



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

JULY-AUGUST 2017

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

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**JULY 9 SPECIAL GENERAL
ASSEMBLY AGENDA ENCLOSED**

QUICK NEWS



George Lalikos and Stella Athanasiou were honored with the 2017 Metropolis Saint Photios Award. 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 11-17 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD ON MOUNT TABOR - AUGUST 6



You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your glory, as much as they could bear. Shine also upon us sinners with Your everlasting light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, Glory to You! (Apolytikion of the Feast of the Transfiguration)

Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

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

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About the Parish

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

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

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Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2017 Parish Council

Gerri Valliant, President

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George Dickos	Stephen Stearns
Van Backeris	Karen Georgiadis
Tom Germanos	Alex Trilivas
Marios Kritiotis	Jean Willow

Ministries

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

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



God knocks continuously at the door of man's heart. He waits until man freely opens the door to Him. Then, He enters, loaded with His gifts of grace and all His incomparable riches, and makes a feast with man."

Archimandrite Zacharias, Remember Thy First Love

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Gracious Lord,

"Hello! I didn't know you were out there," he said, responding to the pounding on the front door. "Well, I wasn't sure you were in there either. I've been ringing the doorbell for five minutes," I replied. "Oh, that! Yea, sorry, that doorbell doesn't work!"

Has that ever happened to you? You know someone's home. You press the bell, but can't tell if it rang. And you wait. So begins the awkward process of figuring out whether to ring again, or to knock loudly. Maybe they didn't hear? Maybe they're occupied for the moment? They said they'd be glad to have you come over. Surely, they must know you're out here? Why don't they answer?

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." This passage from the Book of Revelation speaks of God's intense desire to always be with us wherever we are. Further explained above by one of the great spiritual guides of our time, Archimandrite Zacharias of Essex (pictured, right), the Lord desires even more than just to be with us; He waits patiently to bless us, to pour His gifts of grace on us. But it is we who must open the door; He will not force Himself into our house, our life and our heart as an unwanted guest.



A recent visit to the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Essex, England. From left to right: Archimandrite Zacharias, Father Photios Dumont (Seattle, WA), Father John Touloumes and Father Kyrill (Elder of the Monastery) seated in the Church of Saint Sliouan.

During the sometimes hectic months of summer, with travel, vacation, camps and the like, it is important for us all to remember, God still stands and knocks. And He waits. For our door to open. But more, for our heart to open. And not just once, but every time. Imagine the enthusiasm with which we would wake up every day if we knew that first thing in the morning the doorbell would ring and it would be God asking to come into our house today? In truth, He does, though without the senses of active faith and daily prayer, we can't see or hear Him, so we don't even sense He's there. Likewise, He invites us to His Holy House. And stands looking out in anticipation of us accepting His invitation. There is no such thing as a "summer off" from God, for He never ceases to be with, invite and, yes, desire us. And when we accept, it inspires others around us.

Across the world at this very moment Christians are being persecuted like no other time in our life. Churches are being destroyed. Believers are being martyred. We Americans, who walk in the Constitutionally-protected freedom of religion and assembly, as we celebrate Independence Day on July 4th, should never take those blessings for granted. We would never tolerate being told by anyone—and person, authority or government—"You cannot attend your Church this morning." Let's not allow apathy, habit or spiritual lethargy keep us from doing so either. See you in Liturgy and at Church...all summer!

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services July/August

Please take note of the following weekday services for the feast days in July and August. Unless otherwise indicated, weekday Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel (SG).

Aug. 2: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Note: The period of August 1-15 is a strict fast season.

Aug. 4: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 5: 6:30pm Great Vespers of the Transfiguration and the Blessing of the Grapes (SG)

Aug. 7: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 9: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 11: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 14: 7:00pm Great Vespers of Koimissis

Services held at our sister parishes celebrating their Feast Day in Aliquippa & Oakmont.

Aug. 15: The Falling Asleep of the Theotokos

Aug. 29: Beheading of St. John the Baptist (SG)

Note: This is a strict fast day.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Holy Trinity's Taste of Greece Labor Day Weekend

Please mark Wed., August 30, through Sun., September 3 on your calendar for this summer's "Taste of Greece" Festival. The Festival Committee is asking everyone, new members and old hands, young and young at heart, to pledge a donation of their time and talents so that we can continue to grow both the success of the festival and the fellowship with all our Holy Trinity church family members! See page 18 for information on how you can help!



Festival Ad Book Volunteers Needed!

The Festival season is quickly coming upon us. Last year's Festival was a banner event for our Holy Trinity community and this year's is looking to be even bigger. With your help, the new Ad Book provided tremendous support, and we would like to build on that success this year. We are seeking volunteers to join the 2017 Festival Ad Book committee. Please see the enclosed Ad Book flyer and form or email inquires and interest to festivalads@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Festival Food Preparation July

Cooking for the 2017 Holy Trinity "Taste of Greece" Festival is almost done...but not yet! Help is still needed for a few remaining days during both daytime and evening hours. Everyone is welcomed and everyone's help is needed...bring the kids, the Yiayias, the neighbors...no experience needed. No matter what your talent, there's something for you to do. And it's FUN! See you and your friends there!

Festival Volunteers Needed by the Day, Not Just the Hour!

The Festival Committee is looking for parishioners to fulfill a variety of roles—there is something for everyone and everyone's help will be needed! Please consider donating your day (or days!) as your offering of stewardship to Holy Trinity Church. Many of our stewards even take vacation to do so. To learn about how to help, To sign up our events site at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events and choose your slots. Thank you! Thank you for your sacrificial offerings of love!

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Sign Up for the Summer Feeding Program Weekdays

Holy Trinity Church has been blessed to serve as the host site for the new Pittsburgh branch of the FOCUS North America Summer Feeding Program. Each week from June 15-August 11, teams of local volunteers from Holy Trinity and other area churches and organizations are gathering on Monday through Friday mornings to prepare lunches in Holy Trinity Church's kitchen. The meals are then delivered to the distribution site at the Carnegie Library Extension on Federal Street on Pittsburgh's North Side, just a few blocks from Holy Trinity Church's previous location. Sign up today to volunteer at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/summer-feeding. See the complete report on page 5 of this issue.

Special General Assembly July 16

An announcement and agenda for a Special General Assembly on July 16 is enclosed. This is a brief, single-item assembly to seek approval for the purchase and installation of a new freezer section addition to our kitchen facilities. The Festival Committee has requested this addition and the Parish Council has endorsed the approval. Because of the dollar amount of the purchase, the item needs to be submitted to the Parish General Assembly for approval. Please be present for this important meeting. Thank you!

Faith Night at PNC Park. August 17

The 5th Annual Faith Night will be held on Thursday, August 17 following the Pirates-Cardinals game at 7:05 p.m. Enjoy discounted tickets for the Pirates-Cardinals game at 7:05 and stay after the game to hear Pirates Players and Coaches discuss how faith has impacted their lives, both on and off the field. Tickets are \$25 for Holy Trinity. You must call or email for reservation. 412-322-6002 jcbathanasiou@aim.com.

REGIONAL NEWS & EVENTS

Monastery Dinner September 9

Please see the enclosed flyer for the Fourth Annual Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery Fundraising Dinner on September 9. This year's theme is "All Generations Will Call Me Blessed." The event starts at 3:00pm with Vespers followed by dinner at 4:00pm at St. Nicholas. Reservations can be made online at 2017DinnerBanquet.eventbrite.com. Reservations deadline is September 1 and the requested donation is \$100 per person.

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

JULY-AUGUST 2017 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



Father John Androutsopoulos

The Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

August 6 is the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor. (Read the Gospel of the Feast: Matthew 17: 1-9).

Troparion of the Feast: "You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your

disciples Your glory, as much as they could bear. Shine also upon us sinners with Your everlasting light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, Glory to You!"

About the Feast of the Transfiguration

The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord is one of the 12 Great Feasts of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church. When Jesus, our Lord and Master, took three of His Disciples – Peter, James and John – to the top of Mount Tabor, He truly prefigured His Resurrection on that memorable day. These three disciples were to be with Jesus at His betrayal, so He wanted them to see the wonderful event so that they might not be dismayed and distressed at His suffering at the crucifixion.

Mount Tabor was covered with light during the Transfiguration; the light was so bright that the three Disciples threw themselves on the ground, unable to look upon the transfigured Lord. He did shine forth in glory. At that glorious revelation, Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with Christ that they might manifest that He was the Lord of the living and the dead, and that He was the God who spoke of old in the law and the Prophets, and He was the One to whom the voice of the Father did bear witness from a radiant cloud saying, "This is My Beloved Son, hear Him."

The Transfiguration was the mystery hidden before the ages, and now it was revealed before Peter, James and John. They were not able to stand the radiance of Christ's countenance and the splendor of his garments, so they fell down on their faces, kneeling, and being overcome with astonishment at the sight of Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

My beloved: Each Feast day of our Church has its special message for us Orthodox Christians, if we would just take the time to study or meditate the occasion and the meaning of the Feast. The Feast of the Transfiguration uplifts us. We are shown the glory of our Lord and Savior, and we are inspired by the events of the Transfiguration. It is customary for grapes to be blessed on this radiant and glorious Feast day. In the Old Testament, God ordered the blessing of the first fruits of

the season. We continue to obey this order of God. We are grateful for the blessing that God has bestowed on us. "How great are Thy works, O Lord, Thou has made all things in wisdom."

Questions and Answers on the Gospel of the Feast

Why was Christ transfigured before His Disciples on Mount Tabor?

To confirm their faith in His divinity; to guard them against doubts when they should afterwards see Him die on the Cross; to encourage all of the faithful to be patient in all crosses and afflictions, for the bodies of the just will be made like the glorified body of Christ as their resurrection. (Phil. 3: 21)

Why did Moses and Elijah appear?

To testify that Jesus was really the Saviour announced by the prophets on the Old Law, and to be witnesses of the founding of the New Law.

When we get to heaven, will we recognize those who are already there?

Will we know Moses, David, Peter and Paul? Yes, I think God will give us the same spiritual inspiration that He gave to Peter, James and John. Moses had been dead 1480 years and Elijah for 900 years. Yet, here they are alive and the disciples saw them and heard them talking.

And, will we recognize our loved ones to whom we have said goodbye down here?

Surely, I think that God will give us that privilege and that blessing if we are in the same place, the place of the Just, because

there is another place of the unjust. Jesus said I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am you are going to be also. The other place is prepared for the devil and his followers. Let us remember that heaven is a prepared place for prepared people.

Some Reminders about Fasting in August

Though it falls during the August 1-15 fast, fish is permitted on the Transfiguration, Sunday, August 6th. And do not forget that August 29th, the day of the Beheading of the Glorious Forerunner John the Baptist, is a strict fast on whichever day it falls.

As always, those with serious illness have a special fasting exception. Consult with your spiritual father.



Interior of the Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, Israel.

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

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH KICKS OFF MAJOR NEW MINISTRY AS THE HOST SITE FOR THE FOCUS NORTH AMERICA SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM: THE LOVE OF THE GOSPEL IN ACTION!

Holy Trinity Church has taken a historic step forward in its Outreach and Philanthropic ministries by being selected as a Host Site for the FOCUS North America Summer Feeding Program in Pittsburgh. James Portellos, Summer Feeding Operations Manager for FOCUS, made an official presentation to the Holy Trinity Parish Council on February 21, describing the program's mission, requirements and logistics. After a thorough discussion, the Parish Council voted unanimously to offer our facilities as the Host Site for the program beginning in 2017. The program began its first day of operations on June 13.

About the Summer Feeding Program

Over 45,000 children in Allegheny County struggle with hunger because they do not have regular access to nutritious and affordable food. Each month their families are faced with a difficult decision: pay the rent or buy groceries.

While the reach of federal nutrition programs is significant, thousands of food-insecure Pittsburgh children still go hungry, especially during the summer months when there are no free or reduced school lunch programs. There are long-term impacts of child hunger that extend beyond the discomfort of being hungry. Food-insecure children, according to Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, are more likely to suffer in areas of education and behavior. This summer, through its Summer Feeding Program, FOCUS will serve thousands of meals across the country in seven cities, including Pittsburgh.

How Holy Trinity Church is Helping

In designing the new Holy Trinity Church facilities—which opened in June of 2013—our architect worked with the community, its ministries and committees to do a needs analysis so that the final project would serve the current and future ministry requirements of the parish. One of the results of that process is the inclusion of two wonderfully-equipped, large

kitchens and food preparation areas that are able to support our daily needs, our caterer's work for the community and, of course, the tens of thousands of guests who attend our annual Greek Festival.

Those great facilities also provide us the opportunity to extend our mission beyond the walls of our own church by using them for worthy philanthropic causes, and the FOCUS Summer Feeding Program is a perfect fit. Just as Holy Trinity Church used to open its community center on the North Side in cooperation with the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood on a regular basis to feed the homeless, we now also have the opportunity once again to use our facilities to do the work of the Gospel in a new and rewarding way.



Up and Running for 2017

Each week from June 15-August 11, teams of local volunteers from Holy Trinity and other area churches and organizations are gathering on Monday through Friday mornings to prepare lunches in Holy Trinity Church's kitchen. The meals are then delivered to the distribution site at the Carnegie Library Extension on Federal Street on Pittsburgh's North Side, just a few blocks from Holy Trinity Church's previous location.

According to FOCUS Site Coordinator Dan Delvitto (pictured above), "We've had quite a few children showing for lunch up every day. They're enjoying the food They're enjoying the videos. They're enjoying the company. They're very thankful. They're very respectful." What's the most rewarding part of interacting with them? "Smiles and happiness!" says Dan.

As far as community response, Dan says, "The volunteers have been great. Many of them actually join us to serve the children as well. They immediately connect with them."

And how has Dan found the Holy Trinity facilities? "It's an excellent kitchen and the facilities are more than good, to say the least!" Glory to God!

Get Information and Volunteer!

For more information or to volunteer, visit the Holy Trinity Church website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/summer-feeding.

Stewardship: Investing in Our Community

As a young couple, Stephanie and I are beginning to think about how we want to invest our money so that it will pay dividends for us when we are older. We are setting aside money for things we want right now, saving money for big expenses we know we'll have in the next few years, and also starting to put some away to gain interest for our eventual retirement.

When we think about what we want to invest in, it isn't just monetary returns that we hope to get back. That is to



Niko Petrogeorge and Stephanie Baker
Young Adult Couple.
Holy Trinity Stewards.
Engaged to be married in July

say, we feel that it is equally as important to invest in our community, so that in the future, that community will be there to share our struggles and joys. That community will help build us up, support us, and give our lives meaning. In short, we believe that now is the time to invest our time, talent, and treasures at our church, so that as our family grows and matures, we will have that church to be a part of.

Neither Stephanie nor I are from Pittsburgh and we don't have much family in the area. Having

both grown up as Orthodox Christians and being actively involved with our

respective churches, we feel blessed that Holy Trinity feels like a natural home. It is familiar and welcoming, and we know that as long as we are in Pittsburgh, our church will always be a place that we can come to center ourselves. Even beyond the four walls of the church of Holy Trinity, we've been able to take the sense of community, purpose, and peace that we find there and carry it into our everyday lives. While the distance from our home makes it difficult sometimes to get to Holy Trinity, being able to be there, even if it's just once a week, offers us a perspective on what is important in life.

For us, our stewardship starts with a monthly financial

contribution. We know that by giving sacrificially to the church, the rewards we will reap will be returned many fold. We all know that the church cannot operate without cash, and we are happy to give generously so that our programs can grow. In addition to financial stewardship, we pray for the Holy Trinity community and all those who attend, as well as those whom the parish serves through charitable outreach.

Stephanie and I have also given our time to various ministries. We've volunteered to help cook for the festival, which has been a great opportunity to meet and get to know people we've seen dozens of times on Sunday, but would have never been able to have a conversation with. Volunteering both in the food preparation and at the festival itself has been instrumental in making us feel like a part of the Holy Trinity community.

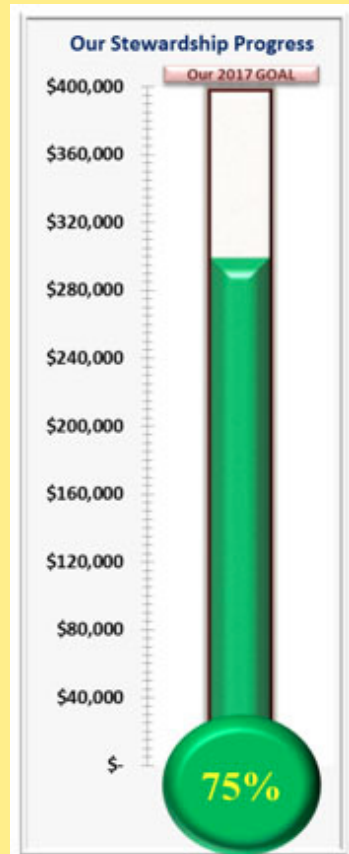
Both of us have also been involved in chanting the services with our Protopsalti, George. Our life at Holy Trinity really begins and ends with prayer, centered around our liturgical services. As the traditional music of our church, it is critically important that our Byzantine chant continues to not only survive, but to thrive, to be passed on for generations. I feel grateful to those who have helped to begin to train me in this music so that we can all find peace and prayer in the traditional services of our church. We are deeply grateful to the Holy Trinity community and look forward to continuing to invest our time, talent, and treasure to the building of this community and to the glory of God.

2017 STEWARDSHIP PROGRESS:

What Does This Thermometer Mean?

It's an easy way to view our progress toward our goals. The green fills up as our pledges come in. (This also includes donations from parishioners without a pledge card.)

So far, we have \$299,325 in pledges and support, which gets us to 75% of our goal of \$400,000 for the year, with \$100,676 remaining to get us there!



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

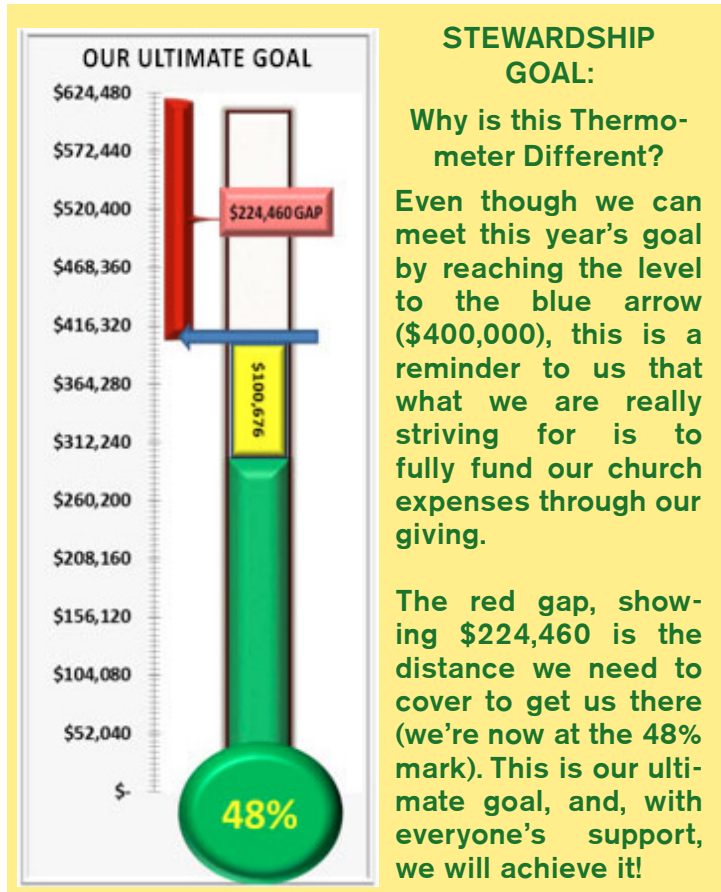
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 Ms. Alexandra Valliant
 Miss Harriet Valliant
 Mr & Mrs Gerri Valliant
 Mr Peter Valliant
 Mrs Anna Vozos
 Mrs. Christina Waters
 Mrs Elaine Weaver
 Miss Mary-Magdalene Welsh
 Mr & Mrs Daniel Willow
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zagnacky
 Mr. & Mrs. George Zappas
 Dr & Mrs Antonios Zikos
 Mrs. Dorothea K. Zikos
 Mr & Mrs Anthony Zissis
 Ms Anna Zissis



THE HOLY TRINITY BROADCAST MINISTRY: SHARING THE LIVE INTERNET VIDEO BROADCAST + LIVE INTERNET AUDIO BROADCAST IN-HOUSE DISPLAYS + PITTSBURGH FAITH AND FAMILY CHANNEL

Editor's Note:

When the new Holy Trinity Church was built, it was designed with our Mission Statement in mind, which includes the phrase, "...to proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith..."

One of the ways we prepared to proclaim that Faith was by incorporating the technology needed to broadcast and record our services. We didn't really know at the time what that fully meant, but we understood that it was important to provide for it.

Since then, the Lord has blessed us and allowed us to become a blessing for others by extending the worship and teachings of the Church to many who cannot attend or would like to replay services, celebrations, sermons or teachings. And we were invited to be the presence of Orthodoxy on the Cornerstone Television Network's "Pittsburgh Faith and Family Channel."

Many people and other churches have asked about how we do it. This article is here to explain that, and to also highlight the tremendous talents and contributions of our Broadcast Ministry leader, Melanie Hulse. Many thanks to those whose insights and contributions made these capabilities possible, and to Melanie for her on-going service to the community through this ministry.

With thanks in Christ, Father John

The Holy Trinity Broadcast Ministry at Holy Trinity is an outreach program serving not only our parish, but extending to our neighboring community as well as Orthodox Christians worldwide. The mission is to provide a way to bring our services to people who may not have a way to attend; to serve as an educational resource for people who are interested in learning more about our faith; and to invite our neighbors to worship with us.

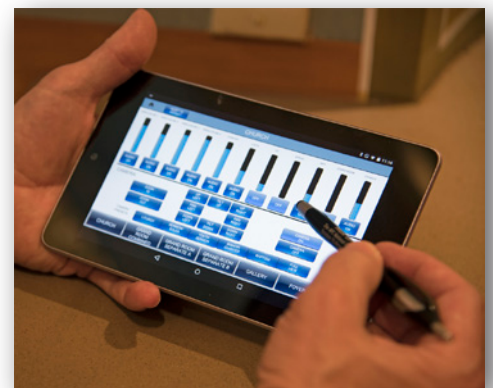


Melanie Hulse

worship services. As the ministry grew and word spread to other parishes about the Broadcast Ministry, Fr. John received many inquiries about this new outreach program. Today the Broadcast Ministry includes the live broadcast, the cable broadcast, and a complete archive of the weekly Liturgy and Orthros as well as Holy Week services. Future plans for the ministry include the capability to air live feeds of special services held at the Saint George Chapel.

Laying the Foundations

When the broadcast facilities were being designed into the plans of the new church, a team of professionals (Dagostino Electronic Services and Kinetics Audio) and volunteers put many hours into making it possible, coordinated by Nikki Marsh, a Holy Trinity parishioner. Audio and video broadcast was made possible throughout the church campus with large screens and even rock speakers outdoors. For external broadcast, we utilized the resources of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Internet Ministries Department, which provides the live streaming infrastructure.



One of the Custom-Programmed Android Master Control Tablets

In the Beginning



The Church A/V Rack

With the move to the new church in 2013, we began making the live broadcast of our services accessible via the church's website with the intention of providing a way for home-bound or traveling parishioners to stay connected to their home parish and community. In 2014, Cornerstone Television, a national, non-commercial Christian cable network based in Pittsburgh, began airing the church's weekly Liturgy on the "Pittsburgh Faith and Family Channel," a new concept being piloted in Pittsburgh and designed to provide continuous broadcasts of local

With the growing ministry came the need to involve more people in the process. Fr. John began looking for someone to assist with the weekly editing when he discovered Melanie Hulse, a teen parishioner with an interest in video production. In the her first in-depth interview, Melanie offers here the inside look at how it all happens.

WORSHIP AND TEACHINGS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH
PODCAST + YOUTUBE VIDEO GALLERY + ONLINE SERMON PODCASTS
TEL BROADCASTS + TELEVISION + COMPUTER + SMARTPHONE

How did you become involved with the Broadcast Ministry?

In May of 2015, Fr. John asked my father to help out with the weekly editing of the cable broadcast. Since my father didn't have extra time to offer, he suggested that Fr. John talk with me. I had started video editing as a hobby and had an interest in expanding my skills. I met with Fr. John to talk about the commitment and the rest is history. He spent time teaching me about the system and the process he used. Then I had a few weeks to practice before going solo in September. At 15, I became the Editor for the Broadcast Ministry. It has been a wonderful opportunity to serve the church on a regular basis. I have really enjoyed learning about how the system for a live broadcast works and perfecting my own editing skills.

What are the components of the Broadcast Ministry?

When I started, we had the live feed of the weekly Sunday Orthros and Liturgy plus the edited weekly Sunday Liturgy for the cable broadcast. Fr. John had also set up the YouTube Channel for the archiving the videos. Aside from a few special events, there wasn't much there (yet).

Now I keep the channel up to date with full Orthros and Liturgies added weekly. I also edit the audio of the sermons that you see posted on the home page of the church's website. And I edit and upload some of the special events that you see on the channel. All this is accessible from our parish's website, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org, by selecting Multimedia from the menu.

What is your process for producing the videos?

1) Download: First, I start by downloading the live broadcast later that evening. I can access the computer remotely to download the stored file from the computer that is used to control the video and audio in the church.

2) Edit Videos for Website: Once I have the download, I convert the file to a different format. Then I start with the edits for Orthros and Liturgy. First I check the audio levels and

adjust them as needed. Next I add the title slides. The file is then ready to render and is saved for uploading to the YouTube Channel later in the process.

3) Edit and Upload Sermon Audio files: Once that is done, I go back to the original file and extract the audio from the sermons. This part is fairly fast, so I upload the sermons to the website as soon as they are finished.

4) Edit and Upload for PFFC Cable Broadcast.

Then it is time to work on the Liturgy for the Pittsburgh Faith and Family Channel. The service airs three times a week and must be uploaded to their system by Tuesday morning.



Faith and Family Channel Website

My goal is to complete that upload on Sunday night in order to have enough time to fix a problem should one arise. I have a "formula" for editing the video down to the required limit of 58 minutes, 30 seconds.

Throughout the broadcast and at the end, I insert the church's address and website. Since this is a very abbreviated version of Liturgy, one goal of this ministry is to get people interested in our church and in Orthodoxy.

5) Upload videos to YouTube/HT Website: After rendering and uploading the PFFN broadcast, I go back to the Orthros and Liturgy and upload those to YouTube.

How long does all of this take?

I try to start my download by about 5 p.m. on Sunday. If I can work straight through on the editing, the upload will be finished by about 9:30 p.m. While the upload runs, I can do homework. So it is not a solid time commitment. When I first started, I used Adobe Premiere Elements on a PC. Last fall, I upgraded to a faster processor in a MacBook and started using Final Cut Pro X. Even with the time required to learn a new operating system and professional level editing software, I can see a big difference in the time it takes me to complete the process. It is much easier and faster! Each week I try to have everything uploaded within 24 hours and most of the time it is available within 12 hours.

So if you average five and a half hours each week, that is 286 hours a year. That is a huge commitment of service to the community.



HT Website Live Broadcast

What have you gained from the experience?

I believe that community service is not what you get out of it, but what others gain from your contribution. With the Broadcast Ministry, I have been able to use my talents to give back to the church, and offering time and talents is a form of stewardship. I enjoy video editing and am happy that I can do it for the good of the church community.

In giving back, I have also received. As strange as this might sound, I have enjoyed learning more about marketing and analytics through our YouTube Channel. Each week I am



Broadcast Ministry Team Meeting

amazed at the reach of our Broadcast Ministry. Currently we have 415 subscribers worldwide. Yes, that is worldwide! While I cannot see who they are, I can see where they are watching. We have viewers from Greece, Romania, Italy, Serbia, and many other countries.

amazed at the reach of our Broadcast Ministry. Currently we have 415 subscribers worldwide. Yes, that is worldwide! While I cannot see who they are, I can see where they are watching.

What are your goals for the Broadcast Ministry?

My main goal for this year is to get the word out about how to access our live feed and videos. While the live feed and videos are not intended to replace being at church, they serve a great purpose for our parishioners who may not otherwise be able to attend due to illness or travel. While the link to our live feed is posted on the Archdiocese and OCF website, the YouTube channel subscribers are scattered worldwide. I'd like for our local parishioners to know that this service is here for them too. I would also like to improve the quality of our titles and graphics. So this summer, I am learning how to use Apple Motion, a software package that works with Final Cut Pro X.

High school graduation is around the corner. What happens with the Broadcast Ministry and your future plans?

The beauty of the process is that it can be done remotely and I look forward to continuing as video editor as long as my time allows. However, my goal is to attend college locally so that I can continue to work in my family's business. I plan to major in business and something in video production depending on what college I attend. So the Broadcast Ministry and my future plan work very well together.

Do you have anything else to add?

I would like to thank Fr. John for trusting in me with this responsibility. I am looking forward to seeing how we can continue to grow the Broadcast Ministry and reach more people within the parish, within the greater Pittsburgh area, and worldwide.

THE HARDWARE, SOFTWARE AND SERVICES IT TAKES TO RUN THE BROADCAST MINISTRY

THE CAMERA:

Vaddio ClearView HD-19 High Definition 1/3-Type Exmor high-speed CMOS Image Sensor PTZ video camera.



THE COMPUTER:



Apple 15" Macbook Pro (Late 2016) running macOS 10.12.5; 2.8 GHz Intel Core i7, 16GB RAM, 512GB SSD, AMD Radeon Pro 450 GPU; External Porsche Design 2TB USB-C hard drive for storage of raw and rendered videos.

THE SOFTWARE:

Apple Final Cut Pro X 10.3: Video editing and creation.
Handbrake: Video media conversion.
FileZilla: Upload files for cable system broadcast.
GoToMyPC: Download raw video from A/V system.

THE A/V SYSTEM:

Custom-designed facility-wide A/V system and control pads

VIEWER FEEDBACK

I wanted to thank you sincerely for the broadcasts of your services at Holy Trinity.

I'm a university student from Massachusetts, but

I am studying in Europe this year and I thought that I was going to miss out on Holy Week entirely until I discovered that these livestreams exist. I was able to join in for the end of the week in Pittsburgh since it's in the closest U.S. time zone to me. It was so amazing being able to understand the words of a service again, and I will admit to becoming no small bit emotional when you asked the congregation to sing Χριστός ἀνέστη with those of us watching. It did make me feel not alone. I just wanted to share this with you so you would know how much it meant to someone.



Church School Graduation | Community Life Photo Journal

Congratulations to all our students and many thanks to the Church School staff, parents and volunteers for a successful year!



Pre-School Class



Kindergarten Class



First-Second Grade Class



Third-Fourth Grade Class



Fifth-Sixth Grade Class



Seventh-Eighth Grade Class



Ninth-Tenth Grade Class



Eleventh Grade Class



Graduating Seniors and Their Families



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH CLASS OF 2017

Please join us in celebrating the talents and God-given gifts of the students from Holy Trinity Church who are graduating from high school this year. We also thank God for the families, relatives and community which have nurtured them in the rich soil of the Holy Orthodox Faith. May God be with them always!

Themistocles Balouris Pine-Richland High School



Themis graduated from Pine-Richland High School as 4-year Honor Roll student. He played on the football team for 4 years. He is the recipient of the Technology Award and participated in the March of Dimes Walk for 3 years. He has been very involved in church activities, including serving as an Acolyte, a HOPE, JOY and GOYA member and is currently GOYA President. He has played GOYA basketball and volleyball and has been a long-time Greek dancer and Greek Festival volunteer. Themis has been active in philanthropic work, at the Pleasant Valley Shelter and the FOCUS lunch program. He has also participated in multiple mission trips. He will attend the University of Dayton and major in Engineering and Business.

Elizabeth Durosko North Allegheny High School



Elizabeth graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School as a 2-year member of the National Honor Society. She was also involved in many organizations, including the Health Occupations Students of America, Spanish Club and Student Council. She enjoys studying languages and has received the National Spanish Exam Silver and Gold Awards. She also recently received the Greek Nationality Room Independence Day Poetry Scholarship. Elizabeth has been active in Church School, Greek Dance and GOYA, including playing GOYA basketball and volleyball. She will attend the University of Pittsburgh at the College of Arts and Sciences.

Maggie Fitzpatrick Seneca Valley High School

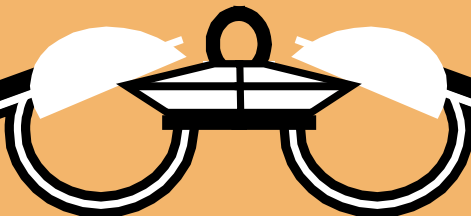


Maggie graduated with Highest Honors from Seneca Valley Senior High School. She was a member of the Color Guard for 4 years and Captain for 2. She was active in musical theater and Concert Band, where she played trumpet, and was President of the Chess Club. She also started a support group for victims of bullying. She has been active at Holy Trinity Church, with Church School, GOYA, summer camp, retreats, choir, Greek dance and philanthropic work. Maggie is the producer of a forthcoming video, "My Big Fat Greek Festival," which documents the Holy Trinity Greek Festival. She will attend the University of Dayton and major in Marketing and Communications. She will also be in the Marching Band Color Guard.

Niko Mermigas North Allegheny High School



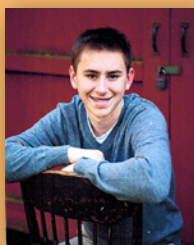
Niko graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School as a scholar athlete. He has been awarded several local and national athletic scholarships for his performance on the football field. He served as captain of the North Allegheny football team and received 3 varsity letters for football. He was also a WPIAL First Team All-Conference Wide Receiver and was named to the North Pittsburgh Fabulous 22 during his junior year. He also worked with the Project Water Association at NA. Niko has been active at Holy Trinity in many ways, including Church School, GOYA, Acolyte service, Greek Festival volunteer work and a player in the Holy Trinity Golf Classics. He will attend Dartmouth College and major in Economics. He will also play on the university's football team.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

Hank Morris

North Allegheny High School



Hank (Steven) Morris graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School. He was active in sports and was a North Allegheny Baseball Association veteran for 5 years. In all he has played baseball for 13 years. At Holy Trinity Church, Hank has been a life-long student of Church School, a member of GOYA for four years and has been involved in GOYA basketball and volleyball, the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp and other GOYA events. He has also been a participant in GOYA mission trips for 4 years and an active Holy Trinity Greek Festival volunteer. He will attend Xavier University where he will major in Business Management.

Christos Pappas

North Allegheny High School



Chris graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School on the High Honor Roll and the Higher QPA Roll. He received the Student Excellence Award for Pre-Calc and Honors Senior French. He was active in hockey, playing for 3 years on the Foxes travel team and playing for the North Allegheny Varsity Inline Hockey team. Chris has played violin since 3rd grade and was in the North Allegheny Orchestra. At Holy Trinity Church, Chris has served as an Acolyte and has been an active Holy Trinity Greek Festival volunteer. He has also participated in Greek School for 6 years.

Jack Passodelis

North Allegheny High School



Jack graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School as a member of the National Honor Society and a 4-year All Academic Scholar Athlete. He also received the Student Excellence Award. He competed in club soccer for 10 years and was captain of the NA Varsity Soccer Team. Jack was named an WPIAL All-Section and Finest 15 Honorable Mention player. He also played lead trumpet in the NA Jazz and Honors Wind Ensemble. He has participated in Holy Trinity Church School, GOYA, Greek Festivals and played GOYA basketball. He will attend The College of William and Mary and major in Applied Mathematics and Economics, with a minor in Music.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

(Proverbs 9.10)



Keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; keep my commandments and live. (Proverbs 7.1-2)



June 13/14, 2017: Holy Trinity GOYA took its annual Summer Fun & Mission Trip to Ohio in June. The teens enjoyed a hot and sunny summer day riding the coasters (and playing Arcade games!) at Cedar Point on Tuesday, joined by GOYAnS from other parishes from Ohio. They then moved on to the Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery in Perrysville, where they offered a day of mission work, prayer and Q&A discussion time with the Gheronda of the Monastery, Father Joseph.



May 30, 2017: Holy Trinity GOYA hosted its annual Senior Recognition Dinner at Heinz Ward's Table 86 restaurant. The juniors upheld their annual tradition of presenting the graduating seniors with gifts commemorating their GOYA years and memorable moments. The seniors also had an opportunity to offer their reflections on their years in this foundational Orthodox Christian teen ministry and the life-long friends they have made.



June 11, 2017: The GOYA teens got out the buckets and rolled up their sleeves for their first GOYA Car Wash at the new Holy Trinity location. Lots of parishioners dropped off their cars during Coffee Hour and the GOYAns went to work! Funds raised by GOYA go to support their many activities, including trips, events, sports uniforms, retreats and all the other fun-and-faith-building opportunities.





April 22, 2017: The Metropolis of Pittsburgh celebrated its Fourth Annual Saint Photios Awards Banquet at the Sheraton Station Square. Each parish is asked to submit two names of “unsung heroes” who have served the life of the Church. Each awardee is given a special Saint Photios Award pin and plaque and has his/her picture taken with His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. This year, Holy Trinity Church’s recipients were Stella Athanasiou and George Lalikos. The banquet was attended by many Holy Trinity friends and family members.



In the spirit of thanksgiving for the dedicated work rendered by the faithful of this Metropolis in service of their Lord through their dedicated stewardship to the parishes, the Metropolis of Pittsburgh recognizes the volunteers of our parishes at the Annual St. Photios Awards Banquet. 2017 Holy Trinity Recipients: Stella Athanasiou and George Lalikos. Congratulations and thanks to both!



“Crown Them With Glory and Honor”: One of the ways the glory and honor of marriage is celebrated at Holy Trinity Church is the blessing of couples on significant wedding anniversaries. Pictured below are Michael and Angela Leist (left), who celebrated 25 years on June 4, and Anthony and Helen Balouris (right), whose children and grandchildren joined them in celebrating 60 years of wedded life.



May 13, 2017: Holy Trinity Church was honored to host the 2017 Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Metropolis Finals. Twelve fine speeches were offered, six by Junior Division regional finalists and six by Senior Division winners. Of those, one from each division was selected by a panel of impartial judges to represent the Metropolis at the Archdiocese Finals level in Boston on June 10. For the first time (at least the first time known by anyone involved), both finalists came from the same parish: our own Holy Trinity Church! Congratulations to Stefan Bordeianu (Senior Division) and Evan Chrisanthus (Junior Division) for their excellent presentations and for being chosen as winners to go to nationals. For their speeches and Boston photos, see page 20-21.



April 22, 2017: Stefania Bounos and 2 other classmates from the 4th grade Greek School class at St Nicholas Cathedral competed at the Greek Language Festival held the Cathedral. Each won first place and each girl received a trophy. Well done! Axioi!



May 28, 2017: Holy Trinity Church was also honored to host a gathering of the YES Leadership Team of FOCUS North America. They came from around the country to Pittsburgh this weekend for leadership training and joined us for Divine Liturgy, then met in the Fireside Room. Katrina Bitar, YES Program Leader, expressed her thanks to the community: “Thank you so much for your hospitality and love. The YES leaders were truly touched by your kindness and interest in them.”



THE 2017 "TASTE OF GREECE": WED. AUG. 30-SUN. SEP. 3

This is it! Thanks to all the good work, labors of love and sacrificial offerings of the Holy Trinity family and friends, cooking for the 2017 Holy Trinity "Taste of Greece" Festival is *almost* done...but *not yet!* Help is still needed for a few remaining days during both daytime and evening hours. Everyone is welcomed and everyone's help is needed...bring the kids, the Yiayias, the neighbors...no experience needed. No matter what your talent, there's something for you to do. And it's FUN!

JULY COOKING DATES		
Fri. 7/7	8am-9pm	Souvlakia
Sat. 7/8	9am-5pm	Souvlakia
Thu. 7/20	9am-9pm	Moussaka
Fri. 7/21	9am-9pm	Moussaka
Sat. 7/22	9am-5pm	Moussaka
Sun. 7/23	After Liturgy	Moussaka

HOLY TRINITY'S TASTE OF GREECE

A variety of your favorite Greek food and pastry

Aug 30 - Sept 3, 2017
Wed - Sun • 11 am - 9 pm

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
985 Providence Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
(Corner of Babcock & Cumberland across from UPMC Passavant)

Free Parking and Shuttle Service Available from the GREEN LOT at UPMC Passavant
Shuttle Hours: Wed-Fri 5-11pm; Sat-Sun 10am-11pm

412-366-8700
www.holytrinitypgh.org

SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL BY SPREADING THE WORD!

The 2017 "Taste of Greece" flyer is ready for you to share! A copy is enclosed and it is available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/festival. Also, please post your yard signs in July!

SUPPORT THE FESTIVAL BY SPONSORING AN AD IN THE 2017 HOLY TRINITY GREEK FESTIVAL AD BOOK!

We are asking for you to support the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church "Taste of Greece" Festival, held again this year during Labor Day weekend, by placing an ad in the Greek Festival Ad Book. See the enclosed flyer/form.

DISPLAY YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN THE 2017 HOLY TRINITY GREEK FESTIVAL AD BOOK

We are asking for you to support the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church "Taste of Greece" Festival, held again this year during Labor Day weekend, by placing an ad in the Greek Festival Ad Book.

Wednesday, August 30 through Sunday, September 3, 2017

We have firmly planted our cuisine, culture and Faith in Pittsburgh's North Hills Community. Last year's festival was an overwhelming success on all fronts. We continue to reach and exceed our projections. Holy Trinity has a long history of presenting fantastic Greek festivals. Last year our "Taste of Greece" Festival was a huge success due to the generosity of the over 40,000 guests who attended.

We are looking for your support and sponsorship by placing an advertisement in the 2017 Taste of Greece Festival Ad Program Booklet which will be distributed to our over 40,000 guests. Please feel free to pass this along to your family, friends and favorite business establishments.

Page Size	Print Dimensions	Black & White	Color	Notes
Front inside cover	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Front inside facing page	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Center Page-left	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Center Page-right	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Back inside page-left	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Back inside page-right	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Back Cover	5.5" x 8.5"	\$1,000	\$1,200	Includes 15 second video display ad
Full Page inside	5.5" x 8.5"	\$500	\$700	Includes 15 second video display ad
Half Page	5.5" x 4.25"	\$250		
Quarter Page	5.5" x 2.75"	\$125		

Included with the purchase of premium ad space, as detailed above, this year we will again be offering digital signage display ads. The ads will be shown in our Grand Room on two 108-inch 720p HD projection screens, as well as on two 54-inch HD monitors in our Gallery and a 48" HD monitor in our Foyer entrance where the majority of festival queuing occurs. What a great way to create exposure for your business or honor a special event or family celebration! Each ad will be shown continuously for 15 seconds every 15 minutes.

The deadline for placing an advertisement or personal/family message in the Food Festival Ad Book is Friday July 28th, 2017.

- Please submit all ads in .png or .jpg format.
- Digital display ads are 1280x720 (720p) resolution and require "landscape orientation" for submission.
- Printed Festival Book ads are to be submitted in "portrait orientation" at print dimension size listed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!



BE THERE FOR THE "WORLD PREMIERE" OF THE "MY BIG FAT GREEK FESTIVAL" DOCUMENTARY ON JULY 2ND!

Holy Trinity Church's very own Maggie Fitzpatrick spent many months documenting, videoing, interviewing and editing materials for a film-making course project based on the Holy Trinity "Taste of Greece" Festival. This professional-quality production will be premiered on the big screens in the Grand Room during Coffee Hour on Sunday, July 2, following Divine Liturgy. Come and see the "behind the scenes" look at what it takes to put together the biggest, fattest Greek Festival in the Pittsburgh region! It's great fun everyone will enjoy. Admission is free.

“Fox Chapel Grad Pantelas Hitting All the Right Notes”

Forget the southern twang, Indiana Township native Aris Paul Pantelas has a little Pittsburghese in his country-style music. The 25-year-old started writing music as a teen at Dorseyville Middle School and has since been recognized locally and nationally for his singing, songwriting and instrumental talent.

Stardom struck for Pantelas even before he graduated from Fox Chapel Area in 2009, and now he prepares to release his first album, “Drive All Night.”

“When I first started out singing in Nashville, people were like, ‘He’s got this strange twang about him,’ and they just couldn’t place it,” Pantelas said. “I think it’s the Pittsburghese that they just couldn’t figure out.”

While he appreciates the sound of country icons like Willie Nelson and Patsy Cline, Pantelas also harbors a love for classic rock, blues, soul and his native Greek music.

Music was – and still is – a lifestyle for the Pantelas family. He starting strumming his first chords at age nine.

“My dad just had guitars lying around the house, so I began messing with them young,” Pantelas said.

His father, Paul Pantelas, was a touring guitarist playing Greek music, blues and rock. With WDVE on his dad’s car radio, he got a crash course in classic rock.

“I grew up loving it all,” he said.

In the late 1980s, his father and uncle opened Excuses Bar and Grill in the South Side, a home for beer, burgers and live blues music. Still open, Pantelas now performs there regularly.

“Back in the day, South Side only had a handful of bars, believe it or not, and Excuses was known as the music one,” Pantelas said. “That was back when Pittsburgh’s music scene was just starting out.”

In middle and high school, Pantelas performed with the same band, but never under the same name. From Mickey Murder and the Quartet, to Car Chase Explosions, Pantelas and his group would perform for school pep rallies and other school functions. It wasn’t until his junior year he began entering his instrumental composition into regional and state competitions, leading to his Nashville recognition.

“It was sort of a developmental thing where they wanted me to write songs,” Pantelas said. “I was blown away at age 17 and 18 where I was going down to Nashville and seeing all the stars.”

Between his junior and senior year, Pantelas was flying to the Music City for a couple of weeks every three to four months.

He kept writing while attending Allegheny College to

receive his finance degree. In 2016, Pantelas won the WYEP Dos Equis Singer-Songwriter of the Year contest, and later that year, opened at Club Café for Raelyn Nelson, Willie Nelson’s granddaughter.

It was at Excuses five years ago that Pantelas’ father introduced him to Bill Toms, a Pittsburgh musician who has played and written for Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan. Since, Toms has not only mentored Pantelas, but also welcomed him on stage to perform.

His personality, songwriting ability and performance skills are what makes Pantelas stand out in the Pittsburgh music scene, Toms said.

“It seems to be he’s really discovering his own voice as a songwriter,” Toms said. “As a roots-oriented songwriter... He’s in line with rhythm and blues and is oriented with a little bit of folk and that Nashville sound as well.”

While juggling full-time construction work during the day, Pantelas’ nights are long as he prepares to release his full album and perform at next month’s Three River’s Arts Festival. The album is a collection of songs dating back to his college days, only a portion of what he’s written over the years.

“I am beyond excited to finally get these songs out there,” Pantelas said. “There is so much development that goes into it with a lot of time, a lot of money and a lot of working things out.”

His current EP – what he calls a tease to his soon-to-be released album – can be heard on WYEP, iTunes, Soundcloud and The Rivers Edge web radio station.

“I never stop writing and I actually have a whole catalogue full that could make many more albums.”

Despite performing and working in different cities, Pantelas said Pittsburgh’s growing music scene holds the most promise for him.

“Each Pittsburgh village holds its own renaissance of music, and I think that’s really cool,” Pantelas said.

His band standing next to him on stage consists of two guitarists, a drummer and a bass player, but one day he hopes for it to grow.

“My dream band is one of those giant rock ensembles that you do soul, country and all that because you just have so many players,” he said.

Christine Manganas is a freelance writer.

Article appeared in:

triblive.com/local/foxchapel/12256517-74/fox-chapel-grad-pantelas-hitting-all-the-right-notes



Metropolis of Pittsburgh Junior Division Winner Evan Chrisanthus: "Send Me"

Oratorical Festival Junior Division Topic 4

"The Orthodox Church venerates saints and martyrs every day. Talk about a saint whose life inspires you to be a better Orthodox Christian."

As the Christians gathered to worship deep in the catacombs, the priest requested volunteers to take the Eucharist to the jailed Christians to give them courage. Whoever went would surely be arrested if they were caught, and the Holy Gifts would fall into the hands of unbelievers. "Send me," said a young boy named Tarsizios. He convinced them that no one would suspect him because of his age.

So, Tarsizios held the Eucharist close to his heart and traveled to the prisons. Along the way, he encountered some boys his age that asked him what he carried. Unwilling to surrender the Eucharist, the boys began to beat him mercilessly. A soldier and secret Christian saw this and chased the boys off, but by then, Tarsizios succumbed to his injuries. Miraculously the Eucharist was found intact, meaning Tarsizios fought with each breath to protect the Body of Christ. This boy, no more than fourteen, clung to Christ, and gained the crown of martyrdom. But how can this boy martyr who lived almost two millen-

nia ago be an inspiration to my life? After all, the times of Christian persecution are over. But what if I told you that the last 120 years have been the bloodiest time for Christianity?

During the 20th Century, over 30 million Christians were martyred, over 20 million in Russia alone under Communism. Today in North Korea, over 70,000 Christians are confined in concentration camps, and up to three generations of a family can be arrested just for owning a bible. The daily plight of Christians in the Middle East is something that is horrifying beyond belief. Christians being slaughtered and brutalized on a daily basis; aware that at any time, they could be forced to endure unspeakable atrocities, like the twin bombings that killed 50 Christians on Palm Sunday while they celebrated the Liturgy. These persecutions may seem that they don't affect our lives, since they are so far away. But in 2015 during a

mass shooting in Oregon, the gunman asked his victims if they were Christian. If they responded yes, he shot them in the head. Think of the courage of those students who confessed their belief, knowing their fate!

How did Saint Tarsizios, and other Christian martyrs, endure, and remain courageous? The simple answer is Spiritual bravery. Saint Paisios of the Holy Mountain says, "In the spiritual life even the most cowardly person can acquire great bravery, if only he places his trust in Christ. Such a person, can go to the front line and fight in a war and win." How do we gain this unstoppable Spiritual bravery? Spiritual boot-camp, like a soldier preparing for battle: through increased fasting, prostrations, receiving the Eucharist more frequently, confessing to our Spiritual fathers, and above all, prayer. As Saint Paisios explains, "a soul at prayer can hold the enemy at bay."

Do we have opportunities to practice Spiritual bravery in our daily lives? Indeed! Something as simple as doing our Cross amidst non-religious friends can go a long way. Spiritual Bravery can also mean standing up for someone being bullied, and standing up for the unborn child. Nowadays, society is telling us that our beliefs are not 'politically correct.' Spiritual Bravery means not compromising the Gospel of Jesus Christ

or the teachings of the Orthodox Church in the name of political correctness.

So, my brothers and sisters in Christ, let us call to mind and pray for those being persecuted

every day, and remember the Martyrs of our times, so that we may learn from them, and live by their example. Let us pray daily for the Grace of God to prepare ourselves for Spiritual training, so that we can be Spiritually brave, through God's grace. Let us cling to Christ with every ounce of our being like young Tarsizios, so we can become, as Saint Paul says, "greater than conquerors." Let us all step forward without hesitation and say, "Send me!"



Metropolis of Pittsburgh Senior Division Winner Stefan Bordeianu: "Give Your Life to God"

Oratorical Festival Senior Division Topic 5

"Jesus said, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21). When no political party represents genuine Christian teaching, how does an Orthodox Christian navigate political conversations and make political judgments?"

In the book of Matthew, a group of pharisees "went and plotted how to entangle [Jesus] in his words." 22:15. They asked him: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 22:17. Jesus skillfully rebutted by asking "why put me to the test you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." 22:18-22:19. When they did, he asked "whose Likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22:21. The pharisees were amazed and awestruck.

There is a profound message that we can derive from this dialogue in regards to faith and political concern: give your life to God.

In the beginning of the encounter, Matthew explains to us that the "pharisees went and plotted how to entangle [Jesus] in his words." The pharisees use the question about taxes for a very specific reason, being that there is no Jewish law that requires paying taxes to an occupier, but it is unlawful under Roman law to not pay taxes. In other words, the pharisees are asking Jesus if it is better to obey the law of God or that of the State. If Jesus answers in favor of the Romans, the Jews will consider him a traitor to God's law. If Jesus answers by opposing Roman taxes, he will not be considered a good citizen by Romans. So Jesus, being perfect, cannot side with either of the two imperfect choices. He then asks the pharisees what is on the tax coin. They answer with the image of Caesar. He then says "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." In other words, give the image of Caesar to Caesar, and give the image of God to God. But what is the image of God? The answer is us. It is the duty of Christians to give their lives to God. When voting for political candidates, the bible does not give any answer on who to vote for. God never said, I like Trump. You should vote for Trump. He never said that Hillary is a great person. He just

told us to devote our lives to him. It is a mockery of God's words to back political beliefs with the scripture, especially considering God's power. When a politician uses God's name, he portrays himself as a man of God, and is therefore more influential towards the 70% of the American population that are Christians. Abusing such power is using the Lord's name in vain. There is no way to know what God truly wants, because there is no definite answer in the bible. The only clear answer is that we must give our lives to God.

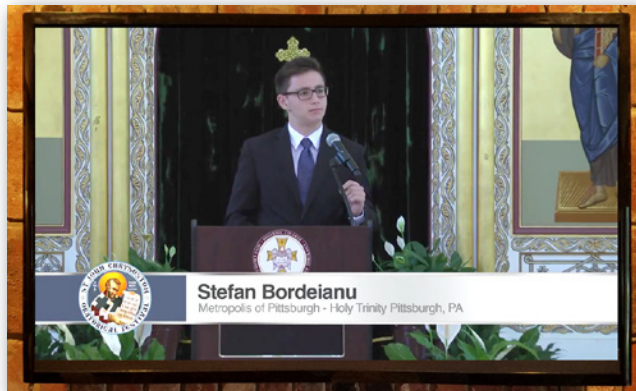
The dialogue also establishes a separation between God and State. When Jesus asks the pharisees to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's", there is no room for interpretation. Render to the state what is owed to the states, and render to God what is owed to God. Faith should not determine political stances, because there is a clear separation.

That leads to the question of how a Christian can incorporate faith into his or her political decisions. The answer is that living a life of God will lead you to make political decisions. The scriptures tell us to feed the poor and bring them to our house, it tells us to preserve life, it tells us to be good to our neighbors, it tells us to live as God would, and it tells us to

love one another. No political stance or candidate will be an epitome of our faith. There will never be a perfect choice, just as the pharisees brought to Jesus two imperfect options. When choosing a political candidate or political stance, the scriptures

and our Orthodox tradition should lead the decision. There is no clear answer in the bible about who you should vote for, but there is a clear answer on what is right and what is wrong.

In conclusion, we should lead lives devoted to God, and we should make political decisions based on the scriptures and Orthodox tradition while always knowing that there will never be a perfect candidate or stance to match our faith. Jesus told us to beware of the entanglement of religion and politics, and we should follow suit. While we give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, we should more importantly give to God what is to God.



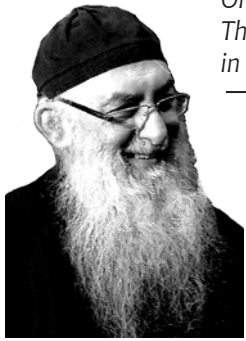
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**Archimandrite
Zacharias
of Essex**

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as “precious vessels of the Holy Spirit.” In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.

Father, what is the true calling of our human nature?

Man’s calling lies within the creative mind of the pre-eternal Counsel of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. God, out of sheer goodness, conceived the idea of man outside time, and by His creative word called him into a life which includes duration. He destined man for a life in the incorruptibility of loving communion with Him. He implanted divine grace as a seed of deification in man’s created nature. God’s pre-eternal plan for man, the direct and personal mode of man’s creation, the ‘many and various ways’ He takes care for fallen man, and His ineffable providence ‘in these last days’ for man’s restoration—from all this we are persuaded that man’s vocation is incomprehensibly wonderful and great.

How does knowing our calling change our lives?

The knowledge of the magnificence of man’s calling in Christ—that is, how God chose and destined man before all ages to become perfectly like his Heavenly Father—inspires humility before the ineffable goodness and providence of God. This humility disposes man’s spirit favourably and opens his heart to receive gratefully the blessed gift of his calling from the Father who is above all worlds.

When God’s call, and the honour inherent in His promises, are voluntarily received with faith, creative grace is attracted, which re-animates the hardened heart of man. The first visit of grace is a gift of God’s good pleasure and it inaugurates in man a beneficial change, wrought by the experience of the love poured into his heart by the Energy of the Holy Spirit. This is the “first love” [Rev. 2:4], which bears witness to the truth and sets the seal of “certainty” [Luke 1:4] about the New Testament of God the Saviour. Thus, the calling of the Triune God is a calling of love; but it is love which is “not of the earth, but of heaven.”

Gheronda, how can prepare ourselves to understand our calling?

The first movement of God’s love towards man takes place when God finds man favourably disposed to receive the visitation of His grace in the right spirit. The preliminary union between man and the Holy Spirit is a pure gift of God’s will and its measure accords with the measure of the love with which man accepts it.

Man, from his very first meeting with God, receives grace and enlightenment, which reveal the pattern of life which conforms to God. This grace bestows on him a foretaste of all the godly virtues, and an introductory experience of “many of the mysteries of life in God.” Prayer issues from the depths of the heart and becomes man’s natural state. The mind turns inward; it is refined and illumined, and with the immediacy of a flash of lightning it moves in accordance with the Spirit of the Lord.

In a word, God makes a personal covenant with man, which actually constitutes a renewal of what he professed at his baptism. This covenant, an act which on man’s part indicates a positive disposition towards God’s call, is accompanied by grace that illumines man and regenerates him for “life in the living God.”

What does it feel like to embrace our calling?

During this first period of spiritual life, man feels the living presence of God as the Light of Love, and rejoices in a deep peace. This feeling evokes in his spirit an irresistible attraction towards Christ, and he gradually becomes familiar with His inner life. When grace comes into his soul man is filled with consolation as he discovers his inner spiritual freedom and the inspiration to undertake the struggle of the Cross. He has a great desire to be found worthy of God’s calling and to be led to the fullness of divine love. He accepts the ‘folly’ of faith and believes with boldness that he “can do all things in Him who strengthens” him [Phil. 4:13]. He then begins to accomplish the spiritual work of his development in Christ.

This first period of divine visitations shakes man to the core, altering his entire vision of life. The initial experience of grace establishes the foundations of his new life in God in accordance with divine revelation. An unusually vivid energy takes hold of his heart, which burns with inexplicably sweet love for God. “His heart is alive with feeling during this initial stage which abounds in [...] powerful experiences.” An inner euphoria concentrates all man’s powers and makes every work of piety so light and pleasurable that he cannot attribute this to himself, and he accepts it as a gift of God [cf. Eph. 2:8]. God’s blessing rests upon man in a wonderful and palpable way; heaven is open to his requests and his prayers are readily heard. He feels the peace of reconciliation with God and savours the grace of salvation. He experiences the true jubilation of his passage from death to life.

His life is no longer supported by the conjectures of fantasy or logic, but by the fire of divine love... which can teach him everything he needs to learn so as to “walk in newness of life” [Rom. 6:4]. He becomes familiar with the word of the Gospel and with the words of Scripture as a whole; they are now addressed to him directly and personally. They purge his mind and his heart, continuously re-animating the grace of his calling to a radical transformation of all his being. He is totally captivated by the divine desire that the love he has known become his inalienable inheritance forever. He feels fulfilled and understands that the meaning and purpose of his life is ‘to be with Christ’ [Phil. 1:23], both now and for all eternity.”

*Excerpted from “Christ, Our Way and Our Life”
by Archimandrite Zacharias (Zacharou) of the
Saint John the Baptist Monastery in Essex, England
(Note: Father John had the great blessing of visiting Father
Zacharias in person at the Monastery in Essex recently.)*



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Scripture of the Month: "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding." (1 Jn. 5.20)