

# Sunday Before the Nativity



**St. Anastasia the Great Martyr and Deliverer of Potions [Pharmacolytria]**

**December 22, 2024**

**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, New Jersey 07090  
908.233.8533     [www.holytrinitywestfield.org](http://www.holytrinitywestfield.org)**

**Live streaming services**

**Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizio, Parish Priest**

## Forefeast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

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. Luke; On December 22 we celebrate St. Anastasia the Great Martyr and Deliverer of Potions (Pharmacolytria), whose holy relics are placed in the altar table of Holy Trinity; Sts. Chrysogonos, Theodota, Evodias, and Eutychianus, the Martyrs

### First Tone

Ἦχος Α΄

Morning Gospel:

[St. Luke 24:1-12](#)

[Ελληνικά](#)

Epistle Reading:

[Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40](#)

[Ελληνικά](#)

Gospel Reading:

[St. Matthew 1:1-25](#)

[Ελληνικά](#)

**Apolytikion:** “Although Your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Saviour, and Your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, You rose on the third day giving life to all the world. Therefore, O giver of life, the powers of heaven praise You: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.”

**Apolytikion of 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 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 St. Anastasia:** “O Lord Jesus, unto Thee Thy lamb doth cry with a great voice: \* O my Bridegroom, Thee I love; and seeking Thee, I now contest,\* and with Thy baptism am crucified and buried.\* I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee;\* for Thy sake I die, that I may live in Thee:\* accept me offered out of longing\* to Thee as a spotless sacrifice.\* Lord, save our souls through her intercessions, since Thou art great in mercy.”

**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*

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

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

Sunday, December 29, Orthros, 8:15 AM; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

### **Altar Donations**

**Altar Candles:** In memory of Peter Genakos†

**Vigil Light:** In memory of Euphrosyne (Phroso) Levas†

**Large Candles:** In memory of Nicholas J. Bouras†, Anna K. Bouras† and Anagnostis (Notis) Kotsolios†

**Kandili:** In memory of Nicholas J. Bouras†, Anna K. Bouras† and Anagnostis (Notis) Kotsolios†

**Prothesis:** In memory of Nicholas J. Bouras†, Anna K. Bouras† and Anagnostis (Notis) Kotsolios†

### **Sacraments and Rites**

**Memorials:** Your prayers are requested this morning at the memorial services in memory of Anagnostis (Notis) Kotsolios†, 40 days; Constantine (Gus) Zades†, 1 year; Nicholas J. Bouras†, 11 years; and Anna K. Bouras†, 30 years

**Funerals:** On Tuesday, December 17, the funeral for Leonidas Balatsos† was held. On Thursday, December 19, the funeral for Kassiani (Kasey) Dakos Jeffries† was held. Eternal be their memories.

### **Welcome Visitors**

The parish of Holy Trinity welcomes those visiting our community. We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. If you are looking for a spiritual home, we hope that you consider becoming part of our family. Fr. Peter would very much like to meet you. Please visit the Philoxenia/Fellowship table in the Bouras Center after services to meet parishioners and enjoy our Fellowship Hour. Subscribe to Holy Trinity weekly emails providing news, information, and weekly announcements by request at: [HolyTrinity@htgocnj.org](mailto:HolyTrinity@htgocnj.org)

**Fellowship Hour:** Please join us in the Bouras Center after church for the Fellowship Hour in memory of Nicholas J. Bouras†, Anna K. Bouras† and Anagnostis (Notis) Kotsolios†

**Holy Trinity Bookstore:** The Holy Trinity Bookstore is open. Visit for Christmas cards and meaningful small gifts.



Danny, Bill, Lou, Foula, Eupraxia, Chris, Arlene, John, Ted, William, Theodora, Michael, Gioula, Nicholas, Hellen, Luba, Kevin, Janice, Elaine, Patty, Cynthia, Nicholas, Blace, Christos, Thomas, Rich, Robert, Phyllis, Lea, Mary, Mason, George, Chloe, Yolanda, Luke, George, Maria, Alexander, Athena, Demetra, Stavroula, Harry, Kathy, Jennifer, Pamela, John, Helen, Chris, Niko, Vicky, Dino, Stephanie, James, John, Theodora, Novlet, Chrysavgi, Alexandra, Sue, Marilyn, David, Basil, Laura, Marylee, Meropi, Adina, Nicholas, Constantine, Molly, Leonedas, David, Elizabeth, Tara, Lambros, Anne, Maria, Mikos, Arthur, John, Al, Jessika, Anastasia

### **St. Anastasia the Great Martyr and Deliverer of Potions [Pharmacolytria]**

The reason St. Anastasia is called “pharmacolytria” (deliverer from potions or spells) can first be attributed to certain miracles recorded in the synaxarion as freeing those troubled by unclean spirits and releasing those under the spell of sorcerers.

St. Anastasia, a Christian saint and martyr, suffered for Christ during the time of Diocletian's Christian persecutions. She was the daughter of a pagan, Praepextatus, and a Christian mother, Fausta, who instructed her in the Faith of Christ and who baptized Anastasia as an infant and secretly raised her with Christian values. During the persecutions of Diocletian, Anastasia visited many prisons and cared for the Confessors of Faith. She would feed, minister, bind wounds and ransom suffering captives. Upon her having been discovered in her ministry to Christians, she was jailed and tortured.

Anastasia began secretly corresponding with a holy man, St. Chrysogonos (Dec. 22), who told her to be brave and patient during her persecution and accept the Lord's will. As she did not receive the crown of martyrdom at this point, she was released from prison and continued distributing her property to those less fortunate and suffering. She then set off to follow Chrysogonos who was interrogated personally by Diocletian, but never renounced his faith. Chrysogonos was ordered to be beheaded and thrown into the sea.

Anastasia traveled from city to city caring for Christian prisoners who filled the jails of Diocletian. She healed their wounds and relieved their pain. Consequently, when she was arrested in Illyricum, she was taken to the prefect of the district for being Christian. The authorities tried to persuade her to deny the Christian faith and threatened her with torture, but Anastasia could not be swayed, so she was delivered to the pagan priest Ulpian in Rome who presented her with the choice between riches or suffering, luxuries or torture devices. When she chose torture rather than forsake Christ, he gave her three days to reconsider. At this time, Ulpian left her with three wicked women who did their utmost to make her give in to the man's demands by accepting a luxurious and sinful life, full of pleasure. Anastasia, guided by the Holy Spirit, resisted and strengthened her faith in Christ. Enamored by her beauty, Ulpian decided he would defile her purity. However, once he went to touch her, he was struck blind and his head burst into extreme pain. On his way to the pagan temple, he died pleading in vain for help from his imaginary gods.

St. Anastasia, now free, set out once again to care for imprisoned Christians, along with Theodota (Dec. 22), a pious young widow and faithful helper. After Theodota was martyred, Anastasia was caught and imprisoned once again. She was ordered to die by starvation. For 60 days, she ate nothing yet was not harmed. It is said the martyred St. Theodota visited her and fed her during this time. St. Anastasia was perfected in Faith by being beheaded with almost 200 other Christians. Her holy relics were first taken to Rome and then under Patriarch Gennadios were taken to Constantinople in 470 AD. A church was dedicated to her in the Imperial City and later, relics of her hand and head were transferred to the Monastery of St. Anastasia established by St. Theonas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki. This monastery still exists to this day. Relics of both St. Anastasia, the martyred saint, and St. Theonas, the Hierarch, are placed in the Holy Altar Table at Holy Trinity, in Westfield.

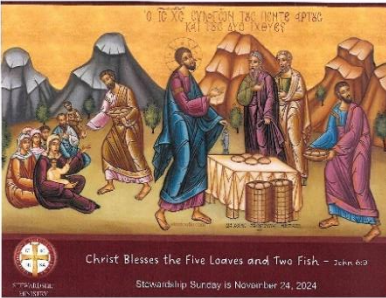


### **Reading the Communion Prayers – Pages 60-63 in Liturgy Book**

In Her wisdom, the Church provides beautiful prayers to read before receiving Holy Communion. These prayers are part of our Eucharistic preparation which also includes a complete fast in the morning (i.e., nothing by mouth) before receiving Holy Communion. As these prayers are read by the clergy in the altar, the faithful should join in at the same time by reading them silently. These Communion Prayers speak to us about faith and forgiveness; humility and cleansing of sins; and a feeling of unworthiness in the presence of the Almighty God. Finally, they reveal the benefits of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. The conclusion of these prayers is seen in the priest who asks for forgiveness from his co-celebrants in the altar and then from the entire congregation. In like manner, each of us must ask for forgiveness from our brethren before approaching the Holy Chalice.

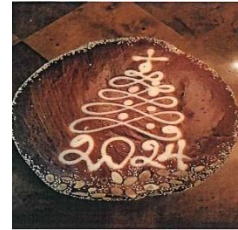
## 2025 Stewardship Drive is Underway

2025 Stewardship Cards are currently being collected. Please submit your signed Stewardship Card by December 31. Holy Trinity is an active and welcoming parish of dynamic stewards. Together we participate and grow in our faith through these ministries which teach the Orthodox Faith and unite us in service to one another and the greater community. The Parish is asking each Steward to contribute \$2,200/family to help make our Stewardship effort successful.



## Fourth Annual Philoptochos Bread Sale

Pick up your orders Sunday, December 22!



## 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.

**Trinity Circle** - Our Vasilopita Lunch/Meeting is Tuesday, January 7, 11 AM - 2 PM. Fr. Peter will bless our Vasilopita and give everyone piece. We thank Despina O'Neill for donating the luncheon in memory of her son Derek and her husband Jim.

## TOTS (Trinity Orthodox Toddler Social)

It is a fun way to connect with other Orthodox families with small children. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, January 8, from 9:30 - 11:30 AM in the preschool room. Children 18 months-Pre-K are welcome with their caregivers (younger siblings welcome!). Bring water, sneakers, and a snack. Contact Val Comprelli [vcomprelli@gmail.com](mailto:vcomprelli@gmail.com) or 612-801-8608 to sign up or with any questions.

**Religious Education Classes Have Begun** - Click the link to register: [Religious Education Registration](#) We are looking for Assistant Teachers and Substitutes! If you are interested in teaching, you do not need to be an expert on Orthodoxy to join our Religious Education team! Please contact Pete Markos at [pmarkos307@gmail.com](mailto:pmarkos307@gmail.com)



## 2024 Angel & Mitten Tree – Drop-off Due Date: Sunday, December 22

Please support this Holy Trinity Christmas tradition. We are collecting baby items: diapers size 3, 4, 5, & 6, wipes, new/unused clothing (NB-5t), new books for ages 0-5. We are also collecting new/unused mittens, gloves, hats, and socks. Drop-off deadline Sunday, December 22.

Personalized ornaments for the Angel Tree are available for \$10. Proceeds to benefit Religious Education. Please contact Elise Savnik at 908-337-5046.



### 2024 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 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Gifting Program will benefit Moms Helping Moms, helping underserved families in NJ**

We will be collecting:  
Diapers – size 3, 4, 5 & 6  
Wipes, Diaper Cream, Baby Wash  
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 34<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup>.

**DROP OFF DEADLINE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22ND  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**



## **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**

### **2024**

September 25

October 9, 23

November 6, 20

December 18

### **2025**

January 8, 22

February 12, 26

March 12 (Wed.), 28 (Fri.)

April 11, 25 (Fridays)

May 9, 23 (Fridays)

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



**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

Email the Choir Director

[kathanasoulas@hotmail.com](mailto:kathanasoulas@hotmail.com)

# Upcoming Parish Events

**January 18, 2025**

## **Holy Trinity Winter Wonderland Dance**

**Join us for a night of food, dancing, family, friends, and fun! There will be an open bar and a delicious buffet to enjoy. We will also have a performance by our Greek dancers and activities for kids throughout the night. Galloping Hill Caterers, Union, NJ. 6 - 10 PM.**

**Tickets: Adults \$100, Teens 13-18 \$60, Kids 2-12 \$40. To purchase please Venmo @westfieldgreeksschool and include your first and last name and ticket quantity.**

**\*\* Donations Needed \*\***

**We kindly ask for raffle prize donations. All proceeds from the raffle will support the Greek School. If you are interested in donating an item, please email**

**[asfourmarissa@gmail.com](mailto:asfourmarissa@gmail.com)**



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US

*Holy Trinity  
Winter Wonderland  
Family Dance*

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

JANUARY

SATURDAY | **18** | AT 6 PM  
2025

TICKETS

ADULTS \$100, TEENS 13-18 \$60, KIDS 2-12 \$40

*Thank you for supporting the  
Holy Trinity Greek School*

