zadrozny, daughter of Chris and Frank Zadrozny, has graduated Cum Laude from Duquesne University with BS in Business Administration, actively searching for employment in the Marketing sector.



Nicholas Michael Zervos, son of Michael and Laura Zervos, graduated from University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Economics with a concentration in civil engineering and minor in modern Greek. He plans to pursue a project manager position in the construction and real estate development industry.

Post-Graduate Degrees

Jimmy Kartsonas, son of Al and Ria Kartsonas, graduated from John Carroll University with his MBA and will begin his financial career with Raymond James.



Emelia Krakora, daughter of Steve and Rebekah Krakora, is graduating from the University of Pittsburgh's Biomedical Master's Program. She will be attending medical school at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall.

Kassianna Maria Politis, daughter of Manuel and Dr. Alexis Megaludis Politis graduated from the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine with a degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine.

She will begin her Family Medicine Residency Program at UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.





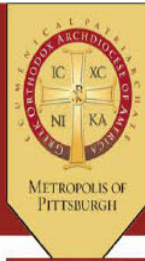
GOYA End of Year Party



SENIORS





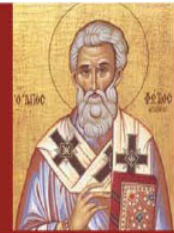


VOLUME 9 NO. 4 ISSUE: 79

AUGUST 2025

A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



2025 CLERGY LAITY ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 25 - 27, 2025

Registration opens 4:00pm
(Clergy 11:30am)

Annunciation Cathedral Columbus, OH
555 N High St, Columbus OH 43215-2068

pittsburgh.goarch.org/2025-assembly

Lodging:

**Hampton Inn & Suites
Columbus - Downtown**
501 North High St,
Columbus, OH 43215

SCAN FOR HOTEL
RESERVATIONS



Group Rate available until 09.03.2025

Use Group Rate Code: 92E or
Metropolis Clergy Laity 2025 block

Call: 614-559-200

info@pittsburgh.goarch.org 412 621 5529

Registration Cost:

3/2 Days: \$250.00 | 1 Day: \$150.00
+ \$15.00 for Friday Evening event:
Global Foodie Experience

Online Registration Opens: Aug 1
Registration Deadline: Sept 14

SCAN FOR CLA
REGISTRATION



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH
Metropolitan Savas invites YOU to the 2nd Annual
Sat. Aug. 23rd 11am - 9pm
St. Demetrios Community Center
1223 Atlantic St. NE
Warren, OH

GOMOPALOOZA

Are You a Musician, Band or Artist?
Want to Perform or Display Art?
Contact Fr. Joe DiStefano
frjdistefano@yahoo.com

Fun for All the Family!
2 Music Stages
Kids Games
Art & Craft Exhibits
Food & Beverages

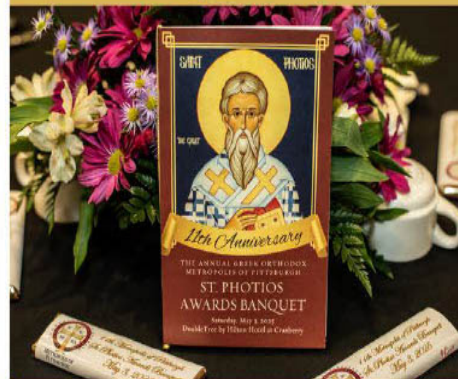
AUG. 23 2025
MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL

Free Admission Free Parking

All Proceeds go to the GOMoP Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Bands Solo Acts Arts & Crafts

Scan me!

2025 St. Photios Awards Banquet Photos



The 2025 St. Photios Awards Banquet photos are now available to view and be downloaded from our website at:

<https://www.pittsburgh.goarch.org/st-photios-awards-banquet>

New Metropolis Center



Let's Do This!

WE HAVE A DOME!
Our campaign goal is within sight! Please consider a donation to the campaign.



Join us! **2025 REGIONAL YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PARAKLISIS SERVICES**



WESTERN REGION	CENTRAL REGION	EASTERN REGION
ST. PAUL CHURCH NORTH ROYALTON, OH THURSDAY, AUGUST 7 7:00 PM	ST. GEORGE CHAPEL (OF HOLY TRINITY, PITTSBURGH) 8941 RINGEISEN ROAD ALLISON PARK, PA 15101 FRI. AUGUST 8 AT 6:30 PM	ANNUNCIATION CHURCH YORK, PA TUESDAY, AUGUST 12 6:30 PM

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Family Camp

SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2025 | CAMP NAZARETH

"Honoring the Sabbath"
In the busyness of life, how can families slow down together?

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
Adult Track: Priscilla Callos, MDiv, RBC, CT
Youth Track: Marina Giannirakis, MSW, MPS

OPEN TO ALL FAMILIES! REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 14.



Scan our QR Code for more info!

Questions? Contact Fr. Joe DiStefano at frjdistefano@yahoo.com

Hosted by the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh and the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral...

THE 3RD ANNUAL | 2025 SYNAXIS OF ORTHODOX WOMEN BYZANTINE CANTORS

Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral
419 South Dithridge Street | Pittsburgh, PA | 15213 | USA

September 11 -
Thursday afternoon to Sunday midday **September 14**
Culminating on the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross

\$250 per participant*
includes all meals, workshops, e-music packet, & more

Blessed by His Eminence +Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, this synaxis (coming together) of female cantors from across the country and the world for Orthodox Christian worship, education, and practice in the Public Art was the first event of its kind in the USA and is convening for its third year in a new region of the country.

Workshop Instructors



Featured Presenter
Father Eleftherios Constantine
Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Teaching License in Byzantine Music,
Central Music Conservatory of Thessaloniki

Register online before August 15!



*Additional Costs: Travel and Accommodation

REGISTRATION, Travel info, and more at: www.stnickspgh.org/sawbc2025

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR METROPOLIS MINISTRIES!
It costs approximately \$1,000 per day to operate our Metropolis - including Metropolitan Savas's Archpastoral visitations, preparations for summer camp and GOYA retreats, our vital registry, and more.
Please consider sponsoring a day in the life of the Metropolis:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232
412-621-5529 (Main) 412-465-0460 (Camp) 412-621-8543 (Youth)
pittsburgh.goarch.org info@pittsburgh.goarch.org




Live Greek
Music by
Ta Filarakia

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
SAVE THE DATES!

THE GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

GREEK FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

November 14-16, 2025

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Featuring dance workshops with guest instructors
Groups & Individuals welcome. Ages 8 and up.



FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
ELENI DEDOUSIS
VICTORIA ANDROMALOS DALE
HOST PARISH COORDINATORS
greekdancers@HolyTrinityPgh.org

MICHELLE KOTSAGRELOS
METROPOLIS CHAIRPERSON
mmk8317@gmail.com

ALYSSA KYRITSIS
METROPOLIS Y2AM DIRECTOR
akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org



Most Holy Theotokos save us!

First names for the commemoration during the

Paraclesis Services

during the Dormition Fast, August 1-14.

For the health and salvation of the servants of God:

**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
123 GILKESON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

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