

# The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✠ NEW JERSEY



October 2021 ✠ Volume 45, Issue 6

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## The Sower of Seeds

*Explaining the Gospel Reading of Oct. 17, 2021 Luke 8:5-15*

In the Parable of the Sower and the seed, Jesus takes the common process of gardening and speaks to us in terms that all of us can understand. With this parable, we are asked to consider the soil of our heart. Is it fertile? Meaning receptive to Christ and the message of salvation. Or is your heart like a stone, so hard that the Lord's teaching has no effect upon you since you will not allow Him to penetrate and enter your being.

*"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold. As he said this, he called out, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Luke 8:5-8)."*

The Sower is Jesus and the seed is the word of God. The ground is your heart, where the word of God belongs and tries to take root. The path, the rock, the thorns, and the fertile soil represent the condition in which the word finds your heart. Is your heart like the hard-trodden soil of the path? How many



times have you heard the teachings of Christ and neglect to follow His teaching? Without Christ, it is impossible to live a virtuous Christian life.

You know that you should pray every day but we neglect our daily prayers. We are called to love God with all your heart, mind and soul, to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, respect God's

*Continued on page 2 ➡*

**ST. DEMETRIOS**  
the Great Martyr and  
Myrrh-streamer of Thessaloniki  
October 26

The Great Martyr Demetrios, the Myrrh-Gusher of Thessaloniki, was the son of a Roman proconsul. Three centuries had elapsed and Roman paganism, spiritually shattered and defeated by the multitude of martyrs and confessors of the Savior, intensified its persecutions. The parents of St. Demetrios were secretly Christians, and he was baptized and raised in the Christian Faith. By the time Demetrios had reached maturity and his father had died, the emperor Galerius Maximian had ascended the throne (305). Maximian, confident in Demetrios' education as well as his administrative and military abilities, appointed him to his father's position as proconsul of the Thes-

*Continued on page 3 ➡*

*Wait for the promise of the Father*



# Dates in the Life of Our Church

October–November 2021

## ✠ OCTOBER

<b>17</b>	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM OCMC Luncheon, Bouras Center
<b>18</b>	8:00 PM State Meeting
<b>19</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
<b>21</b>	9:30 AM TOTS
	10:00 AM Trinity Circle trip to Hunterdon Playhouse
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Choir
<b>24</b>	Religious Education Open House
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
<b>26</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
<b>28</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Choir
<b>31</b>	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

## ✠ NOVEMBER

<b>1</b>	Sts. Cosmas and Damianos
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
<b>2</b>	11:00 AM Trinity Circle
	4:00 PM Greek School
<b>4</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Choir
<b>5</b>	3:00 PM Baptism
<b>6</b>	4:00 PM Wedding
<b>7</b>	Daylight Savings time ends
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
<b>8</b>	Synaxis of the Holy Archangels
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
<b>9</b>	St. Nektarios the Wonderworker
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

4:00 PM Greek School

7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Meeting

7:30 PM Parish Council

**11** St. Menas, St. Victor, and St. Vikenzios

4:00 PM Greek School

7:00 PM Choir

**14** 8:15 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

**21** Entrance of the Theotokos

8:15 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

**28** 8:15 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

**30** St. Andrew the First-called

8:30 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

## Sower of Seeds

↩ Continued from page 1

creation, prepare for and receive Holy Communion frequently, and treat your neighbor with love, honesty and respect. You know that by doing these things, you will become perfected in the faith, yet they are not done.

Is your heart hard like a rock? Do you receive the word of God with joy, and find joy being in His Church worshipping His holy name? After a quick initial growth spurt, does your faith dry up causing you to fall away from His

Church, and do you find yourself away from His home for extended periods of time? Is your heart like the thorny ground? Do you hear God's message with joy only to have this joy choked out by the cares of life? One cannot "serve two masters." The thorns of this life that seek to puncture your soul, take away your joy, and to bring you harm are greed, money, lust for power, envy, passions and every form of excess.

And then Jesus said, "*And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience* (Luke 8:15)." Everyone must strive to cultivate the

"good soil". The word of God -- the seed -- falls in the good soil of your heart, the soil that has been tilled with Christ, fertilized with the teachings of the Church and watered by the Holy Spirit. When your heart is soil that is fertile, then you can openly and honestly receive the Lord's blessings. If you "root" yourselves in Him, then like a tree with deep roots, you will be able to weather all the storms of life.

Pray, then, that your soul becomes the good soil to accept the seed of the Lord, the Sower of all that is good. ❖

Amen



# St. Demetrios

↩ *Continued from page 1*

salonica district. The main tasks of this young commander were to defend the city from barbarians and to eradicate Christianity. The emperor's policy regarding Christians was expressed simply, "Put to death anyone who calls on the name of Christ." The emperor did not suspect that by appointing Demetrios he had provided a way for him to lead many people to Christ.

Accepting the appointment, Demetrios returned to Thessaloniki and immediately confessed and glorified our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of persecuting and executing Christians, he began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city and to overthrow pagan customs and idolatry. The Lord also destined St. Demetrios to follow the holy Apostle Paul as a martyr. When Maximian learned that the newly-appointed proconsul was a Christian, and that he had converted many Roman subjects to Christianity, the rage of the emperor knew no bounds. Returning from a campaign in the Black Sea region, the emperor decided to lead his army through Thessaloniki, determined to massacre the Christians. Learning of this, St. Demetrios ordered his faithful servant Lupus to distribute his wealth to the poor saying, "Distribute my earthly riches among them, for we shall seek heavenly riches for ourselves." He

began to pray and fast, preparing himself for martyrdom.

When the emperor came into the city, he summoned Demetrios, who boldly confessed himself a Christian and denounced the falsehood and futility of Roman polytheism. Maximian gave orders to lock up the confessor in prison. An angel appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him. Meanwhile the emperor amused himself by staging games in the circus. His champion was a German by the name of Lyaeos. He challenged Christians to wrestle with him on a platform built over the up-turned spears of the victorious soldiers. A brave Christian named Nestor went to the prison to his advisor Demetrios and requested a blessing to fight the barbarian. With the blessing and prayers of Demetrios, Nestor prevailed over the fierce German and hurled him from the platform onto the spears of the soldiers, just as the murderous pagan would have done with the Christian. The enraged commander ordered the execution of the Holy Martyr Nestor (October 27), and sent a guard to the prison to kill St. Demetrios. At dawn on October 26, 306 soldiers appeared in the saint's underground prison and ran him through with lances. His faithful servant, St. Lupus, gathered up the blood-soaked garment of St. Demetrios, took the imperial ring from his finger, a symbol of his high status, and dipped it in the blood. With the ring and other



holy things sanctified by the blood of St. Demetrios, St. Lupus began to heal the infirmed. The emperor issued orders to arrest and kill him.

The body of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrios was cast out for wild animals to devour, but the Christians took it and secretly buried it in the earth.

During the reign of St. Constantine (306-337), a church was built over the grave of St. Demetrios. A hundred years later, during the construction of a majestic new church on the old spot, the incorrupt relics of the Holy Martyr were uncovered. Since the seventh century a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh has been found beneath the crypt of the Great Martyr Demetrios, so he is called "the Myrrh-Gusher." ❖





# Philoptochos

2021-2023 Philoptochos Board

■ BY MARIA KANARAS, PRESIDENT

*“There is nothing permanent  
except change.”*

— HERACLITUS

**L**ike all things in life, our Philoptochos Board reflects this quote. We cherish our past and honor our former board members, all the while remaining open to new ideas and creative ways to accomplish our mission

and welcoming new members. This month, we joyfully share our 2021-2023 Board listed below.

To our Philoptochos stewardship, we welcome you to join us this Fall in a variety of initiatives and fundraisers such

as: Breast Cancer Awareness, Thanksgiving Dinner Drive for Market Street Mission, Christmas Card fundraiser, Feeding the Hungry, and One Warm Coat Drive.

## 2021-2023 PHILOPTOCHOS BOARD

- Sandy Boutsikaris
- Helen Bruno
- Christina Colonias
- Ellen Conti
- Mary Demiris
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- Penny Pefanis
- Elise Savnik
- Mary Skiadas
- Kristin Tencza
- Phyllis Verenes
- Debra Vlahakis, Recording Secretary

Celebrating our Philoptochos Honoree at 2021 Metropolis of NJ Banquet – Penny Pefanis  
As a long standing, devoted parish-

ioner of Holy Trinity, Penny Pefanis has consistently given her time, talent and treasures to numerous ministries of Holy Trinity, serving as Head of

Religious Education, Youth Advisor and Philoptochos President - leading our chapter with much grace, dignity and devoutness. ❖



# Greek School

## Principal's School Opening Message

■ BY MRS. STAVROULA MERGOUPIS, HOLY TRINITY GREEK SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**G**reetings to all parents/guardians, faculty, staff and all members of the Holy Trinity Greek School community,

During these uncertain times of the pandemic, we come together once again this year to open our Greek School with hope, love and faith. Our program continues with regular, in-person classes once again! I am certain that we will have a productive academic year for all our students, guided by the passion of our teachers. The students will once again have a traditional classroom experience within our program. Most of all, we here at the Holy Trin-

ity Greek Afternoon School Program are present to ensure the safety of our children with all necessary precautions and protocols. We will ensure that the students will have a safe environment, in order to learn and create with one another. The dedicated teachers will always be available with fervor in our important endeavor; always focused, determined and dedicated to the cause of the preservation of our important Greek culture, language and Orthodox Christian ideals. Our teachers will guide and support the students to their full potential and encourage them to strive for excellence and be inspired to

create wondrous works once again. The goal of our program will always ensure that our teachers enhance and shape the students' creativity and their love for their culture.

Lastly, I would like to extend my greetings to the new incoming families and their children, who will become part of our school community. We welcome you with open arms and loving kindness. I wish you all, especially to our students, a safe and beloved journey during this academic school year, in which we will all work together in unison for the successful advancement of our academic program. ❖

First day of Greek School begins with Agiasmos in the Church with Fr. Peter



# Dissension, Devil's Division

■ BY V. REV. EUGENE N. PAPPAS



“But He know their thoughts and said to them,  
‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid to  
waste and house will fall against house.’”

**H**istory has proven that what was considered “fail-safe” by those in authority, power, and position oftentimes would be an utter disaster. Still others would clamor that what is impossible with man is indeed possible with God (Luke 18:27). And so it is!!

Even our American experience in ‘democracy’ as detailed by our Hellenic forefathers, would inevitably be a successful experiment despite political division, dissension, and derision. With issues like slavery, taxation, ‘divine rights’, political tensions resulted in catastrophies. However, through leadership, determination, and perseverance, unity may be achieved even in the face of major disagreement. Admittedly, we sure do disagree, more than we wish to admit.

Our Lord Jesus, in His ‘divine right,’ pierces the veil of every soul and reads both mind and emotion of each human heart. Jesus is readily aware of demonic possession, satanic intrusion, and diabolic intrigue. He knows His adversary’s strengths and frailties. Unfailing in His determination, the

Lord seeks in all places and all times to reconcile individuals to each other and to the community at large. He employs a prophetic ministry, softening the human hearts of prideful hardness into pacific reconciliation, justice, and peace among all.

The prophetic, scriptural messengers of God, both human and angelic, relentlessly presented alternatives to thought, word and action to ameliorate human circumstance and condition. Our efforts urge us to present ourselves as ‘pleasing’ to the Godhead. His beckoning voice is ever in our ears awaiting our positive response to His Will. Our motivation and reason is so simple. We seek the abiding intimacy of God in our heart, mind, soul, and inter-personal activity.

The oneness with God is a sacred intimacy fostering meta-noia (the look-

ing inward). Who among us is not aware of our persistent disdain for reflecting mirrors, which evidence every blemish, wrinkle, and added ‘pound’. All the more reason for us to look inward, where reflecting glass neither distorts nor distracts. Look to your soul...it may need tending and pruning.

Whatever is your present distraction from God’s attraction, restore and heal your division and dissension with Him and your fellow man. Don’t let your house fail and fall! Prepare for a taste of the ‘kingdom to come’ in the now and present hour. ♦







# Metropolis of New Jersey to Honor Holy Trinity Parishioners

**O**n Monday, September 20, parishioners from Holy Trinity were honored by His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the Grand Banquet of the Metropolis of New Jersey

Clergy Laity. We appreciate all our parishioners and celebrate the following who have offered so much to Holy Trinity. Parish honorees: Lia Lewis, Steward of the Parish; George Colonias, Parish Council; Penny

Pefanis, Philoptochos; Melissa Krikos, PTO; Maggie Vasilopoulos, GOYA; Felicia Karsos, Essential Medical Worker; Theodore Criares, senior parish member. ❖







# GOYA

## Update

Mr/Ms. GOYA was held on October 10. Holy Trinity participants were: Mr. Westfield, John Colonias with Ms. Westfield, Despina Tarhanidis.





Four divers from Holy Trinity participated in the annual Holy Cross Asbury Park celebration held on Sunday, September 12. Katerina Carayannopoulos retrieved the Cross in the girls junior division. We are so happy for her and for our other divers John Colonias, John Connor, Grace Warnick







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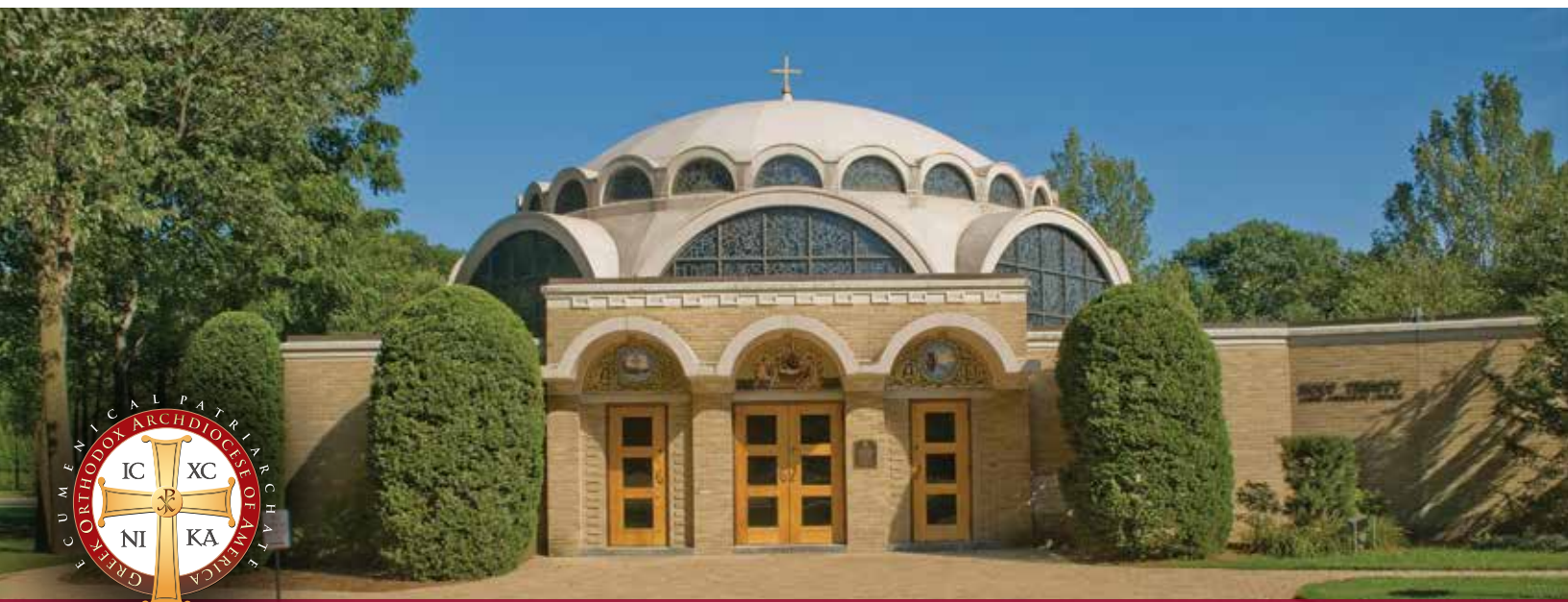
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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

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