



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

DECEMBER 2017 VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 10

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QUICK NEWS



Iconographer Florin Vlad puts the finishing touches on the Saint George Chapel iconography. 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 6-10 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

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

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



Come believers, let us see the place where Christ has been born. With the Magi, those three kings who from the orient are, now let us follow to where the star is proceeding. Ceaselessly do Angels sing praises there. Shepherds in the field sing a worthy song, saying: Glory in the highest be to Him who was born today in the grotto from the Virgin and Theotokos, in Bethlehem of Judea. (From the Orthros of the Nativity of Christ)
Icon from the newly-completed Saint George Chapel. Iconographer: Florin Vlad.

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
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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 spiritual life, education, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



The Lord of the world did not consider it right to allow human beings, for love of whom everything had been made, to be besieged by sin and to be sold like slaves to death. For this reason He assumed human form...Undoubtedly it would have been easier for Him to save the human race without assuming the garment of the flesh. He could have overthrown the power of death by a simple act of will. Instead of that, He chose to ... come among us.

Theodoret (5th c.)

Dear Spiritual Family and Co-Recipients of God's Endless Love,

Last evening many of the young people of our parish and their families attended a new movie, "Wonder." In it, a young boy who was born with facial differences leaves the safe haven of his home to enter a new school. It is a heart-warming and affirming story I would recommend for everyone. Though not an outwardly Christian movie, there were many themes with Christian underpinnings, especially being able to see the image of God and the goodness in ourselves and those around us.

One of the many interesting features of the movie were the crowd scenes, in which one could feel the tension between this young boy's natural desire to be accepted and loved versus the nervousness and uncertainty of others around him, who found it easier to meld into the crowd and avoid or ridicule him rather than actually getting to know him. It was interesting and instructive to see how things changed for him and for others when they risked going outside their comfort zone and into the world of personal encounters, where real human relationships are born. When they engaged him in a personal relationship, everything changed.

It is no different in our relationship with God. When we encounter Him—or better still, when He comes to encounter us—everything changes. In the quote above, Theodoret, a fifth century bishop of the early Church, notes that the Lord, in considering what method He would use to come and rescue us from our fallen state, could have chosen a distant and disconnected exercise of power as the God of the universe, but He did not. He chose to come and be with us, thus claiming one of His most personal names, "Emmanuel" ("God with us"). What a beautiful and transformative way to think about the upcoming Feast of the Nativity. He did what He did not have to do (become like us) so that we could become what we were made to be (like Him).

Here at Holy Trinity Church we have so many ways to both give and receive the message of God's love and God's presence. First and foremost, we are the Body of Christ, a worshiping community, the people of God who glorify and praise Him. During the upcoming Nativity season, please be sure to make that the center of your holiday, celebrating Christ first and then all the blessings and joy that surround His birth. We also have the ability, and indeed the calling, to be the love of God for those around us. Whether it is in providing gifts for the needy families of FOCUS Pittsburgh, singing Christmas carols for our friends, the retired nuns across the street at the Sisters of Divine Providence, or providing the visit, phone call, card or crafts to shut-in or elderly members of the community during the holidays, each offering of love says, "You are not alone." Mother Teresa reminded us about how powerful and important it is to reach out in those times when she said, "The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved."

So, this Christmas, as always, start with worship and praise of the One Who Came To Be With Us. Then, whatever you can do to share His love, please do it. Everyone can do something. Christ is Born! Glorify Him...and share His love!

Paternally yours,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

Spero the Orthodox Church Mouse

For All of Our Heavenly Father's Precious Children



WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services.....December

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. Locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

Dec. 4, 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy: St. Barbara the Great Martyr (SG)

Dec. 5*, 10:00am: St. Savas the Sanctified
*Services for St. Savas held at the Metropolis Chapel

Dec. 5*, 6:00pm: Great Vespers of St. Nicholas

Dec. 6*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Nicholas
*Services for St. Nicholas held at St. Nicholas Cathedral

Dec. 12*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Spyridon
*Services for St. Spyridon held at St. Spyridon, Monessen

Dec. 22/24/25: The Nativity of Christ (see schedule below - HT)

Services for the Nativity of Christ

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family. Please note that all Christmas services will be held at Holy Trinity Church.

Fri. Dec. 22, 9:30 am..... Royal Hours of the Nativity
This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Divine Incarnation.

Sun. Dec. 24, 8:15am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy ...Forefeast of the Nativity
Orthros and Divine Liturgy are offered as usual on Sunday, with the addition of special hymns for the Forefeast of the Nativity.

Sun. Dec. 24, 6:30pm..... Great Vespers of the Nativity
This service "opens the liturgical day" and begins the celebration of the Nativity. Also, the Holy Trinity Choir will be offering a selection of beautiful Christmas carols following the service. (Note: This is not a Divine Liturgy. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion need to attend the Liturgy of the Forefeast of the Nativity on Sunday morning or Christmas morning on Monday.)

Mon. Dec. 25. 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy.....The Nativity
This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Make it a family tradition to keep the most important thing about Christmas the most important thing in your home!*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals.....Dec. 3, 10, 15, 16

This year's Christmas pageant will once again be an "all new" Holy Trinity production, so everyone will need to be there for rehearsals. It's going to be exciting, so please don't miss out!

Sun. Dec. 3 & 10: Rehearsal will take place for grades

7-12 following Divine Liturgy and Church School. Please plan on staying until 12:30pm after Liturgy to make sure everything is completed. Teachers will have specific information for their classes.

Fri. Dec. 15: Rehearsal for grades 7-12 will take place during the GOYA Bread baking evening. All teens are asked to be there to help bake and rehearse.

Sat. Dec. 16: The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 16. NOTE NEW SCHEDULE:

- From 9:00am to 10:00am, Pre-School through Sixth grades will rehearse their parts.
- From 9:00am to 10:00am, the Junior Choir will rehearse their songs.
- From 9:00am-10:00am the instrumental musicians will rehearse their performance.
- From 9:30-11:00am, all 7th-12th grades will rehearse the pageant.

Also note: "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate that day.

Church School Christmas Pageant December 17

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant this year on Sunday, December 17. ALL the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall. Also, please note: Coffee Hour that day is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church School Alumni. Any alumni—parents, graduates of any age, former staff—that would like to help, please contact Presvytera Becky.

No Church School ClassDec. 24, 31

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 24 and 31 due to the holiday celebrations, so please join together to worship as a family on that day.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY.....Dec. 10, 17

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY: Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) will continue to meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after their Church School lesson. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE" on Dec. 10 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Dec. 17.

GOYA Basketball Practice . Dec. 4, 13, 19, Jan. 3, 9, 22, 30

GOYA will hold basketball practice in preparation for the 2018 basketball tournament season on December 4, 13 & 19 and January 3, 9, 22 & 30 from 6:00-8:00pm at Hosack Elementary School, 9275 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101.

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



GOYA Fireside Chat December 10

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat at the home of Anton Peregoncev on Sunday, December 10 from 4:00-7:00pm. Information is being sent directly to GOYA families.

GOYA Christmas Bread BakingDecember 15

All GOYA teens and any available parents are asked to be on duty for GOYA Christmas Bread baking on Friday, December 15. Parents are asked to come during the daytime starting at 9:00am. Teens are asked to be there after school and through to the end of the job in the evening. There will also be Christmas Pageant rehearsal for grades 7-12 that evening.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS AND EVENTS.

Philoptochos Turkey Fundraiser Thank You

The Ladies Philoptochos would like to thank everyone who has donated to their Annual Turkey Fundraiser so far this year. Your donations will be used to assist needy families, local women's shelters and local food banks during the holiday season. If you have not sent in your donation, there is still time to support this worthy cause. Checks can be made out to "Holy Trinity Philoptochos" and mailed to the Church Office.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS.

Parish Council Elections..... December 3

Elections for the 2018-2020 Parish Council term will be

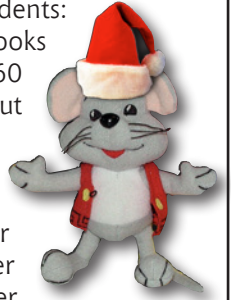
held on Sunday, December 3, immediately following Divine Liturgy. Voting requires membership in good standing, including a signed 2017 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge.

Celebrate 95/5: Save the Date!..... June 3, 2018

This coming June, the Holy Trinity community will celebrate its 95th anniversary as a parish, and we will also celebrate 5 years in our beautiful new church. A grand event is being planned, so please post the enclosed flyer in your home as a reminder and put the date on your calendar from now. Details will be forthcoming.

Calling All Spero's Books!

Attention Church School parents and students: Spero needs your help! There are many books and DVDs missing from his library—over 60 of them, in fact! If you have any books out from the St. Spyridon Children's Library, please return them by the end of December. That would be a great Christmas gift for Spero! If you cannot locate any books or materials, please see a library staff member about replacing them. Also, if a staff member contacts you about missing materials checked out by your children, please respectfully and responsibly fulfill their request to return or replace them. Many years of development and investment have gone into our Saint Spyridon Library. It is a valuable community resource. Let's respect it and care for it properly. Thank you!



Bring Christmas Joy: Join in the Annual Community Christmas Caroling at Sisters of Divine Providence.....Dec. 20

Want to get into the Christmas spirit and do a good deed for our neighbors at the same time? How about joining in on a wonderful annual holiday tradition at Holy Trinity Church: Christmas caroling across the street at the Sisters of Divine Providence! These elderly nuns truly enjoy when we come with parishioners of ALL ages. Meet on Wednesday, December 20 at 6:30pm for a brief practice and then we will head across the way for this wonderful event. EVERYONE is invited to participate: the children of the HOPE and JOY ministries, the youth of GOYA and Young Adults, as well as parents, grandparents and ANYONE who wants to offer some Christmas joy and share in this wonderful community fellowship opportunity and outreach of love!

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Advent: The Fast of Christmas and the Preparation for the Nativity

Advent is a Latin word which means "The Coming." It is used in the life of the Church to signify the visible coming of the Son of God into this world.

The Two Comings of Christ

Holy Scripture bears witness to that "coming" of the Son of God taking place at two different times.

The first coming of Christ took place when the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the most pure Virgin Mary, and born of her in the stable of Bethlehem according to the flesh and was made man, sanctifying the world by His coming, for which many kings and prophets had been waiting.

The second coming of Christ will take place at the end of the world, when Christ shall come in great majesty to judge the living and the dead.

The Purpose of the Fast

The Fast of Christmas (Advent - the Season of Hope), which begins on November 15, is a time of anticipation, a time of hope, a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time of getting ready for Christmas the great and Holy Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The world may not know what "Advent" means or when it begins, or even that there is; such a season in the Christian year; but it does know that there is something called "Christmas" coming, and that if we want the most of it, now is the time to get ready for it.

How We Prepare

Stores, radio and television commercials, city officials make sure that decorations go up and the announcers hammer away with the "hard sell." What are our Advent preparations? How are we getting ready for Christmas? To make the most of Christmas, we have to get ready for it. Hopefully, let us begin, to make the most of our time, realizing that the more we use the Advent days to listen to what Advent says, the more we will profit from our Christmas celebrating when it comes. Christmas this year is going to be, as it always is, another reenactment of the greatest event in history; and we can't come up to something like that without careful preparation.

Thoughts About Advent

ADVENT teaches us to do some spiritual shopping for Christmas. ADVENT should be a season of spiritual awakening for the soul. Fasting, prayer, and the sacraments of repentance, confession: and Holy Communion make the soul

alive and exceedingly happy.

The Greatest Thing

My beloved, "The greatest thing that could happen is going to happen. God is going to visit His world. The Promised One is coming. Get ready to meet Him."

We can be ready to meet our Savior through prayer, fasting, through the Sacraments of repentance, confession and Holy Communion, by attending Church Services during Advent. Christmas is coming. Get ready for it!

Our Christmas Gift to Jesus

"It is, more blessed to give than to receive."

(Acts 20: 35)

How blessed the wise men were in being able to bring gifts to the Holy Babe and to adore Him as they knelt before Him! Their hearts were filled with joy as they left that place.

Everyone who loves Jesus with all his heart wants to give Him love, coming out of a heart full of gratitude. We want to bring Him our best gift - the one He desires most. So we surrender our lives to Him that He may reign over us.

Jesus our Lord and Savior never refuses a gift given with a loving heart. When we open our hearts to Jesus, He enters and fills us with an immense and overflowing joy. His gifts are much bigger than ours. He gives in abundance. How wonderful to be His faithful servants!

"A contrite and humble heart God will not despise." At Christmas time our best gift to Jesus is an open and responsive heart. This culminates in faith which believes that Jesus is the One Whom the Scriptures say He is: the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Bread of life, the Good Shepherd, the Living Water, the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel - God with Us.

Accordingly, we commit ourselves to His transforming power. As surely as Jesus is the Son of God given for our redemption, it follows that when we receive Him we shall henceforth follow Him devoutly and love Him with all our hearts.

For all the gifts which we have received so abundantly from the Father, especially for the Gift of His Beloved Son, we thank our Heavenly Father. We, too, offer ourselves as a gift to Him.

Beloved, we know that many unbelieving merchants take advantage of the spirit of the Holy Season for purely commercial purposes. But in spite of all that may be wrong, there is something wonderful about a season when we celebrate the birth of the Son of God. Let us rejoice and be happy together!

With heartfelt gratitude and love, my family and I extend our special greetings to Father John and Father Radu and their families and all the members of Holy Trinity Church. Have a Blessed Christmas Season. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

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





The Order of Saint Andrew Archons Investiture Ceremony — Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity — October 21, 2017

Holy Trinity Church Honored With The Investiture of Our First Archon

An in-person account by George Athanasiou

On Sunday October 22, 2017, twenty-four men from throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America were invested into the Order of St Andrew the Apostle, as Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This year, Holy Trinity's own Harry Athanasiou was among this select group. This was a very historic moment for our community as Harry became the first Archon in the 95-year history of Holy Trinity.

Harry traveled to New York City with his wife Joyce and their sons George and Fr. Anastasios to participate in a weekend filled with fellowship, education and worship. On Friday evening October 20th, the Archons-elect and their families joined other Archon families at The Metropolitan Club in Manhattan in celebration of the 2017 Nicholas J. Bouras Award for Extraordinary Archon Stewardship at the annual Award Presentation and Dinner Dance which recognized the accomplishments of Archon John A. Catsimatidis, New York City businessman and politician.

On Saturday, Harry and Joyce along with the other Archons-elect and their spouses spent much of the day learning and understanding what it means to be an Archon and the new responsibilities and expectations that they were about to undertake. They were constantly reminded that this was not a lifetime achievement award. This was not an award that was to sit on a mantel in recognition of past services offered to the Church. Rather, this was the beginning of a new level of stewardship to the Church and the advancement of the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.

It was during this program that each Archon-elect was informed of the Offikion (office/title) that would be bestowed

upon them at the investiture on Sunday. The title that each Archon bears, stems from the Byzantine period. Through the Ecumenical Patriarchate, most of the traditional Byzantine imperial and ecclesiastical titles have been preserved. Thus, the specific titles bestowed to the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew by Patriarch Bartholomew and his predecessors, in many cases, stretch back 1000 years or more. Harry received the title "Archon Eufthaxias," which is most closely understood as the "master of ceremonies" or "one who establishes order." Although ceremonial, these titles are selected following close examination of the candidate's background, both in civil and ecclesiastical work and assigned to each by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

On Saturday evening, the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle honored Nobel Peace Prize nominees Emilia Kamvisi and Efratios Valamios, who represented the fisherman of the island of Lesbos and the Greek Islands, with the 2017 Athanagoras Human Rights Award during their Grand Banquet at the New York Hilton Midtown. The Athanasiou family was among the seven-hundred attendees who gathered to celebrate this prestigious award.

Finally, on Sunday at the close of the Divine Liturgy the Archons-elect were invested as official members of the Order of St Andrew the Apostle. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, assisted by their Eminences Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, Savas of Pittsburgh, Evangelos of New Jersey, Gerasimos of San Francisco and their Graces Bishops Demetrios of Xanthos and Sebastian of Zela blessed each Archon with their cross and offikia, reading





the proclamation of their office and exclamation of "Axios" (worthy), to which the entire congregation responded, Axios!

As previously stated, Harry's work has just begun. Each year the Archons gather for retreats, pilgrimages to the Patriarchate, and conferences which focus on religious freedom. Harry will travel this December to our nation's capital, Washington D.C. for the 3rd Archon International Conference on Religious Freedom focusing on "The Persecution of Christians in the Holy Lands & The Middle East: Consequences and Solutions." May the work of our Archons be blessed and fruitful.



Archons Class of 2017 New Members from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Harry Athanasiou and Peter Tsudis and their families





"Breathtaking"

A Holy Trinity Herald Feature Article by Anita Sinicrope Maier

Breathtaking...Stepping through the doors of the St. George Chapel, I found myself transported to another era of time. I was not only immersed in the vibrant colors of the newly painted icons but also felt that I was wrapped in the loving embrace of God. Meeting and interviewing the artist, Florin Vlad, was an honor and a delightful plus to this enlightening experience. I was led through the process of the creation of these magnificent representations of our faith through the life and experience of the iconographer himself.



Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery

Florin is a humble man when it comes to his talents and his skills. Born in Romania, he was interested in drawing since the time he was a child. After completing his service in the army there, he enrolled in The School of Religious Church Painting in 1984. He finished his schooling in 1991 and learned to paint frescoes (the art of painting on fresh plaster with water based paint) through apprenticeships with masters



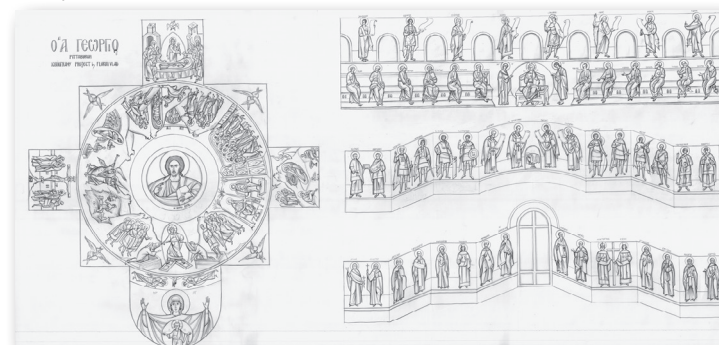
February 19, 2008: Florin completes the first icon of the Chapel - The Pantokrator.

throughout Canada.

According to his training, an iconographer does not sign his paintings, so his signature is found nowhere in the Chapel.

It follows the teaching that the works stand on their own merits, not on those of the iconographer, and are a result of many years of studying the skills of painting icons, following ancient protocols for the representation of each figure, as well as garnering inspiration for this holy task.

Holy Trinity's Saint George's Chapel is Florin's first and only work in the United States. This project was begun in 2008 while the church still resided on the North Side. Most of the icons were painted directly on the wall during his many months here, but some of the panels were painted by on canvas by Florin during his travels to cities and countries across the world such as Canada, Netherlands and Romania. After completing various canvases in studios at different locations, they were transported to the Chapel, where he installed them using a special mounting process. The last of the panels, those of the altar back wall and front walls of the Chapel, were actually back brought from Mississauga, Ontario, to Pittsburgh during a "Byzantine road trip" by Father John and Harry Athanasios.



Florin's original sketch of the proposed Chapel icon project.

The iconography project was "a fertile collaboration" between Florin, Father John and the Holy Trinity community. Sketches of the entire project were done and then submitted to His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos (our ruling hierarch at that time) for approval. Influenced by Byzantine roots, icons in the Orthodox church have been depicted over the ages in much the same manner. Those of Jesus, Virgin Mary, Saint Peter, to name a few, should be able to be recognized and identified by the observer. Composition (and really everything) in the icon is very important, and the placement of the scene in the church also must be according to Orthodox tradition. Even the ornaments and designs that surround the icons are in a standard style. Florin explains that for this project he used acrylic paints and gold leaf. But in all cases, the



preparation must match the surface and be painted in a way that the icon will also be preserved and survive over time. Before my visit, he was working on applying gold leaf, a very intricate process, to the halo of a saint.

The design and content of the Saint George Chapel was intended to match the theme and environment of its surroundings.



Inscriptions are added by hand to each icon

Because it stands on the same plot of ground as the Holy Trinity Cemetery, there were certain scenes in this venue that were important. They represent not only the trees and

other environs outdoors, but also death and resurrection. "You can not see only the famous resurrections depicted throughout time, but also those which are to come on Judgment Day," says Florin. Of particular inspiration for the dome interior was the "Parecclesion" Chapel in the Church of the Holy Savior in Chora, a famous 14th century church outside Constantinople, known for its intricate and stunning frescoes of the Resurrection, the Second Coming and the Last Judgement. Father John asked Florin to recreate these scenes in our Chapel after a pilgrimage to Constantinople, resulting in a particularly fascinating composite work as we see those souls that are called to Judgment Day surrounded by the sea, earth and souls that were consumed by animals or drowned. Balancing those depictions with hope are the glorious scenes of Resurrection and the Entry of the Saints into Paradise.

As we enter the chapel and look up, we can see the scene of the Falling



Scenes of Resurrection and Last Judgement



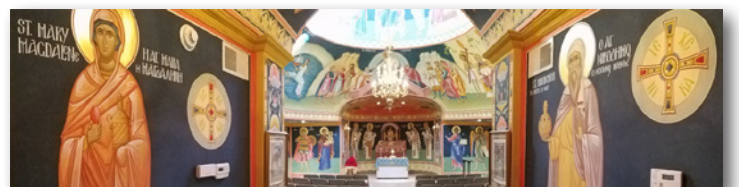
The "building" of an icon. Unlike traditional painting, icons are done by painting the base colors first, then adding the forms, highlights, lines and details. Faces are usually last.

Asleep of the Most Blessed Theotokos. This is a common placement of this particular scene. "The chapel is more about Resurrection than about death, however, because it is important to give hope to those who come here to worship and those burying their loved ones", he adds.

Florin has been here since July, and during this trip, he has been a very active part of the Holy Trinity community. During our festival this summer, he volunteered and worked along side other parishioners. He described the festival as a highlight of being at Holy Trinity and enjoyed meeting and talking to the many people who attended. "This congregation is very dynamic", he says. " They really know how to create programs to keep people close to the church". At the end of November, he will return home to be with his wife and family. His daughter is presently in college in the Netherlands where they lived for several years before moving back to Romania. He admits that it is difficult to be away from family for such a long period of time, but when he returns home, he is looking forward to joining his wife and spending a holiday at their cottage in the beautiful delta of Romania. Enjoy a well deserved rest, Florin. A job well done!

With the completion of the chapel's icons, Holy Trinity has created a treasure in the North Hills. We invite all of you to attend services in the chapel, which are held on Saturdays of the Souls, special weekday feast days and during the evenings of Lent. Many funerals are also held there as we lay our loved ones to rest in hope of the Resurrection. Be prepared for a meaningful and joyful spiritual experience where you will see some icons that are not commonly seen in other churches.

Of course, many dedicated donors have helped to make this happen and we thank them for their amazing generosity! Along with our magnificent main Church, we can all be so proud of our heritage, faith and places of worship. The beauty of our Orthodox Christian Faith is exemplified in the edifice in which we pray, now surrounded by these holy images.





November 9: His Eminence Metropolitan Savas joined us for the November Orthodox Movie Night event. He provided the suggestion for the title, "Places in the Heart" and led a discussion after.



November 22: Youth and parents of the HOPE and JOY ministries reached out with an offering of love and visited the FOCUS Pittsburgh headquarters on the eve of the Thanksgiving. The children served a meal to the FOCUS recipients and had an opportunity to learn about this ministry to the local poor and needy.



December 19: Holy Trinity Church celebrated its second annual Military Appreciation Day, honoring the living and departed members of our armed forces near the Veterans' Day holiday. The day featured photo displays, card writing and honoring our veterans.



☑ **WORSHIP** ☑ **LEARN** ☑ **GROW** ☑ **PRAY** ☑ **SERVE**

FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

“Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5:42)

NEW FORMAT! NEW SCHEDULE!

Four years ago, Holy Trinity Church introduced an innovative series of educational programs under the title of “Faith and Family Wednesdays.” Since then, dozens of presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services provided a way for Christians to grow and progress in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. In active pursuit of growing ministries that are relevant and accessible to our faithful parishioners, this ministry has now adapted and grown into “Faith and Family WEEKDAYS!” Check it out!

“FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS” MINISTRIES GUIDE: 2017-2018

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
DAILY	“Prayer Partners” Prayer Support Ministry	Every Day: In your personal prayers	EVERYONE can participate in this vital ministry. On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for daily!
MONDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey to Fullness” Faith Growth Ministry	Mondays: Fall and Spring Series Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23; Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27; Apr. 23, 30; May 7, 14, 21; Jun 4, 11	This excellent video teaching series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Each segment offers an interactive question and answer period. Same series repeated in fall and spring.
TUESDAYS 9:00am	“Hearts of Faith” Women’s Ministry	4th Tuesday Oct.-May Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 19, Jan. 23, Feb. 27, Mar. 27, Apr. 24, May 22	The Saint Lydia Women’s Fellowship meets for a monthly women’s morning session of conversation with God and each other. The group meets at church at 9:00 am for a 30 minute morning prayer, then gathers in the Fireside Room for an hour of sharing and discussion about the matters of a woman’s heart.
TUESDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey of Marriage” Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-June Sep. 12, Oct. 19 (*3rd Thu.), Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, May 10	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive “Journey of Marriage” materials developed by Dr. Philip Mamalakis and Fr. Charles Johannides. From “Hello!” to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian marriage. It’s lots of fun, too!
WEDNESDAYS 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Study	“Explore the Word” Wednesday Worship & Bible Study Ministry	Wednesdays Oct.-May Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25; Nov. 8, 15; Dec. 6, 13, Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31; Apr. 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Prayerfully read the Bible! In Deuteronomy 11, it says, “Lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.” Each Wednesday, come and till your heart in worship in the Church at 6:30 and then meet at 7:00 the Conference Room for the study of the Book of Romans led by Father Radu Bordeianu.
THURSDAYS 7:00am	“Prayer and Panera” Men’s Ministry	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Sep. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 26, May 17, Jun. 21	The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then moves up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee, breakfast and Christian men’s conversation.
THURSDAYS 7:00pm	“Orthodox Movie Night” Entertainment/Fellowship	2nd Thursday Oct.-June Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10, Jun. 14	A monthly offering of inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it’s a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the “same old stuff” on cable TV. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment?

Watch for weekly updates, special events, guest speakers and youth activities in the Bulletin. Find more info at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/ffw



One of God's Greatest Gifts To Us

As we come to a close of another year it provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments, challenges and opportunities we encountered throughout the year. We also remember the numerous gifts God has bestowed upon us that we sometimes don't always remember to fully cherish and embrace.

You might be wondering what particular gift we are talking about? Is it our health, finances, our home, church, family or jobs? Well, why all these things are important and truly gifts from God, there is one gift He gave us that never loses value, is applicable for every area of our lives, and pays out dividends a thousand times more than anything we could ever own. This gift is God's Word...the Bible!

If you have never attended a Wednesday evening Bible Study session at Holy Trinity then you are truly missing out. Our own Fr. Radu leads it as part of the "Faith and Family Weekdays" ministry and we are currently studying the book of Romans. This is definitely something you don't want to miss and is necessary for your continued spiritual growth. As Christians we are called to study God's word regularly, but sadly to report most Christians do not read the Bible consistently. In fact there are several studies referencing how often the bible is read that reveal some staggering and sad statistics.

One particular example from the 2014 Religious Landscape Study published by the Pew Research Center revealed that only 35% of Americans read scripture once a week. The number is even lower amongst Orthodox Christians coming in at 29%!! Quoted from a study published by the LifeWay Research stated, "God's Word is truth, so it should come as no surprise that reading and studying the Bible are still the activities that have the most impact on growth in this attribute of spiritual maturity. You simply won't grow if you don't know

God and spend time in God's Word."

The Bible teaches us how to live our lives and appropriately manage our time, talents and treasures in service to God. We also come to know God in ways we have never known before. We face a multitude of situations on daily basis and many times are unsure how to approach them. God teaches us through His Word that we are not alone and He is there to teach us how to function in the world we live.

You might ask yourself what are other benefits can we receive from this great gift? According to 2 Timothy 3:15-16 "The Holy Scriptures are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and giving instruction for living rightly. Another benefit is seen in Romans 15:4 that states: "Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement that the Scriptures give us." Lastly, St. John Chrysostom (354-407 AD) said: "Reading the Scriptures is like possessing a great treasure. A Christian cannot help but read the Scriptures. To be a Christian is to rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit speaks to us through the Scriptures."

As you can see it is the responsibility of us all to be good Stewards over everything God has given us, particularly His Word. This is truly one of the greatest gifts He has given us so why not increase your engagement by attending the next Bible Study, make study of the Word a part of your daily routine and see how God will continue to make Himself known to you in ways you might have never thought were possible.

God Bless you on your journey.

The Holy Trinity Stewardship Committee

ONE HOLY TRINITY

Once again, this year's pledge card system carries the theme of ONE Holy Trinity. Just like God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one, we, the members of Holy Trinity Church, need to join together in love as one to serve the Church and to provide for its critical missions in today's society.

The pledge card's left panel contains a clear picture of the Operating Budget of Holy Trinity Church, which covers the operating expenses of the Church. Our goal is to fully fund the budget by our various ministries, missions, salaries, utilities, maintenance, and the like. This year, we also have a goal to eliminate the Church's mortgage by 2020.

First, if you are a family, please complete the left side of the pledge card for the husband and the right side for the wife. If it is a family pledge, check the left box for the husband and the right box for the wife.

My/Our 2018 Pledge:

Goal: To fully fund the Church's operating costs of \$624,000.

My/Our 2018 Pledge:

How much should I pledge? This question must be personally and prayerfully answered by each Holy Trinity member. Although there is no fixed amount, the following guidelines may be helpful in making your pledge and recording \$1,200 to cover the costs of operating Holy Trinity Church for a day - or more for even more days.

1. Base your pledge on your income. Use the chart below to determine a level of pledge proportionally based on your income. Use the chart below to determine a level of pledge proportionally based on your income. Use the chart below to determine a level of pledge proportionally based on your income. Use the chart below to determine a level of pledge proportionally based on your income.

FAMILY INCOME	\$10,000 - \$15,000	\$15,000 - \$20,000	\$20,000 - \$25,000	\$25,000 - \$30,000	\$30,000 - \$35,000	\$35,000 - \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$45,000	\$45,000 - \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$55,000	\$55,000 - \$60,000	\$60,000 - \$65,000	\$65,000 - \$70,000	\$70,000 - \$75,000	\$75,000 - \$80,000	\$80,000 - \$85,000	\$85,000 - \$90,000	\$90,000 - \$95,000	\$95,000 - \$100,000
1%	\$100	\$150	\$200	\$250	\$300	\$350	\$400	\$450	\$500	\$550	\$600	\$650	\$700	\$750	\$800	\$850	\$900	\$950
2%	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700	\$800	\$900	\$1,000	\$1,100	\$1,200	\$1,300	\$1,400	\$1,500	\$1,600	\$1,700	\$1,800	\$1,900
3%	\$300	\$450	\$600	\$750	\$900	\$1,050	\$1,200	\$1,350	\$1,500	\$1,650	\$1,800	\$1,950	\$2,100	\$2,250	\$2,400	\$2,550	\$2,700	\$2,850
4%	\$400	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$1,400	\$1,600	\$1,800	\$2,000	\$2,200	\$2,400	\$2,600	\$2,800	\$3,000	\$3,200	\$3,400	\$3,600	\$3,800
5%	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,750	\$2,000	\$2,250	\$2,500	\$2,750	\$3,000	\$3,250	\$3,500	\$3,750	\$4,000	\$4,250	\$4,500	\$4,750
6%	\$600	\$900	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$1,800	\$2,100	\$2,400	\$2,700	\$3,000	\$3,300	\$3,600	\$3,900	\$4,200	\$4,500	\$4,800	\$5,100	\$5,400	\$5,700
7%	\$700	\$1,050	\$1,400	\$1,750	\$2,100	\$2,450	\$2,800	\$3,150	\$3,500	\$3,850	\$4,200	\$4,550	\$4,900	\$5,250	\$5,600	\$5,950	\$6,300	\$6,650
8%	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,400	\$2,800	\$3,200	\$3,600	\$4,000	\$4,400	\$4,800	\$5,200	\$5,600	\$6,000	\$6,400	\$6,800	\$7,200	\$7,600
9%	\$900	\$1,350	\$1,800	\$2,250	\$2,700	\$3,150	\$3,600	\$4,050	\$4,500	\$4,950	\$5,400	\$5,850	\$6,300	\$6,750	\$7,200	\$7,650	\$8,100	\$8,550
10%	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000	\$6,500	\$7,000	\$7,500	\$8,000	\$8,500	\$9,000	\$9,500

Goal: Eliminate the Church's mortgage by 2020.

CHURCH MORTGAGE

PROGRESS:

\$1,200,000

42% Funded \$500,000

58% Not Funded \$700,000

Goal: Eliminate the Church's mortgage by 2020.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES THIS POSSIBLE

Time and Talents

My time and talents commitment

If it is a family pledge, check the left box for the husband and the right box for the wife.

☐ Activities

☐ Choir

☐ Coffee Hour

☐ Faith & Family Weekdays

☐ Greek Food Festival

☐ Greek School

☐ Greek Ministry

☐ Greek Caring

☐ Greek Food Festival

☐ Greek School

☐ Hospitality Committee

☐ HOCF (Young Adults Ministry)

☐ JOC (Children's Ministry)

☐ Local Outreach Ministry

☐ Missionary Ministry

☐ OOC (College Ministry)

☐ Office Volunteers

☐ Parish Council

☐ Philanthropy

☐ Senior Fellowship

☐ Women's Study Fellowship

☐ Men's Study Fellowship

☐ Brotherhood

☐ Technology Committee

☐ Treasures Ministry

☐ Visitation Ministry

☐ YAC (Young Adult Ministry)

Personal Information - Please complete fully

My Name _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Spouse _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

City _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Child _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Child _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Child _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

Child _____ Orthodox? ☐ Y ☐ N Birthdate _____

For more information visit www.holytrinitypgh.org/stewardship

Stewardship Cards for 2018 have been distributed. Please complete and return yours today!

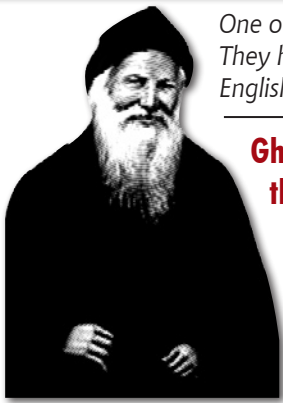
PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL



Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2017 pledge year. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2017 pledge commitment today! Remember, a signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing at Holy Trinity Church each year.

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St. Porphyrios

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 inspired by their wisdom.

Gheronda, how should we respond to those who offend or insult us?

When someone injures us in whatever way, whether with slanders or with insults, we should think of him as our brother who has been taken hold of by the enemy. He has fallen victim to the enemy. Accordingly we need to have compassion for him and entreat God to have mercy both on us and on him, and God will help both. If, however, we are filled with anger against him, then the enemy will jump from him to us and make a mockery of us both. A person who condemns others does not love Christ. Our egotism is at fault. This is where condemnation of others stems from. Let me give you a little example.

Let's suppose someone is all alone in the desert. Suddenly he hears a voice crying out in distress in the distance. He follows the sound and is confronted by a horrendous sight: a tiger has grabbed hold of a man and is savaging him with its claws. The man is desperately shouting for help. In a few minutes he will be torn to pieces. What can the person do to help? Can he run to his side? How? It's impossible. Can he shout for help? Who will hear him? There is no one within earshot. Should he perhaps pick up a stone and throw it at the man to finish him off? 'Certainly not,' we would say. But that's is exactly what can happen if we don't realize that the other person who is acting badly towards us has been taken hold of by a tiger, the devil. We fail to realize that when we react to such a person without love it is as if we are throwing stones at his wounds and accordingly we are doing him great harm and the 'tiger' leaps onto us and we do the same as him and worse. What kind of love do we have then for our neighbor and, even more importantly, for God?

We should feel the malice of the other person as an illness which is tormenting him and which he is unable to shake off. And so we should regard our brethren with sympathy and behave with courtesy towards them, repeating in our hearts with simplicity the prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ', so that the grace of God may strengthen our soul and so that we don't pass judgment on anyone. We should regard all people as saints. We all carry within us the same 'old self'. Our neighbor, whoever he is, is 'flesh of our flesh; he is our brother and, according to Saint Paul, we owe no one anything, except to love one another. We can never pass judgment on others, for no one ever hated his own flesh.

Is this what Jesus means when He says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you?"

When someone has a vice we should try to bombard him with rays of love and compassion so that he may be cured and freed. These things are achieved only through the grace of God. Think that this person is suffering

more than you. In a coenobitic monastery when someone is at fault, we should not tell him that he is to blame. We must adopt an attitude of care, respect and prayer. We must endeavour not to do anything harmful. When we endure insults from our brother, it counts as martyrdom. And it is something we should endure with joy.

A Christian is gracious. We should prefer to be wronged. If love enters us we forget the wrongs we have been done. This is where the secret lies. When the evil comes from afar, you cannot avoid it. The great art, however, is to show disdain for it. With the grace of God, even though you see it, it will not affect you, because you will be full of grace.

Gheronda, this is very different from our every day experience of life in the world.

In the realm of the Spirit of God all things are different. Here one justifies all things in the behaviour of others. Everything! What have we said? Christ sends rain on the just and on the unjust. I say that you are to blame, even if you tell me that he or she is the one at fault. In the final analysis you are to blame in some respect and you will discover in what respect you are at fault when I tell you that you are to blame. You should acquire this sense of discrimination in your life. Inquire more deeply into everything and don't regard things superficially. If we don't go to Christ, if we don't endure patiently when we suffer unjustly, we will be tormented continually. The secret is to deal with situations in a spiritual way. Saint Symeon the New Theologian writes in a similar vein:

"We need to regard all of the faithful as one and think that each one of them is Christ. We need to have such love for each individual that we are ready to sacrifice our very life for him. Because we ought never to say or think that any person is evil, but rather to regard all as good. And if you see a brother troubled by passions, do not hate him. Hate rather the passions that are assailing him. And if you see that he is being tormented by desires and habits from former sins, have even greater compassion on him, lest you also fall into temptation, since you are made of matter that easily turns from good to evil. Love for your brother prepares you to love God more. Accordingly, the secret of love for God is love for your brother. Because if you don't love your brother whom you see, how can you possibly love God whom you don't see? He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"

We shouldn't be enraged by people who blaspheme or who speak and act against God and the Church. Such rage is harmful. We may hate the words and the malice behind them, but we must not hate the person who spoke them nor become enraged against him. Rather we should pray for him. A Christian has love and graciousness and should behave accordingly.

Excerpted from "Wounded by Love: The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios" Uncut Mountain Press, 2005





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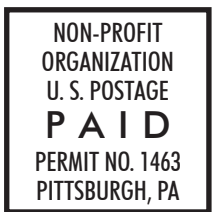
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JESUS IN THE MANGER

He was a Baby, He was a Child, so that you may be a perfect man; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, that you may be loosed from the snares of death; He was in a manger, so that you may be in the Altar; He was on earth, that you may be in the stars. He had no other place in the inn, so that you may have many mansions in the Heavens [John 14.2]. “He,” it says, “being rich, became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might become rich” [II Corinthians 8.9]. Therefore, His poverty is my inheritance; and the Lord’s weakness is my virtue. He chose to lack for Himself, that He may abound for all. The sobs of that squalling Infancy cleanse me, those tears wash away my sins.



St. Ambrose of Milan, *Teachings on Luke 2:7*

Scripture of the Month: “You will find the a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. ” (Luke 2.12)