

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✝ NEW JERSEY



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HAPPY 2020

The Church Home and Christian Continuity



■ BY REV. FR. PETER DELVIZIS

“It is a powerful thing when two or three gather in the name of Christ to pray.” – MATTHEW 18:20



So central is this teaching in the Orthodox Church that not even the Divine Liturgy can be celebrated by a priest alone. There must be another person present so that the words of the Lord may be made manifest in the sacrament.

DO YOU HAVE A
WIFE AND CHILDREN?

Are you the head of a family? Do you have a wife and children? If so, then you are not alone. Together with the members of your family you make up a small church

– the mikri ecclesia. You are the “home church,” as the Apostle Paul calls the gathering of the members of a family and friends which took place during the early years of Christianity, when Christians did not have their own church buildings to pray in. – Romans 16:5 & 6

In those days, every Christian home was a church as well. The head of the family was a sacred person because in all of his conduct as a Christian he inspired respect and contributed to the creation of a religious environment. And just as improper words and actions are not permitted in church, improper speech and actions are not permitted in the

home. And just as the priest calls all to prayer, the head of the family in those blessed years had appointed times when he called his family together for prayer.

What a beautiful sight it is to see a family in prayer. Prayer creates unity by centering family life on Christ. Family prayer shows the importance of faith and how we should rely on the Lord for all things. It teaches children to have respect for their parents, it secures them in parental love, and it provides the avenue to experience the power of love for the first time in their young lives.

Continued on page 2 ⇨

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

January–February 2020

✠ JANUARY

I	Naming of the Lord and St. Basil the Great
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
5	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Lesser Blessing of Waters
6	Holy Epiphany
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of Waters
7	St. John the Baptist
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	11:00 AM Trinity Circle
	4:00 PM Greek School
9	9:30 AM TOTS
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
II	11:00 AM Baptism
I2	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
I4	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Meeting

7:30 PM Parish Council

16	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
17	St. Anthony
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
19	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
21	11:00 AM Trinity Circle
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM NNJYC
23	9:30 AM TOTS
	4:00 PM Greek School
26	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM Vasilopita
28	4:00 PM Greek School
30	Three Holy Hierarchs
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir

✠ FEBRUARY

2	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
4	11:00 AM Trinity Circle
	4:00 PM Greek School
6	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
8	St. Theodore the General
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9	Triodion Begins
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM Communion Breakfast
II	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Meeting
	7:30 PM Parish Council
I3	9:30 AM TOTS
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
I6	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

The Church Home and Christian Community

↳ Continued from page 1

This sacred custom of the entire family praying together continued during the years of the Turkish occupation. In the enslaved country of Greece, Orthodox Christian families prayed together. Family prayer was a necessity, how else could the country endure centuries of Ottoman control?

When the French heard that a handful of Greeks began a rebellion against the Ottoman Empire and were seeking their freedom and fighting against and defeating one of the largest armies in the world, they wondered where they found the strength to endure. A group of French officers was dispatched to Greece. They first arrived in Tripoli and then visited distant villages in the mountains. In those villages, they saw many houses that had been destroyed by Ibrahim; the villagers were living in improvised shacks. Open-

ing one dilapidated home after another, they were shocked to find large families still living in them. A father, mother, and six or seven children in some cases were found in a room with no tables or chairs. Their food was that of poverty; wild greens, onions, and barley bread. But joy shined in their faces. What impressed the foreign visitors especially was that the head of the family at certain times would give the signal and all would then kneel before the icon of Christ. They started praying and prostrating themselves. The



Parish Council

Update

■ BY GEORGE COLONIAS, PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

“You, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” – GALATIANS 5:13

Happy New Year! As we ring in and welcome the New Year, let us, as a Holy Trinity family, also celebrate, applaud and show our heartfelt thanks to Bill Theofanous and Notis Kotsolios, who both ended their long and dedicated service on the Parish Council where they selflessly offered themselves and their God-given gifts serving each and every one of us humbly with love for decades. Although they will neither wear a carnation on Sunday nor attend the monthly Parish Council meetings, I know they will continue to serve this parish with love and offer advice when needed. These

gentlemen each brought perspective and integrity to the council and are keepers of invaluable institutional history and knowledge which we will continue to absorb. Their perspectives will be greatly missed. Their love and generosity towards all of us will never end, nor will our gratitude towards them. We will all work hard to keep the course they have helped set.

In January, as soon as our elections are ratified, Spiro Leunes and Dean Steele, along with the nine incumbents who were up for re-election, will join the other Parish Council members on the solea where Father Peter will ad-

minister the Affirmation of Office. We welcome Spiro, a CPA, and Dean, an attorney, who will faithfully offer their talents and experiences to continue to maintain and improve our community. I encourage anyone who feels a need to help in any aspect of our parish to make their interest known to Fr. Peter, myself or any Parish Council member so we can help find a way to make it happen.

In 2020 please look for continued improvements to our facility, our security efforts, and our planned giving initiative; plus maybe a few surprises. ❖

↩ *Continued from page 2*

youngest child sang “Holy God” and “Kyrie, eleison.” The visitors were astonished at the sight. “This,” they said, “is why these poor people are so mighty. They pray to God, and prayer is their secret strength.”



Today, how do our Greek homes compare? Fortunately, direct tyranny from a hostile and repressive government is gone and in America our personal liberties are guaranteed. But there is still a deceptive and illusive enemy on the

prowl and for this we still need family prayer. This enemy is unlike the enemies of the past, for this one is unseen and hidden from us. There is no direct attack per se but yet it seeks to achieve that which the Ottomans failed to do

– take away our faith and our belief in the Almighty God. That why we need to focus on Christ even more in our modern and free world.

Our precious Orthodox Faith was handed down to us by fearless people who centered their lives on Christ. Without the strength that family prayer provides in the small church environment or mikri ecclesia, we become careless against an enemy who has the same machinations of conquering and destroying Christ within us. Yes, today’s homes are sturdy, clean, well-furnished, and equipped with the latest gadgets; but are the spiritual foundations strong?

As the New Year has arrived and as we move further into the future with each passing

day, let us make a different resolution than all the previous ones of the past. Let us look for inspiration from our forefathers and mothers of the faith to relive the Christian customs and practices handed down to us. And among the first of these let us return to family prayer to strengthen us in all that we do.



Have a happy and blessed 2020. ❖



Philoptochos

Ladies of Philoptochos

■ BY MARINA LOALBO, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY



Over the years, the church has played an important role in so many lives, bringing hope, joy, and healing to those in need. As a ministry of the church, the Ladies Philoptochos strives to imitate that model. Through the Ladies' efforts, these needs have been met on a variety of levels with kindness, generosity, and hard work. And now, with 2019 coming to a close, we are able to look back and see how our efforts and ideas have developed throughout the year.

Our annual Philoptochos Christmas event was held on December 4 in the Bouras Center. The mood was made festive by glittering lighted centerpieces, which created a warm glow and an intimate setting. We enjoyed the fellowship of 75 women, who blessed us with their

presence. After Ellen Manos-Athenson, President, presided over the General Meeting and spoke about our activities for the year, we enjoyed a lovely dinner buffet, followed by socializing and shopping at our boutique tables and Christmas Boutique Bake Sale. We thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful piano playing of Christmas carols by Ryan Kiel, who also entertained us with the festive 12 Days of Christmas, and recruited our guests to participate. The room was filled with the Christmas spirit of joy, fellowship, and fun!

We were honored to have as our guest, Janice Lilien, CEO of the YWCA Union County, and we thanked her for the great work and resources that the YWCA provides. We presented the YWCA with monetary donations from

our party guests, and our Chapter made a generous donation, as well. Janice was appreciative and expressed her sincere "thank you" for the impact our donation will have in support of this important resource to women in our community. May God bless this organization for the good work they do providing a variety of services to women and girls in need.

The Bible tells us that, "Every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the Father of of lights" (James 1:17), and by reflecting on this past year, we see how Philoptochos was an important part of God's generous and blessed plan. Looking at 2019, we are thrilled to have been a part of His works, and we look forward to the ways that He will continue to work through us in 2020. Happy New Years to all! ❖



Holy Trinity Y2AM Sends College Care Packages

■ BY JEANNIE ARIDA

Holy Trinity Y2AM (Youth and Young Adult Ministry) led a parish-wide outreach to our parish's college freshmen. Many Holy Trinity ministries including the Y2AM, the Parish Council, Ladies Philoptochos, GOYA, Women of Faith, and parishioners worked together to send final exam "Survival Kits" care packages to our college freshmen community. These packages were mailed out in early December to fortify the students during exam season.

In total, there were 13 care packages



sent to students who are completing their first semester at college. Each care package weighed over four pounds with completely donated contents. They were filled with healthy snacks like trail mix, granola bars, popcorn, a Starbucks gift card, fresh fruit and one dozen delicious home-baked koulourakia. The boxes included a letter from Father Peter, and the Y2AM, personal notes from the GOYANS, an icon copy of the Lord's Prayer for hanging and an Orthodox Prayer Book for all occasions.

This is the 5th year of this Holy

Trinity Y2AM outreach project. The Y2AM ministry's mission is to keep our Holy Trinity first-year students connected with their church home and let each of them know that our prayers and hearts are with them. We support them with faith and love through the college transition. Holy Trinity will always be their spiritual home throughout their lives. ❖



Book Store

Start the New Year right with a special gift for yourself or a loved one: here are only three of the many books the Book Store has available:

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE

by Albert S. Rossi, PhD.

There is not one person [young or old] who does not have loved ones in need of healing. This book is the perfect answer for that need. "In order to become a healing presence for others, we must first be healed ourselves—through an active relationship with the great Healer, Christ. Drawing on the teachings of the Fathers and saints of the Church, Dr. Rossi gently points the way toward deepening our love for God and for each other so that others may experience Christ through us."

A GUIDE TO GREEK TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS IN AMERICA, 2nd Edition

by Marilyn Rouvelas

"This book is a popular best seller and standard reference about Orthodox and Hellenic traditions throughout the world: 66,000 copies have been sold! It clearly explains the Orthodox faith, giving advice on participating in Sacraments, pronunciation of common Greek words, major cites to visit in Greece, popular Greek music, the right thing to say on special occasions, and even on how to observe name days, fast, and bake communion bread! "The reader will learn why traditions are kept in addition to the practical advice of how and when to keep them.

SAINT NICHOLAS AND THE NINE GOLD COINS

by Jim Forest, Illustrated by Vladislav Andrejev

"The figure of Saint Nicholas stands apart from nearly every other Christian saint: his fame spread across empires and generations to make him one of the most recognizable Christian saints in history. But the popular perception of Saint Nicholas today diverges greatly from his original veneration as a compassionate almsgiver and defender of the poor. Saint Nicholas has been reduced to the pop culture figure of Santa Claus, a jolly old man who brings presents to good little boys and girls. This book reacquaints those boys and girls with the authentic Santa Claus—Nicholas, a man who found greatness not simply in spreading "good cheer," but in being a true icon of Jesus Christ in word and deed." This is not just a wonderful book for children at Christmas, rather, its magnificent stories and illustrations are indeed a great gift for children throughout the year! ❖

Please stop by the Book Store table during the fellowship hour. If you don't see what you want, we can order it for you.



GOYA

Update

■ BY ARIANA TARHANIDIS, GOYA PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the brief holiday break and is ready to pick up where we left off - beginning preparations for Sights and Sounds, which is only two months away! Everyone worked hard before break so we could hit the ground running with practices after - the American singing and band groups picked their song(s), play held auditions, and we are continuing to work hard on perfecting our Greek dance routine. As some may say, "time flies when you're having fun," so we really have to focus and make sure we are being responsible by attending all of our practices (and communicating with those facilitating if you know you will be missing). We are looking for-

ward to continuing our winning streak and increasing participation amongst (new) members - there is a category for everyone!

Though our athletic teams have had a rather lengthy break - our last games were in November - everyone is still practicing and we are excited to participate in the upcoming playoffs. We had a great turnout at our alumni games, and it was really nice to connect with older, returning GOYANs. Thank you to all who participated.

Before the break, we had around twenty-five GOYANs in attendance at both our Lock-In and annual Christmas Dance hosted by St. Anna in Flemington. Parents and GOYANs were also invited to the annual GOYA Christmas

party on December 20th, which was hosted at the Colonias' house. These events were so much fun and we are looking forward to participating in them again next year; it is important to attend events happening both in our GOYA and with other GOYAs as well, for they are great ways to meet new people and get involved in our metropolis.

Our Outreach program is starting the new year by continuing to collect socks, food, and school supplies - thank you to all who have donated and please continue donating! We would also like to extend thanks to all who donated coats - over 100 were delivered, and the wreath sale was a huge success as well - we were able to raise a great amount to donate to our charities. ❖

Sunday School Christmas Program





Christmas Scenes



HOLY TRINITY SCOUTS

Duty, Service, and Love of God

■ BY MIRIAM KOTSONIS, SCOUTING MINISTRY ADVISOR

The first thing that a Boy Scout promises (“On my honor”) is to “do my duty to God...” Similarly, a Girl Scout first promises “to serve God.” The Holy Trinity Scouting Ministry helps these words come alive in the hearts of all our Scouts. Our Church provides sacraments, services like the Divine Liturgy, fellowship, and Religious Education. The Scouting Ministry tries to link all those beautiful gifts together and show our Scouts how God’s love operates not just on Sunday, but in their everyday lives, including their Scouting activities. We believe that duty and service to God become spiritually meaningful when our Scouts are motivated by knowing and loving God and experiencing His love for them.

Our religious awards program, sponsored by the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS), offers Scouts the chance to go deeper in their knowledge and love for the Lord. They

work through an age-appropriate booklet with the help of an adult advisor and earn a medal that is part of their official uniform from that point onward. The St. George Medal is for Grades 1-3, Chi Rho for Grades 4-5, and Alpha Omega for Grades 6-12. Please contact Fr. Peter or Miriam Kotsonis, mekotsonis@gmail.com, to start an award booklet. We currently have a record number of Alpha Omega recipients among our Scouts in high school: eight!

In November, Holy Trinity Scouts participated in a Veterans Day Celebration Color Guard. On our Scout Sunday on December 1, they joined together on the Solea to receive Fr. Peter’s blessing, as well as assisting the ushers. Scouts have been working diligently on their religious awards, and Eagle Scout Nicholas Zotos received the highest award, the Alpha Omega medal, on Scout Sunday.

Holy Trinity Scouts often dedicate major service projects for Eagle, Gold,



or Silver awards to helping our parish or to other Orthodox charities. In recent years, other Scouts have also used their projects to help our Orthodox Church in a variety of ways. For example, Caroline Maglaras’ project familiarized our senior parishioners with new technologies, and Alexandra Maglaras assisted with a church summer camp and a Holy Friday retreat for our children. Julia Love collected photos of our parish, produced video interviews with some of our founders, and created a beautiful slide presentation for our 50th Anniversary luncheon. Molly Love inventoried all the old Greek dance costumes, then led a drive to help purchase a new regional costume for the entire Holy Trinity





dance troupe. Rebecca Kotsonis held a Project Mexico book fair here at church, sending hundreds of children's books in Spanish to fill the library shelves of St. Innocent Orthodox Orphanage. For her Gold Award, she wrote a history of the Holy Trinity Parish that provided key information for our 50th Anniversary book, photographed archival documents, and made audio recordings of elders now no longer with us. We encourage all Holy Trinity Scouts to speak with Fr. Peter and Miriam Kotsonis about ways to focus their service projects on their Orthodox faith.

Our Scouts are also invited to several exciting events in 2020. In April, Orthodox Scouts from NY and NJ will be travelling to Washington DC for special tours. A bus will be leaving from St John the Theologian in Tenafly. In July, the Girl Scouts will be holding a national jamboree in Orlando FL. The EOCS will be represented for the first time, with Holy Trinity Girl Scouts also welcome. In October, the annual EOCS retreat will be held at Holy Cross/Hellenic College in Brookline Massachusetts. Again, our Scouts are invited to participate along with troops and other individual Scouts from NY and NJ Orthodox churches.

We welcome Scouts of all ages as members of our "virtual" Holy Trinity Scouting organization. Our activities and programs all have the goal of growing closer to God, which transforms duty and service to God into acts of love and joy. If you are a parent of a Scout and have not heard from Miriam Kotsonis yet, please send email to mekotsonis@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list.



"Sanctify Those Who Love the Beauty of Thy House" – An Eagle Scout Project

What do these words from the "Prayer Behind the Ambo" near the end of our Liturgy have to do with an Eagle Scout project?

Attending our liturgies at Holy Trinity week after week, and in recent years serving as an acolyte, William Arida chose to focus on honoring the Lord and His House for his Eagle Scout service project. A key requirement of this award is that the Scout must plan, lead, and execute a significant community-service project for the benefit of a non-profit organization.

William saw the need and opportunity to beautify the Holy Trinity Church courtyard. He designed a project that provided attractive new landscaping and a comfortable bench. Then he raised several thousand dollars in donations from family, friends, and parishioners, as well as in-kind donations from local landscaping, nursery, and hardware businesses. After planning carefully and receiving the necessary approvals from Fr. Peter and the Parish Council, he led a team of 22 volunteers over the course of four weekends to clean up the flower beds; uproot dead trees; landscape the area with 48 new trees, shrubs, and plantings; and install fresh Canadian Cedar mulch. He and his team also per-



manently installed a commercial park bench under two shade trees, as a place for rest and reflection. He brought the project in under budget and donated the surplus to Holy Trinity for our youth programs.

William is a member of Westfield Boy Scout Troop 77 and Holy Trinity's "virtual Scout troop." He and his sister Christina (children of Ken and Jeannie Arida) have not only taken part in our Veteran's Day flag ceremonies and annual Scout Sunday celebrations, but also have earned both the Chi Rho and Alpha Omega Scouting religious awards. And beyond receiving the highest awards of Boy Scouting and the Orthodox Christian religious award program, William has shown that he is trying to live out the words of our weekly prayer, giving thanks and praise to the Lord through loving and increasing the beauty of His House. ❖





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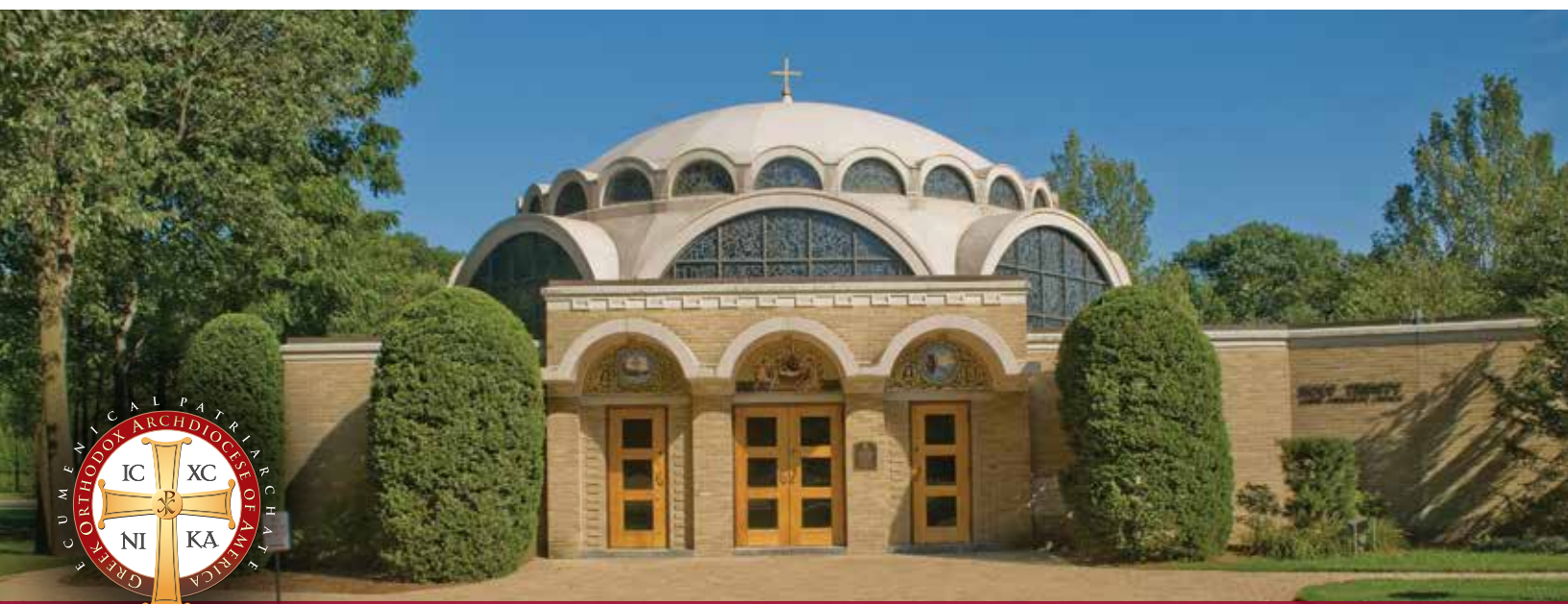
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