

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



July 2023 ✦ Volume 47, Issue 4

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A Child's Beauty

A baby is God's gift to a family. And from an infant's beauty and delicate nature one can clearly see the creative nature of God. If you ever want to be filled with overwhelming joy or be in amazement of God's handiwork, just hold a baby in your hands to look at its body which is so incredibly small and delicate.

I must admit that even though I have performed close to a thousand baptisms over the course of almost thirty years of ministry, my face still lights up and I become speechless each time I hold an infant in my hands to dedicate its precious soul to God.



Most of us were infants when we were baptized into the faith which means we have no cognitive memory of that day. But attend a baptismal service and if you are attuned to what is going on, then you just might learn something from the child.

The Lord remarked that whoever does not become like a child will not see the Kingdom of heaven. — Mark 10:15

By no means is a child a perfect being. But the Lord has taught us that we must incorporate certain traits clearly exhibited by a child to enter heaven. These traits must include trust, and a simple and delicate nature, things adults have trouble maintaining. A child is so extremely blessed because it has not acquired two faces or two different selves. It has not acquired hypocrisy because it has not encountered worldly glory. A child is happy and carefree in knowing nothing about the cares of this world or the anxiety fear casts on us. A child is like one of the birds in the air as described in Matthew 6:29, or a lily of the field, or a flower in a garden who is clothed with God's beauty so that not even King Solomon can outshine it.

But perhaps the most important thing the Lord teaches using the imagery of a child, is that our welfare is based entirely upon dependency. The brilliance of the Lord's teaching is found in that we



must be completely and utterly dependent upon God. There is no other way to enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

So, the next time you look at or hold an infant think of the many things it teaches regarding the purity of faith. Think how many people the infant is dependent on for protection, sustenance, growth, and life. Then using this vivid imagery as provided by the Lord, let us understand how deeply dependent we are on our heavenly Father for all things. Doing this will unlock the gates of heaven for our entry. ✦

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

July–August 2023

JULY

- 16 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

- 23 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

- 26 St. Paraskevi
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

- 30 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

AUGUST

- 3 6:30 PM Paraklesis

- 4 6:30 PM Paraklesis

- 5 6:30 PM Great Vespers

- 6 Holy Transfiguration
8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

- 8 6:30 PM Paraklesis

- 9 9:00 AM Paraklesis

- 11 6:30 PM Paraklesis

- 15 Dormition of the Theotokos
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

“Suffer the little children unto Me.”

As the Lord gathered the children together, He used their innocent nature to symbolize how one is to inherit the eternal Kingdom. He placed one little boy on His lap. Orthodox Tradition teaches that this young lad was St. Ignatius. Because of his encounter with Christ, from this early age Ignatius became His follower. St. Ignatius is also called the “God-bearer” or “Theophoros” because of the Saviour’s hug.

St. Ignatius the God-bearer became a disciple of St. John the Theologian. He was zealous and spared no effort to build up the Church of Christ. He wished that everyone shared the same affection he had for Christ. For this, he was granted a vision to peer into heaven and saw the heavenly angels alternately singing praises to God. To follow this heavenly example, he introduced antiphonal singing (by two choirs) to Church services.

St. Ignatius the God-bearer was

thrown to the lions in the Colosseum and was martyred in Rome. As they tore him to pieces, leaving only his heart and a few bones, the Christians remembered what St. Ignatius would tell them, that “the name of Christ is written in my heart and He is part of my body.”

St. Ignatius the God-bearer is celebrated on December 20.



Tradition says that the child that Christ placed in the middle, for example, was Saint Ignatius the God-bearer, that white Levite who, on his way to martyrdom. ❖

Save The Date!

41st ANNUAL

HOLY TRINITY GOLF CLASSIC

Thursday, October 5, 2023

Echo Lake Country Club

515 Springfield Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090



Sponsorships, scheduling, and fees will soon be provided.

For information, please contact the Golf Committee:

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Holy Trinity Monday

On Monday, June 5, following Pentecost, Holy Trinity celebrated its feast day with a very special and unique service. His Grace Bishop Apostolos presided over the Divine Liturgy with a number of local clergy. In total twelve clergymen highlighted this auspicious day, honoring our parish with their presence. ❖





Celebrating Scout Sunday

On May 7, 2023, the Holy Trinity family celebrated the achievement of one of our high school seniors, Jaclyn Ladas. In addition to earning her Gold Award, the highest rank of Girl Scouting, she completed all the requirements for the highest religious award for Scouts, the Alpha Omega. Surrounded by many of Holy Trinity's Scouts in their uniforms or sashes, Father Peter conducted a short prayer service and conferred the impressive medal on Jaclyn, calling out, "AXIA! – She is worthy!"

Seeing many of the Scouts from our "virtual troop" (boys and girls of different ages, who officially belong to troops near their homes) gathered together was one highlight. Another was when our parishioners all joined in to sing our Church Hymn and the prayer responses ("Kyrie Eleison"), making this an event that truly involved the whole community.



The Alpha Omega religious award is designed for older Scouts, while the St. George and Chi Rho medals can be earned by younger ones. They are sponsored by the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting. All three awards emphasize love of God, learn-

ing about the Orthodox faith and our Church, and service in the Name of the Lord. Other activities and benefits, such as retreats, camporees, and scholarships, are also open to our Scouts. For more information, contact Miriam Kotsonis or Fr. Peter. ❖



Luncheon At Echo Lake Country Club Honoring Our Holy Trinity Choir

■ BY MARINA P. ZAZANIS

Those present at the Philoptochos Fashion Show last April may remember, I won two of the raffle prizes. On my way home that evening I decided to do something special for Holy Trinity with my winnings.

Throughout my student years both in high school and college, I was a member of my school glee club and my church choir. I loved singing with both groups, however, there was an obligation

involved – I had to give up free time to attend glee club and choir rehearsals every week and be present for church services every Sunday.

Over the years following my student days, I had the pleasure of visiting many Orthodox churches around our country. Although all of our churches services are beautiful, in my opinion, a good choir truly enriches the beauty of our liturgy.

Before I reached home that night, I had the answer to how I could best use my winnings. I decided to host a celebration luncheon one Sunday following services at the Echo Lake Country Club to thank the choir. I also wanted to express my appreciation to them for their sacrifice of time and for their contribution every Sunday to our services at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. ❖





Parish Council

Update

■ BY PENNY MAVRIDIS SALES, PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Dear parishioners,

It is an honor to serve as the President of the Parish Council. I look forward to working together to continue to build on the successes of our parish and ministries.

Our continued growth and development as a parish relies on many factors, including the vibrancy of our spiritual home and the success of our various ministries. As your president, my areas of focus will be:

1. Youth involvement
2. Stewardship participation
3. Community and parish outreach

Each of these areas requires active participation, innovation, empathy, resources, and commitment, on which I will ask for your support and involvement.

With respect to increased youth involvement – HTGOC and HTGOC Y2AM we hosted the first of a series of lectures, on June 22, 2023, for young adults. The first lecture will focus on living a purposeful and flourishing life, featuring guest speaker, Mr. Eugene Gentile, Director Career Development, Rutgers University Business School.

With respect to community and parish outreach, HTGOC recently hosted and funded the very successful “Rise against Hunger” charity event, which was spearheaded by our parishioner Kathy Maglaras, wherein over 75 parishioners volunteered their time and fundraising efforts to package over 12k meals for people in Africa.

In addition, after a COVID hiatus, we are bringing back the HTGOC annual festival. We also intend to host a separate Taverna night for parishioners,

family, and friends in the last quarter of 2023. Each event will highlight the philoxenia and warmth of our community.

In support of the importance of these goals, I want to highlight a report issued by the US Surgeon General, which I believe reflects on each of these items. The report, which was issued on May 4th of this year, identifies loneliness as a new public health epidemic. The report states that 1 in 2 adults in the US reports measurable levels of loneliness and tracks as contributors to such loneliness social isolation and decreased social and community connections. The report further highlights the profound effects of loneliness on mental health, heart disease, stroke, and dementia as well as a 30% increase in the risk of premature mortality.

Although COVID exacerbated the levels of loneliness, loneliness was on the rise in the US even before COVID.

More importantly, the report finds that young people are the most affected by loneliness.

Between 2003 and 2020, social engagements with friends decreased from 60 minutes a day to 20 minutes a day.

Per the Surgeon General, “We have seen a decrease in participation in community organizations, faith organizations, and recreational leagues.”

The report outlines several recommendations, including:

1. Spending 15 minutes a day with people we care about
2. Being fully present when interacting with others
3. Not being distracted by technology
4. Helping other people

5. Recognizing that small acts of service and kindness can be powerful in making us feel more connected with one another

Where best to implement these recommendations other than in the sanctuary of our church, among friends, family, and neighbors. From its inception, the church has provided people with comfort when they were grieving, friendship when they were lonely, encouragement and motivation to keep going, and a sense of purpose and community. Moreover, the church continues to offer connection and belonging as it has done for centuries. Why therefore is it that the church continues to suffer parishioner attrition and non-involvement, especially in these tumultuous times of global pandemics, war, poverty, financial instability, and human loneliness? Why has the church as a place of spiritual growth, human comfort, and belonging dissipated on our screens?

According to a 2021 survey from the Pew Research Center, 29% of Americans do not identify with any religion. A remarkable increase from 16% in 2007. While many Americans continue to believe in God and/or espouse some form of “spirituality,” fewer and fewer have ties to organized religion. The church offers us the opportunity to live life well as compared to life going well or life feeling good.

Armed with this knowledge, I ask for your continued support, kindness, charity, and generosity of time, talent, and treasury, all of which are needed to sustain the spiritual infrastructure, moral fiber, and vibrancy of our church. ❖

Metropolis of New Jersey Honors Holy Trinity Parishioners

On May 15 at the Clergy/Laity Grand Banquet, parishioners from Holy Trinity were honored by Archbishop Elpidophoros of America: Mary Psomas-Senior Parish

Member; Kristin Tencza-Steward of the Community; Peter Boutsikaris-Parish Council; Ellen Manos Athenson-Philoptochos; Stavroula Mergoupis-Greek Education Teacher; Pascali

Kuvalakis- Psalti; Iris Love-Youth Advisor; Molly Sophia Love-GOYA

We thank all of you for your special contribution and ministry to Holy Trinity. ❖



Greek School Graduation

Graduation and Scholarship Awards

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS OF 2023

Elizabeth Connant
Stefini Drivas
Athena Ioannou
Jaclyn Ladas
Molly Love

Steven McCaffery
Nikolas (Niko) Skalkotos
Alexandra (Alex) Vasilopoulos
Alexandra Zotos



Steven McCaffery,
Senior Speaker

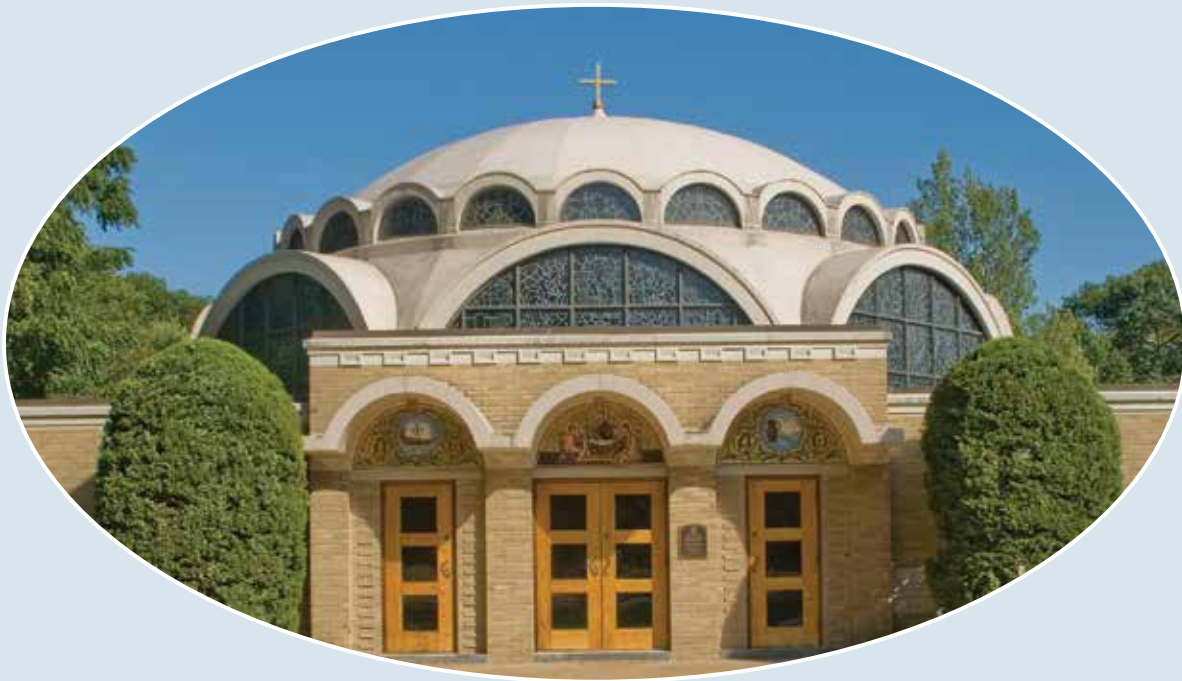
Molly Love,
Senior Speaker



Alexandra Martin, Religious
Education Service Award




Iris Love, Senior Advisor
Service Award



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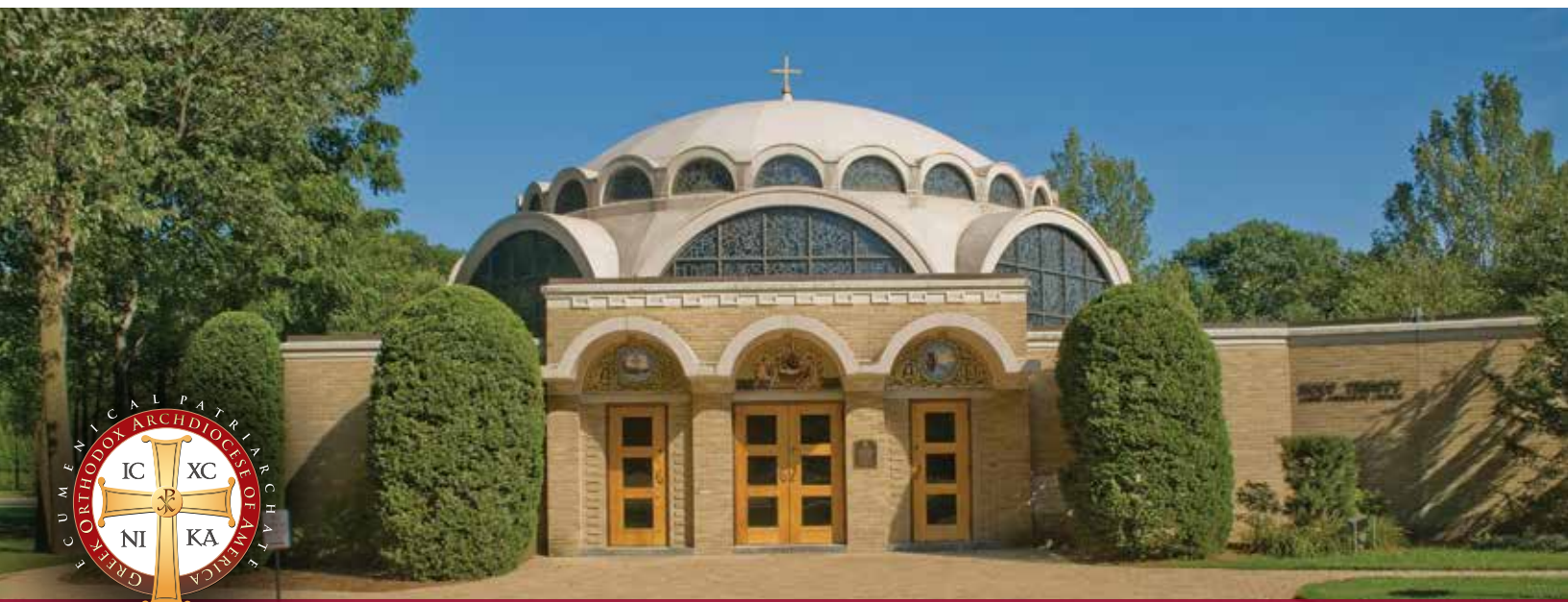
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	<i>Sundays</i>	<i>Weekdays</i>
<i>Orthros</i>	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
<i>Divine Liturgy</i>	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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