



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

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QUICK NEWS



GOYA teens prepared for Christmas at the annual Fireside Chat with Father John on December 14. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 8-10 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

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

2014 Parish Council

George Dickos, President

Dean A. Balouris Marios Kritiotis

George Danis Charles Petredis

Andrew Janis Joyce Athanasiou

Jason Farmakis Stephanie Sedor

Louis Kort Alex Trilivas

Leo Loomis Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



“Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Hebrews 13:15-16

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is hard to believe that entering the year 2015 we are now in the third calendar year at the beautiful new church home where we have resided as a community since June 22, 2013.

Some who have been around from even before the process of planning, funding and building our new church began can go back in their minds to a time when it all seemed so impossible. Where would we find a new property? How would we finance such a project? Who would buy our old facility? These and many other challenges and questions stood in the way for years, but by the grace of God we were inspired, strengthened and motivated to accomplish what the Lord knew we could do even before we took the first step.

Having now settled, worshipped, taught, volunteered, celebrated and lived in this beautiful new testament of faith for the last 19 months, it is easy to leave the memory of what it took to get here behind. And what did it take? A complete community-wide focus, vision and plan. After all, Proverbs 20:18 says, “Plans are established by counsel,” through both internal and external counsel, God provided. The importance of that counsel and planning must never be forgotten, because it is also needed to continue moving us forward.

Likewise, in raising the funds for building and growing the facility for ministry, it was an uphill climb, and a steep one! Again, with much prudence and wisdom, the community choose to refrain breaking ground until half our pledged money was in hand and a financing plan for the entire project was formed. This again follows a good scriptural model from the Gospel according to St. Luke: “Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? (Luke 14:28.)

Even after all that wise counsel and good planning, it was still not possible until the pledging, giving and commitment reached sacrificial levels that equaled the levels of desire for the type of facility and breadth of ministry the Lord had planted in our hearts.

Now that it we have moved in and gotten comfortable, it seems that “our work is done.” The most important thing to remember is this: **“OUR WORK IS NOT DONE!”** Heading into our first post-construction “normal” full year of occupancy and budgeting, the dust has settled, the ministries are growing, we are reaching out in ways never seen before and we should be starting to realize what it really takes to run a place of this magnitude.

As we enter the new year, many people look for resolutions. Both Father John Androutsopoulos (page 5) and Spero the Church Mouse (page 7) have offered a few. Attend services and studies regularly and you will collect many more.

Above and beyond that, there are two resolutions I will in love offer every member of this community to help us each step up the level of support God is calling us to provide so that this Church will be able to be “Faith. Family. Community.” for many for years to come:

- 1. I WILL ASSIST IN FREEING HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ITS MORTGAGE BY MAKING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLEDGE IF I HAVE NOT MADE ONE OR EXTENDING MY PLEDGE IF I HAVE ALREADY PARTICIPATED.**
- 2. I WILL MEET MY COMMITMENT TO MY LORD AND MY CHURCH BY RAISING MY STEWARDSHIP SUPPORT TO THE SACRIFICIAL LEVEL NEEDED TO SUSTAIN AND GROW THE NEW LIFE OF THIS COMMUNITY.**

With boldness, courage and God's blessing, we have established a “new normal” of life and ministry that now requires a “new normal” of support: **sacrificial**. All are welcome at whatever level God puts in your heart and in your accounts. What a joy to use it for the glory of God in 2015!

With sincere paternal love in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE**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!

New Year's Eve Liturgy/Celebration December 31

Want to start the New Year out "on the right foot?" Well, point that foot toward Holy Trinity Church and start your evening with the first Divine Liturgy of the New Year by celebrating the Feast of Saint Basil with Vespertal Liturgy at 6:00 p.m., followed by an exciting New Year's Eve Celebration featuring the live Greek band "The Levendes" from Detroit. Be sure to prepare as usual for an evening Liturgy, with no food or drink following your noon meal, and of course the appropriate prayers of preparation for Holy Communion. There is no better way to sanctify yourself, your family and the entire New Year. "Kali Hronia!" Happy New Year to all!

Weekday Services January

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.. Guide to locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringesen Road, Allison Park.

Mon., Jan. 5: The Forefeast of Theophany

This is the first of two Theophany Divine Liturgies and services of Great Blessings of the Waters. It is an evening Liturgy, so be sure to prepare properly to receive Holy Communion by (in addition to your other spiritual preparation) abstaining from food and drink from your noon meal on. The Liturgy will be followed by the Great Blessing of the Waters service. Please note that this is also a strict fasting day in preparation for Theophany. (HT)

Tue., Jan. 6: The Holy Theophany of our Lord

This is the main Orthros and Divine Liturgy of this great Feast. We will again offer the Great Blessings of the Water at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. (HT)

Wed. Jan. 7: 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. (SG)

Sat. Jan. 17: Saint Anthony the Great

The feast of Saint Anthony will be celebrated at the Saint Anthony parish in Clairton. Watch the bulletin for details.

Fri. Jan. 30: The Three Hierarchs

Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Three Hiearchs, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom (SG).

Faith and Family Wednesdays January

Of course, don't forget the mid-week worship opportunity every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Church. See the schedule for the month on page 6 of this issue.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**No Church School Class Dec. 28**

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 28 due to the holiday celebrations, so please join together to worship as a family on that day.

Faith and Family Wednesdays January

Yes, it is listed under "Worship Life" and under "Religious Education" because they are the pillars on which this weekly minstry stands at it presents opportunities to know God better through both prayer and learning. Please see page 6 of this issue for the January schedule of this weekly ministry.

YOUTH MINISTRIES**GOYA Basketball Practice January 6, 12, 27**

GOYA will hold basketball practice in preparation for the 2015 basketball tournament season on Tuesday, January 6, Monday, January 12 and Tuesday, January 27 from 6:30-8:30pm at Hosack Elementary School, 9275 Peebles Road.

GOYA Parents and Coaches Meeting January 4

GOYA will hold a brief but important meeting for all parents and coaches in the Conference Room following Divine Liturgy. This is an important meeting to distirbute and collect information regardind our GOYAns' participation in the three Metropolis Basketball tournaments for 2015.

GOYA Basketball Tournaments January

Our Holy Trinity GOYA will be participating in three Metropolis Basketball Tournaments this year, the first two of which are in January. They will travel to the Annunciation Cathedral in Cleveland, OH, on January 16-18, for the first tournament, and to the second in Akron, OH, from January 30-February 1. May God grant them good skills, safe travels, protection from injury and the joy of fellowship in Christ with their friends in our sister churches near and far. Thank you also to all the coaches and parents who make these weekends possible. God bless you all!

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS**Philoptochos Turkey Fundraiser Thank You**

The Ladies Philoptochos would like to thank the parishioners & friends of Holy Trinity who supported the 2014 Turkey Fundraiser. This year's fundraiser was our most successful to date! Because of your generosity, the Philoptochos was able to assist many local needy families with super market gift cards, donations to local food banks and school food back pack programs. Thank you!

Vasilopita Celebration January 11

The Philoptochos will sponsor the annual Vasilopita Celebration on Sunday, January 11, 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!

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

In the Hospital? Home-Bound? Let Us Know!

In today's age of information privacy, churches are not notified when parishioners are admitted to hospitals, nursing homes or other care facilities. Both those facilities and your church depend on having the church notified by friends or family member so pastoral care and outreach can be offered. The same goes for those homebound. If you or any of your loved ones are in any of these situations, please contact the Church Office at 412-366-8700 to request a visit from our priests or visitation ministry.

Also, on Sunday, December 4, an initial meeting of our new parish visitation ministry was held, with over two dozen people attending. Interested in being a part of team of brothers and sisters in Christ who offering care reach out to fellow parishioners in situations of illness, loneliness or other personal need? Please contact the Church Office or look forthcoming information on how to offer your time and be blessed as a visitation ministry volunteer.

Parish Council Election Results/InstallationDec. 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 2015-2016 term: Joyce Athanasiou, George Danis, Tom Germanos, Andrew Janis, Michael Passodelis, Stephanie Sedor, and Gerri Valliant. Continuing on for the remainder of their term are Dean A. Balouris, George Dickos, Jason Farmakis, Louis Kort, Marios Kritiotis and Alex Trilivas. Parish Council installation will be held on Sunday, December 28, followed by the election of officers. Please be sure to thank each of them for their labors of love and their active dedication as the elected representatives and leaders of the community. May God be their guide and strength in all things, and may they all have our support at all times!

Year-End Contributions Reminder

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 2014. Please take note that all offerings you would like listed as received during the 2014 tax year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31) for tax deduction purposes must be received at the church or postmarked by Dec. 31. This is an IRS regulation. You may indicate the offerings to apply for either your 2014 pledge (to pay the balance) or the 2015 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 2015 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge Cards have been distributed and all Holy Trinity Stewards should complete one immediately. Questions? Contact Stewardship Co-chairmen Charlie Petredis or Marianne Stearns or email stewardship@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Online Giving Reminder

At the November General Assembly, the exciting news of Holy Trinity Church's new online giving program was announced. It is now possible to make contributions of vari-

ous kinds to Holy Trinity Church online. Our secure system allows you to conveniently make donations online. You can choose to make a one-time contribution or establish a recurring weekly or monthly contribution. Best of all, you don't need to remember to write a check or bring your offering to church - it's already taken care of! Payments can be made via checking account, savings account, credit card or debit card. Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/give to get started!

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. Never has your house blessed before? This is a great year to start! 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.



New Year Holiday Office ScheduleJanuary 1

The offices of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church will be closed on Thursday, January 1, in observation of the New Year holiday.

Holy Trinity Now Broadcasting Services on TV!

Holy Trinity Church is pleased to announce that it has partnered with Cornerstone Television Network's new "Pittsburgh Faith & Family Channel" in an exciting new outreach opportunity that has selected churches from around the Pittsburgh region to provide 24-hour-a-day local religious broadcasting, with an emphasis on worship services.

Prior to this, Holy Trinity Church already featured live Internet broadcasts of all services at Holy Trinity Church on our website, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/live. Now, our Sunday services will be re-broadcast three times each week on the Pittsburgh Faith & Family Channel: Sundays at 2:00 p.m., Wednesdays at 5:00 a.m. and Fridays at 10:00 p.m. to the entire Pittsburgh region. Due to programming constraints, they will be edited down to fit into an hour-long broadcast, but each broadcast will feature the homily or homilies of the day and contact information for Holy Trinity Church.

The enclosed flyer contains information on how to access these broadcasts on your television via local digital broadcast antenna, on Armstrong Cable channels 95 or 413, or on the web at www.ctvn.org/pff. It also contains a current schedule of broadcast services, including Holy Trinity Church!



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

JANUARY 2015 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

New Year's Greetings

Χρόνια Πολλά, Καλή Χρονιά, με Υγεία και Χαρά! Happy New Year with Good Health and Joy!

Thursday, January 1st, marks the beginning of the New Year. Happy Nameday to those who celebrate their namedays this month, including this author, who also celebrates his birthday on his Nameday.

Prayer For The New Year

"Dear Father, as we begin a new year, we pray that all bitterness, and wrath, and malice, and anger, and evil speaking shall be put away from among us, and that we shall be kind to one another. Help us, Father, to be faithful to Thee. In the name of Thy Son Jesus. Amen."

Prayer Thoughts For The New Year

Pray earnestly every day for a deeper love and earnestness in God's service; for a stronger resolve properly to use Word and Sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion; for a clean heart; for worthy dedication of self and possessions; for peace and concord; for the sick of body and mind, the distressed and weak-hearted; pray that God may comfort and bless them; for the Church and the faithful and dedicated priests; that the peace of Christ may rule in your heart and be expressed in your life; that you may abide in God's love and keep His commandments.

Stewardship Thoughts For The New Year

It is well to remember, on this first Sunday of the year, that we cannot get something for nothing. Gambling is getting nothing for something. 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. Let us resolve to try tithing this year, for tithing members make a good Church. A tithing Church never has financial troubles. The Jews were commanded to give the tenth; Christians should give even more.

How To Grow In Grace For The New Year And The Completion Of Our Lives

What do we mean "by the Grace of God?" I believe that it means God's matchless, overpowering love and favor.

"Be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may grow up and be saved. (1 Peter 2:2) When the sinner is spiritually regenerated—born again (1 John 3:3, 5-7)—he starts a new life similar to an infant in the physical realm. The same rules that promote health in babies must be followed to enjoy spiritual growth. Beloved, as Christians, we need:

- 1. The "Pure Milk Of The Word" Is The Proper Formula.** We must study and absorb the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. "Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth. (2:Timothy 2:15)
- 2. Daily Prayer: The "Oxygen Of The Soul."** If we do not have it, we will faint (1 Thess. 5:17). Pray at all times. Beloved, the Christians sweetest privilege is the privilege of talking to God, for that's what prayer is. It is a sad day in the Christian's life when he begins to neglect his prayer life. It is as if God had given us a blank check, which He had signed, and we tear up the check. It is as if God had given us the key of His great Heavenly storehouse, and we threw the key away. Are we neglecting this privilege?
- 3. Get Busy In Christian Work And Bear Witness To Others In Every Way Possible.** "Whoever declares publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him before my Father in Heaven" (Matt. 10:32).
- 4. Rely On God At All Times In Simple Faith.** "Take my yoke and put it on, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. (Matt. 11:29)
- 5. Avoid Evil Company And Any Environment That Tends To Soil The Soul.** "Do not be fooled: bad companions ruin good character" (1 Cor. 15:33). "And so the Lord says: you must leave them, and separate yourselves from them. Have nothing to do with what is unclean, and I will accept you" (2 Cor. 6:17).
- 6. Support Your Church.** The Church is of God, and shall be to the end of the world. The mission of the Church will remain the same: an instrument of God's redeeming love in the world. Where else are we to turn, except to the Church, as a redeeming agency of God, the hospital for the helpless, the hospital of sinners? So, go to Church this Sunday, and by your presence and through your support help the House of the Lord. Take your family; invite your friends and relatives; say a good word for your Church and help it to become what God has always intended to be. "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another, all the more since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming near. (Heb. 10:25). "But if we live in the light – just as he is in the light – then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, makes us clean for every sin." (1 John 1:7.).
- 7. You Should Regularly Partake In Holy Communion,** examine yourself, and confess all known sin. In so doing, you will keep yourself "in the love of God." "If we would examine ourselves first, we would not come under God's judgment." (1 Cor. 11:31)

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you.

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

WORSHIP — BYZANTINE MUSIC — LITURGICAL COOKING — ICONOGRAPHY — OUTREACH PROJECTS

FAITH ^{AND} Family Wednesdays

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR!

Feel like you don't know enough about your Faith? Want to understand the Bible better? Like to learn more about living an Orthodox life? The “Faith and Family Wednesdays” ministry offers guides, teachers and practical experience in all these areas and more. It also provides a great opportunity to spend time around your Holy Trinity family and enjoy worship, fellowship, growth and sometimes just fun! It's a great way to live and learn your faith between Sundays!

ABOUT THE SERIES

The most important thing about the schedule is simple: be there at 6:30 and there will be both a blessing and an opportunity for you. And bring the entire family, because there is something for them, too! The worship service goes from 6:30-7:15pm. After a brief fellowship break, there is a series of simultaneous learning, growth and activity sessions from 7:15-8:30pm. All sessions will take place in the various facilities of Holy Trinity Center. There are three tracks each week: Studies, Growth and Orthodox Family Life. Topics and specific activities will vary from month to month, and information will be published in the Herald, the Bulletin on the email list and on the website.

As we open the second year of this exciting new ministry, many thanks are due to all the teachers, contributors and special guests who have made this series possible. Welcome back to all the participants as well, whose feedback from last season was essential to making adjustments that the Spiritual Life Ministry hopes will make this experience even better this year.

COMPLETE GUIDE THE TO JANUARY 2015 “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS”

TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	GROWTH	ORTHODOX FAMILY LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:15-8:30pm		
Jan. 7 First Wednesday of the month	Blessing of the Waters and Blessing of the Loaves (Artoclasia)	Orthodox Book Club Father Radu	Understanding Orthodoxy Ted Cherpas	“Making Marriage Better” (Marriage Enrichment for Married Couples) Father John
Jan. 14 Second Wednesday of the month	Vespers Service	Bible Study: A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture Father John	Byzantine Chanting Peter Papadakis	Teen Bible Study: Living My Faith Father Radu
Jan. 21 Third Wednesday of the month	Service of the Hours/ Confession also available	Orthodox Book Club Father Radu	(Free week: Attend the Orthodox Book Club!)	“Journey to Marriage” (Preparation for Pre-Marriage Couples) Father John
Jan. 28 Fourth Wednesday of the month	Service of Paraclesis to the Theotokos	Bible Study: A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture Father John	Orthodoxy Today: Medical Mission Trip to Honduras Victoria Andromalos-Dale	HOPE and JOY Youth Ministry Project Father Radu

BIBLE STUDY — BOOK CLUB — JOURNEY TO MARRIAGE — UNDERSTANDING ORTHODOXY — CONFESSION

Hello, my precious children!

Happy New Year! I can't believe it's already 2015! There are so many good things happening here at Holy Trinity Church and in my Saint Spyridon Children's Lending Library.

One of the great (and delicious) celebrations of the Church year is "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? Or that he was—along with the other two famous bishops of his day (Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Gregory the Theologian)—very well-educated in Greek philosophy and other subjects? In fact, these "Three Hierarchs" are so well-respected as scholars that they are known as the patron saints of "Greek Letters," or higher learning. Over 1,600 years later, they still set great examples of learning and faith for us to follow today. May they bless your New Year of studies and school work so you may excel in all things!



You know, 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 you as 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!

Love in Christ, Spero







December 2014: Many dozens of gifts, large and small—including a lot of gift cards—were donated freely and enthusiastically by generous Holy Trinity parishioners for needy children and families in the Pittsburgh area this year. They were distributed through local ministries such as FOCUS Pittsburgh, the Mars Home for Youth and the North Hills Community Outreach ministry. Thank you, Holy Trinity community, for your love and compassion!



December 10, 2014: Putting "Faith and Family Wednesdays" into action, Father Radu led a group of holiday-spirit-filled GOYA teens, family members and other F&FW adult attendees in Christmas Carols at our neighboring Sisters of Divine Providence Mother House. The retired Roman Catholic nuns have been wonderful neighbors and were deeply appreciative of this expression of love.



December 14, 2014: GOYA held its annual Christmas Fireside Chat at the home of the Berexa family to help prepare our teens for a spiritually-grounded celebration of the Birth of Christ. In addition to multimedia presentations and Bible exercises, they had the opportunity to pose questions about anything in the Faith during the "Ask Father John" segment.

A Greek language offering of reflections on the Feast of the Three Hierarchs (January 30) from the prediodical, "Pros Tin Nikin."



Voula Hareras

30 Ιανουαρίου Οί Τρεις Ίεράρχες

Τρεις μεγάλοι. Τρεις άστέρες. Τρεις Φωστήρες τής Οίκουμένης. Οί Τρεις Ίεράρχες άναδείχθηκαν οίκουμενικοί διδάσκαλοι.

Γιατί μέ τά λόγια,τά συγγράμματα,τήν διδαχή τους έπηρέασαν βαθύτατα όλες τίς δομές τής κοινωνίας καί τού πολιτισμού όχι μόνο τής έποχής

τους αλλά καί διαχρονικά. Μέ τεράστια οί ίδιοι μόρφωση, άσχολήθηκαν [ιδίως ό Μέγας Βασίλειος] μέ κάθε τομέα τής έπιστήμης τού καιρού τους, γι' αυτό καί άναδείχθηκαν προστάτες τών γραμμάτων καί τής παιδείας.

Μιάς παδείας πού κατακτάται όχι μόνο μέ τήν στείρα άπόκτηση γνώσεων, αλλά κυρίως μέ τή βαθύτερη καλλιέργεια τής ψυχής τήν κατά Θεόν μόρφωση.

Έστιάζουμε

έφέτος τό ένδιαφέρον στόν Μέγα Βασίλειο,τόν πολυταλαντούχο αυτόν μεγάλο άνδρα μέ τήν εύρύτατη μόρφωση καί τήν πολύπλευρη παιδεία καί άρετή.

Στή συνέχεια θα παραθέσουμε ,σχολιασμένη,πε ρικοπή έπιστολής του πρός τόν φίλο του Γρηγόριο τόν Θεολόγο,όπου άνακαλύπτει κανείς καί τήν δεοντολογία τού διαλόγου.

Έπίσης δύο περικοπές από τό περίφημο έργο του [Έξαήμερος] όπου ως σοφός έπιστήμων μελετά σέ βάθος καί σέ πλάτος τή δημιουργία τού κόσμου καί τού άνθρώπου από τόν Πάνσοφο Δημιουργό.

Μεγάλου Βασιλείου Έπιστολές

Γιά έναν καλό διάλογο [Άπό τότε- μέχρι σήμερα - καί πάντα. Η χάρη τό πνεύμα,ή εύγένεια, όταν υπάρχουν στόν άνθρωπο, ξεχύνονται φυσικά καί άβίαστα,όπως τά άφθονα νερά ενός μεγάλου ποταμού,καί καλύπτουν όλες τίς περιοχές τής άνθρώπινης ζωής.

Αυτό παρατηρεί κανείς καί στην πλούσια έπιστολογραφία τού Μεγάλου Βασιλείου,όπου ό μελετητής συναρπάζεται από τήν έμβάθυνση στά μεγάλα θέματα τής Θεολογίας,άλλά καί προσγειώνεται εύχάριστα καί σ' αυτά τά καθυμερινά καί άνθρώπινα.



Έτσι στόν 4ο άκόμα αιώνα μ.χ. στή χρυσή έποχή τής χριστιανικής γραμματείας,μέσα στά κείμενα τού πολυγραφότατου Μεγάλου Ίεράρχου τής Έκκλησίας βρίσκει κανείς τούς όρους καί τίς προυποθέσεις πού θεωρεί άπαραίτητες γιά έναν καλό διάλογο - θέμα τόσο πολυσυζητημένο καί σύγχρονο.

Τί χρειάζεται λοιπόν γιά νά είαι κανείς καλός συζητητής, ό Άγιος άριστος γνώστης τής ψυχολογίας τού άνθρώπου,ύποδεικνύει.

- Νά έρωτά χωρίς έριστικότητα,
- Νά άπαντά χωρίς ύπεροψία καί έγωισμό
- Νά μήν διακόπτει τόν συνομιλητή του,όταν λέει κάτι χρήσιμο
- Νά μή θέλει νά παρεμβάλλει έπιδεικτικά τό δικό του λόγο
- Νά κρατάει ίσορροπία άνάμεσα στό νά λέει καί στό νά άκούει
- Νά έχει τή διάθεση καί τήν ταπείνωση νά μαθαίνει,χωρίς νά ντρέπεται γιά τήν άγνοία του
- Νά διδάσκει χωρίς φθόνο,χωρίς ζήλεια
- Όταν μαθαίνει κάτι χρήσιμο από κάποιον ,νά τού έκφράζει εύγνωμοσύνη,νά φανερώνει τό όνομά του στους άλλους καί νά μήν τό κρύβει.
- Η φωνή αυτού πού όμιλεί νά μήν είναι ούτε πολύ σιγανή,ώστε νά μήν άκούγεται,άλλά ούτε καί πολύ έντονη,ώστε νά κουράζει,ό μέτριος τόνος νά προτιμάται.
- Προτού έξωτερικεύσει κανείς τό λόγο του,πρέπει μέσα του νά έξετάσει τί πρόκειται νά πεί.
- Νά είναι καταδεκτικός καί εύχάριστος στις συνομιλίες του.
- Νά μήν επιδιώκει νά άρέσει μέ τούς άστεισμούς καί τά εύτράπελα άλλά νά έλκύει τόν συνομιλητή του μέ τίς εύχάριστες παραινέσεις του.

[Έπιστολή 2, Γρηγορίω έταίρω]

Δέν είναι δυνατόν παρά νά θαυμάσει κανείς τού σοφού Ίεράρχου,Μεγάλου Βασιλείου τού έκ Καισαρείας,τήν διακριτικότητα καί τήν διεισδυτικότητα στην άνθρώπινη ψυχή, τά κινήματά της καί τίς διαθέσεις της, άπ' όπου έχουν τήν άρχή τους καί όλες οί έξωτερικές τού άνθρώπου έκδηλώσεις.

Τελικά, καταλαβαίνει κανείς από όσα πολύ ψυχολογημένα έκθέτει στόν φίλο του Γρηγόριο ό [φωστήρ] τής Καισαρείας, πώς γιά έναν πολιτισμένο καί άποδοτικό διάλογο χρειάζεται άρετή,άγάπη καί σεβασμός στόν άνθρωπο. Ταπείνωση.

Πρός τήν Νίκη

Thank You | 2014 Nativity Flowers Donor List

Many thanks to the following parishioners and friends for sponsoring the beautiful poinsettias for the decoration of the church during the Christmas holidays. May the Lord remember them and those whom they have honored!

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Eugenia Graser	In memory of my parents Michael & Mary Patsalos
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Sally Hionedes	In memory of Theodore Hionedes
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Angie Roman	In memory of Gus Roman
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Charles Siebott & Irene Karavolos.....	For the health of our family
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Joanne Ladakos Watson	In memory of James Hartig
Joanne Ladakos Watson	In memory of Paul Hionedes
Mary Magdalene Welsh.....	In memory of my mother, Julia Welsh
Dorothea K. Zikos	In memory of Peter J. Zikos
Anthony and Aspasia Zissis	In memory of our Parents
Lou, Julie and Ale Zozos	In memory of Eileen Hoffmann – Julie's mom and Ale's grandmother

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.

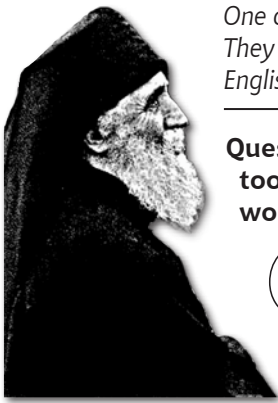
2015 House Blessing Schedule

Date	Time	Area	Zip Codes
Thu. Jan. 8	3pm-6pm	Northside, Perrysville, Bellevue, Westview	15212, 15214, 15202
Thu. Jan. 8	5pm-8pm	South Hills (all areas)	15102, 15216, 1522X, 1524X
Fri. Jan. 9	3pm-9pm	Allison Park, McKnight, Ross, McCandless	15101, 15237
Mon. Jan. 12	3pm-9pm	Gibsonia, Treesdale	15044
Tue. Jan. 13	3pm-9pm	Cranberry, Mars & North	16046, 16066
Mon. Jan. 19	3pm-9pm	Wexford	15090
Thu. Jan. 22	3pm-9pm	Wexford	15090
Fri. Jan. 23	3pm-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 PAGE OR EMAIL FATHER JOHN john@holytrinitypg.org 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.



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 to 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, isn't it perhaps too difficult for someone living in the world to maintain spiritual practices?

No, there are lay people who live very spiritually; some even live like ascetics, with their fasting, their attendance at prayer services, their reciting of the Jesus Prayer, their prostrations, even though they may have children and grandchildren. Glory be to God, for there are many such souls in the world. As a matter of fact, I know a family man who continually recites the Jesus Prayer, no matter where he is. His prayer became auto-activated and his tears are sweet; they are tears of divine exultation.

How simple spiritual life is! If one comes to love God, if one comes to recognise His great sacrifice and His good works, and if one exerts himself, with discernment, in imitation of the saints, he will be quickly sanctified. It is enough that he be humbled, that he be conscious of his own wretchedness and his tremendous ingratitude towards God.

Question: Geronda, should the entire family offer their evening prayers together?

The older family members should bestir themselves with nobility; they should lead by example. They should [offer their evening prayers] and say to the younger family members, “You can stay with us for a little while, if you want.” If the children are somewhat older, they can set up a rule; for example, fifteen minutes for the older children; two to five minutes for the younger children; and after that, as much as they want. If the parents make them stay for the entire [evening prayer], they'll just end up resenting it. They mustn't pressure them, because they haven't yet grasped the power and value of prayer. For example, parents can eat beans and meat; they can eat all types of foods. But when a little child is still only drinking milk, are his parents going to tell him to eat meat just because it's more nutritious? It may be nutritious, but the poor child can't digest it. This is why small children are given just a little meat and broth to start out with, so they'll want more.

Question: But sometimes adults are so tired in the evening that even they can't pray the evening prayers.

When they are very tired or sick, they should just pray half of the [evening prayers], or at least say the Lord's Prayer. They shouldn't bypass prayer altogether. As in time of war, if at night you find yourself alone on a hill and surrounded by the enemy, you'll fire out an occasional shot to scare the enemy away and keep him at bay. They, too, should let out a shot of prayer to keep the devil away.

Question: Geronda, if a husband doesn't live spiritually, what should his wife do?

She should entrust him to Christ and pray that his heart be softened. Eventually, little by little, Christ will descend in his heart, and he will start speculating. As soon as his heart is somewhat softened, then she can ask him, for example, to drive her to church. She shouldn't say to him, “Come to church with me,” but: “Can you please take me as far as the church?” If he takes her all the way to church, then he might say to himself, “I've come this far; why don't I go inside and light a candle?” In this way, little by little, he may make progress.

Question: How should parents motivate their children to attend the holy services and live a spiritual life?

In order for a child to be on the path of God, his parents must be living a proper spiritual life. Some parents who are religious strive to help their children become good persons, not because they are concerned about the salvation of their souls, but because they just want to have good children. In other words, they tend to be more concerned about what other people will say about their children, instead of whether or not the children might go to hell. But then, how can they expect God to help them? The point is not to force the children to go to church, but to help the children get to know and love the Church. Children shouldn't feel pressured to be good; they should feel a need to be good. The parents' holy life informs the children's souls and they then naturally follow their example. As such, they grow up with devotion and with health of both flesh and spirit, without emotional traumas. If parents, out of fear of God, encourage their children, God helps and the children are helped. But if they do this out of egoism, then God does not help. Many times children suffer because of their parents' pride.

Miracles happen with the prayers of little children. Whatever they ask of God, He provides, because they have innocence, and God hears their pure prayer. I remember one time when my parents had gone to the field and left me with my two younger brothers. Suddenly the sky darkened and a torrential rainstorm broke out. We said, “What will become of our parents? How will they get back home?” The two little ones started crying. “Come here,” I said to them, “we will pray and ask Jesus to stop the rain.” The three of us knelt down before the icons and started praying. In just a few minutes the rain stopped. With discernment, parents should help their children, from a young age, to draw near to Christ and to experience, from that young age, the higher joys — the spiritual ones. If children live spiritually, they will live joyfully in this life and rejoice eternally in the presence of Christ in the afterlife.

*Excerpted from “Spiritual Counsels,
Vol. IV: - Family Life”*



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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 by 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: “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.” (John 7.37)