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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.

## Christmas Pageant 2016



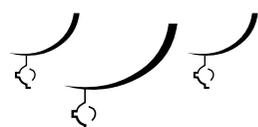
### Our Mission

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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**A Message From The Editor**



Hello again everybody,

At the time of this writing, I am sad to write we lost three people who played an important role in Holy Trinity's history: Chrys Strate, Presbyter Kathryn Constantinides and Chris Economides. May their memories be eternal.

Soon Spring will be here. We are late with The Voice but we are working on fixing that problem.

We are now getting ready for Easter and, once again, we will say the beautiful words... Christ is Risen!

For now, I am going to leave it with that.

Until next time,

Be safe,

Angelo Pete Politis



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## Remarks From Father Angelo



by Father Angelo Artemas  
Dean of the Cathedral

### GREAT LENT AND FASTING

Great Lent is upon us, and in an effort to clarify the Orthodox Faith's tradition on fasting, the following is taken from the Lenten Triodion by Bishop Kallistos Ware:

*Lent is the forty-day period before the Saturday of Lazarus (April 23), and begins on Monday after Cheesefare Sunday (March 14). Holy Week is a special fast in honor of our Lord's Passion and lasts from the evening of Palm Sunday (April 24) through Holy Saturday (April 30). While neither in ancient nor in modern times has there been exact uniformity, most Orthodox authorities agree on the following fasting guidelines:*

1. During the 40 days of Lent, the following categories of food are excluded: meat, animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard), fish with backbones, olive oil, and wine/ alcohol.

2. On the feast of the Annunciation (March 25) fish, wine and oil are permitted.

3. On the Saturday of Lazarus and on Palm Sunday fish, wine, and oil are permitted.

4. During Holy Week meat, animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard), fish with backbone, olive oil, wine and alcohol are prohibited, and a strict fast is maintained all day on Holy Saturday.

5. It has always been held that these guidelines of fasting should be relaxed in the case of the elderly, the ill, pregnant and nursing mothers, and infants and toddlers. Personal factors also need to be taken into account, especially for those who are obligated to take medication, to take meals in the work place or school, or when being hosted by others. The guidelines of fasting, though they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with pedantic legalism.

Please further give careful attention to the following by Saint John Chrysostom on the spirit of fasting:

*Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.*

*If you see a poor man, take pity on him.*

*If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.*

*Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.*

*Let the hands fast by being free of avarice.*

*Let the feet fast by ceasing to run after sin.*

*Let the eyes fast by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.*

*Let the ear fast by not listening to evil talk and gossip.*

*Let the mouth fast from foul words and criticism.*

*For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?*

*Accomplish these precepts and speak ill of no one, and expel the evil habit of swearing.*

*Complete the fast not with judgment but with humility.*

May Great Lent be a time of physical discipline and spiritual growth, and may we always be thankful to God for all things.

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## Remarks From Father Theodore



by Father Theodore Ehmer  
Associate Priest

### A Guard About My Mouth

One of my favorite services that we celebrate in the Orthodox Church is Vespers. It is the perfect way to begin the evening, praising God at the setting of the sun. At the seminary, we had Vespers every evening; it was one of my favorite things about Holy Cross. At every Vespers service, we chant the following verse from Psalm 140: Θεὸς, Κύριε, φυλακὴν τῷ στόματί μου, καὶ θύραν περιοχῆς περὶ τὰ χεῖρά μου. And in English: Set a watch, O Lord, about my mouth, a door of protection about my lips. This is one of my favorite Psalm verses because of the truth that it speaks about our human experience.

Growing up, my mother used to say to me all the time, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” And naturally, since my mom said this, I believed it. But after some years, I’m sorry to say: Mom, I don’t agree! Words absolutely do hurt us. In fact, they are one of the most destructive weapons that we possess. St. James writes in his epistle that the tongue is a fire (James 3:5). And from the Proverbs, “life and death are in the power of the tongue.” (Proverbs 18:21) With our mouths and our tongues, we can either build people up or tear them apart. Our mouths are incredibly powerful and it seems most appropriate to ask God for a guard for them, as we often do not know how to utilize them! What are some of our most dangerous weapons as a society?

Nuclear Missiles? You’d better believe that we have people guarding those. In the same manner, we need to have a guard on what can be our most dangerous weapon, our tongue. When we pray the words of Psalm 140, we are asking God to help us guard this “weapon.”

What is especially dangerous about our words is that we often do not even know when we have hurt somebody with them. If we were to hit somebody, it is very obvious that we have done damage to them. But with our words, we can cause damage to others and not even realize it. And it is important that we guard our mouths at all times, even when we are alone. For example, even if we are in our car by ourselves and exclaim some things we shouldn’t because of the traffic, it’s not like we aren’t hurting anyone. We are hurting ourselves; we are hurting our own soul. It’s better to let a peaceful exhalation come out of our mouth than angry words. One brings peace and the other brings more stress. Ησυχία, quietness, stillness, is a word that is found throughout the history of our Orthodox tradition. This is because the Fathers have always recognized that focusing upon quietness, even for just a small part of the day, helps us to bridle the wild feral animal that our tongue can be.

It is important to guard our tongue at all times. Fasting periods such as the Nativity Fast and Great Lent give us extra incentive to be more introspective, to focus more on our spiritual lives. And with that increased focus comes a responsibility to concentrate not just on what goes into our mouth, but what also comes out of it. We must ask ourselves: what will we choose to use our mouths for? To spread gossip, to say hurtful things about people, or to endlessly complain, as it can be so easy to do? Or will we use our mouths to glorify God, to spread the good news of God’s love, or to build up our neighbors? This is a challenge for me and for all of us. A little bit of quietness can go a long way in facilitating this for each of us. May God give us the strength, wisdom, and stillness that we need to guard our mouths, and a protecting door about our lips, and utilize them for the Glory of God and one another!

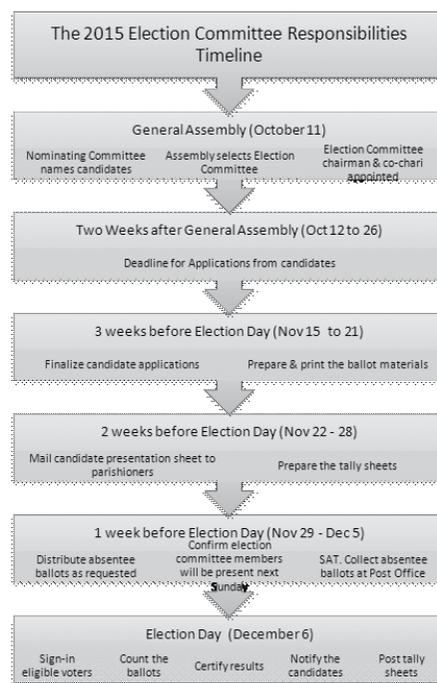
## COUNT ON US

BY GEORGE ZOGZAS

Sunday, December 6, 2015, was a bright and sunny day at the Cathedral. The approaching holidays are generating excitement and anticipation. Parishioners have filled the pews of Holy Trinity.

It is parish election day. There are eight candidates vying for five Parish Council spots and two for one Foundation opening. The polls are open from 9:30AM until 4:00PM.

The Election Committee administers, supervises, and counts the results of the voting (see responsibilities timeline below). The committee was selected at the General Assembly held on October 11, 2015. Mr. George Vlahos was selected to serve as chairman of the committee. He has held that post for over 30 years. Mr. Vlahos then selected Mr. Leo Kyriazis to be vice-chair. Mr. Kyriazis has held that role for several years and has assisted the Parish in establishing its procedures.



Before the polls opened at 9:30, the Office Staff had already marked the rolls of parishioners who voted by absentee ballot.

The two groups compare the count of ballots against the count of parishioners voting. Once reconciled, they proceed to count the votes.

The 5-member teams, each with 1 reader; 2 writers; and 2 observers, begin the count. Each team will count all the ballots. The reader will call out the names receiving votes on each ballot. At the same time, 2 writers are marking separate tally sheets with the votes. The observers are verifying that the readers and writers are correctly calling out and recording the votes. At each 25 ballots, the 2 writers compare totals for each candidate. Any discrepancies are reconciled before moving ahead.

Once the teams have completed the counting, they aggregate all votes for each candidate. All candidates should have the same total vote on all four tally sheets. The chairman and co-chairman then review the tally sheets and the final counts. They then declare the top 5 vote getters for the Parish Council and the top vote getter for the Foundation.

2015 ELECTION BY THE NUMBERS			
<b>Parish Council</b>		<b>Foundation</b>	
Angelo E. Politis	280	John D. Hondros	195
John D. Tsumas	250	Nick A. Merrigas	133
John P. Mahairas	240		
Angelo Kefalas	227		
Jimmy Georgiou	212	<b>Ballots</b>	
Harry J. Stathopoulos	136	Voted in person	342
Matthew S. Karres	117	Absentee ballots	32
Dino G. Nixon	106	<b>Total ballots cast</b>	<b>374</b>

top vote getters in bold

The committee members complete their work after they (1) certify the results, (2) notify the candidates, and (3) post two tally sheets onto the large bulletin board in the hallway outside the offices where they can be inspected by parishioners.

It is just past 7:30PM on Sunday night. The annual parish elections have been completed and the election committee members are headed home. They can be satisfied that they have performed their important duty for the Holy Trinity community.

Election Year	Total Ballots Cast	Parish Council		Foundation	
		# of Candidates	# Elected	# of Candidates	# Elected
2015	374	8	5	2	1
2014	326	9	5	3	2
2013	165	9	5	1	1
2012	164	5	5	2	2
2011	116	5	5	2	1

**Writer's note:** My thanks to George Vlahos and Leo Kyriazis for allowing me to observe the counting of the ballots. I asked them to give me any comments or recommendations they have for the elections process. They obliged. In no particular order:

Our process should assure the community that the ballots are accounted for, the votes tallied impartially, and the results reported represent the will of the community.

... the nominating committee should do more to find qualified candidates to run, especially women.

... Holy Trinity should use email more to enhance communication between the election committee, the candidates, and the voters



### The Counting Room.

At 4:00PM sharp, the polls are closed. The election committee members move the ballot box and roster of voters to the Xenophon Nixon Archival Library where they will count the votes. In the room this year are ten committee members (George Andrews, Georgia Andrews, Carmen Kallelis, Nick Kallelis, Fani Nixon, Steve Panteliadis, Arthur Pappas, Anna Pitsikoulis, Diane Ramsay, and Peter Thomopoulos) plus Mr. Vlahos and Mr. Kyriazis.

Leo Kyriazis goes over the procedures. The next order of business is to verify that there is one ballot for each voter. The padlock on the ballot box is unlocked by Chairman Vlahos and the contents emptied onto the long conference table where the committee members are seated. Some members unfold each ballot and stack them in groups of 25. The others are counting the number of parishioners that voted in person or by absentee ballot.

**DUTY OF FORGIVENESS**

(Continued from July/August)

Fr. Tommy D. Vlahos

**ΤΟ ΚΑΘΗΚΟΝ ΤΗΣ  
ΣΥΓΓΝΩΜΗΣ - 2 -**

Εάν , αδελφοί μου, κάποιος μάς προσβάλλει , εμείς πρέπει να τον συγχωρέσουμε , αν θέλουμε να μάς συγχωρέσει και ο Θεός .Στήν Κυριακή προσευχή λέμε : \* Πάτερ ...άφες υμίν τά οφειλήματα ημών , ως και ημείς αφίεμεν τοίς οφειλέτες ημών \* (Ματθ. 6.12) . Μην κοροιδεύουμε τό Θεό και λέμε τάχα ότι συγχωρούμε τον πλησίον μας . Ο συνάνθρωπός μας μπορεί να έσφαλε απέναντί μας , εμείς όμως αμαρτάνουμε συνεχώς απέναντι τού Θεού . Όταν λοιπόν συγχωρέσουμε τον πλησίον μας τότε θά προσευχώμασθε ειλικρινά . Οπως ακριβώς φερόμασθε προς τό συνάνθρωπό μας , έτσι ακριβώς φέρεται και ο Θεός προς εμάς . Από μάς εξαρτάται η άφεση των

αμαρτιών μας . Για να σκεφτούμε : Πόσες είναι οι αμαρτίες μας απέναντι τού Θεού , και πόσες οι αμαρτίες τού πλησίον μας πού μάς προσβάλλουν ; Μην περιμένουμε να μάς συγχωρέσει ο Θεός , όταν εμείς δέν συγχωρούμε τά πολύ ελάχιστα τού πλησίον μας προς εμάς ! Λέμε καμιά φορά , μά μάς προσέβαλλε ο τάδε . Κι όμως η προσβολή σου π ο τ έ δ έ ν είναι σκληρότερη από εκείνη τού Χριστού μας . Εκείνον Τόν έφτυναν , Τόν βλασφημούσαν, Τόν χτυπούσαν και Τού φόρεσαν τό ακάνθινο στεφάνι και Τόν εσταύρωσαν . Τί λοιπόν είμασθε εμείς μπροστά στό πρόσωπο τού Χριστού , και ποιά είναι η δική μας προσβολή , μπροστά στή δική Του ; Αλήθεια θά θέλουμε να ελεηθούμε από τό Θεό , αλλά εμείς δέν ελεούμε τον άλλον , τότε πώς έχουμε τήν αξίωση να ζητούμε τό έλεος από τό Θεό ; Ο Κύριος μάς έδωσε και άλλη εντολή : \*Αγαπάτε τούς εχθρούς

υμών .. \* , δέν είναι αρκετό να αγαπάμε μόνο όσους μάς αγαπούν γιατί αυτό τό κάνουν και οι άπιστοι . Τί ωφέλεια θά έχουμε εάν αγαπάμε μόνο αυτούς πού μάς αγαπούν ; Εμείς πρέπει να ξεπερνούμε στήν αγάπη τούς άπίστους . Τά μικρά παιδιά πού πρωτοπηγαίνουν στό σχολείο μαθαίνουν τό αλφάβητο και σιγά-σιγά μαθαίνουν να διαβάζουν . Τόν ίδιο δρόμο πρέπει να ακολουθούν και οι Χριστιανοί . Δηλ. Πρώτα να μαθαίνουν να ανταποδίδουν τό καλό αντί τού κακού . Επειτα να μην ανταποδίδουν τό κακό στό κακό , τήν πίκρα στή πίκρα ... , και τέλος να αγαπούν τούς εχθρούς τους , να ευεργετούν όσους τούς μισούν και να ανταποδίδουν τό καλό αντί τού κακού . Ετσι φτάνουν και οι Χριστιανοί στήν τελειότητα και τήν αγάπη προς τούς εχθρούς . Ο Θεός μάς τονίζει ότι : Όχι μόνο να συγχωρούμε όσους μάς προσβάλλουν , αλλά και να αγαπάμε τούς εχθρούς μας . Αμήν

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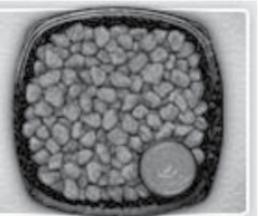
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## ΠΕΝΘΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΙΚΑ

### Theodore H. Besseas CHARLOTTE

- Theodore H. Besseas, 91, passed away at home on December 1, 2015. He was born in Kandila Arcadia, Greece on September 18, 1924, to the late Harry and Evanthis Besseas. Teddy came to the US in 1951 following his service in the Greek Civil War as an officer. He opened Teddy's restaurant in 1963 where he worked until his retirement in 1999. He was famous for his fried flounder and biscuits. Teddy was employed at Harris Teeter for 12 years during his retirement. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. Teddy never met a stranger. Teddy is survived by his wife of 57 years, Christina Parhas Besseas; two daughters, Evelyn Zehia and husband Anthony, Pamela Bostian and husband Rocky; granddaughters, Barbara Preusse and husband Michael and Christina Zehia; two great-grandchildren, Anthony Theodore and Amelia Preusse. A trisagion and funeral service was held at 1:00 PM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., on Friday, December 4, 2015. Burial followed in Evergreen Cemetery. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Carolinas Palliative Care and Hospice, 4425 Green Acres Rd., Charlotte, NC 28208. Arrangements are in the care of Hankins & Whittington Funeral Service; please share condolences online at [www.hankinswhittington.com](http://www.hankinswhittington.com).

### Nick Chris Copsis CHARLOTTE

- Mr. Copsis, 87, of Charlotte, died Tuesday, November 24, 2015, at Carolinas Medical Center. Nick, the son of the late Christos and Marigo (Harakas) Kopsiaftis, was born on April

21, 1928, in Karyae, Greece. He served with the Greek Army after World War II and in 1955 moved to the US. After a brief stay in Chicago he settled in Charlotte. With his brothers Sam and George, they opened and operated the South 21 Drive In Restaurants for over 39 years. Mr. Copsis was preceded in death by his brothers Panos and Sotiris (Sam) and sisters Vasio, Paraskevi, Eleni and Eftihia. Survivors include his wife of 53 years Anthoula (Markos) Copsis; children Dr. Peter (Pamela) Copsis of Matthews, Maria (Tim) Tassopoulos of Atlanta, GA; brother George (Harriett) Copsis of Charlotte and sister Anna Sinodinos of Greenville, SC. Also surviving are his five grandchildren Luke and Nicholas Tassopoulos, Nicholas, Anthea and Vasili Copsis. He is also survived by several beloved nephews and nieces. Mr. Copsis was a long time and active member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. He was the proud godfather to Patti Hondros, Theophani Nixon, John Maheras, Kikki Karres and Johnny Couchell. The family wants to thank Dr. Norman Jack Kramer, Dr. John Fedor and Dr. Patti Roddey for the excellent care that they provided to Mr. Copsis over the years. Visitation took place on Saturday, November 28th, at 10AM at St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, 5108 Kuykendall Rd., Charlotte with a Trisagion service following at 10:30 am and funeral service at 11:00 am. Burial followed at Evergreen City Cemetery, Charlotte. Memorials in memory of Mr. Copsis may be sent to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203, St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, 5108 Kuykendall Rd., Charlotte, NC, 28270, or to UNCC Dept. of Special Education, 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223. Online condolences may be addressed to [www.carolinafuneral.com](http://www.carolinafuneral.com). Carolina Funeral Service & Cremation Center is entrusted with the arrangements.

**Charles Kevin Haskell** CHARLOTTE - Charles Kevin Haskell, 57, unexpectedly fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, December 22, 2015. Kevin was born in Rome, Georgia on February 18, 1958. He moved with his family to Charlotte and attended South Mecklenburg High School where he played football. After proudly serving four years as a communications specialist with the US Navy, he graduated from UNC Charlotte in December 1993 with a degree in political science. He then enjoyed a career in medical sales for over 20 years. Kevin was preceded in death by his mother Dorothy Delaney and is survived by his father Frank Stanley Haskell of Durham, NC; his wife of 26 years Elaine Tatsis Haskell; sons, John and Stephen Haskell; brother, Mark Haskell all of Charlotte, NC. Kevin will long be remembered for his sharp wit, sense of humor, incredible guitar skills and vibrant political commentaries. He loved the Carolina Panthers and all things UNC. He will be dearly missed by his family and friends. The family received friends on Monday, December 28, 2015, from Noon until 1:00pm, immediately followed by the Trisagion and funeral service at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC. Interment was private. Memorials can be made to the Holy Trinity Philoptochos Society, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203 or Children's Miracle Network, c/o Carolina Healthcare System, 1000 Blythe Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. May his memory be eternal. Arrangements are in the care of Kenneth W. Poe Funeral Director Licensee 704-641-7606.

### Xenophon P. Karras CHARLOTTE

- Xenophon P. Karras, 76, died Thursday, December 10, 2015. He was born in 1939 in Papparousi, Evrytainias, Greece. Xenophon came to Charlotte, NC in 1956 where he attended and graduated from Central High School. He was a business owner, enjoyed life and loved his family,

spending time with each and every one. He was preceded in death by his parents, Panagiotis Nikolaou Karagounis and Virginia Dimitropoulos Karagounis as well as his siblings, Virginia Haliandros, Athanasios, Sophoklis, Antigoni and Georgios Karagounis. Mr. Karras is survived by his daughter, Virginia Karras and her husband, Scott Suddreth; grandchildren, Christina and Xena Balaouras, Nia and Xenophon Suddreth, Caleb, Bryson and Andrew Suddreth; brother, Nick Karras and his wife Dafni; sisters, Eleni Toufekias and her husband, Nick and Maria Kostopoulos and her husband, Eleftherios; and many nieces and nephews. A trisagion and funeral service was held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, December 12, 2015, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Interment followed in Evergreen Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the Holy Trinity Renovation Fund or the Ministry Fund at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28203. The family would like to thank extended family and friends for their prayers and support. The family would like also like to thank the staff at the Levine Cancer Center at CMC. Arrangements are in the care of Kenneth W. Poe, Funeral Director Licensee 704.641.7606.

### Chrysoula Kondilis MATTHEWS -

Chrysoula Kondilis, 96, of Matthews, passed away on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. She was born in Greece on July 3, 1919 to the late Demetrios and Eleni Anagnostopoulos. Chrysoula was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She was preceded in death by her husband Gus in 2001 and a brother Konstantinos Anagnostopoulos. She is survived by her daughters, Debbie Vlachos and her husband Bill, Maria Szymanski and her husband David; and a son, Steve Kondilis and his wife, Dena. She was blessed with seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren

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and three sisters. A Trisagion was held at 10:30 AM on Saturday, December 19, 2015, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral with a funeral service at 11:00 AM. Burial followed at Evergreen Cemetery. Arrangements are in the care of Hankins & Whittington Funeral Service; please share condolences online at [www.hankinswhittington.com](http://www.hankinswhittington.com).

**Lula Fellos Pappas** CHARLOTTE - Lula Fellos Pappas passed away peacefully on December 14, 2015, at the age of 93, surrounded by family. In passing, she is reunited with her beloved husband, Nicholas George Pappas. Lula was born in Volos, Greece on June 4, 1922, the daughter of the late Peter Fellos and Helene Mavrika Fellos. Her family moved to the United States when she was a small child. Lula graduated from Central High School and Kings Business College. It was during afternoon Greek School that Lula would meet her future husband, Nick Pappas, who she would marry in 1944, just before he shipped off overseas to serve in the US Army. Lula was a life-long member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral where she taught Sunday School for many years. Along with her husband, she was actively involved in countless ways in the Holy Trinity community. Lula was a long-time officer and member of Daughters of Penelope and Daughters of Evrytania, and a charter member of the Ladies Philoptochos where she served for 73 years. In 2005, she was awarded the Archangel Michael Honor by Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta for her faithful service, tireless efforts and heartfelt dedication to her faith. Lula worked side-by-side with her husband in their restaurants and would later do the same with both of her sons. She remained active in the restaurant business until she was 89 years old. Her zest for life and welcoming spirit were readily apparent to everyone she encountered. She will be missed by her countless

friends, particularly her many friends at Park Lanes where she bowled and worked for many years alongside her sons. In addition to her husband and parents, Lula was preceded in death by her brother, Steve Fellos and her sister, Katina Laskaris. She is survived by her sons, George Pappas and his wife, Peggy of Cornelius, NC and Peter N. Pappas and his wife, Eve of Charlotte; grandchildren, Chad Pappas, John Burns and his wife, Stephanie, Jeff Burns and his wife, Mallory, Bree Basham and her husband, Mike, and Lauren Walker and her husband, Chris; five great-grandchildren, Nathan Gianelli, Samantha and Jacob Burns, Maggie Ann Burns, and Cate Walker; and a sister, Jeannie Gallins and her husband Johnny of Winston-Salem, NC; and many nieces and nephews. The family received friends from 12:30 until 1:30 at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The funeral service followed at 1:30 on Friday, December 18, 2015, at the Cathedral. Interment followed the funeral service in Evergreen Cemetery. Honorary pallbearers were James and Harry Cavalaris. Memorials may be made to the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral Foundation, 600 East Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28203. Arrangements are in the care of Kenneth W. Poe, Funeral Director Licensee 704.641.7606.

**Nikolaos Evangelos Politis** CHARLOTTE - Mr. Politis, 83, of Charlotte, NC passed away peacefully on November 8th, 2015, surrounded by his family after a long illness. He was born on April 15, 1932, at the village of Agia Vlaherna, Greece, the youngest of six children to the late Evangelos and Gianoula Liapis Politis. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Maria Katsanos Politis; his children, son Deacon George N. Politis, his wife Koula and their children Maria G. and Nikolaos; his son Jimmy Politis, his wife Mahi and their children, Maria D., Nikolaos D.

and Alexandra; his daughter Ioanna Politis and her son George Kakouras. He served in the Greek army for two and a half years. He immigrated with his family to the United States on January 21st, 1970, in Charlotte, NC. He retired from the restaurant and the construction business. Some of his favorite hobbies were, hunting, fishing and he enjoyed spending time in his garden. He was a devout Christian and a member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. A man of integrity and strong faith. He was a devoted and loving husband, father and grandfather. He loved everyone and he was loved by everyone. The Trisagion prayer service was held 7:00 PM, Tuesday, the 10th of November 2015, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The Funeral service was held 11:00 AM, Wednesday, the 11th of November 2015, also at the Cathedral. Burial followed in Evergreen Cemetery. His family would like to express their special thanks to Dr. Justin Favaro and his staff at the Charlotte Oncology, Dr. William Warlick and his staff at the Southeast Radiation Oncology and the Harris Novant Hospice and their staff. Note of encouragement and condolences may be sent to the family by visiting [www.ellingtonfuneralservices.com](http://www.ellingtonfuneralservices.com). Memorials may be made to the Christina Nixon Medical Fund, c/o Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. Serving the Politis family is Ellington Funeral Services, "The Historic Morehead St. Chapel", 727 E. Morehead St., Charlotte, NC 28202. 704.334.6700. Family owned since 1944.

**Chrysanthie Strate "Chrys"** CHARLOTTE - Chrysanthie "Chrys" Strate, 88, of Charlotte passed away on November 21, 2015. Chrys served her church her whole life. Visitation and funeral service took place on Monday, November 30, 2015, at 11:00 AM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. Burial followed at Evergreen Cemetery in Charlotte. Memorial contributions may be made in Chrys' honor to "Ladies Philoptochos Society" at the church address. Online condolences may be left at: [www.heritagecares.com](http://www.heritagecares.com). Heritage Funeral Home - Weddington Chapel is serving the family.

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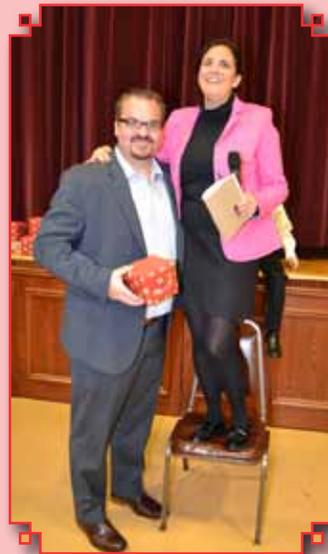
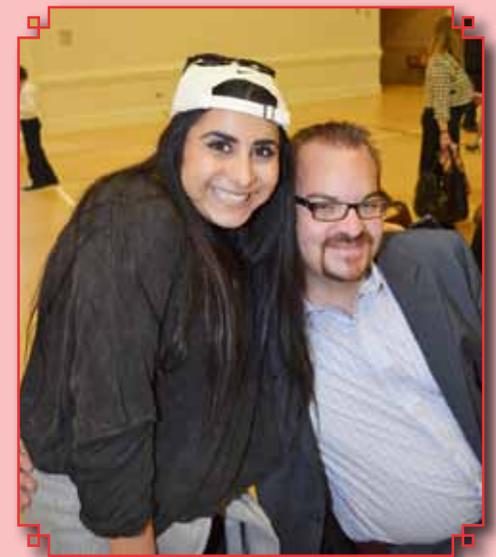



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# Christmas



# Pageant 2016



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**STEWARDSHIP CORNER** BY ELAINE ZAHARAKIS FAGAN

This month we are highlighting our Stewardship Committee and introducing you to our committee members. We know that when many people hear "Stewardship", their first thoughts go towards the church's struggles and the money that is needed. Although these may be some of the realities that we face, there is so much more to Stewardship as a whole. We hope that by learning more about our committee you will gain a new perspective and be inspired to be part of our mission!

The committee's mission is to "engage parishioners in the true meaning of stewardship and how it directly affects the life of our Church and our salvation." So how do we do this? I am not going to lie, this is no small feat, as Stewardship can't be taught, nor is it a bill that needs to be paid; it's a way of life, a gratitude of life's blessings, a love of our faith and the acceptance of supporting our Church as we would our own household. We try to tackle this at every meeting, with the hope that the next initiative will spark that inner steward in all of us.

Our committee is comprised of ten lay members with the guidance of our Dean, Father Angelo. There is nothing extraordinary about any of us, nor are we "Stewardship" experts. We all come from different backgrounds with a variety of skill sets, yet we all share a great love for our Church and the desire to see her prosper. Below is the list of the committee members and a few of our stories that we wanted to share with you.

Holy Trinity Stewardship Committee: Nick and Carmen Kallelis (Chairs), George and Georgia Andrews, Dot Delano, Elaine Fagan, Irene Politis, Eleni Saunders, Peter Thomopoulos, Frances Zogzas.

Nick Kallelis: "I have been regularly attending HTGOC for 12 years. My involvement in the Stewardship Committee started when I was asked by Fr. Philemon to join. I have always been committed to serving the church community, which has given so much to me. The Orthodox faith has strengthened my faith and serving the community is a small way of expressing my appreciation.

Holy Trinity has been there when I needed strength at difficult times.

I love the beauty of the church. It is so reverent and, when attending the Liturgy, you feel close to God."

Carmen Kallelis: "I was introduced to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral by Nick Kallelis in 2007. This was the year we first met. I was educated by Fr. Stathi, Fr. Michael and Fr. Philemon. My baptism and Chrismation took place on October 31, 2010. On March 5, 2011, Nick Kallelis and I were married in Holy Trinity.

Fr. Philemon asked me to consider joining the Stewardship Committee because he felt my background in marketing and advertising could benefit the committee efforts. I have been a part of the Stewardship Committee since 2011.

My focus is getting the message across to our parishioners of what true stewardship means, not only to Holy Trinity but to each member of our community. Commitment to our church benefits each of us by acknowledging our dedication to our God and to our Holy Trinity family. A member in good standing is IN the church and not just AT the church. Each and every one of us has something we can give to our Holy Trinity community. Our needs are many. The time, talents and treasures of our community are great. The rewards of true stewardship are just as great.

Many thanks to the dedicated Stewardship Committee members. It is an honor to serve with them."

Dot Delano: "I have been a member of Holy Trinity for 16 years and have come from another faith tradition. For me, church, any church, requires support from the members. I look at it as a responsibility.

I am not Greek but have found the acceptance, friendliness, cooperation, and the desire to be of service and positive spirit of the people are some of the things I love about this community. I hear Kala a lot and like it!"

Eleni Saunders: "I have been a member of this community since I was six years

old, when my family moved to Charlotte from New Jersey in 1965. I became involved in the Stewardship Committee after attending one of the Stewardship series dinners in 2012. I was intrigued by what was presented and was encouraged by Fr. Philemon to get involved in the committee.

What I love most about our parish is the sense of community that I feel from spending my own life here. Many of our family's life events have occurred within these walls, which is truly priceless!"

Frances Zogzas: "I have been a member of Holy Trinity for 20 years. I began working in the Church office doing Accounting work from 1997 through 2005... then returned in 2009. That's when I joined the Stewardship Committee. I am the one who handles the stewardship in the office. I enjoy being on the Committee because it consists of a wonderful group of parishioners who truly care and love our Cathedral. We all want to see our Cathedral be the best it can be and we believe that involves increasing our stewardship participation along with having active ministries.

I love Holy Trinity because it is my "Church family". Church has always been a big part of my life and always will be."

Elaine Zaharakis Fagan: "I have been a part of this community since the age of six. I have spent my entire life creating lasting memories with my family and friends here at Holy Trinity. I was invited to be a part of the Stewardship Committee by my dear friend Elaine Vastis Conti in 2009, who was also a long time member of this committee. I had no idea what to expect and, to be honest, I wasn't sure how much value I would add. I really only attended the meeting as a favor to her. Wow, what a life changing experience that was! For the first time, I

saw our Church for who she truly was. I had taken advantage of her for so long and realized that I had invested more in a weekend night out than I did supporting my only spiritual home, the one place where I could connect with God and that had fostered the core of my being! That one meeting has turned into a seven-year commitment.

There is so much to love about our Church and this community! For me, it is my home and I know it is a place that I can come to feel at peace!"

We encourage anyone interested in learning more to join us at our monthly meetings held in the library at 6:00pm on the last Monday of every month. Feel free to engage any of our committee members in conversation at any time. We don't have the answers to everything, but would love to speak with you. Also, don't hesitate to visit our Stewardship table during the coffee hour. The information on the table is very useful and it is for you!

Thank you for your continued support and please don't forget to remit your 2016 Stewardship Commitment Form by Jan 31st!!



Pictured Left to Right: Peter Thomopoulos, George and Georgia Andrews, Nick and Carmen Kallelis, Eleni Saunders, Elaine Fagan and Irene Politis. (Members not pictured Dot Delano and Frances Zogzas)



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**The Warriors of Greece By Chris Pangalos**

**Quotes About Greek Fighting Prowess By World Leaders from WWII**

*"Until now we used to say that the Greeks fight like heroes. Now we shall say: The heroes fight like Greeks."*

-Winston Churchill (From a speech he delivered from the BBC in the first days of the Italian invasion of Greece during WWII that was ferociously repulsed by undermanned, poorly equipped but patriotic, hard-core Greek guerilla fighters)

*"For the sake of historical truth I must verify that only the Greeks, of all the adversaries who confronted us, fought with bold courage and highest disregard of death."*

-Adolph Hitler (From a speech he gave at the Reichstag, 4 May 1941) after his previously unbeaten storm troopers suffered tremendous casualties in their battle for Greece.

*"The word heroism I am afraid does not render the least of those acts of self-sacrifice of the Greeks, which were the defining factor in the victorious outcome of the common struggle of the nations, during World War II, for the human freedom and dignity. If it were not for the bravery of the Greeks and their courage, the outcome of World War II would be undetermined."*

-Winston Churchill (speech to British Parliament)

*"You fought unarmed and won, small against big. We owe you gratitude, because you gave us time to defend ourselves. As Russians and as people we thank you."*

-Moscow Radio Station when Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R.

*"I am sorry because I am getting old and I shall not live long enough to thank the Greek People, whose resistance decided World War II."*

-Joseph Stalin (From a speech of his broadcast by the Moscow radio station on 31 January 1943 after the victory of Stalingrad and the capitulation of German 6th Army Field Marshal Von Paulus)

*"If the Russian people managed to raise resistance at the doors of Moscow to halt and reverse the German torrent, they owe it to the Greek People, who delayed the German divisions during the time they could bring us to our knees."*

-Georgiy Constantinovich Zhoukov (Field Marshal of the Soviet Army: Quote from his memoirs on World War II)

*"Regardless of what the future historians shall say, what we can say now, is that Greece gave Mussolini an unforgettable lesson, that she was the motive for the revolution in Yugoslavia, that she held the Germans in the mainland and in Crete for six weeks, that she upset the chronological order of all German High Command's plans and thus brought a general reversal of the entire course of the war and we won."*

-Sir Robert Antony Eden (Minister of War and the Exterior of Britain 1940-1945, Prime Minister of Britain 1955-1957 - Paraphrased from a speech of his to the British Parliament)

*"It would not be an exaggeration to say that Greece upset the plans of Germany in their entirety by forcing her to postpone the attack on Russia for six weeks. We wonder what would have been the Soviet Union's position without Greece."*

-Sir Harold Leofric George Alexander (British Field Marshal during World War II paraphrased from his speech to the British parliament on 28 October 1941)

*"I am unable to give the proper breadth of gratitude I feel for the heroic resistance of the People and the leaders of Greece."*

-Charles de Gaul (From a speech to French Parliament at the end of World War II)

*"The war with Greece proved that nothing is firm in the military and that surprises always await us."*

-Benito Mussolini (From speech he delivered on 10/5/1941)

*"Your soldiers instead of fleeing frantically, as they did in France and Poland, were actually shooting at us from their positions!"*

-A German officer of the Luftwaffe declaring to Greek LtGen. Dedes, commander of Greece's Eastern Macedonia division that the Greek Army was the only one in which the Nazi Stuka dive bomber fighter planes did not cause panic.

*"Greece is the symbol of the tortured, bloodied but live Europe. Never a defeat was so honorable for those who suffered it."*

-Maurice Schumann, Minister of the exterior of France 1969-1973, member of the French Academy 1974 (From his message from the BBC of London to the enslaved peoples of Europe on 28 April 1941, the day Hitler occupied Athens after a 6-month war against Mussolini and six weeks against Hitler)

*"On the 28th of October 1940 Greece was given a deadline of three hours to decide on war or peace but even if three days or three weeks or three years were given, the response would have been the same. The Greeks taught dignity throughout the centuries. When the entire world had lost all hope, the Greek people dared to question the invincibility of the German monster raising against it the proud spirit of freedom."*

-Franklin D Roosevelt, US President 1933 - 1945

*"The heroic struggle of the Greek people... Against Germany's attack, after she so thunderously defeated the Italians in their attempt to invade the Greek soil, filled the hearts of the American people with enthusiasm and moved their compassion."*

-Franklin D Roosevelt, US President 1933 - 1945

**International Orthodox Christian Charities**

Thanks to the special encouragement that our parishioners were given this year from our clergy, the IOCC Event had the best participation ever at Holy Trinity.

A big thank you fore all the delicious foods prepared and offered by various restaurants, churches and individuals: Showmars (Koko Zitsios), St. Nektarios (John Peroulas), St. Sarkis (Lena Neau & Roberta Bazoina) St. George Ethiopian (Nile Restaurant), desserts by the St. Luke members and beautiful background music by the lovely Dina Marinakos Oara.

It is gratifying to know that our local Greek wine distributors, OPA! Wines, CHL International, and Raymond and Roberta Bazoian have donated wines for the past three years, and this year there was also a boutique beer provided by Appalachian Mountain Brewery.

But the most significant part of the evening was the information given by Country Representative from Lebanon, Ruba Khoury, who was an incredible speaker. She spoke eloquently on the plight of the victims of war in Syria, in Lebanon and the Middle East in general. Their physical and emotional pain is constantly before her and before the eighty staff assisting the people in that area. IOCC tries to help these victims of the relentless middle east conflict with food, medicines, clothing, blankets and shelter.



More than 1,000 families in Greece are currently receiving IOCC grocery cards that allow them to buy items suitable for their dietary needs, rather than collect aid at distribution centers. The agricultural products are all sourced in Greece to support local farmers and milk producers. In addition to the grocery card program, IOCC will continue to provide dry food parcels through Apostoli and the Church of Greece, support a soup kitchen feeding 1,200 people a day, and provide 500 schoolchildren with basic supplies needed.

Since 2012, IOCC, in cooperation with Apostoli, the Greek national ministries, and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, has responded to the country's economic crisis with more than \$17.4 million in medical support, heating fuel, food, agriculture development, and job-assistance programs to Greece.

A two-year conflict in Ukraine has displaced 1.5 million people, nearly 180,000 of which are children. IOCC is responding with emergency food assistance to severely impacted by the conflict.

To finish it off, we had a lot of fun with the the singing and cutting up by the the St. Nektarios singers who had everbody laughing and applauding. We are also grateful to the Fourtouna Dance group and their teachers for making the effort to showcase their dance skills.



A special thanks to Holy Trinity for hosting this Event and to the wonderful people who helped set up under the leadership of Elaine Zaharakis Fagan.

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**PRESCHOOL BY PRESCHOOL STAFF**



**Whooh's 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, the preschool staff would like to acknowledge our appreciation to our preschool families, the preschool board members, our Priests, the Parish Council, and all of the Holy Trinity parishioners for your love and support of our preschool program. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful and supportive community. Happy Thanksgiving and many blessing to all of you.

On Sunday, November 1st, the preschool held 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 very generous support of Yiayia's Kouzina and also to both the Holy Trinity and Charlotte communities for attending our fundraising luncheon. We could not have done it without the support of everyone...we thank you! Last, but not least, we appreciate how hard the



Yiayia's Kouzina Fundraising Luncheon Program Nov. 2015

preschool children worked to prepare for our program. As always, they did an excellent job entertaining us and they sounded beautiful. As teachers, there is nothing more satisfying than to see our children grow and progress with each new accomplishment. We have an amazing group of children and we are blessed to have them in our preschool family.

We have had many fun activities taking place at the preschool. On Friday,

November 6th, the three and four year old classes went on a field trip to Firestation #17 located at the airport. They not only learned about fire safety, the red fire trucks and the firemen's



Fire Station Field Trip Nov. 2015

gear, but they also got to see the yellow blaze fire trucks used only at the airport and got to watch the planes take off and land. Everyone had a good time despite the rainy weather. On November 18th and 19th, we began "Our Faith with Father", a bi-monthly hands-on religious lesson about our Orthodox faith with Fr. Angelo and Fr. Theodore. These lessons will be taking place on the 2nd and 4th



Our Faith with Father "Communion" Nov. 2015



Wednesday and Thursday of each month. Our first lesson was all about communion and the religious items used during the service, such as the Chalice and the Paten. The children enjoyed being able to see and touch these items up close. We finished out the month of November focusing on all that we are thankful for and celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday with the class parties on November 23rd and 24th.

In December, our main focus was on the true meaning of the Christmas season...the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. On December 9th and 10th, we had a special Christmas "Our Faith with Father" and Pajama Day. The teachers and children all wore their pajamas to school and brought their favorite stuffed animals to cuddle with. We gathered the children in the church and learned about the birth of Christ and the Nativity Icon. The children made ornaments that we



Our Faith with Father "The Nativity" and Pajama Day" Dec. 2015

used to decorate our preschool Christmas Tree. The preschool wrapped up the month with more festivities as each of the classes had a Christmas party before getting out for the holiday break. On behalf of the preschool staff, we wish all of our preschool families and the Holy Trinity community a Merry Christmas and many blessings in the New Year.



Toddlers & MW Two Year Old Classes



TTh Two Year Old Class



Three Year Old Class



Four Year Old Class

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**Philoptochos By Frances Troupes**

Philoptochos wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The fifteenth National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon was held in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 31st. Four of our members attended and had a wonderful time.



Proceeds from this event are used to award grants to hospitals, universities and programs that benefit children. Since its inception in 1989, the Children's Medical Fund has distributed nearly \$3 million in grants across the United States.

On November 12th, Philoptochos members attended the annual InReach Dream Maker Luncheon held in the Father C Hall. Philoptochos donated the baklava for the luncheon. InReach provides support to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Our Holiday Bake Sale Fundraiser takes place annually in early December. Diane Ramsey and many of our members prepare baklava, koulourakia, spanakopites and tiropites for parishioners to preorder and pick up for the holiday season. What a great way to prepare for the holidays without stressing over when all the baking will get done!

Philoptochos, along with the community, sponsored 149 students for the Annual Christmas Giving Project at

Sedgefield Elementary School. Thank you to Georgette Boukidis and Celia Thevaos for chairing this event and to all who sponsored a child with presents or a monetary donation. Philoptochos also provided 36 complete school uniforms and jackets to students throughout the school year.

On November 22nd, Philoptochos surprised Kenny, the church's custodian, with a 60th birthday celebration. Kenny is always willing to help Philoptochos any way he can. He goes above and beyond to help and always with a smile. We are very fortunate to have Kenny and wish him many years of health and happiness.



We always look forward to the annual Philoptochos Christmas party. This year it was held at Luciano's Ristorante on South Boulevard. We enjoyed a delicious dinner and had a wonderful time. We were pleased to have Father Angelo and Presbyteria Patricia and Father Theodore and Presbyteria Stacy also join us.

Philoptochos met 100% of its National and Metropolis obligations in 2015 and supported numerous local charities and people in need.

**Choir News By OLGA YIAMALIS**

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15:13

Songs are the reason for the Season! Throughout the month of December, the HTC Adult Choir sang carols and rejoiced in the holiday sound. Christmas carols were sung at the Forever Young Christmas Dinner and at Novant Hospital in Uptown Charlotte in addition to the more traditional venue of the Cathedral after Divine Liturgy.

First, the HTC Adult Choir had lots of fun caroling at the Forever Young dinner at Carolina Prime Steakhouse on Thursday, December 17th, under the choral direction of Dr. Philip Thevaos. Everyone joined in and sang along with the choir and had a great time. Other restaurant patrons enjoyed the choir's holiday sound as well.



Next, the HTC Choir spread the Christmas cheer on every floor of Novant Hospital in Uptown Charlotte on Sunday, December 20th, after Liturgy, again, under Philip's direction. The choir's sounds created a harmonious balance of traditional Christmas carols to patients and staff present. The choir's kind holiday gesture brought smiles to others in need and they too enjoyed



spreading well wishes and holiday cheer throughout the hospital. HTC Adult choir carolers included: Irina Monzolevskaya, Dr. Philip Thevaos, Pauline Velonis, Cliff Greene, Niki Kleto, Sarah Vastis, Niki Vastis, Ronnie Pourlos, Cecelia Kotsipias, and Olga Yamalis.



*On an up note*, if you are ready for a change in 2016 and want to enjoy wonderful fellowship, spiritual renewal and beautiful music then consider joining one of the HTC Choirs. Whether First Service or Second Service, our choirs would love for you to join us---make that change!

*On a down note*, thank you to those of you who provided support and comfort for the loss of Chrysanthie Strate on November 21st, a member of the First Service Choir. She will be greatly missed by us. May her memory be eternal.

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**Service:**

As believers we like to fulfill our commitment to serve others within and outside our Community. We do this by sharing our time, talent and treasures for the ministry and the glory of the Lord.

**Living the Orthodox Life:**  
Putting Christ first in our lives through prayer, worship and partaking in the Sacraments thus building and growing spiritually, His Kingdom on earth.

**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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**GOYA-HOPE/JOY News** BY JOHN GEORGOPOULOS



Hello, my name is Chris Xyrafakis. I am a senior at Myers Park High School and am this year's GOYA President. At the church, I participate in altar, in the Greek Festival, Winter Youth Rally, HDF, Church basketball, and Church soccer. At Myers Park, I participate in DECA, I am an officer in FFA, and am on the Myers Park Rugby Team. I work at Autobell and, in my free time, I enjoy watching football and basketball and hanging out with my friends.



My name is Angelina Christodoulis. I am very excited about being the Secretary for GOYA this year! I am 15 years old and a sophomore at Ardrey Kell High School. I like going to school and my favorite subjects are math and science. I am involved in the AK chorus and I enjoy singing. I also play basketball for Holy Trinity, and I am very excited about this season! I am a member of the Epanastates dance group at the church and look forward to competing at HDF in Orlando in January. My parents are Gus and Andrea Christodoulis. I am the oldest of six. I have three sisters (Sophia, Elianna, and Nina) and two brothers (John and Vasili). I love my family very much and I enjoy spending time with them!



Hi my name is Thomas Koufaliotis. I am 16 years old and a sophomore at South Mecklenburg High School, here in Charlotte, NC. I have been involved with Holy Trinity throughout my life. I started pre-school at the church at 18 months and still have the same friends. I enjoy dancing at the festival every year and participating in HDF. I started serving in the altar in 3rd grade and continue to serve today. I enjoy playing basketball with my friends from preschool for the church. Vacation Bible School is one of my favorite things to do. I loved it as a student and I love it more as a counselor/volunteer in the gym. At South Mecklenburg High School, I am a proud member of DECA, South Meck Super Fans, and South Meck Young Republicans. I am excited and I look forward to serving on the GOYA board this year as Vice-President.



Hi, my name is Billy Drossopoulos and I am GOYA Treasurer. Ever since I was young, I had a passion for soccer and all types of athletic events. I still play soccer to this day for Charlotte United and enjoy it greatly. I also play basketball for our Church and surprise everyone once in a while. I love going to Greece and visiting my family. I go every other year and it never gets old. I want to live there when I am older. I want the best for people, not only at our church, but for family and friends as well. I'm there for everyone in times of need. I am THE Treasurer of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte. Thank you.

**Third Graders receiving their Holy Bibles**



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Με ιδιαίτερη χαρά γιόρτασαν τον ερχομό των Χριστουγέννων και του Νέου Έτους 2016 οι μαθητές του Ελληνικού Σχολείου Αγίας Τριάδας



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