



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

March 2025
Volume 33 | Issue 3

Saint Gregory Palamas - Second Sunday of Lent

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Saint Ephraim



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



GOYA girls enjoy a slide down the rail while on break at the February Metropolis Basketball Tournament in Ohio. See more Community Life Instagram photos on pages 10-11.

This holy Father was raised in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. He later lived as a monk on Mount Athos. He was present at various councils, where he contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, where he tended his flock for some twelve years and wrote many books and treatises on the doctrines of our Faith. Having lived sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359. His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessaloniki.

Icon from the Narthex Wall of Holy Trinity Church. Iconographer: Dr. George Kordis



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

Now in our 102nd year!
1923-2025

OUR VISION
Faith. Family. Community.

OUR MISSION
The mission of Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church is
to proclaim and live the Or-
thodox Christian Faith in its
fullness as faithful members
of the Body of Christ.

Let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ

Philippians 1.27

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

So many things in life are accompanied by expectations. We go on vacation and we expect to get some rest and come back with good memories and lots of pictures. We begin a program of therapy and we expect to come out well on the other side. We enroll in college to build a life for our self and expect to get a degree that makes it possible. In all those cases, we start with the expectation of some kind of change from where we started. After all, who would do any of that if we ended up right where we started with no change at all?

When we think of the upcoming season of Lent, what do we expect? There are so many “activities”—if we want to look at them that way: church services, fasting, Lenten retreats and projects, and more. So we might expect to just be busier. That’s ironic, because Lent is a time we should use to find more time for prayer, reading, personal spiritual growth, etc. But regardless whether we are fully immersed in all the Lenten activities or just trying to focus a little more on our faith, what do we expect will come out of it? Repeating the question above, if we did all that and ended up exactly where we started, why would we do it at all?

Try this: we can’t possibly know exactly what to expect because it is not a task or a project, and it is not even of our own doing; it is a gift. Father Zacharias of Essex says, “The season of Great Lent is a gift to the faithful from on high in order to strengthen them in their ‘painful descent into the ocean of their heart.’ Returning to the blessed place of the deep heart, they converse with God from their innermost being, and only then the Lord hearkens unto them and comes out to meet them. This meeting is man’s personal Easter, his eternal Pascha.”

Like so many gifts that sit wrapped and waiting for us, exactly what’s inside can’t really be known until it has been opened. Likewise, just what gifts the Lord has in store for us each Lent cannot be known until they are “opened,”...that is, experienced. But what we can know ahead of time is that every gift from God is intended to draw us closer to Him. That means drawing closer to Christ. That allows us to know Him, love Him and live for Him even more. And that is a change we should all hope to expect to find during this holy season.

Our 2025 Lenten theme, “Living for Christ,” brings that all together. It means living less for our self and our own desires and living more for the One Who has given us life itself. By our humble striving during Lent—doing whatever the Lord calls and strengthens us to do—Father Zacharias concludes that “the Christian hopes to draw a little nearer to Christ, to know Him more deeply and love Him with the tender love that he owes Him, to follow Him with greater fidelity, so that he may taste of divine bliss.”

May we all head into Lent with humility, dedication and the great expectation that when we emerge on the other side, we will be truly “living for Christ.”

Paternally in Christ,

BECOME WHAT YOU WERE MADE TO BE. DISCOVER LIFE ANEW.

LIVING FOR CHRIST

PRAY, FAST, ATTEND, REPENT, CONFESS, GROW

“Let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1.27)

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - March

In addition to regular Sunday Orthros at 8:30am, and Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, the following weekday services will be offered this month. Please see the online parish calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (HT=Holy Trinity Church; SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Sun. Mar. 2, 6:30pm: Forgiveness Vespers** (SG)
This service opens a beautiful and solemn entry into the sacred season of Lent. It is the best way to begin your Lenten journey of repentance and renewal.
- **Sat. Mar. 8 Saturday of the Souls** (SG)
- **Lenten Weekday Services**
See the Lenten Schedule of Services for complete information on weekday services from March 3 on.

Saturdays of the Souls.....March 1, 8

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the “Saturdays of the Souls” at St. George Chapel to commemorate those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Orthros is at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am and the Memorial Service. Download the names form at HolyTrinityPgh.org/documents/worship to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones. **Important: Is in our Orthodox Christian tradition to offer “kollyva” (memorial wheat) during the memorial prayers. If you are able to bring a dish or small tray for the service and to be shared with the faithful afterwards, please do! We cannot lose this beautiful and theologically significant tradition. Thank you!**

LENTEN NEWS & EVENTS

2025 Lenten Theme: “Living for Christ”

Each year we offer a theme for Lent which builds on our Orthodox Christian tradition in a way that helps us grow and connect with Christ in today’s world. This year the

theme is “Living for Christ” taken from Philippians 1.27: “Let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ” During the Lenten journey, you will hear lessons on the many opportunities the Church provides as we restore our relationship with Jesus Christ and His Holy Church and how we can re-evaluate the priorities of our life and live it in a manner worthy of our high calling as His servants and disciples.

Lenten and Holy Week Schedules of Services

This issue of *The Herald* contains a complete schedule of services for Lent. A Holy Week schedule will be included in the April issue. Both are also available online at our website. Please post them 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 and computer calendars! As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, “God is with us.” He has planted the desire for His peace in our hearts and souls. Let’s let nothing keep us from it.

Sunday of OrthodoxyMarch 9

Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon will host the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy celebration sponsored by the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh. Presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, the service of Great Vespers of the Annunciation will feature clergy from Orthodox jurisdictions followed by the annual Procession of the Holy Icons and 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 Orthodox philanthropic ministries 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.

“North Hills Orthodoxy” Presanctified Liturgies

There are now three Orthodox Christian parishes in our North Hills neighborhood, growing the presence of Orthodox Christianity together: Holy Trinity, (Greek

Orthodox Archdiocese), St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (Orthodox Church of America) and St. John the Baptist (Carpatho-Russian Diocese). In the desire to provide a greater fellowship among our parishes and communities, we will be sharing in three Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies this Lent. The dates and locations are as follows:

- **Wed. March 12, 7:00pm** - St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, 1600 Guyton Rd., Allison Park
- **Wed. March 19, 6:00pm** - St. John the Baptist Church, 2201 Duncan Avenue Allison Park.
- **Wed. March 26, 6:30pm** - Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh

All our parishioners are invited to attend all the services. What a wonderful way to build Orthodox fellowship and a stronger connection among our North Hills sister parishes. Each service will be followed by a Lenten meal. (Note: the remainder of the Lenten Presanctified Liturgies will be held on Wednesday evenings as usual at Holy Trinity Church: March 5, April 2 and April 9), followed by a Lenten meal and presentation.

Godparent/Godchild SundayMarch 23

Holy Trinity Church will celebrate its annual "Godparent/Godchild" Sunday as is our tradition on the Third Sunday of Lent (March 23 this year). To make this a full spiritual family event, we are asking everyone to do invite their Godparents and Godchildren to join us. To assist with that, there are invitations with envelopes available in the Narthex and at the church office window. Please take one, sign and address it and send it to the one who sponsored you for your Baptism or Chrismation and ask them to join you for this special celebration and for the Hospitality Hour hosted by Philoptochos afterward. If they already entered the joy of eternal life, they will be with us spiritually and in memory, so celebrate for them here!

Lenten Soup Sales

Holy Trinity GOYA is once again offering its very popular Lenten soup sales during the Sundays of Lent, starting with Cheesefare Sunday and continuing through Palm Sunday. 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 and they are good for you! Please visit the Lenten Soup Sales table in Gallery during Coffee Hour each week! Thank you for supporting our youth!

Lenten Hospitality Hours

Please keep in mind that throughout Lent our Hospitality Hours following the Divine Liturgy observe Orthodox Lenten fasting practices. Any families or ministries hosting a Memorial or Ministry Hospitality Hour and any families

hosting providing the Church School snacks are asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Hospitality Hour and Church School ministries can provide suggestions if needed. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

Lent: A Good Time for Holy Confession

In addition to the special services being held in this holy season, please remember that one of the main focuses of Lent is increased attention to our spiritual life through prayer, fasting and Holy Confession. Orthodox Christians should participate regularly, and Lent provides a good reminder to do so. Through this Holy Mystery we receive the gift of God's divine forgiveness (John 20.23) and the opportunity to share our deepest concerns and receive counsel and encouragement toward spiritual growth. If you would like to receive this blessing during Lent—or any time—please speak with Fr. John or Fr. Radu to set up a time for Holy Confession. *Kali Metanoia!* (Good repentance!)

Upcoming Lenten Dates

- Meatfare Sunday (Last day of eating meat): Feb. 23
- Cheesefare Sunday (Last day of eating dairy): Mar. 2
- Pure Monday (Lent begins): Mar. 3
- Sunday of Orthodoxy: Mar. 9
- Godparent Sunday: Mar. 23
- Saturday of Lazarus/Palm Cross/Candle prep: Apr. 12
- Palm Sunday: Apr. 13
- Holy Week: Apr. 13-20
- Holy Friday (schedule off work & school): Apr. 18
- The Great and Holy Pascha: Apr. 20

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon ProcessionMarch 9

Church School students will once again participate in the annual Procession of the Holy Icons at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. All students should bring an icon of their patron saint or other favorite icon to hold in the procession that day. Be sure to have the name of the student on the back of the icon to identify it!

Readers for Presanctified Liturgies.....Wednesdays

All teen students are asked to sign up for readings for Presanctified Liturgies during four of the six Wednesdays of Lent: March 5, 26, April 2 and 9. At least 8 readers are needed for each service. This is a great way for our young people to contribute to the services and the worship life of our church as active participants.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA MeetingMarch 9

The GOYA teen ministry will be holding its monthly

meeting on Sunday, March 9, in the Conference Room following Church School. All teens are invited to attend.

HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini-RetreatMarch 22

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh is again presenting regional HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini-Retreat this year. The Central Region event will be hosted by St. Nicholas Cathedral on Saturday, March 22, from 12:00-4:00pm. The children will learn about key figures in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lessons include crafts, service projects and more. Lunch will be provided. Registration is free and can be made at <https://tinyurl.com/StNickHJ25>.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Hospitality Hour Hosts Needed

Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to host our reformatted "Hospitality Hour" following our Sunday Divine Liturgies. There are a number of available Sundays in the Spring. Remember a loved one. Celebrate a special event.

Share your hospitality with the community. Contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or email her at hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org to reserve.

Stewardship 2025 is Here – Time to Pledge!

Thanks to the dedication and offerings of so many faithful stewards, 2024 was a record year for Holy Trinity Stewardship. As we strove together for "Stewardship Independence" we reached levels never seen before. Glory to God and many thanks to the faithful stewards who stepped up to the challenge! This year, let's maintain and grow as our theme for 2025 calls us to be "Stewards of God's Blessings." There are two ways to pledge: using a 2025 Stewardship pledge card or by going online to your Holy Trinity Realm account (see below). And there are many ways to give: in person via cash; in person or by mail via check; online at HolyTrinityPgh.org/give; via text by texting HOLYTRINITYPGH to 73256; via the Realm app on your phone; and the giving kiosk in the Narthex. However you choose to support our ministries, thank you! ❖

SAINT SPYRIDON LIBRARY BOOKS MISSING: PLEASE FIND AND RETURN THEM!

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS: WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our Church School's Saint Spyridon Lending Library is a valuable learning resource for all ages and has been built over the years by generous donations and volunteer staff. The only way we can continue to offer this service is if books that are *borrowed* are also *returned*. And right now many of our beloved—some of them irreplaceable—are missing! The list is found below. Parents and students, please look around your homes/cars for any lost books to be returned. If you checked out books but are unable to find them to return them, please see Connee Bistolas or Nicole Steiner to make a payment towards the purchase of a new replacement book. For questions or clarifications, please contact Connee or Nicole during Hospitality Hour. Thank you for helping sustain this valuable ministry!

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr Seuss: One Fish, Two Fish (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> Passages 3: Annison's Risk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Minute Princess Stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Girls Only: Dreams on Ice | <input type="checkbox"/> Pete the Cat: The First Thanksgiving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Charlie Brown Christmas (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> God Gave Us Christmas (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Creek Gang: The Swamp Robber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Rip Squeak Book: The Treasure | <input type="checkbox"/> God Gave Us Love (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> The Band Concert: A book of Silly Sounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After the Fall: Humpty Dumpty (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> God's Word for Me | <input type="checkbox"/> The Call of the Wild (hard cover) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alice in Wonderland (Hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> Good News, Bad News | <input type="checkbox"/> The Caterpillars of HaHa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be Kind, Be Brave, Be You! (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> I Survived the Destruction of Pompeii | <input type="checkbox"/> The Middle of the Night |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulldozer Break-In | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Town on the Prairie (#7 in series) | <input type="checkbox"/> The Story of Jonah |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte's Web DVD | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School Master of Disaster (hard cover) | <input type="checkbox"/> The Swiss Family Robinson (hard cover) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chip Hilton Sports Series: Strike 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> My Orthodox Counting Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie Tales: God Made You Special |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christopher Bear Makes Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> My Orthodox Prayer Book | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curious George: In the Snow | <input type="checkbox"/> Noah's Ark by Jerry Pinkney (hard cover) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disney Princess: Happily Ever After | | |

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME FOR FIND AND RETURN THESE!

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE LENTEN SERVICES

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 pm on the first evening of Lent (March 2 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.

I/My family will be there: Mar. 2



Great Compline

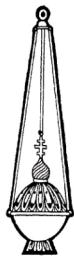
Description: Used only during Lent, this larger version of the Compline or “After Dinner” service contains many special penitential prayers and hymns.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 pm 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.

I/My family will be there: Mar. 3, Mar. 10, Mar. 17, Mar. 31 Apr. 7



Presanctified Liturgy

Description: Every Sunday or feast day Divine Liturgy is resurrectional and celebratory in nature, which is “out of harmony” with the solemn and penitential character of Lent. 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,”—in the seventh century the Church approved the use of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as a way of offering the Holy Gifts between Sundays during Lent. It is typically an evening service which comprises the solemn Lenten Vespers with the distribution of Holy Communion

at the end. This year we will be sharing three of the six Presanctified Liturgies with our sister North Hills Orthodox parishes to grow our inter-Orthodox fellowship.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 pm At Holy Trinity on Mar. 5, Mar. 26, Apr. 2, and Apr. 9; 7:00pm at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on Mar. 12; 6:00pm at St. John the Baptist on Mar. 19.

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns. **Many Psalms and other scripture readings for the service are done by the Church School students (grades 5-12).**

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.

I/My family (including our children) will be there:

Mar. 5, Mar. 12, Mar. 19, Mar. 26, Apr. 2, Apr. 9



Salutations to the Theotokos

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 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 pm on the first five Fridays of Lent. (Note: moved to Holy Trinity Church.)

Special Features: The poetic proclamations of respect and love intoned by the priest on behalf of the faithful as he stands in front of the icon of the Theotokos.

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!’”

I/My family will be there:

Mar. 7, Mar. 14, Mar. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 4




LENTEN FASTING: WHEN, HOW AND WHY



WHEN

The complete Lenten fast (“vegan”) begins on Pure Monday (Mar. 2 in 2025). It continues through Holy Saturday evening and concludes after the Divine Liturgy on Pascha. On the feasts of the Annunciation (Mar. 25) and Palm Sunday (Apr 13), fish is allowed.



HOW

During Lent we abstain from animal products (meat, dairy, fish), olive oil and wine. Wine and oil may be consumed on Saturdays and Sundays. Shellfish, fruits, vegetables and grains are always permitted. Reminder: Those with health conditions should use caution and only fast within whatever your medical needs allow. Consult your priest.



WHY

“Fasting is the great school of all temperance, one of the most difficult and great human tasks. We need to start curbing our flesh by curbing our belly. Fasting is the entryway of repentance, its necessary companion. If we understand the need for fasting and we observe it, we will receive great blessings and we will understand how necessary the fasting that motivates us to great repentance is.”
(St. Luke Simferopol)

FASTING: WHERE IS IT IN THE BIBLE?

“Scripture contains myriad instances of fasting, most of which are total fasts from food and drink: Christ’s total fast in the wilderness (Luke 4:1–2), David’s for the life of his ailing child (2 Sam. 12:13–23), Esther’s for her people (Esther 4:16) and Nehemiah’s fasting and imploring God to save Israel (Neh. 1:4). In Scripture, fasting is a means of repentance and of crying out for God’s attention and help. But fasting doesn’t necessarily require total abstention from food: it can also mean the simple avoidance of meat and dairy, as in the case of Daniel (Dan. 10:3). John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1–4), as a consumer of locusts and honey, was not strictly a vegan, but through his ascetic diet and lifestyle often causes him to be considered the father of monastic fasting traditions. These Scriptural examples set the precedent for Christian traditions of abstaining from animal products, particularly during Lent.”

From “Christianity Today,” Feb. 24, 2020

FASTING: DO NOT JUDGE!

“Two visitors, looked with disapproval on the Elder who was boiling milk being careful not to let it overflow or burn. Eventually one of them couldn’t stand it anymore and said to him: ‘Elder Paisios, we are in the first days of Lent, we have a strict fast, and you are boiling milk to drink?’ The saint was silent. He did not respond. He took off the pot because the milk was boiling. Next, he went to the cell, brought six small, old, porcelain cups, arranged them in a row and carefully filled them. The two pious people saw all this with disgust, because they were thinking that because there were six people visiting and six cups, the monk therefore would dare to offer them milk during these days of strict fasting. Elder Paisios took the filled cups one by one and placed them on a wooden tray and left them on the ground, at the edge of a bush. A few minutes later a viper appeared cautiously and later five baby snakes—her children. The snakes came, slowly reaching the cups, and gently began to drink their morning milk...”

Translated from From “Aghoritikes Mnimes”

“Let us begin the fast with joy. Let us give ourselves to spiritual efforts. Let us cleanse our souls. Let us cleanse our flesh. Let us fast from passions as we fast from foods, taking pleasure in the good works of the Spirit and accomplishing in them love.”

From the Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday

The Holy Trinity Giving Ministry

Our goal (dream) over the years, was to improve our finances, eliminate our debt, and become “Stewardship Independent”... Achieving this milestone allowed us to redirect available funds to a ministry of giving.



It can be said that the Holy Trinity community is one made of generous givers. It's not a boasting statement but a true observation, by people looking from the outside, and ones from within. Even in the lean years, the tradition of generosity offered to others in need continued through various programs and individual initiatives, true to the words of our Lord that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”.

Our goal (dream) over the years, was to improve our finances, eliminate our debt, and become Stewardship independent, i.e., to cover the day-to-day church operation needs by our Stewardship donations and stop depending on festival income to support the operating deficit we were experiencing year after year. This dream became a reality in 2024!

Achieving this milestone allowed us to redirect available funds to a ministry of giving. The blessing of helping others instead of being debtors and borrowers is something for which we “give thanks to God for you, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor and love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessal. 1.3).

As a vehicle to distribute the funds to charities, the Parish Council established a new committee, The Giving Committee. Chaired by Mike Kritiotis, its members include Anthony Balouris (Parish Council President), Marianne Stearns (Philoptochos President), Dan Willow (Festival co-chair), and Paula Valliant and John McCann, representing the community at large. Father John is the clergy spiritual advisor.

The Committee's tasks were: (1) identify potential recipient ministries and charities - local, regional, national, or international - which follow Christ's teachings, (2) research and analyze each charity, provide financials when available and ratings from independent sources, and (3) prioritize and rank the list, being mindful that to be impactful, and with limited funds, not all of the worthy charities on the list could be included in this year's giving.

The total available for this year was \$59,000. \$50,000 has been awarded already; the remaining is reserved for later needs. Twelve organizations were awarded amounts ranged from \$2,000 for areas of smaller needs, to \$10,000 for wider/greater needs. They are listed here. Well done, good and faithful servants! Enter into the joy of your Lord! (Matthew 25:21). ❖

Giving Fund 2025: \$50,000 of Gifts Awarded

**Metropolitan
Maximos Youth
Endowment
\$2,000**

Benefits Metropolis of Pittsburgh Youth & Young Adult ministries and programs

**The Saint
Constantine School
Pittsburgh Campus
\$2,000**

Benefits development and operation the new Orthodox Christian school started in 2024

**Lending Hearts
Pittsburgh
\$3,000**

This Pittsburgh-based charity works on behalf of children and young adults, as well as their families, who are living with cancer

**The Lighthouse
Foundation
\$3,000**

A Christian organization meeting the needs of impoverished individuals and families in northern Allegheny and Butler County

**Peebles District
Volunteer Fire
Company
\$3,000**

Provides fire protection and rescue services for our church and the surrounding area

**Hellenic College
Holy Cross
\$3,000**

College and Seminary of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, raising clergy and lay leaders of the Church for today and tomorrow

**Passavant Hospital
Foundation
\$4,000**

Funds direct support for the most vulnerable patients and those of limited financial means and offers addiction support groups

**Mars Home for Youth
Family Services
\$5,000**

Strengthens families by responding to the mental health and learning needs of children through community-based programs

**The Neighborhood
Resilience Project
\$5,000**

Ministers to trauma affected communities through providing food, clothing, health care and spiritual care and more

**Greater Pittsburgh
Community Food Bank
\$5,000**

Regional charity located in our neighborhood that works to ensure that anyone who needs a healthy meal can get one

**International Orthodox
Christian Charities
\$5,000**

Offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination

**Archdiocese National
Fire Relief Fund
\$10,000**

Funds for the immediate needs of those affected by the devastating fires that have affected areas in southern California





GIRLS JUNIOR TEAM



BOYS JUNIOR TEAM





Metropolitan Germanos of Old Patras is shown raising the flag of the revolution in the Agia Lavra Monastery and blessing the beginning of the Greek uprising against 400 years of Ottoman occupation on March 25, 1821. This painting by Theodoros Vryzakis is one of the most famous depictions of the Greek War of Independence.

Homage to March 25th, 1821

March 25th is one of the most important dates of Hellenism throughout the world, as it celebrates both the anniversary of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottomans and the Great Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos. This beautiful reflection by Voula Hareras captures them both.

The blessed month of March has come, and I call it blessed, because it has a double blessing from God.

The first: by God's command, the Archangel comes and offers the lily to the humble Virgin Mary, whom God chose for her graces, to bring into the world His Only-begotten Son, the God-man and our Savior, Jesus Christ. And she, full of awe and humility, accepts the will of God.

The second blessing is that on the same day, March 25. In 1821, at the Monastery of Agia Lavra, Bishop Germanos III of Old Patras, holding the sacred banner, swears the heroic lads an oath, and the great struggle for the freedom of our enslaved homeland begins, after 400 years of unbearable slavery and tyranny of the Turks.

The slogan is "Freedom or Death." And truly with superhuman struggles and sacrifices, they manage, with the help of the Champion Virgin and their unsurpassed heroism, to re-enter into the international map a free land: our Greece.

And they have complete freedom to worship their God, to have their language, their customs and traditions, without fear and terror.

Truly, what a wonderful thing! 400 years and they held religion, language, patriotism with a knife to their throat, and I wonder with pain, what

are we doing in this blessed country. Where are we? The answer I leave to all of us: let us put our hand on our heart and we will find it.

A double celebration then, and from this our poet (Valaoritis) is inspired and says in one of his verses:

The Virgin Mary and the great Greece share a great day of celebration: one accepts a lily; the other accepts a laurel branch.

Rejoice, Mary! From now on you will be called blessed.

And welcome, freedom, from your foreign exile.

On this great national anniversary of March 25, it is fitting to remember once again the exhortation of our poet "I have no reason to tell you but only one thing: get drunk with the immortal wine of 1821."

The poet in another of his poems grandly reminds..."Those of you who are Greeks, do not forget, you are not from your own hands only. No, you owe it to those who came, passed, will come and will pass." (K. Palamas).

If we remember these verses as the month of the great national holiday has begun, it is because strange things are heard. European students say, they do not hold parades, they do not honor old national heroes with school holidays and other such things. Paradoxically, why in Greece

do we continue such manifestations, some ask without a trace of shame.

But one wonders, should we hesitate to do something different from what foreigners do? Has so much inferiority and copying instilled in us, instead of emulating what is right?

Should we not honor those who sacrificed everything for the expensive price of freedom? Shall we not parade with such a glorious flag? Shall we not gratefully remember the great figures of the heroes? Shall we then forget the miracle of 1821?

Noble foreigners, who have known and loved Greece, confess with sincerity, like the great English poet Selby. "Many peoples have fought for their homeland, but the Greeks are invincible, not only in the struggles for freedom, but they are also great servants of the True, the Beautiful, and the Holy...We Europeans rightly boast that we are all disciples of Greece..."

It is therefore not right, by banishing laziness and rejecting contemporary foreign absurdities, to show that we belong to the same race as those who created a brilliant civilization and are descendants of martyrs and heroes, of a glorious homeland. Walk proudly in the parade, children, let us all sing the songs of freedom, let us sing our national anthem with pride: High is our Flag, high are our hearts. ❖

Voula Hareras

The Holy Angels

“The Holy Angels” dismantles the erroneous view of angels and shows us their true nature, their role throughout the Bible and in the life of the Church.

“The Orthodox Bookshelf” is a *Holy Trinity Herald* column by Rick Paese focusing on books of Orthodox Christian interest for everyone. Many of the books highlighted will be available for purchase at the Three Hierarchs Bookstore in the Gallery.

Harp-Playing Fairies in the Sky?

If you asked a random person to draw an angel, what do you think they would draw? Possibly a chubby winged baby shooting an arrow. An elegant woman in a long robe playing a harp? Whatever it may be, you might guess the rendition would be detached from reality. But it has not always been this way. The Renaissance ushered in an age that began to grossly misrepresent angels in art. According to Mother Alexandra in “The Holy Angels,” this misrepresentation has done more harm than anything else to confuse people about the reality, purpose, and nature of angels. Instead of focusing on the theological significance of angels, artists began making angels look soft and aesthetically pleasing. The actual physical nature of angels cannot be accurately represented since they are spirit. Instead angels should be represented to show their theological purpose and function. Mainstream artists forgot this, causing us to have a misconstrued idea of angels and view them as little more than fake invisible fairies flying in the sky.

“The Holy Angels” dismantles this erroneous view of angels and shows us

their true nature, their role throughout the Bible and in the life of the church, the angelic hierarchy and mission, and their representation in art. The following summary highlights key points from some of these areas.

The Nature of Angels

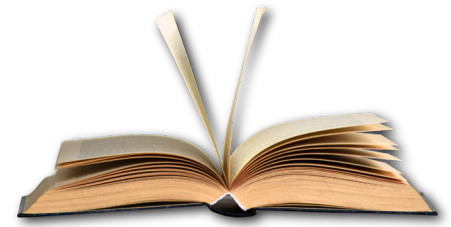
Like humans, angels are created beings. However, the Bible does not provide details of their creation. Their existence is simply presumed, not asserted. They are invisible spirits, with no care for the material world and not limited by space and time. Though created like man, they are a different entity than man. A man does not become an angel when he dies. Angels do not die like men. God grants them immortality by grace. They have free will. They can obey or rebel against God. Angels are fierce, brave, masculine, warrior-like, fighting evil spirits for our benefit.

Angels Throughout the Bible

The most striking thing to me in reading “The Holy Angels” is seeing, in one place, how the angels play a role in what seems like every major biblical event. The angels are never the point of the stories, but they are there, fulfilling their role as messengers, guides, protectors, and intercessors over and over again. From the Garden of Eden to Christ’s resurrection and beyond, the angels are there. They are an important piece of God’s plan and simply cannot be ignored.

Angelic Hierarchy

The angels are categorized into three



Choirs, with each Choir having three Orders, as shown below. Each Choir and Order has their own purpose and function. For example, the First Choir is closest to the Godhead and acts as the channel through which divine grace flows and it inspires us to unite our soul with God. The Second Choir is the dedicated seat of ordered governance. The Third Choir is closest to man, ministering to and uplifting us.

- First Choir
 - Seraphim (Is. 6:2-6)
 - Cherubim (Ezek. 1:10)
 - Thrones (Col. 1:16)
- Second Choir
 - Dominions (Eph. 1:21)
 - Virtues (1 Cor. 13:26)
 - Powers (Eph. 1:21)
- Third Choir
 - Principalities (Rom. 8:38)
 - Archangels (1 Thes 4:16)
- Angels (many biblical references)

It’s Personal

“The Holy Angels” shows us the cosmic mission of the angels, while at the same time reminding us of their role in each of our personal lives. In Matthew 18:10, Jesus tells us we each have a guardian angel. Think about that for a second. We each have a personal angel who serves to protect, guide, and intercede for us every day, and to connect us with the Divine. As Mother Alexandra puts it, these angels are “a luminous span bridging any distance between us and God.”❖

Rick Paese



THE FESTIVAL IS COMING...AND THE COOKING IS HERE!
MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR — TELL YOUR FRIENDS — EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



SPANAKOPITA	
Wed, Feb 26	9am-9pm
Thu, Feb 27	9am-5pm

PASTITSIO	
Thu, April 10	9am-6pm
Fri, April 11	9am-3pm (If needed)

GALAKTOBOUREKO	
Tue, May 20	9am-9pm

BAKLAVA & CHOC. BAKLAVA	
Tue, March 11	9am-9pm

FINIKIA & KOURAMBIETHES	
Sat, April 26	9am-6pm

PORTOKALOPITA	
Tue, June 10	9am-9pm

KOULOURAKIA	
Sun, March 30	After Liturgy

APRICOT ROLLS	
Tue, May 6	9am-9pm

DIPLES	
Tue, June 17	9am-9pm

TIROPITA	
Tue, June 24	9am-9pm

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP! JOIN IN!

OUR GOAL IS TO GET AT LEAST 30 PEOPLE EACH DAY SO THAT WE MAY FINISH ON TIME!

Can YOU give at least a few hours of time for YOUR community's festival? Look over the dates and times listed here.

You'll see both evening and daytime hours, during the week and on the weekends. Everyone's help is needed!

No experience needed...we train on the job! Think of it as free cooking lessons. Questions? Contact Joyce Athanasiou (jcbathanasiou@aim.com or 412-292-4206) or Paula Valliant (paulavalliant@gmail.com or 412-445-4119).



SPREAD THE WORD! TELL YOUR FRIENDS! DON'T MISS IT!
THE 2025 "TASTE OF GREECE" - THU. AUG. 28-SUN. AUG. 31



Caring for the Caregiver



A special seminar hosted by the Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry

Saturday, March 29, 2025
10:00am-1:30pm

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Register for free at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events

Presenter/Facilitator: Maureen Sirianni

Admissions Director at Concordia Lutheran Ministries, Bridgeville
Volunteer instructor with the Alzheimer's Association

Schedule

10:00 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship in Conference Rooms A & B
10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Interactive presentation and group discussion
12:30-1:30 p.m. Lunch & Fellowship

Registration

This seminar is provided at no cost as a community service by Holy Trinity Church
Register free at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events by March 27
Contact: Amy Armanious, Visitation Ministry Coordinator (visitation@holytrinitypgh.org)

What are the goals?

To emphasize the importance of connecting to community care resources, learning about caregiving options, and participating in peer support for family caregivers and others. To empower family caregivers toward their own self-care and self-compassion.

Is this seminar for me?

Are you a family caregiver, professional caregiver, clergy, parishioner, neighbor helping neighbor, or are you just interested in learning about whole-person health (balancing body, mind, and spirit) of self & others. Then yes, this event is for you and we welcome you!

What topics will be discussed?

Focusing on the needs of family caregivers who provide care in the home setting and assisted-living environments. Responding in a compassionate manner to the elderly who have dementia or other memory loss concerns. Describing the care approach as essential in being supportive rather than confrontational. Offering the ministry of presence as a loved one's cognition fails. Identifying caregiver burden and suggestions for relief and prioritizing self-care needs.

“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)



Philoptochos and community members honored “Go Red” day to highlight women’s health on February 9.

**The Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Philoptochos Society**

2025 Daffodil Luncheon

Saturday, April 5, 2025 ~ 11am

**Holy Trinity Pittsburgh
Grand Room
985 Providence Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

Registration and Sponsorship Forms available at the Church Office or email philoptochos@HolyTrinityPgh.org

On Repentance

Repentance is not merely a stage which passes; it remains with us. There is no one without sin, not even if he lived only one day on earth. For we all sin and need repentance. Therefore, repentance becomes a daily activity.

Q: Geronda, how does repentance start?

A person progresses and advances in repentance just as in any other virtue. He keeps progressing until he reaches its perfection. So then, what is the starting point of repentance? Is it leaving sin in the fear of God? There is a point before leaving sin, and that is the desire for repentance.

Many do not want to repent because they enjoy sin and wish to remain in it. Their character is beautiful in their own eyes and they do not want to change. So the simple desire to repent is a good starting point. God's grace accepts this desire and asks: "Do you wish to be healed?" The desire to be healed begins the work of His grace in the person. The next step, then, is actually leaving sin.

Q: Is repentance just about changing behavior?

A: More important than leaving sin is abandoning it in the heart and mind. A person may leave sin practically, but the love of sin is still in his heart. He yearns for it and regrets certain opportunities when he could have sinned, but did not. Such a person has left sin for the sake of God's commandments, not because he hates sin. He should progress in repentance until sin is removed from his heart.

The perfection of repentance is the hatred of sin. That means a person hates sin with all his heart, is dis-

gusted by it, and does not need any effort to overcome it since it no longer agrees with his nature. Here the person reaches the edge of purity.

Q: How do we know what sins we need to repent of?

A: Leaving the most prominent sin in one's life and hating it comes after the next upward step. That next step is leaving the sins that are revealed through spiritual progression, Thanks to God's compassion for us, He does not reveal our every sin and weakness to us all at once, so that we do not feel worthless. Each time we hear spiritual sermons and read God's book and other spiritual books, our weaknesses and shortcomings—which need treatment, struggle, and repentance—are revealed to us. Here we enter into a process of cleansing and purification that continues throughout life.

Because the devil leaves one battleground and fights in another, we should be ready for him in every battlefield. Even the sin of which we have been relieved for a period may tempt us again. In this way repentance will remain with us throughout life.

Q: Geronda, is repentance only about past sins?

A: Repentance is not only for resisting sin. There is also repentance for shortcomings in spiritual progression. The penitent should bear fruit worthy of repentance (Matthew



Patriarch Shenoudah III

3.8); with this he will enter into the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.22). If he does not bear fruit, then he needs repentance for the sin of not bearing fruit, as the Bible says: "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin' (James 4.17).

Repentance, then, is not merely a stage which passes; it remains with us. There is no one without sin, not even if he lived only one day on earth. For we all sin and need repentance. Therefore, repentance becomes a daily activity. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us' (1 John 1.8).

There is a difference between the repentance of sinners and the repentance of saints. Sinners repent of the sins that are an obvious breach of the commandments, the sins which show their lack of love for God. As for the saints, they repent of minor shortcomings, which are caused by human weaknesses. Because of their desire for the life of perfection, they see before them stages to be overcome before they are perfected. During all of this, their hearts are protected in the love of God. ❖

Excerpted from
The Life of Repentance and Purity

THE HOLY TRINITY
HERALD
Faith. Family. Community

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsmagazine of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh (pittsburgh.goarch.org) and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (goarch.org) under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

**Parish Administration
 Clergy**

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 Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest
 Deacon Matthew Palamara, Deacon

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Anthony Balouris, President (pcpresident@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Alexander Anetakis	Evan Danis	Dean Passodelis
Andrew Fournaridis	George Dickos	Michael Passodelis
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George Danis	George Mellis	Jeanne Willow

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at 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! Everyone is welcome!

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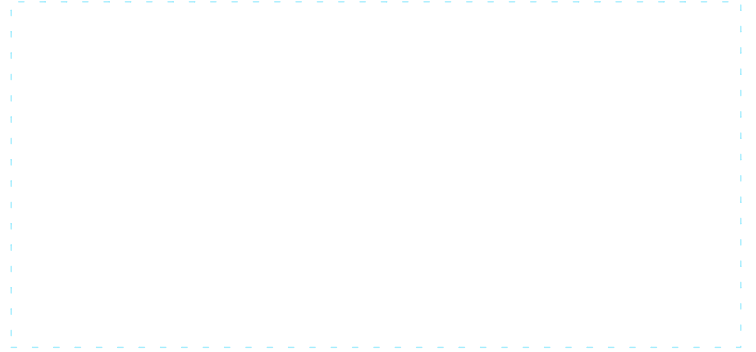
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THE LENTEN PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM

A dark silhouette of a church dome with a cross on top, set against a warm, orange-brown background. The dome is on the left side of the page, and the cross is centered above it.

O Lord and Master of my life,
do not give me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity, love of power and vain talk. (bow)

But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility, patience, and love. (bow)

Yes, Lord and King, grant me
to see my own faults
and not to judge
my brothers and sisters. (bow)

For You are blessed forever. Amen.

A small, bright sun or moon partially obscured by the bottom edge of the page, creating a warm glow.