



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

DECEMBER 2011

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**HOLY TRINITY
NEW CHURCH
GROUNDBREAKING
DECEMBER 11!
Info Enclosed**

QUICK NEWS



Members of the "Taste of Greece" volunteer team take a moment to enjoy the awesome weather, tremendous success and great company at our first North Hills festival, October 7-9. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? Check out the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 7-11.



"Save the world, O Saviour. For this You have come. Set your whole universe aright. For this you have shone on me and on the magi and on all creation. For see, the Magi, to whom You have shown the light of Your face, fall down before You and offer gifts... My Guide, my Son, my Maker, my Redeemer, a little Child, God before the ages."
(Dialogue of the Virgin Mary from the Nativity Kontakion of Saint Romanos the Melodist)

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) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (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 Trivilas

Jason Farmakis Yvonne Balouris

George Danis George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos Joanne Germanos

Louis Kort Andrew Athanasiou

Vasilios Scourmis Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos Kay Balouris, Pres.

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

ChoirJohn Nychis, Director

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

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

Cemetery.....Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Bookstore.....Bill and Linda Areheart



“Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.”

(James 1.16)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Do you remember the joy and wonder of Christmas as a child? It was so simple and so exciting back then. No worries. Just the giggles and squeals as the mysteries under the tree were unwrapped one at a time. Although we might have had a few things on our list, they didn't matter that much because we knew Mom and Dad would have lots of great stuff in store for us.

When you think about it, it's not really that different for us today. At least not here at Holy Trinity Church. And there is no better time to acknowledge that than right now. You see, when children were thronging around Jesus and trying to get close enough to touch Him, the Lord warned His own disciples as they tried to keep them away, “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (Mark 10.14-15).

That is our story at Holy Trinity Church these days. Our Heavenly Father, in whose arms we all find embrace, has so mercifully and generously showered blessing after blessing upon us, it is hard not to see it with the same child-like wonder as the toddler under the tree whose parents bring forth gift after gift, not to spoil their children, but as an outpouring of the unending and gracious love they have for them and the desire to bring them all good things.

All right, perhaps in some ways it is different. Children simply sit and receive; we have worked faithfully to get here. Children also in their self-centric view of the world think it's all about them; we know it's all about Him. And children in their immaturity sometimes open a gift and quickly pass on to the next one; we stand in awestruck amazement and try to fully appreciate each gift in its full meaning and purpose. And none of it is ours alone. We are stewards of His gifts.

So what are these gifts? Well, just to name a few of the most recent ...

- After many years of labors of love, we finally have a Groundbreaking date, and God has mercifully opened every door along the way, from construction plans to financing to General Assembly and Metropolis approval.
- We, along with the rest of the Metropolis, have received the great gift of a new Metropolitan, a shepherd to lead us into the next generation of faith.
- Not only have we received a new Metropolitan, he has blessed us with his very first Sunday pastoral visit and will turn the first shovel on our new Church.
- And, lest we lose sight of what this is all about to begin with, the bright star of Bethlehem points down in the icon of the Nativity and in the depths of our hearts to the center of it all: the great gift of love we find in the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who is the greatest gift of all.

There is so much to be thankful for. May we stand humbly before God at all times in thanksgiving and praise, and may we be always worthy of His great mercy and love! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Paternally yours in the newborn Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Divine Liturgy..... 9:30 a.m.

With the move to the North Hills bringing us within closer proximity to most of our parishioners, Holy Trinity Church is now maintaining a permanent, year-round worship schedule of 8:30 a.m. Orthros and 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy. Remember, all **SUNDAY** services are held at the interim location on Browns Lane (HT). **WEEKDAY** services are held at the Saint George Chapel (SG), 8941 Ringesen Road, Allison Park. Please set your alarms to be there on time!

Weekday Services.....December

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. and weekday services are held at the Saint George Chapel (SG), 8941 Ringesen Road, Allison Park.

Dec. 5*, 7pm: Great Vespers of St. Nicholas

Dec. 6*, 10am: Liturgy - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

Dec. 8*, 4pm: Enthronement of Metropolitan Savas

Dec. 9*, 10am: Metropolitan Savas' First Pittsburgh Liturgy

**Services for St. Nicholas held at St. Nicholas, Oakland*

Dec. 11, 7pm:** Great Vespers of St. Spyridon

Dec. 12, 10am:** Liturgy - St. Spyridon the Wonderworker

**Services for St. Spyridon held at St. Spyridon, Monessen*

Dec. 14, 6pm: Monthly Paraclesis to the Theotokos (SG)

Dec. 24, 10am: Royal Hours of the Nativity (SG)

Dec. 24, 7pm: Great Vespers of the Nativity of the Lord (SG)

Dec. 25: The Nativity of the Lord (HT)

Christmas Services.....December

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family. Please note the location of each: HT=Holy Trinity; SG=St. George.

Sat. Dec. 24, 10 am..... Royal Hours of the Nativity

This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Divine Incarnation. (SG)

Sat. Dec. 24, 7pm..... Great Vespers of the Nativity

This service "opens the liturgical day" and begins the celebration of the Nativity. Note: It is a Vespers service and not a Liturgy, therefore Holy Communion is not offered. (SG)

Sat. Dec. 25. 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy.....The Nativity

This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Make it a family tradition to keep the most important thing about Christmas the most important thing in your home!* (HT)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals.....Dec. 16, 17

This year's Christmas pageant is in an all-new format to adjust to and take advantage of our interim facilities, so everyone will need to be there to find out what to do. The title is, "Journey to Bethlehem." It's going to be exciting, so

please don't miss out!

Fri. Dec. 16: Rehearsals will take place for Grades 7-12 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sat. Dec. 17: The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 17. from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please note: All grades are asked to be present at 9:00 a.m. for rehearsal. "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate in the rehearsal.

Church School Christmas Pageant December 18

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering an all-new "Journey to Bethlehem" Christmas Pageant this year on Sunday, December 18. All the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall. Also, please note: Coffee Hour that day is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church School Alumni. Any alumni that would like to help, please contact Presvytera Becky.

No Church School Class Dec. 25, Jan. 1

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 25 and January 1 due to the holiday celebrations, so please join together as a family on those days.

Orthodox Studies ForumDecember 7 & 21

The Orthodox Studies Forum continues its season on Wed, Dec. 7 & 21, at 7:00pm, at Holy Trinity Church's interim location (495 Browns Lane). The study topic for this year is the book, "Living the Beatitudes" by Father Tom and Presvytera Kyriaki Fitzgerald. The book is available in our Three Hierarchs bookstore during Coffee Hour and at the study. All are welcome. For information, see Father Radu or contact him at FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Saint Lydia Women's StudyDec. 1, 15

The St Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is now in its 12th year! If you have missed out on this wonderful time with fellow sisters in Christ sharing, learning and growing in faith, maybe this is the year you can join in! This group is open to women of ALL ages and ALL places in life! They do not know everything...they are learning, so please don't feel that you don't know enough to attend! This year they are studying a selection of the Epistles of the New Testament using a book entitled "Universal Truth: The Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, Jude, and John" (An Orthodox Bible Study Companion). Meetings are held every other Thursday beginning September 29 at St George Chapel, 8941 Ringesen Road, Allison Park. 9:30 - Coffee and Fellowship; 10:00 - 11:15 Study. For more information contact Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Ministries FOCUS Canned Food DriveDecember

The Holy Trinity Youth Ministries will conclude its canned

food drive to benefit the FOCUS Pittsburgh philanthropic ministry during the months December. Please watch for information at church regarding items needed and collection procedures.

GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat. December 4

The GOYA will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday, December 4 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Please watch the GOYA Facebook page and email list for additional information on this annual seasonal teen ministry event.

HOPE & JOY Christmas Carols at V.A. Hospital . . . Dec. 23

The HOPE and JOY ministries will be visiting the VA hospital on December 23rd at 6:00 pm to sing Christmas carols to some of the patients. The group will offer about an hour and a half of carols at the hospital and then gather at the home of the Germanos family. Please RSVP to Chrysoula Balouris at 724-933-5205 or cbalouris@yahoo.com. The group's "Treatures for Children" projects are also due on Sunday Dec. 4.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

2011 Christmas Tree Gift Tags for Needy Children

Philoptochos is once again coordinating the annual Christmas Tree tags to benefit the children of Auberle, a local charity. Auberle's mission is to care for abused, neglected and troubled children throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. They help thousands of children and their families through residential care, foster care, emergency shelter, in-home intervention, education and community programs. Want to help? Take a tag from the tree during Coffee Hour. Each tag has information about the child and the gift request. Sometimes gift cards are appropriate, other times gifts themselves are best. All gifts must be unwrapped and returned with the assigned gift tag. GIFTS ARE DUE BACK SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11. Please don't be late or a child may be left without a gift. For more information, please contact Yvonne Balouris at 724-934-4850 or via email at ybalouris@zoominternet.net. Thank you for your generosity

Philoptochos 2011 Holiday Bake Sale

The Holy Trinity "Omonia" Ladies Philoptochos 2011 Holiday Bake Sale is now underway! Please use the enclosed order form to place your pre-paid order by Sunday, December 4, 2011. Items may be picked at 495 Browns Lane on Wednesday, December 14 between 11:00am and 2:00 pm or Sunday, December 18, between 12:00 noon and 1:00pm. Thank you for supporting the charitable work of the Philoptochos Society, "The Friends of the Poor"!

COMMUNITY NEWS

Community Christmas Card Form Due Dec. 12

Please see the enclosed form for the Holy Trinity Community Christmas Card. If you would like to include your name in this annual community tradition, please be sure to submit your form and donation to the Church Office by December 12. Thank you!



Holiday Poinsettias Form. Due Dec. 12

Please see the enclosed form for the sponsoring of holiday poinsettias for use in the church during the Christmas and Theophany season. If you would like to donate one or more flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event, please complete the form and return it to the Church Office with your donation by December 12.



Parish Council Elections. December 4

As indicated in the notice to the General Assembly last month, regular Parish Council elections will be held Sunday, December 4, following the Divine Liturgy. Voting rules as published and explained for prior General Assemblies apply: you must be a member in good standing (stewardship and sacramental) to vote, which includes having a current year signed Holy Trinity Stewardship card submitted and contributions being made toward that pledge.

Note: Even though there is an equal number of candidates for positions, the election process must still be conducted to make the elections official. Balloting will be held open only during coffee hour.

Year-End Stewardship & Building Fund Contribution Notes

The Stewardship Committee and Capital Campaign thank all our Holy Trinity Stewards for their pledges and contributions this year and ask that everyone brings their offerings up to date for 2011. Please take note that all offerings you would like listed as received during the 2011 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 2011 pledge (to pay the balance) or the 2012 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, please remember to submit your signed 2012 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge Card as soon as possible, as they were due in November.

Holiday Office Hours

The offices of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church will be closed on Monday, December 26, and Monday, January 2, in observation of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Holy Trinity Email News: Sign Up Today!

Want the Weekly Bulletin sent to your email box? Sign up today! Go to www.HolyTrinityPgh.org and sign up today!

HOLY TRINITY NEW CHURCH GROUNDBREAKING:

DECEMBER 11, 2011

See enclosed flyer for details.

Reserve your luncheon tickets now!

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

December 2011 – The Voice of the Gospel



Father John Androutsopoulos

CHRIST IS BORN – GLORIFY HIM

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ: Rejoice always!

The Word Became Flesh

"And the Word became flesh and dwell among us...." (John 1:14) The meaning of this verse is the following:

The Son of God was incarnate, and received the human nature,

that is soul and body and dwell among us. His disciples saw His glory which was proper for the only begotten Son of God. His Son was full of grace and truth, full of Divine power for our spiritual regeneration and Divine Knowledge for our enlightenment.

Waiting for Christmas

Beloved, Christougenna (Christmas) is coming soon, and we hear people saying: "I just cannot wait until Christmas!" "I am counting everyday until December 24th." "The anticipation is driving me crazy!"

The fast of Christmas or the advent season is a time of looking forward to Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. How about looking back for a minute? It's been a long, long time since that baby was born in Bethlehem and the good news was spread abroad. Christmas is more than gifts and manger scenes and bright, shiny stars.

It Really Did Happen!

It really did happen, you know. A baby was born in a stable, and shepherds came to worship Him, and wise men came bearing gifts. During the Christmas season, we should look back and realize anew what an earth-shaking event it really was.

God became man and came to earth and loved us and forgave us. Think about it. It really did happen!

Preparing for Christmas

Beloved, we are guilty of thinking about Christmas less seriously than we should. We spend a lot of time arranging and rearranging a beautiful manger scene on a table without giving one single thought to its significance. We need to think about the earth-shaking event that happened long ago: the

birth of the Son of God.

Beloved, the fast of Christougenna, that is Christmas, or the "Advent season", which began November 15 – December 24, is a time of spiritual preparation, and with a clean heart (Kathari Kardia) to receive Holy Communion. Advent is a Latin word which means, "The Coming."

He Is Coming

"FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. (The third article of our Creed.)

The basic truth of this article is that God has gone out of His way to grant us salvation. (Read the Gospel of John, Chapter 3, Verses 1 to 21).

Our loving God saw the condition of humanity and was moved by compassion, just as he saw the plight of the Israelites in Egypt and sent Moses to free them. But to bring redemption to humanity, he did not send a prophet such as Moses. "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life" (Verse 16).

That is the heart of the good news: God acted so that we might find salvation. God gave of himself so that we might have eternal life. God saw us in our sin but sent a savior instead of sending condemnation. "God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world but so that through him the world might be saved" (verse 17).

We acclaim this goodness of God in the creed: "For us and for our salvation" God acted, giving of himself, sending his Son to live among us and to give up his life that we might have life. We have not been abandoned to pull ourselves out of our sin as best we can. Truly God has shown His love for us.

Thank You, Lord!

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for coming among us to bring us salvation. Thank you for coming to bring forgiveness rather than condemnation. Keep us always faithful to you and your love. We wish you all "Kala Xristougenna!" May we all have a blessed Christmas!

*With His Love and Blessings,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter*



Hello My Precious Children!

I, Spero, asked my Papou: "How can we find out what is right and what is wrong?" Papou said that we can learn what is right and wrong by reading our Heavenly Father's words in the Bible. Our loving God has given us rules and guidelines on how to live so we know right from wrong. These answers are found in the Bible when we read verses such as the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20.1-17) and the Beatitudes (Matt. 2.5-12). From these, we get a pretty good idea of how God wants us to live. In the Book of Deuteronomy (12.28), are also told to be careful to obey all God's commandments, then later St. Paul reminds us as Christians that we should do everything in a spirit of love (1 Corinthians 16.13-14). We must do what is right in God's eyes because this shows Him every day that we love Him and trust Him. We must love our Heavenly Father above all because He wants only the very best for us and because He loved us first!

Now, my little sister, Zoe, likes to play hide-and-seek. The other day, she asked if we can ever play hide-and-seek with God. I answered that since God is all-knowing and all-seeing, He really has the advantage in that game! Still, we do find some people in the Bible who do try to hide from God because they have not been obedient to Him. Take Jonah, for example. It's one of my favorite Bible stories. Jonah was a prophet, which means he was a messenger of God, because he spoke to the people about God's message to them. Now, the Lord asked Jonah to go to Ninevah and tell the people there to "shape up!" because they were acting in ways they were against God's teachings. But Jonah did not do what God asked. He told God, "No, I do not want to go to Ninevah. They are bad people!"

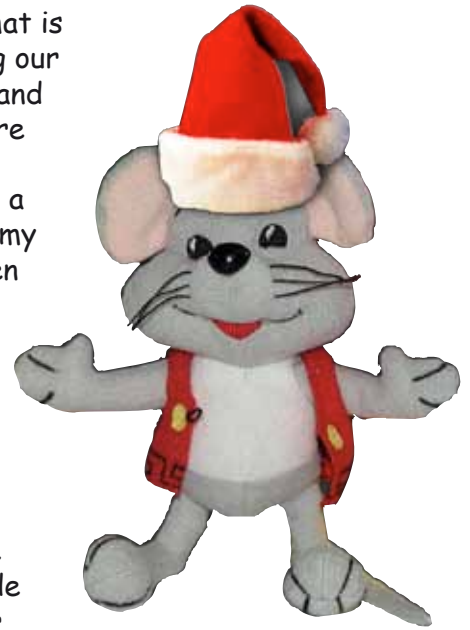
So Jonah tried to run away and hide from God by getting on a boat. But the moment he did, a big storm came up and rocked the boat. Everyone on board prayed for God to stop the storm, but not Jonah; he knew that God was angry at him because He was running away. So they threw Jonah overboard and at that moment the storm stopped! Jonah cried out to God, "Since you know where I am, you can help me, God!" So the Lord sent a big, fat whale to swallow him. Jonah remained in the belly of the sea beast for three days, praying. He finally gave up and told God, "OK, Lord, whatever you want me to do, I will do!" Jonah finally learned what obedience to God is all about. He was now ready to change the lives of thousands of people. Jonah's smart idea was telling God that he was sorry for running away.

After that, I went on to tell Zoe about the very first people who disobeyed God in the Bible, Adam and Eve. God had made the world, then made Adam and Eve, and He gave them everything they needed. One of Adam's first jobs was to name all the creatures that God had created. The Lord also gave them all the food they needed, but told them not to eat from the tree of knowledge, for if they did they would die. Then, one day, Eve was walking by the tree and a crafty snake tempted her by telling her that nothing bad would happen if she ate from the tree, but that she would become smart like God. Eve fell for the lie and took from the tree, then shared it with Adam. They had greatly sinned, not by wanting to be wise, but by disobeying God's command. They also tried to hide from God, but it didn't work for them, either! When the Lord found them hiding in the garden, He asked them why they were hiding and they were ashamed. So they were cast out of the garden of delight. God cursed the snake by making him crawl on his belly forever. But He didn't give up on His best creation, mankind. He had a plan to let us back into His beautiful garden of Paradise, but it took a long time and we still didn't listen. That's when God sent His only-begotten Son into the world to save us. And because Jesus came, died for our sins and conquered death, He broke down the doors which kept us out of Paradise and let us back in through His Resurrection.

"Oh, Spero," said Zoe, "I just can't wait until Christmas to tell Jesus how much I love Him!"

You to, my precious children, can tell Him too, all together on Christmas morning at the special Christmas morning Divine Liturgy. I'll be there. Hope you will, too! Remember, Jesus loves you very, very much!!!

In Christ,
Love, Spero



October 10, 2011: In another of the many steps on the way to final township approval for the new church project, members of the Vision Committee attend the final McCandless Township Zoning Board meeting and look on as Zoning Officer Bruce Betty presents information to the board. The board voted to forward the project to the Town Council, which issued final approval for the project on October 24.



October 9, 2011: Two Holy Trinity women were among nine honored as Greek American Woman Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania by the Greek American Hellenic Foundation of Western Pennsylvania at a Gala at the South Hills Crowne Plaza Ballroom. Over 175 people attended the event. Pictured below with Father John are Holy Trinity's recipients, Stella Athanasiou and Koula Pantzoulas. Congratulations to and all the honorees!



November 1, 2011: On the first day of the recent Archdiocesan Presbyters Council 2011 National Clergy Retreat in Scottsdale, Arizona, Father John—who chaired the event—received a double-surprise: not only was he presented with a birthday cake by the brothers of the APC, but he had help cutting it from His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America!



October 7-9, 2011: If there was ever any doubt about how Holy Trinity Church, its people and its festival would be received in the new N... With the combination of awesome weather, great crowds and lots of help from our community volunteers, we can stand back with thanks...



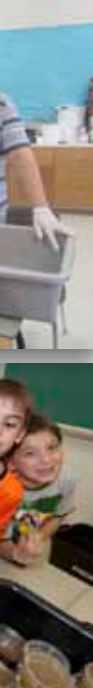
f Greece” - October 7-9, 2011

North Hills neighborhood, it was put to rest by the tremendous success and enthusiastic response experienced during the “Taste of Greece.” Giving and say, like Peter on Mount Tabor, “Lord, it is good that we are here!” Thank you to everyone for your labors of love for HT!





f Greece” - October 7-9, 2011



The excitement continues! The articles on this and the following page have recently appeared in various papers throughout the area.



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Members Take Leap of Faith for New McCandless Church

October 13, 2011 - They landed squarely on solid ground after a major leap of faith.

In just 18 months, members of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church hope to dedicate a new church on their 10-acre property at Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard in McCandless.

In the meantime, they have transformed the former Northway Elementary School building on Browns Lane in Ross Township into a place of fellowship. For the last three months, the congregation has held its Sunday services there.

"We sold the church but had no place to go," said the Rev. John Touloumes.

When Northside Institutional Church of God in Christ purchased the church's property on Pittsburgh's North Side, Touloumes and his church family were without an address.

"He (Jesus) said, 'Follow Me,'" Touloumes said, so he and the members waited for a door to open. "We had things in the fire but no agreements, just options."

Groundbreaking is planned for Nov. 20. If the leadership's timeline holds, a new church will be dedicated in 18 months or fewer. After 88 years, Holy Trinity will minister to more than 300 people at each worship service. Four hundred will fit comfortably in the community center.

Holy Trinity members are "excited, enthusiastic, fulfilled," the pastor said.

As the church's third home, the new building will reflect the traditional Orthodox style with arches and a dome above the sanctuary. The altar will be on the east side, so during a service, the priest and congregation will be looking to Jerusalem.

Bill Fiedler, 58, of McCandless, has led the building committee through the project's many stages. While parish councils had discussed a new church for the last decade, it was in 2007 that leaders agreed to purchase property from La Roche College for about \$1 million. The capital campaign began in August of 2008.

"We started the campaign when the economy tanked," Fiedler said.

Of the 239 active stewards, the church has received 140 pledges. Other donations also have been credited to the project. The total, at present, is \$3.2 million and on its way to the \$6 million needed.

"Some from outside the community gave money just to offer support," said George Dickos, 55, also of McCandless. Both men are happy the plans have been so well received.

"(The site) is better demographically," said Fiedler, for the McCandless residents who make up about 80 percent of the congregation. Many come from Ross Township and other North Hills communities.

"Some (members) didn't come regularly. This is a central location and will give us a larger facility for ministries."

Christ Kamages, an architect from San Francisco, developed the plans. "His ideas were compatible with our own vision," Fiedler said. There will be a fireside room for youth fellowship. The community center will be the place for receptions for church members and outside organizations.

Touloumes, 51, of Bethel Park, is in his 19th year as leader of the congregation and already has seen signs of growth. "Every Sunday, new people are coming who are not from this community," the pastor said. Some are becoming involved with the Greek Orthodox Church because of parents or grandparents. "There are a lot of families," he said.

Young and old seem comfortable in their temporary quarters, where church work takes place through the hands of the people inspired by Sunday's words of worship. An altar table, liturgical vessels, some icons, candles and the Bible, Touloumes said, are all that are necessary to transform a school auditorium/gymnasium into a house of prayer.

Of this, Touloumes is certain: "We are here to fulfill the Gospel," he said. "We are not about numbers, but Orthodox traditions, history, theology and worship."

By Dona Dreeland Staff Writer

post-gazette.com
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Church renting closed Ross school until new building completed

November 10, 2011 - When she was 10 years old, Helena Erdeljac of McCandless played basketball in the gymnasium at Northway Elementary School on Browns Lane in Ross. At age 22, she's going to same gym, but this time it's on Sundays and now she's going there to pray.

For the past 80 years, parishioners of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church worshipped at their church on the North Side. In June, the group began attending services at the former Northway Elementary School, which has been closed by the North Hills School District.

The church is renting the school to serve as its temporary church until a \$6 million facility can be built on the corner of Babcock Boulevard and Cumberland Road in McCandless.

On Sunday, the scent of incense wafted over the worshippers, Greek voices raised in song, and despite the caged wall clocks and basketball nets on either side of the room, it felt like church, said Ms. Erdeljac. "It's nice to know that you can have liturgy anywhere," she said. "It's not about the building, it's about the people."

A recent graduate of Duquesne University, Ms. Erdeljac works at Mediterraneo, her family's Greek restaurant in Ross. Raised in McCandless, the Erdeljac family is emblematic of the reason Holy Trinity voted to move to the North Hills.

"Eighty percent of our demographics are located within a 10-mile radius of our new location," said parish council President Chris Balouris of McCandless, noting that Greek immigrants typically moved to the North Side in the past. "Then they began moving to the north suburbs, and now our community is growing; we need more space."

McCandless Town Council approved the church's land development application last month. The Rev. John Touloumes, Holy Trinity pastor, said the church needs two more grading and building permits before they can break ground, which he hopes will be in December.

"We hope to be in the new building for Easter 2013," he said, adding, "We're glad to be a part of this community, and we're looking forward to a great relationship with our neighbors in McCandless."

In addition to serving as a new worship site, the new location will be host to Holy Trinity's annual Greek Festival, which was held Oct. 7-9 at their temporary North Hills location. The church's Ladies Philoptochos Society, the sponsoring group, was overwhelmed by the number of people who showed up.

"I think everyone in the North Hills came," Philoptochos Society president Kay Balouris said. "We were shocked, because we didn't have adequate facilities, and we ran out of things, which was good and bad."

Philoptochos Treasurer Joyce Countouris acknowledged that the school's small kitchen is not equipped to deal with the church's usual fare, and the large turnout at this year's festival made serving the public even more challenging. "We spend a lot of time looking for things, but it all worked out in the end," she said, anticipating the large, state-of-the-art kitchen that will eventually be the heart and soul of the new building.

Food is a central theme in every Greek celebration, as are music and dancing, and the congregation's members are eager to share their celebrations with their new neighbors. "We want people to know about our heritage and culture, and we intend to be a busy part of the North Hills community, said Mrs. Balouris. "We're also a charitable organization, and we want to share everything we have, because we're a place of comfort for anyone who needs us."

Everyone agrees that moving to the North Hills was needed, but the change is still hard on the congregation's older members. "This was a good opportunity for us," said Stella Athanasiou, 87, of Perry Hilltop, regarding the fact that a donor left the church enough money to buy the new site. "But for those of us who are older, we're suffering. We know we have to go along with what the new generation needs, but it's very hard for us. Sooner or later, we'll get used to it."

By Jill Cueni-Cohen, freelance writer

Festival Offers a 'Taste of Greece' in Ross Township

October 6, 2011 - This year, a new kitchen encountered an old tradition, one that is 39 years old. When the cooks at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church gathered to prepare for

their annual fall food festival, the big pans of souvlaki, baklava and other foods were created in the kitchen of Northway Elementary School, the church's interim home.



After months of cooking, everything is ready for the public to enjoy a "Taste of Greece" from Friday to Sunday. A sampling of the best the islands have to offer will be served from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the school at 495 Browns Lane, behind The Shoppes at Northway, each day.

Leo Loomis, a member of Holy Trinity and a Dormont resident, is chairing the event for another year. He has been involved with the festival for 18 years. "The women have been working very hard," Loomis said. "They've been cooking for months, preparing spinach and cheese pies and pastitsio."

Kay Balouris and other cooks have been blending ingredients for these favorite dishes. Balouris has been there since the first festival was held in 1972. She remembers making honey puffs with her mother. In the years since, some of the recipes have come from her family kitchen. "I never missed a year," Balouris said from her Bellevue home.

As her four children grew, they participated in the church events as they could. Today, her son Chris is council president. Her other son, Jim, is head of the capital campaign.

"Her whole life is about family and church," Loomis said.

Balouris will attend the weekend festival to lend a hand. This year, she'll operate a register and welcome guests to dine under the big tent.

"The best part of the festival is the camaraderie of the congregation," she said, "and the people who participate in our culture." Her favorite entrée is spanakopita, she said, "and not because I'm making it."

Because of a smaller kitchen, the menu is about one-third of what it usually would be, according to Loomis, but the festival menu still will provide a culinary taste tour of Greece from gyros, to calamari to a feta-topped salads and lots in between. Prices range from \$5 to \$12. Imported Greek wines, ouzo, beer and other beverages will be served.

"We can't touch your food," Loomis recalled a comment he often hears from other Greek food festival folk. "Our church is noted for its religion and its food."

The lamb marinates for a month in the freezer, he said. Usually, festival cooks would serve up 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of lamb at their old North Avenue location. "The lamb never freezes. It melts in your mouth."

Loomis, Bill Fiedler, Gerri Valliant and Kathy Romanias cooked the entrees and will be on hand to warm up the servings. Loomis and Balouris are looking forward to the first festival held at their new church at Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard in about 18 months.

If different churches have different talents as Loomis said, the people of Holy Trinity will be ready to welcome one and all.

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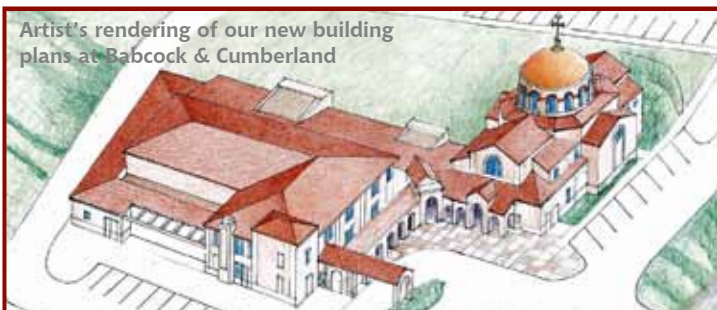
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Christ: The Second Adam



At the heart of all the Good News of the New Testament is the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The first Adam was unable to fulfill the vocation laid before him. Yet everything that the first man left undone was accomplished in his stead by God Incarnate, the Word-become-flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Paul calls Christ the 'second Adam.' Contrasting Him with the first, he says, 'The first man was from earth, a man of dust; the second man is from Heaven' (1 Cor. 15.47).

Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, "The Mystery of Faith"

Scripture of the Month: "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith." (Galatians 3.26)