



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

Rejoice, Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace. For from you the Sun of Righteousness is risen. Christ our God, shines light to those in darkness. Rejoice too, O righteous Elder, for you have received into your arms the One, who frees our souls and grants to us the resurrection.













(Apolytikion for The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple)

From the darkness of the winter months, we now begin to see an increase in the light of day. This light, which is physical, we connect to our spiritual light – Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His very purpose for coming into the world is to bring us the Light of Salvation. The Light of knowledge that leads us to communion with Him and with one another. Shortly, in our Lenten services we will proclaim, “The Light of Christ illumines all.” We are illumined, we are purified, we are healed, and we are forgiven, and we are granted the possibility of coming to know our Lord and Savior, through His Word. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, assumed our humanity in every way and sanctified it through His obedience to the Father and then returns to the Godhead after His (life-giving) death on the Cross and His Resurrection from the dead, uniting our healed and deified humanity (Ascension). It is in the Light of His mercy and compassion that we now strive to cleanse

continued p.4 →

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 1st	 PUBLICAN and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 8th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 15th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 22nd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 1st	 SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 8th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 15th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 22nd	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent MARCH 29th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 5th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 10th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 12th NO FASTING!	 HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

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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

Deacon Elias Diamond

Philip Yamalis, Cantor

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

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Phil. Membership	Christine Picard	(412) 951-7258
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
	Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290
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	Rebekah Krakora	(412) 728-4842
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JOY	Elias Diamond	(412) 413-7427
Young Adults	Elias Diamond	(412) 413-7427
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Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Interior Design Committee	Laura Zervos	(412) 287-5679

***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 2026

Anthony Cuneo, President
Stephen Yamalis, Vice President
Angela Athanas, Treasurer
Socrates Zacharias, Financial Secretary
Sophia Milinkovic, Secretary
Bryan Elderkin
Eleni Maneta
Rita Manganas
Tom Mourtacos
Jordan Nicholas
Ted Sofis
Sadie Stang
Zachary Stevens
Mark Urso
Constance Zotis

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.



and purify ourselves in the Lenten journey toward Pascha; the Passover (Pascha) from death to life in Christ.

February is our month of transition. It begins with the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (February 2nd). The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple concludes the Nativity and Theophany celebrations of our Lord (40 days after the Lord's Nativity - December 25th). The blessing of a mother who has given birth and her child on the fortieth day after their birth continues to this day. Every child is dedicated to God along with prayers of healing for the mother. The Church, the Ark of Salvation, is the place where we gather to encounter our Lord and worship Him as His Body. Jesus' entrance into the Temple was to encounter those who have been waiting for their Savior. St. Symeon and St. Anna represent the Old Covenant and their desire to see the Messiah. All of humanity longs for this encounter with the Savior of the world. How particularly edifying that it took place when Jesus was just 40 days old. Jesus comes to us not to frighten or intimidate us, rather to invite us into communion with Him, following the Father's plan of salvation, given to us through His Son's sacrifice on the Cross. We should be mindful, however, not to misunderstand God's mercy and patience with each of us. For we all will have to give an account of our life - words and deeds before Him. This is emphasized on Judgment Sunday and should be a source of sobriety for all.

This year, at the very beginning of February, we enter into a new season of the Church called the Triodion. This is the time of preparation for the Great Fast (4 Sundays) before we enter the Lenten period itself. This year the Triodion begins on Saturday, January 31st at the Great Vespers Service. Each Sunday has a theme to help us in our journey towards Lent & ultimately the Lord's Pascha.

The first Sunday (February 1st) is of the Publican and Pharisee and focuses on humility. (Luke 18:10-14) To emphasize the point, that we make spiritual progress through humility and not by boasting of our deeds before God (or man), **the Church forbids fasting** during this week.

The second Sunday (February 8th) is of the Prodigal Son (The Loving Father) and focuses on forgiveness and the desire of God to receive all of us into His Heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 15:11-32) This week is a normal (Wednesday and Friday) fasting week. ***THIS YEAR IT IS ALSO GODPARENT/ GODCHILD SUNDAY. **** please plan to stay for our luncheon prepared by the GOYA.

The third Sunday (February 15th) is of the Judgment and focuses on the Second Coming of Christ and how the Lord will judge mankind. The judgment is based on how we have loved, or failed to love, one another. (Matthew 25:31-46) This Sunday is called "Meatfare Sunday" and is our last day for meat products.

The fourth and final Sunday (February 22nd) is Forgiveness Sunday. The Lord commands us to forgive one another as He has forgiven us. We enter our Lenten journey asking forgiveness from all. (Matthew 6:14-21) This Sunday is called "Cheesefare Sunday" and is our last day for dairy products. On Sunday evening we gather for the Forgiveness Vespers (5pm) where we begin our Lenten journey by asking forgiveness of one another. Without forgiving one another, God cannot forgive us!

Lent begins on "Clean Monday" (February 23rd).

PASCHA is April 12th!!!! (*This year Western Easter April 5th*)

Church services during Lent are held **every:**

Monday Evening (6:30pm - Compline with a reading from the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete - a canon of repentance).

Wednesday Evening (6pm - Presanctified Liturgy - The Host (Holy Communion) has been consecrated and left on the Altar from the previous Sunday. In order to receive Holy Communion, nothing should be taken after the lunch meal).

Friday Mornings (9am – Presanctified Liturgy).

Friday Evenings (6:30pm – Salutations to the Mother of God).

Saturday Mornings (8:30am/9:30am –Matins/Liturgy –
Saturday of the Souls 2/14, 2/21, 2/28).

Saturday Evenings – (5pm - Great Vespers and Confession
before or after Vespers).

Sunday Mornings – 8:10am - Matins – Hymns of repentance
after the 50th Psalm

9:30am - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim that we should say every day
of the Great Fast:

O Lord and Master of my life!

**Take from me the spirit sloth, despair,
lust of power, and idle talk.**

(prostration)

**Give to me rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love.**

(prostration)

**Yeah O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and
not to judge my brother (or sister).**

For you are blessed unto the ages of ages, AMEN.

(prostration)

This prayer encapsulates all the elements of repentance, both
positive and negative. Truly the Lord is (or should be) the Mas-
ter of our lives. If that is true, we can (with His help) begin to

remove from our lives the following negative influences. **Sloth**, a spirit of laziness that tells us, "Why bother? Why pray? Why fast? Nothing will change." Spiritual and physical effort is required during Lent. We must engage ourselves (body and soul) and not listen to that voice that tells us Lent is pointless. **Despair**, when we lose all hope that change is possible. If all our thoughts obsess with negative images, we will be unable to experience the joy of repentance and salvation. We will be unable to trust and love one another. This defeat will ultimately lead to spiritual and even physical suicide. We must never give in to this despair but always have the hope of God's forgiveness and salvation before us. **Lust for power** attempts to control our circumstances and the people around us. We no longer look at people as brothers and sisters in Christ, but rather as useful, indifferent, or worse, disposable. Attempting to control our circumstances will ultimately lead us to despair.

Idle talk is most insidious because it is an extension of our own emptiness. It is our attempt to manipulate the truth or reality we live in. Gossip, hurtful comments, and lies all feed into a source of pride that gives us the false sense of who we are. They are also negative. How difficult it is for us to be silent.

Now let us examine the positive attributes we ask God to bestow on us:

Chastity – wholeness of body and soul, not only moral purity, but a life of fulfilling God's commandments and a balance of all things.

Humility, looking at the other person as more deserving than ourselves. Remembering our place before God and not thinking highly of ourselves or our good deeds. God is the source of all good, even if we are the instruments of His will, we remember we are not the source.

Patience, suffering with crosses that we all endure in this life. How quickly we lose our patience over things that are truly insignificant. Anger, hatred, and violence all stem from a lack of

patience. We must learn that in this life we will suffer.

Love, to see Christ in everyone we meet and to sacrifice our self for the sake of the other. For us the Cross is the ultimate expression of God's love for us. The Cross reminds us of how much God loves us and is willing to sacrifice for our salvation and communion with Him.

Finally – **that we judge no person!** Only God knows the heart and intentions of each person. We look at our own sins and seek to repent for them and do not compare ourselves to others. We allow God to judge and we pray for everyone.

“No matter what we do, we need humility, love and nobility. Things are simple. It is we that make them difficult. To the extent possible, we must do what is difficult for the devil and easy for man. Love and humility are difficult for the devil and easy for man. Even a sickly man who cannot become an ascetic can defeat the devil with humility. In just one second man can become an angel or a devil. How? By choosing pride or choosing humility. Do you think it took hours for Lucifer to turn from an Angel into a devil? Not at all; it took him only a few seconds! The easiest way for us to be saved is through love and humility. That is why we must start with love and humility and then go on to the rest. Pray that we might continuously give joy to Christ and distress to the devil, since the devil happens to like hell so much that he does not want to repent.”

(St. Paisios, *With Pain and Love for Contemporary Man*, pg. 69)
My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us not lose this opportunity and seek to encounter our Loving God in all that Church provides for us!

May we take full advantage of the opportunity to attend the Lenten services, pray, fast, dive deeply into the Holy Scriptures, create time for silence and reflection, do acts of charity, and receive the sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion.

May God grant us strength and patience!

Καλη Σαρακοστη! A blessed Lenten Journey!

With love in Christ,
Fr. Michael

A Meditation on “Climbing the Mountain” of Lent

– by Archpriest Stephen J. Belonick

Mountains figure prominently in the Scriptures. I am reminded of Mt. Sinai, where Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God’s Hand; Mt. Tabor, where Jesus led Peter, James, and John to witness His Transfiguration; and the hillside from which our Lord taught His famous Sermon on the Mount. In all of these cases mountains express a theological principle – God reveals Himself and distributes divine gifts to those willing to rise above this world and seek a higher reality. Isaiah envisioned such an ascent when God spoke through him to call all people to “go up to the mountain of the Lord.” (Is. 2:3).

Climbing a mountain takes a great deal of effort. It requires the right equipment. More importantly, it presumes that I am courageous and willing to attempt the climb. Great Lent can be likened to such a mountain. God calls me to ascend to Him. The journey is difficult and requires effort. Rather than boots and spikes, however, prayer and fasting, Scripture reading, quiet time, and a willing heart comprise my gear.

When mountaineers are asked why they brave the elements and dangers to scale a mountain, they sometimes simply respond, “Because it is there.” Similarly, my explanation for undertaking a trying, uphill Lenten journey could be, “To ascend this mountain is not optional. This is where I will meet the Lord and receive true life from His hands.” Surely, His gift is worth my effort to ascend.

Dear beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great honor and humility that I have been asked to take on the role as president of the Parish Council for 2026. I stand on the shoulders of those that have come before and am fortunate to have a firm foundation of which we can continue to grow together. Thankfully, we have a very strong Parish Council that is motivated and ready to take Holy Cross to new heights.

As treasurer in 2024 and 2025, I was fortunate to learn of the ins and outs of how Parish Council works, where we excel, and what our current limitations are.

In 2025, we celebrated acts of outreach from the Parish Council of over \$17,000 to Light of Life, Neighborhood Resilience Project, our Metropolis, and to the monastery. As a community, including with Agape and Philoptochos, there was in excess of another \$70,000 further committed to the projects listed above and other worthy projects. We are living proof of the good that can be done when we work together towards a common goal of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

We also had successful fundraisers including netting over \$230,000 for the food fair, \$34,000 for fundraisers including Gyro Thursdays, \$29,000 for the golf outing, and \$40,000 for the food fair ad book. These fundraisers were used to supplement operating expenses of the church and for the outreach listed above. Some of these fundraisers were new initiatives and would not have been successful without your support and volunteering.

Through smart investments in savings accounts and CDs, we accrued \$24,000 in interest, and also reduced expenditures, where possible, including \$35,000 in electric costs when compared to what was budgeted.

Needless to say, the iconography project has been a huge success through your generous commitments and tireless work of the iconography committee. Our iconography serves as "windows into heaven" facilitating direct communion with the divine.

We had our challenges for the year including the gas line leak, costing \$216,000. Through the grace of God, we had \$205,000 in emergency funds ready to go for this exact type of occurrence. Some might say having almost the exact funds needed was a coincidence. I believe Jesus is looking out for us and our work to glorify Him. Your altruistic giving has helped to raise close to \$60,000 towards rebuilding our emergency fund, with the goal of having 3 months operating expenses.

Stewardship increased from \$622,000 in 2024 to \$670,000 in 2025, over a 7% increase, which is fantastic! Even with this increase in stewardship, we still only cover about 65% of the operating expenses to run the church with stewardship alone. The Parish Council is rolling out a bold and ambitious stewardship campaign with the goal of covering ALL operating expenses by the year 2031. How do we do this? We are requesting a 10% increase in stewardship starting this year and in subsequent years until 2031. You will hear much more about this campaign in the months to come.

Many will say: Why is this important? Don't we already have enough money? If there is bad weather during the food festival, then we would not be able to pay our bills. Also, we are called "to reach out to the whole "oikoumene" (universe) through active missions and philanthropic outreach. There is literally no end to how much good we can do in the world. When we reach the goal of covering all of our operating expenses with stewardship alone, we will then be able to use money from our fundraisers to do more outreach, maintain our aging infrastructure, increase and create scholarships for our youth, send parishioners on retreats and mission work, grow our ministry, and re-establish our emergency funds.

The goals for 2026 and beyond include:

- 1) Strengthen our sense of community while at the same time growing closer to Jesus through serving others by using our time, talent, treasure, and influence.
- 2) Stewardship - cover ALL operating expenses with stewardship alone by 2031 as detailed above.
- 3) Endowment - Have 75 people/families commit by our 75th anniversary (2029)
- 4) Emergency Fund - Reestablish 3 months operating expenses.

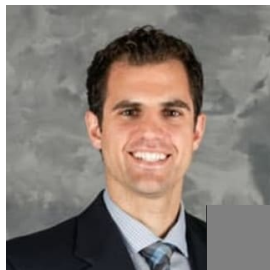
As Holy Cross's vision statement details: "Believing that a church on a hill cannot be hid, we always let our light shine before the world, so that it may see our good works and give glory to our Father Who is in Heaven."

Will you join us as a Parish Council to reach new heights of what is possible?

Please keep the Parish Council in your prayers for a successful year ahead.

With love, Anthony Cuneo

President of Holy Cross Parish Council



Please mark your calendars for upcoming events planned for 2026 (tentative dates):

2/5/26: Gyro Thursday

5/3/26: New Member Wine & Cheese Event

5/7/26: Gyro Thursday

8/20/26: Gyro Thursday

9/19/26: Glendi

11/5/26: Gyro Thursday

Save the Date for the next

GYRO THURSDAY

on February 5th, 11am-7pm!

Please consider helping for any part of the day
and contact Sophia and Stephen at

holycrosspgh.fundraising@gmail.com

with any questions.

Stewardship Reminder

Please be sure to turn in your 2026 pledge card, available in the Narthex or on Realm!

As we aim to cover over 70% of our operating expenses with stewardship, please prayerfully consider a 10% increase in your pledge for 2026.

For questions or to receive help with signing up or pledging on Realm, please contact Stephen Yamalis at:

holycrosspgh.stewardship@gmail.com

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
TO BE HOSTED BY
ALL SAINTS, CANONSBURG
SUNDAY, MARCH 1 @ 4PM

Sunday of Orthodoxy: March 1 ~All Saints Church in Canonsburg will host the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy celebration sponsored by the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh. The service will feature clergy from Orthodox jurisdictions followed by the annual Procession of the Holy Icons and a Pan-Orthodox Choir singing the hymns of the service under the direction of Fr. Tom Soroka. Following the service, light refreshments will be served during fellowship time. Local representatives from Orthodox philanthropic ministries will be there with information on how to get involved. Also, icons and other Orthodox Christian gifts and handmade items will be available to purchase.



**HEAVENLY
FATHER,
FILL MY HEART
WITH JOY THAT
SURPASSES ALL
UNDERSTANDING.
LET MY HAPPINESS
NOT BE
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CIRCUMSTANCES
BUT ROOTED
IN YOU.**

Y'AM

In Suffering *by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)*

After Pascha of 2025, I went to St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Monastery in New York for a few days of spiritual retreat, accompanied by Elder Ephraim of Arizona's book "*Counsels from the Holy Mountain*." At the monastery, I met a pious family from one of our parishes. During our conversation, the topic of *pain* came up, and they told me that one of our priests, in stressing that we must "rejoice in suffering," had unintentionally alienated some young people from him and from the Church.

I corrected the phrase, saying: "I believe the priest meant that as Christians, pain does not prevent us from rejoicing, or we rejoice in spite of the sufferings we endure, not because of them." One of the young men present responded immediately: "I accept that – and I understand it."

From that exchange I wish to reflect briefly on the importance of precision in expression when presenting the Christian message. Often, we intend to convey true teaching, yet through our human, linguistic, or cultural limitations we end up saying something that contradicts our own intent.

The Christian faith affirms that God is not the cause of evil, yet much of our spiritual literature emphasizes accepting trials and pains as sent from God. How can these teachings be reconciled?

First, I must say that there is much confusion about what we mean by the "Fathers of the Church." Not all whom we call "Fathers" are of the same kind. Some are called *Teachers* of the Church – such as St. Basil the Great and St. Athanasius – whose writings are doctrinal, written to explain or defend the faith. Others are *spiritual guides*, such as St. Paisios of Athos, St. Joseph the Hesychast, and others, whose words are pastoral, directed to the healing of souls.

We therefore need discernment when reading their works. When a holy father writes about doctrine or dogma – clarifying or defending the faith – his teaching is universal and objective. But when he offers *spiritual counsel*, it is personal, intended to comfort or strengthen a particular struggler to help that person endure a trial, whether spiritual or material.

For this reason, we cannot extract isolated sentences from any

spiritual father's counsel and use them to build doctrinal positions. Much of today's confusion arises from mixing *personal spiritual guidance* with *dogmatic teaching*.

Orthodox spiritual life is characterized by dealing with each person according to his or her need, capacity, and spiritual maturity. The general rule is applied with wisdom and discretion, according to what the spiritual father perceives to be beneficial for that person. Thus, the great spiritual elders show flexibility in applying general principles. But those who attempt to become "*spiritual fathers through books*" often fall — and cause others to fall — into serious errors.

We believe that the source of evil and suffering lies in the fallen state of humanity. Christ came and accomplished our salvation so that we might return to the paradisaical condition for which we were created. Therefore, God is not the sender of suffering, disasters, or misfortunes; these are the consequences of sin that dominate our world.

Yet we also believe that when we entrust our lives completely to God, we accept all that happens to us as His *permission* for our own good. The word "permission" implies that God is able to prevent evil if He wants to intervene. As St. Paul writes, "*All things work together for good for those who love God*" (Romans 8:28). In this way, we live in peace despite tribulation, drawing spiritual strength to face, overcome, and even benefit from our trials. Such an attitude requires great faith and near-total surrender — but it is the best path for confronting every kind of distress.

The Book of Proverbs says, "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves the one He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (3:11-12). The word translated as "*discipline*" in Greek (*paideia*) literally means education or training — the upbringing of a child through command, advice, reproof, and sometimes punishment. For this reason, some modern translations render it as "*corrects*" or "*reproves*." In Arabic, *ta'dīb* carries the same sense — refinement or correction, a gentle form of blame or chastisement intended for improvement.

These two verses present divine discipline as an expression of paternal love, not hard punishment. In the Christian understand-

ing, suffering accepted with trust in God becomes a form of divine pedagogy, by which means He guides His children toward wisdom and righteousness.

In this positive context, Christians see the trials that befall them – and that they accept in surrender to God – as occasions to draw strength and inner peace. This is also what spiritual fathers do when they comfort and strengthen their spiritual children.

In the same spirit, Elder Ephraim offers words of personal consolation to his own disciples. Let us read some of his comforting counsels, remembering that each must be understood within the broader pastoral context in which he and other holy elders speak. “How much a person loses when he suffers and forgets his sonship, failing to realize that he is being disciplined as a child of God.” (p. 13)

“Trials come to teach us to become bearers of hardship, trained fighters, followers of Christ who was crucified for us, brothers of all the saints who walked the thorny path of the Cross... the faithful, through keeping the holy commandments and enduring the trials brought by the world, the devil, and the flesh.” (p. 19)

“Trials come to bring us closer to God, for tribulations sadden and darken the heart, making it soft, smooth, and humble.” (p. 20)

“He who bears his sorrows with joy and understanding is freed from his sins and their punishments. A spiritual mark is created within him; he becomes compassionate, humble, meek... But the one who lacks true understanding of his trials falls into sadness and depression when he should rejoice – for he walks the road of Golgotha with the saints.” (p. 20)

“Trials of every kind purify the person who accepts them with wisdom and understanding. Every trial that befalls a Christian is a divine visitation for his salvation, sent by the sweet right hand of our heavenly Father, even though our nature does not like such things – just as a sick man does not enjoy bitter medicine.” (p. 23)

“A doctor causes pain to a sick person – through surgery, bitter medicine, even amputation – not out of malice, but for healing. Likewise, God, the Physician of our souls and bodies, heals us through every kind of remedy, trial, and pain, to grant us spiritual health in the highest possible degree.” (p. 33)

On Religious Cinema

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

With the ongoing rise and spread of movies and television series, the production of religious films follows this trend. The approach to depicting religious events on screen varies depending on the production entity behind them. As the “*seventh art*”¹ developed, the number of production houses multiplied, and cinematic technology reached levels close to the fantastic. Because religious matters are among the most significant fields of human concern, across religions and sects, it is natural that the dramatic arts would follow religious themes though for different reasons.

Like any art form, religious art is used for purposes of evangelization, education, documentation, and to promote the beliefs upheld by the producers. Neutrality is rare, especially in this field. In our times, both private and public institutions, even official bodies, compete to present this type of art because it attracts large audiences and stirs the emotions of the religiously inclined in general. Thus, it is now almost impossible to find a screen that does not occasionally present something that touches on religious themes, especially in these troubled days, when appealing to religious emotions has become widely popular.

Religion has always been cautious regarding the depiction of sacred scenes, especially those involving the founder of the faith or its principal figures. Depicting historical, intellectual, or artistic topics usually receives greater acceptance. Yet the dominance of imagery in modern culture, the ease of production brought about by technological advancement, the renewed tendency to look to religion as a solution for the sufferings of contemporary humanity, the freedom with which private companies approach religious topics, and the eagerness of people to consume visual productions as they are – without examination or discernment – have all combined to produce serious problems, emotional reactions, and impactful (sometimes dangerous) stances, especially in religious societies marked by diversity of faiths and sects.

Cinematic portrayal often diminishes the spirit of reverence and devotion to which believers attach great importance. When a believer sees holy figures, whom he venerates and elevates, embodied by an actor (or actress), carrying the actor’s features and personality, no matter how skilled, disappointment is almost inevitable, at least initially. Not to mention that the actor’s image may persist in the believer’s imagination and influence the purity of his prayer.

It is beyond doubt that learning about the personality of any prophet or messenger – and his teaching – through dramatic art does not allow the viewer to enter deeply into the authenticity and precision of that personality. The difference between encountering a world-renowned story through a book or through a film is immense. Describing emotions, situations, psychological analysis, motives, and the inner workings of the human soul cannot be condensed into approximately two hours of film, nor can they be conveyed with the richness that the writer’s pen offers.

Dramatic art also requires sets, costumes, music, movements, excitement, and other elements intended to attract the viewer. When these are applied to a religious film, they inevitably serve the perspective of the producer or director. They may be inappropriate, inaccurate, or even falsified or fabricated. Watching a film is not the same as reading a book; the image remains imprinted in the viewer's mind, confined to the limited time of the screening, and plays upon the imagination in ways that can harm faith and spiritual disposition. Likewise, a wrong image can spread a distorted understanding of the religious doctrine portrayed.

Wherever images appear, whether in cinema, television, or modern social media, they form a vast field for implanting ideas that the producer wishes to promote through his work. Not all viewers can follow, notice, or discern these ideas, nor recognize their falsehood. Such implants are etched into the minds of viewers, who then believe them to be true, while they may be the exact opposite. For example, in one film about the life of Christ, Joseph the Betrothed is shown as a handsome young man, whereas Christian tradition considers him elderly. The same film depicts the Virgin Mary dancing with him at their engagement celebration!

Cinematic production has become a widely used means to spread biased or incorrect ideas, forming false impressions and shaping public opinion about any subject political, historical, moral, and especially religious. Consider *The Last Temptation of Christ* and the uproar it caused. It is a cinematic rendering of a novel of the same name, written by a famous twentieth-century author who spent his life wrestling with the conflict between the sensual human being and the spiritual human being – between body and spirit. He projected his personal struggles onto the person of Christ – portraying Him merely as a man – while hundreds of millions of believers confess Him as God incarnate.

Believers today, living in an age overwhelmed by propaganda, must remain awake, alert, and discerning in all they see, lest they fall under the domination of the cinematic image and its potentially harmful influence on their faith.

Cinematic production in the West, in particular, has become extremely free, driven by various forces, and at times controlled by producers who are atheists, hostile to a particular religion, or intent on promoting a certain ideology. They insert into the film whatever images, words, music, or elements suit their aims. They may not hesitate to use deceptive methods to spread their ideas.

If we recognize the power that imagery has attained today, especially through modern propaganda, and acknowledge how difficult it has become to distinguish truth from falsehood, particularly in news media, then the necessary awareness becomes an urgent need.

In conclusion, dramatic portrayals of religious matters are often marred by inaccuracies – sometimes intentional, sometimes not. They must be approached with serious critical discernment, not watched naively or casually. You cannot protect yourself from falsehood by silencing the voice of others, but by growing in knowledge and continually seeking the truth.

¹ The term "seventh art" refers to cinema, which is considered an art form that synthesizes elements from the six previous arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and poetry.



"TRUE FASTING LIES IS
REJECTING EVIL,
HOLDING ONE'S
TONGUE, SUPPRESSING
ONE'S HATRED, AND
BANISHING ONE'S
LUST, EVIL WORDS,
LYING, AND BETRAYAL
OF VOWS.

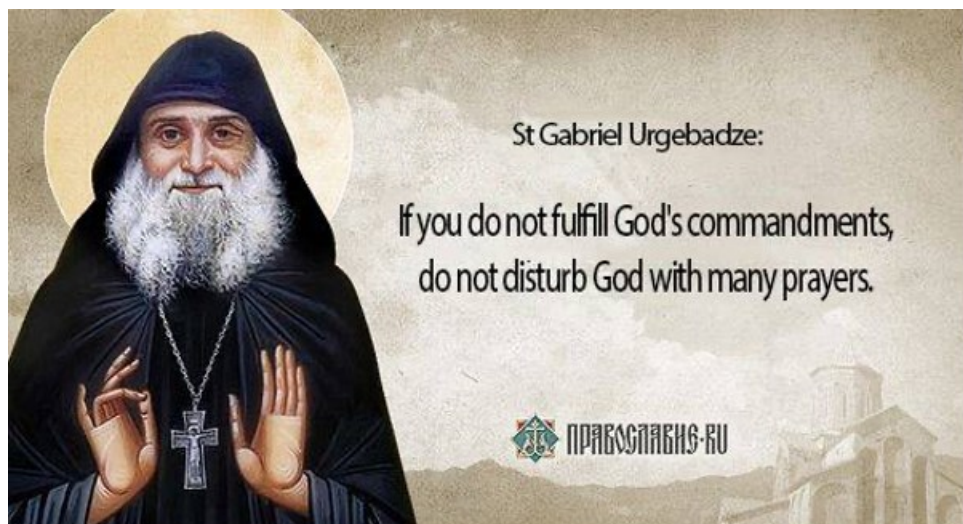
(St Basil the Great)





Godparent/Godchild lunch

Sunday February 8th

After church!



Holy Cross

Sun	Mon	Tue
1 Lenten Triodion begins 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy *General Assembly* 6pm Vespers @ YPAPANTI <i>Publican & Pharisee</i>	2 Presentation of Our Lord into the Temple @YPAPANTI 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 7PM FOOD FAIR MEETING	3 <i>7pm Sts. Mary & Martha</i>
8 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy Godparent/Godchild Sunday & Luncheon <i>Prodigal Son</i>	9 6:30pm Paraclesis  8pm YAL Basketball	10 6:30pm Fellowship & Fitness Adult Pickleball 7pm GOYA Meeting
15 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>3-6pm Philoptochos Membership Social</i> <i>Judgment Sunday (Meat fare)</i>	16 6:30pm Paraclesis	17 6:30pm Fellowship & Fitness Adult Pickleball 7pm Parish Council
22 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Forgiveness Sunday Vespers <i>(Cheese fare)</i>	23 Lent begins Clean Monday 6:30pm Compline	24 6:30pm Oratorical Festival Workshop~GOYA Lounge 7:30pm PickleYAL 

February 2026

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 Fast free 4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	5 GYRO THURSDAY 6:30pm Fellowship & Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	6 St. Photios Fast free Holy Trinity Ambridge 9AM Orthros 10AM Divine Liturgy	7 5pm Great Vespers 6:30pm JOY Bowling
11 4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	12 11am Golden Club Pizza Party 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	13 <div>GOYA BB in Warren, OH</div>	14 Saturday of the Souls I 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers
18 4:30pm GREEK School 6:30pm GOYA Basketball 7PM BIBLE STUDY	19 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	20	21 Saturday of the Souls II 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers 6pm Acolyte Meeting
25 4:30pm GREEK School 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY	26 6:30pm Fellowship & Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS	27 9am Presanctified Liturgy 6:30pm Salutations	28 Saturday of the Souls III 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Great Vespers



THE HOLY CROSS LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
SOCIETY INVITES YOU TO OUR

2026 MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL

SUNDAY, FEB. 15 - 3 TO 6 PM

PLEASE RSVP BY FEB. 8

Renew your membership for 2026 or become a new member!

Doors open at 3:00 PM. Dinner served at 4:00 PM
Community Center Carpeted Area

Optional BYOB Wine Tasting!
If you love wine, bring a
favorite bottle to share.

Membership dues are \$25.
Any additional donations benefit
our Outreach programs.

RSVP TO CHRISTINE PICARD
412-951-7258 OR CHRIS.PICARD57@GMAIL.COM

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIPS

Non Active:

Your donation supports our local and national charitable outreach. You receive our email meeting minutes and announcements.

Active:

In addition to the above, choose your level of involvement. We have multiple fundraising and fellowship activities throughout the year and welcome any of your time. We are a friendly group of women comprised of all ages.

We have a lot of fun doing a lot of good!



NEW at Holy Cross

Fellowship & Fitness Adult Pickleball

ALL levels welcome! See calendar for dates!

Questions? Contact Angela: eapanos@verizon.net



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



ATTENTION High School Seniors and Parents:



The application for the Popi Hagelios Memorial Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross Church is available NOW to download online at

holycrosspgh.org

-events - Holy Cross Philoptochos Philanthropy Award, in the narthex, Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net or Denise Melis, dmelis@comcast.net, electronically.

The COMPLETE application is due by 9PM on 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.

~Elaine Sofis 412.327.7017



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.





This week was the celebration of Theophany, one of the twelve major feast days of the Church. This is a celebration of Christ's baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist, but the word "Theophany" suggests even more than that, it suggests God revealing Himself to us, and this is because at the moment of Christ's baptism, the voice of God the Father bears witness to Christ as His Beloved Son, while the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, descends upon Christ in the waters, thus meaning that the three persons of the Holy Trinity are made manifest to humanity in that moment. This moment also marks the beginning of Christ beginning His ministry in earnest, the beginning of the preaching and teaching and healing which would culminate in His Resurrection.

For these reasons, Theophany is feast day where we are always hearing about the light. One of the hymns of theophany which I particularly love praises God by saying: "Light from Light, Christ our God, has shone upon the world. He is God and He appeared to us. O peoples, let us worship Him." God, in that moment of baptism, illuminates the hearts and minds of humanity, showing his Trifold radiance to us, who had lived so long in sinful darkness and ignorance. Today's Gospel reading, continues the narrative thread of Christ's incipient ministry, and the theme of light. We read that Christ leaves His home town of Nazareth, and goes to Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, and in so doing, He fulfills a prophecy written hundreds of years prior in the book of Isaiah: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

What does this mean? What is the significance of Zebulun and Naphtali, and why did they dwell in such darkness? Zebulun and Naphtali were located in the far north, and it was often from the north that invading armies would come, meaning that the peoples of that lands had been victims of great brutality, of destruction, looting, and murder, from the various armies who had attacked the Holy Land. Truly, they had experienced great darkness, and yet, it is to them, that Christ first goes to, to bring the

light that knows no end to these people who had greatly suffered! If there is any doubt that this might be coincidence or happenstance, consider that Christ's baptism was significantly farther south than this region, that His baptism took place much closer to Jerusalem, the Holy City which His destiny would be fulfilled in. Yet, rather than settle in Jerusalem, He heads north to Galilee, fulfilling prophecy, and ministering to those who sat so long in darkness.

We also must remember that this Gospel passage begins by announcing the fact of John the Baptist's arrest and imprisonment, which would eventually culminate in his death. Earlier this week, we heard of righteous John's mission to the people of Judea, culminating in his baptism of Christ. Yet, in this fallen world, where the righteous so often are marked for death, he too is taken by an evil king. It is important to reflect on this, for as Father Lawrence Farley comments on this Gospel passage, we also live in Galilee, in the region of shadow and death. Father Lawrence writes, "All of us are marked for death, whether that doom comes from an Assyrian sword, or a Babylonian spear, or from heart disease, or a traffic accident, or cancer. Like those ancient tribes, we also look to the horizon and the coming morrow and know that death can approach at any time. But upon us and upon our gloom, light has dawned. For us a Child was born, to us a Son was given, and the Prince of Peace shone the eternal light of hope into our darkness. Now we need no longer fear death. Christ dwells in our midst, and saves us from all enemies, even the last enemy, which is death."

This is the great joy of this festal period. That God reveals Himself in his glory to us who dwell in darkness. Christ's love is so great, that, in spite of the darkness and the threat which inevitably would have faced Him in the wake of John's arrest, He does not hide away, He does not place His light under a bushel, but rather, He brings that light first to those most in need, to those who have suffered greatest. We should rejoice in this, that God brings that light to us in darkness, and we should strive to emulate Him in this, bringing the light to those who need in most.

~Deacon Elias Daimond



Holy Cross
Fellowship
and Fitness
Adult Pickleball:
Come join in
the fun!



GOLDEN CLUB MEMBERS:

Please join us on **Thursday, February 12th at 11 am**, in the Community Center for a complimentary pizza luncheon.

Our speaker that day will be Jimmy Kartsonas. He will be discussing Tax-Smart Ways to Donate, including Donor Advised Funds and Qualified Charitable Distributions. Jimmy is a lifelong member of Holy Cross and a part of the Spanos Group of Raymond James as a Wealth Management Associate. The Spanos Group has been providing financial planning services to the Pittsburgh area for over 40 years and is proud to sponsor many of the events in the Greek Orthodox churches. Jimmy graduated from John Carroll University in 2024 with a double major in Finance and Wealth Management and then again, in 2025 with his MBA. We look forward to having Jimmy join us that day!

To attend, please **RSVP** no later than Sunday, February 8th, as this is a catered event. Call or text Cynthia at 412-722-9512 or Rene at 412-559-1721. We look forward to seeing you in February for fellowship and a lunch and learn good time!

New members are always welcome!





2026 Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Speech Writing Workshop:
Tuesday, February 24 in the
GOYA Lounge at 6:30

Parish Festival:
Friday, March 20 at Holy Cross
immediately following
Salutations Service

Metropolis Festival:
Saturday, May 2 at the new
Metropolis Center

*Scan here for
topics and
resources*



Please contact
Deacon Elias or
Diakonissa Maria with
any questions

ediamondhpcph@gmail.com
mchiareldiamond@gmail.com

YAL Christmas in January Party



SPONSORED BY ALL SAINTS CANONSBURG YOUNG ADULTS

DONATE BLOOD, SAVE LIVES



Join our blood donation drive

The frigid temps and snow storms have had a drastic impact on our blood supply. We need you. Please schedule your appointment today to donate!



DATE
Thursday,
February 28, 2026
2:10PM - 7:00PM



LOCATION
All Saints Greek
Orthodox Church Hall
601 W McMurray Rd
Cansoburg, PA 15317



ELIGIBILITY
Ages 18+
Valid ID required
Additional Eligibility
Requirements

get your appointment

Phone: 877-25-VITAL
Email: youngadultsbys@gmail.com
Blood Drive Code: 100563622



If appointment book full, and youngadultsbys@gmail.com did not work simply a wait!
If we get enough donations, we may be able to open up an appointment!

\$15 GIFT CARD FOR ALL DONORS



Help Patients in February and Receive \$15 Gift Card in Thanks

Donate in February and you'll receive a \$15 Rewards gift card! Must use code **GIVELOVE:2026-V** when scheduling appointment to receive gift card.

Donor Rewards program opt-in required to redeem gift cards in the online store.

Make an appointment at vitalant.org or call 877-25-VITAL

Use blood drive code: 100563622

All Saints Greek Orthodox Church Blood Drive

Location: 601 W McMurray Rd - Cansoburg PA 15317

Date: February 26, 2026

Time: 2:15 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The frigid temps and snow storms have had a drastic impact on our blood supply. We need you. Please schedule your appointment today to donate!



*Terms and condition apply: see vitalant.org/EachDonor

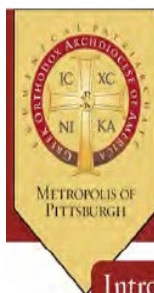
Find us @vitalant:    

vitalant



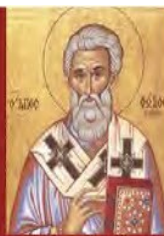
*40 day blessing
of Cristabelle,
daughter of
Renee & Anthony
Corkos*





A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



Introducing New Camping Ministries Coordinator - Sophia Milinkovic



His Eminence Metropolitan Savas is pleased to announce the hiring of Sophia Milinkovic as our new Camping Ministries Coordinator, effective January 16.

Sophia Milinkovic was born in Pittsburgh and raised in Boca Raton, Florida where she later graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a Bachelor of Science. She was brought up in a strong, faith-centered family where the life of the Church was at the heart of daily life. As the daughter of a priest, of blessed memory, her upbringing was deeply rooted in love for Christ and His Church. She was actively involved in the Metropolis of Atlanta and spent many formative summers in Orthodox camping ministry, including time at St. Stephen's Camp (Metropolis of Atlanta) and the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Camp, first as a camper and later as a counselor.

While Sophia's professional background is not directly rooted in camping ministry, it has provided her with strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills. Her career has centered on working closely with people, building and supporting teams, navigating challenges, and fostering environments where individuals can grow and thrive.

Sophia moved back to Pittsburgh in 2011 and has been deeply committed to her parish life at Holy Cross, Pittsburgh and the continued work of the Church as a whole. She serves as a Sunday School teacher and is an active member of her parish council. Through her work with the youth, she recognizes the unique challenges they face today and is passionate about providing them with a safe and supportive space. A space that offers joy, encouragement, spiritual grounding, and a true sense of belonging.

She looks forward to working closely with clergy, volunteers, families, and campers throughout the Metropolis to strengthen the camping ministry and to help nurture the spiritual lives of its youth!

Axia, Sophia!



ST. PHOTIOS AWARDS BANQUET ANNOUNCEMENT

The St. Photios Awards Banquet Committee with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Savas regret to announce that there will be no awards banquet this year due to the relocation of the Metropolis, and hosting the Clergy-Laity Congress in Cleveland.

See you in 2027!



**48th BIENNIAL
CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS**
SAVE THE DATE! - JUNE 30-JULY 2, 2026
**Join us in Cleveland, OH
at the Huntington Convention Center**



Metropolis of Pittsburgh Camp

SAVE THE DATE!

STAFF APPLICATIONS
OPENING SOON

GOYA Spring Retreat &
Summer Camp 2026

Summer Camp

Staff applications open from
February 1st to March 1st.

GOYA Spring Retreat

Staff applications open from
February 15th to March 1st.

APPLY BY
MARCH 1 AT
11:59 PM!

More information — y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/campstaff

New Metropolis Center Progress - January 2026



THE GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH
FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE
PRESENTS:

LENTEN RETREAT

“Living in
Community”

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2025

10 AM - 2 PM

ST. NICHOLAS GOC
220 N WALNUT ST.
YOUNGSTOWN, OH 44503

COFFEE, SWEETS & LUNCH PROVIDED



Presvytera Eleni Christakos

The retreat will offer points to consider regarding:

- The importance of engaging with others.
- Ultimately, Christians can only be saved in community.
- We learn from the example of the early church who “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42).

Our speaker, Presvytera Eleni Christakos is the wife of a Greek Orthodox priest who serves in central Massachusetts and a homeschool mother of three children. She holds a degree in pharmacy and is currently working for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Marriage and Family, coordinating clergy wife/peer groups. Presvytera Eleni also is very active in her church community directing and teaching in the religious education program and managing the book store and lending library. Drawing from her passion for teaching people of all ages, she is on a committee to start a classical Orthodox School. Living with a focus on health and wellness - physical, emotional and spiritual - is a core to her being. She enjoys spending time outdoors hiking and kayaking. A true bibliophile, if she is not actively with her family she can be found reading or coordinating book discussion groups.

To Register, Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/yww3sr7p>



His Eminence's Residence Progress - January 2026



Please consider a pledge or donation towards this worthy campaign that will benefit all. To donate please scan the QR code or visit pittsburgh.goarch.org/pledge

Thank you as always for your support!



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



*Please don't forget to
return your 2026
Stewardship card!*



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

2026 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CARD

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we make the following commitment to the ministries of Holy Cross.

2026 NEW Total Pledge Commitment: \$ _____ OR Keep same as last year: \$ _____

Signature(s): _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Fundraising Appeal

A major gas leak was recently discovered under our church as many of you have already heard. Replacing the entire gas line cost **over \$216,000**, fully depleting our cash reserves.

We have launched an **Emergency Fundraising Campaign** and ask everyone to consider a special donation to help restore our financial footing. Every gift matters—and we are grateful to those that have contributed thus far!

**For God so loved the world,
That He gave
His only
Begotten
Son
That whosoever
Believe in Him
Should Not perish,
But have Everlasting life."**



~John 3:16

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS

FEBRUARY 14, 21 & 28

Memorial services for the dead may be offered at any time. However, the Church has designated certain days of the year for special prayer services for the dead, such as the three Saturdays before Meat Fare Week, Cheese Fare Week and the First Sunday in Lent. The church honors all of the Saints on these days and also those who have died.

Why have the Church Fathers designated Saturday for the Memorial Services? Saturday is actually the Jewish Sabbath and the word itself means "termination" or "the end." Everything was ended on this day, and every person was to turn his attention only to meditation and prayer. In the Orthodox Church during the weeks of pre-Lenten and Lenten period, the truths of judgment day are emphasized during service. Everything ends at the time of judgment, therefore the Church Fathers have designated Saturday for special services for the dead. It was also on Saturday after the Crucifixion of Christ that He descended into Hades and preached to the dead. If you would like Fr. Michael to remember your departed Loved Ones, please submit the names to the church office.

**NO TRISAGION OR MEMORIAL SERVICE
PERMITTED ON FOLLOWING SUNDAYS:**

FEBRUARY 15, 22

MARCH 1, 15

APRIL 5, 12, 19

WE PRAY

FOR THE SOULS OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,
ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS DEPARTED THIS LIFE:

PLEASE PRINT

[illegible]

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2412
Pittsburgh, PA

GYRO
thursday
February 5th
11am-7pm

