



THE VOICE

CELEBRATING CHARLOTTE'S GREEK COMMUNITY NEWS AND HISTORY

Η  ωνη
ΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΟΣ

VOL. 81
NO. 06

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL



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

600 EAST BLVD

CHARLOTTE, NC 28203

704-334-4771

www.htgo.org

NOV/DEC 2021



December 19, 2021: Previous recipients join in the recognition and celebration of the the most recent Archangel Michael Award honorees. Read more about the awards in Around Charlottetown, page 11.



Commemoration and celebration of "Oxi Day" by the Greek School



Congratulations to the Senior Girls Basketball Team which took First Place at the 2021 Winter Youth Rally in Atlanta, GA

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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HOLY TRINITY
Greek Orthodox Cathedral



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THE EDITOR'S NOTE by George Zogzas

Dear Readers:
Welcome back.

Happy New Year to our entire community. Calendar 2022 has dawned and 2021 is behind us. As with every dawn, hope and optimism for better days are renewed in each of us.

Holy Trinity was blessed to have native son (baptized George Tatsis) and now Metropolitan of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA, His Eminence Gregory of Nyssa, celebrate the Divine Liturgy and Christmas Eve service. Adding his voice to those of our own clergy, chanters, and choir, made for a memorable experience for the worshipers that filled the pews on this Friday evening. His remarks after the service revealed his deep commitment to our faith and its unwavering message of love, and his own love and fondness for the Charlotte community where he grew up.

Parish Council and Foundation elections resumed after a one year suspension. While the outcomes were not in doubt, some exciting developments in voting made their debut. We reached out to the newly elected parish council members to ask about their plans for their time on council. See their responses and more on pages 6 and 15.

George Petsas has joined the Cathedral staff as the facilities coordinator. We sat with George to find out a little about him and his plans for this opportunity. Read that on page 15.

Thanks for reading and see you next time.

GZ

voice@htgo.org

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday Jan 9	VASILOPITA CUTTING HDF LUNCHEON AND DANCE EXHIBITION
Friday - Monday Jan 14 -17	HELLENIC DANCE FESTIVAL Orlando, Florida
Monday Jan 17	FEASTDAY OF SAINT ANTHONY Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM
Tuesday Jan 18	FEASTDAY OF SAINT ATHANASIOS Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM
Thursday Jan 20	FEASTDAY OF SAINT EUTHYMOS Orthros and Divine Liturgy 5:00PM
Tuesday Jan 25	FEASTDAY OF SAINT GREGORY Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30AM

REMINDER:

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

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600 East Boulevard

Charlotte, NC 28203

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

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Associate & Youth Priest

Fr. Christian Siskos,

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for advertisements is:

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REFLECTIONS FROM
THE PULPIT

by Father Vasileios Tsourlis
Protopresbyter, Dean of the Cathedral and
Vicar of the Northeast Conference
of the Metropolis of Atlanta

Αγαπημένοι εν Κυρίω αδελφοί,

«*Ἡ Γέννησίς σου Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἀνέτειλε
τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως....*»

Από την αρχαιοτάτη εποχή της ιστορίας της ανθρωπότητας, η θρησκευτική συνείδηση όλων των λαών βρισκόταν σ' ένα φοβερό σκοτάδι. Αυτό ήταν φυσικό, επειδή ήταν αδύνατον για τον πεπερασμένο ανθρώπινο νου να βρει την λύση των δυσκολότατων προβλημάτων για την καταγωγή του κόσμου και τις πηγές του καλού και του κακού. Χρειαζόταν η θεία Αποκάλυψη. Αυτή μόνο θα μπορούσε να δώσει την απάντηση. Υπήρχε μόνο ένας εκλεκτός λαός του Θεού, ο λαός του Ισραήλ, στον οποίο η αποκάλυψη δόθηκε ακόμα από την αρχαιότατη εποχή της Ιστορίας του.

Αλλά και αυτός ο εκλεκτός λαός του Θεού, όπως και κάθε άλλος λαός, αποτελούσε μία μάζα, την οποία η Αγία Γραφή ονομάζει «*λαὸν τῆς γῆς*» (Δ' Βασ. 15, 5). Μία άλλη όμως πολύ πιο μικρή ομάδα των αληθινά εκλεκτών του Θεού, εκείνη των προπατόρων και «*πάντων τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος Θεῷ εὐαρεστησάντων ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἄχρι καὶ Ἰωσήφ, τοῦ Μνήστορος τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου*», τους οποίους τιμᾷ η Αγία μας Εκκλησία τις δύο Κυριακές, οι οποίες προηγούνται της Γεννήσεως του Χριστού. Μόνο αυτοί οι εκλεκτοί του Θεού κρατούσαν την θεία αποκάλυψη ενώ «*ο λαὸς τῆς γῆς*» πολύ συχνά παρασυρόταν στην ειδωλολατρία και δεν διέφερε πολύ από τους άλλους λαούς, που βρίσκονταν στο σκοτάδι και οι οποίοι δεν έλαβαν από τον Θεό καμία αποκάλυψη.

Οι περισσότεροι βέβαια, δεν γνωρίζουν την ιστορία των θρησκευμάτων, γι' αυτό θα σας πω με δύο λόγια μέχρι ποιου σημείου σκοτισμού έφτασαν οι λαοί αυτοί, οι οποίοι με τις δικές τους δυνάμεις προσπαθούσαν να κατανοήσουν τα βαθύτερα μυστήρια της θρησκείας. Από τους αρχαίους λαούς, οι πιο πολιτισμένοι ήταν οι Αιγύπτιοι. Παρά ταύτα, την πρώτη θέση στην θρησκεία τους κατείχε η λατρεία των ζώων! Φορείς της θείας δυνάμεως και άξιοι τιμής θεωρούνταν ο ταύρος, η αγελάδα, ο κροκόδειλος, η κατσίκα, η γάτα, ο πίθηκος, ο σκύλος, το γεράκι, ακόμα και ο ποντικός, το φίδι, ο βάτραχος και άλλα.

Ο τεράστιος ποταμός Νείλος, ο οποίος διασχίζει όλη την Αίγυπτο, θεωρείτο θεός. Ο βασιλιάς της Αιγύπτου, ο Φαραώ, θεωρείτο και αυτός ότι κατάγεται από το

γένος των θεών και ο ίδιος πρόσφερε θυσίες στον εαυτό του. Οι ψεύτικοι αυτοί θεοί εικονίζονταν με μορφή ανθρώπου και κεφάλι κάποιου απ' τα ιερά ζώα. Οι αρχαίοι αιγυπτιακοί ναοί χτίζονταν όχι ως τόποι προσευχής του λαού αλλά ως κατοικίες του ιερού ζώου.

Η λατρεία των ζώων απουσίαζε από την θρησκεία των αρχαίων Ελλήνων και των Ρωμαίων. Οι πολυάριθμοι θεοί τους ενσάρκωναν στο πρόσωπο τους την δύναμη, την αξία και τις καλύτερες ιδιότητες του ανθρώπου. Σ' αυτούς όμως αποδίδονταν και όλα τα ανθρώπινα πάθη: αυτοί είχαν έχθρα μεταξύ τους, πόρνευαν, εκδικούνταν σκληρά τους εχθρούς τους, όπως το έκανε ο ανώτατος θεός του ελληνικού πανθέου ο Δίας, ο οποίος εκδικήθηκε τον Προμηθέα, ο οποίος του έκλεψε την φωτιά και δίδαξε τους ανθρώπους να την μεταχειρίζονται.

Νομίζω ότι αυτά τα λίγα παραδείγματα από την Ιστορία της αιγυπτιακής και της αρχαίας ελληνικής θρησκείας, είναι ικανά για να καταλάβετε πόσο συσκοτισμένη ήταν η θρησκευτική συνείδηση των λαών, οι οποίοι κατοικούσαν στη γη την εποχή εκείνη. Τότε συνέβη αυτό το σπουδαιότατο, σε όλη την ιστορία της ανθρωπότητας γεγονός, το οποίο γιορτάζουμε σήμερα, η κατά σάρκα Γέννησις του Κυρίου και Θεού και Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού, του Υιού του Θεού, ο οποίος κατέβηκε από τους ουρανούς και ενσαρκώθηκε εκ Πνεύματος Αγίου και της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου.

Με την είσοδο του Χρίστου στον κόσμο, όλοι όσοι ζούσαν στο σκοτάδι και δεν γνώριζαν τον αληθινό Θεό, έλαβαν την θεία αποκάλυψη. Όλους τους φωτίσε «*τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως*», όπως λέει το απολυτίκιο της μεγάλης γιορτής.

Αγαπητοί μου, ας σκεφτούμε καλύτερα το νόημα του μεγάλου αυτού λόγου «*τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως*». Μήπως πρόκειται για το φως της διανοίας; Όχι, όχι, το νόημα είναι πιο βαθύ. Δεν φωτίζεται η κάθε διάνοια από το Φως το αληθινό. Ακόμα και ο θαυμάσιος νους των μεγαλύτερων φιλοσόφων, του Πλάτωνα και του Αριστοτέλη, δεν φωτίζονταν από το Φως της αληθείας, ενώ η διάνοια μερικών άλλων φιλοσόφων, ήταν τόσο συσκοτισμένη, ώστε αρνούνταν και μεγάλες πνευματικές αλήθειες, όπως ακριβώς γίνεται και στις μέρες μας.

Ασύγκριτα μεγαλύτερη του ανθρωπίνου νοός είναι η διάνοια του διαβόλου και των αγγέλων του. Άλλα σίγουρα όμως αυτοί στερούνται της οποιασδήποτε κοινωνίας με το φως και έτσι αποτελούν πηγή του βαθύτερου σκότους.

Η γνώση, λοιπόν, την οποία έφερε στον κόσμο ο Κύριος μας Ιησούς Χριστός είναι άρρηκτα συνδεδεμένη με το θείο φως, το οποίο φωτίζει τον κόσμο. Στο στενό σπήλαιο της Βηθλεέμ την μεγάλη εκείνη ημέρα της Γεννήσεως του Χρίστου άναψε για μας το θείο αυτό φως, το οποίο όσο μεγάλωνε ο Χριστός, φτάνοντας σε μέτρο ηλικίας τελείου ανδρός, τόσο δυνατότερα έλαμπε και τελικά έφτασε στο σημείο να είναι η λάμψη του αμέτρητες φορές λαμπρότερη της λάμψης του ηλίου. Επειδή το φως του Θεανθρώπου Ιησού, ο οποίος είναι ο Ήλιος της Δικαιοσύνης, είναι το θείο φως.

Στην Αγία Γραφή ο ίδιος ο Θεός και ο προαιώνιος Υιός Του ονομάζονται φως. Στην πρώτη καθολική

επιστολή του ο απόστολος Ιωάννης ο Θεολόγος λέει: «*Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶ καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία*» (Α' Ίω. 1, 5). και στο πέμπτο κεφάλαιο της ίδιας επιστολής γράφει: «*οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν τὸ ἀληθινόν, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος*» (Α' Ίω. 5, 20).

Ο ίδιος ο Κύριος μας Ιησούς Χριστός είπε: «*ἐγὼ φῶς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθα, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνῃ*» (Ίω. 12, 46). και άλλη μεγάλη αλήθεια για την ουσία του Θεού μας αποκάλυψε ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Θεολόγος, λέγοντας ότι «*Ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν*» (Α' Ίω. 4, 16). Το φως, λοιπόν, της γνώσεως το οποίο έλαμψε στον εθνικό κόσμο με την ενσάρκωση του Υιού του Θεού από την Παρθένο Μαρία, είναι ταυτόχρονα το επουράνιο Φως της γνώσεως του Θεού, πού φανερώνει τις σημαντικότερες ιδιότητες της Ουσίας Του, οι οποίες είναι το *θεῖο Φως και η υπερτέλεια Αγάπη*. Με την λαμπροφώρα διδασκαλία Του, την οποία πάντα επιβεβαιώνει με τα θαύματα, και με τις εντολές Του ο Κύριος Ιησούς Χριστός, έδειξε ότι είναι ο «*ἥλιος της Δικαιοσύνης, και με το θάνατο Του πάνω στο φρικτό σταυρό φανέρωσε ότι είναι και απέραντη θεία Αγάπη*».

Σήμερα ας ακολουθήσουμε και εμείς τους μάγους και ας πάμε μαζί τους με σεβασμό και πνευματική ταπείνωση στο σπήλαιο της Βηθλεέμ όπου είναι η Εκκλησία και ας Του προσφέρουμε τις καθαρές και γεμάτες πίστη καρδιές μας.

Σ' αυτόν λοιπόν, τον Ήλιο της Δικαιοσύνης, το Φως το αληθινό, το Λόγο του Θεού και Υιό της Παρθένου, που άνοιξε δρόμο μέσα σε τόπο αδιάβατο, ας αναπέμψουμε δοξολογία μαζί με τον Πατέρα και το Άγιο Πνεύμα στους αιώνες των αιώνων. Αμήν.

Σας εύχομαι από καρδιάς καλά και ευλογημένα Χριστούγεννα!

Χριστός ετέχθη!

Αληθώς ετέχθη!

Join our **Philoptochos Society** on
Sunday January 9, 2022

for the Annual Cutting of the Vasilopita
and fundraiser for St. Basil's Academy.

Sunday January 9, 2022

You are Invited to Father "C" Hall
for a lucheon and dance exhibition
immediately after the 2nd Divine Liturgy
to support our Hellenic Dance Festival
dancers.

Sunday January 30, 2022

The Greek School's
Three Hierarchs Celebration and
Luncheon after Divine Liturgy
Join us in Father "C" Hall

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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 1980's - 1990's

Charlotte Rehabilitation Hospital May 1981



Thank You

A special thank you to the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society for a gift of \$1,843. This money given so generously by the Philoptochos Society has been used to assist a total of six Rehab patients. Five of the patients needed artificial limbs and one patient needed a wheelchair.

In the photo above, Administrator J. Patrick Thompson accepts the check from (left to right) Mrs. Aphroula Anderson, president; Mrs. Mary Plumides, past president; and Mrs. Bett Kofinas, committee chairperson.

Philoptochos, which means friend of the poor in Greek, is an international organization. The Society in Charlotte holds the popular annual Greek pastry sale and helps groups and individuals in the area.

We are pleased that they have chosen to help Rehab patients who needed assistance.

Gears Start Grinding For Yiasou '80 Greek Festival



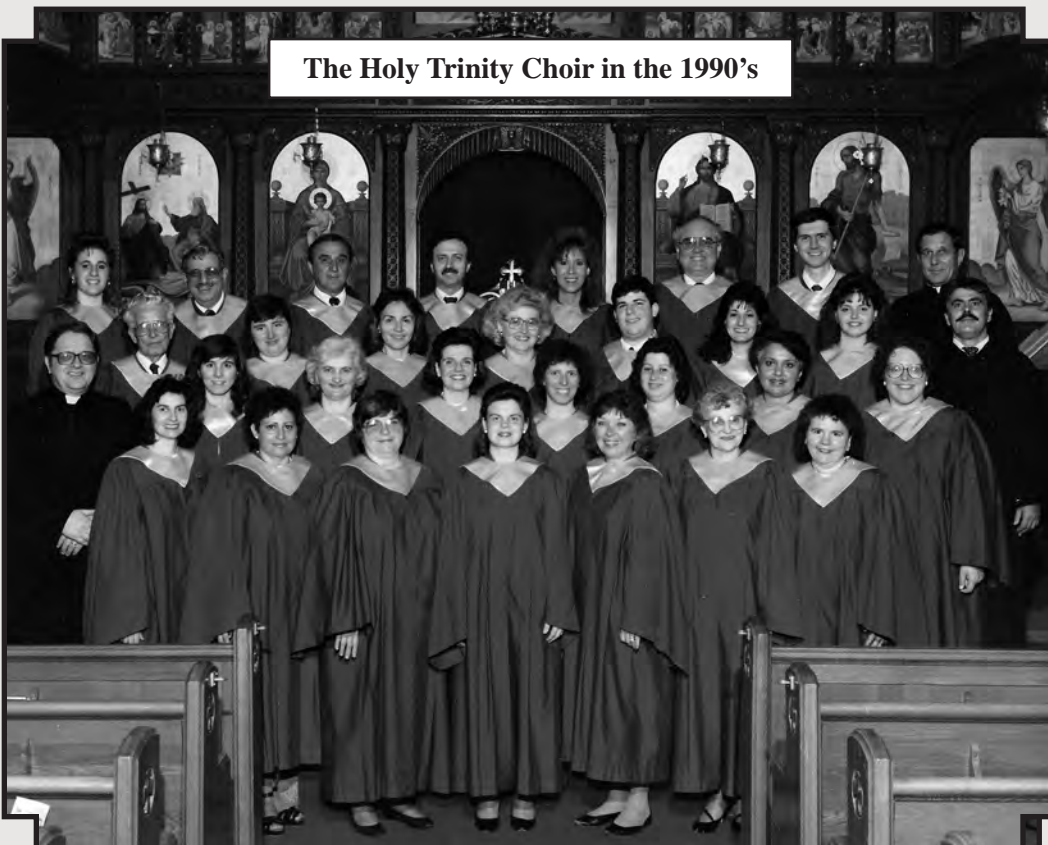
The Yiasou Festival continued to flourish during the 1980's and 1990's. The festival received much recognition and awards during these years and since then has become one of the largest cultural events in Charlotte. Pictured above, L-R: Louise Kokenes, Presbytera Kathryn Constantinides, Voula Triantis.

Diocesan Headquarters Transferred To Atlanta

The Diocesan Headquarters of the Southern States was relocated from Charlotte, NC to Atlanta, Georgia in the Spring of 1981. This was a unanimous decision of the Synod of Bishops in March of 1980 in New York and a majority vote of 35-11 was made by the Archdiocese Council on June 28, 1980, in Atlanta.



The Holy Trinity Choir in the 1990's



The Ahepa House

Above, L-R: Harry Stathopoulos, Maria Kleto, Alene Fadel, Harry T. Cavalaris

The Ahepa House opened its doors on Sunday Sept. 14, 1980. It was the first of its kind in America. The structure was 3200 sq. ft. which included meeting rooms, a kitchen, and a social room. Many events for the youth, senior citizens, Sons of Pericles, and other ministries, took place in The Ahepa House. Unfortunately, years later a fire destroyed the structure, and it could not be restored. We will not forget the happy memories The Ahepa House gave us.

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
NOV/DEC 2021	1980's 1990's

Credits: Historical facts were found in the Xenophon Nixon Holy Trinity Archive Collection. Contributors: Penelope G. Karagounis Maintaining the Ties That Bind: A Social Geography of the Greek Community of Charlotte, NC, Anna and Joanna Pitsikoulis. Olga Kleto, Angelo P. Politis: History of the Greeks Facebook Page. 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 1980's - 1990's

Genetics Clinic • Heartfund • Cancer Fund •

The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Charlotte has donated \$2,000 to the Clinical Genetics Program at Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Father Phaethon Constantinides, Dean of the Cathedral, Steve G. Kokenes, President of the Parish Council, and James Kastriches, Treasurer of the Parish Council, presented the check to Dr. James C. Parke, Jr., Director of the Clinical Genetics Program and Associate Chairman of Memorial's Department of Pediatrics, on May 20.



Checks Presented to American Cancer Society, The Kidney Foundation and Heart Association



Sept. 21, 1986 - Above, Mr. Chris Economides is the auctioneer at the groundbreaking ceremonies for Hellenic Park with the first shovel winning bid by Costas and Nicole Melissaris. Hellenic Park consists of 31.661 acres. Located in southeast Charlotte, it serves the Greek and local communities with year-round sports activities. The park is also used for special events and church related activities.



Senior Citizens Dinner 1995

Above L-R: Presbytera Georgia Muksuris, Ritsa Neary, Zaharo (Sari) Lados, Lemonia Polites, Presbytera Ioanna Vlahos, Helen Gekas, Elizabeth Bakatsias

Below, L-R Chrys Strate, Mrs. Gus (Helen) Pappamihel (Amelia Danikas' mother) Voula Dimos, Panagiota Psillos (Margaret Nixon's mother) Father Tommy Vlahos, Presbytera Janet Kokenes Mamalis.



Above: John G. Plumides, standing, addresses the attendees at a banquet in 1987. From left, Father Phaethon Constantinides and His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos.



St. Nektarios

During the 1980's and the 1990's Holy Trinity had experienced yet another burst of growth. The need for another church was inevitable and the organization of a second church began. In August of 1998 the parish of St. Nektarios Church received its charter by His Grace Bishop Alexios of Atlanta.

2021 ELECTIONS

Elections

On Sunday, December 12, 2021, Holy Trinity held its Parish Elections. This was the first election day in two years since the 2020 Elections were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All members of the parish council each served one additional year (for a total of four years). Voters were electing candidates to fill five Parish Council and two Foundation seats. The five Parish Council members whose terms ended in 2021 were Mitch Christenbury, George Karres, Maria Kotrotsios, Gus A. Pappas, and Nick Pistolis. Only one of the five chose to run for another three year term (Karres). The ballot included four additional candidates: Dimitri Dounis, Dean Peroulas, Christina Skiouris, and Stacey Vastis. With five candidates for five open seats, all were assured to be elected (see below for results).

Peter Thomopoulos and Andreas Ziozios completed their five year terms on the Foundation this year. Unlike the Parish Council, Foundation Trustees who have served a full five year term cannot run for reelection. There were two candidates on the ballot to fill the two seats: Yianni Haralambous and Nick Nixon. They, too, were assured election.

This election saw the continued evolution of electronic voting (E-voting). As in 2019, Holy Trinity's voters could vote by computer at 600 East Boulevard on election day. Additionally, remote voting was available to eligible voters. (see more on page 15)

Results from the elections for Parish Council and Cathedral Foundation were:

PARISH COUNCIL	
Stacey Vastis	156
Dean Peroulas	151
George Karres	146
Christina Skiouris	126
Dimitri Dounis	122

CATHEDRAL FOUNDATION	
Yianni Haralambous	150
Nick X. Nixon	142

Meet the New Members

The Voice asked the new members a few questions. Their edited responses follow.

Dimitri Dounis

Q. What made you accept the challenge of serving on the Parish Council?

A. First, I think we are blessed in that we already have one of the strongest, most committed parish councils we have ever had and working alongside them will be both exciting and humbling. Secondly, I know that using my talents to support our parish and to carry out Fathers' collective vision will be most rewarding.

Q. What areas do you want to focus on during your term?

A. I will focus on carrying out the collective vision of our priests as well as our Holy Trinity vision of providing a loving and caring community for our parishioners, our children, our seniors, and our greater community.

Q. What opportunities and challenges do you see?

A. I often state that challenges are opportunities in discovery. Having a community as large as ours means that we will have multiple opinions on what our goals need to be and how to accomplish them. I also see this as an opportunity for the Parish Council to demonstrate strong leadership by providing clear and transparent communication of our goals and direction. With clear direction we get alignment and commitment. The pandemic era presented huge challenges. Yet, at the same time, opportunities arose. We developed new ways to continue to stay close as a community, to worship together, to provide stewardship, and to help each other. We improvised, adapted, and overcame.

Q. What would you like to see the community do to support your efforts?

A. Engage in active dialogue where we challenge each other. The best way to have constructive dialogue is to become engaged: attend assembly meetings, volunteer on committees, and give back. Then, work to support the decisions made by the Parish Council. Perpetual analysis causes paralysis and prevents a group from moving forward.

Q. Have you served on before? If so, when?

A. I served back when Father Michael Varvarelis and Father Philemon Patitsas were our priests. My term ended in 2011.

Dean Peroulas

Q. What made you accept the challenge of serving on the Parish Council?

A. My father and father-in-law's service within their respective parish communities was such an important and impactful part of their lives. Seeing many of my peers having served and continuing to serve, I felt it was the right moment for me to accept the challenge as well.

Q. What areas do you want to focus on during your term?

A. Youth ministries and continued improvement to facilities, however I am hopeful to be a reliable resource within the Parish Council on a variety of initiatives.

Q. What opportunities and challenges do you see?

A. Charlotte continues to grow as does our Holy Trinity community, and this

growth has its challenges. My hope is we can continue to improve our programs and build infrastructure that will serve the needs associated with that growth.

Q. What would you like to see the community do to support your efforts?

A. We are fortunate to have an active community which supports many ministries, initiatives and activities. My hope is for us all to continue that enthusiasm and work together through challenges with open minds and with focus on the long term success of our parish.

Q. Have you served on before? If so, when?

A. No

Stacey Vastis

Q. What made you accept the challenge of serving on the Parish Council?

A. It felt like it is the right time to give back to the community that I love so much.

Q. What areas do you want to focus on during your term?

A. I would like to focus on our youth programs. As the future of our church, it is important to keep them involved. If we provide an engaging program, they will continue to participate and their love and commitment to the church will grow. Covid has been particularly hard on our youth and we need to work hard to continue to provide programs that give them an opportunity to connect with others.

Q. What opportunities and challenges do you see?

A. I know the past couple of years have proven to be difficult for everyone. With those Covid challenges, here is the opportunity to evaluate what has worked well in the past, what no longer seems to be working and how we can enter into a new year with creative ideas and a commitment to change where needed.

Q. What would you like to see the community do to support your efforts?

A. We have such a supportive community. We might not always agree, but if the community keeps an open mind and trusts their parish council it is easier for us to serve the entire community. With community support, a willingness to compromise, and an all hands on deck attitude, I believe we can get a lot done together.

Q. Have you served on a parish council before? If so, when?

A. No, so I am excited to learn from the members that have and to offer my own insight and service.

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STEWARDSHIP 2021

AS OF 12/31/21

YTD FINANCIALS	2021	2020
Stewardship	\$677,465	\$674,424
Candles, Rentals, Other, PPP Loans	\$410,386	\$135,496
Building/Renov. Donations	\$221,710	\$290,385
Minus : Operating Expenses	-\$942,839	-\$953,750
Minus : Building Fund Expenses	-\$83,306	-\$239,634
NET SURPLUS / - DEFICIT	\$283,416	-\$93,079

A big THANK YOU to all who supported Holy Trinity in 2021! You should have received 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 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 will soon be introducing you, our parishioners, to a new on-line system called **Tithely**. It replaces the program we used for many years called **ACS**. With **Tithely**, each parishioner will be able to go online to change their address, phones, emails; make donations online and thru mobile phones, etc. It should also help with our emailing system, calendar and volunteer scheduling, and much more. We ask that you please be patient with the office staff as we learn and implement this new system.

PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY

by Peter Thomopoulos



M e r r y Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your loved ones. I wish you all the best in the coming year. As I reach the end of my second year in this role, I continue to be

impressed and so appreciative to the many volunteers in the community. We have so many people who give selflessly out of love for the community and desire to further the mission of the church. I would like to thank you all!

This past year has had its challenges but we have so much to be thankful for. We were blessed to reconvene and celebrate major feast days with our immediate and extended church family. We have been able to restart so many of our youth activities and gatherings that are integral to their spiritual development and the establishment of deep friendships. Through the generosity of our parishioners, we have shown that we can be festival independent. For two years in a row, financial stewardship has supported the expenses of the church. This is momentous as this has been a key

impediment for decades as we debated on how to move the church forward.

While financial stewardship is important, we need people to be fully engaged. To achieve our full potential, we need the commitment and many talents embodied in all our parishioners. We all bring a little something different to the table. The unification of these varying backgrounds, perspectives and talents is our ultimate goal. When we unite with love for each other, we practice our faith and embody Christ for which we celebrate this season.

I don't know in what role I will serve in the coming year. I am honored and humbled to have been trusted with leading such a talented group of people. It is my intent to continue looking for opportunities to drive further engagement. I pray we finally bring this pandemic under control and eliminate the divisions that have been revealed. If we focus on God's love and allow that love to shine through in our own lives, this is possible.

As with each year, this is a time of rebirth and fresh starts. With that I would like to ask for your forgiveness for my faults and mistakes over this last year. I pray this next year brings you and your family even greater blessings.

Χρόνια πολλά!

2021 Poinsettias for the Cathedral were donated in memory of and in honor of the following:

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Theodore Besseas
George Burlos
Nick & Zoe Dermatas
John Frangakis
Panayiotis & Athanasia Gesouras
Gregory & Georgia Giannibas
Maria Liras Hondros
Kosmas Kofinas
Gregory Kroustalis

Chuck Kutz
Evanthia Liakakos
Pete J. Mahairas
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Then the angel said to them. "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

**Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
goodwill toward men!**

Luke 2: 10-14 Orthodox Study Bible

Christmas Pageant *December 12, 2021*



*Pageant photos courtesy of the
Sunday School Department*



*Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy with
His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa
December 24, 2021*



Oxi Day

The Greek School celebrated this important day in Greek history on November 7, 2021 with a community luncheon.



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE by Nick and Carmen Kallelis

Editor's Note: The author for the following is unknown.

"My Dad Has Bees."

Today I went to his house and he showed me all of the honey he had gotten from the hives. He took the lid off of a 5 gallon bucket full of honey and on top of the honey there were 3 little bees, struggling. They were covered in sticky honey and drowning. I asked him if we could help them and he said he was sure they wouldn't survive. Casualties of honey collection I suppose.

I asked him again if we could at least get them out and kill them quickly, after all he was the one who taught me to put a suffering animal (or bug) out of its misery. He finally conceded and scooped the bees out of the bucket. He put them in an empty container and put the plastic container outside.

Because he had disrupted the hive with the earlier honey collection, there were bees flying all over outside.

We put the 3 little bees in the container on a bench and left them to their fate. My dad called me out a little while later to show me what was happening. These three little bees were surrounded by all of their sisters (all of the bees are females) and they were cleaning the sticky nearly dead bees, helping them to get all of the honey off of their bodies. We came back a short time later and there was only one little bee left in the container. She was still being tended to by her sisters.

When it was time for me to leave we checked one last time and all three of the bees had been cleaned off enough to fly away and the container was empty.

Those three little bees lived because they were surrounded by family and friends who would not give up on them, family and friends who refused to let them drown in their own stickiness and resolved to help until the last little bee could be set free.

Bee Sisters. Bee Peers. Bee Stewards.

We could all learn a thing or two from these bees. Always Bee kind and share your talents. An Orthodox steward is described in this story.




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PHILOPTOCHOS by Pamela Bostian

Our Philoptochos chapter has been busy over the past month preparing for and holding our annual Holiday Bake Sale. We want to extend a special thank you to the ladies of Philoptochos and to all our volunteers and patrons for making the 2021 Holiday Bake Sale a success!

Our Chapter provided donations to the following local charities: Doves Nest, Dilworth Soup Kitchen, Pass the Plate, Mental Health, Loaves and Fishes, Friendship Trays, Battered Women, Carolina Autism, In Reach,

Crisis Ministry, Empty Stocking, Pat's Place, A Child's place.

Our annual Christmas Dinner was held on December 7th at the Big View Diner. A delicious dinner and warm fellowship was enjoyed by all! See photos below.

Save the dates:

January 3, 2022: Board Meeting, Stack's Restaurant at 11:00am

January 9, 2022: Vasilopita cutting after the Divine Liturgy



AROUND CHARLOTTETOWN by Kathy Xyrafakis**Archangel Michael Awards**

Above, left to right: Award recipients Mrs. Rina Georgiou, Miss Panagiota Minakakis, and Mr. Costas Melissaris.



Above, left to right: Father Vasileios presenting the medal, Mrs. Irene Politis handing the certificate to award recipient Miss Demetra Karres.

On Sunday, December 19, 2021, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, Holy Trinity recognized its latest recipients of the Archangel Michael Award. Because of the restrictions imposed during the worst of the pandemic in 2020, last year's recipients were named but not recognized. That long delayed acknowledgement, along with the naming of the 2021 recipients, was rectified on this day. The 2020 recipients were Mr. Costas Melissaris and Miss Demetra Karres. The 2021 recipients are Mrs. Rina Georgiou and Miss Panagiota Minakakis.

The Awards are announced annually, selected by each parish in the Metropolis of Atlanta, to recognize and honor two servants that embody the best characteristics of the Archangels. The 2020-2021 Commemorative Book is dedicated to: *"Our faithful co-workers in our Lord's Vineyard, who selflessly and generously offer their time, talent, energy, skills and resources to the Glory of God and in His Holy Name, to transform our hopes and dreams for the Holy Metropolis of Atlanta into glorious reality"* See the entire book at <https://atlmeteropolis.org/archangel-michael-honors>.

Veterans Day Commemoration

On Sunday, November 14, 2021, Holy Trinity commemorated Veterans Day by recognizing the members of the community who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States or Greece. Pictured above are the veterans in attendance on that day. They are joined by Deacon George, far left, second row, and Father Vasileios, center.

Veterans Day is observed nationally on November 11 each year. Originally it was known as Armistice Day established to honor veterans of and mark the end of World War I (Nov. 11, 1918). It has since been expanded to honor all veterans. It was made a national holiday in 1938 and renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

George Andrews, pictured in uniform just to the left of Father Vasileios, chairs the Veterans Ministry at Holy Trinity. Please reach out to him at gandrews2018@gmail.com if you have any questions or if you are a veteran and want to learn more.

**Congratulations
Dimitri Kelly**

South Mecklenburg High School Senior Dimitri Kelly was selected to play in the 2021 Queen City Senior Bowl. The game was played on Saturday, December 18, 2021 at Olympic High School and featured the top high school seniors from Mecklenburg and surrounding counties. There are East and West squads, with 40 players on each.

Dimitri has opportunities to play college football with 5 offers of athletic/academic scholarships.

The Charlotte Observer posted an article featuring Dimitri. Read it in its entirety at <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/high-school/article256651732.html>.

At Holy Trinity, Dimitri has been an acolyte since the third grade. He also participates in the folk dance program which he says helps with his football play.

SUNDAY SCHOOL by Effie Rodriguez, Service Committee**Sunday School Fall Service Project : "Let's Help Feed the Hungry - Operation Sandwich," Sunday of Service
- November 21, 2021**

Our Sunday School classes grades 2nd through 12th participated in their annual fall service project called, "Let's Help Feed the Hungry - Operation Sandwich," which was held on November 21, 2021. The purpose of this project is for our children to work together as a team to help serve the Charlotte community. This year was a little bit different than the previous years. The children gathered in Father "C" Hall during Sunday School but instead of making just sandwiches, this year we assembled complete bag lunches. Each bag included two sandwiches, a fruit cup, one snack, bottled water, napkin and utensils. Altogether, the children made 600 sandwiches and 300 bagged lunches for Roof Above. This organization is the merger of the Urban Ministry and the Men's Shelter of Charlotte.

This project would not have been successful without the hard work and dedication of our Service Committee, all the parent volunteers and of course the Sunday School children who, working together, accomplished so much for a great cause. We thank you all for your continued support of our Sunday School Department and for your contributions to the Charlotte community.



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FR. VASILEIOS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 20, 27 AT 10:00AM
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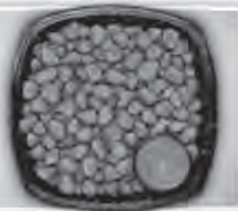
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WHOOO'S IN THE NEWS AT HTGO PRESCHOOL? by Maria Kleto and Cindy Balatsias

The return to the classroom this school year continued uninterrupted into the late fall. Our learning included many fun activities. In November, we started back with "Our Faith with Father", a monthly religious lesson with Fr. Christian. Both the children and the teachers enjoyed all the holiday parties. The Thanksgiving parties took place on November 22nd and 23rd and the Christmas Parties and Pajama Day on December 15th and 16th.

In November, we focused on reinforcing good behavior, good manners such as using the words "please" and "thank you" and showing appreciation when someone does something nice for us. We continued to talk about being kind to our friends and family, and taking turns and sharing with our friends at preschool.

In December, our main focus was on the true meaning of the Christmas season...the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. One of the things we enjoyed this month was seeing the preschool Christmas tree that was decorated with ornaments the children made. We ended the month with a day full of fun and celebrations...Pajama Day and the class Christmas parties. It is always fun to wear our pajamas to school, read the story of Christmas and to celebrate the birth of Jesus all together before getting out for the holiday break.

As we end 2021, our gratitude to the children and parents of our preschool for returning to the classroom, our appreciation to our dedicated teachers who care deeply about each and every child and their success in preschool and beyond; and our thanks to the Preschool Board members, the

Clergy, Parish Council, and parishioners for their continued support of our school and fundraising events.

Registration for the 2022 – 2023 school year will open in January and February on the dates listed below. To kick off the registration process, we will be selling the World's Finest Chocolate Candy Bars after the Sunday Divine Liturgies. Proceeds from the candy bar fundraiser will benefit the preschool.

2022 – 2023 Preschool Registration Opens on the following dates:

January 15th – Currently Enrolled Students and Siblings

February 1st – Orthodox Members

February 15th – Open Registration

For information regarding the preschool and for class availability, you can contact one of the Directors or the Preschool Office. We hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday and we pray that you have many blessings in 2022. Happy New Year!

Preschool Contact Information:

Co-Directors: Maria Kleto 704-564-5842 (m) or Cindy Balatsias 704-502-3859 (m)

Office: Email to preschool@hto.org or phone **704-333-4961**



Above: Our Faith with Father with the 3 year olds class in their classroom.

Below, far left: Christmas and Pajama Day in the Toddler's class.

Below, middle: Our Faith with Father with the 2 year olds, in the Chapel.

Below: Thanksgiving in the 4 year olds class.



ON THE OCF ROAD TRIP WITH FATHER JONATHAN

Father Jonathan continued his outreach to college students in the surrounding area. Below left: University of South Carolina OCF students sharing dinner in Columbia. Below right: Father with students at UNC-Wilmington



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

Nikolas Fotinos

(1947 – 2021)

Nikolas Fotinos, 74, of Iron Station, North Carolina passed away on December 7, 2021.

He was born July 22, 1947 in Viki, Chios, Greece to Michael Fotinos and Kalliopi Kavournias. He emigrated from Greece to the United States of America at the age of 23. Nikolas is survived by his loving children, Michael Fotinos and his wife Penny, and Dr. Peter Fotinos and his wife Virginia; his adoring grandchildren, Nicholas, Kalliopi, Panagioitis, and Tatiana; his dear sisters, Kostandina Flouris and husband Michael of London, Katerina Meligregoris and husband Luie of Canada; and many nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

The family received relatives and friends at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Boulevard, Charlotte, beginning at 11:30 am on

December 10, 2021 followed by the funeral at 12:30 pm. Nikolas was laid to rest next to his wife at Evergreen Cemetery.

Theodore George Karapanos

(1921 – 2021)

CHARLOTTE – Theodore George Karapanos passed away at the age of one hundred on Wednesday, November 3, 2021. He was born on September 23, 1921 in Kapsia, Greece, the fourth child of Efrosyni George and George Kosta Karapanos. Theodore "Papou" is lovingly remembered by his wife of 63 years, three children, three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Celebrating his devoted life are his beloved wife, Demetra; George and Angela Karapanos, Gus Karapanos and Jeff Harwood, Effie and Chris Burlos; his grandchildren, Amanda Karapanos, Kristina and James Craven and Anastasia Burlos and his great-grandchild, Kennedy Efrosyni Craven.

Funeral services were held at 12:30 PM on Monday, November 8, 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.

Helen M. Karris

(1941 – 2021)

Helen Karris, 80, passed away on Thursday morning, December 16, 2021. Helen was born in Paparousi, Greece on August 6, 1941, and was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Gus Karris, her parents, Dimosthenis and Ioulia Mandragonis, her siblings, George Mandras, Elisavet Tsatsaronis, Athanasios Mandragonis,

and Alexandra Maroulis.

Helen is survived by her daughters, Emmy Karris and Julia Karris Scordalakes, son-in-law, Constantine Scordalakes and grandchildren, Eleni Scordalakes and George Scordalakes.

Visitation for Mrs. Karris was held Monday, December 20, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Funeral Service at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

John Aggelos Katsikes

(1950 – 2021)

John Aggelos Katsikes, 71, of Erie, died Sunday, December 19, 2021 at Novant Hospital in Charlotte, North

Carolina. He was born in Lithohorion, Greece on July 25, 1950, son of the late Evangelos and Eleni Katsikes.

John is lovingly survived by his three children, Michael, Dean and Ellen; one brother, Costa of Virginia; and extended family throughout Greece. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Vasiliki; and two brothers, Christos and Aristides Katos Katsikes.

The funeral service was held at The Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, 4376 West Lake Road, Erie, PA 16505, on Friday, December 24, 2021 beginning at 9 am and conducted by Rev. Theofanis Nacopoulos. Interment followed at Laurel Hill Cemetery.



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Meet George Petsas



The newest member of the Holy Trinity staff joined us in late October of this year. George Petsas is the new Facilities Coordinator. We met with him to get to know him and to ask a few questions.

George Petsas comes to Charlotte from the Cleveland, Ohio, area where he spent ten years and met and married his wife, Georgia. She is the sister of Holy Trinity parishioner Dimitrios Dounis. In addition to being closer to family, Charlotte's weather appeals to George.

He finds the warmer temperatures and lack of snow more like what he knew when he lived along the shore in Greece.

When we asked George what his top priorities are in this new position, he chuckled and said, "to keep everyone happy." More to the point, he knows that everyone wants something at sometime when participating at events at Holy Trinity. He wants to do his part to make sure that those things are where needed, when needed.

To accomplish his goals, he will rely on his strengths: patience, organization skills, and persistence in seeking the best solution for any situation.

That brought up the next question, "What help do you want from the community to make this a success for everyone?" Facilities management involves not only the building functioning as it should, but it also includes the supplies and tools needed by each ministry that uses the facilities. Once the supplies and tools are organized, the users of those items can do their part to keep them in good working order and organized. If everyone does their part to stay organized, it will be easier for those that follow to continue to maintain the facilities organized.

George's concluding thoughts on the subject came back to being respectful. All of us being respectful of the facilities, caring for and maintaining them, is respecting the church and all it gives to us. By being good stewards of all that God has given to this community, we set a good example for our children and each other.

George is enthusiastic about this new opportunity and seems to have dived in with both feet. Introduce yourselves to him when you see him at the church.

HT Civics: Election evolutions

One in a series

Election Day returned to Holy Trinity in 2021 following the cancellation of elections last year due to the pandemic. Members in good standing could cast their votes in person on Sunday, December 12, between 9:30AM and 4:00PM ET. The Elections Committee, chaired by Leonidas Kyriazis, manned the polling station. The committee is responsible for overseeing the elections process, from the preparation and mailing of correspondence to the community, mailing out absentee ballots, to assisting voters in casting their votes, then tabulating and certifying the results at the end of the day.

Using digital technology, electronic voting (E-Voting) continued to evolve. In 2019, E-Voting debuted with the introduction of digital ballots using a computer or tablet. The voter could vote by tapping on the screen in the box next to the candidate's name. The advantage to the Elections Committee of this method was the speed and accuracy of the count after the polls closed. Still, all voting took place in person at the designated polling place.

Fast forward to 2021 and the introduction of remote E-Voting. Under this method, qualified members in good standing with a valid email address on file, were notified that the virtual polls were open and they could cast their individual ballot using their smart

phone or computer at home. They would see the same ballot that anyone showing up in person at the polls would see. They could cast their vote, then submit the ballot.

This feature is powered by electionrunner.com, a cloud based service that provides all the technology and mechanics behind the scenes to compile, validate, and tabulate the votes. The system applies the guidance provided by the Elections Committee. For example, E-Voting was allowed from 8:00AM until 4:00PM ET on December 12 only. If someone attempted to submit a vote outside of that 8 hour period, the ballot would not be accepted.

Eligible voters were notified via email at 8:00AM on the morning of December 12 that they could vote. The email notification included the voters' unique credentials on file at the Cathedral Office.

With no suspense as to who would be elected, with 5 candidates for 5 open positions on Parish Council and 2 candidates for 2 open positions on the Foundation Board of Trustees, ballot counts were low. There were 182 ballots cast, 155 electronically, 25 valid paper ballots, and 2 invalid paper ballots. The table below shows counts for the past ten years.

Election Results for Past 10 Years at Holy Trinity					
Election Year	Total Ballots Cast	Parish Council		Foundation	
		# of Candidates	# Elected	# of Candidates	# Elected
2021	180	5	5	2	2
2020*	CANCELLED				
2019	175	5	5	1	1
2018	262	7	5	1	1
2017	313	8	5	1	1
2016	206	5	5	3	2
2015	374	8	5	2	1
2014	326	9	5	3	2
2013	165	9	5	1	1
2012	164	5	5	2	2

* As the only nominee, Nick Kantsios was selected to join the Foundation in 2020.

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"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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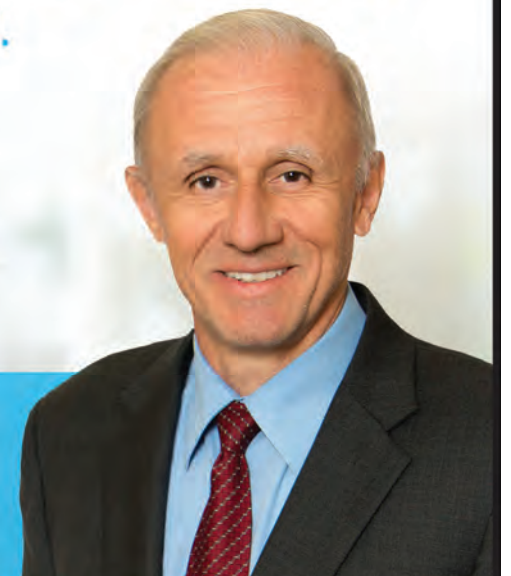
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