

HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS

before...



and after...



SEPTEMBER 2025

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 Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 25 Issue 9

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, Ekonomos

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

*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

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.



*“O Lord I love the beauty of Your house and the place where
Your glory dwells.” (Ps. 25:8)*

With thanksgiving and gratitude to God, we celebrate another milestone in the life of our Holy Cross Church. The journey to complete the iconography and finish the interior of the Church has been a long-standing desire and goal of our community. Eight years ago, Panagioti and Dimitri Christodoulou came to Holy Cross at the request of Gerontissa (Abbess) Olympiada of Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA. The brothers were working on an iconography project at the monastery. After eight years of proposals, meetings with our Iconography Committee (many via zoom), and two more visits from the Christodoulou brothers, we finally reached a consensus. More meetings, a special General Assembly, approval by His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS, and then fund-raising. After all these challenges we were finally able to proceed with the ordering and the installation of the iconography. This September Newsletter is both a visual documentation of the transformation of our Church and an opportunity for those who have been waiting to express their support for this project a reason to do so. You will be amazed, “Come and See!”

With love and prayers in Christ,
Fr. Michael

LISTEN, O DAUGHTER...

"Listen, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people and your father's house and the King will desire your beauty," states the scriptural prokeimenon in the Paraclysis service. Who is the daughter, and who is the King?

These words prophetically refer to Mary who would one day give herself over to the "King" as no other person. Her renunciation of all, even her people and her earthly father's house would make her the most beloved woman who ever lived. Her beauty was such that the King of glory Himself, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ would take His human flesh from her. It is for such a person that we now gather in praise, for God has done a great work in her. The laws of nature will be overturned in her body. God shows us through her what a great calling we are all to have and how much he loves his saints. Today, let us consider what we must do to possess God in this way.

Let us begin by demystifying Panagia, taking her out of the clouds and bringing her down to earth. That she is one of us must never be doubted. Her humanity is one with ours. Created from the same lump of clay as all of us, she possessed no special advantage over any of us. Life was given to her as it was to us. The same impulses and instincts that drive our humanity either toward good or evil were also fully present in her. Yes, she became the most beloved woman who ever lived, but not owing to any special endowment, privilege or birth right. God took possession of her precisely because in herself she knew that she was nothing. She, in total poverty of spirit, radically opened herself as no one else before to the love of God.

So, when Mary inclined her ear, forgetting her people and her father's house, she willingly cut herself off from her previous existence. She catapulted herself into the rarified air of the Kingdom of God. To have stood before God on her family name, on the priestly lineage of her mother and kingly Davidic ancestry of her father or on her personal merits would have made this new creation of God in her an impossibility. In the

words of Thomas Merton, "if we want to attain greatness, we must flee from it," This is what Mary did by her submission to the Lord: "Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.

"Listen, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear..." She listened as no one ever did before, and she heard ineffable things. This is how God took possession of her.

This first step of renunciation placed Mary in the situation where faith is possible. She relinquished all security- family, husband, reputation, for the sake of Christ. "Blessed is she who believed," Elizabeth exclaimed to Mary. She continues, "for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were spoken to her from the Lord." Listen to the ecstatic response of Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His handmaid- en; for henceforth all generations will call me blessed." This was more than just a happy response to some good news. This was a soul now alive in God, surrendered to God, and finally possessed by Him. Indeed, Mary had chosen the good portion, as the Scripture says, that would not be taken from her.

"O God, you are my God; Early will I seek you; My soul thirsts for you; My soul longs for You in a dry and thirsty land..." writes the Psalmist. This was the desire that Panagia possessed. This is what made her such a good listener. And for this she was rewarded beyond measure. Again in the words of the Psalmist, "...the sons of men will be given drink from the river of God's delights and will feast on the abundance of God's house" (Psalm 36:8). Panagia feasted on that abundance as no other person ever has.

The desert father Alonios said: "If only a person desired it for a single day from morning to night, he would be able to come to the measure of God."

Such was the attainment of Panagia. She achieved by her attentive listening that which we all hope to achieve in our lives. She is the model for all Christian striving. In Mary we find the answer to our question, "What will I be like after I die?" The hymn of her feast sums it all up so beautifully: "In

you, O Spotless Maiden, the bounds of nature are overstepped: Childbearing is virginal: Death is but a pledge of life. After giving birth, you are a maiden, after death, alive..."

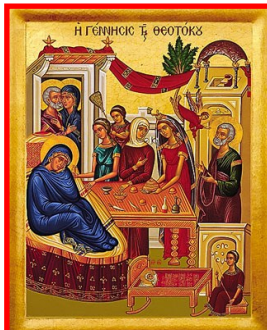
Today, however, as we celebrate the feast we are not only here to admire her assumption into heaven, we are called to imitate it. The whole of creation is groaning with eager anticipation for its redemption. It wants to break off the shackles of its slavery to corruption. We are icons of God, longing for the day when we, too, will be free, and until that time we groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free (Romans 8: 19-23). Mary is only the first fruits of what we all hope for in our lives- a body, spirit and soul resurrection.

Even now the Church has been given tokens of the resurrectional glory that is to come.

In 1987, we at Holy Cross chartered a bus to visit the tearing icon of the Guiding Mother. The pilgrimage, led by Bishop Maximos, arrived at the St. Nicholas Albanian Church in hopes of seeing a miracle. Regrettably, we were informed that a priest from Canada wiped off all the fragrant tears with balls of cotton, leaving the icon of Panagia dry. While somewhat disappointed, we proceeded to chant the Paraclisis service to the Mother of God. Then, at the very moment that we began to commemorate the list of names, fragrant tears began streaming from her eyes. Our pain and need revealed a heart filled with compassion for the world. At the end of the service, as we were anointing the hundreds in attendance, a woman approached me with a photo clutched in her hand. "This is my husband," she said. "He was murdered last month." In that moment, I felt her pain.

Then I thought of Panagia, how she carries the pain of the entire world in her tender heart.

"Listen, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people and your father's house and the King will desire your beauty." And so it was that Mary became a great vessel of grace as the voice of God called her to become His unwedded bride. Today, let us also listen as Mary did so as to be possessed by His love. Then the King will see and desire our beauty for Himself. May it be so. Amen! ~Fr. John Chakos



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

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

GOLDEN CLUB

"A common field one day. A field of honor forever."

Please join us on **Tuesday, September 16th**, as we once again travel by van to the **Flight 93 National Memorial**; no entrance fee is required. Please meet at the church no later than 8:30am.

Space on the van is limited, so please **RSVP no later than Tuesday, September 9th**, by calling Cynthia 412.722.9512 or Rene 412.559.1721. A stop for lunch will follow at a nearby diner.

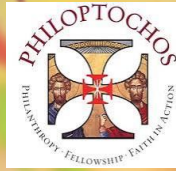
To learn more about the Flight 93 National Memorial prior to our visit, please access the very informative virtual tour, conducted by the Park Rangers through the Flight 93 website or through the YouTube app, searching for Flight 93 National Memorial "Virtual Tour." This will give you a better understanding of the many aspects of the memorial, in lieu of a guided tour.

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 also needed to carry food from the kitchen & 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.



Philoptochos

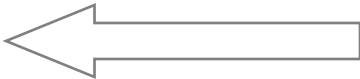
Autumn Food Fair

& Yia Yia Joan's Treasures & Market

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

Please contact Dena Yamalis at 412.343-8355 or dyamalis@comcast.net to help at the pastry booth.
We appreciate any baked goods you can donate.

Please contact Elaine Sofis to volunteer for the
food line.



Donations of jewelry, books, and purses
accepted beginning September 21.



HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
presents the 11th annual



**MEMORIAL
GOLF OUTING**



MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025
SOUTH HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

4305 BROWNSVILLE ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15236

PRICING

\$225/golfer; \$900/foursome*:
includes entry fee, green fee,
lunch & dinner.

SCRAMBLE FORMAT

Skill prizes:

Mens/Seniors/Women

First place team prizes:

Mens/Women/Seniors/Mixed

ORDER OF EVENTS

10 AM: Registration

10 AM: Sit-down Lunch

11:30 AM: Shotgun Start

5-6 PM: Cocktail Reception

(cash bar)

6 PM: Dinner/Silent Auction

SPONSORSHIPS

\$500: Beverages, skill prizes,
putting green, printing, website,
or live auction sponsor

\$750: Dessert sponsor

\$800: Golf Gift Bag sponsor

\$1,000: Lunch sponsor

\$1,250: Co-Dinner sponsor

\$1,500: Golf Cart sponsor

\$2,500: Dinner sponsor

For more information, please contact:

Zach Moore 412-735-8343; Lia Moore 412-760-6879
Nick Kartsonas 412-849-9467; Michael Bell 724-825-2268

PAYMENT & REGISTRATION

**To pay & register by mail, mail this
form with payment to:**

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
Att. Golf Outing
123 Gilkeson Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Make checks payable to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
Please mark "Golf Outing" in memo line.

Golfer name(s):

Phone:

Email:

**To register and pay online,
please visit:**

www.holycrosspgh.org

**Follow the link near the bottom
of the page labeled
"11th Annual Golf Outing"**

***in case of inclement weather or
unforeseen circumstances, golfers will
be provided a pass for future tee time.**



Walk for Missions 2025

Sponsored by
Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater
Pittsburgh
will benefit current mission work in
Guatemala

Sunday, October 12

Registration 12:30 PM
Walk Begins at 1:30 PM

South Park
Children's Playground Shelter
Located at the intersection of
Corrigan Drive and Brownsville Road
South Park Township, PA 15129

*Then He said
to His disciples,
"The harvest truly
is plentiful,
but the laborers
are few.
Therefore
pray the Lord
of the harvest
to send out laborers
into His harvest."*

~Matthew 9:37-38

There is great need in Guatemala for our support! This year we are focusing on continuing to support the medical clinic, as well as getting transportation for the priests who have to travel great distances to the many parishes in the area.

Questions? Contact:
ediamondhpcgh@gmail.com

WALK FOR MISSIONS

Walker's Pledge Form

SPONSOR **CONTACT INFO ** PLEDGE AMOUNT ** PAID AMOUNT ** BALANCE

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Here's what to do:

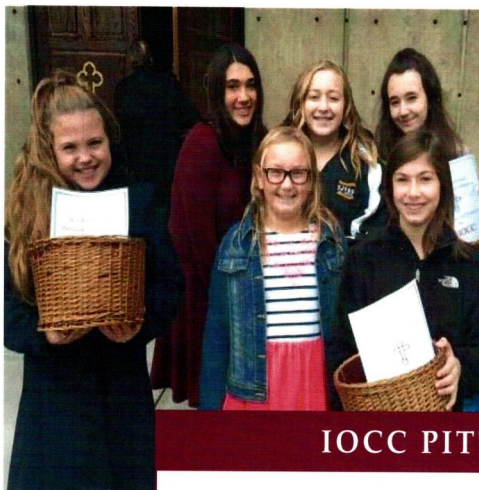
- Raise pledges. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: HOLY CROSS MISSION FUND**
 - Register on October 12 at South Park Children's Playground Pavilion at 12:30.
 - Bring your pledge forms and collected money.
 - Collect pledge balances by October 29 and mail to: *Walk For Missions, c/o Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh PA 15228*
- Lunch and light refreshments will be served following the Walk.

For more info or questions, contact Elias Diamond @ ediamondhcupgh@gmail.com

I hereby waive and release any rights and claims for injury or damage that may occur to me during my participation in the Walk.

Signature_____

Parent/Legal Guardian (if under 18)_____



IOCC PITTSBURGH

Open House

Tuesday, September 9, 2025 7:00 pm

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

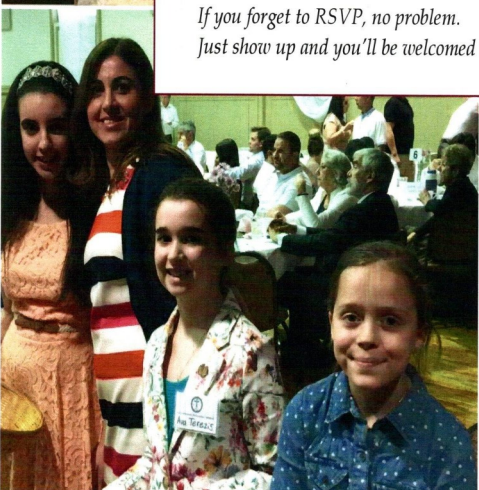
123 Gilkeson Rd (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

IOCC Pittsburgh Committee is pleased to invite you to an open house to meet its members. You'll hear updates and learn how we support IOCC's work. We look forward to meeting you!

Please RSVP online at iocc.org/Pittsburgh
or e-mail Nick Terezis, nterezis@mstrategic.com



*If you forget to RSVP, no problem.
Just show up and you'll be welcomed with open hearts.*



FIRST LITURGY AFTER COMPLETION OF ICONOGRAPHY, AUGUST 10, 2025









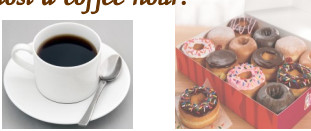




40 DAY BLESSING FOR
SOPHIA, DAUGHTER OF
JOSEPH & ALEXA (*NEE FISFIS*) SALA



Holy Cross

Sun	Mon	Tue
<i>Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host a coffee hour!</i> 	1 Ecclesiastical New Year <i>Labor Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	2
7 Sunday before Holy Cross 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 6:30pm Paraclesis 8pm YAL Basketball 	9 7pm IOCC Open House @Holy Cross
14 Elevation of the Cross 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>Feast Day Luncheon</i>	15 6:30pm Paraclesis	16 8:30am Golden Club Outing 7pm Parish Council Meeting
21 Sunday after Holy Cross 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>Walk for Missions</i> <i>Coffee Hour</i>	22 6:30pm Paraclesis	23 Conception of St. John the Forerunner 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy
28 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	29 6:30pm Paraclesis	30 7:30pm YAL Pickleball 

September 2025

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	4 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	5 5pm Vespers, Orthros @ Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery	6 9am Hours, Div. Lit. @ Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery (Lunch follows) Wedding/NO Vespers
10 7PM BIBLE STUDY RESUMES	11 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	12	13 5pm Feast Day  Great Vespers Dinner to follow
17 St. Sophia & daughters Faith, Hope, and Love 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4:15pm GREEK school 7PM BIBLE STUDY	18 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	19	20 5pm Great Vespers 6pm GLENDI
24 4:30pm GREEK school NO BIBLE STUDY	25 CLERGY/LAITY IN COLUMBUS	26	27 5pm Great Vespers
1 October Holy Protection 8am Orthros 9am Div. Lit. Autumn Food Fair 11am-8pm 4:30pm GREEK school 7PM BIBLE STUDY	2	3	4 5pm Great Vespers

We are now winding down the “dog days of summer.” It seems that even in these modern times with all of our advances in climate controlled environments, we are still humbled by the weather. And in this regard, we realize we are no better than the disciples in today’s Gospel reading who are being buffeted by the wind while trying to cross the sea. But as is often the case with the Scriptures, there is more to today’s passage than relating the miracles of walking on water and calming the storm. For contained in these twelve verses is the very core of the Christian life experience. And so it seemed fitting to delve into that this morning.

The first part of this experience we will call “leaving God behind.” In today’s passage Jesus “made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side.” The disciples found themselves separated from their Lord. Now it may at first seem to matter a great deal whether we ourselves choose to go without God, or whether we just obey when He sends us on ahead without Him, and indeed there are important differences between the two, but for the purposes of today’s discourse, the end result is the same. The point is that whether out of obedience or disobedience to Him, we often find ourselves separated, outside of His presence. Even monastics that have beheld the uncreated light do not experience it constantly. And even the least mystically gifted Christian has on occasion some sense of being in the presence of God, only to subsequently lose that awareness. The key thing is that more often than not, we lose the sense that God is with us. But the wonderful thing about this passage is that this isn’t always because of our imperfection and lack of focus. For just as with the disciples whom we know were close to Him, we too can find ourselves being ‘sent on ahead’, while God turns His attention to other matters. It’s not always because we’ve done something wrong or are somehow inadequate. Sometimes God ordains it because He trusts us to “go before Him.”

And that often brings us to the second part of this experience, which is called “facing the storm.” It seems the disciples had made a lot of progress, for “the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land,” but at some point they ran into a great deal of difficulty, being “beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them.” And so it is with us. Many times and in many ways we start out well, but suddenly face challenges and difficulties in one of life’s journeys. Cares and worries brought on by the world buffet us, and we find that we aren’t making any progress. And we seem to think that there’s something wrong with

us, that if somehow we were closer to God or stronger in our faith that we wouldn't meet with those obstacles. But that isn't always the case. Sometimes God allows it because He knows we can hold out until He comes.

That is the next part of our experience, called "the rediscovery." The odd thing is that when He finally does come, at first we often react like non-believers. Just like the disciples seeing Jesus walking on the water, we cry "It is a ghost!" We become so accustomed to the natural order of the universe that when it is overturned by the supernatural Presence, we at first don't want to think He has come. The difference is that unlike those who deny the metaphysical, as soon as we realize it is His presence, we lose our fear; in fact, once we sense Him with us again, the boldest among us, like Peter, ask to become part of the miracle ourselves. And we find that the Lord will let us try, because He really does want us to become like Him. But more often than not, we're still not ready; we see the waves and we begin to sink, not fully believing in the Divine image that lives within us. Yet for all this, the Lord's rebuke is gentle. Why do you only believe in the workings of the world? Why do you doubt? And we seem to think something is wrong with us, because we have so little faith. But that isn't always the case. Sometimes God allows it because He knows we still need to rely on Him.

Which brings us to the last part of the experience, "back on the boat." For as soon as Jesus stepped onto the boat and rejoined His disciples, the wind stopped. And so it is with us, that the winds of our personal struggles suddenly stop when we are again aware of God's presence in our lives. And in these moments we don't even stop to wonder if there's something wrong with us. We are so delighted to be in His presence again, that like the disciples, our hearts can only marvel and worship Him; saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

My brothers and sisters, our lives are filled with many of these "boat rides." We are "sent ahead", we "face a storm", we "rediscover" the Lord, and He calms the wind when He rejoins us "back on the boat." And it is equally important to realize that these experiences are not because there is something wrong with us; rather, God ordains them because He trusts us to go as far as we can, to hold out until He comes, to rely on Him when He arrives, and to worship Him when He delivers us. For at the end of each journey we grow stronger, and slowly become partakers of the Divine nature, until the end of our journeys in this life, when He will call us into His presence and then continue to grow from Glory to Glory. To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Fr. Frank Dickos

There's something that happens in our language quite often, which we rarely think about, but which carries a lot of meaning. It has to do with the way we speak about our bodies. There is a tendency, for us to speak about our bodies as if they were machines. We don't need to eat, we need to "fuel up." We're not sick, our body is "breaking down." We don't think about something, we "process information." With Artificial Intelligence becoming ever more prominent in our culture, the lines we draw between ourselves and machines become ever more blurred.

But as Christians, we have to recognize that this kind of thinking is a trap, for our bodies are not mere machines, but rather, our bodies cannot be understood outside of that other essential component of the human being, the soul. As Christians, we recognize that soul and body have a deep and intimate bond, and thus, true healing must extend to body and soul both. The Gospel reading we just heard tells us of Jesus healing two blind men, but before he heals them, he asks them, "Do you believe I am able to do this?" to which they respond, "Yes, Lord." He heals their physical affliction, saying "According to your faith be it done to you."

Like the blind men, we must let the light of Christ into our souls first and foremost, for healing the body alone is insufficient. It is a point illustrated as well by the great Saint Panteleimon, whom we commemorate on this day. Saint Panteleimon was born into a wealthy pagan family, and due to his affluent background, was able to study the finest medicine of his day – basically, he was going to be a doctor. However, when speaking with a Christian, he was posed a question. The Christian asked him, "My friend, of what use are all thy acquirements in this art, since thou art ignorant of the science of salvation?"

This changed Panteleimon's life. Embracing Christ, he was given the gifts to heal both soul and body. Echoing the Gospel passage we heard, Panteleimon healed a blind man, a miracle which made his own pagan father convert. He began healing both souls and bodies with the power of God. However, many other physicians, jealous of his success and ignorant of the true nature of soul and body, denounced him to the Emperor, for which he would eventually be martyred. Yet, he stood courageous even in the face of death, for he recognized that, while our bodies must inevitably die, the soul is the life-giving, animating principle of our bodies, which cannot be destroyed.

My brothers and sisters, as much as the world tells us to think of ourselves as machines made of flesh and bone, we are much more than that. We are made in the image of God, and share in both material and immaterial reality. If we forget this truth, then we are truly lost, for if we neglect asking Christ to heal our souls, we will never be *holistically* healed. In other words, we will never be whole nor will we be holy. Through the intercessions of Saint Panteleimon, may we all find healing for our souls and our bodies.

~Elias Diamond





CHURCH SCHOOL BEGINS ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 AT HOLY
CROSS. PLEASE USE QR CODE
OR LINK BELOW TO REGISTER
FOR THE 25/26 SCHOOL YEAR.



[https://onrealm.org/HolyCrossGreekO/PublicRegistrations/Event?
linkString=MzQ3YzdLOWEtMTJjOC00MTJmLTlmZTctYjMyZjAwZWZkM2Vj](https://onrealm.org/HolyCrossGreekO/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MzQ3YzdLOWEtMTJjOC00MTJmLTlmZTctYjMyZjAwZWZkM2Vj)



HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

begins its new academic year!

REGISTRATION and first class on
Ώεδνεσδαγ, SEPTEMBER 17th at 4 15pm

Greek School meets every Wednesday from 4:30-6:30 pm.

There will be classes for beginners in the Conversation-
al 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.

Reverend Father,

Beloved members of the Parish of the Holy Church of the Holy Cross,

With deep feelings of gratitude and respect, we would like to express our warmest thanks for the heartfelt hospitality, trust, and love you showed us during our recent visit to your parish, on the occasion of the installation of the iconography.

The experience we had with you was unique and deeply moving. Your hospitality was exemplary, and the collaboration with the esteemed clergy, the parish council, and the members of the community was marked by respect, understanding, and a spirit of mutual appreciation.

You gave us the opportunity to contribute—however humbly—to the beautification of your Holy Church with the images of our Holy Tradition and to participate in the continuation of your community's vibrant spiritual witness. May the art of iconography serve as a window to heaven and a constant reminder of God's presence among us, inspiring prayer, reverence, and spiritual upliftment in the faithful.

Please extend our thanks to all those who contributed to and supported this effort—for the trust, assistance, and respect you showed us from the very beginning until the completion of the project.

We wholeheartedly pray that the Lord may always protect your parish, strengthen your mission, and grant you health, peace, and spiritual growth. We would be truly delighted to meet again in the future and continue this fruitful collaboration.

With deep appreciation, love, and respect in Christ,

Panagiotis and Dimitris

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΟΥΛΟΥ Ο.Ε.

ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ 129

Τ.Κ.: 57013, Τ.Θ.: 20

ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ΤΗΛ./ΦΑΞ: (+30) 2310 269935





Nina Paliouras, daughter of Constantine & Vasso Paliouras, is currently a pharmacy student at Duquesne University. Nina grew up at Holy Cross, served on the Iconography Committee (youngest member), and was moved to write this beautiful perspective shared on social media after attending the first service back in the sanctuary. (reprinted with permission)

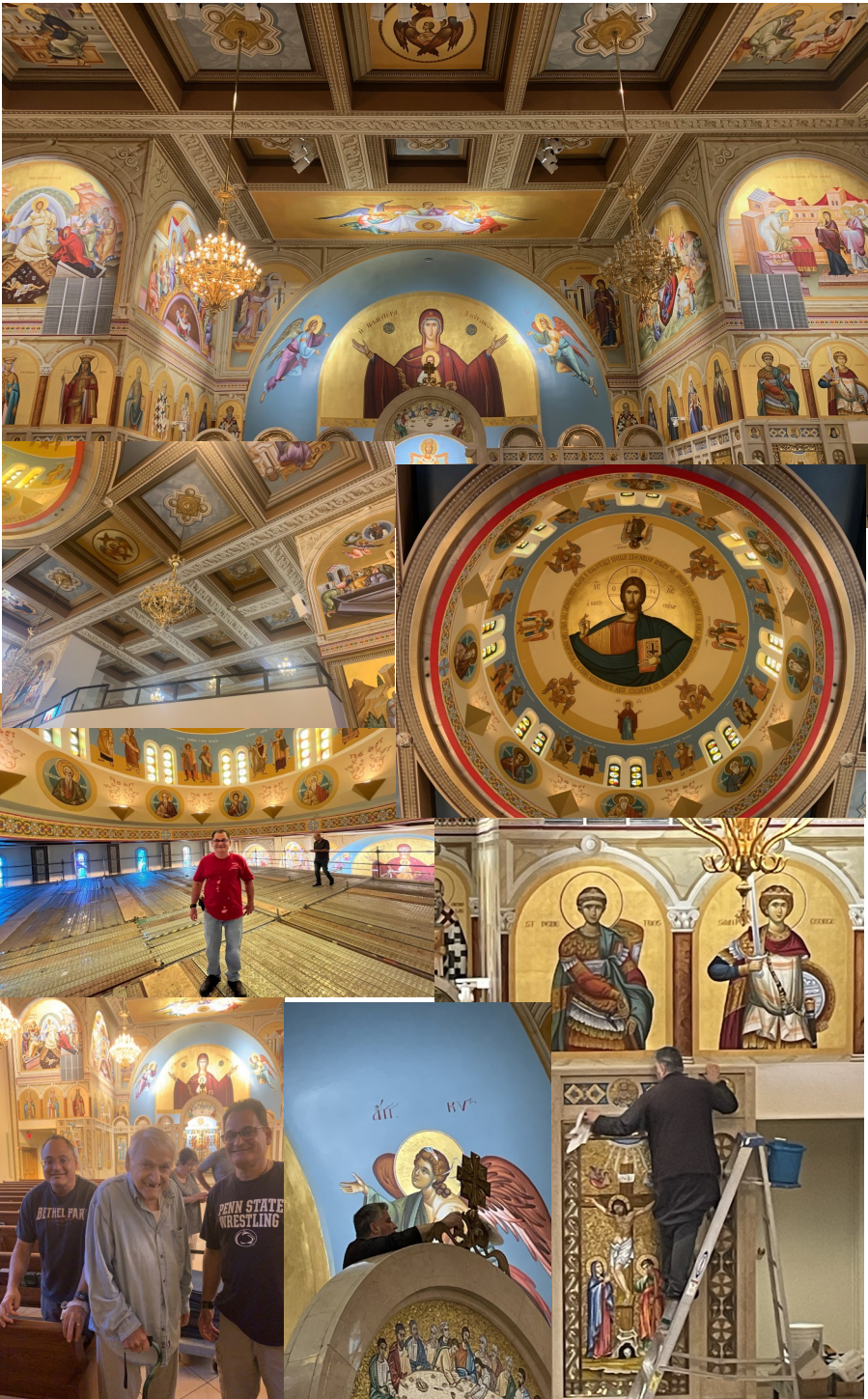
Hi everyone! These are the photos* of the iconography project at Holy Cross! God bless the iconographers from Thessaloniki for their hard work and dedication. Thank you to everyone for your prayers and donations to make this miracle possible. Now the future generations can look up and witness the beauty of the faith and the unwaning light of Christ and the Resurrection written on the walls. Icons are not paintings; they are windows to Heaven showing to us the Life beyond this world that we are all journeying towards since the day we were baptized. Icons bring light and help us during prayer as a reminder that all the saints are alive, the angels are standing with us, and Christ and Panagia are in our midst. We are witnessing the Heavenly Kingdom before our eyes and celebrating the mysteries together. Now that we're approaching the Holy Dormition, this feast day is another reminder that through Christ's Resurrection, we are made alive in Him. The Panagia did fall asleep in the Lord but She was taken by Her Son both Her soul and body and became alive through Him. This is the summer Pascha. Lately, we have been seeing a lot of Christian persecutions in the Middle East, wildfires in Greece, and other issues in the world. All these things in the world are temporary and death has no dominion over us. We may be physically dead and return dust to dust, but we are made alive in Jesus Christ by experiencing the Resurrection so we can rejoice and be united with Our Creator. All of the martyrs of the Middle East are saints and were given the crowns of victory as athletes of Christ. May they intercede for all of us and help everyone to find peace and comfort in God. Whenever you look at an icon, remember that God loves us so much that He wants us to experience the Kingdom with all of our senses, He took on flesh to be a living icon He designed all of us to be to experience humanity, be part of the Heavenly banquet, and seek His love and protection. No matter who we are, where we come from, no matter how political perspective, and no matter how sinful we are, Christ will always continue to love us to the point He will die for us on the cross and lift us out of the tombs bestowing life. He waits patiently for us and wants us to be strong in the Good Fight. Without struggles and temptations, nobody can be saved. Please forgive me the sinner that I am. May Panagia continue to pray for all of us and protect all of us with Her veil. May She also pray for all students who are preparing for the new school year and this year be filled with many blessings.

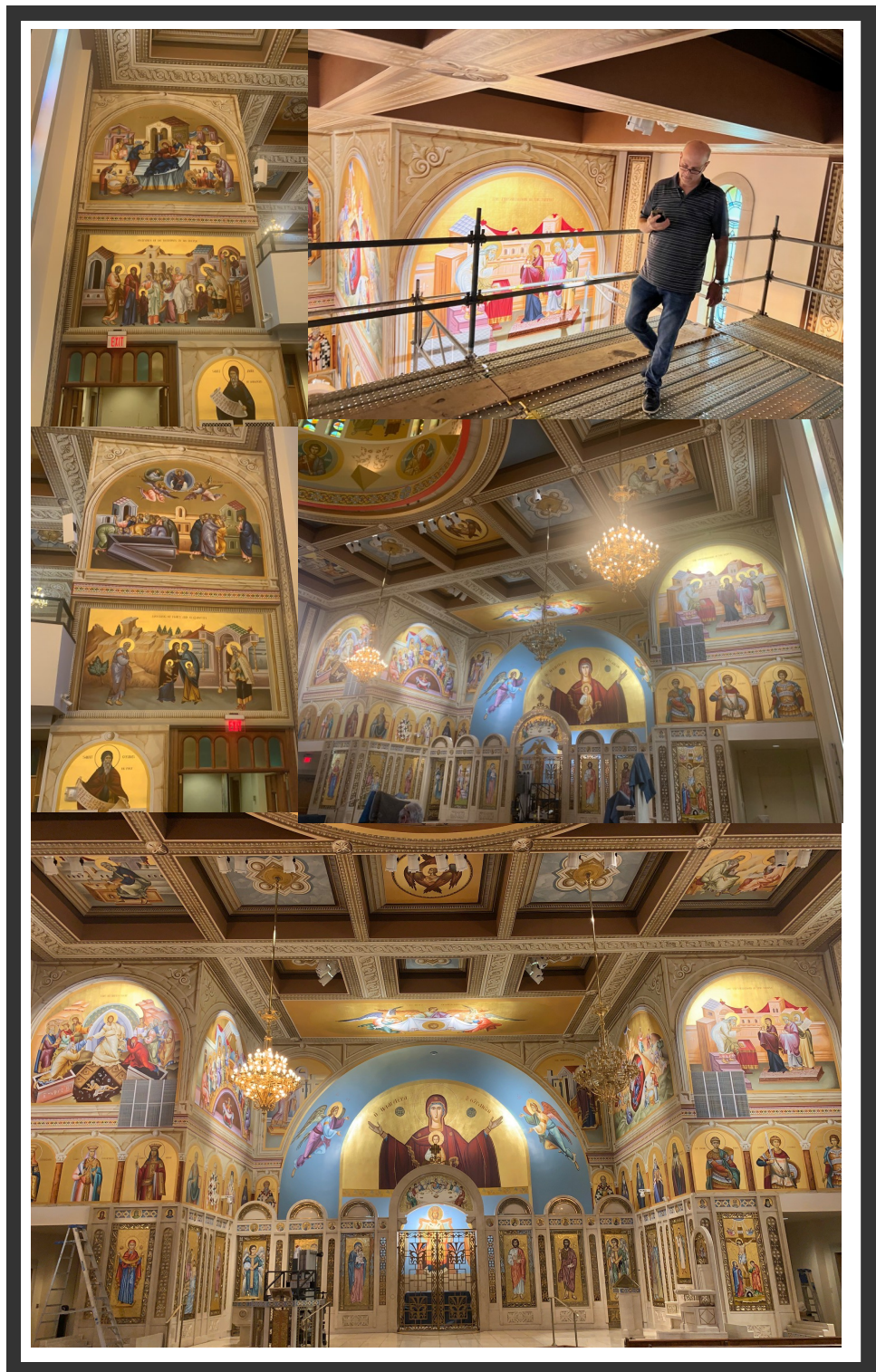
Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

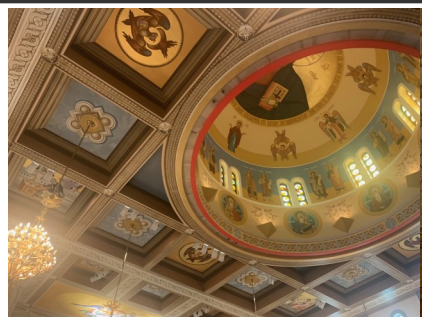
**photos shown were submitted by a variety of parishioners*



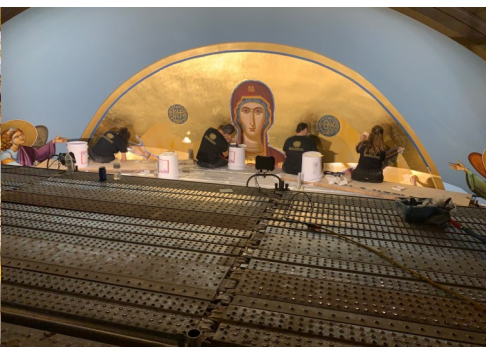














HOLY CROSS OUTREACH: - \$10,000 TO LIGHT OF LIFE
(*\$5,000 FROM THE GENERAL ACCOUNT, \$5000 FROM THE AGAPE FUND*)
- \$3,329 TO NEIGHBORHOOD RESILIENCE PROJECT
- \$1,081 MONASTERY DONATION
- \$10,000 TO THE NEW METROPOLIS CENTER
YOUR GENEROSITY IS MAKING AN IMPACT!



Father Michael Kallaur, Economos
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
123 Gilkeson Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

July 28, 2025

Dear Father Michael,

“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer... Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money... Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.” Acts 3: 1-3, 6-8

For years, this man sat asking for money, expecting only temporary help. But one day, everything changed. Instead of giving him what he asked for, Peter and John gave him what he needed—healing, hope, dignity, and a new beginning through the power of Jesus.

At Light of Life, we serve people every day who come to our doors just like that man. Many are carrying years of pain and brokenness, expecting only a meal or a bed—but God has much more to offer them. And because of donors such as your church who give of your earthly treasures, we can be here to meet not just their temporary needs, but to also provide much deeper gifts.

We are extremely grateful to you and your congregation for the recent generous gift of \$10,000 that we received on 7/22/2025. Thank you so much!

In His Grip,


Jerrel T. Gilliam
Executive Director

Thank you Father Michael!

lightoflife.org

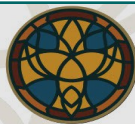
Phone: 412-258-6100 | Fax: 412-231-1982 | 665 Ridge Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15212

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*



**PARISH
PLANNED GIVING**

An Offering of the



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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!

**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

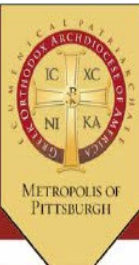
Featuring dance workshops with guest instructors
Groups & Individuals welcome. Ages 8 and up.



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

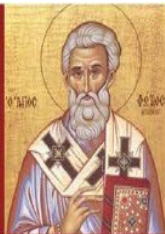


VOLUME 9 NO. 5 ISSUE: 80

SEPTEMBER 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

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 CLIA
REGISTRATION



pittsburgh.goarch.org

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

September 14

Culminating on the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross

\$250 per participant*

Includes all meals, workshops, 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 Act was the first event of its kind in the USA and
is celebrating for its third year in a new region of the country.

Workshop Instructors



Irene Bullock



Amy Hogg



Sarah Rouven



Photini Downe Babson



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.stnick.org/2025

New Metropolis Center

Let's Do This!

Our campaign goal is within sight! Please consider a donation to the campaign.

New Metropolis Center
PO Box 640729
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-0729



SUMMER CAMP - THIS IS THE WAY

This year's theme was "This is the Way" which focused on The Cross of Christ.

"My yoke is easy and my burden is light," Jesus was speaking to the multitudes when He said these words. At that time they didn't know what His physical or His spiritual burden would be. We know that the spiritual burden would be the weight of our sins. But the physical burden.... The Cross. Only the power of Jesus Christ and His love for us can take the epitome of pain, humiliation and defeat and turn it into the perfect instrument of healing, exultation and victory. He has done this for us and calls us to come after Him, step by step, walking with our Cross toward our victory with Him and our ultimate JOY.

MONDAY: We talked about how sin entered the world and how only Christ, fully God and fully man, could save us. The Cross was part of God's plan from the beginning—like the Tree of Life in Eden.

TUESDAY: We looked at Old Testament stories—Abraham, Moses, and others—where signs of the Cross appeared. These moments showed God was always preparing us for Christ's sacrifice.

WEDNESDAY: We learned how Christ's death on the Cross happened exactly as the Scriptures said. Even the smallest details were part of God's plan to save us.

THURSDAY: We saw that Christ chose the Cross with love and strength. In the Church, the Cross is lifted high, not as a sign of loss, but of victory.

FRIDAY: Jesus tells us to take up our own cross. That means living with love, sacrifice, and helping others. The Church helps us do this together, as one Body in Christ.

In addition to our curriculum, our days were filled with Orthodox Life Sessions, Discussion Groups, Water & Land Olympics, Activities, Campfires, Music, and Arts and Crafts. Friendships were formed and connections were created by living our Faith in an Orthodox Christian Camp Community.

We are appreciative of all of the support from our families, parishes, donors, and the many prayers! It is a true joy to see our campers love one another and grow in their Orthodox Faith each summer!

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



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

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EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

5PM VESPERS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

8:15AM

ORTHROS

9:30AM

DIVINE

LITURGY

LUNCHEON

TO FOLLOW

