



HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

The Fall has returned, and the daylight is waning and the night is growing. Soon the leaves will change and return to the earth. All things happening according to God's purposes and in His time of the seasons. It is during this time of the year where we especially offer prayers and hymns of thanksgiving and anticipate the coming (Advent) of our Lord in the feast of His birth (Nativity). November brings us into this time of preparation and fasting for the Lord's birth. We also have a national holiday where we gather and remember with gratitude all that the Lord has done and still does for us and our salvation. We are blessed! Let us be mindful of the Lord's generosity and let us respond with love and thankfulness to the many gifts He bestows on us.

In our Bible Study we are reading from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a young man who was tasked with bringing an unpopular message to the people of Jerusalem and surrounding Judah. The message was because of the infidelity of the King of Israel, the leaders of the Temple, and the abandoning of God's law, the nation of Israel and its city, Jerusalem, would be destroyed. This message was delivered with much anguish by Jeremiah. He loved God and he loved his brothers and sisters, fellow Israelites. Jeremiah wept and pleaded with them to repent and

continued p.4 →

NOVEMBER 2025

General Assembly Meeting Notice

DEAR PARISHIONERS:

There will be a **GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING** on Sunday, November 23, 2025 after the Divine Liturgy following a light lunch provided by Parish Council. Please make every effort to attend.

AGENDA

- (1) Opening Prayer.
- (2) Elections of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for that Assembly.
- (3) Reading of minutes of the previous meeting.
- (4) Nominations of candidates for election to the Parish Council. [list current nominees]
- (5) Election of three-member Board of Auditors. [list current members and current nominees]
- (6) Election of three-member Board of Elections. [list current members and current nominees]
- (7) Election of Building Committee Members [list current members and when their term ends]
- (8) Election of five-member By-Laws Committee (every third year). [list current members and current nominees]
- (9) Election of five members to the Long Range Planning Committee (every fifth year). [list current members and current nominees]
- (10) The Priest's Report.
- (11) A report by the President of the Parish Council.
- (12) Old Business.
- (13) New Business

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael H. Kallaur

Economos

Nick Ambeliotis

Parish Council President

MHK:NA:nj

10/22/25

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 25 Issue 11

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.



return to a life pleasing to God. Not only were the people unwilling to repent, but they also defended their actions as being justified. Jeremiah tried to prick the conscience and hearts of his fellow Israelites.

“Cursed is the man who puts his hope in man and who will strengthen the flesh of his arm in him and withdraws in his heart from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert. He shall not see when good things come but shall dwell in salt lands along the sea and in the desert, in a salt land where no one dwells. But blessed is the man who puts his trust in the Lord, for the Lord shall be his hope. He shall be like a flourishing tree alongside the waters which spreads its roots toward the moisture. He will not fear when the burning heat comes, for he shall be like the root in a grove in the year of drought. He shall not fear, for he shall be like a tree that does not cease yielding its fruit.”

“The heart is deep beyond all things, and it is the man. Even so, who can know him? I, the Lord, examine hearts and test minds, to give each man according to his ways and the fruits of his practices. A partridge coos and collects eggs she did not lay. So is a man who obtains his wealth, but not with judgment. In the midst of his days his riches will forsake him, and at the time of his end he will be foolish.

An exalted throne of glory is our sanctuary. O Lord, the patient endurance of Israel, let all who forsake You be ashamed. Let those who fall away from Me in apostacy be written in the earth, that they forsook the Lord, the fountain of life.” (Jeremiah 17:1-9)

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us not turn aside from the great calling we have been granted by our Lord. We do not put our trust in mankind or in anything that would take the place of our God. We trust only in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and in His divine providence granted to all who are willing to take up their cross, deny their self-will, and follow Him. As the seeds of God’s word are scattered, our soil (soul) must be

cultivated and prepared to receive His words and give them a place to grow and produce the good fruit God expects from us. We rejoice today that there are many opportunities to be part of God's mission in a world that often rejects its Creator.

St. Nicolai Velimirovic writes, "A child was on a journey by night, and it fell from hole to hole, from ditch to ditch, until at last it fell into a very deep pit, out of which there was no way to escape. When the child abandoned itself to its fate and thought it was the end, suddenly there was someone standing above the hole, letting a rope down to it and calling on the child to take a firm hold on the rope. This was the king's son, who rescued the child, washed it and clothed it and took it to its court, keeping the child with him. Was the child saved by its own act? In no way. Its only action was to grab the rope and holding on to it. By what then was the child saved? By the mercy of the king's son. In God's dealing with man, this mercy is called grace. "By grace you are saved." (Ephesians 2:5,8) The Apostle Paul uses these words twice in the paragraph that the faithful might know and understand. (**Prologue** - Vol IV, pg.178)

In the Scriptures, God is calling out to us. Whether it is 500, 700, or even 1000 years before Jesus was born, God is calling out to us through His prophets and saints. We pray that God opens our hearts and minds that we would not only hear His words but cultivate and produce the good fruit He calls us to produce. The time of Advent is another opportunity to do so. May our hearts be filled with thanksgiving and we respond with joy to be the faithful stewards God calls us to be.

On a personal note, Presvytera and I will be taking a trip to Greece (returning 11/14) these next few weeks. Please keep us in your prayers. We will be praying for you as we have the opportunity to visit holy sites and venerate the relics of the saints.

With love & prayers in Christ,
Fr. Michael

The Broken Church *By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

The Church, in her visible and human face, is always broken by the sins of her children. She is hanged upon the Cross of tension stretched between her longing for the heavens as a radiant bride without blemish or fault; and the passions, weaknesses, and falls of her earthly members who knowingly or unknowingly stain her garment, hinder her mission, and pull her downward. This is also the image of the Christian. A believer is one who fully recognizes his weakness and his inclination toward sin yet continually strives toward the heights. This is the struggle of a lifetime. He draws from the grace of God and from constant repentance both his hope and his path to salvation. That is why we find, in the lives of the saints, men and women who reached great heights of purity and holiness, yet still, on their deathbeds, begged for a few more days so that they might begin repentance.

The visible face of the Church is revealed through her members. They are human beings who, through their union with Christ the Head of the Church, are united to one another as one Body. At least, that is how it should be. In reality, they are not always this bright image. Their ongoing repentance, which should be their daily way of life, helps them approach that ideal. But in truth, many within the Church, in all her ranks and orders, are caught up in many other concerns more than in the Lord of the Church Himself who is the very reason for their being in the Church at all.

The believers who are still living in this world are known as the "Church Militant," while those who have entered eternal life are called the "Church Triumphant." Yet the Church remains one; these are only educational terms, not dogmatic distinctions. The "Church Militant," like every human community, is always vulnerable to corruption and failure. Therefore, she constantly needs spiritual struggle, correction, and renewal. Every human group is susceptible to weakness, and the earthly Church is no exception though she possesses the gift of repentance that can wash away the soot of her children from her face. As the Apostle Paul said, "We have this treasure [faith] in earthen vessels [sinful humans], (2 Cor. 4:7)" not in vessels of steel.

The more her members long for eternal life and begin to live it here and now, the more the Church reflects the image of the Kingdom in this world. Otherwise, everything in her remains of this world, even if wrapped in religious language and called "Christian." Renunciation of worldliness and freedom from its temptations are essential conditions for the Church to remain faithful to her Lord. Whoever does not believe with certainty that in the Church we are "poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing everything" (2 Cor. 6:10) is still far from the mind of Christ, which the Scriptures command us to acquire and make our own.

For many, the Church is seen as an organization to be run by the spirit of this world, since it holds resources, institutions, and influence. They think that as long as the Church has money, property, and administrative structures, her witness is secure. They imagine that material wealth alone can ensure her mission and thus they become careless about how it is obtained,

justifying questionable means. They forget that the Lord of the Church provides what is needed when there are pure and faithful hearts devoted to Him. Certainly, earthly goods, when placed in service of the Gospel, can support the Church's witness and ministry. But they cannot create it. True witness is born only from souls in love with Christ, who have made eternal life their goal.

When the People of God are consumed by earthly concerns, they fall into the trap of forgetting the Giver and losing sight of the goal. When believers rely on their own cleverness, planning, and worldly wisdom as though the Head of the Church (Christ) were absent, they estrange the Church from her Lord, instead of estranging themselves from the world (2 Cor. 5:8). Then, they begin to justify whatever seems profitable or advantageous, even crossing the boundaries of what the canons forbid, offering a thousand excuses. The Church needs saints to remain upright. The saints possess discernment, the ability to distinguish between what belongs to God and what belongs to the world. Only the humble keep the Lord's voice audible and obeyed within the Church.

If you desire the Church to be faithful and striving, and striving, begin with yourself. Change yourself. Purify and cleanse your heart. Listen to the divine Word with reverence. Examine your thoughts and actions daily. Shake off the dust of sin and clothe yourself with repentance without ceasing. Then you will become a new person able to recognize your Lord's voice and will, to act according to His pleasure, and to pass that breath of life to your brothers and sisters.

Once, a journalist tried to trap Mother Teresa of Calcutta with a provocative question: "What should change in the Church?" She replied with deep wisdom, "You and I." Indeed, as long as believers continue to indulge in easy criticism, casting accusations at this or that person while excusing themselves, the face of Christ in His Church will remain wounded and nothing will change. With their constant criticism, they disfigure His face with their own hands often without realizing it. But ignorance does not excuse responsibility.

Christ is present in His Church: in the Liturgy, in the Holy Mysteries, in lives of virtue, in the patience of those who are suffering, in the joy of the pure, in the faces of those who love, in the struggle of the repentant, in the innocence of the chaste, in the smile of the gentle, in the cheerfulness of the generous, in the simplicity of the humble, in the detachment of the wealthy, in the contentment of the poor, in the integrity of the faithful, in the service of the needy, in the silence of those who are content, and in the hearts of those who are positive. Christ is in our midst, so let us recognize His presence, bear witness to Him, and work so that our sight of Him never fades from among us. Let us be those who light candles instead of merely cursing the darkness.

Then, perhaps, He will forgive our shortcomings and make us part of His little flock.



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:

Eagle - \$16,000

Ox - \$24,000

Lion - \$25,000

Young Man - \$25,000

Nativity of the Theotokos - \$50,000

Assumption of Mary - \$47,000

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

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.





His Eminence Metropolitan Savas with clergy, youth workers, religious educators, parish councilors, and Metropolis staff who were at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Columbus attending the 2025 Metropolis Clergy-Laity, Religious Educator, & Youth Worker Assembly.

SAVE the DATE:
Thursday, December 11! NEW this Year!
VASILOPITA Making!

Vasilopita (bread using our delicious recipe) will be prepared on Thursday, December 11. A coin will be included in every loaf of circular bread. Rolling begins at 10am, egg washing at 11:30am, bread wrapping and selling from 2-4:30pm. The freshly baked bread, \$12 a loaf, plain or with sesame seeds, will be sold on baking day, Thursday, December 11, Sunday, December 14 and if available, Sunday, December 21 after Divine Liturgy. Cash or checks payable to Holy Cross Philoptochos. Our Vasilopita is a special Christmas and New Year's gift! ANY of your time is appreciated! Lunch will be provided. Thank you for supporting your Philoptochos in its philanthropic endeavors! Elaine Sofis, cell 412 327-7017, home 412 344-7046 or esofis@comcast.net



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



Holy Cross Ladies Philoptochos
invites you to our

CHRISTMAS *party*

Tuesday
5:00 PM

9

December
2025

COCKTAIL HOUR AT 5:00 CASH BAR
DINNER SERVED AT 6:00

**SOUTH HILLS COUNTRY
CLUB**

4305 BROWNSVILLE ROAD

FOOD SELECTIONS

CHICKEN ASIAGO \$45

GRILLED ATLANTIC SALMON \$49

NY STRIP STEAK \$62

VEGAN RAVIOLI \$43

ALL DINNERS INCLUDE SALAD, SEASONAL VEGETABLE
MEDLEY,

YUKON GOLD POTATOES WITH DILL BUTTER, AND
LEMON CAKE

RSVP DYAMALIS@COMCAST.NET

412-589-2646

BY DECEMBER 1ST

WITH FOOD SELECTION





Philoptochos is about to make your holidays a little easier! Frozen pans of spanakopita, made fresh this month, will be available for purchase for only \$35/pan (cut into 16 square pieces). This will be a great addition to any dinner, Steeler or holiday party! Comes ready to bake in a disposable 9"x13" foil pan along with baking instructions. Preorders preferred and pickup on Sundays in November in the Community Center **after** liturgy.

Contact Katina Galie at kagalie@comcast.net or text 412-951-8383 or see Katina or Dina Hartlep during coffee hour to place your order.

Thank you for your continued support of Holy Cross Ladies Philoptochos' efforts to help others.



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](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.

RECLAIM THE TRADITION *Conference*

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

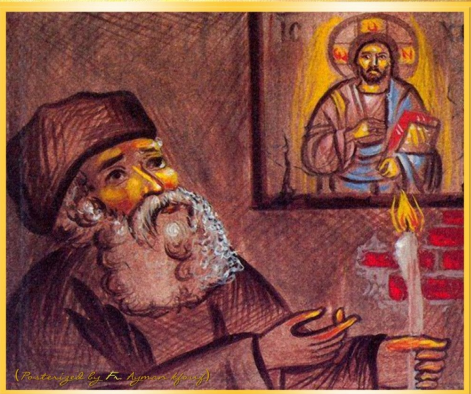


HOSTED BY
**NEIGHBORHOOD
RESILIENCE
PROJECT**

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



WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS
FOR THEY BECOME WORDS
WATCH YOUR WORDS
FOR THEY BECOME ACTIONS
WATCH YOUR ACTIONS
FOR THEY BECOME HABITS
WATCH YOUR HABITS
FOR THEY BECOME CHARACTER
WATCH YOUR CHARACTER
FOR IT BECOMES YOUR DESTINY



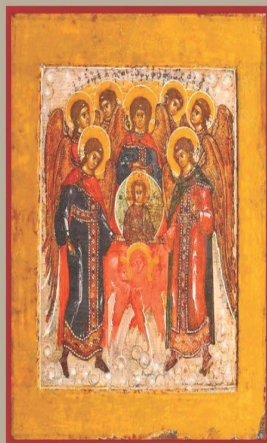
ATTENTION
High School Seniors
and Parents:

The application for the
Popi Hagelios
Memorial Philanthropy Award
of the
Philoptochos Society
of Holy Cross Church

will be available in the narthex,
Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net or
Denise Melis, dmelis@comcast.net,
electronically, beginning
Sunday, November 16, 2025.
The COMPLETE application
is due by 9PM Sunday, March
29, 2026. NO EXCEPTIONS!

The award is available to a
PLEDGED 2026 Holy Cross
family member who is a 2026
graduating high school senior.
Two philanthropy awards are
a possibility to two Holy
Cross high school graduating
seniors. A similar application
is available from Mt. Lebanon
High School. You may apply
to both philanthropy awards,
but will only be eligible for
one \$1500 award.

Vigil in Commemoration of the
Synaxis of the Archangels



Vespers
Litia w/ Artoklasia
Orthros
Liturgy
Followed by refreshments

Dormition of the Theotokos
Greek Orthodox Church
12 Washington Ave,
Oakmont, PA 15139

Friday,
November 7th,
7 pm -
12:30 am

YOU ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

Eulogy for Damon Halkias- 9/29/25 by Father John Chakos

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). I begin with this Scripture verse because there is a story behind it that relates to both Damon and me some 55 years ago. It was the third Sunday of Lent, the veneration of the Cross. Both of us were choir members. It was a transformative liturgy, at the end of which our priest, Fr. Constantine Monios, asked both of us to consider ordination to the diaconate to help him in his fast growing parish. That Sunday I heeded the Lord's call and was sent by our saintly Bishop Gerasimos to the seminary. For his part, Damon, together with his beloved wife and co-worker of 62 years- Carol- answered to a different call, that of a chosen member of the royal priesthood. His altar would also be a place where heaven and earth intersected, but in dispirit settings. Among the many places Damon, together with Carol, would serve would be the diocesan summer camps and retreats, the emotion fraught campfires where he urged the youth to turn to Christ, the young people whose pain he felt, the stewardship program he zealously promoted, the choir loft he sang tenor in, the Monday night prayer meetings he led, the parish councils he served on, the young people with addictions he reached out to in his beauty shop or at Circle C. Needless to say, Damon's impact reached far and wide and touched many lives, not only at the local level, but throughout the entire Archdiocese. Many leaders in the church today, both Clergy and laity, found inspiration and encouragement from Damon. He was always keen to see the potential in others. There are few, even among the clergy, who have done so much for the Orthodox Church. He was a true lay missionary, equal to the Apostles in every way.

Motivating all this drive and devotion was a burning force, a kind of "fire in the belly," an energy deep within his soul. I think of the words of Christ who once exclaimed, "Zeal for thy house consumes me" (Psalm 69:9). In Damon's case it's an apt expression, not only for the house of the Lord, but the people in it. He wanted things to be made right, not only with God, but also between feuding members of the household of God, whether it was a troubled married couple or divided family members. As soon as he learned of a problem, his caring response was immediate. He never held back when it came to the needs of others. Even their house became a place of respite and healing for many, thanks to the hospitality of Damon and Carol.

As a person who gave unstintingly of himself to so many, Damon needed to renew the fire of faith within himself and fill it with the Holy Spirit. The kindling for this fire was the church and its sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession, of which he was a frequent partaker. Both Damon and I, together with our spouses, awoke to a deeper faith at a time of great renewal in the Pittsburgh area through the charismatic movement. Instead of taking us away from our Orthodox faith, it brought us even closer, so close that we wished to serve it the rest of our lives.



Now comes the hard part, the Cross that awaits all of us, that we must willingly carry towards the end of our life. This involves a deeper, fuller, and more intimate engagement with life. This moment is characterized by living with greater generosity, forgiveness, and love, rather than through withdrawal or morbid preoccupation. Preparing for the end of life means truly living it, finishing what needs to be finished by loving more deeply, and ultimately, blessing others rather than holding onto bitterness and accusation. Damon's faith toward the end was an open book, his confessions were honest and sometimes painful, his love for others deep, his forgiveness genuine and his blessings abundant. With him in this difficult journey was his partner in life, the other half of his soul. Yes Carol, you were there for him. He couldn't have done as much as he did without you. Even as he struggled to breathe with a weak heart, suffering with a mind clouded over with depression, he never lost his faith. And Carol was there reading a psalm to him as he breathed his last. The name of Jesus was always on his lips and in his heart. The fire within burned brightly, even as he carried his cross for the last time

One final note about my frequent encounters with Damon. A long time ago, I told him that he was at the top of my prayer list. Subsequently, he would ask me each time, "Am I still at the top of your list," and I would reassure him that he was. Today, I would like to say, Yes, Damon you are still on my list, but in a different way. Now, I must ask him the same question, "Damon, am I, and so many others that you cared for over the years, on your prayer list." Memory eternal dear brother and friend. May God's holy angels carry you into paradise, where the zeal you showed in this life may shine even more brightly, until the return of our Lord in glory.

GOYA Kickoff







GOYA Bonfire



ORTHODOXY

In Tap

CAFE EDITION

FOR YOUNG ADULTS



FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Maria Diamond

MANAGER OF 'SO BLUE'

HELLENIC COLLEGE GRADUATE

ACTIVE MINISTRIES PARTICIPANT AT HOLY CROSS

NOVEMBER 9, 2025 AT 5:00 PM

Fresh Start Cafe

46 W Pike Street Canonsburg, PA 15317

TOPIC

WHOLE IN SPIRIT:

EMBRACING MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Following our speaker, we invite you to enjoy fellowship, a lively discussion and delicious coffees and treats!

Questions? Contact Nina Casella at nina.p.casella@gmail.com





Sun	Mon	Tue
 Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host a coffee hour! 		
2 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	3 6:30pm Paraclesis 8pm YAL Basketball in Community Center	4 7pm Philoptochos Meeting 7pm GOYA Meeting/Lounge Olympics
9 St. Nektarios 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy GOYA Bake Sale 5PM ORTHODOXY ON TAP @FRESH START CAFE	10 6:30pm Paraclesis to St. Nektarios	11
16 GREEK Folk Dance Festival 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	17 6:30pm Paraclesis	18 7pm Parish Council
23 GOYA Fall Retreat 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy General Assembly	24 6:30pm Paraclesis	25 St. Katherine 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy
YOUTH SUNDAY 30 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy		7:30pm YAL Pickleball

November 2025

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 November <i>Osios David of Evia & Sts. Kosmas & Damianos</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers 6:30pm YAL Simmons Farm
5	4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	6 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	7 First Steps at Aviary 	8 Holy Archangels 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers
12	4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	13 St. John Chrysostom 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy 11am Golden Club 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	14 Apostle Philip GREEK folk dance festival	15 NATIVITY FAST BEGINS 5pm Great Vespers
19	4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	20 7PM CATECHISM	21 Entrance of Theotokos 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy	22 GOYA Fall Retreat 5pm Great Vespers
26	4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	27 Thanksgiving 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 	28	29 5pm Great Vespers

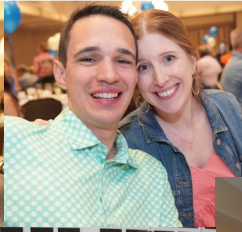
2025 Golf Outing













FINDING GOD IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

MISSION WALK SUNDAY- 10/12/25

~Fr. John Chakos

On one of my first mission trips to Guatemala, I traveled on winding dirt roads, up and down a forested mountain, to the village of San Miguel. The driver was none other than Fr. Andres Giron, the founder of the Mayan Orthodox Church in Guatemala. I had no idea what to expect. After a warm welcome, we were escorted to an outdoor table for a simple meal of soup and tortillas. I noticed the women of the village preparing the meal in a nearby wooden structure, but strangely, only the men served the meal and ate with us. During this time, the women kept their distance, not even speaking to me. I found this a bit strange, but I assumed it was part of their culture. The time came for a prayer service, preceded first by confession. Since I was a stranger and new to their customs, I stood off to the side. Fr. Andres took up his position in a humble shanty-like home, in front of which a long line of people gathered. Realizing that this could take some time, I asked Fr. Andres if I could help him with the confessions. He gladly accepted my offer of help. Then, I was escorted to another simple structure and waited to see what would happen. Suddenly, I looked out the door and saw that many of the women had lined up for their turn to confess. I wondered what they would say, since up to now they remained uncommunicative during my visit. One by one they entered, and the hitherto silent women began to speak to my surprise. Suddenly, the tears began to flow like cataracts of grace. They whispered into my ear from a place deep within themselves, showing me that they knew God in an intimate way. Surprised and humbled, I realized that the word of God had taken deep root in this unexpected place. From this experience, I was reminded that the seeds of God's word can raise sprouts of grace anywhere.

This brings me to the parable of the Sower. God, the sower, goes out to sow and He scatters his seed generously, almost wastefully, everywhere—on the road, among the rocks, among the thorns, on bad soil, and on rich soil, and even in the obscure village of San Miguel. No farmer would ever do this. Who would waste seed on soil that can never produce a harvest? God, it seems, doesn't ask that question. He simply keeps scattering his seed everywhere, over- generously, even wastefully, never calculating the cost in terms of a return. God is prodigal beyond all imagining. Even those of us with hardened minds, or shallow faith, or lives weighed down by many worries receive the seeds of His word without measure.

Among other things, this speaks of God's infinite riches, love, and patience. For us, there is both a huge challenge and a huge consolation in that. The challenge, of course, is to respond to the infinite number of invi-

tations that God scatters on our path from minute to minute. The consolation is that, no matter how many of God's invitations we ignore, there will always be an infinite number of others. No matter how many we've already ignored or turned down, there are new ones awaiting us each minute. When we've gone through the entire period of lent and all of Holy Week without praying or changing our lives, for example, there's still Pascha. The words from the homily of St. Chrysostom capture the essence of God's never-ending care for us: "You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry; partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!" When we've ignored a thousand invitations, there's still another one waiting. God is prodigal, so are the chances God gives us.

The mission of the Church is to be part of God's generous seed- scattering program. We are called to go to places where no one expects to find faith, much less share it. It's easy for us to make the local parish our castle, looking for God within its four walls. The word "Orthodox" is sometimes mis-interpreted as entitling its members to be part of an exclusive group, either ethnically or racially. Only recently, I was told of a mission-minded parish priest who was chastised for bringing in too many converts. Mission work, however, is not about being exclusive but inclusive.

I would like to conclude with the experience of our Ladies Philoptochos, whose members often joined me in the outreach to the Guatemalan orphanage. It proved to be a true and unexpected banquet of faith amidst the humblest of circumstances. The main course was magnificent worship from children's voices, the dessert was smiles, laughter and hugs, kisses and a sense of joy that permeated our entire stay. How can this be, some will ask? Can God be found in such places? Locked within the gated confines of a ghetto, surrounded by drug dealing, prostitution, violent crimes, the constant din of traffic, the frequently heard bang of fireworks or sometimes even gun fire, the toxic smell of pollutants- all would seem to be enough to keep any sane person away. And yet year after year, we would go back because something beautiful lay claim to our love. The banquet table was rich, the food tasty, the feeling of joy very palpable. We did not go away hungry. The orphanage was seeded abundantly with His love. Like Jacob, in this unexpected place, we found God and the ladder to heaven.

Today, let us keep the doors and windows of Holy Cross open. Let the wind blow the seeds of grace in us, over us and beyond to the outer reaches of the world. The Sower of these seeds is not stingy with His love. He only wants people willing to join Him in this adventure. May we be those people for Him and all the world.

Golden Club Outings

Fl. 93 Memorial



Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens



Welcome Center
Pittsburgh Botanic Garden



Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens



Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens



GOLDEN CLUB: Please join us in the Community Center on Thursday, November 13, at 11am for our Annual Membership Luncheon.

Come and enjoy fellowship and good food, for a fun afternoon. We will be collecting membership dues of \$10/person for 2026.

Please call or text your RSVP to Cynthia at 412-722-9512 or Rene at 412-559-1721, no later than Wednesday, November 5th (as this is a catered event).

If paying dues by check, please make payment to: "GOLDEN CLUB of HOLY CROSS."

New members are always welcome!



Save the date for a
Blood Drive
Saturday, December 20
at Holy Cross
Details coming soon...

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:

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MICHELLE KOTSAGRELOS
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The “Golden Rule” is something that many of us are taught from a very young age. Today’s Gospel passage from Luke chapter 6 contains this Golden Rule as expressed through Christ’s words: “As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.” This ethos, of ‘do unto others as you would have them to do unto you’, has been the basis of morality for not just Christians, but for many cultures throughout the ages. Interestingly enough, variations of this formula are found in belief systems as diverse as Confucianism, Hinduism, and German Philosophical Idealism. Even for many atheists, do unto others as you would have them do unto you is a valuable rule to follow if for no other purpose than serving as a basis for a lawful and orderly society. So if that’s the case, then how is Christ’s teaching different or special than the rest of the world? What sets us as Christians apart?

Well, the answer to that comes if we read the rest of the Gospel passage. Christ challenges us and asks, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them... But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.” This is the key. We can do unto others as we would have them do unto us, simply out of selfish reason, doing good unto others only in hopes of what we will receive in return. We can do good deeds unto others, while still carrying hatred in our hearts. And in that case, we are, as Christ says, no better than sinners, who do good unto those who do good unto them.

Christ has many a hard saying, injunctions which challenge us to climb the rocky cliff face of our fallen human nature up to the sun of God’s image in which we were all fashioned. Our goal should be to have all of good deeds spring forth from the pure fountain of love, rather than the muddy fountain of our selfish desires. This is not easy. It means doing good, and even loving those who slander us, hurt us, and hate us, just as the Lord loved and did good unto those who did evil unto Him. So today, let us take these words to heart, and take up our crosses, and follow the path of this the Lord’s teaching: “Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your rewards will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

~Elias Diamond



First Steps of Christ



Walk for Missions





Paraclesis Service to Saint Nektarios

Monday, November 10, 2025 Paraclesis - 6:30 pm, anointing to follow

Saint Nektarios is one of the most well-known and beloved modern Saints of the Orthodox Faith. He was an accomplished scholar who was eventually ordained a bishop and appointed dean of the theological school in Athens. After an active tenure as a renowned preacher and theologian, he retired to the island of Aegina, where he had established the Monastery of Holy Trinity. He lived a pious and humble Christian life there until his death on November 9, 1920, when he was buried in a special chapel built on the grounds of the Monastery.

This beloved bishop was officially declared a Saint by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the year 1961. He has been given the tide “Wonderworker” and is considered the patron saint of people stricken with cancer, heart trouble, arthritis, epilepsy and many other diseases. Many miraculous cures have been reported by those who have visited his tomb or asked for his prayers.

The Apolytikion of St. Nektarios.

Selybria's offspring and Aegina's guardian,

the true friend of virtue, revealed in these last times,

Nekatrios let us, the faithful, praise as inspired servants of Christ; for he pours out healings of every kind for those who devoutly cry:

Glory to Christ who gave you glory!

Glory to Him who made you wondrous!

Glory to Him who through you works healings for all!

We, too, will be offering our requests to this powerful Saint that he might entreat Christ, our God, to heal us of all our spiritual and bodily illnesses. Following the service, we will be anointed with holy oil from his shrine in Aegina. Please use the list below to submit the first names of living Christians for whom you would like prayers offered.

PARACLESIS TO SAINT NECTARIOS

FIRSTS NAMES OF THE LIVING

PLEASE PRINT

“O Saint of God, Nektarios, intercede for us”

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Sunday,
November 23, 2025
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
MEETING**

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