



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

MARCH 2016

VOLUME 24 • ISSUE 3

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

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QUICK NEWS



The GOYA officers announce the donation of all net proceeds from the Valentine Breakfast. 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.

SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS - CELEBRATED THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



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!



Prayer should be the foundation of our life, that upon which our whole life should be configured.

Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev

My Beloved Spiritual Children in Christ,

Some people look forward to eating; others suffer from illnesses or conditions that make eating a chore. Some people head into their daily exercises with enthusiasm; others dread the thought because they are out of shape or injured. Some people head to

work they love and are rewarded by it; others drudge through their daily jobs with a sense of boredom or dread.

Such is the life of prayer. Some look forward to it, are enriched by it and pour their whole soul into it. Others are bored by it and feel disengaged during it, but they keep it up out of habit or perceived duty. Are these two different kind of people? No. We are all made in the image and likeness of God and have the seeds of desire to commune with our Creator sewn into our soul. What is the difference, then? One is prepared, the other is not. One is disciplined, the other is not. One has a positive attitude, the other does not. And each of those conditions can change.

Lent provides some wonderful opportunities for us to turn that attitude around and get in good spiritual shape. But for the serious Christian, it is work. A lot of work. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, who is quoted above,

We need to pray continuously. It isn't enough to pray from time to time, only when we need something from God; we should be always praying: morning, evening and over the course of the entire day and our entire life. And at the center of our prayers shouldn't be anything specific that we're asking from God, but God Himself, because the main content of prayers is always our encounter with God, the possibility of discovering Him for ourselves.

During Lent the Church offers more community worship services, that we may gather as the Body of Christ to pray and be blessed. We are also encouraged to strengthen our own personal prayer life and spiritual studies. And where does it all lead? To the "possibility of discovering Him for ourselves." What an awesome potential!

In addition, the Church offers us increased guidance for reading the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. Here, too, is the land of discovery. Saint Gregory the Great says, "Holy Scripture is presented to the mind's eye like a mirror in which the appearance of our inner being can be seen." Not sure just what readings those are? The Lenten road map of readings can be found on our Holy Trinity website daily, on the Archdiocese website Orthodox calendar or using the Daily Readings app from the Archdiocese. It's available for both iPhone and Android and will keep the daily readings of the Orthodox Church right in the palm of your hand. Give it a try!

Finally, what should those prayers and readings power and inspire? Personal repentance (a "remodeling" of our life); a call to serving others through person and community philanthropic works; a restored communion with our loved ones, friends and even those who have been given to us to help grow the gift of forgiveness in our heart, and a closer and more sincere, honest relationship with the Lord. Without it, even fasting is spiritually futile.

So it all starts with prayer. It is the foundation. Please take advantage of the many Lenten opportunities for events, ministries and activities that are available, but be sure they each begin with, end with and are powered by prayer. We will all be blessed by it. Paternally yours in the love of Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

Cindy Criss and Sandy Schall

"In Loving Memory of Mary Yerazunis (Morris)"

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Lenten Schedule of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of services for Lent. Please post it in a conspicuous place in your home. Make a family plan and circle the services you are able to attend and place them on your schedule and on your phone's calendar! As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, "God is with us." Lent and Holy Week provide us a special time to be with Him. See you there!

Get Lent Off to a Great Start! March 13

The first service of Lent is a particularly beautiful and moving event. The "Solemn Vespers" service is held at the Saint George Chapel and is a transformative worship experience that is like no other in our parish liturgical life. During it the mantle of the bright repentance of Lent is laid upon the Church and upon our hearts. If you have never attended it before, now is a great time to start. Put it on your "liturgical bucket list." You won't regret it. Saint George Chapel, March 13, 6:30pm.

"Faith and Family Wednesdays" Lenten Series

Now in its third year, 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 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!



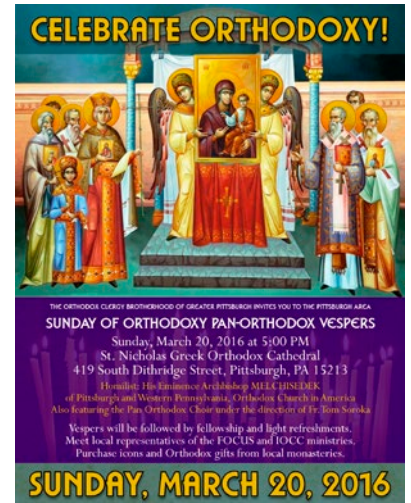
Saturdays of Souls March 5, 12, 19

In the two weeks preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" to commemorate those who have fallen sleep in the Lord. Services are held at the Saint George Chapel located at Holy Trinity Cemetery. See the enclosed flyer to submit names for commemoration. And please consider bringing memorial wheat ("kollyva") along with a list of the names of your departed loved ones.



Sunday of Orthodoxy Service March 20

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting its annual Sunday of Orthodoxy Service and Celebration on Sunday, March 20, at 5:00pm at Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland. The homilist will be His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America. The service will feature clergy from Orthodox jurisdictions, the annual Procession of the Holy Icons and - new this year - a Pan-Orthodox Choir singing the hymns of the service under the direction of Fr. Tom Soroka. Following the service, light refreshments will be served during fellowship time. Local representatives from the Orthodox philanthropic ministries FOCUS and IOCC will be there with information on how to get involved. Also, icons and other Orthodox Christian gifts and handmade items will be available to purchase from the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery (Saxonburg) and the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration (Ellwood City) as well as St. Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore. Come and celebrate Orthodoxy in Pittsburgh! "This is the Faith of the Apostles. This is the Faith of the Fathers. This is the Faith of the Orthodox. This is the Faith which has established the Universe."



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 that starting March 14 and 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.

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

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. Also, if you are traveling during Lent for business or personal reasons, how about planning ahead to attend Lenten services wherever you are? After all, when you are in an Orthodox Church, you are always at home! For the best Orthodox parish locator, visit www.OrthodoxyInAmerica.org. Can't find a Greek Orthodox parish? Check there to find the nearest Antiochian, Russian, Serbian, Romanian or other canonical Orthodox Church.

Upcoming Lenten Dates.March-May

Wondering about Lenten and Paschal dates? They are much later than usual this year! Here's a helpful guide to some of the important events coming up:

- Meatfare Sunday (Last day of eating meat) Mar. 6**
- Cheesefare Sunday (Last day of eating dairy) Mar. 13**
- Pure Monday (Lent begins) Mar. 14**
- Sunday of Orthodoxy Mar. 20**
- Godparent SundayApr. 3**
- Palm SundayApr. 24**
- Holy Friday (schedule off work & school)Apr. 29**
- The Great and Holy Pascha..... May 1**

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

"Prayer and Panera" St. Nikodemos Fellowship. . .Mar. 17

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!

Visitation Ministry Prayer Group

Want to Pray for those Sick, Alone and in Need from your Home? We Have the Place for You! As Holy Trinity Church grows its Visitation Outreach Ministry, we want to be sure that we are praying for everyone involved. If you are willing to pray regularly from home for our sick and shut-ins - as well as our Visitation Ministry Team - please see Stacy Dickos or call her at 412-298-9409. Your prayers would be welcome to offer these souls to the Lord for His mercy and blessings.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Meeting March 13

There will be a meeting for all GOYA members on March 13 following the Divine Liturgy.

HOPE and JOY Vincentian Home Visit. March 20

The HOPE and JOY children will offer a seniors service project on Sunday, March 20 following Liturgy, with a visit to the Vincentian Home. Our young children will visit with the seniors residing there and assist with social activities. This is a great way to share the energetic love of children that brings so much joy into the hearts of senior citizens who are truly uplifted by such visits. Contact Kelley Kaparakos at kelley@hamptonbanquethall.com to confirm your attendance.

Summer Camp 2016 Registration Open

Registration for the Metropolis Summer Camp Ministry is now open at pittsburgh.goarch.org/summer-camp. This is one of the most important faith and growth opportunities that parents and families can offer their children in the life of the Church. Holy Trinity JOY children (ages 8-12) may attend either JOY Session 1 or 2 and our teens may attend either GOYA Session 3 or 4 (although 4 is currently wait-listed). IMPORTANT: When signing up, the youth of our community will receive a parish scholarship of \$200 by entering the code "SCHTP16". This must be entered at the time of registration in order for the fee to be reduced. Need information? See Father John or Presvytera Becky.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2 at Holy Trinity . . . March 25

Friday March 25—the Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day—this year also marks the release of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2," a sequel to the blockbuster Greek-themed hit from 2002. Back then, we held a community showing in our old social hall and lots of people came for just the movie. This time, we will have a fish dinner (in celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation) and we will then go right up the hill to the Cinemark Theater next door for the premiere-day show. Reservations are required and must be pre-paid. As of this printing, some details were still being concluded and will be communicated in March. But until then, please save your spot(s) by reserving at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events. It's going to be a great night with great company celebrating our great ethnic heritage. (Parents, please note that the film is rated PG-13 due to for some suggestive material, so please be advised.) "OPA!"



Saint Photios Metropolis Awards Banquet May 7

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will honor devout stewards of faith, time and talents at the Third Annual Saint Photios Awards Banquet on Saturday, May 7. See the enclosed flyer. **IMPORTANT:** There will be two recipients from each community, and that means two from Holy Trinity Church. Want to recommend someone from our community to receive the award? See the nomination form in the Narthex. Deadline for submitting recommendations is **March 14**.

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

MARCH 2016 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



Father John Androutsopoulos

Lent Comes Again

The first and second Sundays of March this year are the third and fourth Sundays of preparation for the Great Lent.

Sunday, March 6th: Judgment Sunday (Read the Holy Gospel of Matthew 25: 31-46). Remarks and conclusions of that Gospel reading: Those who have shown mercy to the poor are lending to God, and in Greek, Δανείζει Θεώ ο ελεών

πρωχόν ("Danizi Theo o eleon ptohon"). The judgment day is a separation of the righteous from the unrighteous.

Sunday, March 13th: Forgiveness Sunday (Read the Holy Gospel of Matthew 6:14-21). Remarks and conclusions of that Gospel reading: Forgive to obtain forgiveness. To make a mistake is human, but to forgive is divine. Those who forgive are imitating Christ, who from the cross said: "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." If you say I forgive you, but I will not forget what you have done to me, then you bear a grudge. In Greek, that is μνησικακία ("mnesikakia").

Monday, March 14th is the beginning of the Great Lent, and we march through these days leading to the glorious, joyous, triumphant PASCHA, which is our Passover from sin to salvation, from darkness to light, from hatred to love. During Great Lent we have the opportunity for personal communion with ourselves, with others, and with God. It is a spiritual pilgrimage which begins on the first day of Great Lent and ends at the Empty Tomb of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A Time For Preparation

Lent is a season that has been observed throughout the ages by Christians of every land. From the beginning, Lent has been a time of preparation for Pascha. It has been a time for contemplating the meaning of suffering and death, the cost of discipleship and the unimaginable price that has been paid to redeem the world.

A Time For Repentance

It can become for us a time of repentance, asking God to forgive us where we have failed. It can be a time where we determine through His unending power and mercy to discipline ourselves more to His way and will, and to receive His love that we might fully love.

A Time For Fasting

Great Lent is a time for fasting and abstaining. It is a spiritual discipline that we desperately need. Fasting is vital in any spiritual renewal. Fasting must be carried out in true humility. We fast not only from certain foods but abstain from idle talk and gossip. We learn to be charitable towards others: Prayer, fasting

and almsgiving are the three attributes of Great Lent.

A Time For Confessing

Last but not least, prepare yourself for the Sacrament of Holy Confession and receive Holy Communion frequently during Great Lent. With a set goal and high aspiration, you will be ready to enter the Holy season of Great Lent prepared to reach a high level of spiritual renewal.

A Time For Almsgiving

Why give to the poor? St. Paul says of the Lord, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor, His righteousness endures forever" (2 Corinthians 9:9). But do we do our part in this calling?

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS

So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

James 2:17

Works are not the root but the fruit of faith. Our Lord taught us this by His kindly example and by His forthright reminders that His disciples are known by their fruits. To Him, it did not matter that many religious leaders made solemn professions of faith; for he knew they denied their faith by refusing to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and minister to the prisoners and the oppressed. The Letter of James continues our Lord's emphasis on authentic faith as opposed to empty professions of it: "If a brother or sister is poorly-dressed, and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" The confession of faith does not guarantee salvation. We cannot divorce the confession from the conduct of the believer. A wife may say of her husband, "I know he does not love me because he habitually neglects me." The husband's love is dead, or he would express it in the only way available to him, CONCERN FOR THE WIFE. So we have a daily test of the vitality of our faith.

Do we involve ourselves – our time, talents, money – in positive action for the POOR, the NEEDY and the OPPRESSED?

Thou who hast taught us that, inasmuch as we have done unto the least of these, we have done it unto thee – our divine Savior: Matthew 25:40. Grant us a renewed faith that expresses itself in love for thy creatures. Amen. So be it.

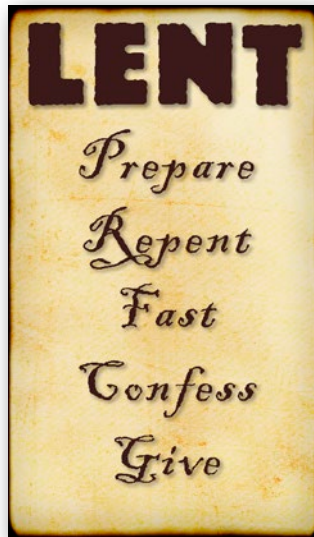
Remember March 25th

This holy day is the feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin Mary and Greek Independence Day.

THE HYMN OF THE FEAST

Today marks the crowning of our salvation and revelation of the mystery before all ages. For the Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims the grace. Wherefore, we also cry out with him, "Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you."

*With the love of the 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 MARCH 2016 “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS”			
TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	ORTHODOX LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:15-8:30pm	
Mar. 2 First Wednesday of the month	Blessing of the Waters/ Blessing of the Loaves	Orthodox Book Club Precious Vessels: The Contemporary Elders Father John	- N/A -
Mar. 9 Second Wednesday of the month	Vespers Service	Bible Study: “A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture” - Proverbs Father John	Byzantine Chanting Peter Papadakos
Mar. 16 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.	
Mar. 23 Fourth 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.	
Mar. 30 Fifth Wednesday of the month	NO SERVICE OR SESSION THIS WEEK DUE TO THE METROPOLIS CLERGY RETREAT. PLEASE CONSIDER ANOTHER LOCAL (NON-GREEK) ORTHODOX CHURCH.		

SPECIAL LENTEN YOUTH OPPORTUNITY: SIGN UP IN CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS TO DO THE LENTEN SERVICES READINGS!

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

Establishing God's Kingdom...Starting Here

When I think of stewardship I am reminded of Jesus' words, "For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also" (Matthew 6:21). As Christians we are called to give our time, talents and treasures to advance God's Kingdom here on earth. God has blessed each of us with potential to use in advancing His Kingdom and we are called to do something with this God-given potential. This is the first, and foremost, reason why my family and I give to the Church. We want to be a part, however small, of God's plan in establishing His love, peace, and joy in a suffering world.

My family and I also give as an act of worship. Everything that we have and everything that we are is a gift from God. Therefore, we worship God by giving Him what is already His. Given all that Christ has done for us why would we not want to give Him our best, doing so with a cheerful heart?

I think Holy Trinity is a great place to put these ideas into practice. We recently became members of Holy Trinity and are excited about all the ministries it has to help strengthen the faith of those who are already part of the Church body and the outreach ministries to help those in spiritual and physical need. I personally can attest to the benefits of these types of ministries, since I have recently started attending the monthly men's fellowship ministry "Prayer and Panera." I cannot stress how important it is to be around other Orthodox Christians outside of the normal worship services for encouragement and spiritual growth. This cannot be ignored, since we

as humans were created to live in fellowship with each other. We look forward to seeing more ministries like this, knowing that these types of activities are made possible by the stewardship of all of us at Holy Trinity. We are also expected as a body of believers to help those in need. I feel good about giving to a Church like Holy Trinity that takes this seriously, as is evident from its various outreach ministries such as the FOCUS outreach and the Visitation Ministry. I hope to get more involved in 2016 with supporting these types of outreach ministries with my time.

Lastly, we appreciate how much Holy Trinity and its Hospitality Ministry makes the non-Orthodox feel welcome and at home. I am a recent convert to Orthodoxy myself and this hospitality made my journey to Orthodoxy that much easier. In my opinion, this type of outreach to the non-Orthodox is vital in a day where Americans are searching for a faith that is not watered down, but rich, deep, and life-changing. I want to be a part of making this happen.

In the end, we give our time, talents and treasures because we love Christ, we love His Church, and we want to participate in spreading this love to those around us.

Rick Paese

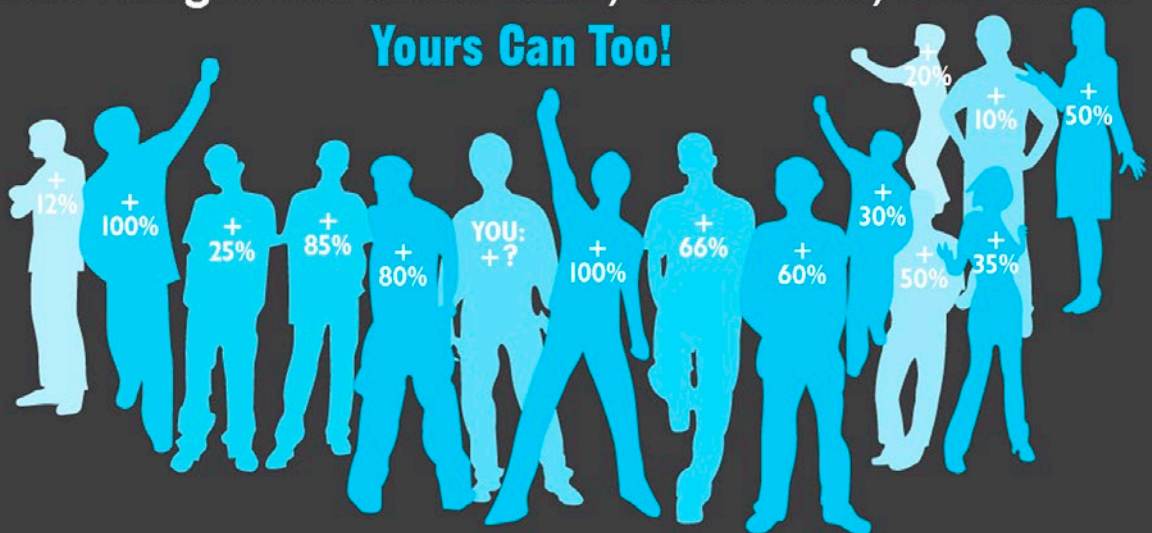
Rick, his wife Doreen and their children joined the Holy Trinity family in November, 2015



WE BELIEVE. JOIN US.

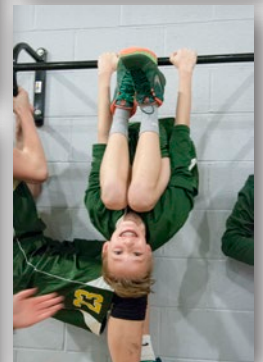
Our Increased Pledges Will Reach More, Touch More, Love More.

Yours Can Too!



FAITH.
FAMILY.
COMMUNITY.

Numbers represent **actual increases** in pledges received for 2016 at Holy Trinity Church. Put yours to work. Pledge today.



February 5-7, 2016: Holy Trinity GOYA fielded three teams - Boys Senior (top right), Girls Senior (middle right) and Boys Junior (bottom right) - to attend their second Metropolis Basketball Tournament of the season at Annunciation Church in Cleveland, OH. Many thanks to the coaches and parents who spent their weekend cheering, shuttling and supporting our teens. GO GOYANs!



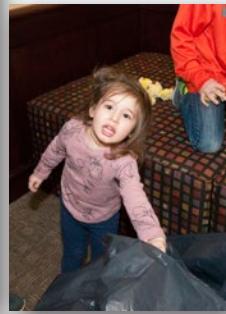
January 31, 2016: (Right) His Eminence Metropolitan Savas made an archpastoral visit to Holy Trinity Church, serving Divine Liturgy, offering homilies to the youth and adults and visit the parishioners after services.

February 14, 2016: (Below) Holy Trinity GOYA hosted its annual Valentine's Breakfast. It was enthusiastically attended by the parish and served by our teens, who donated all the net proceeds from the event, splitting them between FOCUS Pittsburgh and the Holy Trinity Capital Campaign. Well done, faithful teens!





February 19, 2016: Holy Trinity GOYA hosted its second annual "Parents Night Out/Kids Night In" event, during which the GOYA teens offered free child care and lots of fun activities for toddlers through sixth-graders while the parents enjoyed a night out. It was just a small "gift of love" from the teens to the parents for all they do year round!



February 21, 2016: The Young Adults of Holy Trinity Church hosted a "Manners in Today's Society" workshop for the impressionable young teens of the parish. They offered skits and advice on personal communications, introductions, respect for adults, and ... here it comes ... cell phone etiquette! The smile and interaction seen here show the our GOYA youth were engaged, interested and entertained! Well done!



Three original Greek language poems about the struggle for Greek independence and freedom by Voula Hareras



Voula Hareras



25η Μαρτίου

25η Μαρτίου
Φωτιά φωνάζει ο Γερμανός,
στης Λαύρας τ'Αγιοκλήσι,
κτυπάτε όλοι τον εχθρό,
η Ελλάς να ξαναζήσει.

Βροντοκτυπούν τα άρματα,
και ο εχθρός τα χάνει,
λιοντάρι τότε έγινε,
κι ο Οδυσσεύς στο Χάνι.

Και λιονταρίσια πολεμά,
για την ελευθερία,
με αίμα πάντα οι Έλληνες,
γράφουν την Ιστορία.

Στους Απανταχού Έλληνες

Γιατί Ελλάδα μας γελάς,
και είσαι ευτυχισμένη,
μήπως γιατί οι Έλληνες,
που'ναι παντού σπαρμένοι,
στη πρώτη σου αναποδιά,
στη πρώτη σου ζαλάδα,
όλοι μαζί σου φώναξαν
κουράγιο, μάνα Ελλάδα.

Κι είδες μέσα στα μάτια τους
στο φωτεινό τους βλέμμα,
πως όπου κι'αν βρίσκονται,
έχουν εσέ για στέμα.

Κι'αν ζούνε χρόνια μακριά,
σ'έχουν στα όνειρά τους,
και φτερουγίζουν πάνω τους,
και στέκεσαι κοντά τους.
Μήπως γιατί όλοι μαζί,
είπαν στην οικουμένη,
πως η γλυκιά Ελλάδα μας,
ποτέ της δεν πεθαίνει.

Κι'άκουσε ο κάθε σου εχθρός,
τη βροντερή φωνή τους,
πως της Ελλάδας η τιμή,

είναι τιμή δική τους.

Και η Ελλάς απάντησε,
με μάτια βουρκωμένα,
το ξέρω τα παιδάκια μου,
πως γνιοιάζονται για μένα.

Χαίρε Λευτεριά

Ανέβηκα Ελλάδα στα βουνά σου,
κι'ήτανε κατάσπρα από κόκκαλα ιερά,
κοίταξα ψηλά στον ουρανό σου,
κι'είδα να γράφει, χαίρε ω χαίρε ελευθεριά.

Και τότε σκέφθηκα τα χρόνια τα παλιά,
κι'ήλθε στο νού μου η λαμπρή σου ιστορία,
τότε που δίδασκες στον κόσμο τι θα πεί,
αυτοθυσία, λευτεριά, δημοκρατία.

Πήγα στο Σούλι και στο Ζάλογγο ψηλά,
στο Μεσολόγγι, Πλαταιές και Μαραθώνα,
άκουσα εκεί στην Αγία Λαύρα μιά φωνή,
εμπρός, παιδιά για την Ελλάδα, στον αγώνα.

Στο Τεπελένι, στην Χειμάρρα, Κορυτσά,
εκεί ανέβηκα φωνάζοντας, αέρα,
και τότε απλώθηκαν Ελλάδα μου σα φως,
και φώτισες τον κόσμο, πέρα ως πέρα.

Πήγα στις Πίνδου τις απάτητες πλαγιές,
πήγα στου Γράμμου τις κορφές τις δοξασμένες,
και είδα Ελλάδα μου στεφάνια να κρατάς,
και να τα ρίχνεις σε μεριές ματωβαμένες.

Αυτά θυμάμαι εδώ κοντά στα σύνορά σου,
και περιμένω την υπέροχη στιγμή,
για να δοξάσουμε εμείς το όνομά σου,
Ελλάδα μου πατρίδα γαλανή.

Θέλω να μάθουνε οι φίλοι κι' οι εχθροί σου,
πως τα παιδιά σου είναι λιοντάρια στη καρδιά,
και μάχονται παντού για την ειρήνη,
και τραγουδάνε, χαίρε ω χαίρε ω χαίρε λευτεριά.

Βούλα Χαρερά

LENTEN SERVICES: A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

NEW THIS YEAR: MAKE A PLAN FOR LENT - CHECK ALL THE SERVICES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY PLAN TO ATTEND!

Forgiveness Vespers

Description: The first service of Lent, it combines a Solemn Vespers of Lent with a special "Forgiveness Service" at the end.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first evening of Lent (March 13 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: Kneeling in repentance during the changing of the colors from the bright gold and white of the Resurrection to the solemn purple of Lent, listening to the deeply moving hymn preparing us for both Lent and for our final encounter with the Lord,



Why You Should Attend: To start out the spiritual journey of Lent on the right foot. Attending this service marks a clear start of Lent both in our soul and on our schedule.

My/Our Commitment: I/My family will attend: Mar. 13

Great Compline

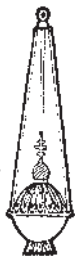
Description: Used only during Lent, this larger version of the Compline or "After Dinner" service contains many special penitential prayers and hymns.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Monday evenings of Lent at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The chanting of the beautiful Lenten hymn, "Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!"

Why You Should Attend: At Holy Trinity Church, all those who attend are able to participate in the many readings of this service if they desire. This is a great way to start each week as we re-enter the depths of Lent following Sunday's bright celebration.

My/Our Commitment: I/My family will attend: Mar. 14, Mar. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 4, Apr. 11, Apr. 18



Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Description: Every Sunday or feast day Divine Liturgy is resurrectional and celebratory in nature, and early on the Church came to regard this character as "out of harmony" with the solemn and penitential character of Lent. So rather than exclude any form of Liturgy during the weekdays of Lent and deny the faithful the ability to receive Holy Communion—the "food of immortality,"—the Quinisext Council in the seventh century A.D. approved the use of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as a way of offering the Holy Gifts between Sundays during Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service which comprises the solemn Lenten Vespers with the distribution

of Holy Communion at the end. There is no consecration of the Holy Gifts during the service. Holy Communion is offered from the reserve gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Lent (except March 30 this year) at Holy Trinity Church. Now part of the weekly "Faith and Family Wednesdays."

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns used only during this service: "Now the Powers of Heaven minister invisibly with us. For, behold, the King of Glory enters. Behold, the mystical sacrifice, fully accomplished, is ushered in."

Why You Should Attend: Provides a mid-week spiritual guidepost which encourages us to prepare both spiritually and physically for Holy Communion, thus deepening our awareness of Lent and strengthening us in our struggles.

My/Our Commitment: I/My family will attend:

Mar. 16, Mar. 23, Apr. 6, Apr. 13, Apr. 20

Salutations to the Theotokos/Akathist

Description: The Akathist Hymn is a beautiful treasure of theological poetry set to music in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. Its main hymn, "O Champion General" ("*Ti Ipermacho*") commemorates the rescue of the Byzantine imperial city of Constantinople from attack, which the faithful attributed to the intercessions of the Mother of God. The service is offered in two forms. The first four Fridays each contain only one segment of the larger poem and are called "Salutations," from the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel to the Theotokos. The "Akathist Hymn" refers to the entire service with all the stanzas and is offered on the fifth Friday of Lent.



When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first five Fridays of Lent (except Mar. 25 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The poetic proclamations of respect and love offered by the priest on behalf of the faithful as he stands in front of the icon of the Theotokos at the front of the church. They are an exclusive feature of this service.

Why You Should Attend: With these services, there is a sense of "being there" when that first proclamation was made by the angel as the hymn says: "An angel, and the chief among them, was sent from heaven to cry to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!'" It is not just the Church honoring her Most Holy Mother: it is me honoring her, too.

My/Our Commitment: I/My family will attend:

Mar. 18, Apr. 1, Apr. 8, Apr. 15

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 brought us their writings and talks in English. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by them.



Elder Cleopas

Gheronda, people often ask me, "Why do you venerate the holy icons?"

Holy Scripture forbids the veneration of sculpted figures and deities. This prohibition refers to the veneration of idols. The law however does not forbid the veneration of certain signs and representations of God and His holy ones, since this honour does

not pertain to the material from which they were constructed but rather, via the holy visage which is depicted, our thoughts ascend to God. We saw the honour that was given to the girdle and face towel of the Apostle Paul. In the Old Testament we learn of the two sculpted Cherubim, which were placed above the Ark of the Covenant and on the tapestry of that holy place. It was before these that they lit incense and rendered repentance.

Just as we are helped by the word to ascend beyond the word, so too are we led by the icons to rise above the icons. Correspondingly, just as God wants our hearing to be made holy through spiritual discourse, so too he wants our sight to be made holy via the holy icons, so that by way of these two superior senses there enters into the soul pure thoughts.

But doesn't Saint Paul teach that we shouldn't compare God to material things when he says, "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver?"

Here (Acts 17.29) the Apostle is not prohibiting the veneration of the holy icons, but rather the erroneous understanding of the idol worshippers who had identified God with artistically graven figures of idols, figures the Athenian gentiles believed to be gods. When the Apostle spoke on Mars Hill he wanted to show to the teachers of the Athenians that if men are descendants of God, that is, have an immaterial soul which is the image of God in us (something which they themselves believed), then from this we can infer that God Himself is also immaterial and, thus, we are related to Him. Hence, God could not be considered identical with the material of a few sculpted deities that existed in the pagan temples of Athens.

In Orthodoxy we believe in the following truth: We have sanctified icons from gold, silver, etc., which were produced with skill and talent, but we never say that God is identical and in the same category with the silver of the icon which enshrines His form, whatever might be the worthiness either of the material used in its construction or of the sculptor who produced it. We teach that there exists one God alone, while the holy icons possess an utterly different significance from that of co-identification with God or the Saint whose form they represent. If man is far more sublime than, and of another nature from, all the statues and images which represent his form, so much the more can God not be of the same

nature as images of His form.

If we cannot see God, then how can we portray Him?

There is no question that it is totally impossible for us to see Him in the form that He is, i.e. in His essence. God did not become visible to men and therefore no one knows how He appears, nor can they paint His form in an icon or fashion a true likeness of His Countenance.' He Himself has said, "You cannot see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." The Evangelist John says the same: "No man has seen God at any time." Likewise, the Apostle Paul says: "...who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Timothy 6.19).

Yet the Old Testament, as well as sacred history, relates to us that there were appearances of God the Father, of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Is this in contradiction to what was said previously? Not at all. If for men it is impossible to see the essence of God, it is still possible for them to see God with their sensible eyes or their intellect in forms or shapes that God might will to appear to them in His Divine Energies. These appearances take place by way of the divine economy (or dispensation) so as man might not die from the vision of God. Thus, Abraham saw the Triune God in the form of three travellers under the oak of Mamre. Jacob saw Him and said, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Moses also saw Him in human form, conversing with Him "face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend." He also saw Him on Mount Horeb: "and he looked and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

The Prophet Amos tells us the following: "I saw the Lord standing upon the altar." God Himself informed Aaron and his sister Miriam that He would appear to some in visible form: "And He said, 'Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream'" (Numbers 12.6). Furthermore, the Son of God was seen with human and most glorious form by the Prophet Daniel, the deacon Stephan, the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, and the holy Evangelist John and others.

Gheronda, how can I answer those who accuse us of idolatry or using icons against God's commandments?

The Apostle Paul speaks concerning the idols and the delusion of the pagans as it relates to the faith of God, not in relation to the holy icons of Christians which is something else entirely. The Christians never imagined God, as depicted in icons, as some perishable four-footed animal or bird, but on the contrary they painted Him as He revealed Himself to man. In this way Christians created a clear and precise conception of the incarnate God. The icon depicts the human form of Christ Who, as man, came and dwelt among men.

Excerpted from "The Truth of Our Faith" by Elder Cleopas of Romania



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Lent: The Gates of Repentance



Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life.

For early in the morning my spirit hastens to Your holy temple, bringing the temple of my body all defiled.

But as One compassionate, cleanse me, I pray, by Your loving-kindness and mercy.

Hymn of repentance sung each Sunday of Lent following the reading of the Orthros Gospel and the chanting of the 50th Psalm

Scripture of the Month: "Bear fruits that befit repentance." (Luke 3.8)