

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



January 2024 ✦ Volume 48, Issue 1

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The Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ

January 6

The Orthodox Church celebrates the baptism of Christ on January 6 from ancient times, calling this feast also the Theophany, since in this event, the Trinity was made known to humankind for the first time. Before an independent feast of the Incarnation of Christ on December 25, the Nativity was celebrated on January 6 as well. Both feasts reveal to us God's long expected visitation to this world. The Trinity is revealed to us and the course of salvation is set. God the Father is revealed in the voice from heaven, God the Son being born in the flesh and baptized by John in the Jordan, and God the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove. God is marvelous in everything that He does.

The baptism of Christ also denotes the beginning of His public ministry. The Gospel reveals that Jesus comes from Galilee. He is thirty years of age, the minimum age for a preacher of the faith. As He approaches for baptism, John protests saying, "I need to be baptized by You." According to the Evangelist John, St. John the Baptist didn't recognize Jesus before He was baptized (John 1:33). Only realizing Whom He was after the Trinity reveals Himself. Yet even before this moment, a feeling of unworthiness came over John as he sensed Jesus' holiness and sinlessness, and His limitless superiority over him.

At this, John ceased to protest and conceded to God's will and baptized Jesus in the Jordan. "And behold, the heavens were opened to Him." Then the voice of God the Father was heard, "You are My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" indicating to St. John and everyone assembled together the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Only Begotten of the Father.

This is how the ministry of Jesus Christ begins. His great labor and the ministry of salvation commence by God revealing Himself as Trinity. To Him be dominion, power, and glory forever more. Amen. ❖



January

The Month Dedicated to the Illustrious Fathers

January (in Latin, *Ianuarius*) is named after the Latin word for "door" (*ianua*), since January is the door to the year and an opening to new beginnings. It is the first month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. The first day of the month is known as New Year's Day. It is, on average, the coldest month of the year within most of the Northern Hemisphere.

Traditionally, the original Roman calendar consisted of 10 months totaling 304 days, winter being considered a month-less period. Around 713 BC, the semi-mythical successor of Romulus, King Numa Pompilius, is supposed to have added the months of January and February, so that the calendar covered a standard lunar year (354 days).

Even though the month of January has the longest nights and is among the darkest times of the year, the Church has made it one of its most luminous with such a vast array of feasts honoring numerous

Continued on page 3 ⇨

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

January–February 2024

JANUARY

- I** Naming of the Lord/St. Basil the Great
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
Office Closed – New Year’s Day
- 2** 11:00 AM Trinity Circle – Vasilopita Luncheon
- 4** 4:00 PM Greek School
- 5** Eve of Theophany
8:30 AM Orthros and Royal Hours
10:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Blessing of Waters
- 6** Holy Epiphany
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of Waters
10:00 AM Joy/Hope and all Holy Trinity Youth
11:00 AM Baptism
- 7** St. John the Baptist
8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
Religious Education Classes Resume
- 9** 4:00 PM Greek School
7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Mtg.
7:30 PM Parish Council Mtg.
- IO** St. Gregory of Nyssa
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9:30 AM TOTS
7:30 PM Sights and Sounds Mtg.
- II** 4:00 PM Greek School

- 13** 11:00 AM Baptism
- 14** 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 16** 4:00 PM Greek School
- 17** St. Anthony
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7:30 PM Sights and Sounds Mtg.
- 18** St. Athanasios
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
4:00 PM Greek School
- 21** 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM Vasilopita Luncheon
- 22** 6:00 PM Sights and Sounds Registration
8:00 PM NNJYC State Mtg.
- 23** 4:00 PM Greek School
- 24** 9:30 AM TOTS
7:30 PM Sights and Sounds Mtg.
- 25** 4:00 PM Greek School
- 28** 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 30** Three Hierarchs
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
4:00 PM Greek School
- 31** 7:30 PM Sights and Sounds Mtg.

FEBRUARY

- I** 4:00 PM Greek School
- 2** Presentation of the Lord
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 4** 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 6** 11:00 AM Trinity Circle
4:00 PM Greek School
- 7** 7:30 PM Sights and Sounds Mtg.
- 8** St. Theodore the General
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
4:00 PM Greek School
- II** 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
12:00 PM Community Communion Breakfast

The Illustrious Fathers

⇨ *Continued from page 1*

Church Fathers. From the beginning of the month right through the end, the Church does not cease to celebrate and remember many illustrious Fathers who brought the profound teaching of Christ into the world.

The many high-profiled saints celebrated in January are: St. Basil the Great (Jan. 1); St. Sylvester the Pope of Rome (Jan. 2); St. Gregory of Nyssa (Jan. 10); St. Peter of the Chains (Jan. 16); St. Anthony the Great (Jan. 17); St. Athanasios the Great (Jan. 18); St. Cyril of Alexandria (Jan. 18); St. Makarios of Egypt (Jan. 19); St. Makarios of Alexandria (Jan. 19); St. Mark of Ephesus (Jan. 19); St. Maximus the Confessor (Jan. 21); St. Timothy the Apostle (Jan. 22); St. Gregory the Theologian (Jan. 25); St. John Chrysostom (Jan. 27); St. Ephraim the Syrian (Jan. 28); St. Ignatius the God-bearer (Jan. 29). As if this wasn't enough, we repeat the celebration of three of the most illustrious saints as the month culminates with the feast of the Holy Three Hierarch – St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom.

In the late Eleventh and early Twelfth Century, men of Christian faith and zealous for virtue, would argue over which of the three great saints were the most noble and important. This created a rivalry and encampment of believers siding with either Basil, Gregory, or John. This “controversy” became problematic as it entered civil discourse and caused ill-feelings with endless arguments. But being mindful of scripture and the words of the great chief apostle, Paul, to be of “same mind and in the same judgment” the Church created a common day of celebration for each on January 30. This celebration united these spiritual giants and the people who followed their teaching under the dominion of Christ. We all serve Christ and just as we have different talents these talents must be used to progress Christ and the Gospel.

Perhaps it is in human nature to take side or to promote someone we are closer to. Let's look at how Paul dealt with similar division in the early church.

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak

the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together... It has come to my knowledge that there are contentions among you. Each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos’ or ‘I am of Cephas’, or ‘I am of Christ’.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10-12

After saying this, Paul asks a rhetorical question, “IS CHRIST DIVIDED?” to show the absurdity of rivalry. And then he goes on to say “Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” These questions drive home the obvious point that we are ministers of Christ and are joined to each other by Him.

The month of January, while feeling long and cold at times, it given a wonder by the Church in the celebration of the Holy Fathers of the Christian Faith. Let us honor and highly exalt these men of virtue and good will so that through their examples of faith and insightful teachings, we may come to appreciate the Orthodox Faith, which has been and will always be the Faith of the Fathers. ❖



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Parish Council

Perspective

As we pause to celebrate our many wonderful accomplishments and the growth of our parish, I am reminded of the parable of the three bricklayers, which highlights the importance of perspective. The advancement of our spiritual and communal purpose, as parishioners of this church, relies on each of us knowing our purpose as a steward, bringing our life's motivations, talents, and skills to our parish, and thereby bringing our parish to life.

The story is attributed to Christopher Wren, the architect commissioned to rebuild St. Paul's Cathedral in London after the great fire of 1666. Five years into the massive project, he stopped to pose a simple question to three bricklayers. "What are you doing?" he asked. The first replied, "I am a bricklayer, working hard to feed my family." The second offered, "I am a builder. I am building the walls of a church." The third answered, "I am a cathedral builder. I am building a great cathedral to God." Their physical task was the same, but their perspective was vastly different.

We might notice that the focus of the first was a job. For the second, it was an occupation. For the third, it was a calling. If we are fortunate enough to experience a role that taps into our God-given design, we know it is possible for that role to provide us the opportunity to fulfill our purpose and to understand that our personal mission can be wherever God places us at a moment in time.

As stewards, our mission may seem mundane on the surface; but if we place our stewardship in the proper context and understand how it contributes to a noble cause, our mission becomes far more rewarding.

If our perspective is limited to the self, then the message we are sending is, "It doesn't matter what you do with your bricks. Just hurry up and get your own pile." But we know that this does not lead to fulfillment or happiness.

Is there something for us to learn from the parable of the bricklayers? Scripture affirms that we have maximum satisfaction and joy when what we do lines up with our God-given talents, desires, and passions, whether that is using a particular set of skills, serving a specific group of people, sharing an

expertise, or supporting a particular cause. In Philippians 2:13, St. Paul says, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

If one defines success as happiness, then we must ask ourselves, "what type of environment and culture do I want to help cultivate, which will allow me to best thrive and find the most joy?" For example, where can I best practice my Christian values, including positively impacting others, especially those less fortunate than me? What does God have in mind for the motivations He built into each of us?

Perspective has power. It changes attitudes. It empowers us to work towards a greater good. It transforms every task into an opportunity to be a cathedral builder instead of just a bricklayer.

This year, we have achieved many milestones and accomplishments; and I want to thank you for your continued support, confidence, and many contributions. Our church community rests on a strong foundation, which we have built together, working collaboratively and enthusiastically, in each case, guided by a spiritual and communal mission and perspective. ❖



Trinity Circle

Update

■ BY AVI KIRIAKATIS, PRESIDENT

We are blessed at Holy Trinity to develop lifelong friendships by being members of Trinity Circle. Parishioners 55 and over are welcome to join Trinity Circle, attend our monthly meetings, socialize and have wonderful outings. Annual dues are only \$15.00. Each meeting begins with a prayer by Father Peter Delvizi, we conduct a short meeting, followed by a speaker, lunch and socializing.

Our Annual Members Christmas Luncheon was at Galloping Hill Caterers where we all had a very festive time; socializing, singing Christmas songs and winning various prizes.

Tuesday, January 2nd is our Annual Vasilopita Luncheon and meeting. Father Peter will bless, cut the Vasilopita and give us all a piece. Everyone hopes they get the St. Basil coin in their portion of the Vasilopita.

Our monthly luncheons are donated and celebrated, in honor of or in memory of loved ones:

January 2nd In honor of Angela & Clem Thomas 69th Anniversary

February 6th In memory of Joy Daniledes loved ones

March 5th In memory of beloved husband Christos Romas

April 2nd In memory of beloved sister Barbara Manos

April 21 Cemetery Palm Cross Sale

May 7th In memory of beloved wife Theresa Kotsolios

June 4th Members end of the year luncheon at Galloping Hill Caterers





PHILOPTOCHOS

As a New Year dawns upon us, we are now able to lovingly look back and thoughtfully reflect on all that we've experienced, accomplished, and celebrated. The year 2023 left us with wonderful memories filled with love and compassion, communion, commitment, fulfillment, and growth. As a fellowship, Christ has blessed us with each other, and 2023 continued to develop our life, not only in Him but in each other's lives, as well. An annual tradition that we can always count on to bring us together in Him is our Philoptochos Christmas general meeting and dinner, held on December 7th. At our general meeting, we shared information about our commitments and fundraisers from the Thanksgiving Dinner Drive and Christmas Boutique Bake Sale to the Community Christmas Card and Vasilopita Bread Sale. As a Sisterhood, we voted to support the Metropolis of NJ Philoptochos Social Service Christmas Outreach Program so that \$3,600 has been donated to benefit 12 needy individuals and families.

We enjoyed hosting over 80 women to a delicious catered dinner by Prestige Diner, and shopping at the many boutique tables. Fun was had by all as we reminisced, shared some laughs, and recruited our guests to sing along to the festive 12 Days of Christmas carol. The room was filled with the Christmas spirit of joy, fellowship, and fun! We thank Phyllis Verenes for chairing this wonderful Christmas Party for our Sisterhood! We were honored to have as our guest, Karen Geer, Executive Director of the YWCA Union County, and we thanked her for the important work and resources that the YWCA provides to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote dignity for all. Through monetary donations collected that evening and the support of the Philoptochos chapter treasury, we presented the YWCA a generous donation from our chapter. May God bless this organization for the services they provide in our local community.



We already are looking ahead to 2024 and the Annual Vasilopita Luncheon on Sunday, January 21st! The luncheon proceeds and donations benefit Saint Basil Academy. This will coincide with our 2024 Stewardship Drive Kick-Off in January ~ your stewardship and continued support is the foundation upon which our chapter can fulfill its mission. Furthermore, exciting plans are underway for our largest fundraiser, the Annual Dinner & Fashion Show, "Coming Up Roses", to be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

The year began, as each often does, with a sense of hope for what is to come, and as believers, we reflect on the good works that God gave us in 2023, with the expectation that He will continue those plans in and through us in the new year. As His faithful, we stand firmly in the promise that "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1.6) and through that promise, we look forward to 2024, knowing that His work will continue to be accomplished through us.

Merry Christmas

And Happy New Years to All!

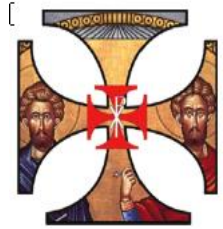




The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity



**VASILOPITA LUNCHEON
&
STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**



January 21, 2024

*Immediately following Divine Liturgy, Bouras Center
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Includes: Buffet Lunch, Salad, Wine & Dessert

**Please mail or stop @ Philoptochos table to sign up
*Kathy Maglaras & Debra Vlahakis, Co-chairs***

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Checks Payable to: The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity

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250 Gallows Hill Rd Westfield, NJ 07091
When mailing, mark envelope "Attn: V"



GOYA

Happy New Year!

I hope you had a wonderful holiday break, and are ready to pick up where we left off - preparing for Sights & Sounds, which is only two months away! The Greek dance group has picked their routine and is starting to piece together the choreography. Our singing groups, band, and play are solidifying their selections as well.

In early December, our volleyball team competed in the District II tournament, and although we did not get the desired outcome, we gave it our best effort and got to play as a team for the last time (until Olympics!). We are proud of both of our boys' basketball and girls' volleyball teams during this past season. We developed our skills, displayed great sportsmanship, and grew closer to our faith together. We thank our coaches Pete Pangis and Vickie Zouzoukis for their tremendous support leading us. Good luck to everyone in future seasons!

December was filled with amazing Christmas celebrations, so here a few. Our GOYAn's helped with the Sunday

School Christmas program, with three of us accompanying the traditional holiday concert. During the break the annual Christmas dance was held at Clifton. Some of our GOYAn's attended the Metropolis of NJ Christmas Tree Lighting. Parents and GOYAn's enjoyed the GOYA Christmas party; thank you to the Caryannopoulos family for hosting us! These events were so much fun, and we look forward to participating in them again next year! I want to remind GOYAn's to actively attend events happening both in our GOYA and with other GOYAs as well, as they are great ways to connect with new people and get involved in our Metropolis.

GOYA wants to thank everyone who donated to our Thanksgiving food drive and supported our pie and bread sales. Each was a huge success and very well received. Our outreach did a fantastic job planning our Christmas caroling trips to local nursing homes and parishioners' houses. We are now busily planning a trip to the NJ Community Food Bank sometime in the upcoming months. ❖



Y2AM

BY JEANNIE ARIDA



The Holy Trinity Y2AM (Youth and Young Adult Ministry) continued the outreach ministry of sending college care packages to the parish's college freshmen. This year, there are nine freshmen from Holy Trinity who received care packages to show support and love as the students prepare for their first semester final exams.

The care packages included a heartwarming letter from Father Peter, greeting cards from the Goyans to their friends, home baked Koulorakia cookies by Avi Kyriakatis, an icon of Jesus Christ, and numerous food items such as popcorn, trail mix, granola bars, gum, Hershey bars and much more.

The boxes were filled to the brim with good wishes, love, and prayers from their home parish at Holy Trinity.

Many ministries supported this outreach including the Parish Council and Philoptochos.


This year marks the ninth year of the Y2AM spreading good cheer to our college freshmen, so they know that their church loves and supports them always. ❖





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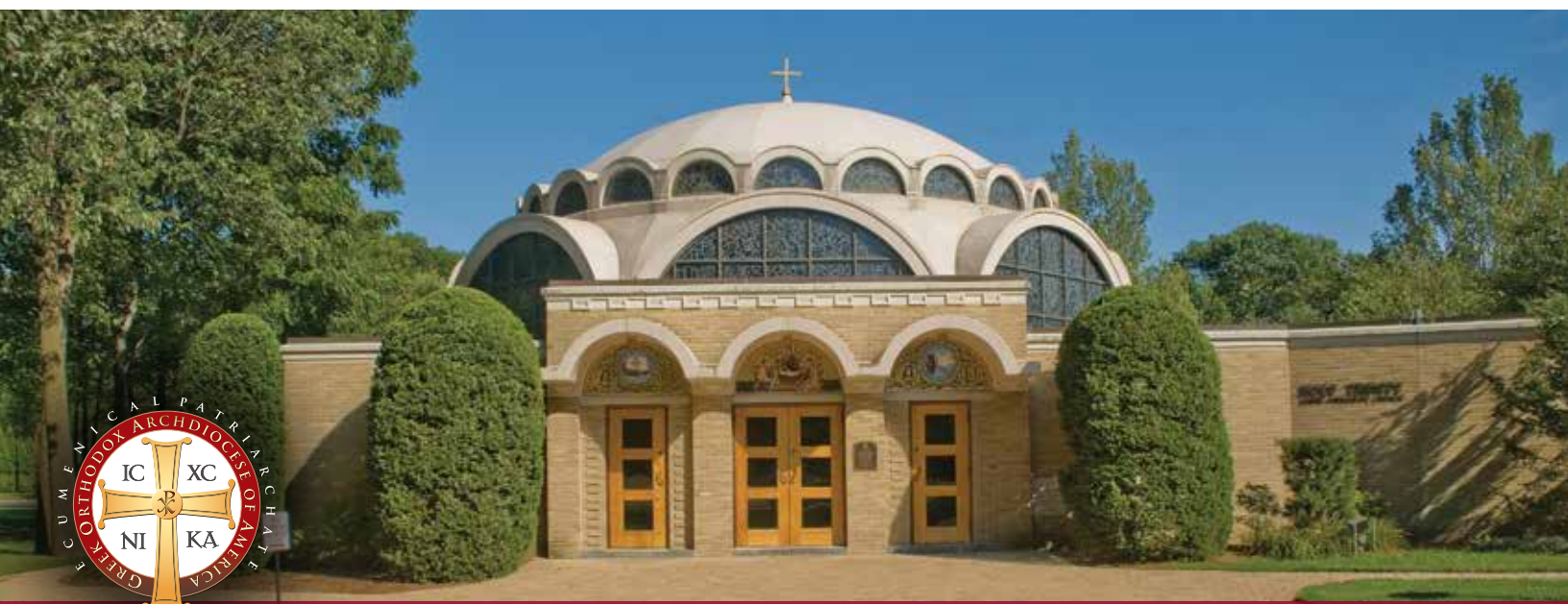
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

	Sundays	Weekdays
Orthros	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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