



# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

JANUARY 2010

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Father John's Message
- 3 News & Events
- 5 Gheronda's Corner
- 6 "Mouse Tales:" The St. Spyridon Library
- 7 Philoptochos Report
- 8-11 Community Life Photo Journal
- 12 Capital Campaign Update
- 13 Ask the Elders
- 14 Theophany House and Business Blessings Info

Also enclosed:

January Parish Calendar

ATTENTION ALL  
HOLY TRINITY PARISHIONERS:

GOYA Basketball Tournament  
Program Sponsor Form enclosed.  
Please lend a hand and support  
our youth!

## QUICK NEWS



Senior ladies of the Holy Trinity community enjoy a Christmas visit from a special surprise visitor at the Philoptochos Seniors Christmas Luncheon on December 3. The group was treated to both a delicious lunch and great jazz entertainment. For more photos, see the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 8-11.



The Venerable Saint Anthony the Great · Feast Day: January 17

Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ



# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

## About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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### About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh ([www.odpgh.org](http://www.odpgh.org)) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America ([www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)) under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

### Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

#### Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

#### Parish Council

Chris T. Balouris, President

Anthony Loomis Alex Trivlas

Sondra A. Balouris Yvonne Balouris

George Danis George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos Joanne Germanos

Robert Marsh Nicholas Sarandou

Vasilios Scoumis Gerri Valliant

#### Ministries

Philoptochos ..... Kay Balouris, Pres.

GOYA.....Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor

Choir ..... John Nychis, Director

Over 50 Club.....Stella Athanasiou, Pres.

St. Lydia Study.....Stacy Dickos, Coordinator

Cemetery.....Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek School ....Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall..... Laura Triantafillos, Coordinator

Bookstore ..... Bill and Linda Areheart



## “Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

**Luke 4.19**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's that time again. Open year closes and life opens another. For at least a brief moment, even if only during the countdown, the transition speaks to us. We mull over remembrances of the year gone by and ponder resolutions for the future. For many people this is a solitary, self-focused exercise as we look back and ask, “What did I do wrong last year?” and “How can I improve my life in the New Year?” They mistakenly conclude that since they are free to make choices, they are ultimately in control of their lives and their destiny, independent of God.

For Christians, however, it is an opportunity to take the divine gift of free will—which gives us the opportunity to use our God-given gifts and talents to make choices that glorify our Creator—and ask another question: “Have I been faithful to God's calling in the past year and to what is His will for me in the New Year?” It is an opportunity for us to exercise stewardship in a life-encompassing sense and to proclaim, “This is Your time, Lord, please reveal Your plan to me and help me to use the gift wisely.”

In that same spirit, we as a church community can ask the same questions. Our journey over the past few years has been one full of adventure and enthusiasm, challenges and victories. Yet after all the marvellous progress, I have a sense that we have walked through all of that to simply make it to the starting line of this next phase in the life of Holy Trinity Church. The greatest is yet to come.

Only a few years ago it would have been hard to imagine that we would enter a New Year with a magnificent debt-free property, plans for a beautiful new church and comprehensive ministries development underway. Using worldly models of success management, we could, as a community, take ownership of it all and take a bow for having survived and arrived at this historic moment and spend time congratulating and awarding one another. This is foreign to a genuine Christian Church. More appropriately, we could look back in humility over the wonders of God's mercy in the past few years, prayerfully offer a thankful, “Glory to You, O Lord!” and then, standing on the launching pad of the next great phase in this blessed community's history, we could borrow the quote from the Gospel of St. Luke above a proclaim a year dedicated to, in the service of, faithful to and acceptable to the Lord. I believe that is what is in the heart of this most blessed community of faith.

So, let's together proclaim and receive it as a year truly “acceptable to the Lord” here at Holy Trinity Church. God is moving among us and doing wondrous things in the life of this community. More people are getting involved in important ways and stepping up to steward aspects of the life of this community. Serious commitments have been made by many members of the community to see God's plans for our new church come to fruition (and there is plenty of room for more names on that board!). Lives are being touched by God in meaningful ways every day. And it is all to His glory.

May God continue to inspire us to progress, sustain us through the challenges, preserve us in humility and grant us all a blessed New Year!

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

**Angela Morris in memory of Michael Morris  
May His Memory Be Eternal!**

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**No Church School Class . . . . . Dec. 27, Jan. 3**

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 27 and January 3 due to the holiday celebrations, so please plan on being in church together as a family for the entire service on those days.

**Orthodox Studies Forum . . . . . Jan. 6, 20**

Now in its fourth year, the Orthodox Studies Forum is designed for adults who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is led by Father Radu Bordeianu and is for both those who have been Orthodox all their lives and want to learn more as well as those seeking to embrace Orthodoxy from another background and grow further in their faith.

This year's forum studying the book, "On Wealth and Poverty" by St. John Chrysostom. This fourth century Father of the Church was one of the most prolific speakers and writers of the early Church and this well-translated series of messages is a contemporary and relevant to our life as Christians as it was when it was originally delivered.

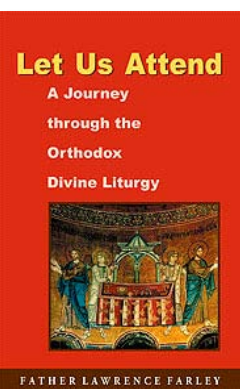
The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at La Roche College, 900 Babcock Blvd., in the Palumbo Science Center, Room 102. For more information, visit [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/osf](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/osf) for details or contact Fr. Radu by email at [FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org).

**Saint Lydia Women's Study Fellowship . . . . . Jan. 14, 28**

Now in its 11th year, the St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is a ministry for women to share in fellowship and to study scripture, the Orthodox Faith and family life in today's world. The meetings take place every other week on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. This year there is a new location: the Saint George Chapel, 8931 Ringeisen Road, located at Holy Trinity Cemetery.

New participants are always welcome: married, single, wives, mothers, working or retired, everyone is welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable, the approach is casual and discussion-oriented. The gathering starts promptly at 10:00am with an hour of study and prayer, followed by a half-hour of women's fellowship. All Holy Trinity women are welcome and invited to bring a friend! For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

This year's topic for study is the Divine Liturgy, the central worship offering of our Church. Books are available for purchase at the study. A complete schedule is available online at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/stlydia](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/stlydia).



## YOUTH MINISTRIES

**GOYA Metropolis Basketball Tournament . . . . Jan. 22-24**

The big event of the month for GOYA will be the hosting of a Metropolis Basketball Tournament on the weekend of January 22-24. As indicated in the Herald, the Sunday bulletin and various announcements, lots of community help is needed! Please volunteers, support, donate and help in any other way you can. The GOYA has committed to support our Capital Campaign from the proceeds of the event, so every bit of help also helps the future of our Church! There are lots of ways to do so. The forms with information on each of these have been mailed in the Herald and are posted on our web site at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/goya](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/goya):

1. Use the enclosed form to become a Program Book sponsor.
2. Use the donations form to underwrite the cost of an item needed to host the tournament.
3. Volunteer your time to help with games, events, services and hospitality.

Questions? Contact [GOYA@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:GOYA@HolyTrinityPgh.org).

**HOPE/JOY Activity . . . . . January 17**

The HOPE and JOY ministries will be holding a fun and special event called "Stump the Priest" with Father Radu. It will be a great way to learn about the Orthodox Faith using fun exercises and music. The activity is being hosted by the Marsh Family. For information, contact Nikki Marsh at 724-625-2729.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Sign Up For the Holy Trinity Email News List**

Want to receive the Sunday Bulletin directly via email? Want to keep up to date with the latest Holy Trinity news, including changes of events, changes due to weather, etc.? Go to [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) and sign up today!

**Fast-Free Celebration of the Nativity . . . . . Dec. 25-Jan. 4**

In celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, please note that the holy canons indicate that there is no fasting from December 25-January 4. This refers, of course, to the daily fasts of the church and does not eliminate the eucharistic fast (no food or drink from the time of waking up until Liturgy) for those receiving Holy Communion. Question? Please see Father John or Father Radu. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

**Weekday Services . . . . . January**

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in the month of January. Please note that we are currently on the time schedule for "Winter Hours:" Orthros is at 9:00 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00.

**Thu. Dec. 31, 6pm..... Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great**

This will be a Vespers Liturgy for the January 1 Feast of Saint Basil. A great way to start your New Year with God's blessings! Then stay for the return of the New Year's Eve celebration at Holy Trinity Community Center and ring in the New Year with family and friends.

**Tue. Jan. 5, 6pm . . . . . Forefeast of the Theophany of our Lord**  
This is the first of two Theophany Divine Liturgies and services of Great Blessings of the Waters. The evening Vespertal Liturgy will be followed by the Great Blessing of the Waters service. Please note that this is a STRICT FAST day in preparation for Theophany and those wishing to receive Holy Communion should refrain from eating from noon until Liturgy.

**Wed. Jan. 6, 9am/10am. . . . . The Theophany of our Lord**  
This is the main Orthros and Divine Liturgy of this great Feast, this year held on a Sunday. We will offer the Great Blessings of the Water at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

**Thu. Jan. 7, 9am/10am . . . . . The Synaxis of St. John the Baptist**  
This feast of the "greatest of the prophets" and Forerunner of Christ is held on the day after Theophany.

**Wed. Jan. 13, 6:00 pm . . . . . Paraclesis to the Theotokos**  
This service of supplication to the Mother of God is held on the second Wednesday of each month.

**Wed./Thu. Jan. 20/21 . . . . . St. Maximos the Confessor**  
Note: Great Vespers on Tuesday and Orthros/Divine Liturgy on Wednesday for St. Maximos will be held at the Metropolis Chapel at 5201 Ellsworth Avenue in Shadyside. His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos will preside in celebration his patron saint and his nameday.

**Fri. Jan. 29, 5pm. . . . . The Three Hierarchs**  
Note: Liturgy for the Three Hierarchs (St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Theologian) will be held in honor of the Three Hiearchs Eastern Orthodox School (THEOS), which celebrates its feast day on January 30. Please note: because the 30th is a non-school day, the service will be held instead at Holy Cross Church in Mt. Lebanon on Friday evening, January 29th. This will be a Vespertal Liturgy.

## COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

### Year-End Stewardship Notes

The Stewardship Committee and Parish Council thank all our Holy Trinity Stewards for their pledges and contributions this year and ask that everyone brings their offerings up to date for 2009. Please take note that all offerings you would like listed as received during the 2009 tax year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31) for tax deduction purposes must be received at the church by Dec. 31. This is an IRS regulation. You may indicate the offerings to apply for either your 2009 pledge (to pay the balance) or the 2010 pledge (to pay ahead) and your pledge balance will be accurately calculated no matter when the offering is made. Year-end statements will be sent out at the end of January. Thanks! Also, the 2010 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge Cards have been distributed and all Holy Trinity Stewards should complete one as soon as possible.

### Parish Council Election Results/Installation . . . . .Dec. 28

Thank you to all those whose names were submitted for Parish Council elections this year. The results from the vote have placed the following members on the Council for the 2010-2011 term: George Dickos, Anthony Loomis, Alex Trilivas, Louis Kort, Jason Farmakis and Andrew Athanasiou. Continuing on for the remainder of their term are: Chris T.

Balouris, Troy Geanopoulos, Yvonne Balouris, George Danis, Joanne Germanos, Vasilios Scoumis and Gerri Valliant. Parish Council installation will be held the last Sunday of December, followed by the election of officers. May God be our guide and strength in all things!

### Vasilopita Celebration. . . . . January 10

The Philoptochos will sponsor the annual Vasilopita Celebration on Sunday, January 10, following Divine Liturgy. Representatives from all parish ministries are asked to be present. In addition to commemorating the Feast of St. Basil, a collection will be taken to benefit St. Basil Academy, the young people's philanthropic institution run by the Archdiocese in Garrison, NY. Thank you for your participation!



### House Blessings. . . . . January

Services for Holy Theophany and its surrounding feasts will be held as usual on January 5-7. An important part of that celebration is the Great Blessing of the Waters service. In order to bring the blessings of the feast and the Lord into our homes, Orthodox Christians traditionally invite the priest to bless their home with the Holy Water from the feast. Please see the enclosed information and schedule your visit by January 5. A House Blessing Request Form can be found on the back page of this issue. Please note that dates of your area and be available at that time. Rescheduling will only be done for cases of inclement weather.



### Snow Line . . . . . 412-321-9282, Option "6"

Please keep in mind over the winter months that the Holy Trinity "Snow Line" is available to check for the cancellation of events in the case of snow or inclement weather. Call the church office after hours, then select option "6" to hear announcements of any cancellations. Keep in mind: snow or other cancellation announcements are also made through our parish email list and our Twitter account. Be sure to sign up for them at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org).



### March for Life Orthodox Delegation . . . . . Jan. 22

Orthodox Christians for Life is coordinating an Orthodox delegaton from our region to participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, DC, on January 22, 2010. A bus will be leaving around 5:00am and returning around 10:00pm the same day. The cost is approximately 40 dollars per person. Anyone interested in participating in this defense of life and commemorating the millions of innocent children whose lives hve been taken since the legalization of abortion in the 1973 Roe v. Wade case, contact Jim Tsikouris at 330-519-1122 or email him at [jamestsikouris@live.com](mailto:jamestsikouris@live.com).



Part of a regular series of contributions by our resident "Gheronda" (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos



**Father John Androutsopoulos**

## A Message for the New Year

"The one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead."  
(Philippians 3:13)

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The old year is behind us; a new year is before us. Some of us will have to cross the Jordan before the year is ended. The promised land awaits God's children. God is the giver of many wonderful new things. Now, to you and me, God is giving a New Year. We wish each other a Happy New Year, but we must do more than that.

The best admonition for all of us is to repent of our sins, to resolve to be better persons and more faithful Orthodox Christians and to remember that we never can repay Christ for all that He has done for us. What has He done? He went to the Cross, took our place and died in our stead.

The following reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew will help is to become faithful Orthodox Christians:

At that time: Jesus said to His disciples: "Watch out for false prophets; they come to you looking like sheep on the outside, but they are really like wild wolves on the inside. You will know them by the way they act. Thorn bushes do not bear grapes, and briars do not bear figs. A healthy tree bears good fruit, while a poor tree bears bad fruit..A healthy tree cannot bear bear fruit,and a poor tree cannot bear good fruit. Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. So, then, you will know the false prophets by the way they act. Not every person who calls me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do." (Matthew 7: 15-21)

### Who Are The False Prophets?

Jesus warned us against false prophets (wild wolves). St. Paul also warned that "grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock." How can we be sure about their teachings?

1) We are to measure them by the two sources of our

Faith: the Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition of our Church. If their teachings do not measure up to the truths of the Bible and Tradition in every respect, we are to reject these teachers and their doctrines.

2) We are to watch out for hypocrites, who show great candor on the exterior, but whose hearts are full of deceit.

3) We should beware of heretics, who surround their false teachings with the delusive appearance of truth.

4) We must avoid those writers who, under cover of attractive and pleasing language, hide the poison of falsehood and immorality.

5) Finally, among the false prophets are: the flesh, the world and the devil.

### Why Does Christ Compare Man to Trees?

He does this in order to make known the good and the bad Christians by their good or bad works. Just as a bad tree brings forth bad fruit, so does a bad man bring forth the bad fruits of wrath, envy, hate, lust, etc.; but as a good tree brings forth good fruit, so does a good man yield the good and sweet fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control (Galatians 5:22). A bad tree—in this case a bad Christian—is cut down and cast into everlasting fire. We should not take our Christianity for granted.



### Stewardship Thought

It is well to remember, as we begin a new year, that we cannot get something for nothing. Gambling is getting nothing for something. Also, New Year's resolutions are good, if they are backed up with earnest prayer for help in keeping them.

A salesman tried to sell a farmer a book on how to be a better farmer. The farmer said that he did not want the book, for he already knew how to be a better one than he was. Most of us know how to be much better Christians than we are.

Prayer: "Our Heavenly Father, as we begin a new year, we pray that all bitterness, wrath, malice, anger and evil speaking shall be put away from among us, and that we shall be kind one to another. Help us, Father, to be faithful to You. Amen."

Have a Blessed, Healthy and Happy New Year

*Have a Blessed and Happy New Year!*

*Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*

Hello, my precious children!



Happy New Year! I can't believe it's already 2010! There are so many good things happening.

First is one of the great (and delicious) celebrations of the Church year: Vasilopita (which means, "Saint Basil's Bread"). It's so..o..o tasty, and it reminds us of a great saint who did a lot for the Church and a lot for the poor and needy. Did you know he was the first bishop in the Church to set up orphanages to take care of Our Heavenly Father's precious children who did not have food, clothing or even parents? That was over 1,600 years ago, and he still sets a great example for us to follow today.

Then, here at Holy Trinity, there will be lots of my older teens around this month because Holy Trinity Church is hosting another Metropolis Basketball Tournament. It's lots of fun, but I always have to be careful about those BIG sneakers flopping around. Wow, my precious little ones grow up into really big ones sometimes!

And finally, as part of the New Year, a lot of people like to make up things to do in the coming year. They call them "New Year's resolutions." Sometimes they are really good things, other times they are a little silly. Well, I, Spero, am here to help my precious children with their resolutions this year. Yiayia has taught me and Zoe a lot of good lessons over the years, and I thought I would put some of them together for your resolutions. Here they are!

I will trust God more this year: Yiayia says many people ask how to get to heaven. She always tells them: "there is only one way: through Jesus Christ." We must place our trust in Him because He is the precious Son of God Who was sent by our Heavenly Father to save us. We trust God when we go to Him and tell Him we are sorry for disobeying Him and we ask for His forgiveness. And we trust God when we let Him and others around us know that we believe that Jesus really does save us and love us. There are lots of ways to do this in the New Year. Try to come up with your own!

I will tell the truth this year: It sometimes seems easier to tell a "small" lie than to face the truth when we get into trouble, but Yiayia says we should always tell the truth because our Heavenly Father loves truth and tells us not to lie. Lying only gets us into trouble. Yes, we can go back and ask forgiveness of others and of God, but why not just tell the truth from the start? It's easier and it's more Christian. There are some good Bible verses that tell us this: 1 Corinthians 13:6, 2 Corinthians 4:2 and Exodus 20:16. Look them up!

I will listen to my heart more this year: You know what happens when we do something wrong and we get that funny feeling in our heart or our conscience bothers us? We feel bad because we have done something to hurt someone else or let God down. Well, sometimes that is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in a very quiet way, because He has planted truth and love in our heart, and deep down inside we know better. So this year, we will make Yiayia, our parents, those around us and, of course, our Heavenly Father, so..o..o proud of us if we learn how to listen to our heart before we make the wrong choices.

Well, that should get you started. Have a great year. Go Holy Trinity GOYA!

Love in Christ,  
Spero

An update on the news and activities of our local Holy Trinity chapter of the Philoptochos Ladies Society, a national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and the Parish Council. "Want more information? Visit their web site at [www.Philoptochos.org](http://www.Philoptochos.org) or contact a local member.

## Philoptochos Report: January 2010

### Blessed Holidays

We pray that everyone had a blessed holiday. It is unbelievable that the New Year 2010 is here. May the New Year be filled with peace, health and happiness.

### Philoptochos Sunday

On November 8, 2009 the Philoptochos celebrated their Name Day, Cosmas and Damianos. We had Koliva in memory of the deceased members of the Philoptochos and Artoclasia for the health of the community. The money collected from the tray and the coffee hour allowed us to donate \$500.00 to the Patriarchate. Also we donated \$100.00 to their Soup Kitchen. We hope you liked our little golf game. If you did not try it you missed some fun. There will be another opportunity in the future. The proceeds from this game help the Philoptochos with their charities.

### Thanksgiving Fund Raiser

Thank you for your generous donations to the Fund Raiser. We collected over \$3,000.00. All of which has been donated to those in need. We are so fortunate that we are not in need. If you or someone you know is in need of help please contact Kay Balouris. All names of those in need will remain confidential.

### Angel Tree

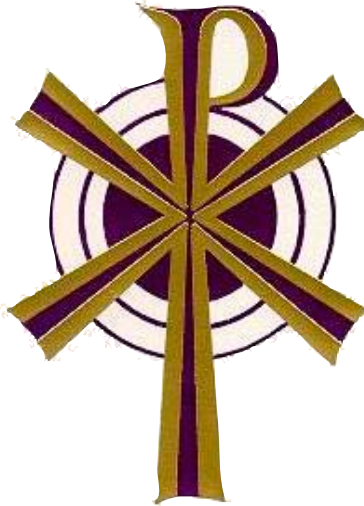
Our Angel Tree has helped the young people at Auberle Home for the past few years. They are so grateful for your wonderful gifts. For some of them this is the only gift they will receive. The names were taken in record time. We thank you for helping make Christmas special for them.



The 2009 Senior Christmas Luncheon

### Christmas Luncheon 2009

If you did not attend the Senior Christmas Luncheon, you missed a great time. The food was good, excellent entertainment but most of all we were able to visit with each other. A surprise visit from Santa (Chris Balouris) distributed gifts to all.



### Holiday Bake Sale

The bake sale was a great success. The money helps us to be able to continue to donate to the many Charities that we have pledged to give to each year. Thank you for your support.

### We Remember

The Ladies Philoptochos remembered our seniors who are unable to be with us. We assembled a Christmas gift of useful items. They will be distributed by Father John we he visits them. We hope they enjoy it.

### Books

Philoptochos is sponsoring an outreach program to collect new or gently used books for infants to 8th grade. The books will be donated to the Family Literacy Center in Sharpsburg and to "All of us Care"/ Volunteer for America. A collection box can be found in the Community Center every Sunday until January 10. This is the perfect opportunity for you to recycle books that you no longer use or want.

### Stewardship

The 2010 Stewardship is due now. The recommended amount is \$20.00. Payment now will establish you as a member in good standing. Once again we are asking young and old to please join. Won't you consider an active membership?? There is so much to do and so little time!

### Vasilopita

On Sunday, January 10, the Philoptochos will have sponsor the annual Vasilopita celebration in honor of the Feast of St. Basil. A collection will be taken to support the Saint Basils Academy in Garrison, NY, an Archdiocese institution supported by the National Philoptochos.

### Prayers

We all need prayers but we have so many members who are not well, are in hospitals, or in nursing homes. Please keep them in your prayers. Prayers do work.

### Coffee Hour

We are still looking for sponsors. Won't you help??

*Respectfully submitted,  
Esther Ladakos, Secretary*





**December 3, 2009:** Holy Trinity Philoptochos hosted its annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Luncheon at Holy Trinity Community Center. The day started with hymns of the Nativity and a blessing by Father Radu. Lunch followed, with a tremendous entertainment program offered by the North Hills High School Jazz Band, featuring over two dozen very talented local young musicians. Finally, a surprise visit was paid to all the seniors by "special visitor" in red and white! Many thanks to the Philoptochos for coordinating this annual holiday treat for the beloved and respected seniors of Holy Trinity who has worked so hard in support of their families and this community for so long!











**December 13, 2009:** The Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School (T.H.E.O.S.) and the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh hosted the annual Pan-Orthodox Nativity Concert at Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon. The proceeds from the event went toward the support of the school in its important mission of Orthodox Christian education. Pictured above: all the choirs assembled around the hierarchs. Below left: The THEOS children's choir directed by Georgia Touloumes, Father John's mother. Below right: The Greek Orthodox Choir under the direction of John Nychis along with other members of the Holy Trinity Choir. Thank you all for representing Holy Trinity Church so wonderfully!







**December 6:** Holy Trinity GOYA held its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas this year at the home of Anthony and Susan Zikos. The teens spent a great night of fellowship together, starting with dinner and continuing with a series of activities and discussions on "O Holy Night: How God Sanctified a Night, the World and Our Lives." In front of a large icon of the Nativity, they had lots of fun with creative readings from Saint Athanasios.







As recently detailed in the October 2009 Capital Campaign Newsletter, Holy Trinity continues to move forward with its fundraising efforts. As of December 18, 2009, we have received 93 pledge cards from parishioners with a total pledge amount of \$2,570,025. The majority of pledges are between three and five years. Thus far, we have collected 26% of the pledged amount, or \$659,524. Our cash-on-hand stands at \$1,340,402. The breakdown of pledges is as follows:

Pledge Level	Number of Pledges
<b>\$250,000 +</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>\$200,000 – \$249,000</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>\$100,000 - \$199,999</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>\$50,000 - \$99,999</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>\$25,000 - \$49,999</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>\$10,000 - \$24,999</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>\$5,000 - \$9,999</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>\$2,000 - \$4,999</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Less than \$2,000</b>	<b>26</b>

Our hope is that parishioners will either increase their annual contribution or extend the duration of their pledge. We also need those who haven't pledged to seriously consider signing a pledge card. As the year-end approaches, remember that the tax code still favors charitable contributions. Please be as generous as you can. Once again, feel free to address questions or concerns to Jim Balouris, Capital Campaign Chair.

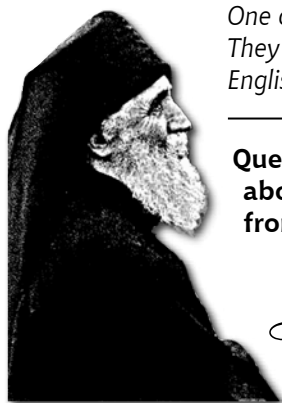
## RAISING UP

Pledges Received As of December 18, 2009

Rev. Fr. John & Pres. Becky Touloumes  
 Rev. Fr. Radu & Pres. Loredana Bordeianu  
 Mark & Teddi Adamczyk  
 Chrysanthi Andromalos  
 Anonymous  
 Anonymous  
**William & Lynda Areheart \***  
 Harry & Joyce Athanasiou  
 Alvin & Tammy Backeris  
 Anthony & Helen Balouris  
 Chris T. & Chrysoula Balouris  
 Christ & Kathy Balouris  
 Constantine & Diane Balouris  
 James T. & Yvonne Balouris  
 Katherine Balouris  
 George Beckas  
 Christopher Bonfield  
 Jonathan Bonfield  
 Reggie & Marianne Bonfield  
 Dennis & Penny Bossick  
 Sophia Bridoux  
 Clifford & Sondra Brubaker  
 Frank & Anne Chapas  
**Holy Trinity Choir \***  
 Cynthia Criss  
 Evan & Kelly Danis  
 Evdoxia Danis  
 George & Sophia Danis  
 Dean Dickos  
 George & Stacy Dickos  
**Bryan & Eva Elderkin \***  
 Frank & Katina Erdeljac  
 Christian & Rebecca Farmakis  
**Jason Farmakis \***  
 Matthew & Melissa Ferrari  
 Bill & Katrina Fiedler  
 Brian & Angela Fitzpatrick  
 Tom & Georgianna Fraley  
 Constance Fries  
**Clifford & Stella Ann Gandis \***  
 Troy & Annika Geanopulos  
 Leo and Elizabeth Gensante  
 Gus & Penny Georgiadis  
 Mark & Karen Georgiadis  
 Steven & Leslie Georgiadis  
 Tom & Joanne Germanos  
**Becky Gidas \***

**Jeremy & Sandy Gracik \***  
 Eugenia Graser  
 Steve & Athena Hodge  
 Brian & Debbie Jewell  
 Gus & Stella Kalaris  
 Charles Siebott & Irene Karavolos  
 George & Scarlet Karpakis  
**James & Bettina Kermes \***  
 James & Lauren Kolovos  
 Presvytera Louella Kostopolos  
**Fanny Kostos \***  
 Marios Kritiotis  
 Mike & Julie Kritiotis  
 George & Canella Lalikos  
 Peter & Maria Liokarea  
 Anthony Loomis  
 Chris & Sarah Loomis  
 Leo & Lucy Loomis  
 Kelly Manning  
 Gregory & Amy Morris  
 Stanley & Helen Morris  
 Michael & Kristen O'Neill  
 Gen. William & Cheryl Pagonis  
 Peter & Mary Panos  
**George & Rhea Pantelakis \***  
 Orestes & Arlene Paras  
 Charles & Jan Petredis  
**Joseph & Arlene Phaturos \***  
 Rania Pontikos  
 Evan & Terri Rigas  
**Christopher Sarandou \***  
 Nicholas & Jane Sarandou  
 Vasilios Scoumis  
 Archie & Mary Selevos  
 Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Sideris  
 James Statheas  
**Craig & Nicole Steiner \***  
 Kirk & Fran Stephen  
 Jim & Lori Thomas  
 Eric & Polyxeni Tomalski  
 Alex Trilivas  
 Gerri & Paula Valliant  
 Kathy Warren-Romanias  
 Ken Whigham  
 Antonios & Susan Zikos  
 Anthony & Aspasia Zissis  
*\* denotes a new pledge received since the last report.*





**Elder Paisios**

*One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred as "precious vessels of the Holy Spirit." In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.*

**Question: Geronda, does worrying about too many things take us away from God?**

Look, let me try to explain. When a little child is playing and is all absorbed with his toys, he is not aware that his father may be next to him caressing him. If he interrupts his play a bit, then he will become aware of his father's caresses. Similarly, when we are preoccupied with too many activities and are anxiously concerned about them, when we worry too much about worldly matters, we cannot become aware of God's love. God gives but we do not sense it. Be careful not to waste your precious energy on redundant worries and vanities, which will turn to dust one day. When you do this, you not only tire your body, but you also scatter your mind aimlessly, offering God only your fatigue and yawns at the time of prayer—much like the sacrifice offered by Cain. It follows that your inner state will be like that of Cain's, you will be full of anxiety and sighs provoked by the devil standing by your side.

We must not waste aimlessly the fruit, the inner core of our power and then leave the shells for God. The many cares of life sap the marrow of our heart and leave nothing for Christ. If you notice that your mind constantly wanders off to various chores that you have to do, you must realize that you are not doing well spiritually, and this should alarm you because you have distanced yourself from God. You must realize that you are closer to material things than you are to God, closer to creation than to the Creator.

**Question: Geronda, everywhere you went you did only the necessary things?**

Yes, I did only the necessary things for down here, so that I would have time to do the necessary things for up there, for Heaven. If you lose yourself in earthly pursuits, you will also lose your way to Heaven. You do one thing, and then you want to do yet another and another. And if you get stuck in this gear, you've lost your way! Lose yourself in the world and you will lose Heaven. As our heavenly pursuits are endless, so too are the affairs of life here on earth. You have a choice: either you get lost on earth or you get "lost" in Heaven. Can you imagine what it means to lose yourself in heavenly pursuits? Oh, how I would be absorbed by the Jesus Prayer! Has that ever happened to you?

When we work too hard and in a hurry, the result is fatigue and distraction, and neither will help us in the spiritual life. For they displace our vigilance and agitate our soul. Under such conditions, one is not only incapable of praying, but he cannot even think. He cannot act with prudence and therefore his actions are not right.

So be careful not to waste your time aimlessly, leaving no

time for your spiritual life, because you will reach a point of being so agitated inside that you will no longer be able to do your spiritual chores. Instead, you will try to get involved with some work, or start a conversation, or even look to create a problem to keep you busy. When we neglect the Jesus Prayer and our spiritual duties, the enemy gets hold of our spiritual "heights" and he begins his assault from up there, using both our flesh and our mind as his weapon. Thus, he renders useless our physical and spiritual strengths, and by cutting off our communication with God, he leads our soul to be taken prisoner by the passions.

**Question: Geronda, are distractions always an obstacle to the spiritual life?**

If you start adding distractions and spend your time on worthless things, then your mind will scatter and depart from God. How can one experience the joy of God when his mind is not focused on Him? It's easy for the heart to grow cold. Whenever you can, throughout the day, try to say the Jesus Prayer mentally and also to chant in a low voice.

If we seek above all the Kingdom of Heaven and that's all we care for, the rest will be given to us. If we become forgetful, then not only do we waste our time but we waste our very own self. When we remain mindful and prepare for the next life, then this life too will become meaningful. When we start thinking of the next life, nothing is the same anymore. But if all we think about is how to make this a comfortable life, then not only are we miserable, but we end up weary and condemned.

Do not be overwhelmed with anxiety and be possessed by the thought that, "Now we must do this, next we must do that and so on," because this way Armageddon will come, and you will still be hard at work. Even doing things with anxiety is demonic. Tune in to Christ! Otherwise, you will appear to be living near Him but inside you will still carry the mindset of this world, and, you might end up, I am afraid, like the foolish virgins. This is why the Lord gave them the solemn warning: Be awake and watchful.

Can you see in the case of Martha and Mary, mentioned in the Gospel, how mindless care for things caused Martha to behave somewhat impudently? It seems that in the beginning Mary was actually helping her, but when she realized that Martha was nowhere near completing her preparations, she left her and went to listen to Jesus. She thought to herself, "Am I to lose time with my Christ for the sake of Martha's salads and sweets?" As if Christ had come to their home to taste Martha's salads and foods! It was then that Martha became annoyed and said, Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Let us be careful, then, not to behave like Martha. Let us pray that we will become good "Mary's."

*Excerpted from "Elder Paisios of Mount Athos. The Spiritual Counsels, Vol. 1: With Pain and Love for Contemporary Man"*

# The Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Homes and Businesses

*"At Your Epiphany, the whole creation sang Your praises. For You, our God, have appeared on earth and dwelt among men. You have sanctified the streams of the Jordan, sending down from on high the most Holy Spirit."*

*From the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters*



## "What is Theophany?"

Every year on January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of Holy Theophany, which is the baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church and is also known by the name, "Epiphany." The Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan at the hand of St. John the Baptist sets the example for our own baptism by water in the Holy Spirit.

## "How do we celebrate Theophany?"

The main celebration is, of course, found in the Church with the holy services on January 5th (the Forefeast), January 6th (Theophany) and January 7th (Synaxis of St. John the Baptist). We also take the feast home with us by having our homes blessed with the Holy Water.

## "What happens during a House Blessing?"

You will receive a call to confirm your appointment a day or two ahead. When the priest arrives, he will conduct a brief service either in your dining room or at the place where your family usually offers its prayers. It is best to have the entire family present if possible, especially children. Please be sure to have an icon and a list of the first names of all the members of your household. If you have a home censer, you may prepare it also. A bowl of water is not necessary, as the priest will bring the holy water sprinkler from the church.

The priest will offer the blessing service and offer the names of the people present and those contained on the family names list in prayer. As the service concludes, please lead the priest throughout the house to sprinkle the holy water while chanting the hymn of Theophany. He will bring a copy of the service so you can follow along and chant the hymn. When the service is over, please understand if your priest needs to keep the visit brief in order to cover all the homes scheduled on that day.

## "Should I Have Our House and Business Blessed Every Year?"

Yes! In the Orthodox Christian tradition, homes should be blessed each year to bring the blessings of the Feast of Theophany into the home and to rededicate ourselves and our family to the Lord. It is an annual commitment, celebration, thanksgiving and family prayer. It is also a pious way of asking God's blessings on our business and livelihood as good stewards of all His gifts.

## 2010 House Blessing Schedule

Date	Time	Area	Zip Codes
Thu. Jan. 7	2pm-6pm	Northside, Perrysville	15212, 15214
Thu. Jan. 7	6pm-8pm	South Hills (all areas)	15102, 15216, 1522X, 1524X
Fri. Jan. 8	4pm-9pm	Cranberry, Mars, Gibsonia, Treesdale	15237, 160XX
Sat. Jan. 9	12pm-6pm	Wexford	15090
Mon. Jan. 11	2pm-9pm	North Hills (McKnight area), Allison Park	15101, 15237
Tue. Jan. 12	3pm-5:30pm	Bellevue, Westview	15202
Thu. Jan. 14	4pm-9pm	All other areas not listed/Make-up date/Snow date	Various

Important note: Please be available at the time scheduled for your area. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thank you for your help!

PLEASE RETURN THE FORM ON THE BACK OF THE HERALD BEFORE JAN. 5 TO SCHEDULE YOUR HOME. YOU WILL RECEIVE A CALL TO CONFIRM YOUR TIME.

**Reminder: Please schedule your House/Office Blessing by January 5th! See back page.**



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*Company Events*

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## 2010 Holy Trinity House/Business Blessing Request Form



Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Daytime phone:	Evening phone:
Notes, directions or special information	
(NOTE: You may also EMAIL this information to: <a href="mailto:fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org">fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org</a> )	

A schedule and description of the House Blessing tradition can be found inside this issue of The Herald. If you would like this special blessing for your family, home or business, please mail or deliver this form to the church office by January 5. Your date and time will be confirmed the day before your visit. Note: Please be available at the time indicated on the schedule. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thanks!

Scripture of the Month: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24.15)