**The Net**

A monthly publication of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
February 2021 | Vol. 13 | Issue 2

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**Directory**

Fr. Matthew Moore  
*Parish Priest*

Erin Harris  
*Office Manager*

**Parish Council**

Anthony Mougianis  
Maria Matzorkis  
Joanne McCraley  
Nick Riley  
Nick Demitras  
Rikki Kamarados  
Rana Mahfood  
Niko Mastros  
Greg Matzorkis  
Don Richardson  
Michael Riley  
Chris Vogagis

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**Agatha the Martyr**

**February 5**

Holy Virgin Martyr Agatha was the fifteen-year-old daughter of rich and respected Christian parents from the city of Palermo (formerly Panormos) in Sicily. During the persecution under the emperor Decius (249-251), the city prefect of Catania, Quintianus, having heard about Agatha’s wealth and beauty, sent his soldiers after her to bring her to trial as a Christian.

At Catania they housed the saint with a certain rich woman, who had five daughters. They all attempted to tempt Saint Agatha with fine clothes, amusements and entertainment, urging her to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but the saint disdained all these things. The more they tried to move her, the more resolute she became. She prayed that she might soon face martyrdom.

During her interrogation under Quintianus, the holy martyr was swayed neither by the flattery, nor by the threats, and she was subjected to cruel torments. They also tried to remove her breasts with metal tongs, and when this failed, they used knives.

The holy Apostle Peter appeared to her in prison and healed her wounds. Saint Agatha was led to torture again, and Quintianus was astonished to see her completely healed, with no trace of cutting. Then the torture began once more.

At this moment an earthquake took place in the city, and many buildings were destroyed. Among those killed were two of Quintianus’s advisors. The terrified inhabitants rushed to Quintianus, demanding an end to Agatha’s tortures. Fearing a revolt by the people, Quintianus sent Saint Agatha back to prison. There the martyr, offering thanks to God, peacefully surrendered her soul to the Lord.
Will You Be My Auxentios?

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Love is in the air! February ushers in the season of love for hundreds of millions around the world. People begin to craft their romantic plans with a loved one, think about gifts, or even explore new relationships on a first date. It’s also a highly popular time to get engaged; it’s estimated that there are around 6,000,000 proposals on the famed day in America alone. Can you guess what I’m talking about? February 14, the church feast day of St. Valentine’s violent martyrdom, made a romantic holiday sometime in the late middle ages.

Except the Orthodox Church commemorates St. Valentine on July 6. We celebrate St. Auxentios of Bythinia on February 14.

So, will you be my Auxentios? The saint lived most of his life as a hermit and ascetic, so I’d make for a cheap date.

This is a humorous example of the difference between Orthodox (Eastern) and Catholic (Western) calendars. Churches have different reasons for celebrating saints on certain days; while many of our saints are commemorated on the same day, there are some variations in the calendars.

Another variation we have in calendars is how the two churches calculate Pascha (Easter). For complicated reasons there is a difference between when the West and the East celebrate Easter. Sometimes we land on the same Sunday, and sometimes we’re just a week off. Some years, like this one, there is a full month’s difference between us; theirs is April 4, ours is May 2. So, while the Western church will have Ash Wednesday on the 17th, we don’t start our Lent until mid-March.

Though I was enjoying some fun with the differences in the calendar, I believe that St. Auxentios is an example of how to prepare for Lent through self-denial and charity. It’s never too early to prepare for the Feast of Feasts. One way we can do that in February is to pray for our brothers and sisters in the Western churches, that God will give them the strength to complete their own journey through Lent. Though we don’t travel together this year, we can still join the ‘choir of the saints’ in praying for them.

Ar. Matthew

February Memorial - 02/07/2021

O, God, give rest to the souls of your servants, those men and women of Holy Trinity that went before us

Loyd Parkas
Georgios Fotiou Fyllas
Isidoros Petrou Lakiou
Michail (Michael) Klouvas
Konstantinos Alexandrou
Stavroula Kalogerakou
Panagiota G. Diamantopoulou
Dimitrios Konstantinidis
Aikaterini Tsouris
Antonios Vergis

THANK YOU to everyone who has begun to support our monthly memorials. It is a blessing that donors have already provided enough for us to buy the materials for koliva through April.

St. Auxentios—Feb. 14
Happy January! Beloved parishioners of Holy Trinity welcome to February! Kalo Mena! Xristos Anesti!

As we continue with the pandemic restrictions and the Green Phase of our coming back to worship at Holy Trinity, a continued thanks to everyone for your cooperation as we continue to allow up to 50% of our sanctuary’s capacity into our church for Divine Liturgy.

We are always working diligently to make it fair and as safe as it possibly can be for everyone; and so far it has gone very well. Please continue to follow the rules of distancing: sitting with close family members only. As with last month many have shown a desire to attend church, though many have also preferred to stay home for the time being; and that’s perfectly fine. There’s no right or wrong here; it is solely based on your personal comfort. This arrangement will change as the pandemic changes, so our hope is that the numbers stay the same or even drop so that we can continue to worship together.

We must stay vigilant and continue to follow the rules strictly as the infection numbers rise. Please follow the rule of wearing a mask, washing and sanitizing your hands, and keeping a six foot distance as often as you can. These steps make such a difference as well as save lives!

Though in the interim, and for those of you who cannot attend or desire not to, please continue to watch our services live every Wednesday and Sunday at: www.holytrinitystb.org/live

You all are, and always will be our church family in person, or online and we pray for the time where we will again all be together to celebrate Divine Liturgy. 🙏

Again, please look at our renovated website that Fr. Matthew has worked on so diligently: www.holytrinitystb.org and surf through the many pages of information, church calendars schedules and updates.

I am proud to report that the COVID-19 Relief Campaign has been extremely well received. Thank you to everyone who has given. The festival committee is very thankful, and your generosity has allowed our church to operate properly during this unprecedented and difficult time. So far, this campaign has brought our church over $86,000, which has done wonders in keeping our church going strong. Donations still keep coming in! God Bless each and everyone of you!

Stewardship:
Our parish strives “To lead people to God through Orthodox Christianity and to provide ways for them live and share God’s love.” It does so in good days and in bad, such as we now experience. Church attendance may be difficult or impossible for you, but we endeavor to spread the “good news” as best we can. Any financial help that you might offer, or can send us is deeply appreciated. 🙏

Please continue to pray for the sick who have contracted this horrible virus, and for the families of the many that have lost their lives throughout the world and here in our country. Also continue your prayers for our sick here within our own church family.

Our outreach committee has met and is currently refining our church roster and data base. If you would like to join the outreach committee, please contact Fr. Matthew, Greg Matzorski or myself.

Sadly, Covid has delayed some of the efforts towards building our ministries. If you have an interest to help, please contact Fr. Matthew or Erin at the church at 740-282-9835 or at office@holytrinitystb.org.

I want to thank all of you for your steadfast support and faith in a year and time that has been so very difficult for all of us. It reminds me of 2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight” and though it is easier said than done, we must stay strong and know that this too shall pass.

Please send our secretary Erin Harris some well wishes, she was recently struck with the Covid virus, but I am relieved to announce that she is back to work safe, and healthy again.

As always, thank you for all that you do in helping make Holy Trinity great; it takes a village and each and everyone of you makes an enormous difference!

Our good friend and parishioner, Kevin Young, has shared a beautiful video that can be seen on YouTube at https://youtu.be/sC2CvruwX13Q. The Video is from our Christmas service from 1988. It is a beautiful thing to watch and I encourage you to do so. Thank you, Brother Kevin, again it surely was a great gift to relive our history from 32 years ago! Efharisto 🙏

In closing and as always let us remember: 1 John 4:7
Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God... Love will always conquer all. Much love and continued blessings.
Have a happy, healthy and abundant February, Tony 🙏
Community

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The following people will be celebrating their birthdays in the month of February.

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<td>Dr. Nicholas Mastros</td>
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If you have been omitted from any birthday month and would like to be included; please let us know by emailing the office at office@holytrinitystb.org or by calling Erin in the office at 740-282-9835.

Keep your contact information up to date.

Parishioners can also take advantage of the following online aids:

- Spend time at the appropriate moments to participate in the services via video. You can find online services at https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts
- Those with newer AppleTV devices, Roku, or Amazon Fire can find the Archdiocesan channel: https://www.goarch.org/tv
- Utilize the Archdiocesan Online Chapel for texts of services, daily readings, and lives of the Saints: https://www.goarch.org/chapel
- There are many edifying Bible studies and educational podcasts available via Ancient Faith Ministries (https://www.ancientfaith.com/) or Orthodox Christian Network (http://myocn.net)
- Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis offers a wonderful daily message through his “Prayer Team” ministry. Sign up using the following link: https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin

PHILOPTOCHOS

President Angie Mahfood is happy to report, that even during the current pandemic the Philoptochos Society has been able to make their monthly donations.

For the month of January the Philoptochos were able to donate to Coats for Kids.

Angie would like to remind everyone to make sure we all count our blessings daily during this uncertain time. She wants everyone to know she is thinking of them and hopes everyone is safe, and healthy.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed Monday, February 15 in observance of President’s Day.

Pledge Envelopes

The 2020 Parish Council decided not to purchase pledge envelopes for 2021. You can still write a check and mail it to the church, or you may go online to make a donation. The website is: http://holytrinitystb.org/online-giving/. Please call the church office at 740-282-9835 with any questions.

Committees

We are looking to fill several committees. Anyone is welcome to join and participate. Currently, we need help with the following:

1.) Outreach
2.) Education
2.) Ways and Means

If you have any interest in any of these committees, please call either Fr. Matthew, or Erin at 740-282-9835 to join.

A Special Thank You

A very special thank you to Shelly Collaras for the flower centerpieces. The flowers look beautiful on the tables in the social hall! Shelly’s thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated!
Orthodoxy 102

Drawing Closer To Christ Through Our Faith

Wednesdays Feb. 3—Mar. 10 @ 7pm
ON ZOOM ONLY

Orthodox Christians have a wealth of worship, theology,
This six-week course is will teach us how to do that.

Week 1— Look Upon Yourself With Sober Judgement
Week 2— Man Shall Not Live on Bread Alone: Fasting in our Faith
Week 3— The Holy Scriptures: Not Just for Liturgy
Week 4— The Liturgical Toolkit: How We Prepare for and Participate in Liturgy
Week 5— Let the Meditation of our Heart be Acceptable in Thy Sight
Week 6— Beauty is an Act of Worship

Call the office for Zoom link information—740-282-9835
ST. JOHN THE FORERUNNER’S COMMUNITY OUTREACH — MORE THAN FOOD

Every month for over a decade, St. John the Forerunner in Boardman, OH has been hosting a meal for, on average, 50 to 70 people. Led by the Philoptochos society, the parish prepares and serves the meal while also donating clothing and canned goods as well. Until the pandemic arrived in March 2020, the monthly meal meant parishioners also spent time talking and interacting with those in need. The program was forced on hiatus for six months due to the pandemic out of concern for the safety of the participants and fear of spreading the Coronavirus.

“Many of us are comfortable and for want of nothing,” said George Denney, immediate past president of the parish council. “We can learn much from the people who come through our doors. They are lonely, experiencing hardship and may not have a home. But their smiles come not only from the food but the connection made between people.” The ministry resumed in November 2020 as a takeaway meal. But the question on everyone’s mind was ‘when can we resume coming into the hall, sitting down and enjoying our meal — and the company,’ according to Denney.

The outreach to inspire and motivate parishioners. After the first takeaway meal had enough leftovers to serve about 150 people at a Youngstown-area soup kitchen, a parishioner was moved to donate 10 turkeys, cases of mashed potatoes, vegetables and pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving time. All as a result of a community meal offered out of love for the least among us. One more benefit from the meal: The number of dinners served at St. John doubled from November to December. “The diners said to us, ‘We can’t wait until we can come in for a meal again. We miss our friends.”

SUPPORT HIS Eminence AND THE Metropolis MINISTRIES

It costs approximately $1,000 per day to operate our Metropolis—including Metropolitan Savas’s pastoral visitations, preparations for Summer Camp and GOYA retreats, our vital registry (tracking marriages, baptisms, chrismations, and deaths), and more. Please consider sponsoring a day in the life of the Metropolis. To contribute, visit https://pittsburgh.goarch.org/support
20th Annual Youth & Camp Workers Conference

Orthodox Youth Workers from around the country have the opportunity to attend a conference with fellow Youth Workers from other jurisdictions to learn from one another and share best practices. The 2021 conference, which was scheduled to take place in Cleveland, will take place online at a cost of $25 per person.

Please visit www.orthodyouth.net for more information and to register. The conference is being held Jan. 28 (from 6:30 to 9 PM Eastern) and Jan. 29 (from 11 AM to 5 PM).

St. Nicholas’s Preschool Curriculum Introduced

In the midst of the challenges of the pandemic, St. Nicholas G.O. Cathedral in Bethlehem, PA has introduced a 14-week curriculum for preschool students. The Academy of Orthodox Faith & Learning is an online outreach program offering daily emails with prayers and lessons for preschool students.

“This is a daily routine of prayers and other lessons meant to maintain the connection with church and develop children’s mind and soul,” said Fr. Alexandros Petrides, assistant priest at St. Nicholas. “It’s a great way for kids and families to start their day.”

You can sign up for this free daily email at www.orthodoxfaithandlearning.org and can share it with others regardless of their location in the Metropolis or Archdiocese.

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 - http://www.pittsburgh.gosearch.org - info@pittsburgh.gosearch.org
412-621-5529 (Main) - 412-465-0460 (Camp) - 412-621-8543 (Youth) - 412-621-1522 (Fax)

His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS of Pittsburgh, Presiding Hierarch

Fr. George Callos, Chancellor
A.D. Ryan Gzikowski, Asst. to Metropolitan & Registrar
Rhea Dallas, Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director
Marina Papafil, Camp Ministries Coordinator
Stacey Stathulis, Stewardship Ministries Coordinator
Maria Stamoolis, Director of Greek Education and Culture
January 22, 2021

Statement Regarding Developments in Medicine:
COVID-19 Vaccines & Immunizations

Christ “came not to heal the healthy, but the sick; not to save the righteous, but sinners”
(Mark 2:17)

As the world continues to battle COVID-19, we are ever grateful to the frontline workers – including medical professionals, emergency responders, and scientists – for their unwavering dedication to making the world a better place.

In light of the same, given our clergy and lay faithful are seeking archpastoral guidance regarding developments in medicine, such as COVID-19 vaccines and immunizations, we offer the following guidance:

Scripture encourages us to respect and protect the body as the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). At the same time, it discourages us from either tempting or testing the Lord (Matt. 4:7). And as your spiritual shepherds, we affirm and assure you that it is neither wrong nor sinful to seek medical attention and advice. In fact, we welcome interventions that provide us more time for spiritual renewal and repentance.

We therefore encourage all of you – the clergy and lay faithful of our Church – to consult your physicians in order to determine the appropriate course of action for you, just as you do for surgeries, medications, and vaccinations, in cancer treatments and other ailments. Indeed, while your own bishop, priest, or spiritual father remains prepared to assist you with spiritual matters, your personal doctor will guide your individual medical decisions.

We trust that whatever course of action you and your doctor decide upon will also benefit the rest of the community. If we work together – in a spirit of sincere compassion and care for one another – we will soon be able to gather together as a full community in our churches once again. We miss you very much and eagerly await the day when we can all exchange the kiss of peace in the Divine Liturgy!

Conveying our paternal blessings with love in the Lord,

Archbishop Elpidophoros, Chairman
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Metropolitan Joseph, Vice-Chairman
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
2021: The Year of the Youth

At the annual meeting in October 2020, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America declared 2021 the Year of the Youth, with the intent of augmenting ministry to children, teens, and young adults across the country. The yearlong festivities will focus on the youth’s presence and potential within the Church by celebrating and enhancing their God-given talents.

The presence of Youth, as full members of the Body of Christ, is essential to the life of our communities. The Youth are our present and future. Our hope stems from a faith that is not only lived on a daily basis but is passed on from generation to generation, ensuring continuity in witnessing Christ’s love in the world.

The presence of Youth in our Church gives us hope and purpose, following the words of the Psalmist: “He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments…” (Psalm 78:5-7).

The Assembly of Bishops, in collaboration with the Orthodox Youth Directors of North America, is planning a variety of exciting events in the coming months. The plan includes a series of online events and webinars as well as opportunities for youth, youth workers, and parents to witness the faith and celebrate their good works in Christ. More details will be made available in the coming weeks and months at orthodoxyouth.net and assemblyofbishops.org.
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The Parish of Holy Trinity would like to thank the following benefactors for making this Monthly Newsletter possible:

In Loving Memory

of Nicholas Mougianis

In Memory of Our Friend,
Annette Kirlin Kazalas

Philoptochos Society
“Friends of the Poor”

Women and Men Invited
See Angie Mahfood or Joanne McCraley to Join
Submissions for THE NET are to be submitted by the 20th of each month.