



THE VOICE

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF COMMUNITY NEWS AND HISTORY

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THE KOINOTHTOS

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Our Vision: With the Grace of God, to provide a loving and caring Community where all belong to Christ, through worship, sacramental life, everyday spiritual discipline, sanctification, education, witness and fellowship.

ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ



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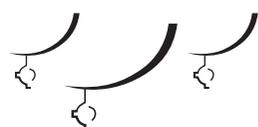
Our Mission

Our Mission is to become faithful followers of Christ and thus active Greek Orthodox Christians by accepting and submitting to the Will of our Lord so that we may realize salvation and enter into the Kingdom of God.

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HOLY TRINITY
Greek Orthodox Cathedral
600 East Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28203



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A Message From The Editor



witnessed the miracle of the weeping Icon. It was a blessed event.

Sunday School performed a beautiful reenactment of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at the Christmas Pageant, with lunch served to the community.

That's it for now. Be Safe.

Angelo Pete Politis



Hello again, Everybody. Hope you and your families had a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Sharing a few events that brought a close to 2014:

Preschool hosted a very successful Yiayia's kitchen.

Fundraising for Church renovations has been successful and continues to be supported by our Parishioners. Thank You! Let's keep up this great contribution!

Library improvements have started; more to come.

Largest event this year: Parishioners and Visitors from various areas came to witness The Panagia Kardiotissa Icon visiting us from Saint George's Orthodox Church in Taylor, Pennsylvania. I myself

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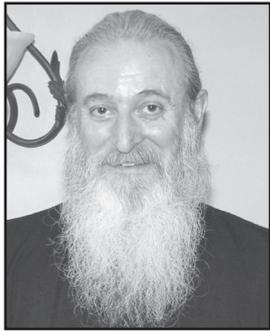


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Remarks From Father Michael



by **Father Michael Varvarelis**
Dean of the Cathedral

My dear Parishioners,

On the weekend of November 15th and 16th, our community was blessed to have Fr. Mark from Taylor, Pennsylvania, visit, bringing with him the miraculous and myrrh-flowing Icon of Panagia Kardiotissa. Everyone in our Community and the surrounding communities was very blessed to be able to have the opportunity to witness this event, be anointed with this myrrh and venerate the holy Icon. I had a few individuals inform me of their personal healing stories which occurred after being anointed with the myrrh. What miracles!!!

In the July/August Voice Publication, I shared with you an article on Panagia Kardiotissa, which led me to want to share a few additional reflections regarding the special place holy Icons hold in our lives and in the Orthodox Church.

The word Icon comes from the Hebrew word "tselem" meaning the manifestation (revealing) of God's glory. In the Bible, Christ is called the image of

God. St. Paul, says "Christ is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) because it is the Word of God which reveals the glory of God to people. Thus, the true image of God is Christ and man is created in the image of God, which means that man is an Icon of Christ. Which means man is not the image of God the Father, but the image of Christ.

Since Christ, as the image of the invisible God, is the glory of God, so man, as the Icon of Christ, is the glory of Christ, that is, man can reveal to the world the glory of God. The objects to which are painted Christ, Mary and the saints are called images (Icons), because they are the manifestation of the glory of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints.

While venerating an Icon, not only does our veneration ascend to the original, but we also become sanctified when we are venerating the sacred images.

The Icon offers blessings to man, according to the degree of his spiritual condition. That is why when venerating sacred images we become sanctified. At the "Service of the Sunday of Orthodoxy", it is said that "The eyes that see the Icons contribute to bring sanctification to man and then the mind of man is ascended toward the knowledge of God."

As the Fathers teach, when the mind of man reaches the knowledge of God and experiences the uncreated energies of God, he is changed and he is a new creation; God dwells in him and man dwells in God. In this, man finds joy, peace, love, forgiveness, kindness, humility, purity and chastity. These holy experiences are happening when people are spiritually vigilant, watchful, prayerful and living in obedience and respect to God's commandments.

St. John Damascene says of the sacred Icons "I do not venerate the matter, but I venerate the Creator of matter. "... "And I will not cease to respect the matter by which my salvation was ministering." Within the

Church we give appropriate value to the matter. We do not underestimate it, nor eliminate it, but we place it in its actual position.

The Protestant world says that we are idolaters because we have the Icons and, to justify their rejection of Icons, they refer to the following verse from the Scripture "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any image of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I Am the LORD thy God" (Exodus 20:4-5). However, this passage is intended to prevent the Jews from paganism for not crafting idols and statues. Whatever creations exist in heaven and how many are down on earth and those that are found in the water of the seas under the earth. That means for them not to make replicas of the sun, moon, fire, water, animals, fish, minerals etc. and worship them as gods.

And in Exodus 20:23 it explains "Ye shall not make gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold". It does not say not to make an image of your God. It only says not to make idols-creations and afterwards worship them like gods.

That is why He said to Moses "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, and thou shalt place them in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof"(Exodus. 25: 17-19). He orders Moses to make images of the cherubim and God describes how to show the Cherubim and where to place them. "Set the cherubims within the inner house and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house." (1 Kings 6:27)

Continued on page 5

Αγαπητοί Ενορίες,

Το Σαββατοκύριακο 15 και 16 Νοεμβρίου είχαμε την ξεχωριστή ευλογία να μας επισκεφθεί ο πάτερ-Μάρκος από το Taylor, Pennsylvania, και μας έφερε την θαυματουργή και μυροβλύζουσα εικόνα της Παναγίας Καρδιώτισσας. Νομίζω όλοι στην Ενορία μας και από τις γύρο ενορίες είχαμε την ευλογία να προσκυνήσουμε την εικόνα, να δούμε τό θαύμα του αγίου μύρου, να μυρωθούμε από αυτό και μερικοί, όπως μου είπαν, είδαν θαύματα ιάσεως πού έγιναν στους εαυτούς τους. Επειδή είχα γράψει για την Παναγία Καρδιώτισσα στην εφημερίδα μας «Φωνή» του Ιουλίου-Αυγούστου, θα ήθελα τώρα να γράψω μερικές σκέψεις πού αφορούν την θέση των αγίων εικόνων στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία.

Η λέξη Εικόνα προέρχεται από την Εβραϊκή λέξη τσελεμ πού σημαίνει την φανέρωση τής δόξας τού Θεού. Στά κείμενα τής Αγίας Γραφής ο Χριστός ονομάζεται εικόνα τού Θεού, ο Χριστός που είναι τό Δεύτερο Πρόσωπο τής Αγίας Τριάδος. Ο Αποστ. Παύλος, μιλώντας για τόν Χριστό λέγει ότι είναι «εικόν τού Θεού τού αοράτου» (Κολας 1,15) γιατί είναι ο Λόγος τού Θεού πού φανέρωσε τήν δόξα τού Θεού στους ανθρώπους. Έτσι η πραγματική εικόνα τού Θεού είναι ο Χριστός, πού γεννήθηκε πρό πάντων τών αιώνων από τόν Θεό πατέρα. Και ο άνθρωπος είναι δημιουργημένος κατ'εικόνα

Θεού, πού σημαίνει ότι είναι εικόνα τού Χριστού. Δέν είναι, δηλαδή, ο άνθρωπος, εικόνα τού Θεού Πατρός πού είναι ο Χριστός, αλλά είναι κατ'εικόνα Θεού δηλαδή είναι εικόνα τής εικόνας τού Θεού.

Αφού ο Χριστός, ως εικόνα τού Θεού τού αοράτου, είναι η δόξα τού Θεού, γι'αυτό και ο άνθρωπος ως εικόνα τού Χριστού είναι δόξα τού Χριστού, δηλαδή μπορεί νά φανερώσει στόν κόσμο τήν δόξα τού Θεού. Τά αντικείμενα στά οποία αγιογραφούνται ο Χριστός, η Παναγία καί οι άγιοι λέγονται εικόνες, επειδή είναι η φανέρωση τής δόξας τού Χριστού, τής Παναγίας καί τών αγίων.

Δέν ανεβαίνει απλώς η προσκύνηση στό πρωτότυπο αλλά αγιαζόμαστε καί εμείς προσκυνώντας τίς ιερές εικόνες.

Η εικόνα προσφέρει αγιασμό στόν άνθρωπο, ανάλογα μέ τόν βαθμό τής πνευματικής του καταστάσεως. Γι' αυτό προσκυνώντας τίς ιερές εικόνες αγιαζόμαστε. Στο «Συνοδικό τής Κυριακής τής Ορθοδοξίας» λέγεται χαρακτηριστικά ότι «αγιαζεται... διά τών σεπτών εικόνων τά όμματα τών ορώντων, ανάγεται δέ δι' αυτών ο νούς πρός Θεογνωσίαν.» Δηλαδή «τα μάτια που βλέπουν τις ιερές Εικόνες συντελούν να αγιάζεται ο άνθρωπος, και ο νούς του ανθρώπου ανεβαίνει προς την Θεογνωσία». Όπως οι άγιοι Πατέρες διδάσκουν όταν ο νούς του ανθρώπου φθάνει στην Θεογνωσία και

εισέρχεται στις άκτιστες ενέργειες του Θεού αλλοιώνεται και ο Θεός κατοικεί εις αυτόν και ο άνθρωπος κατοικεί εις τον Θεόν. Εκεί εις αυτόν τον άνθρωπον υπάρχει χαρά, ειρήνη, αγάπη, συγχωρητικότητα, καλωσύνη, ταπείνωση και αγνότητα. Αυτά γίνονται όταν ο άνθρωπος προσέχει, προσεύχεται και ζεί με υπακοήν στις εντολές του Θεού και έχει θεοσέβειαν.

Ο άγιος Ιωάννης ο Δαμασκηνός λέγει για τις ιερές Εικόνες: «Ου προσκυνώ τήν ύλη, προσκυνώ δέ τόν τής ύλης δημιουργόν.»... «Καί σέβων ου παύσομαι τή ύλη δι ής η σωτηρία μου είργασται». Μέσα στην Εκκλησία δίνουμε σημασία στην ύλη. Δέν τήν παραθεωρούμε, δέν τήν καταργούμε, αλλά τήν θέτουμε στην πραγματική της αξία και θέση.

Ο Προτεσταντικός κόσμος λέγει ότι είμαστε ειδωλολάτρες πού έχουμε Εικόνες καί για νά δικαιολογήσει τήν απόρριψη αυτή των εικόνων αναφέρει τό επόμενο Αγιογραφικό εδάφιο: «Μή ποιήσης σ'εαυτώ είδωλον ουδέ παντός ομοίωμα όσα εν τώ ουρανώ άνω καί όσα εν τή γή κάτω, καί όσα εν τοίς ύδασιν υπό κάτω της γής. Ου προσκυνήσης αυτοίς ουδέ μή λατρεύσης αυτοίς. Εγώ γάρ ειμι Κύριος ο Θεός σου» (Εξοδ. 20,4-5). Ομως τό εδάφιο αυτό σκοπό έχει νά προλάβει τούς Εβραίους από τήν ειδωλολατρεία για νά μή κατασκευάζουν είδωλα καί ομοιώματα. Οσα δημιουργήματα

Continued on page 5

The President's Message



by **John Tsumas**
Parish Council
President

Dear Holy Trinity Parishioners,

As we embark upon a big year in 2015 for Holy Trinity, I thought it would be great to reflect on one of the huge successes we experienced as a community in 2014. We all lead busy lives both in and out of the church, so it is easy to overlook, or maybe not have heard about, the amazing growth in our Parish's Stewardship.

The Stewardship Committee, currently led by Nick and Carmen Kallelis, has done an excellent job keeping the message of Stewardship front and center. I truly believe we are on the cusp of a big positive change in what Stewardship means at Holy Trinity. Their efforts, combined with an increasingly involved community, could mean big things.

I get excited when I see Church attendance increasing, our youth program excelling, an increase in community opportunities for fellowship through many special events hosted throughout the year, our dance program setting the standard and more and more people getting involved as volunteers. All of these things, and many more, are laying the groundwork for an exciting future for our beloved community and can also be

seen when we dissect the Stewardship numbers for 2014.

2014 to 2013 Stewardship Comparison:

- Total 2014 Stewardship: \$429,532 (16% increase)
- Average Stewardship Donation: \$628 (11% decrease)
- Total Numbers of Donors: 684 (31% increase)
- Number of Members who did NOT donate to Stewardship: 279 (35% improvement)
- Number of Donors who gave \$1-\$250: 237 (35% increase)
- Number of Donors who gave \$250-\$500: 210 (19% increase)
- Number of Donors who gave \$500-\$1,200: 171 (30% increase)
- Number of Donors who gave \$1,200-\$2,500: 66 (65% increase)
- Number of Donors who gave over \$2,500: 17 (143% increase)

The first positive change you will notice is 150 donors went from giving nothing in 2013 to giving something in 2014. This is a WONDERFUL shift and we should continue to strive for a similar increase for this year.

Each Parish member's contribution is important. You each play a significant role in contributing something to the operation of our Cathedral.

One of the effects of the increase in the number of donors was it decreased our average stewardship amount from \$706 in 2013 to \$628 in 2014. The reason for the decrease is that the majority (63%) of the new 150 donors were in the \$1-\$500 range.

The next thing I noticed was we had 26 more donors, a 65% increase, give at least \$1,200. This is huge! We need to see this type of improvement on both the

lower donations and the larger donations if we are ever going to be able to pay our bills with just Stewardship.

We had one of the best Stewardship years in a long time, but we are only on the first few steps of the staircase that lead to our Cathedral's financial security. Our projected budget for 2015 is around \$830,000, meaning that current Stewardship is only paying half of our bills. It is important to keep in mind that our Cathedral operates on a budget that is MUCH smaller than most Churches our size, and yet we still have to rely on Yiasou Festival profits to operate. This should bother all of us and should be viewed as unacceptable. The festival profits should be going towards initiatives that will build the future of our community, not to bills.

I would like to close with a challenge to all of us. While our gap between Stewardship and Operating Expenses is significant, we need to understand there is no light switch to turn on that will close this gap instantly. Closing the gap will take time and commitment, but it can be done one step at a time.

I would like to challenge ALL 684 donors from 2014 to increase their donation by \$0.50 a day. This equals \$15 per month or \$183 for the year. I think that most of us would agree with the idea that all of us can find an extra \$15 a month. If everyone would commit to this, we would raise at least another \$125,000 for stewardship, resulting in a 30% increase!

Will you commit yourself and accept my \$0.50 challenge?

God Bless,

John Tsumas

President

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

CONGRATULATIONS

Alexandra "Alex" Tatsis was chosen as one of "The Great 100," an organization created to honor the top one hundred Registered Nurses in NC.

Founded in 1988, The Great 100, Inc., recognizes RNs for their outstanding professional ability and their commitment to excellence in their area of expertise.

With over twenty years of experience as an RN, Alex is truly an asset to Levine Children's Hospital of CMC. Congratulations to Alex, her parents, Peter and Antonia Tatsis, and her brother, His Grace Bishop Gregory of Nyssa.



Christian Maturity:
In Ephesians chapter four,
Saint Paul says we are
to be a "measure of the
stature of Christ; that we
should no longer be children,
but, speaking the truth in love,
may grow up in all things into Him who
is the head: Christ.

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Continued from page 3

Not only in the temple, but Solomon made murals on the wall. Also in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, on the wall he inscribed the figures of the two cherubims “and in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold” (2 Chronicles 3:10). The Orthodox Church interprets the Bible correctly and keeps the correct Tradition and practices in its life.

Though let us examine more closely, what is an Icon? Icon is a book that reminds the literate and teaching the illiterate who asks to be informed about the faith by seeing the Crucifixion, the Mother of the Lord, St. John the Baptist and the other Icons. That is to say that the Holy Icons preach the life of the Lord and His Saints.

Our Holy Tradition preserves how we use the Holy Icons since the time of Christ. Here are some examples of these Icons.

When Christ was going to Golgotha with the Cross on his shoulder and he was approached by Veronica with the Mandylion – her towel - she cleaned off His sweat from His face and the Lord, for her noble thoughtfulness, left His sacred image in her Mandylion (Napkin).

Avgaros, who was ruler of Edessa and who suffered from leprosy, sent his servant to bring him the Lord to heal him or to bring the person of Christ painted on a tile. But as the servant reached Christ and was trying to paint him, Christ was constantly changing his face and the servant could not paint him on the tile. Finally, the Lord called the servant and asked him for a handkerchief and wiped His face, and left His image painted on the handkerchief telling him “Go to your master, give it to him and say that now he will become half-well and later I will send someone to heal him completely.” (This event is celebrated in our Church the 16th of August).

The Apostles Peter and John built a Temple to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lyda, today Tel-Aviv, and they called Her to go there to bless the Church. The Virgin Mary said to them “Go and you will find me there.” Indeed they found the image of the Virgin Mary painted on the right hand column of the temple! In the position that the Bible says “The Queen sat at thy right hand...” (Psalm 45:9).

St Theodore Eliotis, who stayed in the Mount of Olives, says that a saintly Elder had reached an old age and had many temptations from the Devil with the passion of fornication. One day the Elder said to the devil “How long would you continue to tempt me and won’t you go away from me? Leave away from me because you have aged all those years that you tempt me as I also have aged.” Then the devil appeared and said to him “Do not venerate this Icon and I will never tempt you.” It was the image of the Virgin Mary, who was holding the Lord. The Ascetic Elder told the devil “Let me think about this.” Then the Elder went to Abba St. Theodore of Eliotis and narrated what happened with the Demon. Then Elder Theodore replied “The devil tricked you Abba because he put you to swear. But you did well not to reply immediately and ask for advice now. My opinion is not to deny the veneration of the Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, Mary.”

I believe that the most appropriate place of the Icons is in the Church, our homes, our cars and our wallets. This is one of the most meaningful spiritual investments we do as Orthodox Christians. May the Divine Grace that exists in the holy Icons be found in our lives and be transferred from us, as well, to our surrounding fellow individuals. We have the obligation as Orthodox Christians not only to honor the Icons, but more to honor ourselves as Icons of the Lord. Then whatever we think, say and do will agree with the will of God. Then with us as well, the Name of the Holy Trinity will be glorified. This is what I pray and hope for all of us. Amen.

In Christ’s love,

Fr. Michael Varvarelis

Continued from page 3

υπάρχουν πάνω στον ουρανό και όσα υπάρχουν κάτω στη γή και όσα βρίσκονται στο νερό των θαλασσών υποκάτω τής γής. Δηλαδή νά μή κάνουν ομοιώματα τού ηλίου, τής σελήνης, τού πυρός, τού ύδατος, των ζώων, των ιχθύων, των μετάλλων κλπ. και λατρεύσουν αυτά σαν Θεούς.

Και είς τό 23ον εδάφιον διευκρινίζει: «Ου ποιήσετε υμίν αυτοίς θεούς αργυρούς και θεούς χρυσούς ου ποιήσετε υμίν αυτοίς.» Δέν λέγει νά μή φτιάξεις τόν Θεόν σου. Μόνο λέγει να μην κάνουν είδωλα-δημιουργήματα και μετά τα λατρεύουν για θεούς.

Γί αυτό λέγει στόν Μωϋσή: «Ποίησης δύο χερουβείμ χρυσοτορευτά και επιθήσης αυτά εξ αμφοτέρων τών κλιτών τού ιλαστηρίου. Ποιήσονται Χερουβείμ εις εκ τού κλίτους τούτου, και Χερουβείμ εις εκ τού κλίτους τού δευτέρου τού ιλαστηρίου, και ποιήσεις τούς δύο Χερουβείμ επί τά δύο κλήτη. Εσονται τά Χερουβείμ εκτείνοντες τάς πτέρυγας επάνωθεν, συσκιάζοντες εν ταίς πτέρυξιν αυτών επί τού ιλαστηρίου, και τά πρόσωπα αυτών εις άλλα, εις τό ιλαστήριον εσονται τά πρόσωπα τών Χερουβείμ (Εξοδ. 25, 17-19). Δηλαδή διατάσσει τον Μωϋσή να κάνει εικόνες από τα Χερουβείμ και περιγράφει ο Θεός πώς να φαίνονται τα Χερουβείμ. Και αλλού η Αγία Γραφή λέγει: «Πάντας τούς τοίχους τού οίκου εγκολλαπά εγραψε (Σολομών) γραφίδι Χερουβείμ» (Γ’ Βασιλ. 6,27) Οχι απλώς εις τό τέμπλο αλλά έκανε ο Σολομών τοιχογραφία. Επίσης εις τόν τοίχον τού Ναού τού Σολομώντος εις τήν Ιερουσαλήμ εχαράχθησαν τά πρόσωπα των δύο Χερουβείμ: «Και έγλυψε Χερουβείμ επί τών τοίχων και εποίησε τόν οίκον τού αγίου τών αγίων (Β’ Παραλειπ. 3,7-10). Η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία ερμηνεύει την Αγία Γραφή σωστά και κράτησε στη ζωή της την σωστή παράδοση.

Όμως ας ρωτήσουμε πιο συγκεκριμένα τί είναι η Εικόνα; Θα απαντήσουμε ότι η εικόνα ένα βιβλίο πού υπενθυμίζει στό εγγράμματο και διδάσκει τόν αγράμματο ο οποίος ερωτά νά πληροφορηθεί για τήν πίστη μέ τό νά βλέπει τήν Σταύρωση, την Μητέρα του Κυρίου, τον Τίμιον Πρόδρομον.... Δηλαδή μέ τίς Αγίες Εικόνες κηρύττεται η ζωή τού Κυρίου και τών Αγίων Του.

Η Ιερά Παράδοση μας διέσωσε πώς άρχισε η χρησιμοποίηση των Ιερών Εικόνων από τότε που ήλθε ο Κύριος. Ας αναφερθούμε σε ορισμένες Εικόνες. Οι τρεις πρώτες είναι Αχειροποίητες Εικόνες: 1) Ο Χριστός ανήρχετο στόν Γολγοθά με τον Σταυρό στον ώμο όταν Τόν πλησίασε η Βερονίκη και μέ τό μανδήλι της - πετσέτα της – Τού εκαθάρισε τόν ιδρώτα Του και ο Κύριος διά τήν ευγενή χερονομία τής άφησε τήν Ιερά μορφή Του εις το μανδήλιόν της.

2) Ο Αύγαρος – άρχων τής Εδέσσης – που έπασχε από λέπρα έστειλε τόν δούλον του νά τού φέρει τόν Κύριον για να τον γιατρέψει η να φέρει τό πρόσωπον του Χριστού ζωγραφισμένο πάνω σε ένα κεραμίδι. Αλλά καθώς ο δούλος όταν έφθασε στον Χριστό και προσπαθούσε να Τον ζωγραφίσει, ο Χριστός άλλαζε όψη διαρκώς και δέν μπορούσε νά Τόν τυπώσει επί κεράμου. Τέλος ο Κύριος κάλεσε αυτόν

τόν δούλον και τού ζήτησε ένα μανδήλιο και εσκούπισε μέ αυτό τό πρόσωπον Του, οπότε άφησε τήν μορφήν Του ζωγραφισμένη επί τού μανδηλίου λέγοντάς του: «Πήγαινε στόν αφέντη σου, δώσε αυτό και πέστου ότι τώρα θά γίνει μερικώς καλά και αργότερα θά στείλω άνθρωπό μου και θά τόν θεραπεύσει τελείως.» (Αυτό το γεγονός εορτάζεται στην Εκκλησία μας την 16ην Αυγούστου)

3) Οι Απόστολοι Πέτρος και Ιωάννης κτίζουν Ναόν πρός τιμήν τής Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου εις τήν Λύδαν, τό σημερινή Τελ-αβ-βιβ και Τήν εκάλεσαν νά μεταβή εκεί για νά ευλογηση τόν Ναό. Η Παναγία τούς είπε: «Πηγαίνετε και θά μέ βρήτε εκεί.» Πράγματι βρήκαν ζωγραφισμένη την Εικόνα της Παναγίας εις την δεξιάν κολόνα τού τέμπλου! Στην θέση που και η Αγία Γραφή λέγει: «Παρέστη η Βασίλισσα εκ δεξιών σου, εν ιματισμώ διαχρύσω περιβεβλημένη, πεποικιλμένη» (Ψαλμ. 44,9).

4) Αββάς Θεόδωρος Ηλιώτης πού διέμεινε εις τό Ορος τών Ελαιών λέγει ότι ένας άγιος Γέροντας επολεμείτο με ακάθαρτους λογισμούς, ενώ είχε φθάσει σε μεγάλη ηλικία, από τόν διάβολο τής πορνείας.

Ο Γέροντας λέγει εις τον Διάβολον: «Εως πότε θά μέ πολεμάς και δέν θά φύγεις απ’ εμού; Φύγε διότι εγήρασες τόσα χρόνια που με πειράζεις όπως εγήρασα και εγώ». Τότε εμφανίζεται ο Δαίμων και τού λέγει: «Μή προσκυνείς αυτή τήν Εικόνα και ουδεμώς σε πολεμώ». Ηταν η εικόνα τής Παναγίας μας, που κρατούσε τόν Κύριον. Ο Ασκητής λέγει στον Δαίμονα «αφησέ με νά σκεφθώ». Τότε ο Γέροντας Ασκητής «μετέβει εις τόν Αββά Αγιον Θεόδωρον Ηλιώτη και του διηγήθηκε τι του συνέβη με το Δαίμονα. Τότε ο Γέρον Θεόδωρος τού απαντά: «Ο Διάβολος σε ξεγέλασε αββά διότι σε έβαλε και ορκίσθηκες. Ομως καλώς έπραξες και δέν απήντησες αμέσως και ζητάς τώρα συμβουλή. Η γνώμη μου είναι νά μήν αρνηθής τήν προσκύνηση τής Εικόνας τού Κυρίου ημών Ιησου Χριστού και τής Μητέρας Του, τής Θεοτόκου.»

Νομίζω ότι η απαραίτητη θέση των εικόνων στην Εκκλησία μας, στα σπίτια μας, στα αυτοκίνητά μας, στα πορτοφόλια μας είναι από τις πλέον σημαντικές επενδύσεις πού κάνουμε σαν Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί. Μακάρι η Θεία Χάρη πού υπάρχει στις άγιες εικόνες να ευρίσκεται στην ζωή μας και να μεταφέρεται από εμάς στους γύρο μας ανθρώπους. Εχουμε υποχρέωση σαν Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί όχι μόνο να τιμούμε τις εικόνες αλλά περισσότερο να τιμούμε τον εαυτό μας σαν εικόνα του Κυρίου. Τότε ό,τι σκεπτόμαστε, λέμε, και κάνουμε θα συμφωνεί με το θέλημα του Θεού. Τότε και με μας θα δοξάζεται το Ονομα της Αγίας Τριάδος. Αυτό εύχομαι σε όλους μας. Αμήν.

Με αγάπη εν Χριστώ,

Πατήρ-Μιχαήλ Βαρβαρέλης



ΠΕΝΘΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΙΚΑ

Lainie Meredith Manuel Bain

ROCK HILL – Mrs. Lainie Meredith Manuel Bain, 47, passed away on Friday, December 19, 2014, at her home.

A graveside service for Mrs. Bain was held at 1:30 PM, Tuesday, December 23, 2014, at Forest Hills Cemetery, 4290 Old York Road, Rock Hill, SC, officiated by Father Michael Varvarelis, Dean of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Charlotte, NC. The family received friends from 12 noon until 1:00 PM, Tuesday, December 23, 2014, at Greene Funeral Home Downtown Chapel, 355 E. White St., Rock Hill, SC.

Mrs. Bain was born and grew up in Rockville, MD, and was the daughter of Penny Manuel and the late Anthony Manuel of Silver Spring, MD. After graduating from Winthrop University, she married David A. Bain, Jr. and made her home in Rock Hill.

In addition to her mother, Mrs. Bain is survived by her children, Tanner Bain and Zoe Bain of Rock Hill and her brother, Ernest Manuel of York, PA.

Ann Gounaris Economos

CHARLOTTE - Ann Gounaris Economos, 85 of Charlotte, passed peacefully at her home on Wednesday, November 26, 2014, surrounded by her loving family. She was predeceased by her granddaughter, Jessica Ann Hipp. Ann is survived by her husband of 60 years, Steve Economos; children, Tommy (Donna) Economos, Nick (Sherry) Economos, Christena Hipp, Pete Economos; six grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; and sister, Marika Boukedes. The family received friends on Monday, December 1, 2014, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. at McEwen Funeral Service Charlotte, 5716 Monroe Road, Charlotte,

NC 28212. A memorial service followed at 3:00 p.m. in the funeral home chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Hospice of Charlotte. Condolences for the family may be made at www.mcewenfs.com.

Thomas James Ganatsiou

CHARLOTTE - Thomas James Ganatsiou, age 92, of Charlotte passed away Tuesday, December 2, 2014, at his residence. He was born September 26, 1922 in Manchester, NH to the late James and Viola (Gouliara) Ganatsiou. Thomas is survived by his wife of 64 years, Harriet Kambas Ganatsiou; two daughters Viola and husband Scott Weber and Betsy and husband Kenneth Higgins; grandchildren Michael and Matthew Higgins. In addition to his parents Thomas was preceded in death by his sister Penelope Sarantides. Mr. Ganatsiou served his country in the U.S. Army during World War II as a cryptographer. He was a graduate of Syracuse University College of Engineering. His professional career as a mechanical engineer saw him earn several patents. Thomas was an active member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral where he initiated the Greek Orthodox Senior Association. He enjoyed many hobbies including woodworking, stained glass art, model ship building, investing, vegetable gardening, chronicling his experiences in scouting and the U.S. Army. Trisagion and Funeral services for Mr. Ganatsiou were held Friday, December 5, at 2:00 PM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. Interment took place at Lakeview Cemetery in Bridgeport, CT, Monday, December 8, at 11:00 AM. In lieu of flowers the family requests memorial contributions to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral Building Fund. Arrangements are in the care of Hankins & Whittington Funeral Service; please share condolences online at www.hankinswhittington.com.

Frances Kleitches Nixon CHARLOTTE - Frances Kleitches Nixon, age 88, fell asleep in the Lord's arms on December 27, 2014. She was born on January 7, 1926, in Viniani, Evrytania, Greece, to the late Serafim and Chrysanthi Karageorge Kleitches. Frances came to the United States in 1947. She married George S. Nixon in 1959 and had three daughters with whom she shared a lifelong mutually loving relationship. A member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Charlotte since 1961, she was also a member of the Ladies Philoptohos Society for many years and loved helping during the Greek Pastry sales. She loved her God, her church and her family. Frances is survived by her eldest daughter, Christine Skotidas and her husband, Jimmy, of Concord, with whom she had lived for the past six years; her daughter, Penny Havelos and her husband, Harry, of Boca Raton, FL; and her youngest daughter, Catherine Wadsworth and her husband, David, of Richmond, TX. She is also survived by six grandchildren, Dean and Faye Skotidas, Anna Havelos and her fiancé, Ryan Mansour, Kristina Havelos, Lea Wadsworth and her fiancé, Marco Coleman and Brandon Wadsworth, along with many nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, George Nixon, and her sister, Olga Vlahos and her brother, James S. Kleitches. A Trisagion and funeral service for Frances were held at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, December 30, 2014, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests contributions in memory of Frances be made to the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. "Mama, we will always love you, and may your memory be eternal. You will always be in our hearts." Arrangements are in care of Hankins &

Whittington Funeral Service, Charlotte. Please share online condolences at www.hankinsandwhittington.com.

Evelyn C. Salop CHARLOTTE - Evelyn C. Salop, of Virginia Beach, Va., and Charlotte, passed away December 4, 2014. She was born in McKeesport, Pa., in 1923 to John and Samaro Chrissafedes. Evelyn was secretary to the first Vice President of U.S. Steel Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pa., for nine years, where she was affectionately known as "Miss Chris." As a Navy wife, she lived in the Philippines; Cannes, France; Newport, R.I.; and Washington, D.C. Over a lifetime of travels to more than 25 countries, her fondest time was living in Cannes, from 1954-1956. Always an adventurous spirit, Evelyn shared her love of travel, language, and culture with her two children by following her husband, John to the Sixth Fleet's ports of call in the Mediterranean in the early 1960s. In 1961, she moved to Virginia Beach where she served many civic roles including President of the Virginia Beach City Union of the Kings Daughters, member of the Retired Officers Wives Society and Secretary of the Circle of Friends at the Princess Anne County Club; also, President and Secretary of both the Princess Anne Garden Club and the Virginia Beach Investment Club as well as Chief Judge of their precinct. She aided in the establishment of the philanthropic organization, the Philoptochos Society of Saint Nicholas in Virginia Beach, and was a founding member of the Philoptochos Society of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Norfolk, Va. Evelyn is survived by her beloved husband of 65 years, John; a son, John Peter Salop and his wife, Montserrat; grandson, Justin Salop and his wife, Kristen, and their children, Alexa and Ava; grandson, Mark Salop and his wife, Nicole; a daughter, Cassandra Salop Wagner and her husband, David; grandchildren, Christa Wagner Vinson

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and her husband Dave, Andrew Wagner and his wife, Connie, Diana Wagner, and John David Wagner; four nieces and four nephews. She was preceded in death by her two sisters, Sophia and Gloria. Visitation was held Saturday, December 13, 2014, from 10:30 AM until 11:30 AM at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Boulevard. A Trisagion and Funeral Services immediately followed the visitation at the church. Interment was in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral 7220 Granby Street Norfolk, VA 23505. Notes of encouragement and condolences may be shared with the family by visiting www.ellingtonfuneralservices.com. The Salop family is being served by Ellington Funeral Services, "The Historic Morehead St. Chapel", 727 E. Morehead St., Charlotte, NC 28202; 704-334-6700.

The Charlotte Observer + 9A
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News and Notes

"Mister Pete" of eateries wins Long Leaf Pine

BY JONATHAN MCFADDEN jmcfadden@charlotteobserver.com



Pete Politis, left, has opened at least 10 area restaurants in the past 60 years. Gov. Pat McCrory presented his award on Dec. 15.

Here are some recent happenings with Charlotte-area entrepreneurs:
 ■ **Pete Politis**, the longtime restaurateur who has opened at least 10 Charlotte eateries in the past 60 years, has another notch to add to his lifetime of accomplishments: The Long Leaf Pine award.

Gov. Pat McCrory awarded Politis, 83, with the award on Dec. 15. The accolade recognizes North Carolina residents who have a proven record of significance service to the state. Politis, affectionately known as "Mister Pete," qualifies.

Politis, a native of Greece, survived Nazi occupation and avoided execution when he was accused of being a spy, he told Shop Talk in September. He served in the Greek Army for two years before a honorable discharge in 1949. Two years later, he arrived in America, where he began to work washing dishes at an uncle's restaurant in Fayetteville. He earned \$7 a week.

He moved to Charlotte to work in a cousin's restaurant, learning all he could about the industry. He soon began opening restaurants, the first of which was the **Little White House Sandwich Shop** in 1953. He retired 17 years ago but works as a greeter at **Skyland Family Restaurant** on South Boulevard.

He said he does not plan to leave until he's 95.

Politis said he was surprised when he got the call that he won the award. But he understands why.

"My history is a big history," he said.



Restaurants:

S. Charlotte, NC Pizzeria

\$180K+ Inv, GR \$510K

Mooreville, NC Amer Bistro

\$239K+ Inv, GR \$290K 2.6 Acre

Wilson, NC \$65 K(\$649K R/E) + Inv,

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Upscale Hotels off I-85:

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Concord, NC \$4.35M N CLT-Concord Mills

Retail & Commercial:

Lenoir, NC \$299K+ Inv, GR \$166K

Day Care Center/After School

Durham, NC \$899K RE+Inv, GR \$565K

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Choir News By Olga Yamalis

December 21---HTC Christmas Pageant

This annual HTC event was again a holiday masterpiece held in "Father C" Hall after Liturgy. It collaborated the Sunday School, First Service Choir, Second Service Choir and St. Romanos Baritone Choir. The pageant featured Christmas carols that were English, Greek, Traditional, German, Huron Indian, Spanish and American Spiritual. The setup and sound were well planned and orchestrated. The use of hand bells on "Carol of the Bells", sleigh bells on "To Thendro ton Xristougennon" and "Trigona Kalanda", flute by Olga Yamalis on "Twas In the Moon of Winter" and "What Child is This?", along with other percussion of drum and triangle. "Go Tell it on the Mountain" featured Dr. Philip Thevaos's tenor solo, and "O Tannenbaum" and "The Boar's Head" were brilliantly done by the St. Romanos Baritone Choir. Our sincerest Thank You and appreciation go out to the Pageant Directors and Committee, Choir Conductor Dr. Philip Thevaos, Organist Irina Monzolevskaya, students, families and the luncheon staff. Thank you for a memorable holiday tradition everyone enjoys and will remember.

Looking ahead to 2015

All of our HTC choirs are looking forward to Sunday, January 18th, when Divine Liturgy will be held in the Symphony Ballroom of uptown Charlotte's Sheraton Hotel, as we host the Hellenic Dance Festival. We will all be celebrating the Liturgical arrangement of the Kevin Lawrence hymnal (red book) and will be under the choral direction of Dr. Philip Thevaos.

Choir rotation continues throughout the remainder of the Sunday School year with the St. Romanos Baritone Choir, Second Service Adult Choir and Youth Choir. Choir practice for the First Service Choir is Monday Evenings at 7pm and Second Service Choir is Thursday evenings at 7pm. Youth Choir has three remaining Sunday Liturgies (January 25, February 22 and March 22) and one Saturday Liturgy (April 4).

If time permits in your schedule, come on, come sing with us! We'd love to have you!

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GOYA-HOPE/JOY News By John Georgopoulos



Lucas Collins
WYR Article

Why you should go to the Winter Youth Rally

I've participated in the Winter Youth Rally (WYR) for the past three years and have enjoyed every single minute of it. I was a little nervous the first time I went, yet all those nerves flew away the minute I got there. The best part of WYR is meeting people from other parts of the Metropolis. I have made so many different friends and these friendships carry over into other church events and into life outside the church.

Another great part of WYR is the competition. This is seen through basketball, volleyball and the Bible Bowl. Many may think the Bible Bowl may be boring, yet some of my best memories come from the fun moments on stage with my teammates. I, personally, have never played volleyball but my sister, who has, expressed it was great fun. I played basketball two out of my

three WYR years and had a great time with my teammates and coaches. The first year we went to the championship, but the second year we weren't as successful. Even when we weren't winning, I still had a blast cheering for the other teams from Holy Trinity as well as the teams that my new friends were on. I have always had a great time while at WYR and I look forward to it every single year. If you're thinking about going, I would say, definitely try it out.

The focus of this year's Winter Youth Rally was showing your Kefi (passion) for life and everything you do. The counselors from Ionian Village handed out "Kefi cards" whenever you showed passion. The Charlotte teams performed well in basketball with the Senior boys team's second place win and the Senior girls team's first place win. Both championship games were competitive and came down to the wire. I met a lot of new people who I still talk to today. Overall, this is a great aspect of our Church and we are lucky to have it. This not only gives us a better understanding of the Church, but it provides us with memories that we will have for the rest of our lives.

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Around CharlotteTown By Kathy Xyrafakis

Back by Popular Demand... "Around CharlotteTown" by Kathy Xyrafakis

We'd love to hear your accomplishments and any exciting news that you'd like to share.

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Congratulations to Angelo Tatsis and Irene Politis who are both 2014 recipients of the Archangel Michael Award from our Community. This award is given to those who exemplify the true Orthodox Christian way of life by their deep faith, commitment, dedication and service to their Church and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They were honored on Saturday, November 8th, in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you to both for all that you do for our Holy Trinity Community!

Congratulations to Alexandra Tatsis who was chosen as one of the "Great 100 Nurses in North Carolina 2014". Recipients were recognized for their outstanding professional ability and for contributions made to improving healthcare services in their communities. She was honored at the annual black-tie gala at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. Alexandra is a nurse at Levine Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center. Also our congratulations to her parents, Peter and Antonia Tatsis, and to her brother, Bishop Gregory Tatsis. We are very proud of her!

Congratulations to Pete Politis who was presented one of North Carolina's highest awards of the Order of the Longleaf Pine by Governor Pat McCrory, which is presented to outstanding North Carolinians who have a proven record of service to the State. He was honored on Monday, December 15th, surrounded by family and friends!

RECENTLY ENGAGED COUPLES....

Athanasia Tsiaras is engaged to John Richard Jackson of Charlotte. Athanasia is the daughter of Spiro and Ekaterini Tsiaras. Plans are underway for a June 2015 wedding.

Maria Despina Koutsokalis is engaged to Anthony Nicholas Asprogiannis. Maria is the daughter of Vasiliki Zaravelis Koutsokalis and the late Loukas Koutsokalis. Anthony is the son of Nick and Esther Asprogiannis of High Point, NC. Plans are underway for a September 2016 wedding.

Congratulations to both of our newly engaged couples!

Continue to share all of your exciting news with us... engagements, weddings, anniversaries, promotions, retirements, travels, awards and much, much more!

Please contact Kathy at (704)334-4771 or kathy@htgo.org



At Holy Trinity, we have been blessed to have Mrs. Irene Politis as a most talented, faithful, dedicated and sincere parishioner. She comes regularly to Church on Sundays and weekday services. Irene loves the Lord and likes to be involved and help with the Ministries at the Church and especially with our Philoptochos.

She is part of our Metropolis Philoptochos Council and the Chair for the Annual Philoptochos Lenten Retreat at the Diakonia Retreat Center of our Metropolis. She has contributed to revitalize our Stewardship Program and to support initiatives to successfully operate certain Ministries of our Parish. Irene is a shining example of faithfulness and devotion to Christ, to our Metropolis and to our Church and Parish. I am very proud to have such a faithful member of our Holy Trinity Cathedral and I wholeheartedly would like to congratulate her on receiving worthily the St. Michael's Award.

Rev. Fr. Michael Varvarelis

Mr. Angelo Tatsis is one of the most helpful, strong and dedicated faithful in our Community. I would like to say that he is a pillar of our Community.

He loves the parishioners and also has a good word to say to them. He offers here and there a "tasteful" and appropriate joke to create the comfortable atmosphere for everyone around.

Mr. Tatsis is the eyes, ears and heart of our Community with his piety, dedication and sacrifices for the Lord, the Cathedral, his family and our Parishioners. I would like to congratulate him on receiving the St. Michael's award. I would also like to thank him for being a Guardian Angel at the Cathedral and finally to say how proud I am of Mr. Angelo Tatsis.

Rev. Fr. Michael Varvarelis

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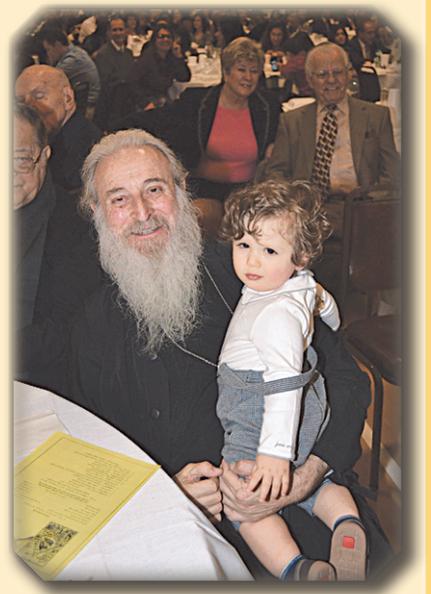
Christmas Pageant 2014



Christmas



Pageant 2014



Christmas Pageant 2014



TWO ARTICLES ON FASTING

Fr. Tommy D. Vlahos

Η ΝΗΣΤΕΙΑ -1-

Η νηστεία , αδελφοί μου , γιά τήν Εκκλησία μας είναι ένας ιερός δεσμός . Δεσμός ο οποίος έχει τήν αρχή της από τήν αρχή τού κόσμου . Είναι η πρώτη εντολή , η πρώτη νομοθεσία , πού έδωσε ο Θεός στό κόσμο . Εκείνο τό * ού μή φάγετε * από τόν απηγορευμένο καρπό , είναι η π ρ ώ τ η νηστεία , πού επεβλήθηκε στόν άνθρωπο από τόν Δημιουργόν . Εξ αυτού βλέπουμε ότι η νηστεία έχει τήν αρχή της μαζί μέ τόν άνθρωπο . Ο Μ. Βασίλειος ονομάζει τή νηστεία : * Νόμου πρεσβυτέραν και συνηλικιώτην τής ανθρωπότητος * . Ως θεία εντολή συνεχίζεται στην Παλ. Διαθήκη καθώς και στην Καινή . Οπως : Οι προφήτες , οι δίκαιοι και οι πατριάρχες νηστεύουν και προσεύχονται . Ομοίως και στην Καινή Διαθήκη : Ο Κύριος νηστεύει γιά 40 ημέρες στην έρημο , νηστεύουν οι Απόστολοι , νηστεύει η πρώτη Εκκλησία και προσεύχεται σέ κάθε εξόρμηση τών Αποστόλων ανά τόν κόσμο . Από πολύ νωρίς καθιερώνεται , από τούς Αποστολικούς ακόμη χρόνους , η νηστεία τής Τετάρτης και τής Παρασκευής καθώς και τής Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής . Η νηστεία είναι εκδήλωση πένθους , λύπης και πόνου , και τούτο φαίνεται από τά λόγια τού Κυρίου , όταν οι μαθητές τού Ιωάννου , κάποτε , και οι Φαρισαίοι πλησίασαν τόν Κύριο και τού είπαν : Γιατί εμείς και οι Φαρισαίοι νηστεύουμε και οι δικοί σου Μαθητές δέν νηστεύουν ; Τότε Εκείνος τούς απάντησε : Οι Μαθητές μου τώρα έχουν μαζί τους τόν Νυμφίον , τόν Διδάσκαλό τους , και δοκιμάζουν χαρά . Πώς λοιπόν νά νηστεύουν εφ'όσον δέν πενθούν ; Θά έλθει όμως καιρός όταν ο Διδάσκαλός σταυρωθεί και θά Τόν χάσουν από κοντά τους , και τότε , επειδή θά έχουν πένθος , θά νηστεύουν . (Ματθ. 9. 14-15) . Ο Κύριος εννοούσε τό πένθος τού θανάτου Του , και έτσι , ο ίδιος ο Κύριος καθιέρωσε , γιά μάς , ημέρες πένθους και νηστείας , τίς ημέρες τών Παθών Του . Τήν Τετάρτη και εμείς νηστεύουμε σήμερα , διότι είναι η ημέρα τού παρανόμου συνεδρίου πού αποφάσισε τόν θάνατον τού Κυρίου . Τήν δέ Παρασκευή διότι είναι η ημέρα τής σταυρώσεώς Του , ημέρα πένθους και δακρύων . Νηστεύουμε τήν Μ.

Εβδομάδα , διά τά πάθη Του . Τήν Μεγ. Τεσσαρακοστή γιά νά θυμώμασθε τή νηστεία τών 40 ημερών τού Κυρίου στην έρημο , και διότι η Μεγ. Τεσσαρακοστή μάς κατευθύνει πρós τά Πάθη τού Σωτήρος . Η νηστεία είναι εκδήλωση πένθους , αλλά και εκδήλωση πί σ τ ε ω ς και υπακοής στό θέλημα τού Θεού . Επίσης είναι και μέσον κυριαρχίας επί τού εαυτού μας και μέσον ανυψώσεως εΐς τά άνω , τά θεία , τά ουράνια , και όπλον κατά τού διαβόλου . Ο Κύριος κάποτε απάντησε στους Μαθητές Του πού Τόν ρώτησαν : * Διατί εμείς ούκ ηδυνήθημεν εκβαλείν αυτό * ; Και τούς απάντησε : *Τούτο τό γένος (τών δαιμόνων) εν ουδενί δύναται εξελθείν , ειμί εν προσευχή και νηστεία * (Μαρκ. 9.29). Η νηστεία λοιπόν είναι τό όπλον κατά τού διαβόλου καθώς και η άσκηση στην αρετήν και επιβολή στόν εαυτόν μας , μέ τό νά κόβουμε τίς ορέξεις μας , καθώς είναι και προδιάθεση εΐς τήν θερμή προσευχή και καλλιέργεια πνευματική γιά μιά άγια και μιά ενάρετη ζωή . Αμήν .

Ιερέας π. Ταξιάρχης Δ. Βλάχος .

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ΟΙ ΜΟΡΦΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΝΗΣΤΕΙΑΣ -2-

Η νηστεία , αδελφοί μου , έχει δύο μορφές . Έχει τήν κ α τ ω τ έ ρ α καθώς και τήν α ν ω τ έ ρ α νηστεία . Η κατωτέρα είναι τό νά αποφεύγουμε ορισμένα φαγητά . Είναι δηλαδή , η εξωτερική μορφή αυτής τής αρετής . Η ανωτέρα νηστεία είναι η νηστεία τών παθών , τής κακίας και γενικά κάθε αμαρτίας . Αυτή δέ είναι η ουσία τής αρετής , και η καθ'αυτό νηστεία , η οποία δίδει αξία και στην άλλη , τήν κατωτέρα νηστεία . Μήν ξεχνάμε ότι η νηστεία τών παθών δέδει αξία και στη νηστεία τών φαγητών . Η Αγία Γραφή μάς λέγει : Ο Θεός ζητάει τήν κάθαρση τής ψυχής από τήν αμαρτία κυρίως , παρά τήν κάθαρση τής κοιλιάς από τίς τροφές (Ησα. 2.11-21) . Αυτή τή νηστεία τών παθών τήν τονίζει και η υμνωδία τής Εκκλησίας μας : *Νηστεύσωμεν , αδελφοί σωματικώς , νηστεύσωμεν και πνευματικώς * - Αλλού μάς λέει : * Νηστεύσωμεν νηστεϊαν δεκτήν , ευάρεστον τό Κυρίω . Αληθής νηστεία η τών κακών αλλοτριώσις , εγκράτεια γλώσσης , θυμού αποχή , επιθυμιών χωρισμός , καταλαλιάς ψεύδους και επιορκίας . Η τούτων ένδεια νηστεία εστίν αληθής και ευπρόσδεκτος * . Επομένως μήν περιοριζόμασθε μόνο στή νηστεία τών τροφών , αλλά νά νηστεύουμε συγχρόνως τά πάθη μας , τή κακία μας και τά μίση μας . Έτσι τότε νηστεύουμε τήν νηστεία πού θέλει ο Θεός και τήν νηστεία πού μάς αγιάζει . Από όλες τίς εντολές τού Θεού , η μόνη πού επιδέχεται παράβαση είναι η νηστεία τών τροφών . Πρós τούτο οι Κανόνες τής Εκκλησίας μας λέγουν : Νηστεύουν οι υγιείς , καταλύουν όμως οι ασθενείς . Δηλ. Βλέπουμε πώς : Ενώ η νηστεία τών παθών είναι ισόβιος και απαραίτητος , η νηστεία τών τροφών έχει εξαιρέσεις . Οι ασθενείς , οι καχεκτικοί και οι ανήμποροι ούτε μπορούν αλλά ούτε και πρέπει νά νηστεύουν . Οι υγιείς όταν δέν νηστεύουν Αμαρτάνουν , ενώ οι ασθενείς αμαρτάνουν όταν νηστεύουν . Επομένως : Ο κάθε ένας μας άς νηστεύει τίς τροφές σύμφωνα μέ τήν υγεία του . Ολοι μας όμως νά νηστεύουμε , μέ κάθε τρόπο και θυσία , τήν πνευματική νηστεία . Τήν νηστεία τής ψυχής μας , γιατί αυτή είναι ο αγιασμός και η σωτηρία μας . Αμήν .

Ιερέας π. Ταξιάρχης Δ. Βλάχος .

CHURCH FINANCES UPDATE

Below are expenses our Church incurred in 2014. The "Projects" were the higher ticket items that we had budgeted for and hoped to do depending on finances.

The "Projects" were paid mostly from the following: \$65,000 from the Pauls Endowment, \$20,000 from the Goudes Greek School Endowment, \$10,000 from the Ahepa Foundation, and the rest from 2011 Capital Campaign Pledge payments and other individual donations. We are very thankful for these donations!

The "Maintenance" expenses were just to maintain our facilities. This money comes from our Stewardship income. We are very thankful to everyone for their Stewardship offerings and hope everyone will continue supporting our Cathedral.

2014 Building "Projects" Completed

Church Chiller	\$ 56,668
Church Boiler	\$ 38,064
Classroom Desks	\$ 19,425
Gym Bleachers	\$ 3,087
	<u>\$ 117,244</u>

2014 Building "Maintenance" Expenses

3 trees removed beside Church	\$ 11,445
Lawn care/landscape	\$ 12,665
Reg. maintenance on HVAC	\$ 9,553
HVAC repairs	\$ 6,661
Roofing/gutter repairs	\$ 2,684
Parking lot repairs	\$ 2,700
	<u>\$ 45,708</u>

Below are the "Projects" we hope to accomplish in 2015. The estimated and budgeted costs for these is \$75,000 to \$100,000. These are much needed items. The Fr. C Hall and the Cathedral are in constant need of repairs so we must fix before things get more critical and then it becomes an emergency.

2015 Building "Projects"

- Fr. C Hall - HVAC repairs
- Fr. C Hall - roof repairs
- Cathedral - LED light bulbs installed
- Cathedral - roof repairs

Estimated cost is \$75,000 to \$100,000

The budget for 2015 "Maintenance" expenses is \$50,000.

STEWARDSHIP 2014

As Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral Stewards, we should all be grateful for the support given by our Church Community. 2014 was successful in many ways. Stewardship financial donations increased by 16%. This was accomplished at the same time the Building Fund was supported with over \$500,000 of commitment. The number of Ministries increased.

However, the festival is still a large part of the budget. In spite of the increase in stewardship donations, the Festival supports 46% of the budget. We continue to rely on funds from people who are not our members to support our Church. We need to continue to become independent of Festival income so that the Church is fully supported by our membership. This fact cannot be over-emphasized. By depending on the Festival for paying our bills, we subject ourselves to a major financial crisis if the festival is rained out. Our goal is to attain a festival-free budget over the next several years.

We would like to propose that all of us, as members of our Cathedral, increase our Stewardship by another 16% for this new year of 2015. If this materializes, we may be close to reaching our goal of seeing our Cathedral be independent from the Festival. Thank you for your love of the Cathedral.

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ΕΘΕΛΟΥΣΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ 2014

Σαν μέλη του Ελληνικού Ορθοδόξου Καθεδρικού Ναού τής Αγίας Τριάδος θα πρέπει όλοι να είμαστε ευγνώμονες για τη στήριξη που παρέχεται από την Εκκλησιαστική Κοινότητά μας. Το έτος 2014 ήταν καρποφόρο σε πολλούς τομείς για την Εκκλησία μας. Η Εθελουσία Προσφορά αυξήθηκε κατά 16%. Αυτό επιτεύχθηκε την ίδια στιγμή που το ταμείο για τις Ανακαινίσεις υποστηρίχθηκε με πάνω από \$500.000 από τους Ενορίτες μας. Επίσης ο αριθμός στις Διακονίες αυξήθηκε. Ωστόσο, θέλουμε να παρατηρήσουμε ότι το Φεστιβάλ είναι ακόμα ένα μεγάλο μέρος του προϋπολογισμού. Παρά την αύξηση των δωρεών το 2014 το Φεστιβάλ υποστηρίζει το 46% του προϋπολογισμού. Δηλαδή συνεχίζουμε να βασιζόμαστε σε χρήματα από τους ανθρώπους που δεν είναι μέλη μας για να πληρώνονται οι λογαριασμοί της Εκκλησίας μας. Νομίζουμε

ότι επειδή η Εκκλησία είναι δική μας τιμή και ευθύνη θα πρέπει να γίνουμε ανεξάρτητοι από το εισόδημα του Φεστιβάλ, έτσι ώστε η Εκκλησία να έχει την πλήρη υποστήριξη των μελών για να πληρώνονται όλα τα έξοδα. Το γεγονός αυτό μας απασχολεί. Επίσης με το να στηριζόμαστε στο Φεστιβάλ για την πληρωμή των λογαριασμών μας, εμείς οι ίδιοι μπορεί να βρεθούμε μπροστά σε μια μεγάλη οικονομική κρίση, αν στη διάρκεια του Φεστιβάλ βρέξει. Στόχος μας είναι να πετύχουμε να έχουμε το Φεστιβάλ χωρίς να εξαρτόμαστε οικονομικά από αυτό για τον προϋπολογισμό της Εκκλησίας μας. Γι' αυτό και προτείνουμε να αυξήσουμε όλοι μας, όσοι μπορούμε, την Εθελουσία Προσφορά στην Εκκλησία μας κατά 16% αυτό το έτος 2015. Τότε θα είμαστε πολύ κοντά για να πετύχουμε την ανεξαρτησία από το Φέστιβαλ. Ευχαριστούμε πολύ για την αγάπη σας στον Καθεδρικό.

Philoptochos By Tula Kourakos

Merry Christmas, Health and Happiness in 2015 for all.

On November 6th, a group of our Philoptochos members attended the InReach Dream Maker Luncheon in the Father "C" Hall. It is always our pleasure to provide the Baklava for InReach, a leader in providing support to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. We are also looking forward to having InReach assist us in our upcoming workshop to make TLC Lap Blankets of Hope for Levine Children's Hospital.

Our Annual Christmas Party was festive with holiday music and decor, along with a delicious buffet dinner that was enjoyed by all. Toiletries were collected and delivered to the Battered Women's Shelter. A special thank you to Presvytera Kathryn for providing door prizes.

Our Holiday Bake Sale has become a successful annual fundraiser that has replaced the Southern Christmas Show. Parishioners pre-ordered baklava, spanakopites and tiropites, picking them up just in time for the Holidays. Thank you to Diane Ramsey and ladies for helping with the preparations and baking.

It is always a special time for the Ladies of Philoptochos along with Father Michael to visit our elderly parishioners in their homes and nursing homes during the Holidays. They are always welcomed and appreciated. Gift bags were presented to all.

For our Annual Christmas Giving Project at Sedgefield Elementary School, Philoptochos, along with the community, sponsored 141 students! Parishioners provided a monetary gift or presents. Thank you to Georgette Boukidis and Celia Thevaos for chairing this project and to all who sponsored a child. Philoptochos also provided 40 uniforms to students at the beginning of the school year.

In 2014, Philoptochos met 100% of its National and Metropolis obligations, supported numerous local charities and, most importantly, gave assistance to our parishioners in need.

The mission of our Philoptochos is "To promote charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic outreach, to preserve the sanctity of life and family and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions". All ladies 18 years and older are invited to come and join.

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Preschool By Preschool Staff



Whoos in the News at the Preschool?

The HTGOP staff hopes all of our preschool families and parishioners had a

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In this time of giving thanks, we wanted to remember all of you for your love and support of our preschool program. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful and supportive community. We hope that everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday. May God continue to bless our preschool children, our staff and board members, our parishioners and all their families.

On Sunday, November 2nd, the preschool had its annual Yiayia's Kouzina fundraising luncheon, which was a huge success. We appreciate all the hard work from the parents, family members, board members and staff that volunteered to help with the luncheon. Many thanks to our cooks for preparing the delicious meal that was enjoyed by everyone. We also wanted to thank all of our sponsors and donors for their generous support of Yiayia's Kouzina as well as the Holy Trinity and Charlotte communities for coming out to support our fundraiser. We could not have done it without you... Thank You everyone! Last, but not least, our preschool children did an excellent job entertaining us. As always, they sounded beautiful and we were very proud of all of them! We finished out the month of November focusing on all that we are thankful for and celebrating the holiday with the Thanksgiving class parties on November 24th and 25th.

In December, our main focus was on the true meaning of the Christmas season...the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. On December 10th and 11th, we had a special Christmas Story Time and Pajama Day. The teachers and children all wore their pajamas to school and brought their favorite stuffed animals to cuddle with during story time. We all gathered around the Christmas tree and read the stories "Away In a Manger" and

"The Night Before Christmas". After the stories, we sang Christmas Carols and decorated the preschool Christmas tree with the ornaments the children made. The preschool wrapped up the month with more festivities, as each of the classes had a Christmas party before getting out for the holiday. We hope that everyone enjoyed their Christmas break and we were excited to have all of our preschoolers return to school on Monday, January 5th. On behalf of the preschool staff, we wish all of you many blessings in the New Year.

Teacher's Corner:

M-F 4's "The Little Explorers" – Angelina Korinis

As we left October and the fun of Halloween behind, we welcomed the month of November, which falls in the heart of autumn, with all the beautiful earth colors dancing around. In this country, the Land of Opportunity, November is inevitably intertwined with the celebration of Thanksgiving.

Just like the Pilgrims and the Indians came together to honor their friendship and survival in their new land, Thanksgiving gives us the chance to get



Christmas Story Time and Pajama Day
2's & 4's Classes

together and thank God, family, friends and this nation for embracing and giving us the opportunity to change our lives and test our strengths.

Following the symbolism of Thanksgiving, our main themes in our class were giving thanks and sharing with family and friends. Yiayia's Kouzina falls in this category, too, i.e., thanking the community and beyond for the opportunity to have their children in our lives and teach them as best as we can by sharing angelic voices and a hearty meal.

Other themes we explored through books and activities were Pilgrims and Indians, liking ourselves and how unique each one of us is in the eyes of our Creator. Along the way, we also mixed in some letters (P,B,R,J,U,V,W), some numbers (5,6,7), some shapes (squares and triangles) and some colors (red and blue to make purple).

With all these fine ingredients, our recipe cannot be anything but perfect and with all our Explorers on board, the Mayflower, once again, sailed the high seas and reached the New World triumphantly!!!

With November sailing off and all the turkeys conquered at our dinner tables (as well as in our class where our Pilgrims and Indians hunted plenty of wild turkeys playing at our Community center), December came knocking at our door demanding our attention with different festivities and activities.

Our class was decorated with a Manger (Φάτνη), Christmas trees, wreaths, Santa Claus, reindeer (Rudolph), gingerbread men, nativity icons and other things relative to this blessed season. We wanted the children to have fun while we stressed the main reason we celebrate Christmas. Our Community center was popular as the kids wrap "presents" (blocks from the Blocks center). The wrapped presents may have looked interesting and creative as they sometimes ended up having more tape than paper....but our little explorers got the warm feeling and the joy of giving and receiving while having fun and exercising their fine motor skills!

Lots of books were read relating to Christmas and lots of activities kept the children busy creating and learning. We finished the capital letters of the English alphabet and we practiced up to number 10. Our shape was the star.

We had a fun day wearing pajamas

while Ms. Cindy read/recited "The Night Before Christmas" and "Away In A Manger". Videos may, but probably will NOT, be available....

This year, our Christmas party took place in our class. Parents/grandparents of our graduating class were welcomed to come for lunch and the party that followed.

We sent many wishes to everybody for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year, 2015.



Christmas Story Time and Pajama Day
T's & 3's Classes

MWF 3's "The Cuddly Kittens" – Athina Politis and Anna Koufaliotis

Our Cuddly Kittens did a wonderful job singing their hearts out at the Yiayia's Kouzina luncheon. We were all so proud of them.

In the month of November, we've been busy trying to hold markers and pencils correctly (grasping them between the thumb and fingers) and we've started using scissors, trying to cut following a straight line or a simple shape like a square or a circle. Although it was still challenging for most of the kids, we are not giving up and will continue to work on the important skill..."practice makes perfect"! We will work on this until our kids develop the appropriate familiarity with these two very essential fine motor skills, much needed for further progress. In November, our bible



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Preschool Cont.

verse was: "in Everything Give Thanks" Thess. 5:18. And "thank you", we always encourage our kids to say, expressing their appreciation for the people and things in their lives. Also, through our books and activities, we learned how important it is to be thankful and to share with friends and family. We hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving Everyone... "Gobble, Gobble".

As December came, our Cuddly Kittens were very busy. They were doing much better in cutting, tracing, coloring and learning new letters, numbers and shapes. We put our emphasis on how to spell their first name and attempted to start printing it.

Our main theme was the Christmas season with all its glorious colors smells and tastes. A season full of surprises, sharing and giving, but most importantly, a season in which we celebrate the birth of Jesus. That's what we taught our little ones - that God gave us Christmas by sending Jesus, His own son, to be born on earth as a baby. "God's Son is born for us" (Isaiah 9:6) was our bible verse this month.

The highlights of this month were our Christmas Pajama Party StoryTime on the 10th of the month and our class Christmas party on the 17th.

We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas, Kala Cristougenna and hope you have a very prosperous and blessed 2015.

TTH 2's "The Rainbow Fish" – Athina Politis and Anna Koufaliotis

Our Rainbow Fish were busy learning about fall harvest, families, giving thanks and that the church is God's House. Our color was brown and our shape was the triangle. We had fun making handprint Turkeys and pretending to be Pilgrims and Indians wearing headbands.

We love singing songs so we stayed

busy singing about turkeys and Indians and learned our "Thank you God" lunch prayer. We also began working on using our little fingers trying to hold and cut with blunt scissors.

It is so wonderful to see our kids, how they interact and play with each other. They have settled so nicely and follow our class routine with such ease. We are so pleased with them, and we are certain that they feel the same ease with us. They show that with the hugs and kisses they give us. We hope everyone had a very "Happy Thanksgiving"!



Preschool Christmas Tree Decorated With the Ornaments the Children Made

Can't believe Christmas has come and gone. Our Rainbow Fish were swimming very happily in our classroom splashing their little fingers, messy with joy while they created beautiful Christmas Tree Angel ornaments, candy canes, cotton jolly Santas, and Reindeer handprints. Our little ones learned through our books everything that the Christmas season has to offer and what the true meaning is... The birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ. After all the hard work, our little ones deserved to have a very relaxed day, a "Pajama Day" full of comfort and fun cuddling with their favorite stuffed animal they brought from home. That day, they enjoyed listening to some of our favorite Christmas books of all time, "The Night Before Christmas" and "Away In A Manger". We ended the month of December with our Christmas party in our class on the 18th.

We hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

MW T's "The Toddling Turtles" – Stasy Skarlatos and Mahe Politis

We hope everyone is enjoying this cool weather we are having. Our little ones have enjoyed their time here and have settled into their routine. In November, we continued to talk about Fall, how we are thankful for all that God has given us, and Thanksgiving. Our activities included coloring some fall items, making a family tree and some turkey crafts. We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Our Toddling Turtles had a great time in November talking and learning all about Turkeys and Thanksgiving. In the month of December, we talked about Baby Jesus being born in a manger and all the wonders of Christmas. Some of our activities included making an ornament for our Christmas Tree and Baby Jesus in the manger. We even had a PAJAMA DAY on December 10th and got to bring in our favorite stuffed animal. We listened to the stories "The Night Before Christmas" and "Away In A Manger". Our colors for the month were red and green and our shapes were the star and triangle. We also enjoyed singing some Christmas songs. We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Daughters of Penelope

Recent Daughters of Penelope Events:

The Daughters of Penelope held the 85th anniversary celebration of its Founders Day on Sunday, November 16, 2014, after the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

Several Daughters attended the St. Nektarios Philoptochos' annual Fashion show and sponsored 2 tables at the fund raiser. This event took place on Saturday, December 6, 2014.

January and February member meetings will focus on the upcoming Queen of Hearts High Tea and Fashion Show. Individual and corporate champions, door prizes and raffle items were collected for this important event to raise funds for the Carolinas Breast Cancer Fund at Carolinas HealthCare System's Levine Cancer Institute. Eileen Fisher is providing the fashions at Carmel Country Club on Saturday, February 21, 2015.

The Daughters has re-printed its Holiday Classics Greek Desserts Cookbook and will have it available at the High Tea. For those interested in obtaining a copy, please contact either Pat Economides or Eleni Bingham. Price is \$5.00.

The Charlotte AHEPA Marathon Chapter 002 and Venus Chapter 102 of the Daughters will host a mini-workshop on February 7 at the Socrates Academy. Ahepa and Daughters members from District 3 are attending. The Daughters' District Governor, Kathy Matrakis, and the Grand Governor, Julie Macris Collins, will also attend.

The organization has recently built its web page: Dopvenus.org

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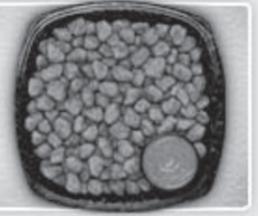

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Sunday School By Dena Hondros

Sunday School Lends a Helping Hand to the Homeless

On November 23, Holy Trinity Sunday School students made over 500 sandwiches and snack bags for the homeless as part of their fall service



project. Deacon George Politis drove the donated food to the Urban Ministry Center that same day.

The Urban Ministry Center, open since 1994, accepts donations from



various congregations and businesses with the goal of ending homelessness in Charlotte. With its team of volunteers, counselors and social workers, the center provides a daily soup kitchen and helps

find housing for the homeless. Volunteers also give talks about the realities of homelessness in hopes of dispelling common stereotypes.

For our own Sunday School students, the idea of not having a place to sleep or dinner on the table every night is a difficult reality to grasp, especially during the holidays when we gather with our families to enjoy a home-cooked meal. Although homeless numbers nationwide have dropped slightly, homelessness is a tangible reality for hundreds locally



in Charlotte. Community outreach is at the core of the Urban Ministry Center's mission, but community outreach is also an integral part of our Greek Orthodox faith and upbringing; Sunday School students demonstrated just that when they spent one morning making sandwiches for the local homeless. As 10th grader Joanna Nixon said, "The homeless don't have a lot of stuff and are not as fortunate as us, so it's good to help others less fortunate."

By Dena Hondros



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