



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

**Christ is Risen! Χριστος Ανεστη!!!**

*“Christ our God, You ascended in glory. Granting joy to Your disciples through promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.  
“ (Apolytikion for Ascension)*

On the fortieth day after Holy Pascha, we celebrate the Lord’s Ascension into the heavenly realm (this year May 21<sup>st</sup>) and His being seated in the place of honor at the Father’s “right hand.” The day before the feast of Ascension we have the “leave-taking” of Pascha (this year May 20<sup>th</sup>). The divine services are celebrated exactly as they are on the night of Pascha. This brings to a conclusion (liturgically) the celebration of Pascha for another year. Instead of sadness we are given a new joy to contemplate. The Lord now ascends into the heavens and instead of focusing on the physical separation from Christ, we are able to encounter the risen Lord in all places, at all times, whenever we call upon the name of the Lord. Christ said, “I am with you always until the close of the age.” (Mt.28:20). Christ’s departure is not a sadness, but a new reality that we embrace when two or three are gathered together in the Lord’s name. (Mt. 18:20). It is in the power of the Holy Spirit who makes Christ present to all of us, throughout the world, throughout the universe and beyond.

*continued p.4 →*

# THE 2026 PITTSBURGH SUMMER GREEK FESTIVALS GUIDE

*It's a great tradition, and it's here again: 39 days of Greek Festivals in the greater Pittsburgh region, so plan well and you can eat Greek all summer! Post this schedule on your refrigerator and share copies with others. Bring your family and friends! We look forward to serving you!*

## LOCATION

## DATES

- St. Nicholas (Pittsburgh/Oakland) ..... May 5-10
- All Saints (Canonsburg) ..... June 8-12
- Holy Trinity (Steubenville) ..... June 10-12
- Holy Cross (Pittsburgh/Mt. Lebanon) ..... June 15-19
- Kimisis Tis Theotokou (Aliquippa)..... June 11-13
- Holy Dormition (Oakmont) ..... June 26-28
- All Saints (Weirton) ..... July 10
- St. Spyridon (Monessen) ..... July 10
- Holy Trinity (Ambridge)..... July 14-18
- Presentation of Christ/Ypapanti (East Pgh.) ..... July 23-25
- Holy Trinity (Pittsburgh/North Hills) ..... September 3-6

SEE BELOW FOR FESTIVAL HOURS & HOST PARISH WEB SITES. CHECK FOR UPDATES.

## THE 2026 PITTSBURGH SUMMER GREEK FESTIVALS: ALL THE DETAILS

Don't cook tonight...go Greek! Please pass copies on to your friends! Greek food is always enjoyed best with good company!

Parish	Dates	Address	Phone	Website	Hours
Saint Nicholas (Pittsburgh/Oakland)	May 5-10	419 S. Dithridge St., Pittsburgh	412-682-3866	www.StNicksPgh.org	Tue-Thu: 11a-9p; Fri: 11a-10p; Sat 12-10p; Sun 12-8p
All Saints (Canonsburg)	June 8-12	601 West McMurray Rd., Cburg	724-745-5205	www.AllSaintsCbg.org	Mon-Fri: 11a-9p
Holy Trinity (Steubenville)	June 10-12	300 S. 4th St., Steubenville	740-282-9835	www.holytrinitystb.org	Wed-Fri: 11:00a-9:00p
Holy Cross (Pittsburgh/Mt. Lebanon)	June 15-19	123 Gilkeson Rd., Pittsburgh	412-833-3355	www.HolyCrossPgh.org	Mon-Thu: 11a-9p, Dinner til 8p; Fri: 11a-10p, Dinner til 9p
Kimisis Tis Theotokou	June 11-13	2111 Davidson St., Aliquippa	724-375-5341	www.Theotokou.org	Thu-Sat: 11a-8p
Holy Dormition (Oakmont)	June 26-28	12 Washington Ave., Oakmont	412-828-4144	www.DormitionPgh.org	Fri-Sun: 12p-11p Dinner until 9p
All Saints (Weirton)	July 10	3528 West St., Weirton	304-797-9884	allstswv.org/greek-festival	Fri: 11a-9p
Saint Spyridon (Monessen)	July 10	1207 Grand Blvd., Monessen	724-684-5411	stspyridon.pa.goarch.org	Fri: 11a-9p
Holy Trinity (Ambridge)	July 14-18	2930 Beaver Rd., Ambridge	724-266-5336	www.htgoc.org	Tue-Sat: 11:30a-8:30p
Ypapanti/Presentation of Christ	July 23-25	1672 Electric Ave., E Pittsburgh	412-824-9188	www.ypapanti.net	Thu-Sat: 11a-9p
Holy Trinity (Pittsburgh/North Hills)	Sep. 3-6	985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh	412-366-8700	HolyTrinityPgh.org/festival	Thu-Sun: 11a-9p

Thank you for enjoying our great Greek food, music and culture. Take a church tour and ask about the timeless Orthodox Christian faith while you're there, too! Also, want to help us feed, minister to and provide health care for the hungry and needy of the Pittsburgh area? Support the Neighborhood Resilience Project, an Orthodox Christian philanthropic ministry united in faith and joined by a desire to provide action-oriented and sustainable solutions for poverty-and-trauma-affected communities in the region. Find out more or donate at [neighborhoodresilience.org](http://neighborhoodresilience.org).

This free guide is provided as a public service of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church (Pittsburgh/North Hills). Please share it with your friends! Find it online at [HolyTrinityPgh.org/pittsburgh-greek-festivals-guide](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org/pittsburgh-greek-festivals-guide).

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 26 Issue 5*

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

**Fr. Michael Kallaur, Presiding Priest**

**Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter**

**Deacon Elias Diamond**

**Philip Yamalis, Cantor**

**Nena Jovonovich, Secretary**

Website: [holycrosspgh.org](http://holycrosspgh.org)

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

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

**Office Hours** Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

## **Organizations & Committees**

Church School	Elias Diamond	(412) 833-3355
Philoptochos Pres.	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
Phil. Membership	Christine Picard	(412) 951-7258
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	Dina Hartlep	(412) 720-9383
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 <a href="#">via Zoom</a>
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.



Christ's ascension makes possible our ascension. By Christ's ascension, we do not have to wait until we die to experience heaven. Our disobedience to God, our sin severed earth from heaven and destroyed our communion with God. Jesus has restored our communion with the Father. Through the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood on the Cross, forgiveness is granted to those who seek it. We can reject the pride and sinfulness of this world (as we do in baptism) and ascend through prayer, fasting, spiritual discipline and the sacraments of the Church into the heavenly realm. The Church is where we find heaven on earth. Heaven is not somewhere in outer space, heaven is what Christ gives to us when we follow Him. "The kingdom of Heaven is within you." (Lk. 17:21) Our interior journey with the grace of the Holy Spirit is transforming our human life into what we are called to be, the holy people of God. Our life can be a victory over sin, a witness to the love of God, and an experience of God's presence here and now.

There is a meaningful encounter between St. Paisios of Mt. Athos (d. 1994) and St. Constantine the Emperor who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century (d. 336 -the first Christian Emperor of Byzantium). St. Constantine the Great appeared to St. Paisios in his cell and said the following, "I am Constantine, and I have come to reveal to you the glory which the monastics enjoy in Heaven, as well as the boldness and closeness which they have with Christ. I envy you, O Paisios... whereas I blame and censure myself for not becoming part of this honored rank of monks, and I cannot bear the loss." St. Paisios responded, "Do you not enjoy the splendid glory and divine radiance?" "Yes", responded St. Constantine, "But I have neither the boldness as the monks nor equal in honor with them. I have seen the souls of certain monastics, when they die and are separated from their bodies, soaring like eagles with much courage toward the heavens, and the opposing rank of demons did not dare to approach them at all. Then I witnessed the gates of Heaven opening to these souls entering and appearing before the Heavenly King, standing with great boldness next to the throne of God." (*The Art of Salvation*, pg. 268)

This encounter helped St. Paisios immensely. Monasticism is indeed a special calling for those who have been called. Although many of us are not monastics, our Christian effort requires ascetical action. We are all called to pray, to fast, to attend Church, to dedicate our life and talents to serving God and our

neighbor. Those who humble themselves here on earth, are exalted in the Heavenly Kingdom. The Lord is not concerned with our earthly titles and stations, He instead examines the hearts and desires of each person. Our ascent towards the Kingdom of God begins with our descent into the spiritual warfare of the heart.

St. Paul writes of his experience of heaven, "What eye has not seen, no ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him." (I Cor.2:9) Christ has given this gift to all of us. Heaven is present here and now, the earth is a reflection of the heavenly beauty.

St. Athanasius the Great wrote, "God became man, so that man could become God." God came down to earth so that we might ascend to heaven. This is joy of the Lord's Ascension. We can ascend!!! Christ is everything to us. He is our hope, our joy, our peace, and our love. Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives and in Him we transcend the darkness of sin and suffering and ascend to throne of God. Where everything material (including gravity) pulls us down to the earth, we go up with Christ. When we enter into the Church we ascend, "Blessed is the Kingdom...." When we enter into the chamber of hearts, where we have enthroned Christ, again we ascend. It is here and now that we discover the kingdom of heaven in our midst!

Jesus taught, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Lk. 17:21) From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He began, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mt. 3:2)

The feast of Ascension is the affirmation that Christ descended in order to make it possible for us to ascend. We rejoice in God's plan of salvation.

*"Completing Your whole plan for us, uniting earth to heaven,  
You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, not parting at all,  
but ever remaining, and saying to those who love You;  
I am with you and no one will be against you...."  
(Matins of Ascension)*

*St. Nicholas Velemirovich writes:*

“How can mortal man have a part in the nature of God? How can the eternal ally itself with the temporal, the glorious with the unworthy, the incorrupt with the corrupt, the pure with the unclean? It cannot without particular conditions. These conditions are mentioned by the Apostle Peter. A condition on God’s side and one on our side. As the condition on God’s side, St. Peter speaks of God revealing to us His power and all things that pertain unto holiness and eternal life. On our side, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God has fulfilled His condition and given us power through knowledge of Him and has called us to glory and virtue. Now it is up to us to fulfill our condition, that is knowing Christ the Lord, to escape from the lust of the world. The Lord Christ first revealed heaven and all heaven’s blessings, then He invited all mankind to draw near and receive these blessings. How did He invite them? By words alone? By words indeed, but not only by words; by glory and virtue. By glory; that is, by His glorious Resurrection; by virtue; that is, by His wonderful service and suffering. By these He has invited us to receive the exceedingly great promises, that by them, we may partake of God’s nature. But that we may be able to know Christ and hear His invitation, we must first escape the lusts of this world. If we do not escape them, then we will remain blind before Him, before His glory and virtue, and deaf to His invitation. “ (*Prologue Vol.III, pg.71*)

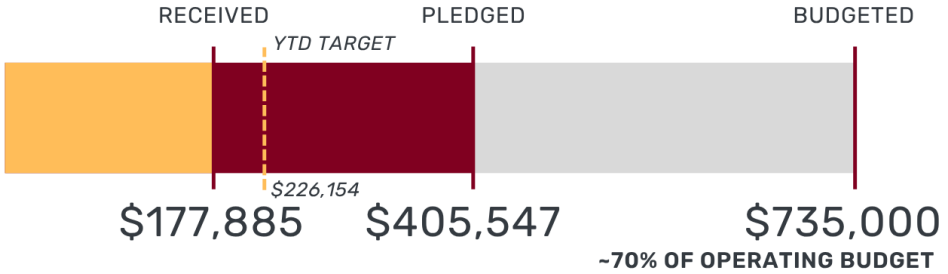
We thank God for all the blessings we have received, both known and unknown. We rejoice at all that is made possible for us through the great love and plan of salvation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are called to be the sons and daughters of God; participating here and now in heavenly banquet of Christ. May we seek to ascend to the heights of heaven by journeying within to cast out the darkness of sin and enthrone Christ as Lord and Master of our lives.

**Christ is Risen! Χριστος Ανεστη!!!**

With love and prayers in the Risen Lord,  
Fr. Michael

# STEWARDSHIP 2026 SNAPSHOT

AS OF 4/23/2026



## 205 PLEDGED MEMBERS OUT OF AN EXPECTED 500+ MEMBERS

Membership status includes completion of **annual 2026 pledge**, via Stewardship Card or Realm. **To pledge on Realm, please request an account first** (see below).

Thank you to those who have pledged and/or contributed to our 2026 Stewardship campaign thus far! We are approx. **half-way** towards our goal, and targeting to have all 2026 pledges returned by **June 2026**, if possible.

If you have not yet returned your pledge, please drop off your Stewardship Card in the Stewardship box in the Narthex or complete your pledge on Realm.

For any questions or to request an invitation to Realm, please contact Stephen Yamalis at [holycrosspgh.stewardship@gmail.com](mailto:holycrosspgh.stewardship@gmail.com). To pledge and manage stewardship on Realm, an invitation and account creation are required.

## ROAD TO 100%

Please join us on the **Road to 100%**, as we aim to cover 100% of the Operating Budget with Stewardship, by 2031, allowing other income sources to be dedicated to major projects, outreach, reserves, and more! To join in this effort, please prayerfully consider a **10% average annual increase** in your stewardship pledge/contributions.



# HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Christos Anesti!

What a joy it has been to go on the magnificent journey of repentance during Lent, reliving the Passion during Holy Week, and the ultimate culmination of Pascha celebrating the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. During our Earthly lives, we get a limited number of opportunities to take this journey, and I am deeply thankful to have traveled with you.

Where do we go from here? How can we honor Jesus's ultimate sacrifice? Mark states "Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). We are called to serve one another. As the Body of Christ, we come as different parts (individuals) with different functions (spiritual gifts), yet we are all vital and necessary for the whole. One of Holy Cross's greatest strengths as a community is the diversity in gifts that we have been given. We were created perfectly to accomplish a specific purpose. Where do you fit in the Body of Christ? Now is the perfect time to reflect and pray on this. How can you get more involved by using your spiritual gifts to fulfill Holy Cross's mission?



One way to see where you fit in is by joining us at the **Mingle and Mimosas Event**, to be held on **Sunday, May 3rd** after liturgy in the Community Center. Representatives from every organization in our congregation will be present to help guide you on where you fit in to serve with your time, talent, and influence. This event is for new members and anyone that is interested in getting more involved. We'll have tasty food and of course mimosas while we learn more about our wonderful ministries.

Our next **Gyro Thursday fundraiser** will take place on **May 14th**. Please volunteer to help on that day and stop over for a delicious meal!



## HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

123 Gikeson Road | Pittsburgh, PA 15228 | (412) 833-3355 | Fax: (412) 833-3357 | [www.holvcrosspoh.org](http://www.holvcrosspoh.org)



# HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

On **Sunday, May 17th** we will have a **General Assembly** where we will discuss the audited 2025 financials, a plan to improve our aging infrastructure, and a stewardship campaign update.

The **food fair** will take place on **June 15th-19th**. Thank you to all who have been involved in the preparations. This is a massive undertaking and our biggest fundraiser of the year. Get involved today!

Also, make sure to save the date for our 2nd annual **Glendi** to take place on **Saturday, September 26th**.

Our **stewardship campaign** is in full swing. The stewardship committee is formed and you'll be hearing from a representative of the committee at some point this year. We are asking all parishioners to consider increasing their stewardship by an average of 10% per year until the year 2031. This would allow us to use stewardship alone to cover all operating expenses for the church, freeing up fundraising monies to go towards facility improvements, outreach, and re-establishing our emergency fund.

Lastly, please consider making Holy Cross a part of your long-term financial plans to bolster our **endowment**. The endowment provides for the long-term financial security of the parish while giving back to the community. Planned gifts serve as a way to fulfill our call as Orthodox Christian stewards.

With love in Christ,

**Anthony Cuneo**

***President of Holy Cross Parish Council***

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.
- 3) Endowment - Have 75 people/families commit by our 75th anniversary (2029).
- 4) Emergency Fund - Reestablish 3 months operating expenses.

Please mark your calendars for upcoming events planned for 2026:

5/3/26: Mingle & Mimosas Event - After Liturgy in the community center

5/14/26: Gyro Thursday

5/17/26: May General Assembly - After Liturgy in the community center

June 15-19: Food Fair

8/20/26: Gyro Thursday

9/26/26: Glendi

11/5/26: Gyro Thursday

11/8/26: November General Assembly

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# HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Christ is Risen!

Upon reflecting on Holy Week services, the beautiful Agape meal on Pascha, and several events during Bright Week, I cannot help but feel touched by the sense of love and joy within our parish family. This sense of family, community, belonging, and togetherness is an essential backbone to what makes us such a strong Orthodox Christian parish. We often feel at home when at Holy Cross, both in the pews and beyond.

Looking around the church during the various services, I cannot help but smile as I see family, friends, and cherished members of our community from the front of the pews, to the narthex, to the chanter's stand. WE all make up our community. We all help make Holy Cross the loving, warm, comforting home that it is.

In addition to practicing our faith through services and prayer, we have an obligation to continue to support and build our community through various ministries and organizations (Shameless plug to attend the Mingles & Mimosas event on 5/3 to learn more 😊). This is where, through stewardship, we give our time and talents to the areas where they could be most useful. We are blessed to have a vibrant community with a wealth of knowledge, skills, and backgrounds. Through the various ministries offered, we have the opportunity to all have a hand in making our parish thrive together.

Of course, we tend to focus a bit on discussing the "treasure" aspect of stewardship— giving monetary contributions. These allow us to "take care of our home" and collectively allow for the day-to-day operations of our parish and for us to see our shared vision(s) come to fruition. The Stewardship funds ultimately drive the budget to run our parish operations, maintenance, activities, etc. all year.

So you may be asking yourself— "I'm doing one or all of these things. Why are we still asking for a Stewardship card to be considered a 'member' of Holy Cross?" The answer is simple. The signed Stewardship card is a representation of our **annual** acknowledgement of our membership in the Holy Cross community. It is a commitment to the responsibility we have to represent the parish by conducting ourselves in an Orthodox Christian manner and also serve our community and maintain our shared home through our time, talents and treasure.

Our parish bylaws define membership simply as annually signing a Stewardship card because of what this represents. There is no minimum pledge amount, and we are reminded to only give within our means. As a pledged member, you participate in shaping our future by voting in General Assemblies (Shameless plug to attend the upcoming General Assembly on 5/17 😊)



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# HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

and elections, in addition to actually making it happen by contributing your... yes— time, talents, and treasure.

As we focus on membership, the Stewardship Committee would like to thank the ~200+ members who have pledged (by submitting a 2026 Stewardship Card or pledging on Realm) so far for 2026. If you have not already, please pick up a Stewardship Card today from the Narthex or request an account to pledge in Realm today. Simply fill out the card, sign, and submit in the Narthex or via mail to the Church office to be an "official" member for 2026. Please join us in acknowledging our membership and stewardship of our Holy Cross community.

In order to pledge via Realm, an invitation to create an account must be accepted. To request an invite to Realm or for any questions, please contact Stephen Yamalis at [HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com](mailto:HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com) or find any member of the Stewardship Committee (names are listed below).

Thank you!

### **Stephen Yamalis**

2026 Vice President, Stewardship Chair

[HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com](mailto:HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com)

### **2026 Stewardship Committee**

#### **Committee**

- Stephen Yamalis (Chair, VP)
- Alex Chakos
- Pres. Adrienne Dickos
- Rachel Gogos (former VP)
- Annie Urso

#### **Board of Advisors**

- John Hoenig
- Konrad Mayr
- Emanuel Panos
- Manuel Politis
- George Sokos

#### **Parish Council**

- Tom Mourtacos
- Ted Sofis

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# **HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA**

**Sunday, May 17, 2026 | Holy Cross Community Center**

- 1. Opening Prayer**
- 2. Elections of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for that Assembly**
- 3. Reading of minutes of the previous meeting**
- 4. Review 2025 audited financials**
- 5. Discussion and approval regarding usage of the line of credit**
- 6. Stewardship Report**
- 7. Old Business**
  - Iconography Update**
- 8. New Business**
- 9. Closing Prayer**

HOLY CROSS  
**GREEK FESTIVAL**

2026 Cooking Schedule \*

**T-MINUS 2 MONTHS**

Spanakopita	<b>5,500 pieces</b>	Completed
Souzoukakia	<b>2,500 pieces</b>	Completed
Koulourakia	<b>10,300 pieces</b>	Thur April 16 <sup>th</sup> 5pm Wed April 22 <sup>nd</sup> 5pm Tue April 28 <sup>th</sup> and Thur April 30 <sup>th</sup> 5pm Saturday May 23 <sup>rd</sup> 9am
Tiropitas	<b>2,150 pieces</b>	Monday May 4 <sup>th</sup> 10am-5pm Tuesday May 5 <sup>th</sup> 10am-5pm
Patitisiso	<b>1,550 pieces</b>	Tuesday May 5 <sup>th</sup> Boiling Noodles Wednesday May 6 <sup>th</sup> 10:30am – 5pm Thursday May 7 <sup>th</sup> 10am – 5 pm
Galatobouriko	<b>1,275 pieces</b>	Monday May 11 <sup>th</sup> 10 am
Kourambiedes	<b>2,980 pieces</b>	Tue May 12 <sup>th</sup> 10-5 Wed May 13 <sup>th</sup> 10-5 Thur May 14 <sup>th</sup> 11-6
Baklava	<b>5,760 pieces</b>	Thursday May 28 <sup>th</sup> 9:30 and 4:30
Finikia	<b>2,500 pieces</b>	TBD
Karidopita	<b>1,550 pieces</b>	TBD
Shank sauce		TBD
Syrup		TBD

\*Reminder texts and voicemails will be sent before each prepped item  
 Times and dates are subject to change.

***Baking with a Twist!***  
 Festival Koulourakia Preparation

**7,128 (594 DOZ) MORE TO GO!**

Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 5pm-9pm  
 Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 5pm-9pm  
 Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9am-4pm  
 and more dates if needed!

Snacks will be provided!  
 All are welcome!  
 No experience needed!

For signup and questions:  
 Contact Stephen Yamalis  
[yamalis.stephen@gmail.com](mailto:yamalis.stephen@gmail.com)

Join us for a Special Coffee Hour!

# MINGLE & MIMOSAS

Welcoming our newest members to Holy Cross!

3 MAY  
2026

WHILE MINGLING WITH OUR  
LONG STANDING  
PARISHIONERS!

FOLLOWING  
LITURGY

COME SEE WHAT HAPPENS  
“BETWEEN” SUNDAYS!

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ALL  
THE DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS  
AND OUTREACH WE HAVE!



# GOYA Spring Retreat @ Camp Nazareth



**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
123 GILKESON ROAD • PITTSBURGH, PA  
*(across from the galleria)*

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
FOR HOLY CROSS  
Gyro Thursdays  
in 2026!**

**May 14th  
August 20th  
November 5th**



# GREEK SCHOOL PROGRAM



ΜΥ FAVORITE GREEK FOODS  
ΤΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΜΟΥ ΦΑΓΗΤΑ ΑΓΑΠΗΜΕΝΑ

Επιλογή: Αλίκη Πρωτόμα  
Καλλι: Ανδρέας Μουστάκης



ΣΠΑΝΙΚΟΠΙΤΑ



ΠΑΣΤΙΣΙΟ











# 2026 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL



## AT HOLY CROSS

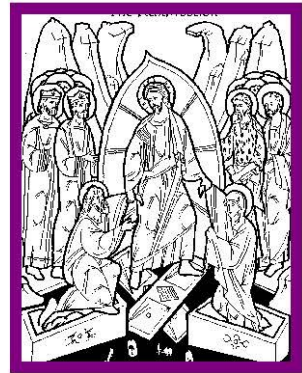
Bring your children to learn God's word at VCS!

VCS is dedicated to teaching our young children about Orthodox Christianity in a fun and exciting atmosphere. It is an extension of the Sunday School experience that can greatly enhance a child's sense of belonging to the church, while providing our children with an opportunity to make life-long friends in the church community.

Activities include daily skits illustrating lesson, brief classroom instruction, religious music lessons, hands-on crafts relating to lesson, recreation time, snack & social time.

This year's theme is:

# SUMMER PASCHA



## Monday, July 27 thru Friday, July 31 from 9am~Noon

*\*Monday, July 27, children should arrive at 8:30 am*

Welcoming all children age 3 years through entering 6th grade  
High School students, parents, interested adults needed to volunteer.

Nominal registration fee of \$20 per student

**Please register early Online (QR code or link below) or use form →**

so we can prepare nametags, snacks & crafts!  
Make checks payable to Holy Cross VCS  
and send to:

123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228

Should you need financial assistance, please contact

Fr. Michael Kallaur (Holy Cross) at (412) 833-3355

[https://onrealm.org/HolyCrossGreekO/  
PublicRegistrations/Event?](https://onrealm.org/HolyCrossGreekO/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NjNkYTQ2MWEtNjg5My00ZTIxLWFMNjktYjQxZjAxMjk4YjRi)

[linkString=NjNkYTQ2MWEtNjg5My00ZTIxLWFMNjktYjQxZjAxMjk4YjRi](https://onrealm.org/HolyCrossGreekO/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NjNkYTQ2MWEtNjg5My00ZTIxLWFMNjktYjQxZjAxMjk4YjRi)



# Orthodox Christian Vacation Church School at Holy Cross

## 2026 Registration Form ~ Please print.

Child's First & Last Name	Age on July 30	Grade Entering Fall 2026	Allergy information (Food, Medicine, Other)

Parent's Name(s):
Home Phone:
Address:
Church Parish you belong to:
Mother's Cell Phone:
Father's Cell Phone:
Email address:

**Emergency information, OTHER THAN parents**

1st Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my child(ren) listed above permission to participate in the Vacation Church School held July 27–31, 2026. I understand that my child(ren) will be responsible for obeying the rules and regulations of VCS as enforced by the directors, teachers, and staff. I hereby release Holy Cross church, its VCS teachers and staff from liability for the safety and/or conduct of my child (ren). I also give permission for emergency medical care to be administered to my child(ren) if necessary.

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For administrative use:

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Amt Rec'd/Check# \_\_\_\_\_ Amt Rec'd/Cash \_\_\_\_\_

+ BARTHOLOMEW

By GOD'S MERCY

ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE – NEW ROME  
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH:

GRACE AND PEACE FROM GOD

## Patriarchal and Synodal Encyclical

*on the occasion of the celebration of the 1400th anniversary  
of the solemn chanting of the Akathist Hymn while standing  
for the deliverance of the Queen of Cities  
from the siege of the Avars and the Persians*

*"To You, our Champion Leader, we, Your City, ascribe hymns of victory and  
thanksgiving, for having been delivered from calamities, O Theotokos!"*

This year marks fourteen hundred years since, in honour of the Theotokos, the Kontakion now universally known as the "Akathist Hymn" was solemnly chanted in church, with all the faithful standing. It is an exalted and triumphant poem which, with singular richness and elegance of expression, refers both historically and theologically to the divine economy of the Incarnation and to the unique role of the All-Pure Mother of God within it.

Through this Kontakion, the faithful at prayer reverently greet the Panaghia with the repeated echo of the first salutation addressed by the Archangel Gabriel, herald of grace and joy, to the one full of grace: the word "Rejoice." Through this word, the "mystery hidden from all ages" is made manifest, and "the sum of our salvation" is brought to fulfilment. The repetition in this hymn of the word "Rejoice" one hundred and forty-four times in address to the All-Blessed Virgin clearly bears a mystical meaning. It recalls the one hundred and forty-four thousand pure saints of the Revelation, who sing the "new song" with their harps before the throne of God and "follow the Lamb wherever He goes."<sup>1</sup> As the people of God are purified in both life and doctrine, wholly devoted to the incarnate Word of God and indissolubly united with Him, they hymn the saving divine economy and at the same time salute, in songs of praise and sacred melody, the All-Glorious Mother of the Lord and Mother of the Church, as well as her mighty protection over the Church's devout flock.

The opening of the Kontakion, its *Prooimion* (prelude), was originally the well-known hymn, "Having mystically received the command in knowledge...", which refers exclusively to the Annunciation of the Theotokos. This shows that the entire hymn properly belongs to that great feast, for which, even to this day, the whole service of the Salutations forms a beautiful and richly flowered crown of forefeast and afterfeast. In the course of time, a new introductory hymn became established – "To you, our Champion Leader, we ascribe hymns of victory" – in order to express the grateful thanksgiving of the people to her "through whom trophies are raised" and "through whom enemies are overthrown."

The salvation of the City and of the whole Empire from the terrible assault of the Avars and the Persians, during the absence of Emperor Heraclius and his army, who were far away striving to recover the precious Cross of Christ, was rightly attributed to the mighty protection and help of the Most Holy Theotokos, to whom the founder, Equal-to-

the-Apostles Emperor Constantine the Great, had reverently dedicated New Rome. Receiving the unceasing and anguished supplication of clergy and people from the depths of their hearts, the Mother of God not only strengthened the resolve of the few defenders, but also wrought a great miracle: by the swirling of storm winds she brought about the total destruction of the besiegers' fleet, after which they were driven into disorderly flight, and thus the City was saved. Rightly, therefore, "having been delivered from calamities," the City of the Theotokos inscribed its hymns of victory to the Panaghia, whom it thenceforth named its "Champion Leader," and as such it called upon her again and again throughout the turbulent history of Orthodoxy, each time tasting sweetly her love and her mighty protection.

The historic Church of Blachernae, where, according to ancient tradition, an all-night vigil was celebrated each week in honour of the Mother of God, often in the presence of the Emperor, received on the night of 7 August 626 the crowds of the God-fearing people who had been saved. Deeply moved and with tears of gratitude, they offered her veneration and chanted the Kontakion with its new *prooimion*, as fitting thanksgiving and a debt of glorification to God and to her who, in the words of Saint Andrew of Crete, "holds the second place after the Trinity"<sup>2</sup> — the Deliverer and Protectress of the City and of the whole realm.

From that hour, the "Akathist Hymn" — this radiant masterpiece of ecclesiastical poetry, this incomparable monument of the Greek language and most intricately woven work of art of God-inspired theology — became the most beloved hymn of our liturgical life, the Christians' sweetest delight. Long ago, it was translated into many languages. Bishops and priests chant it with compunction. Monastics recite it daily, and the faithful often throughout the year. Theologians analyze its lofty dogmatic ascents. Scholars of language and literature plunge into the beautiful depths of its expressive refinement and poetic grandeur. Poets and painters draw inspiration from its luminous lyrical images. Iconographers depict lovely scenes from its abundant content. Masters of ecclesiastical music clothe it in elaborate sacred melodies. Yet the "Akathist Hymn" always remains, above all, the God-befitting prayer of the Church — the voice of the devout heart of Christians, at once glorification, thanksgiving, supplication, and entreaty to Him who "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man"; and at the same time, an appeal to her who possesses maternal boldness before God and who, in manifold ways and at all times, abundantly bestows her mighty help and protection upon the devout Orthodox faithful.

The Akathist Hymn calls every believer to vigilance, to remain upright and steadfast, in humility and prayer, before the great challenges of our age, in these grievous days of upheaval and war through which humanity is now passing. Let us pray fervently that the Mother of the "Peace of God," moved by the prayerful offering of her "Akathist Hymn" by all the faithful in compunction and reverence, may once again act as "Champion Leader" of all who are wronged and endangered, and as the mighty Protection of the children of the Church throughout the world, granting to the human race the true Peace of her Son, that peace "which surpasses all understanding."<sup>3</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the month of March 2026 A.D.  
Indiction III



**Bartholomew of Constantinople**  
supplicant in Christ

ORDINATION TO THE DEACONATE OF TIMOTHY SOFIS  
AT ST. DEMETRIOS IN WILLIAMSBURG, VA  
ON LAZARUS SATURDAY





# Holy Cross

Sun	Mon	Tue
<p><b>GYRO THURSDAY</b>  <b>MAY 14 • 11 am – 7 pm</b></p> <p>ONLINE ORDERING AND TAKEOUT ONLY:  <a href="http://holycrosspgh.org/gyro">holycrosspgh.org/gyro</a></p> 		
<p><b>3</b> Sunday of the Paralytic              8:15am Orthros              9:30am Divine Liturgy              Coffee Hour  <b>Mingle and Mimosas</b></p>	<p><b>4</b>  <b>9AM TIROPITA</b></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis  <b>8PM BASKETBALL</b></p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>9AM TIROPITA AND PASTITSIO NOODLES</b></p> <p><b>7pm IOCC Open House @ Holy Cross</b></p>
<p><b>10</b> Sunday of the Samaritan Woman              8:15am Orthros              9:30am Divine Liturgy  <b>Mother's Day</b></p>	<p><b>11</b>  <b>10AM GALATOBOURIKO</b></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>10AM KOURAMBIETHES</b></p>
<p><b>17</b> Sunday of the Blind Man              8:15am Orthros              9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><b>19</b></p>
<p><b>24</b> Fathers of 1st Council              8:15am Orthros              9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <hr/> <p><b>PENTECOST 31</b>              8:15am Orthros              9:30am Divine Liturgy  <i>*No memorials</i></p>	<p><b>25 Memorial Day</b>  <i>Office Closed</i>              9-11am Jefferson Cemetery              12:30-2:30pm Mt. Lebanon Cemetery</p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>7:30pm PickleBALL</b></p> 

# May 2026

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p><b>1</b> <i>Prophet Jeremiah</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy</p>	<p><b>2</b> <i>Metropolis Oratorical Festival @Oakmont</i>  5pm Great Vespers</p>
<p><b>6</b> Mid-Pentecost 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy <b>10:30AM PASTITSIO</b>  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p><b>7</b> <b>10AM PASTITSIO</b>  6:30pm Fellowship &amp; Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS</p>	<p><b>8</b> St. John the Theologian 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Lit</p>	<p><b>9</b>   5pm Great Vespers</p>
<p><b>13</b> 8:45am Golden Club <b>10AM KOURAMBIETHES</b>  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p><b>14</b> St. Isidoros 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy <b>11AM KOURAMBIETHES</b> <b>GYRO THURSDAY</b> 6:30pm Fellowship &amp; Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b> <i>Philoptochos Tea</i>  5pm Great Vespers</p>
<p><b>20</b> Apodosi of Pascha 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy  4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p><b>21</b> Ascension Sts. Constantine &amp; Eleni 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy 6:30pm Fellowship &amp; Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>23</b> <b>9AM KOULOURAKIA</b>  5pm Great Vespers</p>
<p><b>27</b>   7PM BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p><b>28</b> <b>5PM KOULOURAKIA</b> 6:30pm Fellowship &amp; Fitness Adult Pickleball 7PM CATECHISM CLASS</p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b> Saturday of Souls 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy  5pm Great Vespers</p>

## Palm Sunday Sermon

An interesting fact about palm trees which many do not know is that there is an ancient Greek name for this plant, which is “phoenix.” There is some debate about what this name refers to. Some think it refers to the ancient Phoenician people, whose alphabet framed a prototype for the Greek alphabet. However, a more compelling theory is that it refers to the phoenix, a mythical bird believed to inhabit ancient Egypt.

The legend goes that the phoenix was an immortal bird - when it grew old, it would disintegrate into a burst of fire, only to be reborn from the ashes into a new life. For this reason, the phoenix bird became a symbol for a number of first and second century Christian writers who saw the myth of the phoenix a symbol for the death and Resurrection of Christ.

So, the palm tree has this linguistic association with the phoenix. It makes sense then that the palm branch is also a symbol of victory, of royalty, of kingship. After all, each one of us fights many battles in our lives, but ultimately, no matter how great the king, no matter how great the conquest, even the greatest rulers of men lose to the final foe: death. Yet, the phoenix as a symbol is so powerful that it can even overcome death itself.

Overcoming death is what Christ came to do. He is the king, not just of Earth, but of Heaven. His victory is not just one of a mortal king, whose empires rise and fall, and become swept away with the sands of time, but rather, Christ’s victory is an eternal victory, that opens our path to eternal life. This Sunday, we remember Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when the crowds welcomed Him, hailing him triumphantly, shouting ‘Hosanna in the highest!’

These crowds by and large recognized Him as an earthly king, a great one certainly, but one still very much in line with the kings who came before. But He was and is so much more than that. He is the eternal king, the one who triumphs over death. Like the phoenix, though Christ came to die upon the Cross of His own will, He will rise again. Today, we celebrate His kingship both of heaven and of earth. Yet, this same week brings with it the struggles and suffering and sacrifice of Christ as well.

In our own lives, period of feeling triumphant may very quickly be followed by suffering and crisis. This should be a reminder to us to fear not. Even the Lord’s triumph on this day would quickly turn to crisis. But He will rise again, and we too, when the darkness feels like it would overwhelm us, must hold to the hope of the Resurrection, which we celebrate every Sunday and next Sunday most of all. As the Lord bore His sufferings with resilience and faith, let us not lose hope in our own lives, but instead cling to the hope of His ultimate victory as king of kings.

~Deacon Elias Diamond

RSVP BY MAY 10TH

*Afternoon Tea*



HOLY CROSS LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS

INVITES YOU TO SPEND AND  
AFTERNOON WITH US FOR LUNCH AND  
TEA

SATURDAY **16** 11:00 AM  
MAY

TICKETS \$25

PLEASE CONTACT DENA YAMALIS  
412-343-8355  
DYAMALIS@COMCAST.NET

# HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA











# DID YOU KNOW ?

There is **no minimum pledge amount** for your annual Stewardship contribution. We should give what we can! The amount can always be adjusted.

Have you completed your 2026 pledge yet? If not, please pick up a bright yellow card in the Narthex or request an account for Realm by contacting [HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com](mailto:HolyCrossPgh.Stewardship@gmail.com).

Holy Cross Stewardship 2026

annual  
pascha bread  
baking



## Young Adults at Agape Meal



Start them YOUNG →

Fr. Michael visiting our oldest parishioner Harry Kainaroi I at 103!



# HERE WE GO!



## RETROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH SUMMER CAMP 2026

SELECT ONE:

- WEEK 1: JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup> - JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>      2<sup>ND</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- WEEK 2: JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>      5<sup>TH</sup> - 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- WEEK 3: JULY 5<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>      7<sup>TH</sup> - 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- WEEK 4: JULY 12<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 18<sup>TH</sup>      10<sup>TH</sup> - 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

"AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME,  
SO I SEND YOU."  
JOHN 20:21



## Oratorical Festival Speeches

Hi, my name is Siena, and I would love to share why St. Helen is special. She was the mother of Constantine the Great who was the Roman Emperor at the time. The Romans killed Christians because Christians were worshipping Jesus instead of the Roman gods. St. Helen asked her son if he could stop killing Christians and he said yes! St. Helen is credited for discovering the holy tomb, and the real Holy Cross. Thanks for listening to my speech and I hoped you learned something about St. Helen.

-By Siena Cuneo

Saint Eletherios was born and raised in a well respected Christian family, was consecrated as the Bishop of Illyricum, and has a feast day on December 15th. These are a few things Saint Eletherios did to improve the life of ancient Rome and I will be talking about these three.

Saint Elefthirios was raised by his mother who was a saint. Her name was Anthia and she got baptized by the Apostle Paul. She raised and took care of Saint Elefthirios for a while and then he was educated by the Bishop of Rome. Known for his intelligence, he was ordained deacon at 15, priest at 18, and bishop at 20. He was the youngest bishop to ever be consecrated!

As Bishop of Rome, Saint Eleftherios (or Eleutherius) led the church in Illyricum, converting many to Christianity. The Roman emperor was angry so he came after him and arrested him. As soldiers were coming they heard the sermons and they were converted to christianity, but he told the soldiers to take him to Rome because he didn't want to get them in trouble. He was executed alongside his mother, Anthia, in Rome.

Saint Eleftherios's feast day is celebrated on December 15 in the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions. His feast day is held in his honor and his name means freedom and is common in Greece.

We can learn from him by never letting your faith down and never stop believing in God. Even at a young age we can still make a big impact on the world.

Thank you.

-By Luca Cuneo

*Topic 1: Pick a common icon type that is found in Orthodox churches (for example, Christ Pantocrator, Virgin Hodegetria, the Resurrection icon) and explain its meaning and theological significance.*

### Pantocrator

Reverend Fathers, honorable judges, parishioners, fellow speakers, Good Morning. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Lord, Lord, look down from heaven and behold and visit this vineyard which your right hand has planted.” (Psalm 80:14). As we lift up our eyes to the sacred icon of our most awesome Pantocrator in this church, we enter into a mystery. The gaze of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Pantocrator meets us and knows what is in the vineyard of our hearts. One eye judges; yet the other shows compassion. It is one undivided truth. Together, they reveal the mystery of His mercy and His justice.

The term “Pantocrator” means “Almighty” or “Ruler of All.” It is a powerful biblical title that expresses Christ’s absolute authority and divine sovereignty. As the focal point of the dome, the Pantocrator rises above us in heaven and is crowned within the sanctuary. It is the strongest architectural and theological statement within. What dwells beneath the dome is Truth!

It is not merely symbolic, but liturgical, experiential, and dogmatic. So essential is the image of Christ Pantocrator that a church is not consecrated without it. Just as Christ is the center of the universe, so His image occupies the highest and most central place.

Dogmatically, the Pantokrator proclaims that Christ is the unchanging Truth across all time and all of His kingdom. He is the Pre-eternal Word, the Creator, the One who fills all things and is contained by none, the Giver of life!

His halo with the sacred inscription, "Ο Ω Ν" (Ho Oōn), or “He Who Is,” is the Divine glory and the Uncreated light. The book of Revelation 1:8 powerfully identifies God as “The One Who is and Who was and Who is to come, The Pantocrator,” revealing Him as Divine Glory and Uncreated Light.

The Pantocrator is experiential, where we all feel and encounter His presence in the church.

He is felt in my heart and mind when standing under the dome during prayer, where Christ presides over me. When the sensor lifts up my prayers, and voices are chanting, this is where heaven and earth meet. Christ fills and governs all of creation and is visibly present to all.

He is clothed in two tones, a deep red and a rich blue. Red symbolizes earth, blood, and clay in His humanity. The blue represents heaven and His divinity. Thus, the God-man. The icon teaches without words. He holds the Gospel, Book of Truth, and Law in His left hand. He blesses us with His right hand. His one eye shows that He rules with judgment, yet the other eye His compassion. Together, a treasure of mercy and truth is revealed.

The very Christ who judges is the One who heals. Whether encountering His mercy or His judgment depends on our spiritual disposition. It is a humbling experience of compassion, repentance, and encountering Truth. The humble encounter mercy, and when it is the unrepentant, the truth is revealed. Psalm 85 declares, “You, Lord, are merciful and truthful.”

Saint Nektarios said, “Contemplating Christ Pantocrator is not about admiring divine majesty from afar. It is about allowing Him to become the ruler of your thoughts because love and truth are inseparable.

Inside the dome, Christ the Pantocrator proclaims a place between heaven and earth where there is no beginning and no end. He is the One who sees all, knows all, judges with righteousness, and loves with boundless mercy. Christ the Pantocrator, who is Willing to replenish the world. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). May His grace dwell upon us as we cry out with the Psalmist: “Lord, Lord, look down upon us and visit this vineyard which Your right hand has planted.” O Christ our God, and to You we offer up glory, with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen

-By Sergio Raftis

Hosanna!!! The King is coming!!! Palm Sunday is coming up. Jesus entered Jerusalem as people surrounded the streets celebrating by waving palm branches and laying down anything they could out of respect for Him. It was joyful, loud and cheerful as Jesus came in on a baby donkey. But, do people really know who they were welcoming? Just a few days later, many of those same people turned against what they saw. This is why we must live and celebrate Palm Sunday everyday to grow closer to God.

Jesus enters Jerusalem with humility. He doesn't come in on a big white horse in shining armor, He comes in on a baby donkey. He wants us to see Him as a friend that loves and helps us. He chooses this over attention and power. That's hard for us to do too because we want people to like us and want to be successful as human beings. Jesus shows us that real strength is loving and serving others. At my school, I have a friend on crutches right now and I carry her stuff to and from our classes. It's important to love and support people and not be so self absorbed.

We must stay consistent in our faith because those people in that crowd that were once shouting, "Hosanna!" were now shouting, "Crucify Him!" It's easy to feel close to God and present with him when we are at church, with our family, or even at Camp Nazareth. But, when we try to do this at school or work, it can be challenging. For example praying before meals. It's easy to do this with family or at church, but maybe you feel uncomfortable at the lunch table at school or praying before you eat at a business meeting. Being Christian and praising God isn't just on Sundays, it's everyday.

It's also important to show up for God like how Jesus's disciples did. We can do this today by going to church regularly, reading our Bible, the list could go on and on. Lent is also a time when we can give up or add things in our lives that help us grow closer to God. However, this can be difficult because we have such busy lives. If I were to connect this to my life today, it would be like me sacrificing one of my favorite TV shows on Netflix so that I can go to bed earlier and wake up on time to get to church. And personally, that's something I struggle with. But, if we take it one at a time, this can be more manageable. We also must remember that God wants us to be happy and do things we love as long as they're good for us.

Palm Sunday teaches us who Christ really is. People thought He was going to give them power and take their problems away, but He came to offer love and salvation. Sometimes we focus too much on our problems and forget what really matters, which is Jesus. Sometimes, when I do my quiet prayer when I go to bed, I feel like I'm giving God a checklist of all the things that bothered me that day that I wanted to go right, but we just have to trust God's plan and thank Him for the day we received, because we are so lucky that we got to receive it.

Palm Sunday is more than just a celebration that happens one day a year, it's a life you can live. So, will we be part of the crowd for a moment, or will we follow Christ for eternity? Thank you so much for listening and I hope to see everyone on Palm Sunday.

-Melanie Frommeyer

Send off for  
Apostoli  
Kallaur



## HOLY CROSS ICONOGRAPHY PROJECT UPDATE

Icons still available for support...

- Eagle → \$9000
- Ox → \$24,000
- Lion → \$17,000
- Young Man → \$25,000
- St. Andrew of Crete → \$10,500
- St. Cyril of Alexandria → \$25,000
- St. Gerasimos of Abydos → \$6000
- St. Innocent of Alaska → \$24,000
- St. Raphael of Brooklyn → \$24,000
- Nativity of the Theotokos → \$50,000
- ~~Assumption of Mary → \$17,000~~
- St. John Maximovitch → \$25,000
- Gold Leaf around the Platitera → \$20,000

Help us reach our goal!

## **The Sanctifying Dimension, Part One~His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)**

Once, a woman said to me, with the tone of someone who had just discovered something incredible: "At your request, the parish priest came to our home and offered the Service of the Sanctification of Water. Truly, the evil spirit has left the house, Your Eminence, and we are no longer experiencing strange occurrences." She had told me that a series of evil events had been taking place in their home, and they did not know the cause. She was not convinced by my answer about the cause — although she is a woman with advanced academic degrees, and she and her husband are deeply committed to their faith and their church.

This is the condition of many people for whom faith has become an ideological, intellectual conviction — mixed with religious practices — while the living sanctifying dimension is absent from their lives, practically rather than merely theoretically.

The sanctifying dimension of life is essential to Christian faith, and it is the Church's function, especially through the liturgy. That our lives be sanctified does not mean that they are limited only to good deeds and virtuous behavior. This path is certainly necessary for those who believe in the Gospel teachings. But the presence of God and His action in life — His effect upon it, and its transformation into a true fullness from Him — is an indispensable matter of faith, if we desire a truly living faith.

The liturgical dimension is among the foundations of faithful and vibrant Christian living. It is indispensable and cannot be replaced by something else. The world in which we live is saturated with the evil spirit, and nothing removes it except the Spirit of God. From here, we understand the priestly function in the Church: the priest is the person established, by divine grace, to be a means for sanctifying life and drawing down the grace of God. And when he says to someone, "*May God bless you,*" his words have real effect; they are not merely a pious wish.

From this angle we also understand the liturgical sacraments. Baptism may unfortunately be merely a social event for some; yet their lack of awareness of its spiritual action does not negate it. It is a true new birth, in which the baptized becomes a child of God and receives divine grace that preserves him — if he preserves it — from the evil spirit and its works.

Through the Eucharist, Christians receive Christ Himself: He dwells in them, sanctifies them, and gives them spiritual strength by which they confront the evil powers that continuously wage war against them, seeking to distance them from their Lord and cast them into sin, so as to rob them of salvation and lead them to spiritual death — and even bodily death in some cases. And so it is with the rest of the sacraments.

According to Orthodox faith, the divine sacraments are not limited to seven, as legal catechesis shaped by Western thought often teaches. Rather, every prayer service that a priest performs at the request of a believer is, in a real sense, a sacrament. These prayerful services touch the lives of believers in all their details: from the blessing of water and the blessing of the home with it, to the service of Holy Oil and anointing the sick with it, to the blessing of a new car, to prayers for a child when he goes to school for the first time, and so on.

The believers live by the grace of God, and they express their longing for it through these prayerful acts which sanctify their life in its entirety. In this way they live, always drawing upon divine grace. The sanctifying dimension is not merely a ritual composed of a few actions, nor is it a talisman like those some people hang around their necks. It is a sanctifying act for which the believer asks, and that is performed by a canonical priest who has received — through the Holy Spirit — the grace of the priesthood, so that he may sanctify our lives.

A sacrament is the presence of God in an unseen manner, yet one that is felt by believers who experience it.

Unfortunately, this concept has largely disappeared in recent years. Faith for many has become a mental conviction of certain doctrines that then "require" a particular lifestyle with specific spiritual practices — by which one simply "fulfills a religious duty."

If knowledge is essential for believers—and if it requires discernment between conscious faith and superstition—this discernment does not mean turning the spiritual life into a matter of principles alone. Faith touches every dimension of the human person: the intellectual, the spiritual, the bodily, and the practical. A person does not live by intellectual convictions separated from life. True faith is the living embodiment of these convictions in daily life.

Even priests have become estranged from this concept. Their sanctifying ministry has weakened greatly, and for many it has come to be limited to fulfilling the "duties" of the Divine Liturgy, baptism, funerals, and weddings — treated as necessary religious ceremonies. For example, the blessing of homes at Theophany has become a burden that some consider heavy and therefore neglect. So how much more the Service of the Sanctification of Water in a home when the need arises?

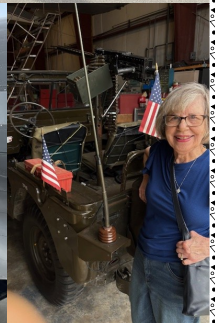
We are witnessing an unconscious deviation of priestly ministry from its essential function — and it is being replaced by social services and various activities that do not fall under sanctification and are not the heart of the priest's work. Any work a priest does apart from his sanctifying ministry is not the core of his vocation. By "work" here I mean administration, accounting, and various social activities, including charitable work. These have come to occupy most of his time and ministry, and because of them, he enters into conflict with the faithful, thinking they are diminishing him when they fulfill their own role and duty. There may be occasions when necessity calls him to work in this area or that, but he must remain aware of the importance of handing such tasks over — at the earliest opportunity — to those in his parish who are qualified, so that he may devote himself to the ministry of confession, the other sanctifying services, visiting the faithful, and nourishing his own life of prayer.

Why have we reached this low point of the absence of sanctifying life? The reasons are many, and there is no room to enumerate them here. But responsibility falls on all of us. The home is the first and primary educator. Whoever grows up in a household devoid of piety will find it difficult to live and understand piety when he becomes older, even if he becomes a priest or a monk. More so the believer living in the heart of society!

Perhaps cultivating the spirit of piety — which makes a person alert to the presence of God at all times — is among the greatest needs of the human person today. Truly, what does it profit a person if he gains the whole world and loses himself? What does he offer himself if he lives far from God, even if he bears God's name and fights for Him? Life with God is first experienced in the heart, before anything else. God addresses your heart and touches it, and you are changed to become like Him; otherwise, you are deceiving yourself that you belong to Him.

You truly belong to Him when you give Him your heart. And the heart, in the Christian spiritual understanding, is the whole being. When the grace of God touches your heart, you leap for joy like a deer, and you want this joy for the world around you. Begin to sanctify your life and nourish yourself well on the abundant graces God has given to your Church. Live them. Activate them. Do not be content with social-religious appearances, which often become the very reason your heart is walled off so that the grace of God does not enter it.

# Golden Club at Air Heritage Museum in Beaver County





# Golden Club at Air Heritage Museum





**GOLDEN CLUB:** Join us on Wednesday, May 13, as we travel by van to the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, PA. The Museum is dedicated to American art, with a special focus on the art and artists of southwestern Pennsylvania, showcasing works from four centuries. Admission is free and features a permanent collection and traveling exhibitions. The Museum is also known for its unique perspective on American life and connecting local history with national art movements.

Please arrive at the church by 8:45am for 9am departure. Following our visit, we will have lunch at a local restaurant. To reserve a seat on the van, please **RSVP** no later than Wednesday, May 6, to Cynthia at 412-722-9512 or Rene at 412-559-1721. We hope to see you!

# GOYA making Sandwiches for the Homeless during Holy Week



## Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Festival

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Mt. Lebanon will be hosting its 54th Annual Food Festival on **June 15-19, 2026**. We thank you for your past support and encourage you to participate in making this year's Food Festival Ad Book a success. We plan on hosting thousands of guests at this year's festival to share our culture and our faith! Your generous donation will help support this endeavor, allow you to promote your business or cause, as well as support the mission of Holy Cross!

Please indicate the level of sponsorship and complete the requested information below. You may include camera ready art and ad copy by attaching with your remittance. The deadline for placing an advertisement or personal message in the Food Festival Ad Book is **Friday, May 22, 2026**.

**Other sponsorship opportunities are available! Should you have any questions, please contact:**

**Philip Yamalis (412) 606-0092 – [psaltipgy@gmail.com](mailto:psaltipgy@gmail.com) -or-**

**Chronis Manolis (412) 612-8129 - [chronismanolis87@gmail.com](mailto:chronismanolis87@gmail.com)**

Sponsorship Application Form – Holy Cross Annual Food Festival				
Name:		Amount:		
Address:		E-Mail:		
City:	State:	Zip:		
Contact Person:		Phone:		
Application deadline: May 22, 2026 <b>Payment must accompany application for placement.</b>				
Page Size	Actual Size	Location	Cost	Mark with X
2 Full Pages Color Centerfold	11 x 8-1/2"	Centerfold (Includes Sponsorship)	\$ 3100	
2 Full Pages Color Adjacent	11 x 8-1/2"	Adjacent 2 pages (Includes Sponsorship)	\$ 2550	
Full page Color Back Cover	5-1/2 x 8-1/2"	Back cover (Includes Sponsorship)	\$ 2550	
Full page Color Inside Back Cover	5-1/2 x 8-1/2"	Inside back cover (Includes Sponsorship)	\$ 1850	
Full page Color Inside Front Cover	5-1/2 x 8-1/2"	Inside front cover (Includes Sponsorship)	\$ 1850	
Full page - Color	5-1/2 x 8-1/2"	(Includes Video Ad)	\$ 1300	
Full page - Black & White	5-1/2 x 8-1/2"		\$ 825	
Half page - Black & White	5-1/2 x 4-1/4"		\$ 450	
Quarter page - Black & White	5-1/2 x 2"		\$ 250	
Patron	One line listing		\$ 50	
Donation				
<p><b>Please make check payable to: Holy Cross Church Food Festival.</b>  <b>Mail to:</b> Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church,  <b>ATTN: Food Festival Ad Book</b>                      123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228</p>				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!**



**IOCC PITTSBURGH**

# Open House

*Tuesday, May 5, 2026 7:00 pm*

**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
123 Gilkeson Rd (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

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

Please RSVP online at [iocc.org/Pittsburgh](http://iocc.org/Pittsburgh) or e-mail Nick Terezis, [nterezis@mstrategic.com](mailto:nterezis@mstrategic.com)

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



# WALK OR RUN WITH TEAM IOCC

*At the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend*

**Saturday, May 2, 2026**

*Help change lives around the world!*

Choose a Race as a Solo Participant or Form Your Own Team!

5K ★ Kids Marathon ★ Toddler Trot ★ Pet Walk

4-Mile Fitness Challenge ★ Champions Mile

SIGN UP NOW AT  
[iocc.org/pgh](http://iocc.org/pgh)



**INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES**

Questions? Contact Dean Stambolis at [DeanStambolis@verizon.net](mailto:DeanStambolis@verizon.net) or 412.874.9572

# Graduate Recognition Sunday, June 7

Graduating High School & College Seniors (post graduate degree earners as well) will be recognized by the Parish. Please send information to the Church Office:

[holycrosspittsburgh@gmail.com](mailto:holycrosspittsburgh@gmail.com)



## Information to submit by Friday, May 22

*to be included in June Crossroads*

- ~Name of Graduate and their parents.
- ~Name of school graduating from - High School or College.
- ~What he/she intends to study or degree earned.
- ~Where he/she plans to further their education or future employment plans.

**Please submit (email) a photo as well!!!**

There will be a free concert of *Path of Miracles* at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church on Friday, June 5th at 7:30. Open seating. All are welcome. The choir Voces Solis will present *Path of Miracles*, Joby Talbot's acclaimed a cappella work depicting the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.

Through four movements, the work traces a spiritual journey marked by separation, transformation, and connection, weaving together medieval chant and contemporary musical language. It has 17 voice parts, so it is musically riveting.

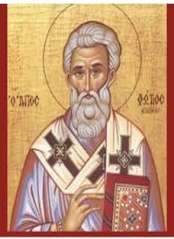
The text is about the Camino de Santiago, the most walked Christian pilgrimage in the world, including many Orthodox to venerate St. James at the goal point of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The text is from the Codex Calixtinus, which is a medieval collection of stories from the camino in 7 languages, including Greek, integrated in chronological order of when cultural groups first hiked the camino. The choir will move throughout the space to evoke the journey in an interesting way. <https://www.vocessolis.org/events>

Our own **Thespina Christulides** is featured, and AJ Prestogorge from Ypantanti is also involved.



# A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

## NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



### 48th BIENNIAL CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

**SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 30-JULY 2, 2026**

Join us in Cleveland, Ohio  
at the Huntington Convention Center

**Online Registration is now open!**

[www.clergylaity.org](http://www.clergylaity.org)

The theme of the Congress, "Rise and Build" (Neh. 2:18), emphasizes the growth and development of the parish — its ministries, its people, and its witness in the world.

**Hotel Group Rates are now available:**

<https://www.clergylaity.org/hotels>

Choose from Three Hotels: Delegates, attendees, and exhibitors of the 48th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress have the choice of staying in one of three hotels in the downtown Cleveland area, just minutes from the Huntington Convention Center where the Clergy-Laity Congress will be held.\*

Plan Your Visit: Parish delegates should plan to arrive on Monday, June 29. The Clergy-Laity Congress will begin at 10 AM on Tuesday, June 30 and will continue through 10 PM Thursday, July 2.

\*Meetings of the National Philoptochos Convention will be held at the Hotel Cleveland.

# Help us honor our 2026 Graduates!

Register your graduate before May 13th using the following links!

**High School Graduates**

<https://tinyurl.com/GOMOPHS26>

**College, Graduate, &  
Specialized Degrees**

<https://tinyurl.com/GOMOPCollege26>

Questions? [akyritis@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:akyritis@pittsburgh.goarch.org)





**YAL  
NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
'26**

**JULY 1-5 2026**

**CLEVELAND, OH**

*Join hundreds  
of young adults for  
a weekend full of  
faith & fellowship!*

*Rise & Build:  
Claim Your  
Calling!*



Hosted at the  
Cleveland Marriott  
Downtown!

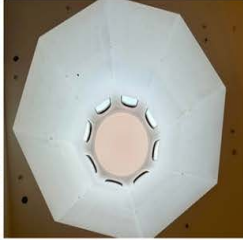
**Featuring:**  
Engaging speakers - Interactive service project  
Themed evening events - Free time in Cleveland

**Register Now!**  
[clergyylaity.org/yalconference](http://clergyylaity.org/yalconference)

IG/FB @yalnationalconference  
Questions? Email us at [yal@goarch.org](mailto:yal@goarch.org).

## New Metropolis Center | April 2026

Did you receive our March mailing? Please consider a pledge or donation towards this worthy campaign that will benefit all. We are so close to our goal! To donate please scan the QR code or visit [pittsburgh.goarch.org/pledge](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org/pledge)



Images: Metropolis Center, Chapel Dome, Sanctuary, Social Hall



Images: Prayer Garden Walkway, Office, Kitchen



Image: Bell Tower

The Department of Greek Education for the Metropolis of Pittsburgh presents

## The Annual Greek Language Story Contest



Do you know of someone in your family or community with a fascinating story to tell?

Interview and write the life story of an elderly immigrant with Greek or Cypriot roots living (either) independently or dependently, such as in a nursing home, assisted living, etc.; or interview the child or spouse of an elderly or deceased immigrant and tell their life story.

### 1 Tell of their life before and after coming to the U.S.

- where they traveled from and why they left
- who they traveled with and how they traveled
- who they prayed to for strength and any miracles
- how old they were when they arrived to the U.S.
- what challenges they faced
- what did they do here in the U.S.

### 2 Provide pictures

- of them, their family
- of places where they lived abroad, and in the U.S.
- of their favorite places and pastimes, both abroad and in the U.S.

### 3 Provide samples of

- their favorite Greek songs, hymns, poems, etc.

You are not limited to only the above questions, nor are all of the above imperative

Type this in Greek and in English in a Word document. Provide a copy for the person you interviewed and send a copy to:

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh Department of Greek Education, 5201 Ellsworth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15232, also email a copy with the pictures separately not in the word document to [mstamoolis@verizon.net](mailto:mstamoolis@verizon.net)

Student interviewers are from 4th - 12th grade. Awards given to students who display thoroughness and hard work.

Deadline to register is June 4, 2026. Deadline for submission is June 11, 2026. For information e-mail Maria Stamoolis, [mstamoolis@verizon.net](mailto:mstamoolis@verizon.net).

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE - \$500  
2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE - \$300  
3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE - \$100



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](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org) [info@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:info@pittsburgh.goarch.org)



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123 GILKESON ROAD  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

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*(across from the Galleria)*

**GYRO  
THURSDAY**

**— MAY 14 —  
11 am - 7 pm**

**ONLINE ORDERING AND  
TAKEOUT ONLY:  
[holycrosspgh.org/gyro](http://holycrosspgh.org/gyro)**

