



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



Holy Trinity Church School students and staff prepare for the Procession of the Holy Icons. 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 8-11 or visit our growing online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.



TODAY, HE WHO SUSPENDED THE EARTH IN THE WATERS IS SUSPENDED ON A CROSS.

THE KING OF THE ANGELS WEARS A CROWN OF THORNS.

HE WHO WRAPS THE SKY IN CLOUDS IS WRAPPED IN A FAKE PURPLE ROBE.

HE WHO FREED ADAM IN THE JORDAN ACCEPTS TO BE SLAPPED.

THE BRIDGROOM OF THE CHURCH IS FIXED WITH NAILS TO THE CROSS.

THE SON OF THE VIRGIN IS PIERCED WITH A SPEAR. WE WORSHIP YOUR PASSION, O CHRIST.

SHOW US ALSO YOUR GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.

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.

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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!



He is our God, and we are the people of
His pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
O that today you would hearken to his
voice!

Psalm 95.7

My Beloved Spiritual Children in Christ,

Our little dog, Rex, is a curious creature. Following the advice of the vet, he is fed twice a day, morning and evening. He only eats a certain kind of food because of some digestive issues he had some time ago. It amazes us that even with the "same old food" day in and day out, he usually goes after it with enthusiasm when it is put in his bowl. And then, there are days he just lets it sit for hours before touching it. Is he bored? Just not hungry? Hard to tell. But it is our responsibility to provide him what he needs anyway. Imagine the challenge of shepherds who have entire flocks. It's not really possible to figure out why one eats on any given day and one doesn't. The shepherd knows he needs to herd them, keep them fed and protect them, even if the sheep don't realize it. But they know his voice and it is a powerful call.

The beautiful icon of Jesus Christ to the right is of "Jesus the Good Shepherd." It comes from the passage in John 10.11-18, where Jesus tells His disciples, "I am the good shepherd." And in an ultimate confession of love for us, He continues, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep," so the icon portrays him simultaneously caring for the sheep (us) and voluntarily being sacrificed on the Cross to protect and save us.



Yet like the sheep that do not always respond so well to the shepherd who provides us with food, shelter and safety, we still resist that which is best for us. This is why Jesus also says in the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15) that He sometimes needs to go after the one who has strayed and is in danger to keep it safe, even if it doesn't realize the need.

Lent is the safe pasture that the Lord and His Holy Church provide for our nurture and spiritual protection against the constant corruption and temptation of the world around us. Sometimes we look at it as the "same old food" and yawn with disinterest, but that is far from the truth. Lent is our most liturgically rich and inspiring time of year, and no matter how often we hear those hymns and scripture, they feed us each time. I realize it takes a commitment: there are 27 services during Lent, for a total of 52 hours, and continuing on through Holy Week adds another 15 services and 28 hours! And throughout it all, the voice of the Shepherd calls out, "Come!" as He did to the Disciples, to Peter in the boat and to Lazarus in the tomb. "O," says David the Prophet in the passage from Psalms above, "that today you would hearken to his voice!" Yet sometimes we say, "Sorry, not hungry."

In his book, "Help, I'm Bored in Church!", David Smith says we feel that way in part because of the seemingly repetitious nature of Orthodox worship (it's not really) and that our distraction-addicted minds constantly crave new things to feed their restlessness. The cure? Prayer. Silence. And, according to St. Isaac the Syrian, to "continually search after wisdom." "There is," he says, "no stronger bond for the mind's unruliness than this."

We are two weeks into Lent. There are four weeks to go, then on to Holy Week. I know not everyone can make every service. Do what you can ... and then push yourself further. This season is here for a purpose, and the Lord knows we need it. Yes, we can and should worship and pray throughout the year, but just as shepherds move their flocks around from season to season, this is the pasture and the season the Lord has provided for our refreshment, repentance and renewal. Even though the services and hymns are sometimes over 1,500 years old, they are new for us each time they speak to our heart. And we all need to hear that voice, calling us to that "richly laden table" at the other end of the pasture. Let's hearken to it together.

Faithfully yours in Christ the Good Shepherd,

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Lenten and Holy Schedule of Services April

This issue of The Herald contains the complete schedules of services for Lent and Holy Week. They can also be found online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Lenten Soup & Sauces Sales Weekly During Lent

The GOYA is once again offering its very popular Lenten soup and sauces sales during the Sundays of Lent for \$7 each. Among the many good reasons to buy some to take home are that they are strict Lenten recipes, they provide fund-raising support for our GOYA ministry ... plus they taste great, are good for you and are ready to warm and eat! Please visit the Lenten Soup and Sauces table in Gallery during Coffee Hour each week! Thank you for supporting our youth as you strive to maintain and grow your spiritual discipline of fasting during Lent!

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder Through Pascha

Please keep in mind throughout Lent our Coffee Hours following the Divine Liturgy observe the Orthodox Lenten fasting schedule. Anyone sponsoring a memorial coffee hour or providing Church School snacks is asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Philoptochos and the Church School can provide a list of suggestions for good alternatives. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

Lenten Resources Available on the Internet

Looking for educational or inspirational information and resources for Lent? Try one of the best religious sites on the Internet: the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. To visit the general site, go to lent.goarch.org. There you will find Lenten messages, scriptures, prayers, articles, hymns, videos and more.

Holy Week Books Available

Please be sure to stop by our Three Hierarchs Orthodox Bookstore to pick up your copy of the Holy Week/Easter Service book from Patmos Press. This book contains all of the services for Holy Week and Easter in the original Greek text with the Modern English translation on opposing pages. All paragraphs are arranged to correspond to both languages, making it easy to follow the services in either language. This invaluable book is a great aid in participating fully in the services of Holy Week and are reasonably priced at only \$21.00 each. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Lynda Areheart at 412-561-7795.



Saturday of Lazarus Palm Crosses/Candles April 23

Calling all Holy Trinity Church School students and staff, their families, friends relatives, and everyone at Holy Trinity Church: Your help is needed to prepare some important items for our Holy Week services! Divine Liturgy is at 9:30 a.m. fol-

lowed by a Lenten breakfast and the project. **Please sign up at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events** to volunteer to bring a Lenten breakfast item for the morning. Plan to stay and help make the many Palm Crosses (note: everyone can help with this!) as the younger students take on the very important task of preparing the cupped candles for Holy Friday and Holy Saturday evenings. The GOYA teens will be setting up for the Palm Sunday luncheon. There will also be a special "Caring Bags" for the homeless outreach project, and the youth will make cards for shut-ins. Parents, please be sure to attend with your children and family.

GOYA Community Palm Sunday Luncheon April 24

The GOYA teen ministry will be hosting their very popular annual Community Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon again this year in the Grand Room of Holy Trinity Center. Please make plans to attend with your family and be sure to buy your tickets in the Gallery after Liturgy during April, because advance purchase is required. Take out will be available, too!

Help Decorate Kouvouklion on Holy Friday! April 29

As we prepare to celebrate Pascha, please consider taking the day off from school or work on Holy Friday. All ages are invited to come to the church and help with decorating the Kouvouklion (the Tomb of Christ) with flowers immediately following the 9:30am Service of the Royal Hours (the service lasts approximately one hour). Please come to make this one of your offerings of dedicated love and service to the Lord as we honor His Holy Passion in His holy Church. **(Important note: this is a family opportunity, not a "drop-off" event. Young children must be supervised by a responsible adult.)**

Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner April 30

Don't forget to make plans to attend the Resurrection Orthros, Liturgy and Dinner at Holy Trinity Church on Saturday evening/early morning of Pascha. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your family, friends and other members of Holy Trinity to break the fast and celebrate the Feast of Feasts!

Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt May 1

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the Main Lawn of the church (weather permitting) on Pascha following the Agape Vespers Service at **12:00 p.m.** All the children are invited to come for this beautiful and bright service. It is an especially good way for those with small children who are not able to attend the midnight service to share in a special celebration of Pascha.

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

"Faith and Family Wednesdays" Lenten Series

This educational and inspirational ministry presents a weekly offering of Holy Trinity ministries that bring to the life of the community a new way to learn, grow, worship and participate in the life of the Church on a regular basis. Each Wednesday features a worship service followed by a series

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

of learning and growing opportunities The “Faith and Family Lenten Series” combines all that with the beautiful 6:30pm Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, at which our teens do the many readings. Evenings start at 6:30pm as always. Following the service, at approximately 7:30, a light Lenten meal is offered. Volunteers are needed to sign up to bring the main meals, so everyone who attends is asked to please bring a Lenten (non-meat, non-dairy, non-fish) salad, side dish or dessert if possible. Sign up at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events. The learning session, with everyone gathered in the Grand Room, goes from 8:00-9:00pm. More information can be found on page 6 of this issue of the *Herald*, as well as in the weekly bulletin, so remember to save Wednesdays evenings for Holy Trinity Church!

“Prayer and Panera” St. Nikodemos Fellowship... Apr. 21

The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship meets on the Third Thursday of each month for morning prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at Holy Trinity Church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then move up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee and breakfast and conversation on living as a Christian man in today’s world. Questions? Email at SaintNikodemos@HolyTrinityPgh.org. Change up your morning routine - and change things for the better!

OUTREACH AND PHILANTHROPY

Visitation Ministry Needs Your Help: Pascha Baskets

The Visitation Ministry is asking for volunteers to deliver Pascha Baskets to our homebound parishioners beginning Palm Sunday and throughout Holy Week. If you have time to deliver even one basket it is very much appreciated. Please see our Visitation Ministry table display on Sunday, April 17th during coffee hour. Look for our table display with the balloons and the Pascha basket. We are also asking for donations towards purchasing the items for our Pascha baskets and in designing our small gifts for our homebound parishioners. If you are interested in learning more about offering your talent and time with our Visitation Ministry, then stop by our table display. We currently have 4 Mini-Teams that need your help: Prayer Team, Small Gifts Team, Home Visitation Team, and Cards/Phone Call Ministry. Please contact Amy Armanious with questions or email visitation@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

FOCUS Pittsburgh Pascha Candy Donations Needed

It is always a joy to see our young Holy Trinity children scampering around the lawn on Pascha at the Agape Vespers in search of candy. But what if there was none to be found? That is the case with many of the needy children that FOCUS Pittsburgh serves, and we at Holy Trinity Church can help change that. FOCUS Pittsburgh will again be sponsoring the annual Easter egg hunt and lunch for the children and families around the Center’s communities, on Saturday, April 23. This is a very well attended event, and eagerly anticipated by the children. We are asking for donations of candy and

the small plastic “eggs” for the hunt. Hint: Take advantage of post-Western-Easter sales to get good bargains and bring your donated items to the church by April 17. There will be a bin set up for this purpose. Thank you, good and faithful messengers of God’s love!

YOUTH MINISTRIES

HOPE and JOY Saxonburg Monastery Visit April 10

The HOPE and JOY ministries will visit the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg (109 Saint Elias Ln, Saxonburg, PA 16056) on Sunday, April 10 from 2:30-5:30pm. They are planning a service project, talk with Gherontissa Theophano, a church service at the Chapel of Saint Seraphim in the woods, as well as an evening meal. Parents are requested to also sign up. Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events to register.

GOYA Meeting April 17

There will be a meeting for all GOYA members on April 17 following the Divine Liturgy.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Home Visitation Mini-Team Meeting..... Apr. 10

The Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry’s “Home Visitation Mini-Team” will be having a special meeting on Sunday, April 10th about 11:30 a.m. in conference room A and B to discuss the delivery of Pascha baskets and other important agenda items. Also, anyone interested in learning more about our Visitation Ministry or is willing to deliver a Pascha basket to a homebound parishioner is “welcome” to attend this meeting. Lent is a blessed time of the year to grow in the faith and offer our time to those who may need an encouraging word during a home visit. So please join us on April 10th. Contact Amy Armanious or Sondra Balouris with questions or email visitation@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Lenten Retreat at Oakmont..... April 16

Everyone is welcome to attend a Lenten Retreat to be held on Saturday, April 16 at the Dormition of the Theotokos Church in Oakmont. The retreat runs from 11:00 am until 1:30 pm with a Luncheon at 12:00 noon prepared by the Sisters of the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery. Archimandrite Joachim Cotsonis, PhD. will present “The Icon of the Extreme Humility & Themes of Lenten Lamentations” and Rev. Dr. George D. Dragas, Professor of Patristics, PhD. will present “The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord, and our Resurrection at the End of Time According to St. John Damascene”. The Dormition of the Theotokos Church is located at 12 Washington Ave., Oakmont, PA 15139. For additional information, please call the church office at 412-828-4144.

Saint Photios Metropolis Awards Banquet May 7

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its Third Annual Saint Photios Awards Banquet on Saturday, May 7. See the enclosed flyer for information and a reservations form.

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

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

APRIL 2016 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH" PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA



Father John Androutsopoulos

Israel!" (John 12: 12-13)

Palm Sunday Questions

Q: Why did Jesus ride upon an ass when entering Jerusalem?

A: He made use of this humble animal to teach humility by His example and in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zachary, who foretold that He would make His entrance as one poor and sitting upon an ass, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on an ass' colt!" (John 12:15)

Q: What should we ask of Christ on this Day?

A: 1) That He would give us the victory in the fight against the flesh, the world and the devil. 2) That He would give us the grace to enter with Him the Heavenly Jerusalem as the Jews entered with Him into the earthly Jerusalem.

Q: What can we learn from today's Gospel reading?

A: That nothing is so changeable as the opinion of the world, since they who cried out on Palm Sunday, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord," were the very ones who cried out on Good Friday, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Learn to trust in God alone and not in men; for he who is with you today, may be against you tomorrow.

About the Great and Holy Week

The Great and Holy Week (Passion Week) begins with the service of Bridegroom on Palm Sunday evening, (the Matins of Holy Monday morning.) This week is called "Holy Week" because during it we celebrate the most important mysteries of our redemption with touching religious ceremonies. We should spend this week, according to the intentions of the Church, meditating on the sufferings of our Lord, and on His cruel death; also, by fasting more strictly, by strict recollection, and by devout prayer.

Holy Friday Questions

Q: Why do Christians hold Good Friday in such esteem?

A: Because on this day, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, by giving Himself up into the hands of His enemies, after being scourged, crowned with thorns and dying on the cross, accomplished the redemption of mankind.

About Palm Sunday

The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. "The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord even the King of

Q: Why do we annually celebrate the memory of this day?

A: In order to render dutifully our thanks to Christ the Lord for our redemption.

About The Great and Holy Pascha (Easter)

"He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." (Matthew 28:6) When the Myrrh-Bearing women arrived at the tomb, the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid. You are seeking Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, He is risen, just as He said. Come and see where He lay." We are rejoicing that the women found that tomb empty. You go to Mecca and they say, "Mohammed is our prophet and here is his grave." And they show you a tomb decorated with millions of dollars worth of rubies and diamonds. But the Christian can shout, "Jesus is my Saviour, but His tomb is empty. He is not a dead Saviour – He is alive!" Now, Christ's resurrection guarantees our own. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He is called, "the first fruits of them that sleep." Why? Go to a tree filled with fruit. You pick the first ripe fruit, then later you go back and pick the remaining fruit as it ripens. So, Jesus was raised first; He is the "first fruits." Then, one day we shall follow Him out of our graves and into the mansions above.



Questions about the Resurrection of Christ

Q: Why do the apostles speak in nearly all their sermons of the Resurrection?

A: They do so because Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our faith and the anchor of our hope; for, as St. Paul says, "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. 15, 17) If Christ has not risen, He is not then the Son of our God, and our faith is but human. Without the resurrection, Christ would not have perfectly conquered death; therefore sin, which is the cause of death, would not have been taken away by Him.

Q: How is the date of Holy Pascha calculated?

A: The calculation of the date of Pascha was determined by the regulations of the First Ecumenical Council and is as follows:

- (1) Pascha was always after the vernal equinox,
- (2) Pascha was to follow, but not coincide with, the first full moon of spring.
- (3) Pascha was always to be on a Sunday.

THE HYMN OF THE RESURRECTION

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

*With the love of the Risen Lord,
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 THIRD 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 LENTEN SERIES

What it is: The best way to start every “Faith and Family Wednesday” is simple: be there at 6:30pm. During Lent that will have you there in time for the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Our teens will volunteer to do the readings, and following the service there will be a light Lenten meal in the Grand Room at 7:45pm. After the meal is served, a single presentation for the evening will be offered.

How to get involved: Worship is at the heart of the life of the Church, and Lent provides many wonderful and varied opportunities to participate in worship, so begin the evening by attending the Presanctified Liturgy. Teens should sign up on Sundays at Church School to read for the Wednesday services. Parents are asked to please sign up to bring main dishes, salads, side dishes or dessert for the covered dish Lenten dinner. Then, plan on staying for the presentation. There will be time for fellowship and questions and answers each week.

COMPLETE GUIDE THE TO APRIL 2016 “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS”

TRACK	WORSHIP	LENTEN PRESENTATIONS
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:15-8:30pm
Apr. 6 First Wednesday of the month	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	LENTEN SERIES: A SPECIAL PRESENTATION EACH WEEK! Community Covered Dish Lenten Dinner after Liturgy Sign up to bring a Lenten dish at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events . Lenten Topic Presentation during dinner in the Grand Room. Speaker: Anna Valliant. Topic: “Mission to Romania”
Apr. 13 Second Wednesday of the month	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	LENTEN SERIES: A SPECIAL PRESENTATION EACH WEEK! Community Covered Dish Lenten Dinner after Liturgy Sign up to bring a Lenten dish at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events . Lenten Topic Presentation during dinner in the Grand Room. Speaker: Father Demetrios Carellas. Topic: “Prayer”
Apr. 20 Third Wednesday of the month	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	LENTEN SERIES: A SPECIAL PRESENTATION EACH WEEK! Community Covered Dish Lenten Dinner after Liturgy Sign up to bring a Lenten dish at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events . Lenten Topic Presentation during dinner in the Grand Room. Speaker: Peter Papadakos. Topic: “The Hymns of Holy Week”
Apr. 27 Fourth Wednesday of the month	HOLY WEEK: ATTEND SERVICES. SEE SCHEDULE AND ONLINE CALENDAR	

SPECIAL LENTEN YOUTH OPPORTUNITY: SIGN UP TO DO THE LENTEN SERVICES READINGS AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

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

Stewardship: Thinking Clearer, Loving Deeper

Three (real and local) conversations, three different settings:

1

Man, at a family gathering: "Why do you go to church, anyway?" Woman: "Well, to pray of course, to receive Holy Communion..." as her 8-year-old son walks by, he chimes in: "And I go to Sunday School, and then play with all my friends!"

2

Young man, at the end of Liturgy: "Memorials make me sad, but the hymns are so uplifting. I can see why we need them." Young woman next to him: "And that kollyva is the bomb!"

3

A father is walking with his young son to the car, after a Pirates game. They walk by a homeless man, sitting on the sidewalk, with a coffee can by his legs. As they're about to pass the man, the boy turns and drops his half-full bag of peanuts in the can, without missing a step. "God bless you!" the man says. Dad looks over to see why he pulled on his arm as he turned and sees the peanuts in the can. "Why did you do that?" he asks his son. "Because I saw you give the man money earlier on our way to the game. I didn't have money, but I had extra peanuts."

Is Stewardship about money? Well, it is, and it isn't. Just like any organization, to be successful we need to earn income. Keeping a church like Holy Trinity in good condition and fulfilling our mission of Faith, Family, Community will require over \$590,000 this year. Our goal is to raise about two-thirds of that (or \$370,000) through our Stewardship contributions. The thermometer-style graphic on this page tells us where we stand against that goal (doing well, by the way; let's keep it up!). We are all shareholders in this vineyard that God planted in our corner of the world. But do we realize that we're also share-givers?

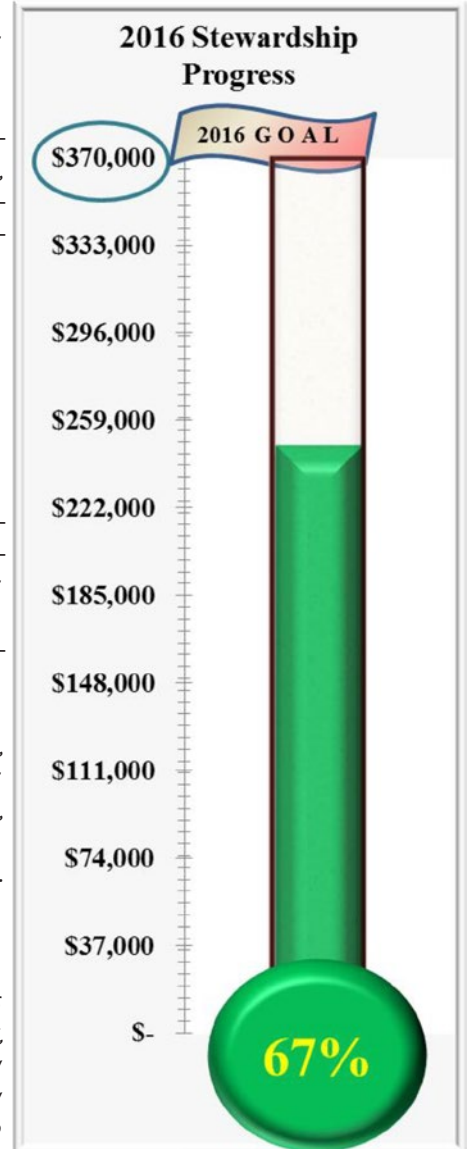
What do we get as "dividend"? some might ask. None of the three conversations above would've happened without God—without Faith, Family, Community. Stewardship is about becoming selfless and generous persons, not just with

our money but with our lives in general. Being part of Christ's Church humbles us, helps us think clearer, love deeper. It's a return on our investment that we often can't fully explain, but we know it's there in our hearts and all around us. It's about our kids getting excited to be with their church friends; the touching prayers and support when dealing with a loss (and, of course, the kollyva); a parent choking back proud tears when the young child says "because I've been watching you, Dad."

Charts scattered on this page show that we continue to grow strong in supporting this community of faith with our Treasures. Know that everyone is appreciated and thanked deeply for giving 'το κατά δύναμιν', (according to our abilities), our Time, Talents and Treasures to grow this vineyard.

Καλή Σαρακοστή!
(Have a Blessed Lent)

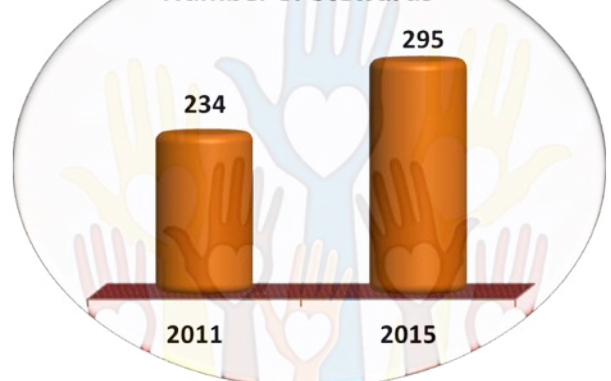
*Your servants
in Christ,
The Holy Trinity
Stewardship Ministry
Committee*



Number of Stewards Pledging Over \$1,000 Grew Almost Threefold in Four Years



Number of Stewards





March 20, 2016: Church School students and staff participated in the Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession of the Holy Icons. Each child brought an icon, processed into the church at the end of Liturgy and gathered on the solea to sing, "Who is so great a God as our God?"



March 20, 2016: Later the same day, hundreds of Orthodox Christians—hierarchs, clergy and laity—gathered to celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Oakland. A Lenten social followed in the Cathedral Center.





(Left) March 20, 2016: Holy Trinity held its monthly meeting in the Conference Room to plan their Lenten Luncheon and many philanthropic activities. As seen in the photo, the Philoptochos is for women of all ages who wish to serve Christ, His Church and those in need as "friends of the poor." All are welcome to join.

(Below) March 20, 2016: The HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) youth ministries participated in a Lenten service project to the senior residents of nearby Vincentian Home. The children first gathered after Liturgy to prepare hand-made gifts (see photo of gifts, bottom center), then met at the home along with their parents to assist the residents playing games. Our young children added a lot of smiles, joy and love to the resident's lives, and the seniors responded with much appreciation. It was yet another way our children learn the broader meaning of "community" in "Faith. Family. Community."



CELEBRATE PALM SUNDAY!
with Palm
Sunday Liturgy &
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COMMUNITY
FISH LUNCHEON**

A HOLY TRINITY FAMILY TRADITION!

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PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016
FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY**

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BREAK THE FAST! REJOICE IN THE FEAST!**

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**SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 30
11:00PM RESURRECTION SERVICE**



**DINNER IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY
FREE-WILL OFFERING. HOSTED BY HOLY TRINITY PARISH COUNCIL.**

A Greek language composition titled, "If Tears Could Talk" and an original Greek poem about tears by Voula Hareras



Voula Hareras

Αν Μιλούσαν Τά Δάκρυα

Καί ποιός μάς είπε ότι τά δάκρυα δέν μιλούν. Μιλούν στην παγκόσμια γλώσσα τής καρδιάς για να μπορούν να την διαβάζουν οι άνθρωποι όλης τής γής καί όποιος ηλικίας.

Αν έπιχειρούσαμε να μεταφράσωμε τήν γλώσσαν τών δακρύων, θά έπλημμύριζαν τήν ζωή μας όλα τά είδη τών τραγουδιών, από τούς άλαλαγμούς τής χαράς μέχρι τών θρήνων τούς σπαραγμούς, από τούς παιάνες τών ένθουσιασμών μέχρι τό μοιρολοϊ του άνέκφραστου πόνου.

Θά ξεγλιστρούσαν αύθόρμητα οί ψιθυρισμοί από τίς μυστικές τής καρδιάς μας συγκινήσεις, πού κανείς δέν θέλομε να τίς ξέρη, τάχα ποιός μπορεί να έρμηνεύση έσωτερικά βιώματα πού ούτε έμείς οί ίδιοι κάποτε δέν τολμούμε να άποκρυπτογραφήσωμε.

Αν όσα λένε τά δακρυσμένα μάτια μας έγράφοντο μέ γράμματα ή μέ νότες στό πεντάγραμμο, δέν θ' άντεχε ούτε ή ματιά, ούτε ή άκοή μας τούς θρήνους, τά παράπονα, τά έρωτηματικά, τίς τύψεις, τήν ντροπή, για τά άνομολόγητα λάθη μας πού ούτε μονάχοι μας κάποτε δέν θέλομε να παραδεχούμε.

Καί όμως! Ο, τι δέν λένε τά χείλη καί δέν γράφει το χέρι, τό δημοσιοποιεί πολλές φορές τών ματιών μας τό δάκρυ. Καί τό δάκρυ μιλάει ειλικρινά, δέν γνωρίζει τήν γλώσσα τής ύποκρισίας, τής άδυναμίας, τών ψεύτικων συναισθηματισμών. Ξαφνικά άναποδογυρίζει τό ποτήρι τών διαλογισμών πού μαζεύει στής ψυχής μας τά φυλλοκάρδια τά σύννεφα, πού πυκνώνει μέσα μας κάθε είδους εύαισθησία, καί άνεβάξει στά μάτια τήν βροχήν τών δακρύων. Αρκεί να διασχίση τόν ούρανόν τής ψυχής μας ή άστραπή μιάς άλήθειας, ίκανής να τήν συγκινήση. Χαρά στόν άνθρωπο πού έχει τότε τήν εύαισθησία να κλάψη.

Κλασσικό τό παράδειγμα μέσα στό Εύαγγέλιον.

Τό άμάρτημα σχεδόν μέ τήν ίδια βαρύτητα του Ιούδα καί του κορυφαίου Αποστόλου Πέτρου, ό πρώτος Τόν έπρόδωσε, Τόν έπούλησεν, ό προδότης! Ο άλλος Τόν άρνήθη, έβεβαίωνε πώς δέν Τόν ξέρει καί μάλιστα 'μεθ' όρκου' στην πιο κρίσιμη ώρα τής ζωής Του, όταν ό Κύριος, μόνος, έγκαταλελειμμένος, έξευτελισμένος, δαρμένος, έδικάζετο για να θανατωθή!

Ομως! Ομως ή άστραπή τής αγάπης του Κυρίου έβγήκε γεμάτη στοργή καί τρυφερότητα από τήν Θεϊκή ματιά Του... καί πέρασε στην ματιά του Αποστόλου Του κι έφτασε στά βάθη τής καρδιάς του, κι ό Μαθητής, ό γενναϊός στην Πίστι καί στην αύταπάρνησι, συγκλονίσθηκε 'καί έξελθών έξω έκλαυσε πικρώς' (Μάρκ. κστ'75).

Στήν κατάπικρη ώρα του πειρασμού ό Απόστολος Πέτρος δέν άρνήθηκε τόν καλόν έαυτόν του, θυμήθηκε κάτω από τό Θεϊκό χάδι εκείνης τής ματιάς του Διδασκάλου του, ό, τι του είχε πεί πριν από λίγο, ότι πριν να λαλήση ό πετεινός, θά μέ άρνηθής τρείς φορές!... Καί καθώς τό λάλημα του κόκκορα σάν ξερή σκουζιά έσκισε τό σκοτάδι τής τραγικώτε-

ρης νύχτας του κόσμου, ή βροχή τών δακρύων του γενναϊού Μαθητού έπότισε τήν ψυχή πού άμάρτησε, καί όχι μόνον τήν δική του, έπese μαλακή, ποτιστική, σωτήρια στό σκληρό χώμα τής άμαρτίας τής κάθε μιάς ανθρώπινης ψυχής, κι άφησε να άντηχή στους αιώνες τό τραγούδι τής μετανοίας, λυτρωτικό, άναστάσιμο, χαροποιό.

Τό μήνυμα διαχρονικό. Δέν ύπάρχει άμάρτημα, όσο βαρύ καί άν είναι, πού να μπορεί να νικήση τήν αγάπη του Χριστού. Η ψυχή πού άμάρτησε, έχει δρόμο να γυρίση στη συγγνώμη. Άρκεί να μη πνίξη μέσα της τήν εύαισθησία τής άποδοχής του μηνύματος πού τής στέλνει ή Θεία στοργή. Τό ξέρω πώς άμάρτησα, λέει καί κλαίει ό Απόστολος Πέτρος, αλλά ξαναγυρίζει συντριμμένος σέ Σένα, τόν Υιόν του Θεού καί Σωτήρα μου. Καί περιμένω από Σένα τήν λύτρωσι.

Κάποτε Σου έδινα ύποσχέσεις, ότι ποτέ δέν θά Σέ έγκαταλείψω, κι άς κάμουν ό, τι θέλουν οί άλλοι...γιατί έγώ είμαι σταθερός κι ήρωϊσμό πού τόν άπέδειξα...τόσες φορές...Τώρα ή άμαρτία μέ έκαμε κουρέλι, λυπήσου με...

Δέν φαίνεται πουθενά μέσα στην ιστορία τών ανθρώπων να έκλαψεν άμαρτωλός για τήν πτώσι του καί να μη συγχωρέθηκε από τήν εύσπλαχνία του Θεού.

Ο Ιούδας δέν έκλαψε συντριμμένος, διότι δέν μετενόησεν, άπλώς 'μετεμελήθη'. Καί τόν κατάπιεν ή άπόγνωσις, αυτόκτονήσε, καί τόν έκέρδησεν ό άδης.

Δώρον Θεού ή γλώσσα τών δακρύων, μάτια πού τολμούν να βουρκώνουν έμπρός στό μήνυμα τής αγάπης του Θεού, ποτίζουν τήν ψυχή τους μέ τήν βροχήν τής Θείας Χάριτος, καί άνθίζει μέσα τους ή άνοιξις τής άναστάσεως.

Προς Την Νικην

Τα Δυό Δάκρυα

Από τή γή δυό δάκρυα
θερμά μαργαριτάρια
άνέβηκαν καί στάλαξαν
στού πλάστη τά ποδάρια.

Καί είπε τό πρώτο τρέμοντα
προστά στόν Θείο Θρόνο,
έμένα μ'έβγαλε ή καρδιά
για τόν δικό της πόνο.

Καί ό πλάστης άποκρίθηκε,
ούτε στημή μη χάνεις
σύρε να γίνης βάλαμο
τόν πόνο της να γιάνεις.

Ηρθε καί τ'άλο τρέμοντα
έμπρός στόν Θείο Θρόνο
έμένα μ'έβγαλε ή καρδιά
για καποιο ξένο πόνο.

Κί'ό πλάστης άμοκρίθηκε
εσύ μαζί μου μείνε
τής ευσπλαχνιάς τά δάκρυα
δάκρυα δικά μου είναι.

Η Ανάστασις του Κυρίου μας να φέρει Ειρήνη στόν κόσμο, καί Υγεία καί Εύτυχία στά σπίτια σας.

Βούλα Χαρερά

Outreach. Charity. Almsgiving. See The Difference You Made!

FOCUS Pittsburgh News

During 2015, FOCUS-Pittsburgh achieved much, thanks to your generosity and support. How wonderful it is to see the difference you all make for so many! (Just as an example, Holy Trinity's part alone in the bag lunch program resulted in over 1,750 bags of food last year.) We want to say Thank You! Here is a sample:



1. 55 people received training for the unemployed/under-employed and/or job search assistance and support.
2. The weekend Backpack Feeding Program now reaches 2,500 at-risk children each week during the school year. (We started with 60 in 2012.) In the last quarter of 2015, we distributed 133,459 meals.
3. FOCUS Pittsburgh's Free Health Center documented 428 patient visits.
4. 41,263 items of clothing, emergency food supplies, household items and hot meals were distributed.
5. 1,276 people received emergency relief and transportation/document recovery (IDs, Birth Certificates) assistance.
6. With the support of Neighborhood Allies, the McAuley Foundation, Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh, the Trauma-informed Community Development project was inaugurated. This program focuses on

mitigating, alleviating and eliminating the forces (violence, lack of medical, behavioral and dental health care, food, clothing and jobs) that imprison individuals and communities in poverty and urban decay by using concrete and achievable community and individual interventions.

North Hills Community Outreach Volunteers Urgently Needed in June - For the US Open!

Do you love the game of golf, and/or doing something meaningful with a group of friends? NHCO urgently needs volunteers to register to help in our assigned concessions tent at the Men's US Open golf tournament, June 13-19, at Oakmont Country Club. The US Open donates funds for each NHCO volunteer hour served.



This is a huge fund-raising opportunity for NHCO, but we need your help! Before or after finishing your eight-hour shift in the Open's only air-conditioned concessions tent, you can watch golf's greatest athletes in action. Please contact Harriet with questions at hzgibbs@nhco.org or 412-408-3830 x 3204. Or register directly at volunteerspot.com/login/entry/679052588051

Please note: This opportunity involves a considerable amount of standing and walking. Volunteers 17 & younger must be accompanied by a volunteer 18 or older.

Did You Know About the FOCUS Pittsburgh Free Health Care Clinic? A Work of Love in the Name of Jesus Christ.

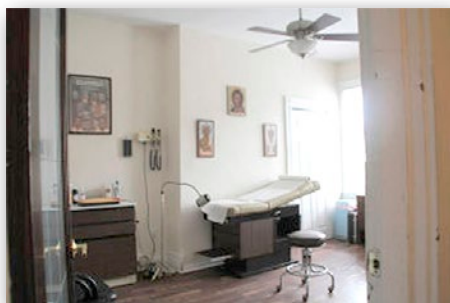
About FOCUS Pittsburgh's Free Health Center

Established as a Volunteer in Medicine (VIM) facility, the Free Health Center has a team of Volunteer Medical Professionals who provide skilled and compassionate care, while non-clinical volunteers provide help with answering patient phone calls and assisting with applications for care.

Our volunteers together with our staff of two full-time employees and one part-time employee care for patients according to the VIM's "culture of caring" model that values how an individual is treated just as much as the treatment they receive.

The Need

FOCUS Pittsburgh's Free Health Center is booked for Medical Health Appointments through July. The patient list grows on a daily basis. There is a desperate need for primary and mental health care in the neighborhood. In order to reduce the wait for



patients, we are in need of volunteer doctors, nurses, and specialty health professionals.

Volunteer

People who make the best FPFHC volunteers are ones who feel passionate about our mission. FPFHC recruits and trains local volunteers in a variety of roles that may include: receptionists, schedulers, greeters, pharmacists, assistants, eligibility screeners, interpreters, and others.

Medical Volunteers

Our medical volunteers tend to our patients, offering first-rate care. They sacrifice time out of their busy schedules to ensure that our patients are treated by trained professionals with the utmost care and respect. Our medical volunteers include: Physicians and Registered Nurses.

Dental Volunteers

Similarly, our dental volunteers give back to the community by donating their time and talent to provide quality dental care for our patients. Our dental volunteers include: Dentists, Hygienists, and Oral Surgeons/Specialists.

Become a Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kristina Elias, Clinic Administrator, 412-502-5024 or k Elias@focusna.org.



Elder Aimilianos

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.

Gheronda, how did man's spiritual death happen?

St. Makarios of Egypt says, “When Adam fell into sin, he fell away from God and died spiritually.” Do you understand what he is saying? The life of God is the life of the Holy Spirit within us. When Adam fell, he separated himself from the Spirit, and thereby lost God, and died a spiritual death. The light drained from his body, and he was filled with darkness. He was suddenly deformed, disfigured, ugly, and vile.

The sin of Adam has affected all mankind, and is beyond any human cure. This is why St. Makarios at this point quotes from the prophet Isaiah: “There is no soundness in them; but bruises and festering sores, which cannot be healed; it is not possible to apply a plaster, nor oil, nor bandages” (Isaiah 1.6). And this is why David says: “There is no healing in my flesh” (Ps. 37.4). “I look at my flesh,” he says, “at my hands, my feet, my entire body, and all of it is sick; not a single part of me is healthy. And when I look at my soul, I see that it, too, is sick; black and blue with the bruises of sin. Then I look even deeper, to try and see the Holy Spirit, but my soul is empty, isolated, and dead.” Thus it is possible for a man to be physically alive, but spiritually dead.

How can we be rescued from this spiritual death and find rebirth and new life?

We've created a way of life for ourselves, indeed an entire culture, in which we can't be bothered to pick ourselves up from our place of pain in order to seek our deliverance. It's like when you're sleepy, and can't get up from your bed: in the same way you get used to your closed heart, your private hell. But you need to hate this condition, to realize that it's death for you, and that only you can open the door.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. 3.20). This means that Christ knocks on the door of the heart, not just once or twice, but all the time. But I choose not to open it because I've learned to live without Him. It's like being used to having your own room, all to yourself, and suddenly you have to share it with someone else. The night seems unbearable, and you can't wait for the other person to leave, so you can have the place all to yourself. We like our solitude.

But whenever we want, our heart can open and at once the great transformation will take place. And this is an opening to the spiritual fire, to the Holy Spirit, to Christ, to God. Do we want this? Will we unlock our heart? It all depends on whether we want to love God, or continue loving our selves. And if we do decide to stop living on our own, and throw open up the doors for the light to enter, then we'll discover that, while we were looking for God, we also found our fellow man, for now we realize that there are people all around us.

How does spiritual rebirth begin?

When we begin to accept other people as they are; when we love them and live for them, sacrifice ourselves for them, discern their deepest needs and desires, and hasten to carry out whatever it is they want, then we begin to feel the presence of Christ, the presence of God.

When you begin to hear the footsteps of God, then nothing but God can satisfy you. You don't want to stop anywhere or linger over anything, because nothing in the world can take the place of God: He alone can satisfy you. You want to fast more, to pray more, to keep vigil more, and to love more. Above all, your whole being tends toward Christ, to surrender yourself to Him, and to wait for Him: to wait on the Lord (Ps 26.16). You don't want anything except God. But you accept whatever is given to you, whatever is said to you, out of love for the giver. You don't cause problems. You don't concern yourself with problems. No matter what happens, you remain peaceful and serene, because you are waiting on the Lord.

Those who live in such a manner live in and for God. They begin to feel God's warmth, his breath, filling their hearts and all the space around them. Years ago, it was common to place a small mirror under the nose of someone who appeared to be dead. If the mirror became clouded over by breath, you would know that the person was still alive. And so now, with God, you begin to realize that you're alive: you begin to feel God Himself. Previously our heart was closed; now it has opened. These are the first two stages.

After this, we have a heart that acquires the capacity to sense and perceive things spiritually; a heart that hears and perceives God through the distant gloom. Such a heart, by means of its spiritual senses, is alert, poised, and waiting for God. A person at this stage is calm, serene, and cheerful. He's like someone whose home is in readiness, everything's in place, and he's sitting calmly, waiting for the arrival of his guest. Such a person may seem to be quite alone, but in the expectation of his love, all things are filled with perfect fullness.

And this brings us to yet another experience in our lives. We began with the harsh bitterness of solitude, which was a state of existence that we deliberately created and clung to. Why? Because this bitterness, this self-centeredness, this self-incarceration, this state of misery, is actually something that we enjoy. It's as if I lent you my alarm clock, and then a few days later asked for it back, because I needed it in the morning, but you go ahead and break it. I immediately become aware of how attached I was to that little alarm clock. I look at the clock, broken into pieces, and my heart bleeds. That's the way my heart bleeds over my broken self. This is why the first leap is necessary to free myself from my earthly attachments, which means to let go of my self-will and feeling of self-sufficiency. After that, the sky clears and the horizon opens up.

Excerpted from “The Way of the Spirit”
by Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra
(to be continued)



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The Body at Prayer

Why is it so important that the body participate in prayer? Why can't you simply pray in spirit while lying in bed or sitting in an armchair? In principle, you can...in special circumstances, such as illness or when traveling, this is done. But under normal circumstances it is necessary while praying to make use of the dispositions of the body that have been preserved in the tradition of the Orthodox Church.



Go to an Orthodox Church during Great Lent and you will see how from time to time all the parishioners fall on their knees, then get up, then again fall and get up. And such goes on for the duration of the service. You will feel that there is a special intensity to this service, that people are not simply praying, but are laboring in prayer.

Prostrations [bowing down] help prayer a great deal. the body becomes more collected, and when the body is collected, composure of mind and attention comes much more naturally.

Excerpted from "Prayer: Encounter with the Living God" by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev

Scripture of the Month: "Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!" (Ps. 95.6)