

# The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



March / April 2026 ✦ Volume 50, Issue 3

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## The Servant of the Lord

**W**e are all called to be servants of the Most High. We offer service to our Lord, for He is gracious to us. He blesses and gives us life. Just like all the saints of the Church we are to serve the Lord and each other with love, dedication, and faith.

“These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” – Acts 16:16 Paul and Silas are great examples of Godly dedication and service. But one person outranks these two illustrious saints and all the saints. The Panagia served God by allowing Him to be born in this world for the salvation of all.

During each Great Lenten period, the solemn period is interrupted by the joyful and radiant feast of the Annunciation. This feast explains the Virgin

Mary’s reaction when she learned from the Archangel Gabriel that she would conceive the Son of God by the Holy Spirit. “Behold, the servant of the Lord! Let it be done to me according to your word,” shows her willingness to become a servant of the Most High and authenticates her faith in God.

“Let it be done to me according to your word”

The Panagia’s response should be the response of every Christian to the invitation to do God’s will under any circumstance.

*Continued on page 2 ⇨*

## Holy Week Liturgical Schedule

### APRIL 4, SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

Orthros..... 8:45am  
Divine Liturgy ..... 9:30am

### APRIL 5, PALM SUNDAY

Orthros..... 8:30am  
Divine Liturgy ..... 9:30am  
The Bridegroom Service..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 6, HOLY MONDAY

The Bridegroom Service..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 7, HOLY TUESDAY

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts..... 9:30am  
The Bridegroom Service  
Hymn of Kassiani..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 8, HOLY WEDNESDAY

Sacrament of Holy Unction ..... 3:00pm  
Sacrament of Holy Unction ..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 9, HOLY THURSDAY

Divine Liturgy of the Mystical Supper ..... 9:30am  
The Holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Twelve Gospels and the Crucifixion ..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 10, HOLY FRIDAY

Veneration of the Cross ..... 9:00am-3:00pm  
Imperial Hours ..... 9:30am  
Apokathelosis, Unnailing Service ... 3:00pm  
The Lamentation Service at the Epitaphios..... 6:30pm

### APRIL 11, HOLY SATURDAY

Vesperal Divine Liturgy ..... 9:30am  
Resurrection Vigil ..... 11:15pm  
Divine Liturgy ..... 12:00am

### APRIL 12, THE GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

Agape Vespers ..... 11:00 am



# Dates in the Life of Our Church

March – April 2026

## MARCH

6	6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	12:00 PM Oratorical Festival
7	Sights & Sounds	17 7:30 PM NNJYC
8	St. Gregory of Palamas	18 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
	8:15 AM Orthros	8:00 PM Theosis
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	20 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn
9	9:00 AM Presanctified Liturgy	21 Rise Against Hunger
10	4:00 PM Greek School	22 8:15 AM Orthros
	5:00 PM Great Compline	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	7:30 PM Parish Council Mtg.	23 5:00 PM Great Compline
11	9:30 AM TOTs	25 The Annunciation
	6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	8:30 AM Orthros
	8:00 PM Theosis	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
12	4:00 PM Greek School	27 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn
13	6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	29 8:15 AM Orthros
15	Holy Cross Sunday	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	8:15 AM Orthros	31 5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	

## APRIL

I	6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	8:00 PM Theosis	5 Palm Sunday
4	Saturday of Lazarus	8:15 AM Orthros
	8:45 AM Orthros	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

## Servant of the Lord

⇨ *Continued from page 1*

Daily we recite the Lord's prayer and say, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." This is another way of saying, like the Panagia, "let your will be upon me, Lord."

It is important to declare our acceptance and obedience to God's will. By stating this, we show to all that we belong to God and will do what He asks. Doing this requires sacrificing our own will, our own self-governance. But by accepting God's will we are liberated from the shackles of unruliness, ambition, and stubbornness.

Think about it. Because we want everything to be done our way, according to our hopes, our vision, our self-interest, we become bitter and frustrated when things do not go according to plan – our plan!

The servant of the Lord, exemplified by the Virgin Mary, accepts what is not in accordance with personal plans and ambitions. The acceptance of God's will is the key to true happiness, for certainly we are not in control of a lot in our lives – even our own destiny. A person does not know his own future or what tomorrow will bring. The wise servant humbly acknowledges that true joy rests in the acceptance of a will that is greater than ours. God's will is purer and wiser than ours.

Let us internalize the words of the Panagia, "Behold, the servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to Your word," so that we can discover true freedom, true humility, and the fullness of human dignity. ❖

# Holy Week Book

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On Sale  
in the  
Bookstore



# What does it mean to Call no man father...?

## Call no man Father

—Matthew 23:9

Doesn't our Lord command that no person should be called father, including priests.

The term father in any language is one of the most profound and engaging words. We address the priest by calling him father and ask for his blessing. We also use this term for the greatest theologians and hierarchs of the church. The Church has countless Church Fathers. In truth, the highest form of honor the Church can offer is to call someone father.

Certainly, Jesus was not speaking of the natural parent, for the term father is used throughout the New Testament. Nor does it refer to the spiritual relationship of the spiritual father to spiritual child, since St. Paul describes himself as a father to the Christians found in Corinth. — 1 Corinthians 4:14-15.

By saying "do not call anyone on earth your father," Jesus condemns the use or acceptance of any title and dignity which stands between God and man. Jesus is

not primarily speaking here of words, but of an attitude. To consider a person a "father" in a way which obscures the Fatherhood of God is what He criticizes. When Christians use it to refer to God's representatives, all this does is remind us of the Divine Father. In similar fashion, Christ forbids us in Matthew 23:10 to submit ourselves to independent teachers who obscure the one Master Teacher (kathēgētes).

# What does it mean to fast...?

Few topics generate more opinions from a group than the subject of fasting. Priests, lay people, families, have all developed their own customs surround fasting and its implementation. Our Lord recognized fasting as something that is commonly done. He encourages fasting by saying "When you fast..." But He reminds us not to fast in a hypocritical way or with downcast faces. — Matthew 6:16-17

Fasting is a form of self-control over temptation, impatience, sin, and material urges such as food. Its purpose is to discipline and cleanse the soul and body. A change in diet signals a change in errant ways and assists the penitent in achieving higher and loftier goals.

In response to fasting, many people are quick to say the following: "it's not what goes into your mouth that defiles, it's what comes out of it." While this is certainly true, as serious Orthodox Christians, we should move beyond such low-level Sunday School arguments.

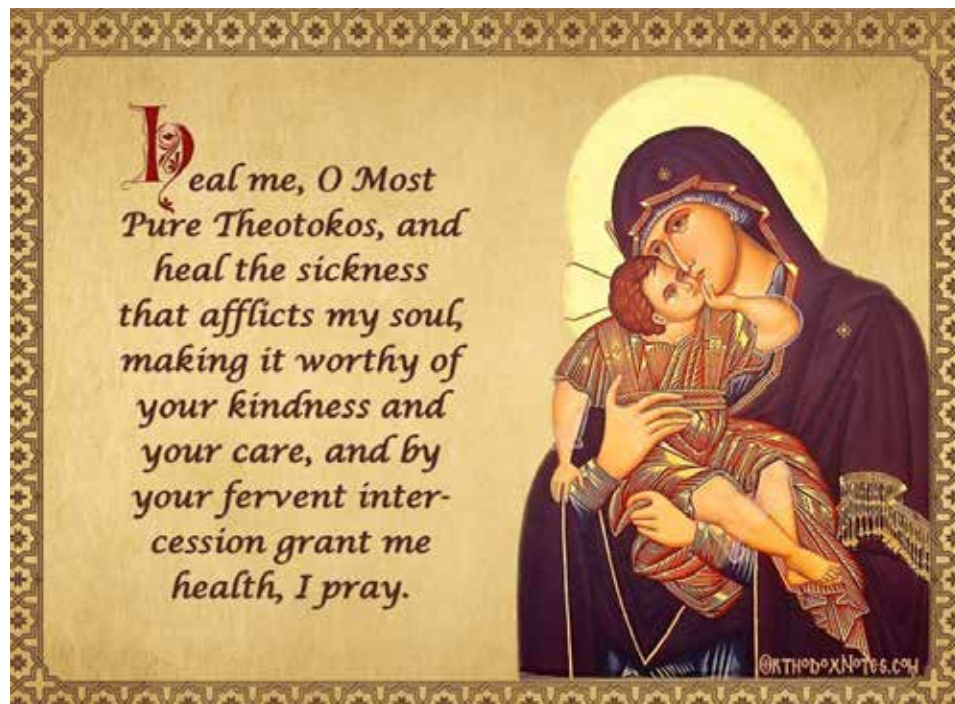
In terms of fasting, if a person cannot control the things that he sees, touches, or smells, in other words, the tangible things that the senses perceive and that are placed in the mouth to eat, then how could that person ever control the intangible things that are not perceived by the

senses? In other words, if you can't control the thing that you see how can you ever control these things that are unseen that lurk in the recesses of your heart?

To keep the Biblical principles of fasting, one should fast privately, without boasting or long-drawn-out faces. Fasting is an invaluable tool given to help us grow spiritually during Great Lent. Fasting teaches us how to control tangible things

so that we can learn to move beyond this to control the intangible things.

One hymn of the Church says, "fasting is the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies, and curses. The stopping of these things is the fast that is true and acceptable." To get to this higher spiritual level, we must start with the physical fast. ❖



# The Newly Illumined

**H**oly Trinity is happy to receive three new members who enter the Orthodox Church through Holy Baptism. These individuals have dedicated personal time studying the Orthodox Faith and have gone through a long period of catechetical preparation to enter into the joy of the Faith of the Apostles. We are excited for them and their new faith journey. We welcome them with open arms and pray our Lord will always bless and keep them in the faith.

Fr. Peter asked the three Newly Illumined why did you want to become Orthodox and what is important about the parish of Holy Trinity?



## Angeliki

As someone who was raised as a Jain/Hindu, my journey to Christianity began in a non-denominational Protestant church, where everyone read the Bible so that they could "know Jesus more". As I began reading the Bible and regularly attending service, I noticed that the timeline of Easter was inaccurate in Protestantism, which often placed it before Passover contrary to the Gospel accounts. In researching why this discrepancy existed, I discovered that the Orthodox Church had always celebrated Easter after Passover. As I began to learn more about Orthodoxy, I found that it answered all of my questions in a way that couldn't fundamentally be answered by Protestantism. The holisticness of Orthodoxy is what led me to

the Church.

In contrast to well-meaning Protestants who were quick to judge the status of salvation of others, Father Peter presented a more nuanced perspective of God when I first interacted with him at Holy Trinity. It was even more refreshing to see that the parishioners of Holy Trinity similarly had a humble attitude and overlooked any superficial differences between us. These experiences I found to be a very



Baptism of Justin (Joel) and Angeliki (Anjali) Romero, Saturday, February 21. Sponsors are Mariam Kotsonis and Michaela (Michelle) Zelfiff

important part of Holy Trinity. Having just begun my journey into Orthodoxy through Baptism, I hope to continue to grow deeper in my love for God, for the fellow parishioners at Holy Trinity, and for those in the community at large. ❖

## Justin

I discovered the Orthodox Church through apologists on YouTube who pointed out that the theology and praxis of Protestantism was inadequate. Simply being told to believe in Christ was not enough for me, especially when I struggled massively with many passions. I learned that the Orthodox Church actually has the precise tools needed to combat the passions and grow closer to Christ. The change I experienced from using these tools is what ultimately drew me into the Church.



The cordiality of the parishioners and the beauty of the Church grounds are important parts of Holy Trinity. ❖

## Isaiah

I was drawn to Orthodoxy by a desire to find the doctrine that has remained unchanged since the establishment of the Church. [Orthodoxy] reaches back the farthest in history.

There is an abundance of people knowledgeable about different topics and are willing to help one another. The church has offered me many opportunities to learn more, to get involved with church life, and to experience the culture through social outings, i.e. GreekFest; Independence Day Parade, Sights & Sounds. ❖

Baptism of Isaiah Johnstone, Saturday, February 28. Sponsor is Ted Biniaris





# Philoptochos

■ KATHY MAGLARAS, PRESIDENT

Our Philoptochos chapter continues its heartfelt mission of philanthropy and service, and none of this would be possible without the generosity of our families and friends.

Philoptochos also had the opportunity to serve at Lunch Break, an organization that provides food, clothing, and housing solutions to people in need throughout Monmouth County. Volunteers worked from 8:00 a.m.

to 12:30 p.m., stocking shelves with fresh produce, bread, eggs, and other donations, and assisting shoppers in the mini-supermarket as they selected fruits, vegetables, meats, soups, and more. A special thank you to Kristin and Walter (for stepping in to help), since many of us were already committed due to the rescheduling of the Vasilopita luncheon. Your commitment was greatly appreciated! ❖



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**March 14**

*Walking with Christ Luncheon*

**March 28**

*Rise Against Hunger*  
(we need many volunteers to make this Lenten project another success)

**April 28**

Annual Fashion Show,  
our largest fundraiser of the year

Please stop by the Philoptochos table on Sunday for more information.



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Westfield, NJ presents

# MEGA 50/50 RAFFLE

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**Only 1000 tickets to be sold!  
\$50 per ticket.**



### Join us at the Greek Fest!

**Friday May 29, 5pm-11pm**  
**Saturday May 30, 12 pm -11pm**  
**Sunday May 31, 12 pm -6pm**

*Drawing to be held on Sun. May 31 @ 5 p.m. at  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, NJ 07090.  
All proceeds to benefit Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Westfield, NJ*

[www.njgreekfest.com](http://www.njgreekfest.com)

Winners need not be present to win and will be notified. Winners responsible for all taxes. If the offer is oversubscribed, the first 1000 tickets paid for will be honored. All other contributions will be returned. If not completely subscribed, per state regulations, the exact prizes offered will be at the following percentages:

Grand Prize - 20%  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - 10%  
Five 3<sup>rd</sup> Prizes - 4% each



NJLGCC ID# 538-1-17636  
Municipal Lic. # RL-2025-33

To reserve your ticket(s), please fill out this portion, including signature and return with your payment made payable to:

**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, NJ 07090**

Tickets will be distributed after receipt of payment. Mail in entry deadline: Friday, May 15, 2026

#of tickets to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50 each = \_\_\_\_\_

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# T.O.T.S. Trinity Orthodox Toddler Social

March 25, April 22, May 13, May 27



### 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



# Prepare For Holy Week: Spirit of Lent Concert

Friday, April 3

St. Anna Greek Orthodox Church  
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33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary

## *The Spirit of Lent Concert*

A Choral Offering of  
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English and Greek

Ryan J. Kiel, Director  
E. Hope Demitry, Organist

~~~~~  
Friday, April 3, 2026

7:30 p.m.

Suggested donation \$10.00  
Students free

Refreshments following program

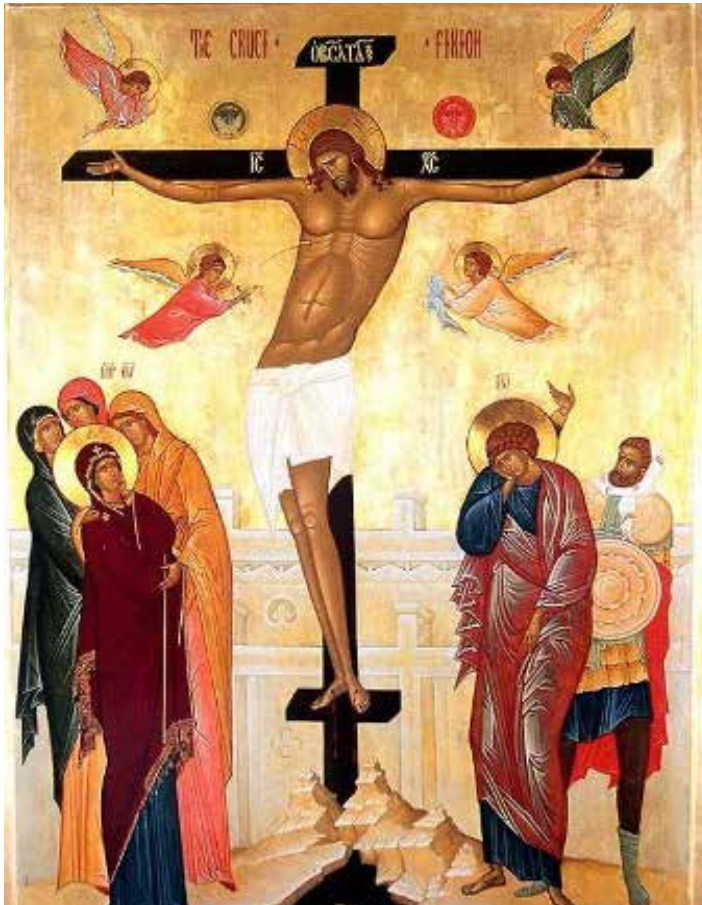
[www.stannagoc.org](http://www.stannagoc.org)



Many Holy Trinity parishioners, as well as others from northern and central NJ, have come to look forward to the Lenten Concert as a beautiful way to close out the forty days of Lent and prepare for the Great and Holy Week ahead. Held on the Friday before the Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday, the Spirit of Lent is offered each year by choir members from throughout the region. Of course, a lot of the Holy Trinity choir take part as well! In 2026, the concert will be held at St. Anna Greek Orthodox Church in Flemington, NJ, beginning at 7:30 PM. Following the one-hour concert, the community invites you to a Lenten reception so you can enjoy fellowship on this lovely and spiritually uplifting evening. The suggested donation is \$10 for adults; young people are free. ❖

Save the Date:  
2026 Holy Friday Retreat

Friday, April 10



The Events and Individuals  
of Holy Week for grades K-6

Friday, April 10, 2026  
10 am to 3 pm  
Registration is free!

The Retreat will focus on theology, symbols, and hymns  
of Holy Week, Holy Friday and Pascha  
Followed by the taking down from the Cross:  
Apokathelosis from 3pm to 4pm

Parents are asked to attend the Apokathelosis  
A Lenten lunch and midday snack will be included

To Register contact Pete Markos  
Pmarkos307@gmail.com  
for further information.

Save the Date:  
Greek Independence Day Parade

Sunday, April 26



TIME: 1:30 PM

March on 5th Avenue from 61st to 74th streets for the  
**87th NY Greek Independence Day Parade.**  
This marks 205 years since March 25, 1821, the start of the Greek  
Revolution for liberation from the Ottoman Turkish yoke.

**WEAR YOUR BEST BLUE AND WHITE**

Join Holy Trinity Sunday, April 26, 1:30 PM in New York  
for the 87th NY Greek Independence Day Parade! This  
marks 205 years since March 25, 1821, the start of the Greek  
Revolution for liberation from the Ottoman Turkish yoke.  
Wear your best blue and white and join us for a march up  
5th Avenue from 61st to 74th street! More information and  
details will be shared closer to the date. ❖

Join us!  
Westfield, NJ  
**GREEKFEST 26**  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

**May 29, 30, 31**


|                         |                          |                       |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Friday<br>5 p.m. - 11pm | Saturday<br>Noon - 11 pm | Sunday<br>Noon - 6 pm |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|

Be an active part of our 2026 GreekFest! Please volunteer your time, talents & treasures. Everyone is needed to make our festival a success!  
To sign up, simply scan the QR code or go to:  
<https://bit.ly/Greekfest26Volunteers>



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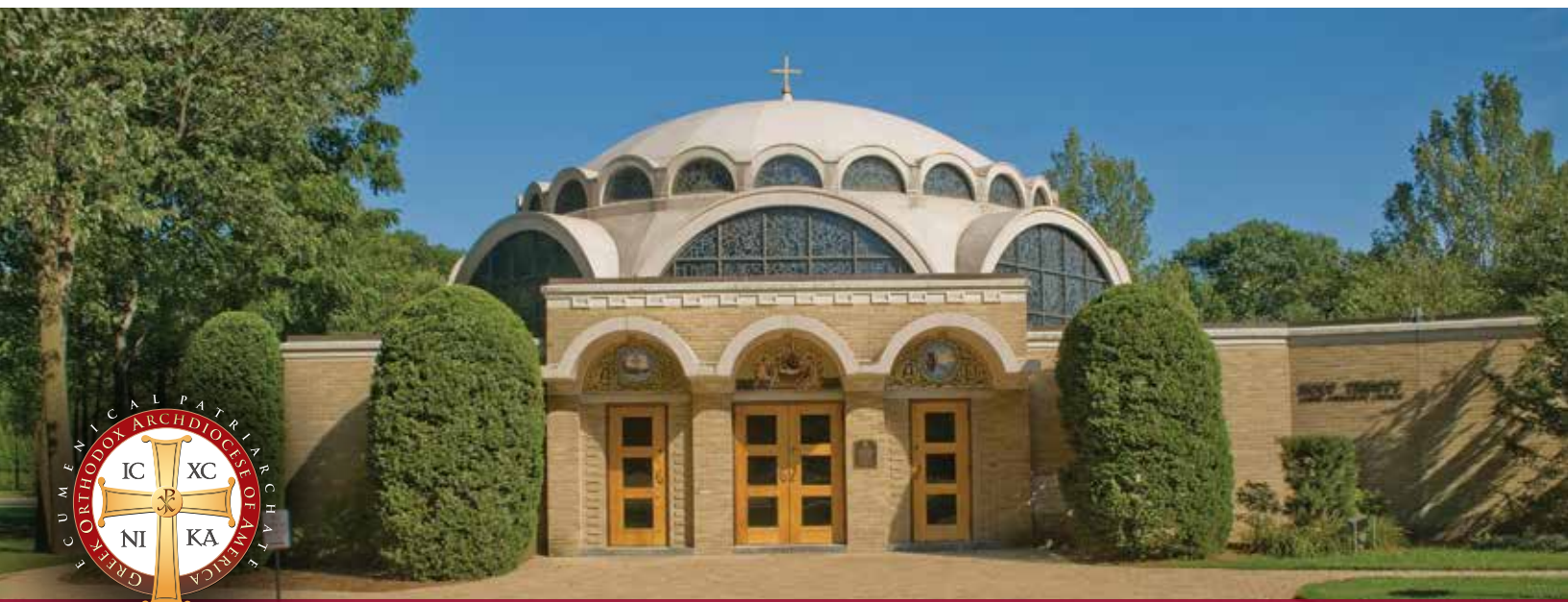
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# HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*E-mail* FrPeter@htgocnj.org

## OFFICE STAFF

*Office Manager* Diana R. Waltsak  
*Admin. Assistant* Kathy Genakos  
*Caretaker* Beatriz Ramirez

## WORSHIP

*Lead Psaltis* Pascalis Kuvalakis  
*Choir Director* Anne Kernoski  
*Organist* Phyllis Verenes  
*Head Acolyte* Alex Spiridonov

## MINISTRIES

*Parish Council* George Koutsaftes  
*Philoctochos* Kathy Maglaras  
*Religious Education* Pete Markos  
*Greek School* Stavroula Mergoupis  
*Greek School PTO* Zaharoula Ioannou  
*Youth (GOYA)* Sophia Skalkotos  
*JOY/HOPE* Kathy Petsinis Paone  
*TOTS* Valerie Comprelli  
*Bookstore* Sandy Mouratoglou  
*Cultural* Celia Kapsomera  
Peter Tarhanidis  
*Trinity Circle* Avi Kiriakatis  
*Fellowship* Lauren Karanikolas  
*Scouting* Miriam Kotsonis

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

## THE PROMISE: VOLUME 50, ISSUE 3

10 issues published annually.  
No subscription fee.  
Article deadline - 10<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month