

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY



AGIA SOPHIA
THE GREAT CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CONSTANTINOPLE

December 21, 2025

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, New Jersey 07090
908.233.8533 www.holytrinitywestfield.org
Live streaming services

Rev. Fr. Peter Delvzizis, Parish Priest

On the Sunday before the Nativity, we celebrate all those who from ages past have been well-pleasing to God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos according to the Genealogy as recorded in the Gospel according to St. Matthew; The Holy Martyrs St. Juliana of Nicomedia and St. Themistocles

Third Tone
Ἦχος Γ΄

| | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Morning Gospel: | St. Luke 24:36-53 | Ελληνικά |
| Epistle Reading: | Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40 | Ελληνικά |
| Gospel Reading: | St. Matthew 1:1-25 | Ελληνικά |

Apolytikion: “Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown the mighty power of His arm. He has trampled down death by death, becoming the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell and has granted to all the world His great mercy.”

Apolytikion of the Forefeast: “Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.”

Apolytikion of the Holy Forefathers: “Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The holy Three Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls.”

Apolytikion of the Church: “Blessed are You, O Christ our Lord and God, You who made all wise the fishermen Your Apostles, sending down upon them Your Spirit, which is Holy and through their work drawing the world into Your net, glory to You Who loves mankind.”

Kontakion: “On this day the Virgin * comes to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.”

Liturgical Schedule

Monday, December 22, **St. Anastasia the Great Martyr**, Orthros, 8:45 AM;
Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

Wednesday, December 24, **Paramoni of the Nativity**, Great Hours, 8:30 AM; Vesperal
Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Wednesday, December 24, **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**, Orthros, 6:30 PM;
Divine Liturgy, 7:30 PM; Christmas Pageant, 9:00 PM

Altar Donations

Altar Candles: In memory of Peter Genakos†; **Vigil Light:** In loving memory of Evelyn Connant†; **Large Candles:** In loving memory of Constantine (Gus) Zades†; **Prothesis Candles:** In loving memory of Kassiani Dakos Jeffries†; **Kandili:** In memory of John and Fran Zemboulis†

Sacraments and Rites

Memorials: Your prayers are requested Sunday morning at the memorial services for Kassiani Dakos Jeffries†, 1 year; Simion (Simos)†, 2 years, and Despina†, 16 years, Klimos; Evelyn Connant†, 3 years. Eternal be their memories.

Churching: On Sunday a 40-day blessing of Calliope Nora Oertel, daughter of Christopher and Koula Oertel, will be held.

Welcome Visitors

The parish of Holy Trinity welcomes those visiting our community. Worshipping the Holy Trinity is the principal act of an Orthodox parish, especially on the Day of the Resurrection (Sunday). Our mission is to live the Holy Gospel and spread the Good News to those in our area. We are sanctified by God's grace through the holy Sacraments and glorify Him each moment of the day. We seek God's mercy, as we confess the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Visit the Philoxenia/Fellowship table in the Bouras Center after service to meet parishioners and enjoy our Fellowship Hour.

Fellowship Hour

Please join us in the Bouras Center after church for the Fellowship Hour co-sponsored by the Connant family, and the Jeffries family, in loving memory of Evelyn Connant† and Kassiani Dakos Jeffries†.





The December Edition of *The Promise* is Now Available Online!
www.HolyTrinityWestfield.org/the-promise. Subscribe to Holy Trinity weekly emails providing news updates and announcements. Request at:
HolyTrinity@htgocnj.org

2025 AGAPE FUND Christmas Eve Collection

Being conscious of the spirit of Christmas and the requirement to proclaim the Gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), at the Christmas Eve service the AGAPE FUND collection will be taken on behalf of the Holy Trinity Outreach and Pastoral ministries to benefit those who labor in the Vineyard of Christ, most especially the priests in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. All donations will be sent to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) to support a mission priest (SAMP). Your generosity is gladly accepted. Let us as a parish support this beautiful and Christ-centered ministry.

Bookstore – Items for Christmas

Check out all the new items in the bookstore. There are wonderful stocking stuffer items that will make for a treasured gift. The Christmas table is set up with gifts that remind us of the joys that are associated with the Nativity of our Lord. Buy Christmas cards, icons, incense, etc.

Special Christmas Gifts

At Christmastime, you may desire to express your love for Holy Trinity by offering special gifts such as communion wine, festal icons, incense, charcoal, pew torch candles, daily Bible guides, holy water bottles, Poinsettia plants, and wreaths that can be donated in memory of or for the health of loved ones. Please call the church office. Thank you for your generosity. A special request is asked for the floral decoration of both the Nativity and Epiphany icons.



Religious Education

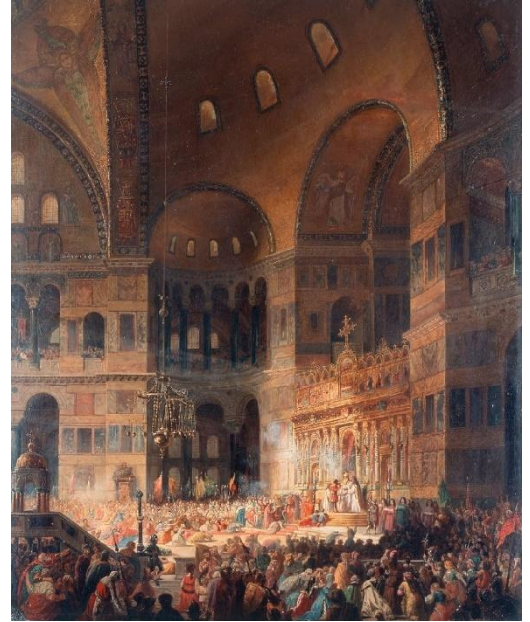
We have opportunities available to make a difference in the lives of our youth through our faith! You do not need to be an expert on Orthodoxy and you do not need to have teaching experience. We are just looking for extra hands! We are looking for Assistant Teachers for the Pre-K class and the combined 9/10 grade class. If interested, please contact Pete Markos at religioueducation@htgocnj.org

Religious Education Christmas Program and Pageant - December 21 and 24

Please join us for the Christmas Program, Dessert Reception and Santa, Sunday, December 21, in the Bouras Center following the Divine Liturgy and the Christmas Pageant at the Christmas Eve Evening Service on Wednesday, December 24 in the church.

Consecration of the Great Church of Christ – Agia Sophia – December 24

Agia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) built by Emperor Justinian I (532 – 537 AD) and named after our Lord, the Logos and Second Person of the Trinity and was the Cathedral State Church of Constantinople. At the time, it was the world's largest interior space and among the first to employ a fully pendentive dome. It is considered the epitome of Byzantine architecture and is said to have "changed the history of architecture." It has been described as "holding a unique position in the Christian world" and as an architectural and cultural icon of Byzantine civilization. It was the epicenter of the Eastern Orthodox Church for over 1000 years until the Ottoman Islamic Conquest.



Emperor Justinian spared no expense to erect this masterpiece, which went up in an astonishing span of just five years. When the emperor inspected the almost completed work shortly before its consecration, he was silent for a long time. His eyes scanned its contrasts of gold with blue, the alternation of vertical and horizontal marble slabs, and the opposition of carved columns to curved arches. These created an interior beauty that made the space seem to melt into space so that it was hard for the eyes to gauge distance. After a long introspection he exclaimed, *"Solomon, I have surpassed you!"* In truth, no temple of antiquity had ever come close to the originality and magnificence of this grand church. It had been made possible only by Justinian's zeal. At first it was simply called the "Great Church" but later the name Holy Wisdom was applied to it. On December 27, 537, Patriarch Menas of Constantinople consecrated the architectural masterpiece. Eventually a bridge linked the church directly to the nearby imperial palace. Six hundred religious workers served the building in which the most important religious functions of the empire took place. According to the Patriarch of Constantinople, these workers included 80 priests, 150 deacons, 40 deaconesses, 60 subdeacons, 160 readers, 25 chanters, and 75 doorkeepers. It was by far the biggest church in the entire Christian world, but it was badly damaged by a succession of earthquakes in the 550's and the dome collapsed. Justinian ordered a restoration by Isidore the Younger, nephew of Isidore of Miletus, who gave the building an even more amazing dome. The church was reconsecrated in Justinian's presence on Christmas Eve, December 24, 563 A.D. Justinian died two years later.

A Description of Agia Sophia in 563 A.D. by Paul the Silentiary reads, "Thus is everything clothed in beauty; everything fills the eyes with wonder. But no words are sufficient to describe the illumination in the evening: you might say that some nocturnal sun filled the majestic temple with light. The cunning craftsmen pierced suspended discs with their iron tools so that they may receive shafts of fire-wrought glass and provide pendent sources of light for men at night. Yet not from the discs alone does the light shine at night, for next to the discs the shapes of the lofty cross with many eyes upon it, and it pierced back it holds luminous vessels. Thus hangs the circling choir of bright lights. You might say you were gazing on the effulgent stars of the heavenly Corona close to Arcturus and the head of Draco. Thus, the evening light revolves round the temple, brightly shining. Lights upon countless other lights, hanging on twisted chains, does the church of the ever-changing aspect contain within itself; some illumine the aisles, others the center or the east and west, others shed their bright flame at the summit. Thus, the bright night smiles like the day and appears herself to the rosy-ankled."

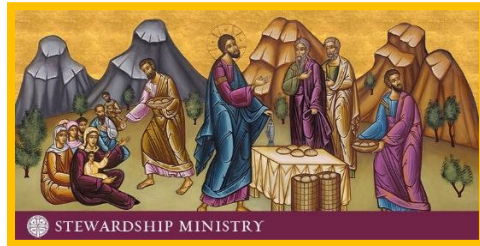
One can understand why this building conjures up both the extreme national pride, wonder, zeal, and amazement of the Greek Orthodox people and at the same time the calamity and horror surrounding the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. The Greeks are fixated on their churches, which are not only places of worship but treasure houses of their material culture that has survived some of the greatest disasters known to humanity. Agia Sophia stands out above them all. Even today, as the Turkish authorities convert it from a museum to a mosque and heap insults upon the entire Orthodox World by desecrating its sacred space and use religious appropriation, its interior is still a place of wonder. Even stripped of its gold and silver, with its frescoes faded and begrimed there still exists a sense of boundless wealth and mystical power. To the Orthodox people Agia Sophia will always be the Great Church of Christ.



2026 Stewardship Campaign

"Building Up the Body of Christ"

We have commenced our annual 2026 Stewardship Campaign. We thank all Holy Trinity parishioners who always rise to the occasion to support our beloved parish. In 2025 we received 423 signed Stewardship Pledge Cards. For 2026, so far we have received 149 Pledge Cards. Our goal for 2026 is to increase the number of stewards. You can help us on our journey by submitting a signed pledge card. Together we can keep Holy Trinity a special home and spiritual center.



***Holy Trinity is my spiritual and cultural center –
It is a place like no other, rooted in faith.
It nurtures joy and a deep sense of purpose in giving.***

There was a certain man in the Old Testament named Nehemiah, who after seeing the crumbling walls of Jerusalem, called the people to "Rise up and build." Nehemiah knows he can't do it alone. He inspires the people, sharing his vision to rebuild. The people responded, "Let us rise up and build."

Spiritually, this story calls us to build using material that is beyond brick and mortar. As Orthodox Christians, we must use our faith to build up and make our parish stronger. Stewardship calls us to respond to the needs of the Church by using God's gifts faithfully. Together we can "rise up and build" lives that are holy and dedicated to God.

This call of Nehemiah to "rise up and build" invites us to become active members of the Church, the Body of Christ, to join in ministry and contribute according to our abilities. As Orthodox Christians, we understand that Stewardship is a community effort in which everyone plays a role.

To date, the parish has funded our Metropolis, Archdiocese, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Foundation, several outreach initiatives, and continued support of our growing and vibrant ministries.

Pledge cards are available in the pews, at the Pangari and can be submitted online at <https://form.jotform.com/230346419533151>. The suggested pledge is \$2,200 per steward and \$500 for young adults. The pledge card includes an option to identify your interest in volunteering by ministry.

To be a steward in good standing means one is eligible to vote at parish assemblies & elections, and to run for the Parish Council - please submit your pledge card by the end of the year.

Yours in Christ,

Stewardship Committee

Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale – Sunday, December 21

Please visit the Philoptochos table during the Fellowship Hour. Enjoy our homemade baked goods with your Frappe, coffee, tea or other favorite beverage and/or take home to share with your family and friends. **Καλά Χριστούγεννα!**

Vasilopita Bread Pick Up - Sunday, December 21

Pick up your order on Sunday, December 21, at the church. Please call/text Denise Eliopoulos 973-568-0938 with any questions.

36th Annual Angel & Mitten Tree – Deadline Tuesday, December 23

We are collecting baby items such as formula, diapers, wipes, new/unused clothing (NB-5t) for Moms Helping Moms. Please note that there is a high demand for formula this year (Enfamil and Similac preferred). We are also collecting new/unused mittens, gloves, hats, and socks. Drop off deadline Tuesday, December 23. Thank you for your generosity to this beloved Holy Trinity Tradition!

Altar Boys

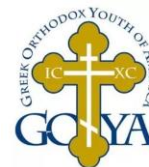
Fr. Peter invites all boys ages 12 and older to commit to serve in the altar. An acolyte plays an important role in the ceremonial aspects of the Divine Liturgy. We want our children to remain in the church as they grow up. By committing and serving in this unique role, a deep respect is instilled. This shapes and deepens faith. Please see Fr. Peter for more information.

Angel Choir

The Angel Choir has joined the Adult Choir on Sundays. Angel Choir practices are after Sunday School from 11:45 AM to 12:15 PM. Children should meet with the director for practice in church in the choir pews. Children ages 7-12 interested in joining the Angel Choir should attend Sunday's practice. For more information contact the church office or Choir Director, Anne Kernoski, akernoski@gmail.com

2025 GOYA Registration

<https://forms.gle/hAmPHc4bLkk9eN9F8>



Contact Sophia Saketos at 908-247-6048 or goya@htgocnj.org with questions.

Trinity Circle - Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Vasilopita Luncheon 11 AM - 2 PM donated by Marie Mastorakis in memory of Gus Zades.

TOTS (Trinity Orthodox Toddler Social) - January 14, 2026

Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 14, 9:30-11:30 AM in the preschool room. Children 18 months-Pre-K are welcome with their caregiver (younger siblings welcome!). Bring water, sneakers, and a snack. Contact Val Comprelli 612-801-8608 or vcomprelli@gmail.com to sign-up or with any questions.

SAVE THE DATE - Holy Trinity Cultural Committee - January 15, 2026

The Holy Trinity Cultural Committee invites all parishioners and friends to an evening with Iphigenia Kanara, Consul General of Greece in New York. More details to follow early January.

SAVE THE DATE - Holy Trinity Family Dance - January 17, 2026

Join us for a night of dancing, delicious food, and fun. The evening will feature a performance by our parish Greek dancers, children's activities, and a buffet dinner. Galloping Hill Caterers, Union, NJ, 6-10 PM. To purchase tickets, please Venmo @westfieldgreeschool and include your name and ticket quantity or visit the Greek School table during Fellowship Hour. Adults \$100; Teens (13-18) \$60; Kids (3-12) \$40. All proceeds will support the Holy Trinity Greek School. If you would like to donate a raffle item or sponsor prizes, email liapapathomas@gmail.com For general questions, email asfourmarissa@gmail.com

Adult Greek Dance Lessons, Thursday, January 22, 2026

Lessons will be offered by Ronnie Filippatos Fernandez one Thursday per month, \$25 per class. The next lesson is January 22, 7 - 9 PM. We will enjoy some light drinks and appetizers while learning Greek dances. If interested, please send your name and phone number to htgocgreekdance@gmail.com. The remaining dates are: 2/19, 3/26, 4/23, 5/21.

Philoptochos Stewardship and Vasilopita Luncheon - January 25

Reservations are now open. Please join us immediately following Divine Liturgy. Sign up during the Fellowship Hour, by mail or email: asst-treas@htphiloptochos.com As a reminder, the luncheon is a fundraiser for St. Basil Academy and Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Programs. Mary Carayannopoulos and Yiana Leichtling, co-chairs.

Get Your GOYA FRAPPÉ

Support our GOYA Youth and enjoy a refreshing
Frappe!

\$5 for each frappe.

Cash or Venmo (@WestfieldGOYA)



Proceeds go towards
Holy Trinity's MDF trip!

MDF: Metropolis Music and Dance Festival



FRAPPE FOR PURCHASE AFTER LITURGY AT THE
BOURAS CENTER ON:

Sunday, December 7

Sunday, December 14

**2025 Angel Tree
and
Mitten Trees
Sponsored by Religious Education**

Please continue to sponsor these wonderful Holy Trinity Christmas traditions and help local children in need.

The 36th Annual Christmas Gifting Program will benefit Moms Helping Moms, helping underserved families in NJ.

We will be collecting:

GREAT NEED FOR FORMULA
(Enfamil and Similac preferred)
Diapers – size 4, 5, 6 & 7 and Pull-Ups
Diaper Cream
Baby Wash
Wipes
New, unused baby clothes
(0-5T Fall/Winter only at this time)
New, unused books for ages 0-5
Other essential baby items
(NEW items only)



The 36th Annual Mitten Tree

What to Do?

1. Purchase new mittens, gloves, knit hats or socks in adult and children's sizes.
2. Place them under the Mitten Tree starting December 7th.



If you have any questions, call Elise Savnik 908-337-5046

**DROP OFF DEADLINE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23RD
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**



Join the Choir...
You'll Be Glad
You Did!

Adult Choir for ages 18 to senior citizens



Angel Choir for boys and girls ages 8-12



Byzan "teens" for boys and girls Ages 13-17

For more information, email Anne Kernoski, Choir Director:

akernoski@gmail.com

[Click here to sign up](#)

*Come join us for
Adult Greek Dance*

**Now offering Greek Dance
Lessons for adults!**

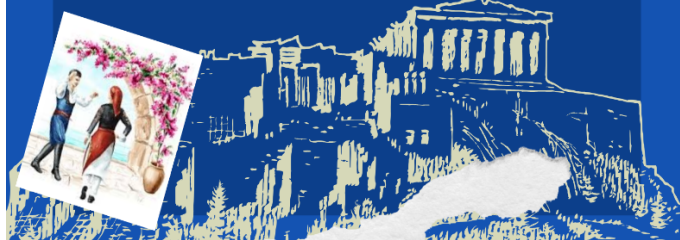
Practices will take place once a month in the
Bouras Center

10/16, 11/20, 1/22, 2/19, 3/26, 4/23, 5/21

\$25/class

Scan here to sign up

Please contact the instructor
Ronnie Filippatos
for more information
HTGOCGreekDance@gmail.com



join us for
**GREEK DANCE
LESSONS**



COME BE A PART OF THE HOLY TRINITY
GREEK DANCE GROUP!

Classes offered for grades
PreK-12
and adults as well!

Contact: Ronnie Filippatos Fernandez
908-672-6203

Htgocgreekdance@gmail.com



Upcoming Events

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

December 21, 2025

Religious Education Christmas Program

The Religious Education & Joy Hope Graciously Invite All Holy Trinity Parishioners, Families & Friends To Our

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM, DESSERT RECEPTION

& HOLIDAY FUN!

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 21, 2025

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE LITURGY

IN THE BOURAS CENTER!

SIGN UP TO HELP OR BRING A DESSERT

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B054FAEAD28A5FD0-58567405-2025>



January 15, 2026



**Consulate General of Greece
New York**

Save the Date: January 15, 2026

**The Holy Trinity Cultural Committee invites all parishioners
and friends to an evening with**

**Iphigenia Kanara
Consul General of Greece in New York**

More details to follow in early January 2026

January 17, 2026

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US AT

Holy Trinity Family Dance

GALLOPING HILL CATERERS
1085 GALLOPING HILL ROAD, UNION NJ
THE CRYSTAL ROOM

JANUARY

SATURDAY | **17** | AT 6 PM
2026

TICKETS

ADULTS \$100, TEENS 13-18 \$60, KIDS 3-12 \$40

TO PURCHASE VENMO @WESTFIELDGREEKSCHOOL OR BRING A CHECK TO THE GREEK SCHOOL
TABLE AT COFFEE HOUR (MADE OUT TO HOLY TRINITY GREEK SCHOOL PTO)

INCLUDE YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME AND TICKET QUANTITY.

Westfield Greek School
@WestfieldGreekSchool

*Thank you for supporting the
Holy Trinity Greek School*



venmo

January 25, 2026

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity



VASILOPITA LUNCHEON & STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY



January 25, 2026

Immediately following Divine Liturgy in the Bouras Center

All proceeds to support St. Basil Academy and youth and young adult programs throughout the Archdiocese and in all Metropolises

ADULTS - \$30

CHILDREN 16 and under - \$20

Includes Buffet Luncheon, Salad, Mezethes, Wine & Dessert

Please mail or stop by Philoptochos table to sign up

RESERVATION FORM

Deadline by January 19th - Reserved seating for tables of 10

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ # Adults: _____ # Children _____

Amt Enclosed: _____ Check # _____ Cash _____ Credit Card _____

Checks payable to: Ladies Philoptochos Society of HTGOC
Zelle accepted: treasurer@htphiloptochos.com

Send to: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, NJ 07090
Attn: Vasilopita Luncheon

Mary Carayannopoulos & Yiana Leichtling, Co-Chairs



T.O.T.S.- (Trinity Orthodox Toddler Social)

Mission Statement

The mission of the Trinity Orthodox Toddler Social (T.O.T.S.) of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is to provide an environment fostering fellowship and prayer for children aged 18 months to 4 years of age and their mother, father and/or caregiver. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of comfort and security in God's house while experimenting in independent and cooperative age-appropriate play under their caregiver's supervision. Concurrently, the toddler social enables these adults the opportunity to meet, pray, and socialize.

TOTS meetings: Wednesdays, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM, Pre-K Room

2026

January 14, 28

February 11, 25

March 11, 25

April 22

May 13, 27

Bring water, sneakers and a snack. Contact Val Comprelli (vcomprelli@gmail.com or 612-801-8608) to sign up or to ask any questions.



GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS

✠ AMEN ✠