



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

QUARTERLY

Faith. Family. Community

Fall 2026
Volume 34 | Issue 4

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

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PHOTO SPOTLIGHT



Sep. 13: Fr. Radu and Presvytera Loredana Bordeianu are honored and presented with gifts on the occasion of their 20th anniversary at Holy Trinity Church AXIOI! God grant them many more years!



Today the invisible Nature is joined to mortal men, coming forth from the Virgin. Today the infinite Essence is wrapped in swaddling clothes at Bethlehem. Today God leads the Magi by a star to worship Him, and with gold and frankincense and myrrh they foretell His three-day burial. Therefore we sing: O Christ, our God, made flesh of the Virgin, save our souls. (From the Orthros Service of December 26)

Icon from the Annunciation of the Theotokos Monastery in Ormylia, Greece

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, PITTSBURGH, PA



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”
Romans 8.28

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

It is so tempting in many areas of life to run across unexpected challenges and immediately judge them as “good” or “bad.” It is not always that simple.

The Bible gives us plenty of examples where looking at a situation, it would have been a normal reaction to say, “Wow, this is really bad!” Joseph would have probably been justified in thinking that when this happened to him: “His brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. Then they grabbed him and threw him into the pit” (Genesis 37.23-24). And it would have been perfectly understandable for the Israelites to think, “Wow, this is really bad!” as they stood at the edge of the Red Sea with a watery death in front of them and a violent death behind. In both cases, the Lord made “all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”

Sometime during the opening afternoon of the 2026 Taste of Greece Festival this year, many of us started getting those severe weather warnings through our phones’ emergency notification system. You know, the kind you never want to get, and if you do you should immediately get to a safe place. As the skies darkened very quickly, the torrential downpour began bowing the roof of the main tent and the 80+ mile per hour winds actually tilted it to one side. In that scary moment it was also easy to look and think, “Wow, this is really bad!” And it could have been. But to the glory of God and to the credit of our amazing members and volunteers, what happened? We brought everyone inside to safety and let the weather pass. When it was all over we lost the use of that massive tent and both of our mud-soaked main parking lots. Disaster? Nah! Like Joseph being rescued from the pit or the Israelites making their way on dry land through the sea, we endured, we adapted and we survived...because we believed. And we demonstrated to others and to ourselves the unity, resilience and faithful determination that help make Holy Trinity Church the amazing community it is.

Saint Paul reminds us that what we think are either “good” and “bad” things are all still under God’s dominion and will work out to His purpose. To see things that way we need to remember that the Lord’s Prayer, given to us by Jesus Himself, says, “Thy will be done,” not, “My will be done.” It challenges us to look not for the good or bad in things, but for the God in things, Who is “everywhere present and filling all things” (Prayer of the Holy Spirit).

We like to think we have it all figured out, but the Prophet Isaiah reins us in when he writes, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord” (Isaiah 55.8). I hope the Taste of Greece 2026 near disaster is a lesson that those of us who experienced it, and those of us reading about it, will remember. It is a humbling reminder not to second guess or cut God off in His plans, because He always knows best and He always works toward it for us.

Paternally yours,

Now in our 103rd year!
1923-2026

OUR VISION
Faith. Family. Community.

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

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - October-December

The following weekday services will be offered this quarter at 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy unless otherwise indicated. Please visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Tue., Oct. 20 - St. Gerasimos of Kefalonia** (SG)
- **Tue. Oct. 20, 6:30pm:** Paraclesis to St. Paisios (SG)
- **Wed., Oct. 21 - St. John of Monemvasia** (SG)
- **Mon., Oct. 26 - St. Demetrios the Great Martyr** (SG)
- **Mon., Nov. 9 - St. Nektarios the Wonderworker** (SG)
- **Fri., Nov. 13 - St. John Chrysostom** (SG)
- **Sat., Nov. 21 - Entrance of the Theotokos** (SG)
- **Wed., Nov. 25 - St. Katherine the Great Martyr** (SG)
- **Mon., Nov. 30 - St. Andrew the Apostle** (SG)
- **Thu., Dec. 3 - St. John the Hesychast** (followed by Philoptochos Christmas Seniors Luncheon - note location - HT)
- **Fri., Dec. 4 - St. Barbara the Great Martyr** (HT - Service held at Holy Trinity Church because relics of St. Barbara are in the Holy Altar Table of the Church)
- **Sat. Dec. 5:** St. Savas the Sanctified - Nameday of Metropolitan Savas (Watch Bulletin for information)
- **Sat. Dec. 5:** St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (6:30p Great Vespers at St. Nicholas Cathedral)
- **Tue. Dec. 8, 6:30pm:** Paraclesis to the Theotokos (SG)
- **Wed. Dec. 9:** Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos (SG)
- **Sat. Dec. 12,** St. Spyridon the Wonderworker (9:00a Orthros/10:00a Liturgy at St. Spyridon in Monessen)
- **Thu. Dec. 24-Fri. Dec. 25:** See below for the schedule of services for the Nativity of Christ.
- **Thu. Dec. 31 - 6:30PM EVENING** Orthros/Liturgy - St. Basil the Great (SG) (*Note: EVENING service begins at 6:30pm*)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School & Youth Ministry Starts with Church!

With thanks to our enthusiastic and dedicated staff—all of whom volunteer their time and talents to help you raise your children in the faith—we look forward to another great year of Church School ministry at Holy Trinity Church. Thank you to the parents who place this as a high priority in their children's lives by bringing them on time, discussing what they have learned afterwards and taking the time to thank the teachers and staff for their offerings of love for the children of this community. Remember, **Church School begins with Divine Liturgy**. So please be sure to have all our students there at 9:30 am each Sunday. The youth sermon—a special time for your priests to teach and connect with our youth—takes place early in

the service after the Gospel, so they won't want to miss that.

Also, parents and young people: please remember that **all youth ministries at Holy Trinity Church begin with Divine Liturgy and Church School**. All HOPE, JOY, GOYA, and Greek Dance children start by being regular attendees at worship services and Church School as part of the Holy Trinity family, together in Christ. This is how we raise faithful young people with the Lord at the center of their lives. Thanks for your faithful participation and witness.

Fall Food Drive: 5,000 Items for Those in Need

From November 1-30, the Holy Trinity Church School ministry is once again holding its Fall Food Drive...and again it's **Church School vs. the Community!** Here's how the contest works:

- For **Church School students**, each Sunday bring your bags to the Conference Rooms - please be sure the nametag is on your bag.
- For the **community**, there will be a bin in the Gallery to drop your bags.

You do not need to have children in Church School to participate. Food items will be donated to the Orthodox Christian ministry at the Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. Our goal this year is to **collect 5,000 food items for those in need**. A shopping list can be found attached to the provided collection bags, at the church office window or on our website. Choose the Documents menu, then All Documents, then Ministries.

Christmas Pageant Full RehearsalDecember 19

The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 19 from 9am-12pm. Please check the Church School email for details.

Church School Christmas Pageant.....December 20

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 20. As always, ALL the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, the students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for Hospitality Hour hosted by the Church School Alumni parents. Then, enjoy another Holy Trinity original Christmas Pageant production!

Youth Safety Clearances Required for All Parents!

To comply with Archdiocese regulations, Holy Trinity Church is now requiring all parents of all Church School students to obtain their Archdiocese Youth Safety clearances. If you are not yet registered, please email YouthSafety@HolyTrinityPgh for instructions.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Playtime and Parea..... Thursdays

We're excited to grow another season of Playtime & Parea! Join us for a fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents, caregivers, and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. This group is oriented toward children ages 0 to 4. Sessions begin at 10:00am in the Fireside Room. The Fall schedule is as follows: Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17. Please watch the Bulletin for changes or announcements. And please note the meeting day has changed to **every other THURSDAY**. Questions? Contact Helena Kraniou and Marika Gagianas at playtimeandparea@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

HOPE and JOY Pumpkin Patch Oct. 18

The Holy Trinity Pumpkin Patch event for families of HOPE & JOY (PreK–6th grade) will be held on October 18 from 2:00–4:00 PM at Yeck's Farms, 568 Baker Rd, Freedom, PA. Families can enjoy a hayride and campfire, with hayride participation limited to those who RSVP. The event is free of charge; however, please note that Yeck's Farms is cash only for any personal purchases made during your visit. RSVP by October 11 to Victoria Ambrose at 412-720-5094 or JOY@HolyTrinityPgh.org for JOY children and Maria Athanas at 724-991-5129 or HOPE@HolyTrinityPgh.org for HOPE children. Don't miss out on the fun!

GOYA Meetings Oct. 18, Nov. 8

Holy Trinity GOYA will hold its monthly meetings in the Conference Room following the conclusion of Church School classes on October 18 and November 8. All teens are invited to attend.

Holy Trinity Youth Sunday..... Oct. 25

The Holy Trinity community will celebrate Youth Sunday on October 25, with parish responsibilities being fulfilled by our teens and with inspiring messages being offered by our youth during the youth homily and GOYA officers will be installed. Please be there to support them.

GOYA Fall Fest..... Oct. 25

Holy Trinity GOYA will host its annual Fall Fest on October 25 in the Gallery following Liturgy, with hot sandwiches, comfy fall appetizers, salads, pumpkin and apple treats and more for sale. A homemade taste of Fall from our GOYA families! Proceeds will benefit our teens, including their participation in retreats, athletics, fellowship and other activities. Thank you for supporting our youth!

Metropolis GOYA Fall Retreat..... Nov. 20-22

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its annual GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth on the weekend of November 20-22. Thanks to the generosity of our parish family and

the support that GOYA receives for its fundraisers, a 100% scholarship will be given to any Holy Trinity GOYA who is active in Church School and GOYA and signs up by the retreat deadline. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend a weekend with your HT friends, and meet other GOYAs from around the Metropolis, and grow stronger in your faith as an Orthodox Christian. The discount code to be only used for **active GOYAs participating in the worship, Church School and GOYA ministries of Holy Trinity Church** is HTPitt100. The code **must be entered at the time of registration**. Registration opens October 1.

GOYA Turkey Bowl November 29

GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Football Game on Thanksgiving Sunday following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited, players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! JOY children are invited to cheer on the teens. See you there!

GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat.....December 6

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday, December 6 from 4:00-7:00pm at the home of Connor and Alyssa Mackrell. Watch the GOYA email list and GroupMe for details.

GOYA Christmas Bread Order by December 13

Our GOYA teens will once again offer their delicious and popular Greek Christmas Bread this year. Orders must be placed by December 13 for pickup following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 20. Orders may be placed at the GOYA bread table during Coffee Hour in December, directly with any GOYA teen OR ONLINE at HolyTrinityPgh.org/goyabread. See the flyer in this issue for more information.

GOYA Christmas Bread Prep December 17-19

All GOYAs are asked to help prepare Christmas bread on Friday, December 18, after school and Saturday, December 19, 9:00-12:00pm. Parents' help is also needed all day Thursday and Friday, December 17-18. See Presvytera Becky for info and to sign up.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos Meetings..... Sept. 27, Oct. 18, Nov. 22

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will hold monthly meetings on the noted Sundays in the Fireside Room following the Divine Liturgy. All members are invited to attend, and new members are welcome to join, as we empower the mission of our Ladies' Society. What is Philoptochos? It is a dynamic national organization of 25,000 members which responds immediately to needs and crises, with its philanthropic outreach extending to each area of the country and throughout the world. (There is no December meeting.) Contact philoptochos@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Philoptochos Sunday November 1

Holy Trinity Philoptochos and all Philoptochos chapters around the Archdiocese will celebrate National Philoptochos Sunday on the first Sunday of November. Please join our community in honoring this philanthropic outreach ministry, the "Friends of the Poor."

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS**Holy Trinity Choir Rehearsals..... October-December**

Holy Trinity Choir will hold rehearsals on Sundays, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, December 6 and December 13 following Hospitality Hour. Rehearsals last approximately 45 minutes. No previous choral experience is necessary, however a musical background is welcomed. To join or learn more, email choir@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Orthodox Dudes on Tap October 25

This new casual men's ministry is for guys, single and married, to just enjoy a few hours of conversation, snacks, brews and great company with other Millennials and Gen Z'ers. Laid back. Informal. Want to find out more? Email OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org for times and places.

Military Appreciation Day 2026..... November 8

The Visitation Ministry and the Bereavement Support Ministry are hosting Hospitality Hour for Military Appreciation Day on Sunday, November 8th (Veterans Day is November 11th). We will be honoring all veterans as we are so grateful for their service to our country. There will also be a memorial service for our veterans who have fallen asleep in the Lord. We will have our display monitors in the Grand Room and Gallery with our honorees' names. Feel free to bring framed photos of your family members and friends who have served our country. For new parishioners who want to add their loved ones' names to our display monitors, see Amy Armanious by Sunday, November 1 or email at visitation@holyltrinitypgh.org.

Regular Fall General AssemblyNov. 29

The Fall General Assembly and nominations for Parish Council and other offices will be held following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 29. An agenda is enclosed in this issue. These meetings give everyone an opportunity to become informed of and involved in the overall life and future of Holy Trinity Church. Anyone is able to attend, but you must be an active stewardship member of Holy Trinity Church with a current 2026 Stewardship Pledge to vote.

Parish Council ElectionsDecember 6

Elections for the 2027/2028 Parish Council term will be held in the Grand Room during Hospitality Hour on Sunday, December 6, following the Divine Liturgy. Nomination forms are available for download on our website at

HolyTrinityPgh.org/documents/parishcouncil. Please note that signed forms must be received at the church office prior to the November 29, 2026, General Assembly.

Fall Hospitality Hour Dates Available Nov./Dec.

Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to host our Hospitality Hour following our Sunday Divine Liturgies. There are Sundays open throughout November and December. Remember a loved one. Celebrate a special event. Or just step up and share your hospitality with the community. Don't want to do it alone? Get together with another family or two! Additionally, all ministries are asked to host two Hospitality Hours each year. Please be sure you have reserved your dates. And for those Sundays when there is no designated host, please offer an item for the "Open Table" covered dish Sundays. Contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or email hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Hospitality Hour Team: Are You Being Called?

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13.2). One of the foundational ministries of Holy Trinity Church is Hospitality. You can see it listed as one of the six pillars around our parish logo. It also serves the dual purpose of welcoming newcomers in a friendly environment and providing a regular opportunity to live our parish vision: "Faith. Family. Community." Hospitality Hour is where that happens every Sunday, but it doesn't happen on its own. It is intentional and it takes a team!

Every other ministry of this parish happens because people respond to the Lord's call to use their God-given gifts for the life of the Church. The Hospitality Ministry is no different. The need is there. The question is, "Are you being called to serve on the Hospitality Ministry Team?"

This wonderful ministry has grown to the point that we need a larger team to manage it. Many weeks there are hosted Memorials or Sundays sponsored by ministries, but there are also other "Open Table" Sundays that need to be coordinated and staffed. We really need a team of at least 4 to 5 people to share the tasks of scheduling, stocking supplies and, on "Open Table" Sundays, set up and clean up. Please prayerfully consider making this one of the ways you serve your church and contact Stacy Dickos at 412-298-9409 or send an email to hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org to volunteer.

HT Hosting Metropolis Tournament Feb. 5-7

One of the things that makes our Metropolis GOYA Basketball tournaments possible is that communities from around the tri-state area step up to host them. Since opening our beautiful new church and facility in the North Hills, Holy Trinity Church has hosted four such events

every 3 to 4 years. This year it is our turn again, and the community will be hosting the first tournament of the year on the weekend of February 5-7.

Note that this news items is being listed under "Community News & Events" rather than "Youth Ministry News" because it is not just our GOYA teens and their parents, but the entire community that opens its doors with our traditional Holy Trinity hospitality. Watch for information in upcoming Bulletins and parish emails about how you can help. Or contact Tournament Chairpeople Tim and Nicole Gross or Presvytera Becky Touloumes for more information. Thank you for your help, encouragement and enthusiasm!

CHRISTMAS SEASON NEWS & EVENTS

The Nativity Fast

There are four main seasons of fasting on the Orthodox calendar in preparation for four major feasts: Great Lent, August 1-14, the Holy Apostles in June and November/December for the Navidity. It starts on a lighter basis on November 15, then rises to the level of strict fast for the last two weeks after December 12, meaning refraining from meat, dairy and fish. Fasting, attendance at services, increased attention to our prayer life and participation in Holy Confession (see below) are all important parts of our preparing a place in our heart to receive the Lord at Christmas. Please see Father John with any questions or to schedule a time for Confession.

The Gift of Forgiveness: Confession

As you plan your gift-giving for Christmas this year, remember to also add a gift you can give yourself...or rather receive from the Lord: forgiveness through the Holy Sacrament of Confession. This is a sacred responsibility and blessing every Orthodox Christian should take seriously, as it is the Church's obedient response to the command of Jesus Christ, Who said to the Disciples, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven" (John 20.22-23). That grace, through the Apostolic Succession of ordination, stills flows through the priesthood today, and participating in Holy Confession allows us to receive it, not by the priest himself but by the grace of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus. Contact the Church Office or Father John to schedule yours during this holy season of the Nativity.

Christmas Card Forms.....Due December 6

If you would like to include your name in this annual community tradition, please be sure to submit your form and donation to the Church Office by December 6. The card will be mailed with the Christmas/New Year bundle.

Holiday Poinsettias Form.....Due December 6

Please consider sponsoring holiday poinsettias for use in the church during the Christmas and Theophany season. To donate one or more flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event, please complete the form and return it to the Church Office by Dec. 6.

Angel Tree Christmas Gifts..... Nov./Dec.

We are again partnering with the local Orthodox ministry of the Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) to bring joy to hundreds of people in the community this Christmas season. "Angel Tags" will be available in November, so watch for them after Liturgy in the Gallery. There has been a marked increase in need, and we are striving to provide gifts for 140 children and senior citizens. This has been one of the hallmarks of the generosity of the Holy Trinity family for years as we have offered literally thousands of gifts to children who otherwise might receive none. Let's make sure all the tags are claimed on the first Sunday as we continue our offerings of love for our neighbors.

Community Christmas Caroling Dec. 16

The entire community—adults and youth alike—are invited to this special, joyful evening of traditional Christmas carols sung by members and youth of our Holy Trinity community to our neighbors across the street at the Sisters of Divine Providence on Wed. Dec. 16. Meet at Holy Trinity at 6:30pm, then head over to bring Christmas blessings and cheer to our neighbors! This event has become a deeply-appreciated annual feature of our relationship with the sisters, from whom we were blessed to purchase the land for Holy Trinity Church back in 2007. Everyone is welcome!

Services for the Nativity of Christ Dec. 24-25

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

- **Thu. Dec. 24, 8:30 am: Royal Hours of the Nativity**
This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Incarnation.
- **Thu. Dec. 24, 6:30pm: Vesperal Liturgy of the Nativity**
This service begins the celebration of the Nativity. Also, the Holy Trinity Choir will be offering a selection of beautiful Christmas carols following the service. (Note: Those wishing to receive Holy Communion need to observe proper fasting and spiritual preparation)
- **Fri. Dec. 25, 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy**
This is the main service of the Nativity of the Lord. Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! And let's keep Christ at the center of Christmas. ❖

Faith & Family Weekdays

Grow Your Knowledge and Practice of the Faith!

JOM

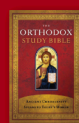
Journey of Marriage
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm



Marriage seminar aimed at preparing couples for their wedding. Based on the "Journey of Marriage" course by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Conducted as group sessions with couples to share and grow together. Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Feb. 2, Mar. 2, Apr. 6, May 4.

ETW

Explore the Word
Wednesdays, 6:30pm



Father Radu continues his exploration of the Holy Bible with the greatest adventure book of the New Testament: The Book of Acts. Learn about the history of the early Church and how the Good News was spread. Fall dates: Oct. 7, 14, 28; Nov. 4, 11, 18, Dec. 2, 9.

MPS

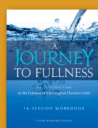
Monthly Paraclesis Service
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 6:30pm



Join in hymns and prayer, to honor the Theotokos, Saint Nektarios of Aegina and Saint Paisios of Athos at our beautiful Saint George Chapel. Ask for the prayers of these powerful saints. Pray for those in need. Oct. 20, Dec. 8; Jan. 12, Feb. 9; Mar. 9.

JTF

Journey to Fullness
Mondays (6-week series), 7:00pm



An overview of the Orthodox Christian Faith for newcomers interested in joining or life-long members yearning to deepen their understanding. Format: Videos and Q&A/discussion. Oct. 19, 26; Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23. Repeats in the Spring.

P&P

Prayer & Panera
Select Thursdays, 7:00am



Prayer and Christian fellowship for men. Meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then moves up the hill to Panera for 45 minutes of coffee & conversation. Fall dates: Oct 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 17.

ODT

Orthodox Dudes on Tap
Meets Periodically



This new casual men's ministry is for guys, single and married, to just enjoy a few hours of conversation, snacks, brews and great parea with other Millennials and Gen Z'ers. Next get-together is Oct. 25. Laid back. Informal. Want to be notified? Email OrthodoxDudes@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Orthodox Christian life happens every day, not just Sunday! Faith and Family Weekdays offers many ways during the week to grow in our faith and share in the community life of the Church. Ready to learn more about the Bible, about your Faith, about navigating life's challenges as a Christian, a woman or a man? Want to enjoy fellowship with others in your Christian family and community? It's all there. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar and the Weekly Bulletin for updates.

PTP

Playtime & Parea
Every Other Thursday, 10:00am



This fun, faith-filled playgroup is for parents, caregivers, and little ones (ages 0-4) to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. Meets in the Fireside Room. The Fall schedule is Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17. For info email playtimeandparea@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

**AND SAVE THE DATE FOR
CHRISTMAS CAROLING FOR OUR
NEIGHBORS AT THE
SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE!
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16**

The entire community—adults and youth alike—are invited to this special evening of Christian holiday outreach to our neighbors at the Sisters of Divine Providence on Wed. Dec. 16. Meet at Holy Trinity at 6:30pm, then head over to bring Christmas blessings and cheer to the sisters!

Faith in Action

Stewardship is one of the ways our faith becomes visible

Dear Holy Trinity Stewards,

As we move beyond the summer months and begin to look toward the fourth quarter of the year, it is a good time to pause and reflect on where we are and where we are going together as a parish.

Earlier this year, we reflected on being Rooted in Faith and Growing Together, recognizing the ways God continues to nurture our community. In the second quarter, we considered From Welcome to Commitment, remembering that every household strengthens the whole and every gift matters.

Now, as we enter the final months of the year, our focus turns to Faith in Action. Our faith is not something we simply believe; it is something we live. And at Holy Trinity, stewardship is one of the ways our faith becomes visible.

When we give, we help make possible the ministries that bring our faith to life: the worship that gathers us around the sacred services and Holy Mysteries; the teaching that deepens our understanding of Scripture and Holy Tradition; the outreach that brings care and compassion to those in need; the hospitality that welcomes others into our church family; the fellowship that

strengthens the bonds among us; and the many activities and ministries that allow Holy Trinity to serve our parish and the wider community.

Generosity is worship. Growth requires action.

Our stewardship commitments are helping sustain this work, and we are grateful for the faithfulness of so many members of our parish. As we look at our progress this year, we can see areas where we are trending ahead of our goals and we can also see areas where we still have some ground to make up. With the fourth quarter approaching, there is an opportunity for all of us to help close that gap and finish the year strong.

Stewardship is more than meeting a financial goal. It is a way of life that recognizes that our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from God. It calls us to respond with gratitude, responsibility, and trust, offering back a portion of what we have been given so that His work can continue through His Church. As Christ reminds us in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light shine before others.” Our stewardship is one way we let that light shine. Not simply through what we say, but through what we do.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has already made a stewardship commitment this year. Your faithfulness provides stability for our ministries and helps Holy Trinity continue its mission each and every day. If you have made a commitment but have not yet had the opportunity to fulfill it, or if you have not yet made a commitment, we urge you to take that step now! Stewardship is an opportunity for every member of our church family, new or longtime, to put faith into action and share in the responsibility and joy of building up the life of our parish.

As we move into the final quarter, let us all put our Faith in Action! With gratitude for what God has given us, confidence in what we can accomplish together, and a renewed commitment to the work He has entrusted to us. ❖

Evan Danis
Stewardship Chairman





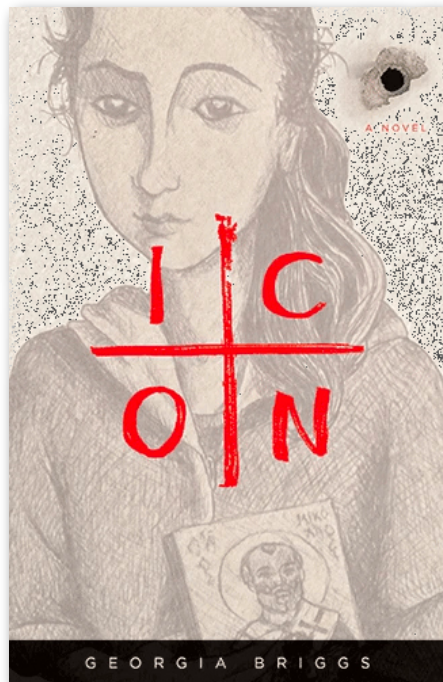
"The Orthodox Bookshelf" is a *Holy Trinity Herald* column by Rick Paese focusing on books of Orthodox Christian interest for everyone. Many of the books highlighted will be available for purchase at the Three Hierarchs Bookstore in the Gallery.

Georgia Briggs's *Icon* is a young adult Orthodox fiction novel. The story is told through the eyes of Euphrosyne, a 7th grade Orthodox girl in a post-Christian dystopian America. From Euphrosyne's perspective, we see an America where it is no longer acceptable to be a practicing Christian. In the name of a new system of "tolerance" and "acceptance," expressing one's faith is considered too judgmental and must be eradicated. If you do not obey, you are ostracized, shamed, and potentially even killed. Publicly expressing your faith is out of the question. Christian names, like Euphrosyne, are banned. Holidays are completely secularized. Church services go underground. People disappear. The story forces the reader to ask: what would I do if living my Orthodox faith became dangerous? Can I trust in God even when danger strikes?

Euphrosyne's Story

Euphrosyne experiences firsthand the violence and tragedy of being an Orthodox Christian in this secular world. She loses everything and is forced to conform to a world that has become completely fake and superficial as it turns away from God. As the story unfolds, you can feel the stiff, dead world within which they live. Fake

plants, no windows, no meaningful conversations. Everything is sterilized. Euphrosyne yearns for meaning. Instead, she faces a coordinated effort to convince her to abandon her faith, especially from her psychiatrist, her teacher, and even her grandfather. As she tries to fight back, Euphrosyne wrestles with guilt and tries to understand the age-old question: why does God save some but not others? It's not fair. It all feels random to her.



How God Works for the Good

The story may not offer easy answers to these questions, but through the darkness we see pinpoints of light shining through. God's hand is working for the good of Euphrosyne and others. He has not forgotten her. She encounters others who risk their lives for her. An old family friend, a priest, a librarian, and a miraculous St.

Nicholas icon.

In the end, Euphrosyne must decide how to respond. Can she actually resist the adults in authority? Can she stand up to their seemingly good arguments against remaining a Christian? How much is she willing to risk when she sees her peers around her threatened and tortured?

Persecution: Not Just in History

The scenario in *Icon* may seem extreme, but its underlying premise is not difficult to imagine. History has shown how easily societies can slip into violent persecution of Christians. On one hand, the story reminds me to be thankful for the freedom we have in America today to practice our Orthodox faith. On the other hand, it is a reminder to always be prepared to stand up for the truth when persecution arises. For me, the book felt less like a typical dystopian novel and more like reading the lives of saints. It invokes a call to courage, to greater devotion, and to love God and others more. Above all, the book reminded me that we do not always see God's bigger plan, especially when things are dark and seemingly hopeless.

Read, Learn, Discuss

Icon is a great book for a teenager (with parental permission), but I think adults will enjoy it as well. It is short, fast-paced, and easy to read. It would also make a great book for a family to read together and discuss, especially the questions it raises about faith, suffering, courage, and trusting in God's sovereignty. ❖

Rick Paese

FAITHFUL TENANTS

"It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Cor. 4.2).

When was the last time you entrusted someone with something that belonged to you? And not just anything, but something treasured or precious. Maybe a car (Ferris Bueller's Day Off Ferrari scene comes to mind!). Maybe a collector's item of some sort for a special occasion. Or, as an ultimate act of trust, allowing someone else to hold your baby (this becomes less of an issue with the third and fourth child!)

In the end, whatever it is, there are a few things necessary for that loan or transfer to happen.

The person loaning needs to have confidence in that person they are handing it over to is trustworthy.

The person receiving needs to have an awareness of how important it is to the one offering it.

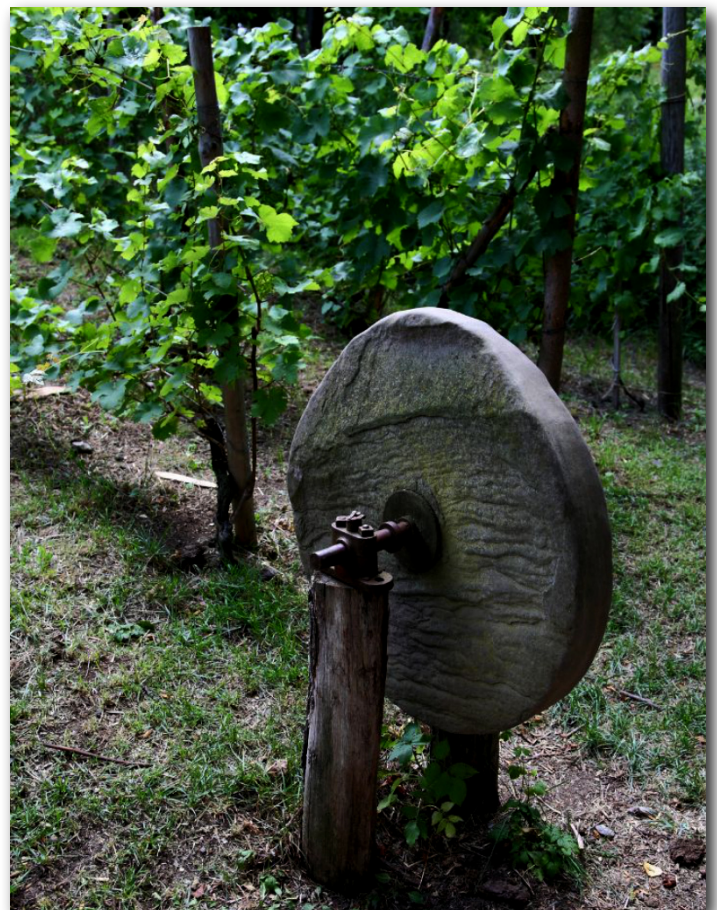
While in charge of it, an amount of care needs to be exercised that demonstrates a keen awareness that the "it" belongs to someone else and they will be responsible for using it well and returning it intact.

In today's Parable of the Vineyard, we see a very different picture of trust and care. In fact, it's a story of broken trust and lack of care that is a disaster from the start. The entire story is a "how not to do this" example. An owner starts a vineyard and a winery; it grows so much he brings on others to manage it and he heads off to another country, perhaps to buy another vineyard. While he's gone, he sends some workers to go to collect the harvest, but the managers beat and kill the workers and refuse to hand the fruits over. The owner then says, "Ah, I need to send in someone they will really respect and listen to." So his son goes, but they also kill him and think they'll take over the operation. In this parable told by Jesus, we don't really know how it ends for the thieves, but we do hear the disciples venture a guess that it will end in a "miserable death" and handing the vineyard over to others who deserve it.

Why did Jesus offer such a teaching story? Ultimately, it's

a hidden way of letting His disciples know just how much faith the Father is putting in them to care for the truth He is entrusting to them. According to St. Theophylact of Ochrid, "The stone means Christ Himself; the builders are the teachers of the Jews who rejected Him. But when He rose from the dead, He was set in place as the head of the corner, that is, He became the head of the Church, joining Jews and Gentiles in one faith. For the Church which connects us and makes us one in faith is the Lord's doing, and is worthy of all wonder. The kingdom of God, that is, closeness with God, has been taken from those who heard the prophets and did not believe them and given to those who believed."

Truth. Forgiveness. Salvation. Jesus brought it all to those who had been waiting for so long. It was a gift. It was a trust. As he warns in the parable, it needed to be faithfully tended. In other similar parables, like the Parable of the Talents, Jesus is opening the eyes and hearts of His disciples ... and us ... to the reality we repeat at the end of each Divine Liturgy: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1.17). Please focus on that for a moment. Our Heavenly Father is offering us the best out of His love for us. When





we struggle with what to do with it, the problem is not the Giver or the gift, but our attitude and our aptitude. When it is received with humility, faith and love, and when it is used for the godly purpose for which it was given, it remains good. But when ego, pride and a sense of being an owner rather than a steward take over, think about how God sees it...and sees us.

Saint Paisios, indeed a friend of God, tries to imagine what goes through God's mind when He sees how poorly we handle His gifts sometimes. "If God gives us some gift, we look down at others as if they were ants, and we trouble them with our arrogant and prideful behavior. If He does not give us any gifts, we become despondent and hopeless. In which case, God Himself says, 'If I give them some gifts, they become prideful,...behaving arrogantly towards others. If I do not give them any talents, they are troubled and tormented. Even I do not know what to do.'" This is obviously just spiritual humor, but I don't even want to imagine getting God that frustrated at me.

Let's see if we can find a way to relate that to our lives today. Question: has anyone ever entrusted anything to you? Anything valuable? Anything precious? Anything you're a little intimidated taking care of because you know how much it means to the person who entrusted you with it? As a parent, and now a grandparent twice over, I can say the first thing that comes to my mind is our children, and from them our grandchildren. This is why, as a church, we take such care when entrusted with young people,

because we understand that we, along with the parents, are all accountable to the Lord for them, not as owners but as stewards responsible for a gift from God.

This idea extends to not only "things" but "everything," and that means talents, abilities, gifts, looks, skills and more. Pretty much everything we so often count as "ours" in our life. But if we are honest about it as Christians, none of it is really "ours." Again, Saint Paisios cautions us, "We must be very careful not to claim the talents given to us by God as our own. We ought to thank God for them, and be concerned that we utilize them to their full extent." (St. Paisios, *Passions and Virtues*, 96). What happens when we refuse to give God the glory and take ownership of those gifts unto ourselves? The saint continues, "God, of course, does not worry when a person claims His gifts as his own, but He will not give him any more gifts in order not to harm him. However, if one acts simply and humbly, knowing that his gifts and talents belong to God, then God will surely give him even more."

The great Saint Maximos the Confessor agrees, saying that God measures out His gifts to men according to the gratitude with which they receive them. "Thus we enter the blessed fullness of God's grace: the greater the gratitude and glory we offer Him, the more abundant is the measure of His gifts to us" (Archimandrite Zacharias, *The Engraving of Christ in Man's Heart*, 28).

What a joy it is, dear friends, to be so trusted by God as to be recipients of His gifts, over and over. And it is in this holy place we are reminded of His love for us, so much so that He gave His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring us the ultimate gift of salvation for those who believe.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a simple challenge to think about today. What kind of tenant or steward of God's gifts are you? What is it that you have, that you can do, that you have built, that you have bought, that you have earned, that you have been honored for, broken a record for or otherwise "possess" that is "yours" entirely, and not a direct gift from God or springing forth from what you have done with something that started with a gift of God? What is really "ours?" What do we "own?" The only thing in our life that is not from God...sin. And He will forgive us for that when we sincerely repent and ask.

Today and every day we should ask ourselves, have we recognized God's gifts; have we thanked Him for them? And have we used them in ways that please Him by serving Him and serving others? Have we grown fruits by using it for the purpose He has intended, not like the ungrateful thieves who stole the vineyard in today's Gospel, but as "tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." After all, in the end, who does not want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Mt. 25.21). May it be so. Amen. ❖

Delivered August 30, 2026

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TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

IS YOUR NAME MISSING
FROM THIS LIST? IT'S
NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP!



PLEDGE NOW!

The Agape Challenge

What would you do with \$100 if you were given it and instructed to give it away to help others?

The Agape Surprise

On Sunday, May 10, 2026, the parishioners of Holy Trinity Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, received a surprise presentation at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The Proistamenos, Father John Touloumes, and three members of the Holy Trinity Agape Fund Committee stood up before the congregation and announced that everyone there today was being enrolled as “Agape Fund Angels,” agents of love in a very special mission to freely give away \$10,000 to help as many people in need as possible. To understand this event, it is necessary to have the background information on what made this special project a reality.

About the Agape Fund

The Holy Trinity Agape Fund was created in obedience to the Holy Gospel’s exhortation to reach out to all people in need and as part of implementing the Mission Statement unanimously adopted by the Holy Trinity Parish General Assembly on November 19, 1999, which includes “An outreach ministry which fulfills the command of Jesus Christ to reach out to the sick and needy, to serve the least of our brethren, and to spread the Gospel both locally and throughout the world.”

The Agape Fund was established in November 2002, through an endowment gift from the James G.



Paras Memorial Endowment Fund of \$125,000.00, which represented a tithe of the Paras Endowment, offered in thanks back to the Lord in accordance with the biblical tradition of offering a “tithe” (a tenth) of our first-fruits to the Lord (Leviticus 27.30). Since then, it has grown in both principal and application, with the Agape Fund Endowment investments reaching over \$250,000 in 2026 and the total philanthropic giving since inception having reached over \$365,000. It is administered confidentially by the Priest for the privacy and protection of the recipients, is overseen by the Agape Fund Committee and is subject to an annual third-party financial review to ensure the security and proper distribution of funds.

The Challenge That Led to The Agape Challenge

Each year the Agape Fund is charged with distributing half the year’s investment growth to needy individuals and philanthropic institutions. In 2026, the Committee realized that the rate of distribution would not reach a level sufficient to accomplish that goal. In other words, they were not giving away

[NEW SHOES]

I learned of a young man at my workplace who walked to work almost 3 miles every day. His manager said he really needed new shoes. With the Agape Challenge money he purchased the young man a new pair of socks and sneakers. Ironically the Nikes were "Giannis" models for a man named "Ian."

[FEEDING THE KIDS]

We volunteer at the Neighborhood Resilience Project and are familiar with the Backpack Feeding Program, which provides food for disadvantaged youth so they have something to eat on weekends. We offered our Agape Challenge money to support that program.

[THE TEDDY BEAR]

I work in a hospital environment and learned that a lady with no family nearby was probably on her last day. I went to the hospital gift shop and purchased a teddy bear and some flowers. I gave them to her and told her they were from my church. I discovered later that she hugged that teddy bear until her last breath.

It was an experience that reminded me how small things can bring great love and comfort for those who are alone in this life.

[THE DOG]

I donated the \$100 to a neighbor's roommate who had just been diagnosed with a grand mal seizure disorder to apply toward acquiring a trained dog to alert her of pending seizures. These companions are both expensive and critical.

[THE THRIFT SHOP]

I added \$20 to the Agape Fund \$100 and prepare three envelopes with \$40 each. I took them to the Red, White & Blue Thrift Shop and handed them out to three people.

The first person was a mom with two teen girls. She was very excited and said, "God is good!" The second was an older lady who worked there. She thanked me and told me it was her birthday! Finally, there was a mom and daughter, who were very happy and thanked me.

[THE DELINQUENT STUDENT LUNCH BILL]

I gave the money to the local elementary school to pay off a student's delinquent lunch bill. I'm not sure if it paid for just one student or a number of them, but the woman in the office was quite surprised and happy. I thought the whole idea of going out into the community and helping someone was awesome. For days I shared the story of the Agape Challenge with everyone I know. It also made me feel good and pretty proud of my church!

[THE COLLEGE PREP COURSE]

We gave our funds to "Boys and Girls Hope Ignites Pittsburgh" to help students with SAT prep classes.

enough money. So a decision was made by the Agape Fund Committee to enlist the entire community in identifying needs and distributing funds. To do this they adopted a model based on a similar event at the Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, Massachusetts. Their priest, Father Luke

Veronis, had put together a program years before that gave money to parishioners to give away, and that provided the inspiration for our own version.

The "Agape Challenge" was approved by the Committee and kept entirely confidential until its unveiling that Sunday morning. Only the Parish Council President was aware of it ahead of time. Papers and envelopes were printed secretly in the church office. A check was

[MEDICAL BILLS]

We added to the Agape Fund's money and donated it to a couple who were experiencing difficulty paying substantial medical bills. We were so happy to tell them it was from our church, as it was easier for them to accept it as a charitable offering from a church rather than a personal offering of help.

[AUTISTIC CHILD SUPPORT]

I gave two \$50 Walmart gift cards to families who have children enrolled in an autistic support classroom in the Ambridge area. The cards were placed in food packages to help feed the children over the summer. This encouraged me to look more intentionally for ways to serve and love people as Christ loves us.

[MULTIPLE TRAGEDIES]

Three families from Holy Trinity Church teamed together to offer \$300 of Agape Fund money to a family in which the wife had recently had her leg amputated due to frostbite. Her husband is also disabled. And to make matters worse, a tree recently fell on their house and crushed it. With tears in her eyes she gratefully accepted our gifts. She was able to purchase new bedclothes, soaps and creams. With so much unexpected tragedy in her life, she felt blessed to have received such unexpected help.

[INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH]

We divided our \$100 into three portions. The first \$50 went to an organization in Dublin, Ireland, where we found a coffee shop that employed homeless people and used the proceeds to help them. We offered the money so they could buy more beans or supplies. The next \$10 went to a disabled man who was asking for money for lunch in front of a university in Romania. The money was much more than he was hoping for and said that he would have enough left over after lunch to also get him the medicine he needed. He was extremely grateful. The last \$40 went to a young woman in a Romanian park. She was gathering glass and plastic bottles to bring to a center which would pay her for recycling. She was grateful, but immediately left because she saw a set of keys on a nearby park bench and she wanted to locate the owner. Despite some obvious mental health issues, she showed great character and real concern for others, even though she was in need herself.

[PLEASANT VALLEY SHELTER DINNER]

My brother, my husband and I served dinner at the Pleasant Valley Shelter, but we added our own special gift. We added some personal money to the Agape Fund gift and prepared 30 envelopes with a note that said it was a gift from Holy Trinity Church. This unexpected gift, given directly to each person with kindness and understanding for their plight, made them feel valued and recognized as people who matter. Many were deeply moved that someone cared enough to help them. Some thanked us repeatedly. It gave them the dignified freedom to be able to buy something for themselves. Looking into their eyes and seeing the surprise and warmth gave us a quiet, joyful satisfaction, but one mixed with a bit of heartache, knowing we were face to face with people living under such hardship. We were filled with a profound sense of gratitude for being able to help.

"There will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'" (Deuteronomy 15.11)

taken to the bank to collect the currency needed, and the Committee then confidentially assembled everything that was needed.

Following the Divine Liturgy that day, a presentation was made explaining that 100 envelopes had been prepared, each containing a crisp \$100 bill. There was also a letter explaining what the money was for, how to use it and an "Agape Challenge Experience Reporting Form" to report back how it had actually been used and what the experience meant for those who gave and those they helped.

The Instructions

The main content of the instructions letter read as follows:

It is now your turn to participate in a meaningful and action-based way to reach out directly as Agape Fund Angels. There is an envelope in this packet with a crisp \$100 bill. 100 envelopes will be distributed today for a total of \$10,000 to be given away. Your "Agape Fund Challenge" is to distribute that money in a way that fulfills the Agape Fund mission, then use the included form to report on your experience. You can choose to help one or more people. The options are unlimited: help an individual or family in need; make a charitable donation; sponsor a philanthropic activity; purchase supplies to make packages of love to give to people on the street; gift birthday gifts to a child that won't get any; take a person who could use some companionship to lunch. Use your imagination! You may choose to say it is a gift passed on from your Church or simply leave it anonymous. Highlights of the experiences will be published in the Holy Trinity Herald.

Following the announcements and distribution of the antidoron, parishioners lined up in the Gallery to receive and sign for their envelopes. By God's grace, there were exactly enough envelopes for every family in church that day. Everyone who wanted to participate received one. Even guests who had never been to Holy Trinity Church were permitted to be part of it.

The Results

As of this writing, around 85% of those who received envelopes distributed the money within the 4 week deadline and returned completed Experience Reporting Forms. More continue to be returned even to today. The colorful boxes on these pages share the colorful and moving experiences of both the donors and the recipients. There were so many acts of love there is not enough room for them all on these pages, but there certainly is enough room in the hearts of those who gave and those who received. For more information on the Agape Fund, contact Father John Touloumes at 412-366-8700 or send an email to "AgapeFund@HolyTrinityPgh.org."

[THE SINGLE MOM]

I called the Township of McCandless and asked Social Services if there was anyone who was in financial need. There was indeed a single mom with a 2-year-old who had recently lost her job. I made arrangements to meet the young lady at the township building to present the gift to her. I included a note of encouragement and a pamphlet about our Orthodox Christian faith. I also invited her to join my family for dinner at the Taste Greece Festival at Holy Trinity Church. She hugged me and cried and said she wasn't used to being helped but was extremely grateful to Holy Trinity Church for doing the Lord's work through this generous project.

[DOWNTOWN HOMELESS]

Wanting to make it a teachable moment, I drove to downtown Pittsburgh with my son with the intention of finding an individual to help. We found a homeless man who had no possessions other than a bag full of clothes and personal items. We talked with him for a while and learned he was "down on his luck" right now. We gave him the envelope with \$100 and said, "This is a gift from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church." The man visibly started tearing up and said "Thank you."

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2.14-17)

[THE WIDOWED MOTHER]

I learned of a recently widowed mother of a seminarian at St. Tikhon's Seminary. I offered her the money to help her son cover his daily needs and expenses.

[THE FRIEND'S DAUGHTER]

We donated our money to support a former co-worker's efforts to raise funds and awareness for S.M.A., or Spinal muscular atrophy, a rare neuromuscular disorder, as her daughter has been diagnosed with it not long ago. We were glad to connect with her and offer the help.

[THE ORPHANED CHILDREN]

We added the Agape Fund to some other money and bought a substantial Giant Eagle gift card for a family of orphaned children living with relatives. The relatives were not usually of the disposition to ask for help, even though it was so desperately needed. So it was welcomed as an unexpected blessing for them.

[ORTHODOX EDUCATION]

We donated our money to a video project titled "The Journey Continues" from Fr. Barnabas Powell and Faith Encouraged. There was a matching donor drive, so our \$100 became \$200. We so appreciated the impact his "Journey to Fullness" series has had on our lives, we wanted to help make such resources available to others who are seeking to learn about the Orthodox Christian Faith and Church.

[THE NEW CLOTHES]

I purchased new clothing for a 64-year-old man I met at the Pleasant Valley Shelter who recently served 14 years in a state prison. I went to the shelter and had asked who might be in need of clothing, and was introduced to Tony. His entire wardrobe consisted of 2 pairs of pants, 2 shirts and some underwear. So I took him to Kohls on McKnight Road and purchased clothing for him. We prayed together after the purchase and Tony shared with me it was the nicest thing he had ever experienced.

[THE CAR PAYMENT]

I used my the \$100 Agape Fund money to help my friend Michael with his car payment. He's currently living paycheck-to-paycheck while trying to build a better future for himself. He works hard but struggles with money and has a lot of family problems at home. I wanted to help him out a little and show him he's not alone during this tough time. This opportunity really blessed us both in a meaningful way. He was so appreciative when I gave him the money, and he gave me a big hug afterward. Seeing how much it meant to him made me emotional because I care deeply about him. This experience made me feel I could freely share Christ's love by helping someone in need without expecting anything back. I also learned how important it is to support others during tough times and to show love through actions, not just words.

[THE LOCAL FOOD BANK]

We made this a family project, so with my wife and children, we researched the top food items needed for the local food bank. They said \$1 provides 3 meals if the correct items are donated: canned goods, oats and pasta. So with our \$100 we bought the correct items and provided meals. God has blessed our family with the ability to help others, so we added some personal funds to be sure that the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank will be able to continue providing meals to needy folks in the area.

[THE WAITRESS]

The elderly waitress could hardly walk. She appeared to be in so much pain with each step. When I gave her the money she said, "No" and looked surprised. I told her that it was not a tip but a blessing to share with her. The smile that replaced the pain on her face was priceless. It made her day. For me, I'm going to build a routine of sharing a blessing quarterly or when the opportunity arises. It feels great to help others!

[THE NORTH SIDE CARDS]

I purchased ten \$10 McDonald's gift cards and distributed them to homeless individuals on the North Side [Editor's note: that was our church's previous city location] and other downtown areas of the city. All the wonderful people who received them smiled and said, "Thank you" or "God bless you" and were very appreciative. I felt more blessed than the recipients for being able to bring them a moment of happiness.

[GAS FOR THE FAMILY VAN]

I gave the \$100 to a man at the gas station who had a car full of kids. He was very thankful and surprised. I think it was a great relief because of current high gas prices.

[THE DISABLED PATIENT]

I gave the Agape Challenge money to a disabled patient of mine. This 76 year-old woman suffered a stroke years ago which resulted in significant arm paralysis. Then she lost her husband last year, leaving her to care for their adult-age son with cerebral palsy. All along she has never complained about her disability. I told her the offering was from our church and she was very happy and surprised by the gift.

[THE AUNT AND HER 4 CHILDREN]

We matched the \$100 provided by the Agape Fund and gave a total of \$200 to the owner of a local ice cream shop. She lost her sister to leukemia last year and is now taking care of the four young children her sister left behind. She's very active in the lives of her nieces and nephews and has set up savings accounts for the children as they grow. She is someone who cares about her community and does many selfless things.

It was really nice to be able to give something to her in a way that's very meaningful and to also provide support for the children who lost their mother at a young age. The Agape Challenge was also a good opportunity to stop and realize that we can do random good deeds at any time.

[THE BUS PASSES]

One of my friends who works at a non-profit told me her organization was in need of bus passes to help people get to work, so I donated 10 passes to them. I gave the remaining funds to Mr. Roboto, a volunteer-run music venue in Garfield that serves as a sober artistic community space. I love helping friends and I felt very happy to be able to serve my neighbors in ways I believe are beneficial to both people and the community. I know my friends will use it well.

The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' (Matt. 25.34-26) ❖

















(August 20) At the beginning of the new school year, a double-blessing at Holy Trinity Church! Above: Church School students bring their backpacks and are offered in prayer for much success and God's holy protection in both their Church School and academic year. Below: 120 backpacks sponsored by the community and collected by GOYA are blessed to be distributed to area students.



Top two rows: Scenes from the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Convention, hosted from June 30-July 2 in Cleveland by the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. The theme was "Rise and Build." Third row: The Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry offers the community an opportunity to reach out to the elderly, the home-bound and the sick by signing beautiful hand-made Orthodox cards. Bottom row: Robert and Angelica Geisler are received into the Orthodox Christian Faith by Holy Chrismation.





Top row: Father Radu and Presvytera Loordana Bordeianu are honored and thanked on their 20th anniversary at Holy Trinity Church. Second row: Christopher Ramaley is raised to the rank of Eagle Scout, with his parents, Father Radu, Father John and scout master Bill Fiedler present to celebrate. All those celebrating their feast day on August 15 gather for their annual photo. Third row: both young people and parents gather for the Youth Ministries Kickoff. Bottom row: Representatives from the Mrs. Claus Club are presented with a donation from the proceeds of the Golf Tournament. Right: A visit from members of the 2026 OVC team.

Join us for:
Holy Trinity's

HEART HEALTH AWARENESS DAY



Sunday, October 18th
...following Divine Liturgy

CPR Training
Lifestyle, Diet, & Exercise Tips
Heart Healthy Hospitality Hour



American
Heart
Association.

THE HEART OF
PITTSBURGH



Questions?

Mike Erdeljac | 412-735-9345



FAMILIES OF HOPE & JOY

October 18, 2026

2pm - 4pm

HAYRIDE & CAMPFIRE



Yeck's Farms
568 Baker Rd
Freedom, PA 15042

RSVP by October 11

HOPE to Maria at 724 991 5129

JOY to Vicki at 412 720 5094

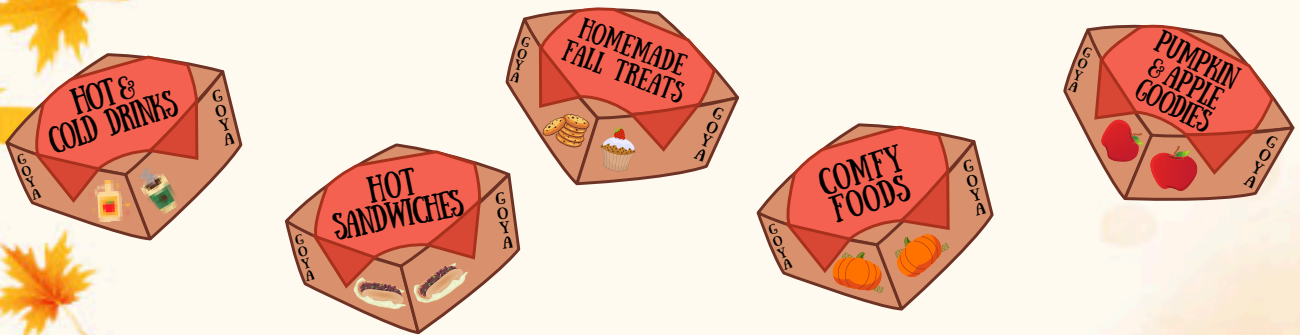
HOLY TRINITY
PreK-6th Grade

*Event is free! Only those that
RSVP will be able to participate in
the Hayride. Yeck Farms is cash
only for any personal purchases
made during your visit.*



GOYA FALLFEST

YOUTH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
IN THE GALLERY FOLLOWING LITURGY



A HOMEMADE TASTE OF FALL
FROM OUR GOYA FAMILIES!

PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE
GOYA TEEN MINISTRY.
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH!





ALL HOLY TRINITY SENIORS ARE INVITED TO JOIN
TOGETHER FOR AN ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TRADITION:

Philoptochos Seniors Christmas Luncheon



THU. DECEMBER 3, 2026

8:30 ORTHROS/9:30 LITURGY

SAINT JOHN THE HESYCHAST



11:00AM LUNCHEON

Enjoy the company of your Holy Trinity friends!
Dress in your Christmas best! Celebrate the season!

For reservations, contact Yvonne Balouris
at 724-316-2847 by November 28

Hosted by Holy Trinity Philoptochos



Inviting all Holy Trinity
HOPE & JOY families to
attend the

CHRISTMAS DROP & SHOP

Sponsored by Holy Trinity GOYA

5 PM - 8 PM Friday, December 4, 2026

Holy Trinity Community Center

Featuring: A Spaghetti Dinner, Christmas movie,
games, and a craft for the Sisters of Divine
Providence

**Feel free to dress your child in their
Christmas pajamas!**

How to Participate:

- RSVP by November 30th by visiting HolyTrinityPgh.org/events
- Drop off your HOPE and JOY Children to HT between 5:00pm and 5:30pm by checking them in
- Parents go enjoy your evening and pick up your child by 8pm!

Holy Trinity GOYA is pleased to take your order for

Homemade Greek Christmas Bread

Available in two delicious styles!



Traditional Round



Holiday Multi-Colored Loaf

Both available with or without Sesame Seeds. Still only \$12 per loaf.

Order deadline: Wednesday, December 9th
Bread will be available for pick-up on Sunday Dec. 20th
following Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church

Order in-person from any Holy Trinity GOYA teen - OR -

Place your order online at HolyTrinityPgh.org/goyabread

Homemade with love by Holy Trinity GOYA

985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 GOYA@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Thank you for your support of the Holy Trinity GOYA Ministry!



Congratulations!

2026/27 Scholarship Awardees:

**The Vlahakis Scholarship
("My Sister Penny Award")**

Lena Drapas

**The William C. & Irene K. Petredis
Holy Trinity Scholarship**

Nick Kaparakos

**The Agape Award for
Philanthropic Service**

Evangelia Balouris
Rebecca Bordeianu
Ekaterina Peregoncev

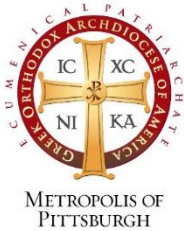


Keep an eye out for info on
our 2027/28 Scholarship
Opportunities!



For information and applications:
HolyTrinityPgh.org/scholarships





"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Reverend Father John Touloumes, *Proistamenos*
Reverend Father Radu Bordeianu, *Assistant Priest*



GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOTICE AND AGENDA SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY

September 25, 2026

Dear Parishioners,

Our regular Fall General Assembly will be held in the Grand Room on Sunday, November 29, 2026, following the Divine Liturgy. The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. Invocation Father John
2. Election of Chairman of the Assembly
3. Approval of Minutes George Dickos
4. Priest's Report Father John
5. Parish Council President's Report Anthony Balouris
6. Selection of the Auditing Committee for 2027
7. Selection of the Parish Council Election Committee for 2027
8. Nomination of Candidates for Parish Council for 2027/2028
9. Reports
 - A. Year-to-Date Financial Report and 2027 Budget George Melliis
 - B. Stewardship Committee Report Stewardship Committee
 - C. Cemetery Committee Report Bill Fiedler
 - D. Festival Committee Report Festival Chairperson
 - E. Giving Committee Funding Approval for 2027
10. Old Business
11. New Business
12. Adjournment and closing prayer Father John

Please be present and participate as part of fulfilling your membership at Holy Trinity Church. Also, please keep in mind that you must be a 2026 Stewardship member in good standing with a signed pledge card to vote.

Sincerely,

+Father John Touloumes
Protopresbyter

Anthony Balouris
Parish Council President

IMPORTANT NOTE: A Parish Council nomination form can be obtained from the Church Office or downloaded at HolyTrinityPgh.org/documents/parishcouncil. Please note that all members nominated (or interested in being nominated) for the December 6 Parish Council elections must attend the Holy Trinity Parish Council Candidate Seminar to be conducted on Monday, November 30, at 6:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Church.

Love For Our Neighbor

He who has real love does not care whether others appreciate his love. He does not even remember the sacrifice he makes for his neighbour because he does it out of pure love.

Q: Geronda, how can I, who have so many passions, ever be saved?

With love and humility. As soon as these two virtues are nurtured, pride and evil will become malnourished and the passions will start to perish. In this way, one by one, all of the passions will gradually disappear, and the rest of the virtues will come on their own. Therefore, direct all your efforts towards love and humility. True love and humility embrace each other like loving twin siblings. Love cannot be separated from humility. Love contains humility and humility contains love.

Q: What if my love for God and for my neighbour has grown cold?

Sow the little bit of love that has remained in you so that it may sprout, grow and bear more love for you to harvest. Afterward, you will sow the greater amount of the love you have harvested and gradually your storehouse will become so filled that you will have no place to put the harvest, because the more love you sow, the greater its yield.

For love to grow, you must give it. But he who does not give even the little love he has is like one who tightly holds a handful of seed and does not sow it. Such was the wicked and slothful servant who hid the talent.'

You will receive as much love as you offer. If you do not give love, you will not receive love. Look at a mother: she constantly offers her love to her children; she constantly receives love from them in return, so her love becomes ever increasing. But when we want the love of others exclusively

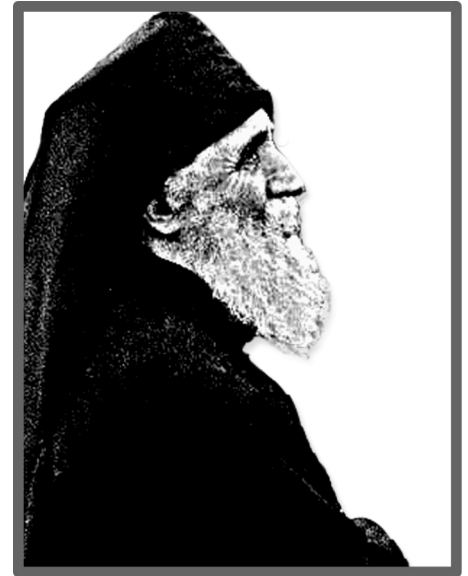
for ourselves and expect everyone else to give to us, and if, when we do some good, we are thinking of compensation, then, instead of having priceless love, we have cheap love. This estranges us from God, and we receive love neither from God nor from other people. Those who have worldly love fight over who will grab more love for himself.

Those who have spiritual, priceless love will fight over who will give more love to the other. They love without considering whether others love them; nor do they expect others to love them. They constantly want to offer and give of themselves, without expecting others to give them anything or give of themselves to them. Such people are loved by all, but even more so by God, with Whom they are thus, kindred.'

This is love without exchange benefits! We should not do good deeds for the sake of receiving blessings in return. We should cultivate the noble, invaluable love which God Himself has, rather than the cheap, worldly love which carries every human weakness.

Q: Geronda, Abba Pambo says, "If you have a heart, you can be saved." What does he mean?

It can mean many things. First, if you have a heart means if you love God. Second, if you have a heart means if you have sensitivity and you are not insensible or indifferent. Third, if you have a heart means if you have goodness. Fourth, if you have a heart means if you have forbearance. Fifth, if you have a heart means if you have



Saint Paisios of Athos

fortitude.

The power of the heart is a tremendous thing! The heart is like an ever-charging battery. It doesn't get tired, nor does it grow old; its power is never exhausted. But we must work the heart. For, although we all have a heart, what can that possibly mean if we do not work the heart? One can be a giant and still not have the courage to do anything if he doesn't work the heart. Another may be small and frail, yet he never grows tired because everything he does, he does with his heart.

Right here at the monastery, I see a Sister who, although she is not very strong physically, never feels tired because she puts her heart into whatever she does. She does not try to avoid work; instead, she is concerned about how she can comfort others. She does every little thing with love because she is pained over it and not because others will see her and praise her. She has no self-love, no need to be admired by others; she moves about inconspicuously; therefore, she receives divine Grace and is helped by God. ❖

Excerpted from
"Spiritual Counsels", Vol. 5

THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD*Faith. Family. Community***About the Herald**

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

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**About the Parish**

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Web site: HolyTrinityPgh.org | Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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**

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos
Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest
Deacons: Dn. Matthew Palamara, Dn. Theodore Stewart

2026 Parish Council

Anthony Balouris, President (pcpresident@HolyTrinityPgh.org)		
Alexander Anetakis	Evan Danis	Christopher Loomis
Eleni Balouris	Eleni Dedousis	George Mellis
Penny Balouris	George Dickos	Dean Passodelis
Michael Bounos	Michael Erdeljac	Dan 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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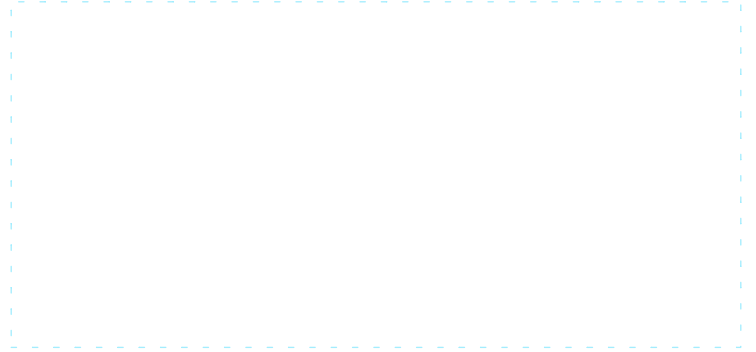
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WHAT PRIESTS ARE CALLED TO DO

On November 13, the Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of Saint John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, a prolific fourth century preacher and a patron saint and role model of priesthood through his life and his classic work, "On the Priesthood." In honor of his feast, the passage below offers an insightful portrait of the essence of the priest as a pastor and shepherd: bringing souls to God.



The scope of our art is to provide the soul with wings; to rescue it from the world, and give it to God; to watch over that which is in His image; if it abides, to take it by the hand, if it is in danger; to restore it, if it is ruined; to make Christ dwell in the heart by the Spirit; and, in short, to deify and bestow heavenly bliss upon one who belongs to the heavenly host.

Saint Gregory the Theologian, "The Flight to Pontus" (4th c.)