

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



July / August 2025 ✦ Volume 49, Issue 5

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Dormition of the Theotokos

August 15

To understand the falling asleep of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, it is helpful to study the icon of this feast. You will note the body of Mary in a reclining position to represent her death. Above her, inside a radiant ray of light is the Lord Jesus. He is surrounded by angels and is holding his mother's soul, pictured as a babe, in swaddling clothes to denote her birth through death into eternal life.

At the right, near the head of the Virgin, is Peter, who is weeping and censing her pure body.

At the left, is Paul, and on either side of the bed-like structure can be seen the other apostles weeping. On some icons of the falling asleep of the Panagia, one finds a little pagan character who tries to upset the virgin's bier. An angel of

the Lord comes to smite him. The point expressed here is the argument decided at the Ecumenical Council in Ephesus about whether Mary was the birthgiver of the man Christ (Christotokos), or the God-man (Theotokos). The icon shows

the triumph of Orthodoxy by the angel's smiting the character who would upset the Church is official teaching that Mary is truly the Theotokos (birthgiver of God-man Jesus).

This beautiful icon can be used to explain death to children. When we die, the body falls

asleep in the Lord and is placed in the cemetery where it will rest. The soul is taken to heaven by Jesus. At the Second Coming of Jesus, He will raise the body and reunite it with the soul. Thus we shall be with the Lord forever. ✦



Metropolitan Apostolos presides at Holy Pentecost Service

On Pentecost Sunday, June 8, we were blessed to have His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos preside at Holy Trinity. It was a beautiful day and we were honored to have our spiritual father with us for the great celebration of Pentecost.



Wait for the promise of the Father

Dates in the Life of Our Church

July–August 2025

JULY

- 13 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 20 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
12:00 PM Baptism
- 27 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
2:00 PM Wedding

AUGUST

- 1 6:30 PM Paraklesis
- 3 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 6 Holy Transfiguration
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 8 6:30 PM Paraklesis
- 10 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 15 Dormition of the Theotokos
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 17 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 24 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
- 31 8:15 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΗΣ

June 12, 2025

Rev. Protopresbyter Peter Delviziis
Esteemed Members of the Parish Council
and the Philoptochos Society
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
250 Gallows Hill Road
Westfield, NJ 07090

My Beloved,

I pray this letter finds you well, both spiritually and physically as we continue our sacred service in our Lord's vineyard.

It is with tremendous joy that I write to you to express my most heartfelt appreciation to the entire Greek Orthodox Community of Westfield for the warm welcome and wonderful hospitality offered to me for my Archpastoral visit to your parish on the feast of Holy Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2025 to celebrate the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The wholehearted welcome I received by the devout parishioners is truly indicative of the faithfulness of the community and demonstrates your true devotion to our Lord and to His Church. I thank you also for the most generous gift which you offered to me as well as for the beautiful meal which we shared together. It is my most fervent prayer that this beautiful parish and its ministries continue to grow and expand, bringing all the faithful closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as we continue our sacred mission to spread the Good News of the Holy Gospel.

Praying that our Lord, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, continues to bless you and the entire Greek Orthodox Community of Westfield, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

Metropolitan Apostolos
† APOSTOLOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey

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Metropolitan Apostolos presides at Holy Pentecost Service



Holy Trinity Cultural Committee

Thursday, June 26

The Holy Trinity Cultural Committee hosted an interesting evening on June 26. Living Beyond the Cave, was a free, interactive, and multisensory experience that blended ancient wisdom with modern insight. Dr. Vasiliki Tsigas-Fotinis lectured about how to re-awaken your sense of purpose and invite you to see life beyond illusion. ❖



Saint STEPHEN

Saul directing the martyrdom of St. Stephen



When St. Stephen was stoned by the wicked people (Acts 7:54) at the direction and oversight of Saul (Acts 7:58, who became St. Paul) they left his body for the beasts and birds to consume. However, God's providence intended otherwise. The first martyr's body lay in an open place at the foothill of the city for two days. The second night, a man by the name of Gamaliel a secret disciple of Christ and renowned Jewish teacher, came and removed the body. He took it to bury it in his field, which was at a distance of some twenty miles from Jerusalem and was called by his name, "Kaphar-gamala", that is, "the field of Gamala, where he was to be laid to rest some years later. When his friend Nicodemus, the secret disciple of the Lord died, he too was buried at this place.

Many centuries passed until no one living knew where the body of St. Stephen was buried. Then, in the year 415 A.D., during the reign of Patriarch John of Jerusalem, Gamaliel appeared three times in dreams to Lucian, the priest at Kaphargamala. Gamaliel related everything concerning the burial of himself, Stephen, and the others, showing him the exact spot of their forgotten grave. Affected by this dream, Lucian informed the patriarch, and, with his blessing, went with a group of men and found and exhumed four graves. Ga-



maliei had already told him in the dream whose grave was which. A strong, sweet-smelling fragrance, emanating from the relics of the saints, permeated the entire cave. The relics of St. Stephen were then solemnly translated to Jerusalem and were honorably buried there. The relics of the remaining three were placed in a church, located on the hill above the cave. Many healings of the sick were occasioned by the relics of St. Stephen.

Afterwards, during the reign of holy Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), the relics of the holy Protomartyr Stephen were transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Deacon Laurence (August 10). Later a church dedicated to the Protomartyr Stephen was built, the relics were transferred there on August 2.

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In Orthodox Christianity, the veneration of relics is an expression of the belief in the resurrection of the body and the sanctification of the material world through the Incarnation of Christ. The relics of the saints, who have become temples of the Holy Spirit, are regarded as sources of grace and blessings for the faithful.

The translation of relics, such as those of Saint Stephen, is a reminder of the close connection between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. The relics serve as a tangible link to the saints, who continue to intercede for the faithful before the throne of God. Through the veneration of relics, the faithful are drawn

closer to the saints, who inspire them to live lives of holiness and devotion.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Stephen, let us be inspired by his example of unwavering faith and love for Christ. May his prayers and the grace that flows from his holy relics strengthen us in our spiritual journey, leading us ever closer to the Kingdom of God.

In the spirit of Saint Stephen, let us also remember to pray for those who, like him, suffer persecution for their faith, that they may be granted the strength to endure and the grace to forgive, even in the face of great trials.

Through the prayers of the Holy First Martyr Stephen, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen. ❖



Thank You for a Successful GreekFest

■ GEORGE KOUTSAFTES, PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The GreekFest25 Committee began planning for this year's festival back in January with the new template implemented last year with a strong focus on marketing and social media influence to draw more patrons. This combined with the strong leadership of our experienced and dedicated festival committee proved to be a winning formula. From the very start, we planned with a vision for greater impact. The focus was clear - serve delicious food and drinks to 50% more attendees, while showcasing the warmth and beauty of Greek culture—through music, dance, and festive décor. With prayers answered for clear skies, all the planning paid off, and GreekFest25 was a resounding success on every level.

First and foremost, the festival is the single largest fellowship event we conduct at Holy Trinity each year. It is a fantastic opportunity for our parishioners, old and new, to come together with love for Holy Trinity and a shared commitment to serve. The positive spirit of philanthropic fellowship was unmistakable and uplifting. Equally inspiring was the multi-generational representation of our volunteers. Knowing our youth are committed to the future of Holy Trinity fills us with pride, and the festival is a catalyst to develop the next generation of Holy Trinity leaders.

Second, the festival plays a vital role in spreading the awareness with our neigh-



bors and the wider community of who we are as Greek Orthodox Christians and proud Greek-Americans. We welcomed over 5,000 guests to “our home” and they experienced the joy, warmth, and vibrancy of our faith and culture. From the well-attended church tours to the superb food, dancing, and music,

we brought the Greek spirit to life – no plane ticket required! We could not generate this awareness without the professionally impressive marketing and social media campaigns. Other churches are copying our approach, which is the sincerest form of flattery.

Now onto the bottom-line results. When including the impact of financial sponsorship and the 50/50 raffle we generated over \$270,000 in gross revenue and netted approximately \$160,000 in profit. Excluding the impact of sponsorships and the 50/50 raffle our direct festival sales increased by over 50% to over \$180,000. We could not have achieved this outcome without the veteran leadership of our festival committee, who planned meticulously for such a large increase.

This outcome goes a long way to funding Holy Trinity to fuel the impact of our Ministries and Outreach: spreading the word of Orthodox Christianity via increased education, awareness, and philanthropic outreach. GreekFest25 was more than an event—it was a transformational expression of faith, community, and fellowship.

None of this could be accomplished without the incredible leadership of our GreekFest25 Chairs – Anthe and Jimmy Angelides and the talented, ded-

icated, festival committee, their names are listed below. We can't thank each of them enough for the many hours they spent after work and weekends to plan and execute this tremendous festival. Each are a beacon of leadership and love for Holy Trinity, and we are incredibly grateful for their effort.

And most importantly, we could not do it without you, our parishioners. Over 300 of our beloved members of our parish made all the well-orchestrated planning come to life. Thank you! ❖

GreekFest25 Committee

Chairs – Anthe and Jimmy Angelides

Bar – Peter Boutsikaris

Construction – Dimitri Sidiropoulos

Crepes / Kafenio – Maria Tarhanidis

Décor - Roula Agathis

Dinners – Stephen Ladas, Ron and Andrea Cerini

Engineering (Problem Solver!) – Mike Savorgiannakis

50/50 Raffle - Nina Anastasiou

Grill – Chuck Anastasiou, Rick Roscoe

Kids Zone – John and Andrea Quintanilla

Loukoumades - Michelle Zelif

Marketing / Social Media - Jeannie Arida, Nikos Lioutas, Ariadne Monfalcone

Pastries - Mary Carayannopoulos

Sales – Lauren Koniaris

Site and Infrastructure Support - George Colonias

Sponsors – Penny Mavridis Sales

Sound & Entertainment – George Koniaris

Treasury – Peter Tarhanidis and George Colonias

Technology – Kristin Tencza

Vendors - Ellen Conti, Aggie Zourzoukis

Volunteers - Roula Ioannou

Wine Tasting – Ariadne Monfalcone, Joe Sales

Special Thanks from Catie Carayanopoulos

Good morning Father Peter, Archdeacon Konstadinos, Presvytera Victoria, Director Markos and fellow parishioners. I'm Catie Carayanopoulos and I joined this community 16 years ago. I am graduating from Sunday school today, but I would first like to say thank you.

Thank you Father Peter for leading the Parish in so many ways, especially the youth development. Thank you to my "Para-nouna", Presvytera Victoria, for your love and support, and unparalleled fashion advice.

Thank you to Ms. Athanasoulas and the choir for finding me and convincing me to join. It is one of my favorite activities to stand with you all and sing the beautiful hymns that accompany the liturgy. I enjoyed every "Spirit of Lent" concert and I will miss singing "To Pazari" at the annual end-of-year dinner.

Thank you to all of my past and present GOYA advisors, including my sensational mother, but especially thank you to Mrs. Saketos. I was honored to be at your side during your inaugural year as head advisor. Words can't describe how grateful I am to have you as a role model: your dedication and commitment to the youth is truly inspiring.

Thank you to all of my religious education teachers, including my own father, for the lessons on scripture, theology and God's word that have helped me discover the meaning of faith and our purpose to bear witness.

Twelve years of Sunday School. It sounds like a long time when you say it aloud, almost our whole lives really. We started with coloring icons and learning the Lord's prayer, and over time, we began following the Gospel, analyzing its parables and passages. We had discussions on how to live out those teachings in our daily lives and to put God above all else. Somewhere in the middle of that journey it stopped being "just Sunday School," it became the foundation for who we are and who we hope to become.

These last two years, with Mr. Tarhanidis and Mr. Karsos guiding our classes with thought-provoking questions, we have examined various aspects of life and how God has advised us to navigate decisions. With the struggle between virtues and vices, the roles of husband and wife, the goal of parenthood, and the aspirations to uphold the standards set by the Saints, we were directed to consider how we, as Orthodox Christian adults, will live in today's society. We learned that we will need to preserve the lessons of worship, fellowship, stewardship and discipline.

And this is not an easy task. Life gets busy and faith sometimes feels distant. But that is where habits and the people we surround ourselves with matter. I've learned that maintaining your faith is not about having all the answers. Maintaining faith is about staying in conversation with each other and with God. It is about showing up – to church, to prayer, to Sunday School.

To the younger kids sitting here today, still traveling through this journey, my advice is simple: get involved, stay connected, take this seriously, and don't just go through the motions. You will become the guardians of our faith and



as it is ours, it is also your job to bear witness.

For me, GOYA and the choir helped me with that. Singing taught me that worship is not just what we say but how we say it, with heart, reverence and joy, and of course, with a good pitch. GOYA gave me a space to serve a purpose and an environment to grow and learn with friends who share the same faith.

Religious Education was the source of our direct learning about the faith, and you should take advantage of the opportunity to learn from the powerful intellectuals we have here as teachers. However, it takes two to tango. Of course, the teachers teach, but you, the students, are a part of that teaching. So, prioritize Sunday School over competing activities that don't offer spiritual growth, and prepare and participate for class as well.

And once you reach your graduation you'll be faced with the question of "what will I do with what I've learned?" I think the better question is "how will I live what I've learned?" Because faith is not something you shelve after graduation, it is something to take with you forever – in how you treat others, in the choices you make, and in the way you return to God in prayer, service and love.

For all the seniors, these experiences of Joy/Hope, Greek School, Greek Dance, GOYA, the choir, the altar, Sunday School, may be ending today, but their lessons continue to support us as we move forward. Whether that's college, work, or anything else, we know we are not alone, but traveling with everything this community has poured into us.

I thank you. From the decade and a half we've spent here, we owe this church and everyone here many thanks for shaping us into the people we are today. Although we may be leaving to start the next chapter of our lives, we will strive to make you all proud as we explore, travel, work, grow a family, but most of all, we will make you proud keeping God in our hearts and minds, prepared to teach and share, to anyone willing to listen, the beauty of our faith, just as you and Religious Education has taught us. ❖




Trinity Circle, Independence Day Celebration





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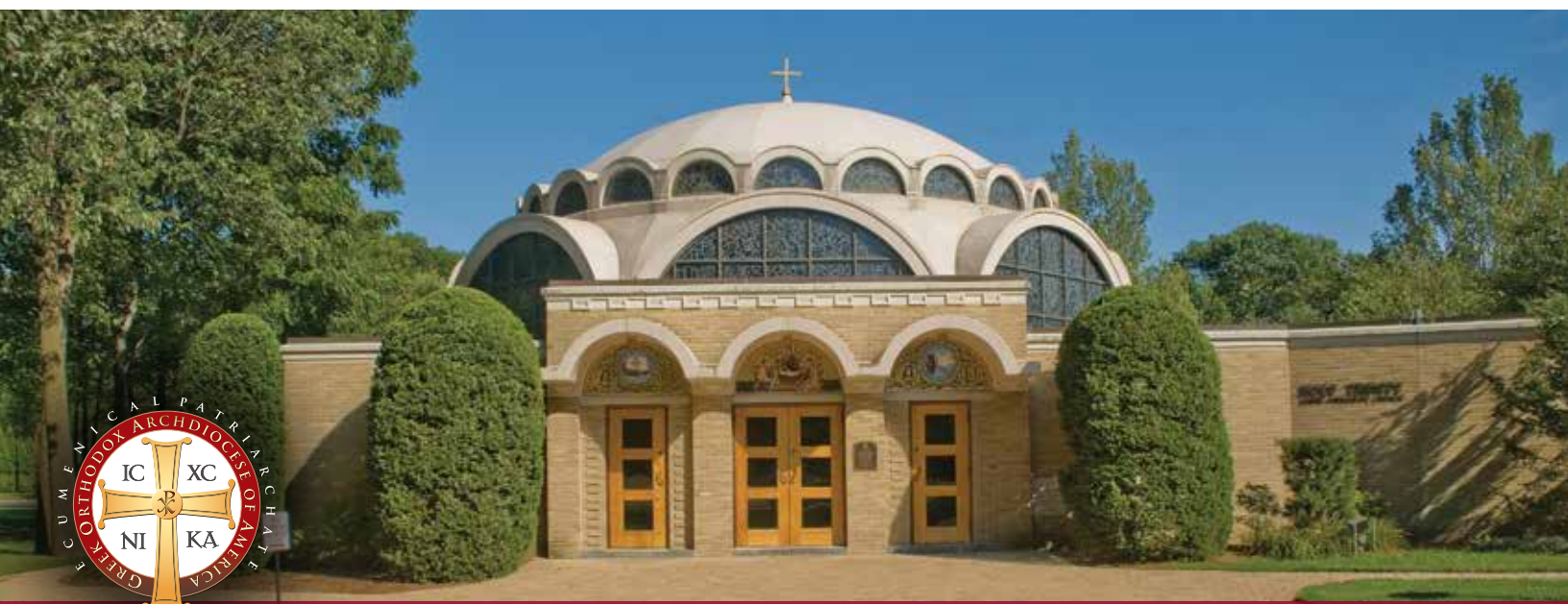
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METROPOLIS OF
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	<i>Sundays</i>	<i>Weekdays</i>
<i>Orthros</i>	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
<i>Divine Liturgy</i>	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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