



# THE VOICE

CELEBRATING CHARLOTTE'S GREEK COMMUNITY NEWS AND HISTORY

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ΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΟΣ

VOL. 81  
NO. 05

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL



<https://www.facebook.com/HolyTrinityGreekOrthodoxCathedralCharlotte/>

600 EAST BLVD

CHARLOTTE, NC 28203

704-334-4771

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

SEP/OCT 2021



**A Wonderful Celebration.** The Philoptochos recently celebrated Mrs. Bett Kofinas' 100th birthday. Read more about her in the Philoptochos report on page 10.



November 2, 2021: The clergy and chanters after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the Feastday of Saint Elpidophoros. Visiting clergy were from Saint Nektarios and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Winston Salem, NC.



**We Are Back.**

Although in a streamlined version, the community's Yiasou Festival was held, just like always, on the weekend after Labor Day.

At left, our local band Notes Nostalgias performed for our visitors. See other photos on pages 8-9 inside,



**YIASOU GREEK FESTIVAL 2021**  
SEP 9-12

## 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.

## 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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**THE EDITOR'S NOTE** by George Zogzas

Dear Readers:  
Welcome back.

And just like that, the first (and maybe last?) Drive Through only Yiasou Festival has come and gone. A totally new concept for our community, the early signs are that it was successful. We were blessed with wonderful weather on all four days. Thanks to all the volunteers that came through remaining flexible and adapting to this new format. See the photos on pages 8-9.

That was immediately followed by the start of the academic school year 2021-2022. Greek School and Preschool returned to in person instruction the following weeks, and by the last Sunday of September, our Sunday school program was back in session. See their updates on pages 12-13.

And just like that, we are within reach of another year end. Before we know it, we will have eaten too much turkey and watched too much football on Thanksgiving Day, students will be reaching the end of the first semester of school and longing for the holiday break at the end of December, and everyone will be contemplating resolutions for improving their lives in the New Year.

Let's not forget the most important event left this year: the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on December 25. It would be great to fill the Cathedral to worship together.

Thanks for reading and see you next time.

GZ

voice@htgo.org

**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

Sunday Nov 21	<b>THE PRESENTATION OF THE THEOTOKOS</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM
Thursday Nov 25	<b>FEASTDAY OF SAINT KATHERINE</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM
	<b>THANKSGIVING DAY</b> Church Office Closed
Friday Nov 26	Church Office Closed
Monday Dec 6	<b>FEASTDAY OF SAINT NICHOLAS</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM
Sunday Dec 12	Parish Elections
Saturday Dec 25	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> <b>THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST</b>
Saturday Jan 1	<b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b> <b>FEAST DAY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT</b>

**REMINDER:**

Check the bulletin and website calendars for updates or call the Office at 704-334-4771

**THE VOICE**

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**HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL**

600 East Boulevard

Charlotte, NC 28203

704-334-4771

www.htgo.org

*The Voice is the bimonthly publication about Holy Trinity, its parishioners, their faith, and the community*

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**Next Issue: NOV/DEC 2021 DEADLINES:**

for articles or photographs is:

**Friday, December 17, 2021**

Photos should be in large format .JPEG attachment (300 dpi min.)

for advertisements is:

**Monday, December 6, 2021**Email to **voice@htgo.org**

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***The Holy Trinity Centennial 1923 \* 2023***  
*One in a series of reflections on Charlotte's Orthodox community and its proud*

**The 1960's - 1970's**



1966 - Executive Building Fund Committee Hellenic Community Center:  
 left to right seated: James Pachal, George Makres, Thomas Cavalaris, George Kostakes, D.N. Polyzos,  
 James Karres. Standing: Nick Pappas, Nick Kaperonis, Bill Anderson, Nick Miller, Steve Kokenes,  
 Xenophon Nixon, John Polites



May 9, 1971- New Education Wing Groundbreaking Ceremony.  
 Christ A. and Marie P. Pitsikoulis bid and won the gold shovel. In attendance, but not pictured, were Fr. C and Charlotte Mayor John Belk.



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## *The Holy Trinity Centennial 1923 \* 2023*

*One in a series of reflections on Charlotte's Orthodox community and its proud history*

### The 1960's - 1970's



**February 6, 1967** - Pastry Preparation for Philoptochos Pastry sale at Driftwood Steakhouse on Wilkinson Blvd. owned by Christ A. Pitsikoulis and Angelo G. Pappas. Above, left to right, Mrs. Voula Triantis, Mrs. Sara Thevaos, Mrs. Ioanna Pappas.

**1977 Yiasou Greek Festival** – A classic photo representing our 1<sup>st</sup> annual Yiasou Festival. Below, John Skiouris is taste-testing.



**May 11, 1969** – The Dedication of the new Hellenic Center, Xenophon Nixon is Master of Ceremonies Mrs. Artemis J. Paschal In memory of her late husband Jimmy, is awarded the golden key.



December 1969 - GOYA left to right:

1<sup>st</sup> row: Mary Mandanis, Joana Diamandouros, Anna Pitsikoulis, Joanna Pistikoulis, Anna Maria Thevaos, Emily Nixon, Steve Pourlos, Jackie Canaclides

2<sup>nd</sup> row: Terry Robinson, Renee Anderson, Sandra Anastes, Theoni Mandrapillias, Fr. Nick Bacalis, Sandra Pappas, Andre Trakas, ???

3<sup>rd</sup> row: Mecia Kotroulias, Maria Polites, Maria Triantis, Basil Coston, Nick Nixon, Andy Polyzos, John Couchell,

4<sup>th</sup> row: ???, Lula Polites, John Thevaos, Pete Thevaos, Pete Kleto, Louie Politis

5<sup>th</sup> row: Steve Keretsis, Tommy Pistolis, George Stathopoulos, Tommy Economos, Chris Stathopoulos

#### PREVIOUSLY IN THIS SERIES

Issue	Topic
JUL/AUG 2020	Introduction
JAN/FEB 2021	1920's
MAR/APR 2021	1930's
MAY/JUN 2021	1950's
JUL/AUG 2021	1940's
SEP/OCT 2021	1960's 1970's

**Credits:** Historical facts were found in the Xenophon Nixon Holy Trinity Archive Collection. Contributors: Anna and Joanna Pitsikoulis. Olga Kleto.  
Compiled and edited by Kathy Kanellopoulos and Gloria Kontoulas of the Holy Trinity Archives Ministry



## *The Holy Trinity Centennial 1923 \* 2023*

*One in a series of reflections on Charlotte's Orthodox community and its proud history*

### **The 1960's - 1970's**

The 1960's and the 1970's brought many changes to the Charlotte Greek Community. Soon after the consecration of Holy Trinity on September 24, 1954 plans for a new Community Center and an Educational Building were underway. The Jones Mansion could no longer serve the ever-growing Greek community of Charlotte. Therefore, under the chairmanship of Mr. George Miller, the Hellenic Center Building Committee began their efforts for a new multi-center which would serve the Greek Community for decades to come.

1960: Reverend Chrysostom Papalambrou was elevated to the rank of Bishop and was assigned to Australia.

1961-1966: Reverend Theotokis Pappas replaced Fr. Papalambrou in 1961. Fr. Pappas was succeeded by Reverend Emanuel Bouyoukas and Fr. Bouyoukas was succeeded by Reverend Chris Kallos in 1966.

July 3rd, 1966: Hellenic Center Groundbreaking ceremonies. Construction continued at a very fast pace and on July 16, 1967 the Hellenic Center was completed. The initial cost of the building was 650,000.00 at this time the community had grown to approx. 350 families

August 1966: The arrival of Reverend Phaethon Constantinides

May 11, 1969: Dedication of the new Hellenic Center

May 9, 1971: Groundbreaking ceremonies of the new educational wing

September 1977: Fr C. along with Gus Nixon, Jimmy Anderson and the cooperation of many parishioners started the Yiasou Greek Festival.

Reverend Phaethon Constantinides served the Charlotte Greek Community for 30 years. He was a graduate of the school of theology at the University of Athens, Greece. He was a strong spiritual leader with a charismatic personality and gained the love and respect of the entire congregation in a short amount

of time. His Presbytera Kathryn was a gracious and loving woman and supported the Charlotte Greek Community along with Father C. Together they raised a generation of Charlotte Greeks and left a legacy of spiritual leadership and a love of community for Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Father C. was willful and determined. He recognized the need for change and progress and devoted time to create new ministries, fund raising events, and educational and spiritual programs.

He reorganized the Sunday School Department and worked closely with Mrs. Katina Laskaris, and then later with Mrs. Elaine Michaels for many years.

He created the altar fund and helped many parishioners who were in need.

He introduced and helped coordinate the first Yiasou Greek Festival, which has become one of the largest cultural festivals in the USA.

Father C. requested that a church bus be purchased to help provide transportation for the elderly who could not drive to Church on Sundays. Shortly after this, he also organized the first senior citizens group.

Father C. created the First Service Liturgy which was primarily performed in English.

His favorite and most cherished ministry was the FOS program. On Wednesday evenings family night began with dinner followed by a series of lectures Follow Our Savior, an Orthodox educational program.

Reverend Phaethon Constantinides, Dean of the Cathedral, passed away on June 16, 1996. Presbytera Kathryn remained in Charlotte and lived her life quietly and gracefully. She continued to support our ministries and fundraisers. She was dedicated to the Philoptochos and served on the board consistently until her passing on February 13, 2016. The memories we all share for both of them will remain in our hearts forever.

May their memories be eternal.



August 1966 - Reverend Father Phaethon (pictured above) and Presbytera Kathryn Constantinides arrive at Holy Trinity.



1974 Greek Night Fundraising Event - John Triantis and Nick Karras lead the dinner preparations with supreme organization.



1973 Greek Night Fundraising Event - An evening of Greek Culture: food, dance and music. Pictured above, left to right: Olga Kleto, Mary Alice Andrews, Helen Beleos



## A NEWS ROUNDUP

by The Voice Staff

## Open Budget Meeting

The Parish Council held the Open Budget meeting on Monday, October 18, 2021. Notable proposals for the upcoming year include:

**Hires:** The budget includes the hiring of three individuals to fill the new positions of (1) Communications Manager/Secretary, (2) Facilities Manager, and (3) Custodian. The job descriptions were communicated to the community through the Weekly Bulletin updates and were posted on the job search site, Indeed.

**Software:** Before the end of calendar year 2021, Holy Trinity is implementing a new software program. Tithely is a multifunctional program that allows for contact with parishioners through technology tools including a mobile phone app. According to Treasurer John Tsumas, Tithely will also provide back office operations support that can drive changes in methods of giving.

**Repairs:** Delayed from 2021, plans are to complete the repairs to the exterior of Father C. Hall in 2022. It was mentioned that parking lot repairs need to be considered, but nothing definite is planned for 2022.

The purpose of the Open Budget Meeting is to get a look at the numbers, but more importantly, to hear from the Parish Council what their plans are for the upcoming year and how the money

will be raised to meet those obligations. The attendees can ask questions and designate specific line items for further discussion at the Parish Assembly that is scheduled for two weeks later.

## Parish Assembly

The second Parish Assembly of the year was scheduled for Sunday, October 31, 2021 immediately following the conclusion of the second Divine Liturgy. The meeting was to be in person only, (no video conferencing) and masks were required. The agenda for the meeting was distributed at least 10 days before the meeting.

Primary agenda items included approving the 2022 Budget, preliminary Yiasou Festival Report, election of a Board of Auditors and a Board of Elections, and a report from the nominating committee. For this elections there are 5 openings for Parish Council and 2 openings for the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox the Foundation. The elections will be held in December.

Due to not meeting quorum at the Parish Assembly scheduled for October 31st, it has been rescheduled for Sunday, November 14, 2021 in the Father "C" Hall after the Divine Liturgy. Per the Bylaws, quorum requirements will not apply at this Assembly.

## ON THE OCF ROAD TRIP WITH FATHER JONATHAN

Father Jonathan has been on the road this fall visiting Holy Trinity college students at their schools. Top: Students join Father at the Old Well at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Center: Father with students attending Clemson University in South Carolina. Bottom: Father poses with two students at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.



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## STEWARDSHIP 2021

AS OF 11/10/21

YTD FINANCIALS	2021	2020
Stewardship	\$566,098	\$543,193
Candles, Rentals, Other	\$261,284	\$95,568
Building/Renov. Donations	\$169,775	\$235,388
Minus : Operating Expenses	-\$756,899	-\$810,424
Minus : Building Fund Expenses	-\$73,386	-\$210,819
<b>NET DEFICIT</b>	<b>\$166,872</b>	<b>-\$147,094</b>

A big **THANK YOU** to all who supported Holy Trinity in 2021! You will soon receive your **2022 Stewardship form**. Please make any corrections, sign, and return to the Church. These forms are very important and are needed at the beginning of every year from ALL parishioners in order to keep our records and anticipated pledges accurate. You do not need to mail any payments with this form.

### WAYS TO GIVE:

- **CHURCH SERVICES** - bring your offerings to the many services we offer.
- **ON-LINE BILL PAY** - you can set up on-line payments thru your bank. There are no fees to you or the Church.
- **MAIL** your check or bring to office during the week between 9am-5pm.
- **CHURCH WEBSITE** - go to [htgo.org](http://htgo.org) and select the "Give Now" button to set up payments whether one-time or monthly. The Church pays credit card fees.
- **CREDIT CARD** - call the office with your credit card information and we can do a one-time charge. The Church pays credit card fees.

**We Need The Church All Year Long & The Church Needs Us Too**  
Year-end is approaching and we ask that you make and bring any offerings before December 28th. Any donations received or postmarked after Dec. 31st will be posted into next year. Postings for 2021 end on 12/31.  
We have a wonderful property, and along with its blessings, come many expenses. We thank you for your continued support and love for Holy Trinity. We ask for your kind generosity to help us maintain our property and keep our programs and ministries strong.

**Hosanna Bookstore reading materials, kids' activities, gift items, icons, charcoal & incense.**

## CATHEDRAL FOUNDATION

by George Zogzas

*Editor's note: The writer is Secretary-Treasurer of the Foundation and Editor of The Voice.*

**A Ten Year Recap.** For the 10 year period of 2011-2020, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Foundation (HTGOF) witnessed growth in its assets and in the grants and donations made. During this period, investments generated \$650,728 in income (dividends, interest, and capital gains). With those unrestricted funds, HTGOF made grants and donations of \$610,503. \$300,000 of that total went to the Cathedral's renovation project, specifically the Chapel. The remaining amounts were donated to Mecklenburg County charities; local and national health organizations; and direct aid to individuals and families in the Holy Trinity community.

Foundation assets are invested in equity and fixed income mutual funds and ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds). The funds are divided evenly between two professional financial advisors.

Restricted funds make up almost 73% of the Foundation's total assets as of December 31, 2020. While market fluctuations can go up or down, restricted funds can only increase. That is because the Foundation is bound to retain all memorials, donations, and bequests received.

**How to Help.** Memorial donations to the Foundation are the primary source of new funding. When you make a memorial donation to HTGOF, two things will happen: First, the money will be designated as restricted and can never be spent. It will be invested and any gain from that investment will be used to make grants and donations to worthy causes. Second, the name of the person you designate to remember will be added to the list of all previous memorialized individuals. The Foundation holds an annual memorial

service at Holy Trinity where each name is read by the priest. Right now, that list is approximately 600 names. After this year's memorial on May 30, 2021, Father Christian Siskos reflected on the power of the simple act of reading those names. "Know that the names that we have just read, long and arduous though it may have seemed, and it sounds like nothing is happening. When we too will repose, we will be in the ground buried, how thankful we will be that our name, small and insignificant though it maybe, will be on that list. Every time we pray for those who've departed, we impart grace to those who can no longer repent. God's grace. God's love. That's the value of all of those names that we have read."

If you are in the position to suggest to a loved one where memorials can be directed, please consider this community's own Foundation. Recognized by the IRS as a 501-c-3 Not for Profit organization, the tax ID number is 23-7376106. Reach us via email at [info@htgof.org](mailto:info@htgof.org).

2011 - 2020  
Unrestricted  
Revenues  
**\$651**  
thousand

2011 - 2020  
Donations and  
Grants made  
**\$610**  
thousand

Dec 31, 2020  
Restricted Assets  
**\$1.167**  
million  
+15.9% since  
2010

Dec 31, 2020  
Total Assets  
**\$1.597**  
million  
+28.8% since  
2010

Financial results are unaudited.





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### Prayer for the Beginning of the Day

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace, help me in all things to rely upon your Holy will. In every hour of the day, reveal your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by you. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray. And, Yourself, pray in me. Amen.



## *Yiasou Festival 2021 A Drive Thru Event*



*Photos provided by and courtesy of Georgia Pappas Blathras, Elise McGinnis, John Shelton, and Olga Yamalis*



## Yiasou Festival 2021 A Drive Thru Event



### Yiasou Greek Festival 2021 Thank You Sponsors & Supporters!



Photos provided by and courtesy of Georgia Pappas Blathras, Elise McGinnis, John Shelton, and Olga Yamalis



**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE** by Nick and Carmen Kallelis**LESSONS LEARNED**

We learned the pandemic was devastating for many. Personal hardships still remain for some. We do not know for certain what the future holds for this virus which is still in the learning stage of the medical profession.

On one hand, we learned that the unexpected can happen at any time. Little did we expect that our church would be closed and that the largest fundraiser, the festival, would be cancelled. We learned we can not depend upon this event to support our expenses.

On the other hand we learned an enormous amount of positive things about who we are.

Our stewards of the church responded in many ways by helping others, volunteering to serve in the church activities, ushering, sanitizing, serving as cantors, etc. We witnessed stewardship at its finest.

We found a way to continue to function as a church providing all the necessary activities to continue with our mission and vision regardless of the roadblocks caused by the pandemic. We learned that the strength of our church and faith were evident throughout the entire pandemic. The stewardship of our staff and volunteers made this possible.

Hopefully, we learned that the future success of Holy Trinity is dependent on realizing we must become self-sufficient and not rely on the festival income for our daily operations. Festival income when available needs to be reserved for the unexpected, capital improvements and serving our community in times of need.

Let's all be grateful that with the Lord's guidance we were able to continue with our religious life and have become a stronger entity. Going forward we will become even stronger if everyone participates in our ministries, committees and become stewards of good standing.

We also learned how grateful we ought to be for being blessed with the leadership demonstrated by our Clergy and Parish Council. They found creative ways to keep us actively involved in all aspects of the church services and provided a safe environment throughout the difficult period.

Let's express our appreciation by doing our part and becoming MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING in Holy Trinity. Join a ministry, serve on a committee, respond to the needs of the church by volunteering even for only a few hours. Let's all be involved and not depend upon only a small percentage of our parishioners to carry the load.

October 24, 2021: From the AHEPA 45th Biennial Congressional Banquet in honor of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. Pictured at right

Left to Right Seated Ahepan Chapter #2 Archon Elect Dr. Terry & Heidi Sarantou, Bess Dimos Past Chapter Atlanta Evrytanian Association President, Louie Past Chapter #2 President & Irene Politis Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos President.

Left to Right Standing: Christina Melissaris, Archon Harry Cavalaris Past Supreme Governor, Archon Kal Kardous Past #2 Chapter President, Dr. George Andrinopoulos Chapter Vice President, Elaine Kevgas Past Grand President Daughter of Penelope & National Philoptochos Board

**PHILOPTOCHOS** by Pamela Bostian

We want to extend a special thank you to the ladies of Philoptochos and to all volunteers once again for their support of the 2021 Greek Festival!

Our chapter's Name Day (Agia Elpis) was celebrated with a luncheon held on Saturday, September 25th at Four Suns (Matthews, NC). A special 100th birthday celebration was held in honor of Mrs. Bett (Vasiliki) Kofinas during the luncheon. Mrs. Kofinas has been a member of Philoptochos for over 75 years and has served as president of our local chapter, president of the Metropolis and as a member of the Archdiocese Philoptochos board. Happy 100th Birthday Mrs. Kofinas!

Our Chapter held their first board meeting of the new year on September 28th. The first General meeting was held on October 14th. Meeting dates and times have been changed as follows:

General Meetings will be held the 2nd Thursday of every month:

3:30 pm: Agenda Review Board meeting

4:00 pm: General Meeting

**Save the date! 2021 Holiday Bake Sale**

Order Deadline: November 5th

Preparations and Baking: Week of November 8th

Order Pickup from the Church:

- Sunday, Nov 21st 12:00 to 2:00 PM
- Saturday, Dec 4th 12:00 to 2:00 PM
- Sunday, Dec 5th 12:00 to 2:00 PM

Order(s) can be placed and paid for at our website: <https://htgo.org/holiday-bake-sale/> Or Mail Order Form with Payment To:

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**AROUND CHARLOTTETOWN** by Kathy Xyrafakis**Sigmon - Pistiolis**

Madison Sigmon and Harris Pistiolis were married on Saturday, October 2, 2021. Madison is the daughter of Bill and Debbie Sigmon and Mary Ruth Hunter. Harris is the son of Michael and Vicky Pistiolis. The wedding ceremony was held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. After a honeymoon trip to the Excellence El Carmen in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, the couple returned to Charlotte and are building a house in Weddington.

**Congratulations**

Dr. Dimitrios (Takie) Hondros has been elected to serve as the next President of the NC Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP). The NCAFP is a medical association that represents 4,300 family physicians, residents, and medical students across North Carolina. The mission of the NCAFP is to improve the lives and professional environment of current and future family physicians so they can provide exceptional care to their patients and communities. The NCAFP also provides high-quality continuing education. As president of the NCAFP, Dr. Hondros will be advocating on behalf of its members and their patients to government agencies, insurance companies, and healthcare systems. In addition, he will be promoting the field of family medicine by working with medical students and residencies in the state.

**Hello!**

"My name is Adonis (Tony) Tsurunakis and I am a realtor in Charlotte. Originally from Baltimore, Md, I have lived in Charlotte the last 5 years with my lovely wife and have been an active agent for the last 18 months.

In that short time, I have been able to successfully sell a business (Mr.K's), residential property, and have over a million dollars of land acquisition deals currently under contract.

Having lived in Athens, Greece, for seven years, I am fluent in the Greek language and can assist individuals translating difficult real estate terminology and guide you through the complexities any given transaction has to offer. If you are looking to either buy/sell land, residential and/or commercial property, please reach out to me and I will be glad to arrange a personal meeting. Thank you."

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**AND HALF WAY AROUND THE WORLD**

October 17, 2021: Newly elevated Protopresbyter Stavros Kofinas (l) and His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew after the Divine Liturgy at the Phanar.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday October 17, 2021, the Day of the Synaxis of the Holy Physicians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew bestowed the "Offikion" of "Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne" upon Fr. Stavros Kofinas, Coordinator of the Network of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care. The Service took place at the Phanar in Constantinople.

His All-Holiness spoke about Fr. Stavros's contribution to the area of pastoral care worldwide as well as focusing on his coordinating the Patriarchal Network. In response, the new Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne referred to his love and affection for the Ecumenical Patriarchate from his youth. He spoke regarding the present crisis facing pastoral care saying: "Today the pastoral ministry of the Church, and

all the world as a whole, is in a grave crisis because it has forgotten what "remembrance" means and how this is related to historical memory... If we do not know where we came from and where we belong, we will not understand where we are today and what path we are to take in the future. Without this historical remembrance, the Eucharist will lose its diachronic meaning – the "do this in remembrance of me". Ungratefulness and the lack of love will dominate. We will repeat the same mistakes of the past and will not be able to obtain a wholesome ecclesiastical identity in order to face today's needs."

Protopresbyter Stavros Kofinas is the son of Mrs. Bett Kofinas and the late Tom Kofinas.

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL** by Elizabeth Raby

Sunday October 17, 2021: Third graders received their bibles. Pictured, l-r: Amalia Koutsoupas, Evan Holland, Lake Hefner, Autumn Coppola, Ava Coppola, Dimitri Pappas, Stephanie Prassas, Penelope Reedy, Vinny Mingo, Leo Manousos, Tatiana Fotinos, Sia Athanas, and Isadora Ioannidis. On the second row, their teachers Mrs. Joann Christodoulis, Mrs. Dora Russell, and Father Jonathan. Photograph provided by the Sunday School Department.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IS BACK IN FULL SWING! It has been a smooth start and it is great to see all 300 students. May this year be blessed. On September 19th, the Sunday School Department hosted a Meet and Greet for our parents and teachers and a coffee hour to welcome all of our new and returning families. We thank Father Jonathan for the beautiful blessing he gave all of our students and their classrooms on the first day of Sunday School on September 26.

We are extremely blessed and very thankful to have a talented and energetic group of volunteers who take the time each week to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for our faith with our youth. Please take the time to thank them for their dedication when you see them.

Grade	Teachers
3 & 4 yr. old	Parent volunteers
Kindergarten	Andreana Pappas and Effie Rodriguez
1st grade	Staci Pistolis and Chrysoula Xyrafakis

Grade	Teachers
2nd grade	Anna Georgalis, Soula Mitrou
3rd grade	Dora Russell and Joann Christodoulis
4th grade	Georgia Zavalis, Elliot and Lindsey Hillmann
5th grade	John Tsumas, Nick Pistolis
6th grade	Maria Sarris
7th grade	Mary Angela Ginosatis
8th grade	Rena Koufaliotis and Georgette Boukidis
9th grade	Stephanie Ross
10th grade	Deacon George Politis
11th grade	Drew Dudley
12th grade	Vaki Karampourniotis and John Shelton

On October 17th, our third graders were presented with their very own Bible to use in class and throughout their lives. Congratulations to our third graders! Below is the beautiful inscription Father

Christian included in each Bible.

*"Today you have received the Holy Bible. It is the very Word of God spoken to humanity throughout the ages. The Word of God contains everything that is necessary unto Salvation. It is the source of joy and comfort during times of struggle and despair. It encompasses every human emotion. It outlines all human affairs. It directs us to the path of righteousness and steers us away from the pit of darkness. It reminds us that there is great evil in the world. But that there is even a greater good -- God, Himself. And finally, always remember that 'He (God) who is in you, is greater than he (evil one) who is in the world.' (1 John 4:4)*

We are excited for another wonderful year. Our program is in need of your help though. We have several volunteer opportunities available, both in and outside the classroom. If you are interested in sharing your time or talent, please stop by the Sunday School office or contact [htgosundayschool@gmail.com](mailto:htgosundayschool@gmail.com).

**GREEK SCHOOL** by The Voice Staff

On September 8, 2021, the community was informed that Mr. Larry Peroulas was stepping down as Greek School Principal, effective immediately. He has served in that position for over twenty years. During his tenure, the Greek School program enjoyed tremendous success with a solid Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum.

Simultaneously, it was announced that for the 2021-2022 school year, the program will offer expanded opportunities with a Pre-K class (3+year olds), and a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade option for students who wished to continue their progress in Elinomathia levels.

Classes will be held in person and masks are required for all teachers and students in accordance with state and local guidelines. Classes began on September 14 with the traditional Agiasmo (Blessing of the Waters) in the Cathedral.

Please consider registering for any of the classes offered. Contact Office Secretary Kathy Xyrafakis at 704-334-4771 for more information. Adult classes are also available.





## 1000'S IN THE NEWS AT HTGO PRESCHOOL?

by Maria Kleto and Cindy Balatsias

*Jesus said "Let the little children come to me" then He took them in His arms and blessed them. Mark 10: 14-16*

**Welcome to all of our 2021 - 2022 Preschool Families!** On behalf of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Preschool staff, we want to first thank our parents for sharing their children with us and entrusting us with their care. We pray for God's blessings for our children, preschool families, staff and board members as we start the new school year. We are looking forward to many exciting times at the preschool this year.

The staff is always excited to see the children. This year more than ever since the school was closed last year due to COVID-19. There were too many unknowns with the pandemic and we felt keeping the school closed was the safest thing to do at that time. We appreciated everyone's patience and understanding as we navigated our way through these difficult and unusual times. At last we are open again and so happy to have all the children back at school!

It was with great anticipation that we awaited the return of the preschool children for the 2021 - 2022 school year. It is amazing how much they have grown in the last year and a half. We are so happy to see all our families and have our classrooms filled with our preschooler's smiling faces again. The transition into the school year is off to a smooth start and the tears in the younger classes are almost all gone. We look forward to watching the children develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and physically throughout the year. Our mission is to provide each child

with a positive learning environment allowing them to master the appropriate educational and social skills needed for school readiness. It is very rewarding to see how much the children progress each year, gaining confidence and independence in their abilities as they prepare for the next grade level.

The preschool opened on Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup> with the Open House and Agiasmos. The parents and children first gathered in the classrooms to meet their teachers and see their old and new friends. We then all moved to the Cathedral where Fr. Christian did the Agiasmos service blessing our families, staff and school for the start of the new year. The first official day of classes began the following day. Despite some tears from the children and the parents, the first day of school was a success. Many times, the separation is harder on the parents than the children, but eventually everyone settles into the routine. We are truly blessed to have a group of very dedicated, caring teachers on staff. They put a lot of time and effort inside and outside of the classroom preparing their lessons. They work hard to make their classroom environment warm and inviting where our preschool children can thrive.

Our staff members for this school year are:

Monday and Wednesday Toddler: Alexandra "Alex" Tatsis and Chrysoula Xyrafakis

Tuesday and Thursday 2 Years Old Class: Lisa Giotis, Stasy Skarlatos and Georgia Harakas

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 3 Years Old Class: Lisa Giotis and Chrysoula Xyrafakis

Monday – Friday 4 Years Old Class: Angelina Korinis, Andrea "Mahe" Politis and Stasy Skarlatos  
Co-Directors: Cindy Balatsias and Maria Kleto

In September, our classes focused on getting to know our friends, settling into the new routine, learning about the classroom centers and the class rules. We talked about being kind to our friends, sharing and taking turns, using our good manners and the appropriate way to express our feelings. We also worked on teaching the children to be responsible and independent. The children are so proud of themselves every time they accomplish a task or master a new skill.

In October, we talked about the beauty of the Fall season, the leaves changing colors, the cooler temperatures, farms and farm animals, fall harvest, and how animals begin to prepare for winter. Since October is fire safety month, we discussed how to stay safe in the event of a fire and learned how to "stop, drop and roll" and call "911". At the end of the month the classes held their fall parties and went trick or treating to the different church offices. We will also be starting our monthly religious lessons, "Our Faith Father", with Fr. Christian.

This just a glimpse of what is happening at our preschool in September and October. There are still a few openings in some of our classes. If you are interested in registering your child, please contact us for information or to schedule a tour of the preschool. We pray God will keep us all safe and healthy. Many blessings to our children and their families, our staff



*September 20, 2021: Preschool begins with the Agiasmos service. Above: Fr. Christian blesses the children and parents in the Cathedral. Below: Fr. Christian in the hallway of the Preschool blessing the classrooms*



and Preschool Board members, and to our Holy Trinity community for a good year.

Contact information: Co-Directors: Cindy Balatsias 704-502-3859 or Maria K Kleto 704-564-5842 Preschool Office: [preschool@htgo.org](mailto:preschool@htgo.org) or 704-333-4961

**HOPE AND JOY AT THE PUMPKIN PATCH** Photos provided by Fr. Christian



## In Memoriam



*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." John 11:25*

### Stephanie Nixon Bell

(1987 – 2021)

Stephanie Ann Nixon Bell, 34, our beautiful angel and loving mother of three children passed away on Sunday, October 10, 2021. She was born on August 28, 1987 in Charlotte, NC.

Stephanie is survived by her three children, Stavros, Alexandros "Alex" and Arianna Bell; her parents, Spero and Georgia Nixon; her sisters, Christina and Nicole Nixon; her grandmothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A visitation was held from 5:00-7:00 PM with a Trisagion service at 6:00 PM on Sunday, October 17, 2021 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203. Funeral services were held at 11:00 AM on Monday, October 18, 2021 at the church. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

### Maria Katsanos

(1938 – 2021)

Maria was born in the mountains of Agia Vlacherna, Karpenissi, Greece in 1938, daughter to Kostandinos Evangelos Katsanos, Foteni and Evangelos Kaltsounis.

She was married for 54 years to Demetrios Nicholas Katsanos (deceased). She is survived by her children Foteni (husband Nick), Dena (husband Andy), Nicholas, Gus (wife Christine), Peter (wife Carrie), and Helen (husband Kirk); her grandchildren Strati, James, Jimmy, Maria, Demitria, Despina, Rachel, Melissa, Caleb, and Rory; and great grandmother to Ava, Michael, and Anthony.

She is also survived by siblings John (wife Sophia) Kaltsounis, Athanasios (wife Maria) Kaltsounis, Chrisoula (husband John) Doulaveris, Ekaterini Pendas, Spiros (wife Fotini) Kaltsounis, and Lambros (wife Spiridoula) Kaltsounis; and loving niece Ekaterini Doulaveris of Florence, S.C.

Her Trisagion (wake) was held on October 11th at 10:00 a.m., immediately followed by the Funeral Service at 11:00 a.m., at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 600 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203, then followed by her burial at 1:00 p.m. at Sunset Memory Gardens 8901 Lawyers Road, Charlotte, NC 28227. Luncheon to follow.

### Georgia Christou Katsoudas

(1944 – 2021)

Georgia Christou Katsoudas, 77, of Charlotte, passed away on September 12, 2021 at home

surrounded by family. She was born in Asimochori, Greece on August 21, 1944 and was the daughter of the late Angelo and Eleni Giannouli Christou.

Mrs Katsoudas was preceded in death by her husband Konstatin Katsoudas who passed in May 2007.

Survivors include her three children Frances, Elaine, and John Katsoudas, one granddaughter Joya Katsoudas and her "adopted son" Bill.

The family received friends Thursday, September 16th beginning at 10:00AM for the Trisagion at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, followed by the funeral service at 11:00 with Father Jonathan officiating. Burial took place at Evergreen City Cemetery.

### Serafim Apostolos Nasios

(1940 – 2021)

Serafim Apostolos Nasios, lovingly known as "Mike," fell asleep unto the Lord on Saturday, October 16, 2021. He was born on July 17, 1940 in Viniani, Evrytania, Greece to the late Apostolos and Eirini (Kaltsis) Nasios.

Mike is survived by his wife of 48 years, Maria and his three loving children, Apostolos "Laki" Nasios, Irene Chamis and her husband, Odysseus and Katerina "Tina" Nasios. He also leaves behind his three beloved grandchildren, Mary, John and Lily, who will miss their pappou dearly.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, October 21, 2021 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral with Fr.

Vasileios Tsourlis officiating. The family received friends one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

### Antonios Hristos Poulos

(1938 – 2021)

Antonios Hristos Poulos, 83 of Charlotte, NC passed away Friday, September 17, 2021. He was born on March 15, 1938 in Psilovrahos, Greece and was the son of the late Hristos and Agathi Makrozahopoulos.

Survivors include his loving children, Agathi (Aggie) Poulos and Hristos (Chris) Poulos both of Charlotte; his three brothers, Ioannis and his wife, Efstathia, Konstantinos and his wife, Stavroula, Dimitrios and his wife, Evaggelia, and his sister Maria Avgeris and her husband, Konstantinos. He is also survived by his sisters-in-law, Foteini Makrozahopoulou and Maria Makrozahopoulou, all of Greece along with many nieces and nephews. Mr. Poulos was predeceased by his beloved wife, Spyridoula Poulos, his parents, Hristos and Agathi Makrozahopoulos, and his siblings Athanasios, Andreas, Georgios and Eleftheria.

The funeral service for Mr.

*Continued on next page*

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## In Memoriam

*Continued from previous page*

Poulos was held at 11:00 AM on Friday, September 24, 2021 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The family received friends at the church one hour prior to the service. Interment was in Greece at a later date.

### Our Condolences

Our sincere sympathies to Mr. & Mrs. John Bisbikis for the passing of Olympia's brother, **Vasileios Boukouvalas** on October 22, 2021 in Agrinion, Greece. May his Memory be Eternal.

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## An Exhortation to Attend Church by Saint John Chrysostom

*Editor's note: This is an abridged version of the original writing*

### Churches Are Spiritual Ports

Churches resemble ports in the ocean, which God has placed in cities—spiritual ports, wherein whoever of us takes refuge finds indescribable calmness of soul, made dizzy from worldly business. And precisely as a calm and waveless port offers safety to the boats docked there, so also the Church saves from the storm of earthly cares whoever hastens to it, and grants the believers to stand securely and listen to the word of God with great calmness.

The Church is the foundation of virtue and the school of spiritual life. Just cross its threshold at any time, and immediately you forget daily cares. Pass inside, and a spiritual ray will surround your soul. This stillness causes awe and teaches the Christian life. It raises up your train of thought and doesn't allow you to remember present things. It transports you from earth to Heaven. And if the gain is so great when a worship service is not even taking place, just think, when the Liturgy is performed—and the prophets teach, the Apostles preach the Gospel, Christ is among the believers, God the Father accepts the performed sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit grants His own rejoicing—what great benefit floods those who have attended church as they leave the church.

**"Come to me, all who are tired and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).**

What is more longed for than [to hear] this Voice? What sweeter than this invitation? The Lord is calling you to a Banquet when he invites you to church. He urges you to be comforted from toils and He transports you to a place of comfort from pain, because He lightens you from the burden of sins. He heals distress with spiritual enjoyment, and sadness with joy.

### Why Don't We Attend Church?

Despite all this, few people come to church. We run eagerly to places for fun and amusement. We listen with pleasure to the foul words of actors and singers without getting bored. And yet when God speaks, we yawn. We don't mind the bad weather or the cold or the distance for our pleasure. When we are about to go to church, however, then the soft rain becomes an obstacle to us.

The martyrs shed their blood for the Truth, and we are concerned about a little distance to the church? They sacrificed their lives for Christ, and we don't want to toil even a little? The Lord died for our sake, and are we too tired or bored to come to church, preferring to stay at our house? Nevertheless, we must come, to see the devil being defeated, the saints winning, God being glorified, and the Church triumphing.

Come to hear the divine Word, and try to implement it in our lives. If we put medicine over our wound and it doesn't heal the same day, won't we put it on again the next day? If the wood cutter who wants to cut a cherry tree doesn't manage to knock it down with the first strike, won't he hit it a second and fifth and tenth time? We also should do the same thing.

But we may say that poverty and the need to work prevent us from attending church. The week has seven days. God shared these seven days with us. And to us He gave six, whereas for Himself He left one. What the widow of the Gospel did in the case of charity, we must do the same for the duration of one day. She gave two mites and received much grace from God. We must lend two hours to God also, going to church, and we will bring to our home gains of innumerable days.

Even if we found a whole treasure house full of gold, and on account of it, we were absent from church, our harm would be much greater—spiritual things are greater than material things—because material things, even if they are many and flow abundantly, we don't take to the next life; they are not transported with us to Heaven, and they won't present themselves at the judgment seat of the Lord. On the contrary, the spiritual treasure we obtain in church is not a possession that can be taken away, but rather it follows us everywhere.

### **"Yes, but I can pray at my house."**

Yes, it is possible for us to pray at our home also. It is impossible, however, for us to pray as we pray in church, where there is a multitude of fathers and where cries of petition are sent up to God in one voice. Church is more spiritually conducive than home. In church there is one mind, the agreement of the believers, the association of love, the prayers of the priests. The priests preside over the services—so that the weaker prayers of the people are strengthened with their stronger prayers, and thus all together they ascend to Heaven.

St. John lived from 347 to 407 and is one of the greatest saints of our Church. A prolific writer, he served as Archbishop of Constantinople. He was fearless when preaching the Holy Gospel, and also when standing up for the truth. He died while in exile in 403. Among the many accomplishments and writings of St. John, the Divine Liturgy that all Orthodox Churches throughout the world celebrates is attributed to him. His homilies are read by Christians of multiple denominations throughout the world and throughout time.



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