

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

We are blessed in the Orthodox Church to have Holy Communion (the Eucharist) at the center of our life. The Holy Eucharist is often called "the sacrament of sacraments" because from it, everything else is given. The goal of our spiritual life and all worship is to lead us into communion with God. All the sacraments from baptism to the remembrance of the departed have their connection in the Holy Eucharist.

The Holy Eucharist was connected to the Old Testament meal of Passover. The blood of the lamb was placed on the doorposts of those who sacrificed the lamb, to prevent the angel of death from killing the firstborn child (Ex.12:5-7). This was the final plague against Pharaoh that allowed the release of the Jewish people. This annual meal of remembrance of that Passover, that led to the freedom of the Jewish nation from slavery in Egypt, into the promise land, was a foreshadowing of what Jesus would accomplish on the Cross when He offered Himself up for the life and salvation of the world. Jesus became the Lamb of God. His body and blood were shed for the forgiveness of our sins and for the establishment of a New Covenant in His Name. Iesus came into the world to bring all of us into a new reality, out of the slavery of sin and death. Jesus establishes His kingdom which begins in us when we set our hearts on Him. In our baptism, we die to a fallen world and are raised to this new life in Christ. His words resonate deeply when we attempt to understand this mystery:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I

# Philoptochos Cutumn Food Fair

& Yia Yia Joan's Treasures & Market

at

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Community Center

123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon

(across from the Galleria in the South Hills)

Wednesday, October 1 & Thursday, October 2nd 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Featuring GREEK favorites including Moussaka, Tiropita, Spanakopita, Pastitsio, Gyros, Chicken Rolls, rice pudding, soups and much more!

Bake Sale featuring delicious Greek pastries, pies, cakes, cookies and a variety of breads.

Inside seating...so come rain or shine! Elevator available!!

NO PHONE OR ONLINE ORDERING
All proceeds benefit the philanthropic efforts of the
Holy Cross Ladies Philoptochos Society.
Cash or Credit Cards accepted.

#### Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 25 Issue 10

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: holycrossogh.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.            | loptochos Pres. Dina Hartlep |                |  |
| 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                  | ang Adults Elias Diamond     |                |  |
| GOYA                          | DYA Denise Melis             |                |  |
| 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 Laura Zervos  |                              | (412) 287-5679 |  |
| Committee                     |                              |                |  |

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

shall give for the life of the world is my flesh..." (John 6:5)

The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians (I Cor.11:23-26):

"For I received from the lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, 'This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper saying, 'this cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord."

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the greatest moment of our week, sometimes more than once a week if we are able, is to gather as the Church – the Body of Christ, and to lift-up the entire world in prayer and offer back to God all that He has given us. "Your Own of Your Own, we offer unto You, on behalf of all and for all." The bread and wine, especially prepared and offered on the holy Altar, are transformed by Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Church triumphant and the Church militant come together as one. We should not take this great miracle for granted.

Our preparations to receive this gift from God and commune with Him are important and should be a priority. Fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays and during the various fasting periods of the Church are essential. If you need guidance about fasting, that is a conversation to have with your priest or spiritual father if they are not the same. Prayers in preparation for Holy Communion are in most Orthodox prayer books. The sacrament of Holy Confession at least once a year if not more frequently.

We live our lives in a fallen world and are exposed to much evil and darkness. Jesus calls upon each of us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Sometimes we stumble. We all need God's love, mercy, and forgiveness. A priority in our lives must be given to God. Let us approach the precious Body and Blood of Christ with "the fear of God, with faith and with love." May we desire this communion with our Lord!

With love and prayers,

Fr. Michael



After many years of planning, our parish of Holy Cross is extremely blessed to witness the installment of the majority of the iconography project. We are thankful to Fr. Michael, Fr. John, our Parish Council, Michael Zervos and the Building Committee and the Iconography Planning Committee for the tremendous amount of time, dedication and effort that went into bringing this incredible transformation to our sanctuary. Thank you to everyone who has donated towards the project and sponsored icons.

This project was under the heading of iconography, but it is important to note that approximately 50% of this project was maintenance of our church. The last time our church was painted, updates were made to the electrical system as well as other maintenance needs were taken care of was over 20 years ago with Challenge III. With the scaffolding in place for the icons, these very important "house keeping" needs were addressed.

As services have resumed in the church, parishioners have asked if donations are still needed for this project. The answer is Yes!

No donation is ever considered small. All commitments made can be paid in installments through the end of 2027.

#### Following is a current update on icons available and amount needed for each:

St. Mark - \$17,000

Eagle - \$16,000

Ox - \$24,000 Lion - \$25,000

Young Man - \$25,000

St. Andrew of Crete - \$12,300

St. Cyril of Alexandria - \$25,000

St. Gerasimos of Abydos - \$5000

St. Innocent of Alaska - \$25,000

St. Raphael of Brooklyn - \$24,250

Nativity of the Theotokos - \$50,000

Assumption of Mary - \$49,500

Panaghia & Elizabeth Greeting Each Other - \$24,500

Thank you very much for your prayerful consideration of supporting this historic project. It is truly a blessing for the many future generations of Holy Cross.

#### The Little Churches

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The family is considered the first church of every believer. It is there that one learns the first steps of faith and reverence, the love of God, and the practice of virtue. The larger church, the parish, is nothing other than the union of these smaller "domestic churches." The more faithfully our families live out their faith, the more they will raise men and women filled with love, zeal, and devotion. In turn, the Church of God is strengthened, producing saints and witnesses, men and women committed to serving both God and society.

Within the Church, believers experience the communion of one faith, which makes them one body, a single family. Christians are called to live with a deep awareness of this spiritual kinship, for in the Holy Eucharist, Christ Himself establishes a bond stronger than blood or tribe.

This communion must not remain an idea; it must be lived out. When it is broken by division or offense, the Gospel commands us to refrain from approaching the holy chalice or offering sacrifice until reconciliation has taken place: "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23–24).

From here comes the very meaning of the parish: one temple for a community of believers living in the same area. When someone worships in their parish church, they are called to form genuine spiritual bonds with its members. Commitment to one's parish strengthens responsibility toward brothers and sisters in Christ, nurturing a deeper sense of the Church and the importance of communion. This lived experience should, in turn, extend outward to embrace all humanity.

Sadly, this sense of communion is often weak. One reason is that many approach communal prayer without deep understanding, reducing it to a mere "duty" instead of living it as the shared expression of faith. Another reason is an overemphasis on ritual and celebration at the expense of the personal, spiritual communion that should exist between the believer and God, between one another, and ultimately with all people.

For these reasons, the Church encourages the formation of small groups made up of a few individuals or families who share a common concern, goal, or ministry. These groups gather first for prayer, and then also for a particular service either spiritual or humanitarian. United by a shared purpose, their relationships grow deeper, and they come to experience more fully their spiritual kinship, provided they remain rooted in the truth of the Gospel.

This emphasis on small communities was one of the great contributions of the Antiochian Orthodox Youth Movement<sup>1</sup>. It taught its members to live in communion with one another, and through this,

to discover the wider communion of the Church. Many who grew within the Movement tasted the beauty and sweetness of Christian fellowship, carrying one another's burdens just like the first Christians, and learning in practice—not merely in theory—that the Church is truly the family of God.

In our own time, when individualism is exalted above all else, people often live in a crushing loneliness. They may have colleagues at work, classmates, or neighbors, but what they lack most are deep, heartfelt relationships built on spiritual foundations, relationships that sustain and are sustained in return. Even genuine friendship has become rare in today's world. Sociologists sometimes describe this reality with the phrase "loneliness in the crowd."

An old story illustrates this. In the 1970s, the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* reported on why many Russians, after retirement, were returning to the Church. One such man, a factory director, had been honored upon retirement but soon found himself alone. Divorced, with children living far away, he grew increasingly sad and isolated. Day after day, he sat in the neighborhood café with his newspaper and coffee, his face marked by loneliness. Another retired man noticed his sorrow and asked the reason. After hearing his story, he simply told him, "Come to church, and you will not be alone." And it was so. In the church, fellow worshippers welcomed him, cared for him, and bonded in friendship with him.

Many people today seek this same care from the Church, but they often place the entire burden on the priest, forgetting that love for the Lord also requires love for one another, expressed through real care and support. While the priest is indeed the shepherd and primarily responsible, the parish does not belong to him alone. The Church is Christ's, and all her children are called to share in her life and ministries whether educational, pastoral, social, and charitable.

For this reason, it has become urgent that believers form small groups of prayer and service, united not only by faith but also by a shared concern, so that together they may labor to address it. The needs today are many, and the opportunities for service are countless, especially in these difficult times!

If you carry your burden alone, it will weigh you down. But when you share it with your brothers and sisters, working together under the guidance of a spiritual father, you will find joy as you bring joy to others. In sharing, you will experience the warmth of communion and the happiness that comes from selfless love.

How much we need workshops of prayer and service—communities that radiate the joy of Christ's Resurrection in our suffering world. These are to be rooted in prayer, reflection on the Word of God, and the effort to live it daily first and foremost in personal life, then in family, parish, and society.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Founded in 1942, the Orthodox Youth Movement revitalized the Church in the Middle East. It maintains a vital role to this day.

#### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are living through difficult and uncertain days. As we look around our nation today, it is impossible to ignore the tension, division, and uncertainty that seem to surround us.

But as Orthodox Christians, we are often reminded to lift our eyes above the noise of the world and place our hope firmly in Christ, who is our peace and our strength.

The Apostle Paul reminds us: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7). These words are a reminder that our foundation is not in politics or passing events, but in Christ Himself. He is the rock on which we stand, and when we are rooted in Him, we cannot be shaken.

I had the great honor and blessing to get to know Geronta Ephraim of Arizona and call him my spiritual Father. One of many things I learned from Geronta was the importance of reflection and silence. He would tell me that the teeth were a fence to hold back the tongue. And he encouraged me to repeat the Jesus prayer, especially in turbulent times (Lord Jesus Christ, Have Mercy on Me a Sinner).

Now, more than ever, we must center our lives on Christ and stay grounded in the life of the Church. Let us be faithful in prayer, in reading Scripture, and acting as Christ-like as humanly possible.

Let us love and support one another as brothers and sisters, forgiving quickly and encouraging often. In a world divided, the Church is called to be a light—showing unity, peace, and love that come only from God.

I encourage each of you to make time to grow closer to Christ every day. Make time for prayer, attend the services when you are able, and let us walk together in fellowship. Remember distraction comes from the evil one.

Together, we can shine as witnesses of God's love and bring hope to a world in need—not through our own strength, but through His grace.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, and may His peace guard your hearts and minds.

With love in Christ, Nick Ambeliotis President

#### Dear beloved Holy Cross family,

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones doing well.

Recently, our community faced an unexpected challenge: a MAJOR repair to our main gas line. While the work was critical to keep our facilities safe and fully operational, the cost was significant and came without warning. Situations like this remind us why it's so important to maintain a strong reserve fund—so that when unexpected needs arise, we can respond with confidence and security knowing that we don't have to put our ministries or programs at risk.

At the same time, we are all aware that costs continue to rise in nearly every area of life—and our church is no exception. Our operating expenses are approximately \$80,000 each month. On top of that, we must also be mindful of maintaining our aging infrastructure so that Holy Cross remains a strong and welcoming home for generations to come.

But this isn't just about numbers—it's about stewardship. As St. Paul reminds us, "Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). By faithfully protecting and strengthening our reserve, we are caring for the blessings God has entrusted to us, ensuring the future of our Holy Cross family, and continuing to serve those who rely on our ministries.

Please prayerfully reflect on the role stewardship plays in your own life and to consider how your continued generosity continues to sustain our church foundation. Together, we are not only meeting today's needs but also preparing for tomorrow.

Thank you for your love, your trust, and your partnership in this mission. With God's grace and our shared commitment, we will continue to grow a stronger community united in our belief of Christ.

With love,

#### Rachel Gogos

Vice-President + Stewardship Chair

#### CHOIR DIRECTOR NEEDED

Reaching out to our community to see if anyone has interest in leading our Choir. If you or someone you know has the talent and a desire to direct the incredible voices at Holy Cross please reach out to a member of the Parish Council or Father Michael.



### GOLDEN CLUB

Join us on **Thursday, October 9th**, for a trip by van to the **Pittsburgh Botanic Garden in Oakdale**. The 65 acres of outdoor gardens and woodlands offers the natural beauty of western Pennsylvania. The Garden transformed its coal mined land, using ecological landscape practices, into a habitat for native flora and fauna, natural wildlife, art installations and surprises around every bend in the path. It is a hidden gem in the truest sense, so put on your walking shoes, bring your water bottle and prepare to explore this oasis of green space! Admission to the Garden is \$16, payable at entry. For lunch, we will dine at a local restaurant.

**RSVP** to Cynthia by text/phone at 412-722-9512 or Rene at 412-559-1721, no later than Monday, October 6th. Space is limited. Please arrive at the Church by 8:15 a.m. for boarding of the van. We hope to see you!

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Our **Curbumn Food Fair** is quickly approaching. The AFF Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to ensure another successful event, and we now respectfully ask for your help. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year for our Philoptochos, with all of our proceeds going to outreach. ANY of your time is greatly appreciated. If we all do a little, we will accomplish a lot. Feel free to bring a friend or family member to work with you! Please forward this email to family and friends and share our flyers on your social media.

\*\*We also need your delicious baked goods for our pastry table.\*\*

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** Please contact the following chairpersons:

**FOOD LINE**: Elaine Sofis 412-327-7017 ; <u>esofis@comcast.net</u> **PASTRY**: Dena Yamalis 412-589-2646 ; <u>dyamalis@comcast.net</u> -

baked good donations needed

CASHIERS: Denise Sokos 412-889-3399; dsokos@mac.com

**PREP KITCHEN**: Sadie Stang 412-915-2335; <u>sadiestang@hotmail.com</u> **YIA YIA's ATTIC**: Pauline Kitchen 412-491-2365; <u>kitchen05@comcast.net</u>

jewelry, purses, book donations accepted

#### Tear Down & Clean Up:

THURSDAY 10/2, 8:00 PM FRIDAY 10/3, 10 AM Start

Thank you all for your efforts. Please feel free to reach out with any questions. Dina Hartlep

President, Holy Cross Ladies Philoptochos Society 412-720-9383

## HOLY CROSS PHILOPTOCHOS AUTUMN FOOD FAIR FOOD LINE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR

WED, OCT 1st & THURS, OCT 2nd, llam-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 <a href="mailto:esofis@comcast.net">esofis@comcast.net</a> to volunteer a shift or two or BOTH DAYS! Thank you for volunteering to help support your Holy Cross Philoptochos in its Philanthropic endeavors.

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### HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH presents the 11<sup>th</sup> 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 "11<sup>th</sup> 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: ediamondhcpgh@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 @ ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com |
| I hereby waive and release any rights and claims for injury or damage that may occur to meduring my participation in the Walk.  Signature   |
| Parent / Logal Cuardian (if under 18)   |



#### GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

#### NEW METROPOLIS CENTER

#### "One Generation Shall Proclaim Thy Works to Another." (Psalm 144:4)

August 18, 2025

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church 123 Gilkeson Rd Pittsburgh, PA 15228-1015

Dear Fr. Michael.

Please accept our gratitude and that of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh for the gift of \$10,000.00\* towards building the new Metropolis Center, received August 14, 2025 a payment towards your Parish's pledge. You honor God with your generosity as a faithful steward of His blessings and are among the most significant and generous supporters to this project.

We are very excited to see the progress of construction and look forward to the day we can expand our ministries and enable our faithful to more deeply engage in Christ-centered activities for generations to come.

With Archpastoral blessings, and love in the Lord,

+SAVAS

METROPOLITAN OF PITTSBURGH

Your gifts of \$10,000.00 received via check #6915 dated 7/13/2025.

\* No tangible benefits, goods, or services were provided to you in exchange for this gift.





受ける できょう できょう できょう できょう できょう できょう さん day blessing: Lucia Marie, daughter of Alex & Alexa Pantuso



考えるのでは、 10 day blessing: Delilah "Ioanna," daughter of George & Alana Frazier



#### 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!

Of Interest to ALL of our College & University Students of ALL Universities (in the US): SPRING SEMESTER - 2026 (February through May) University of Pittsburgh's, **Dietrich to Cyprus** Program in Cooperation with the University of Nicosia (UNIC)

Dietrich to Cyprus: Peace, Migration, Sovereignty

https:// globalexperiences.pitt.edu/ cyprussemester

Led by Pittsburgh's own, Dr. Mike Epitropoulos (Pitt) This is an exciting time to study in and visit Cyprus! Cyprus will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2026, from January 1 to June 30. This will be the second time Cyprus has held the presidency. Students will take select ANY two to three (2-3) courses from UNIC's catalog (various departments) and two (2) from the Pitt "Peace, Migration, Sovereignty" program.

soference

Walk with the saints. serve your neighbor, and build a new city where the brokenhearted are loved back to life.

WELCOME SPEAKER FR. PAUL ABERNATHY



**NOVEMBER 5-7, 2025** ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE









#### GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Archepiscopal Encyclical for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross

September 14, 2025

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

Χαῖρε, Κριτοῦ δικαίου φανέρωσις.... (Ακάθιστος τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ, N) Hail, Manifestation of the Righteous Judge.... (Akathist of the Holy Cross, N)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today, we hail the Precious and Life-giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In many of our parishes, the Akathist to the Holy Cross is chanted in overflowing praise. Like so many of our magnificent liturgical texts, this Akathist contains glimpses and glimmers of the mystery of our salvation in Christ, which illumine our spiritual path and teach us the deep things of God.

It is not without purpose that our Theological School is named "Holy Cross," because the Cross of our Lord is one of the greatest teachers in the two thousand years of the Church. We have amazing and erudite Saints, like Basil and the Gregorys, whose writings endure through the ages, and who are studied intently at our Theological School. But the Holy Cross of our Lord teaches wordlessly. It teaches by example, and by sheer manifestation. Therefore, when we chant, "Hail, Manifestation of the Righteous Judge," we come to the realization that the Lord, hanging upon the Cross, is being revealed to us as the Righteous Judge.

Let us all pause for a moment and consider the only truly innocent human being, put to death for the sake of every other human being. It is an unfeigned "sign of contradiction," as the Prophet Simeon the Elder said (Luke 2:34). For from the Cross, the Lord delivers no judgment of anyone — not his crucifiers, nor the ones who clamored for His destruction, nor those who ridiculed Him in His agony. The Lord, the Judge of the Universe, judged no one; rather, He gave His life for the life of the world with forgiveness.

Such is the lesson for each of us, then, as we praise the Holy Cross. To forgive, rather than condemn. To love, rather than despise. These are the lessons that are at the core of our training of the good people studying at our beloved Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Today, on their Feastday, let us remember this vital Institution of our Church and support its mission, as we apply ourselves to the lesson of the Cross, the greatest teacher of our souls.

With paternal love in Christ,

16 Aprentis Lyndopoeol

† ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America





#### Sun Mon Tue



# Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host a coffee hour!



| 5<br>8:15am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Liturgy                            | 6   | 7  |
|---|---|--|
|   | 6:30pm Paraclesis 8pm YAL BasketYAL in Community Center | 7pm Philoptochos Meeting<br>7pm GOYA Meeting/Bonfire |
| 22<br>8:15am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Liturgy<br>Walk for Missions      | 13  | 14   |
|   | 6:30pm Paraclesis                                       |  |
| 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy COFFEE HOUR:                       | 20  | 21   |
| Archdiocese Director of<br>Parish Planned Giving,<br>Melpomeni Murdakes | 6:30pm Paraclesis                                       |  |
| <b>26</b><br>8:15am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Liturgy                    | 27  | 28 OXI Day   |
|   | 6:30pm Paraclesis                                       | 7pm YAL Pickleball                                   |

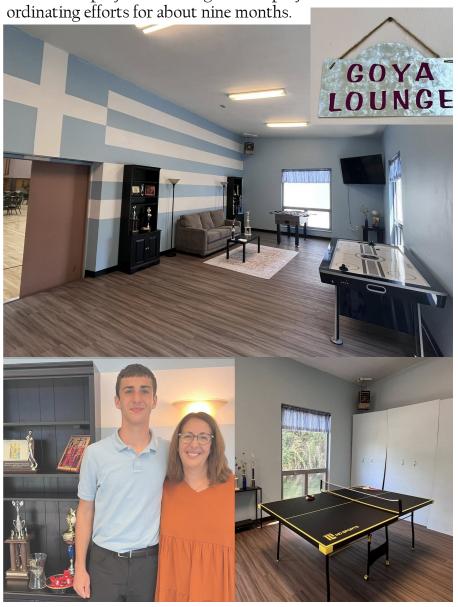
# October 9095

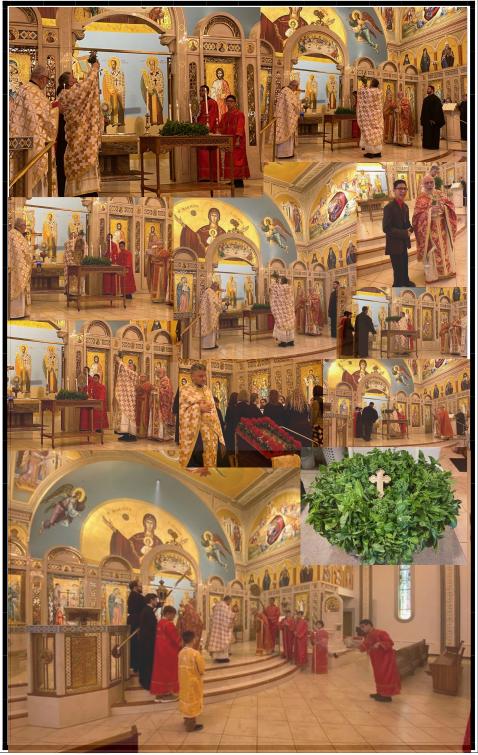
| Wed  | Thu   | Fri      | Sat  |
|--|---|----------|--|
| 1 October Holy Protection 8am Orthros 9am Div. Lit. Autu | <b>2</b><br>mn Food Fair 11am-8pn   | <i>3</i> | 4  |
| 4:30ρμ greek school<br>7PM BIBLE STUDY                   |   | **       | Wedding/NO Vespers   |
| <b>8</b> 4:15рм <del>G</del> REEK School                 | 9 St. James,<br>son of Alphaeus<br>Apostle<br>8:30am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Lit |          | 11 St. Philip the<br>Apostle of the 70<br>8:30am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Lit                |
| 7PM BIBLE STUDY  |   |          | 5pm Great Vespers  |
| 15   | 16  | 17       | 18 Luke the Evangelist 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Lit                                      |
| 4:15pm greek school<br>7pm Bible Study                   | 7PM CATECHISM<br>CLASS  |          | 5pm Great Vespers  |
| 22   | 23 St. James,<br>brother of the Lord<br>8:30am Orthros<br>9:30am Divine Lit       | 24       | 25   |
| 4:15pm greek school<br>7Pm Bible Study                   |   |          | 5pm Great Vespers<br>6pm JOY Bonfire   |
| 29   | 30  | 31       | 1 November Osios David of Evia & Sts. Kosmas & Damianos 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy |
| 4:15pm greek gchool<br>7PM BIBLE STUDY                   |   |          | 5pm Great Vespers  |





Earlier this year the storage room at the end of the gym was "gifted" to GOYA so the youth could renovate it into a comfortable and inviting space. The lounge is freshly painted, has brand new flooring, and is stocked with a TV, a ping pong table, an air hockey table, and a foosball table! Michael Murphy took on the project as his Eagle Scout project and has been coordinating efforts for about pine months.









September 14th 2025

"Come all you faithful, let us worship the Holy Resurrection of Christ, for behold through the Cross, joy has come into all the world." This phrase is taken from the Orthodox prayer that begins "Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ," and not only typically follows the Sunday matins gospel reading, but is said silently by the clergy at other times in the Liturgy. It goes without saying that the Cross is central to Christianity, but the claim can be made even more radical by stating that it is the defining symbol of Christendom, so much so that to fully embrace its implications, we must similarly embrace the Christian world view. It is all but impossible to accept the Cross, and not look at the world the way Christians do. And so today, on this the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, let us consider why this is so.

Some aspects of the Cross are easy to extend to other faiths and philosophies. It is a symbol of selflessness, and many hold that to be central to their beliefs. Anyone who is a humanitarian understands that. But the Cross is more radical than mere altruism. It is in its essence an instrument of agonizing death. No humanist would embrace the guillotine, or electric chair, or the hangman's noose as a cause for joy, yet for the Christian it is undeniably so with the Cross. It is not just an instrument of death, it is the symbol of life. "For behold through the Cross, joy has come into all the world." This is not the raving of a masochist, but a confession of the metaphysical. For the only way the Cross, that horrid instrument of Roman capital punishment, can be a cause for real joy is if we can look beyond the physical and see its spiritual dimension. So no one who truly accepts the Cross acknowledges that there is something more than the physical universe.

Yet by the same token, the Cross is anchored in the world which we experience through our senses. It is not a symbol of escape from this life into a better one. A true dualist does not extol anything material. Socrates did not extol the hemlock that poisoned him, and neither did his followers. They might not have disparaged the Cross, but neither would they have embraced it as a symbol. The Cross in its fullness implies a joining of earth and heaven, on the one hand proclaiming the joy of eternal life, yet at the same time being made of the stuff of creation.

It is also a symbol of the acceptance of suffering. It acknowledges, as does the first of the Buddhist four noble truths that Life is suffering, but it does not proclaim that we should seek the end of suffering, nor that attachment is suffering's cause. Instead, it proclaims that

some suffering is good, because it is the suffering that proceeds from love. Everyone who experiences real love knows that there is suffering in it. It is no accident that in the Orthodox wedding service we draw parallels with the martyrs. Or that parenthood is also acknowledged as a sacrifice. Many of us here have experienced firsthand a weeping icon. Many if not most of these are of the Panagia. But we know that the Queen of Heaven has been taken up and even now lives the transfigured life. She has her renewed, heavenly body. And yet she sill cries. How could that be so? For many faiths, heaven is a place of happiness, where tears have no place. But the Cross is the symbol of the willingness to embrace suffering in the cause of Love. And because the Theotokos loves so deeply, her heart breaks for us, and so she weeps. Even though she dwells in heaven, she embraces the suffering of divine love. And yet this does not diminish her joy. "For behold through the Cross, joy has come into all the world."

If it has done this, then both the joy and the suffering are ours as well. Neither is avoided, the Cross embodies both. When the Lord tells us to take up our cross and follow Him, as is proclaimed in the gospel, it is an acknowledgement of this. And it is done in imitation of what He already has done, for that command is prefaced with "He who would come after me." The Cross is not just His, it is ours, too. It shows us that because it is for us as well as for Him, that our destiny lies on the same path as well. The way of the Cross, is the way of the Divine, and to acknowledge and embrace it is to acknowledge and embrace that our destiny is to become partakers of divine nature. Heaven for us is not a place of reward for having lived a life pleasing to God. It is more. It is the opportunity to grow and become even more like Him.

My brothers and sisters, do you now see why the Cross is so uniquely a Christian symbol? For even though it is an instrument of death, it is also the gateway to life. It embraces both. And even though it is rooted in the physical world, it affirms the hope of the world to come. It embraces both. And even though it is a source of suffering, it is also the cause for ultimate joy. It embraces both. And even though the divine endured it, it is for humans as well. It embraces both. Life and death; Physical and Spiritual; Suffering and Joy; Human and Divine: this is the essence of the Christian message, and in its entirety is unique to it and no other faith or worldview. It is ours alone. "Come all you faithful, let us worship the Holy Resurrection of Christ, for behold through the Cross, joy has come into all the world." To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen. +Fr. Photios





Last Sunday, we celebrated the Exaltation of the Precious and Life Giving Cross, our Church's feast day, a celebration so magnificent it cannot be contained in one day. Throughout the week, the Church has continued to celebrate the Cross, and on this day, a week later, we have one last grand celebration of this feast of the Cross. Today's readings and hymns all center around the Cross, and I'd like to focus in on the Epistle reading for today, from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, in which he writes, "Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified."

When Saint Paul refers here to the law, he is referring to the commandments of law given to the Jews in the times of the Old Testament. Most of us are familiar with the Ten Commandments, but in the Old Testament, one can find 613 commandments given by God to the people of Israel. These commandments covered nearly every aspect of life and society, and were the basis of the Jewish community from ancient times through the very time when Saint Paul was writing. However, Saint Paul says something that would have serious implications in his time, namely, that "a man is not justified through works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ."

What Saint Paul is telling us is that, even if one follows the letter of the law down to the minutest detail, even if one obeys the commandments to not kill, steal, commit adultery, and if even if one follows the orders to honor father and mother, and to have no other gods before God, even if one does all these things, follows all these laws, one cannot be made good by them alone. After all, just because we do not kill, does not mean we don't have hatred in our hearts for our brother and sister. Just because we don't commit adultery, doesn't mean we don't have lust in our eyes, and just because we do our duty to honor our father and mother and even God, does not mean we have any love for any them.

The law alone cannot make people good. No, Saint Paul tells us, only Christ can make us good. Christ calls us to a higher commandment, a higher law, the law of love. In the gospels, Christ is questioned as to what the greatest commandments are, and in response, he tells us that the essence of all the Old Testament law can be summarized in two commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.and 'Love your neighbor as yourself." In other words, the aim and essence of all the laws should always be love.

This love that Christ describes can be imaged as a Cross. One beam runs upwards from the Earth towards the heavens, like our relation to God our Creator. The other beam of the Cross stretches outwards, like arms, ready to embrace and love all the rest of the suffering creation, and at the intersection of these two beams we find our own hearts. These two loves, for God and for neighbor, like the beams of the Cross are inextricable and support one another.

However, the world whispers to us always, telling us what love is, but the "love" which the world tells us of, is often only self-gratification in disguise. Real love, true love, the love which Christ showed us on the Cross, must always involve sacrifice. Loving God requires sacrifice: it requires sacrifice and struggle to come to Church, to keep a prayer rule, and to follow the commandments. Loving our neighbor likewise requires sacrifice, to give to another instead of ourselves, especially when our efforts are met with ungratefulness or even hostility. As we leave this period of celebration for the Holy Cross, we would do well to remember the lessons of the Cross, for no greater love has a person than this: the love of laying down one's life for brother and sister, and above all, for God.

~Elias Diamond





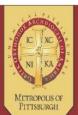
# Walk for Missions Coffee Hour

## Walk for Missions Hot Wings Contest

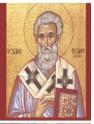








### **A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν** NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH





Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual GOMoPalooza Music & Arts Festival held at St. Demetrios, Warren, Ohio on Saturday August 23 celebrated the talent and craft of all ages of the Metropolis! The fabulous assortment of music all day by solo performers, bands, acoustic singers and our

very own 'Band of Fathers" created a carnival fun atmosphere and in all we had 16 Youth & Adult solo acts and five Bands play. The Art Exhibit showcased artisans, craftspeople and Iconographers, in total 30+ works of art were displayed. Kids had a fantastic time participating in over ten activity stations and we enjoyed a delicious selection of refreshments. Thanks to all that volunteered their time to create this wholesome family fun event. Much gratitude to all the sponsors, we are eternally grateful, and big thanks to all of YOU that came out to GOMoPalooza! We look forward to seeing you next summer for more GOMoPalooza!!

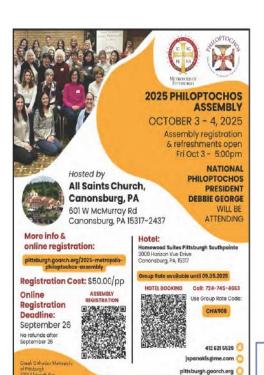


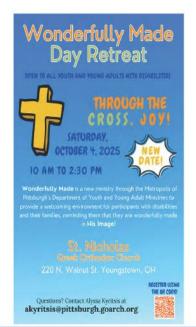
















MARK YOUR CALENDAR! SAVE THE DATES!

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 greekdasoers@HolyTrinityPgh.org

MICHELLE KOTSAGRELOS METROPOLIS CHAIRPERSON mmk8372shatmail.com

ALVSSA KYRITSIS METROPOLIS YZAM DIRECTOR akyritsisäpittsburgh.goarch.org



### 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



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### Youth Health Kit Drive and Assembly

Youth Volunteers and Monetary Donations Needed!

November 8, 2025 | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

### HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

123 Gilkeson Rd. (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228
All Orthodox Youth Groups are asked to participate.
Students, please bring your volunteer forms for school credit.

Our goal is to assemble <u>several thousand</u> health kits. Donations are needed to purchase bulk health kit supplies.

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

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



# OKTOBERFEST HAPPY HOUR

To Benefit International Orthodox Christian Charities



## Thursday, October 9 • 6–9 pm Rusty Gold Brewing Company

43 W Pike St. ~ Canonsburg, PA 15317
DONATIONS WELCOME | NO RSVP NEEDED

20% of food & beverage proceeds will benefit IOCC

Make a donation or become a sponsor at

## iocc.org/pittsburgh

Or make checks payable to IOCC and mail to Kevin Reck at 105 Sycamore Dr. McMurray, PA 15317. Contact Kevin Reck at 724.344.5610 or

kevinsreck@gmail.com with any questions.

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### Bourbon Tasting

TO BENEFIT IOCC

Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:00 PM Adult Tickets \$70; Veterans and Active Duty US Military \$60

### LEAF & BEAN

3525 Washington Rd. | McMurray, PA 15317 Tickets include a Leaf & Bean gift, three bourbon samples, and light hors d'oeuvres

Register online at:

## iocc.org/pittsburgh

Or mail checks (payable to IOCC) to Nick Terezis, 306 Marberry Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Questions? Contact Nick Terezis at nterezis@mstrategic.com or 740.282.5198



For more on Rusty Gold and their meticulously brewed drafts, visit www.facebook.com/rustygoldbrewery or call 724.485,2332

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

Return Service Requested



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