



# THE VOICE

CELEBRATING CHARLOTTE'S GREEK COMMUNITY NEWS AND HISTORY

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ΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΟΣ

VOL. 82  
NO. 02

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL



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

600 EAST BLVD

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MAR/APR 2022



Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!  
Christ is Risen!

Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!  
Truly He is Risen!



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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.

According to many accounts, attendance during Holy Week and especially Good Friday and Saturday midnight services, parishioners returned in large numbers to 600 East Boulevard to experience the full range of emotions. They range from the depths of despair from Thursday and Friday to the exaltation of Christ's ultimate triumph over death for all of us. We share some pictures on pages 8 and 9.

Our news roundup on page 4 details the Parish Assembly held on April 10, 2022, the delivery and installation of the new furnishings for the chapel and Cathedral, and introduces you to new hires Olympia Koutsokalis, Sarah Vastis, and Ronald LaBorde.

Our education programs take over on page 5 with Greek School, Oratorical Festival, and Preschool reports. Page 8 includes some great photos from the Greek Independence Day celebration held on Sunday, March 27. We can all be proud of the efforts and results from these important ministries.

High School senior Elaina Yamalis recounts her trip to St. Photios Shrine in St. Augustine, FL along with her very large class of seniors. This is a trip that the many senior classes have made over the years..

Thanks for reading and see you next time.

GZ

voice@htgo.org



*Our congratulations and thanks to Father Jonathan for stepping up into the role of Interim Dean of the Cathedral. You have carried out these new duties with a steady hand while maintaining a humble, approachable demeanor.*

### Holy Trinity Youth Ministries thanks:

**Dimitri and Yannoula Kakouras** for providing us with the delicious Palm Sunday lunch and

**Demetria Reedy** for organizing and executing our annual Pascha Egg Hunt.

Your dedication to our community is greatly appreciated.

## THE VOICE

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### HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

600 East Boulevard

Charlotte, NC 28203

704-334-4771

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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 Priest and Youth Director*

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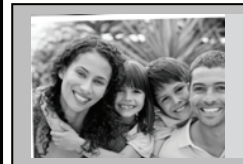
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#### Next Issue: MAY/JUN 2022 DEADLINES:

for articles or photographs is:

**Friday, June 17, 2022**

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

for advertisements is:

**Monday, June 6, 2022**

Email to **voice@htgo.org**



## REFLECTIONS FROM THE PULPIT



by  
**Rev. Christian Siskos**  
Associate Priest

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Our Lenten journey which began so many weeks ago has found its fulfillment in the empty tomb of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Our Church, as a loving mother and as the hospital that it is, prescribed for us all a method by which we might cast off the old-person (as St. Paul writes in his epistles) and put on the new-person, that is to put on Christ. Through the Lenten journey we increased in our ascetic practices: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. These ascetic practices are meant to target specific parts of our spirituality. Fasting aims at strengthening our will and curbing our impulses, prayer aims at uniting us with the Lord and His saints, and almsgiving aims at bringing us closer to our neighbors; those who love us and those who hate us. We can summarize this period of Lent as a time of waiting. We are waiting for the glorious resurrection. Unlike the disciples of Christ, we have the benefit of knowing how the story ends and so, making our struggle, our doubts a little bit easier to bear.

But what comes after the Resurrection? Immediately after chanting "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down death and to those in the tombs bestowing life," the Church, our mother, transitions our minds and hearts to focus now on the coming of the Holy Spirit. Great Lent was characterized as a period of waiting for the Resurrection, but now the period following Great Pascha, is characterized as a period of waiting for the Holy Spirit, the glorious descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles

as described in the book of Acts. We remain with the risen Lord for 40 days and during that time greeting each other with "Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!" But then the Lord departs from our midst and ascends into heaven. And this, Christ says, is to our benefit, because this way the comforter, the spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit Himself, is sent to humanity. And as we know, this constitutes the aim of the Christian life; that is the aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.

As we hear from St. Seraphim of Sarov, "Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian activities, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this end. The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, they are only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God. But mark, my son, only the good deed done for Christ's sake brings us the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All that is not done for Christ's sake, even though it be good, brings neither reward in the future life nor the grace of God in this."

While we prepared ourselves to receive His glorious resurrection, let us not neglect now to prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit, without which we will be able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. So that we may pray together

*"... All that is not done for Christ's sake, even though it be good, brings neither reward in the future life nor the grace of God in this."*

---- St. Seraphim of Sarov

and say:

"O Heavenly King, comforter, the spirit of truth. Everywhere present and filling all things. The treasury of blessings and giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us of all impurities and save our souls, O Good One."

### Calling High School and College Graduates!

**We want to hear from you.**

If you have recently graduated, or soon will, we want to know about it and feature you in The Voice.

Please submit a short bio with details and a picture to [voice@htgo.org](mailto:voice@htgo.org).

## PASCHAL HOMILY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

If there are devout and God-loving people here, let them enjoy this beautiful, radiant festival. If there are prudent servants, enter joyously into the Lord's joy. Whoever may be spent from fasting, enjoy now your reward. Whoever has toiled from the first hour, receive today your just settlement. If any came after the third hour, celebrate gratefully. If any of you arrived after the sixth, have no misgivings, you have lost nothing. If some have been as late as the ninth, come forward, do not be at a loss. If any of you have arrived only at the eleventh hour, do not be dismayed for being late.

The Master is gracious: He accepts the last even as the first; He gives rest to those of the eleventh as well as to those who have labored from the first; He is lenient with the last while looking after the first; to the one He gives, to the other He gives freely; He accepts the labors and welcomes the effort; honors the deed, but commends the intent. So, all of you, enter into the joy of our Lord: first and second, share the bounty. Rich and poor alike, celebrate together. Sober or heedless, honor the day, Those who fasted and those who did not, rejoice today. The table is full, everyone fare sumptuously. The calf is fatted; no one go away hungry. Everyone, savor the banquet of faith; relish the richness of His goodness.

No one need lament poverty, for the kingdom is seen as universal. No one need grieve over sins; forgiveness has dawned from the tomb. No one need fear death; the savior's death has freed us from it. While its captive, He stifled it. He despoiled Hades as He descended into it; it was vexed when it tasted His flesh.

Foreseeing this, Isaiah proclaimed: "Hades," he said, "was vexed when he met You below." It was vexed because it was abolished. It was vexed because it was mocked. It was vexed because it was slain. It was vexed because it was shackled. It received a body and encountered God. It took earth and came face to face with heaven. It took what it saw and fell by what it could not see. Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown. Christ is risen and demons have fallen. Christ is risen and angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life rules. Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the tomb. For Christ, having risen from the dead, has become the firstfruits of those that slept. To Him be the glory and the dominion, forever. Amen.

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## NEWS ROUNDUP by The Voice Staff

## Spring Parish Assembly

Holy Trinity convened its spring time Parish Assembly on Sunday, April 10, 2022. It was held in Father C Hall immediately following the second Divine Liturgy. A light Lenten meal was served. Ten members of Parish Council were in attendance.

Father Jonathan opened the meeting with a prayer at 12:05PM. He then conducted the selection of an Assembly Chairman. George Andrews was elected and took over the meeting from that point. Peter Thomopoulos was elected Vice Chair, followed by the appointment of Lucy Pappadakes as Secretary, Anna Pitsikoulis as Parliamentarian, and Drew Dudley as Timekeeper.

The minutes of the November 14, 2021 Parish Assembly were approved after James Cavalaris asked for a correction of the notes under New Business relating to Hellenic Tower Fund monies.

The Assembly next considered the selection of delegates to the National Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress to be held in New York City July 3-7, 2022 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel. The theme for this year's Congress is "Legacy, Renewal, Unity". It will include a celebration of the first 100 years of the Archdiocese. Holy Trinity's By-Laws allow for up to four delegates for this biennial event. The first two are the Dean of the Cathedral (Father Jonathan) and the Parish Council President (John Mahairas). Nominations for the other two positions were James Cavalaris and Harry Stathopoulos. With no other nominations, those four were elected to represent Holy Trinity.

Nick Kallelis reported for the Stewardship Committee. He noted that stewardship donations are slightly ahead of budget through March 31, 2022 and encouraged the attendees to keep it up. Mr. Kallelis noted that in the future, a growing portion of Yiasou Festival gains will be directed to capital improvements only and none to the operating needs of the Cathedral.

He expanded on the importance of all parishioners to complete and return the annual stewardship form. While getting an accurate estimate of financial support, it is equally important the contact information be kept current so that ministries can reach out to prospective volunteers.

George Karres presented the financial report through March 31, 2022. Of note was that total income is higher than budget and that total expense is lower than budget.

Chairman Nick Kantsios reported on the Foundation's activities and finances for 2021. (Find the full report on page 14).

George Andrews gave an update on the Centennial Committee activities. Beginning in September 2022, an event is planned for each subsequent month culminating with the Grand Banquet Gala to be held on Saturday, September 23, 2023.

Under New Business, Joanna Pitsikoulis recommended two books to the Parishioners that are available through Hosanna Bookstore. **Re-Introducing Christianity: An Eastern Apologia for a Western Audience** edited by Amir Azarvan, and includes a

chapter written by Fr. Jonathan. The second book is for children and is titled **The Thief Who Stole Heaven** by Raymond Arroyo.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:03PM.

## Greek School Director Hired

The Parish Council announced that Olympia Koutsokalis has been hired as the next director of the Greek School Program. Olympia's start date was April 26, 2022, with her primary focus on preparing for the 2022-2023 school year.

Olympia has more than 10 years of experience, and is currently a History teacher at Charlotte Country Day School. She received a bachelor's degree in Arts and History from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and is completing a master's degree in History in May 2022. Olympia's resume clearly reflects her passion for life-long learning and acquired strengths needed to be a successful director. We are so excited that Olympia has joined the Greek School team and look forward to fully supporting her as she takes on this role to help Greek School continue teaching our children the Greek language and culture.



## New Youth Director

The Parish Council announced that Sarah Vastis has been hired as the new Youth Director for Holy Trinity. Her start date was May 2, 2022.

The official notice stated that "Sarah has been an active volunteer in our community for many years and has demonstrated strong leadership in her various roles (e.g. Sunday School Director, Ministry Guide Creator, Cathedral Choir). She is passionate about working with our Youth and has special interest in incorporating faith education across our ministry offerings, including athletics. As a parent of young children, she has a vested interest in creating and maintaining Youth Programs that are organized and enriching. She believes in a holistic approach that includes opportunities for more full-family engagement in our programs".

A welcome meet and greet for Sarah was held on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> during the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual QCC Championship games.



## Meet Ronald LaBorde

Ronald LaBorde joined the Holy Trinity staff earlier this year on a full time basis as custodian. Originally from New York City, Ronald moved to Charlotte in 1998. He worked for Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools for two years prior to joining us at Holy Trinity. Before that, he was a cook for Compass Group, assigned to multiple locations throughout the city.

When not working, he enjoys working with his hands and listening to music, especially jazz. Ronald is the father of two, and grandfather of two. Please introduce yourself to Ronald when you meet him.



## Arrival of New Furnishings

On an overcast day, volunteers were on hand to unload the furniture from the delivery truck and take it into the Cathedral to begin the setup. George Petsas and Ronald LaBorde led the other helpers to transport the 40 chairs for the chapel, a chanter's stand, and an Epitaphio. Below are pictures of the new furnishings.

On Monday, April 11, 2022, a team of four (Fr. Jonathan, George Petsas, John Mahairas, and John Shelton) installed the new chanter stand and seats donated by Holy Trinity parishioners. All of our new wood furniture was hand carved in Trikala Greece.

Thanks to the generosity of many parishioners, our chapel, dedicated to St. Chrysostomos of Smyrna, is now adorned with the hand carved chairs from Greece, crafted by Georgios Mageirias. Please stop by the chapel to see them.



Below: Children hold their icons and participate in the Sunday of Orthodoxy.





## STEWARDSHIP 2022

as of 4/30/22

YTD Financials	2022	2021
Stewardship	\$256,548	\$298,423
Candles, Rentals, Other	\$138,369	\$64,524
Building/IRRC/Renov. Donations	\$80,480	\$76,978
Minus : Operating Expenses	-\$345,291	-\$295,000
Minus : Building Fund Expenses	-\$54,990	-\$39,827
<b>NET Income (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$75,116</b>	<b>\$105,098</b>

★ **Your stewardship is needed year-round.** Especially during the summer months when people go on vacations and Church attendance drops. The Church facilities remain open for us all summer with the a/c and lights on. Please come to Church as a family even though there is no Sunday School or practices. We need God in our lives all-year-long. **God and the Church does not go on vacation from us.**

Please call the Church office if you've moved or will be on vacation and have your mail "held" or "forwarded". **The Church's mail does not get "held" or "forwarded". It will return to the Church.** The Church then must pay the return postage.

<b>2022 Stewardship Budget</b>	<b>\$756,000</b>
<b>2022 YTD Pledges (186 families)</b>	<b>\$244,431</b>

☺ Many stewardship forms are being returned without pledge amounts. Please try and estimate how much you will donate so that we can financially plan better. Only 186 families wrote an amount out of the 251 pledge forms received.

## PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY

by John Mahairas



Xristos Anesti!  
Christ is risen!

Cathedral will flourish with activities and worship once again.

Time moves so quickly. It seems like we just celebrated Christmas and the birth of Jesus, now we have experienced the Lenten

season and his resurrection and the Glory of Pascha. Soon we will be celebrating Pentecost and observing our church's Name Day. It has been a very exciting time here at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. We have observed many religious holidays and we have also seen all of our ministries and programs flourish and become very active again. We all pray that the pandemic is behind us and our

I thank the entire community for their support and assistance in celebrating and planning a great Holy Week. We had unprecedented attendance at all of our services! It was great to see our church campus at capacity with the faithful attending and experiencing the joy of Pascha.

This year's Yiasou Festival will mark the beginning of a year-long celebration of our 100 year anniversary! Please make every effort to volunteer and assist with the preparation and the execution of our wonderful Greek Festival. The entire community needs to come together to make this event a success. I look forward to seeing everyone there!

In Christ

## GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

by Sophia Dimou Tsokanis, Greek School PTO President

On Sunday March 27th, 2022, the Holy Trinity Cathedral of Charlotte afternoon Greek School program celebrated Greek Independence Day. After having remote classes all last year, it was lovely to get together to celebrate this important date in Greek history.

Over 100 students performed traditional Greek songs, poems and dances in honor and remembrance of the Greek Revolution which led to the independent nation we know as Greece, or the Hellenic Republic. The children wore traditional Amalias and Tsolias costumes.

The Parish Council, Clergy and PTO also had the pleasure of honoring Mr. Larry Peroulas, for his dedicated service as the Greek School Director for the past 25 years. Mr. Peroulas, his wife and family were all in attendance. He was given gifts on behalf of the Parish Council and PTO.

A coffee hour followed, sponsored by the Greek School PTO.



March 27, 2022: The community honored Larry Peroulas for his 25 years of dedicated service in leading the afternoon Greek School program. Above left: President John Mahairas, Mr. Peroulas, Roula Skenteris, and Father Jonathan. Above right: Effie and Larry Peroulas

See March 25 Celebration pictures on page 8



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**SUNDAY SCHOOL** by Mena Nickolopoulos**2022 Oratorical Festival**

Holy Trinity held its local Oratorical Festival on Sunday, March 13, 2022. Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The Oratorical Festival Program begins at the parish level and is divided into two divisions:

Junior Division for students in grades 7-9

Senior Division for student in grades 10-12

We had a total of seven orators present this year. Congratulations to our junior division finalists, Angela Christodoulis and Dimitri Katsanos and to the senior division finalists, Vicky Koukoutsis and Gabriella Meletiou.

The top speakers in the Junior and Senior Divisions advance to the district level. Holy Trinity is part of the Northeast Conference of the Metropolis of Atlanta which held its District Oratorical Festival at the Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church in Greensboro, NC on April 9, 2022. Two finalists in each of the seven districts will participate at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival. The Metropolis Festival will be held the weekend of May 13-15, 2022 at Holy Trinity - Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Birmingham, AL.



**Oratorical Festival Participants:** March 13, 2022, Above, left-right Deacon George, Father Christian, Ava Russell, Angela Christodoulis, John Michael Xyrafakis, Dimitri Katsanos, James Vastis, Nicole Vastis, Vicky Koukoutsis, and Gabriella Meletiou

At the District Competition, Dimitri Katsanos won second place in the Junior Division and will compete at the Metropolis Festival in May. Angela Christodoulis and Vicky Koukoutsis received honorable mention.



**Oratorical Festival District Participants:** April 9, 2022, The participants at the Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church in Greensboro, NC. Holy Trinity's Vicky Koukoutsis (4th from left); Angela Christodoulis (6th from right) and Dimitri Katsanos (5th from right) with the other participants.

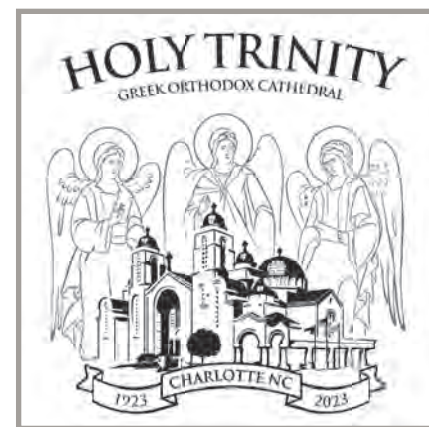
The top speaker in each metropolis division is then selected to participate in the Archdiocese Finals, which is hosted by a different metropolis each year.

The 38th National Oratorical Festival will be hosted by the Metropolis of Denver at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas Texas June 3-5, 2022. All eighteen finalists (two from each Metropolis) at the National Festival will participate in a weekend of activities, the highlight of which is the delivery of their speeches on Saturday morning. The Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund provides college scholarships to the top speakers. Currently, the top three speakers of each division receive college scholarships of \$2,000, \$1,500 and \$1,000. This year, each Honorable Mention speaker will be awarded \$500.

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION** by Jimmy Demopoulos**Sponsorship**

Over the last month, announcement and introductory information has gone out regarding the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral Centennial Celebration. Our 100 years of existence deserves nothing short of a year-long celebration. Events will formally kick off on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, during the Yiasou Greek Festival where Charlotte leaders and the community will be dedicating a Historical Marker at our East Boulevard campus. Celebrations will continue with planned events commemorating different aspects of our community leading up to the Grand Banquet Finale Celebration on September 23, 2023. A Commemorative Centennial Album is being designed to capture our parish history and to include highlights of this Centennial celebration. This will include an opportunity for personal commemorative advertisements to capture your own family histories in conjunction with our community. This momentous celebration will be honored with the installation of a Centennial Icon that captures all of Holy Trinity's places of worship.

There are many ways to support this Centennial celebration, whether it be through volunteering during events, joining one of the Centennial committees, or becoming a sponsor. Your support is an integral part of this Centennial Celebration's success. In fact, the Centennial would be the capstone of all the tremendous support received over the last 100 years! Our great-grandparents, grand-parents, parents, children and our children's children are all part of this amazing and rich legacy that Holy Trinity has bestowed upon Charlotte, our families and our own lives. Through the Lord's grace and guidance, our community has touched so many lives, and that could



not have been possible without your support.

Sponsorship for the Centennial celebration will provide the means to properly honor the 100 years of blood, sweat, and tears shed by our forebears that established this community in Charlotte. The Centennial is more than just a year-long celebration, it is a year-long commemoration of every single person that has devoted their time, energy and resources to the community we know and cherish today. Your sponsorship will give us the opportunity to properly honor those individuals and ensure they are memorialized forever. To that end, there are multiple ways to sponsor this momentous celebration:

We kindly ask that you review the options and submit your sponsorships by August 1, 2022. You can pick up a sponsorship form in the church office or email us at [htgocentennial@gmail.com](mailto:htgocentennial@gmail.com). Your support is very much appreciated and will be the foundation of creating a memorable and deserved commemoration of the first 100 years of Holy Trinity's existence.

**PLATINUM:** \$20,000 and above

Banner logo recognition  
Program recognition  
2 pages in the Centennial album

**GOLD:** \$10,000-\$19,999

Banner logo recognition  
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## WHOOO'S IN THE NEWS AT HTGO PRESCHOOL? *by Maria Kleto*

Christos Anesti...  
Christi is Risen!

March's main focus was on the start of the Lenten Season and the Journey to Pascha. We also had several big celebrations this month, especially the Annunciation of the Theotokos and Greek Independence Day. We celebrated these special days by coloring icons, decorating wreaths, making Greek Flags, and by singing the Greek National Anthem. The Lenten lessons included the Entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus washing the Disciples feet, the Last Supper, and Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection. The children practiced saying Kalo Pascha, Kali Anastasi, Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti and learned to sing the Christos Anesti hymn in Greek.

With the blowing in of the March winds, the children learned about the windy spring weather and flying "diamond shaped" kites. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, we talked about St. Patrick's Day and how the three leaves on the shamrock

represent the three aspects of the Holy Trinity... the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As the April showers rained down upon us, it brought with it the renewal of the beautiful Spring season. The children looked forward to being able to spend more time outside enjoying the warmer weather and taking nature walks. These walks are not only fun and good exercise, they also offer a learning opportunity to discuss the reawakening of spring, insects and animals, life cycles, April showers, flowers and rainbows.

The Preschool was closed April 11<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> for Spring Break. We returned in time for our Holy Week. Each class celebrated Pascha with an Easter Party and an Easter Egg Hunt on April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The children really enjoyed their parties and they very quickly found all the hidden Easter eggs. Parents helped the staff prepare for the Easter parties and egg hunts.

Some of the other topics covered in April included baby birds and bird's

nests, baby chicks, bunnies and squirrels, insects, and caring for our planet to name a few.

The classes focused on the colors green, blue, and yellow and different shapes including the cross, shamrock, and diamond. The children continued to work on sharing, taking turns, following directions, the alphabet, numbers and counting, colors, shapes, the days of the week, the months, improving fine motor skills, sorting, matching, and sequencing. In addition to those skills, the older classes learned to recognize and write their names. The two, three, and four year old classes had their parent teacher conferences to review areas where the children are excelling and areas for improvement. The Preschool goal is to prepare each child academically, emotionally and socially to be ready to move on to the next grade level.

During Lent, the preschool held its annual fundraising project selling luminary bags purchased "In Memory of" or "In Honor of" a loved one. All

the names from the luminaries are given to our priests to be blessed during the services. The luminary bags are lit and displayed outside of the church during the Holy Friday evening procession. It was a beautiful way of remembering and blessing our loved ones as we rejoice in the miracle of the Resurrection. This fundraiser was a huge success and we thank everyone in the community for your support.

Registration for the 2022 – 2023 school year is on-going. Please contact us for information about our program, class availability, registration information or to schedule a tour.

### HTGOP Contact Information

Email: [preschool@htgo.org](mailto:preschool@htgo.org),

Director:

Maria K Kleto 704-564-5842

Office Number: 704-333-4961

## SENIOR TRIP TO ST. PHOTIOS *by Elaina Yamalis*

Our Sunday School class took its annual trip to St. Photios in St. Augustine, FL from Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. We had a very large group consisting of 27 Seniors, 4 chaperones, and Father Jonathan. This annual trip is awarded to the Senior class.

Thursday was mainly a traveling day from Charlotte to Jacksonville. On Friday, we toured the St. Photios shrine. It

is beautiful filled with icons all written in Greek. This shrine is the birthplace of the Greek Orthodox faith in America.

Later we explored St. Augustine on a guided tour learning about the significant history of the city and how it was founded. The day ended with a Lenten meal provided by our church.

On Saturday we participated in a service project with the

youth of our sister church, St. John the Divine in Jacksonville. We split into different groups and provided help where we best fit. We wrote cards for shut-ins, crocheted prayer shawls for the church, and made care packages for people in Ukraine.

Afterwards, we went on a tour of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) where we were welcomed and our group was taken on a tour of the building. We were taught

about the different aspects of missionary efforts and ended the tour with a riveting game of Jeopardy. Later, we spent quality time and relaxed at the beach. On Sunday, we attended Divine Liturgy at St. John the Divine in their new cathedral, said our goodbyes to our new friends, and began the journey back after the service.

This trip will always remain a cherished memory for me. It was a journey back to our

spiritual roots and a time for reflection on our faith. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend as it prepared me for my road to adulthood. To Father Jonathan, our chaperones, and Parish Council, thank you for providing us with a community that allows us this opportunity and encourages growth in our faith. To my classmates, thank you for the memories over the years and on this trip.



March 17, 2022: Seniors ready to board for St. Photios. Front, L-R: Kosta Tsourlis, Dimitri Kelly, Theo Karres, Dimitri Brikas, Maria Kaltsounis, Maria Holevas, Vicky Koukoutsis, Jenny Zaharopoulos, Yianna Palamaris, Briana Russell, Caterina Fiore, Gabriella Meleti. Back, L-R: Stilianos Lazaridis, Braden Dugo, Anthony Gillette, Maria Mahairas, Alexis Christenbury, Demetri Kanos, Elaina Yamalis, Father Jonathan, Alex Melissaris, Erinne Kastanas, Anthoula Pappas. Attending but not pictured: Stephen Tassios, George Matalas, Vasili Limbanovnos, Panos Vlahos.



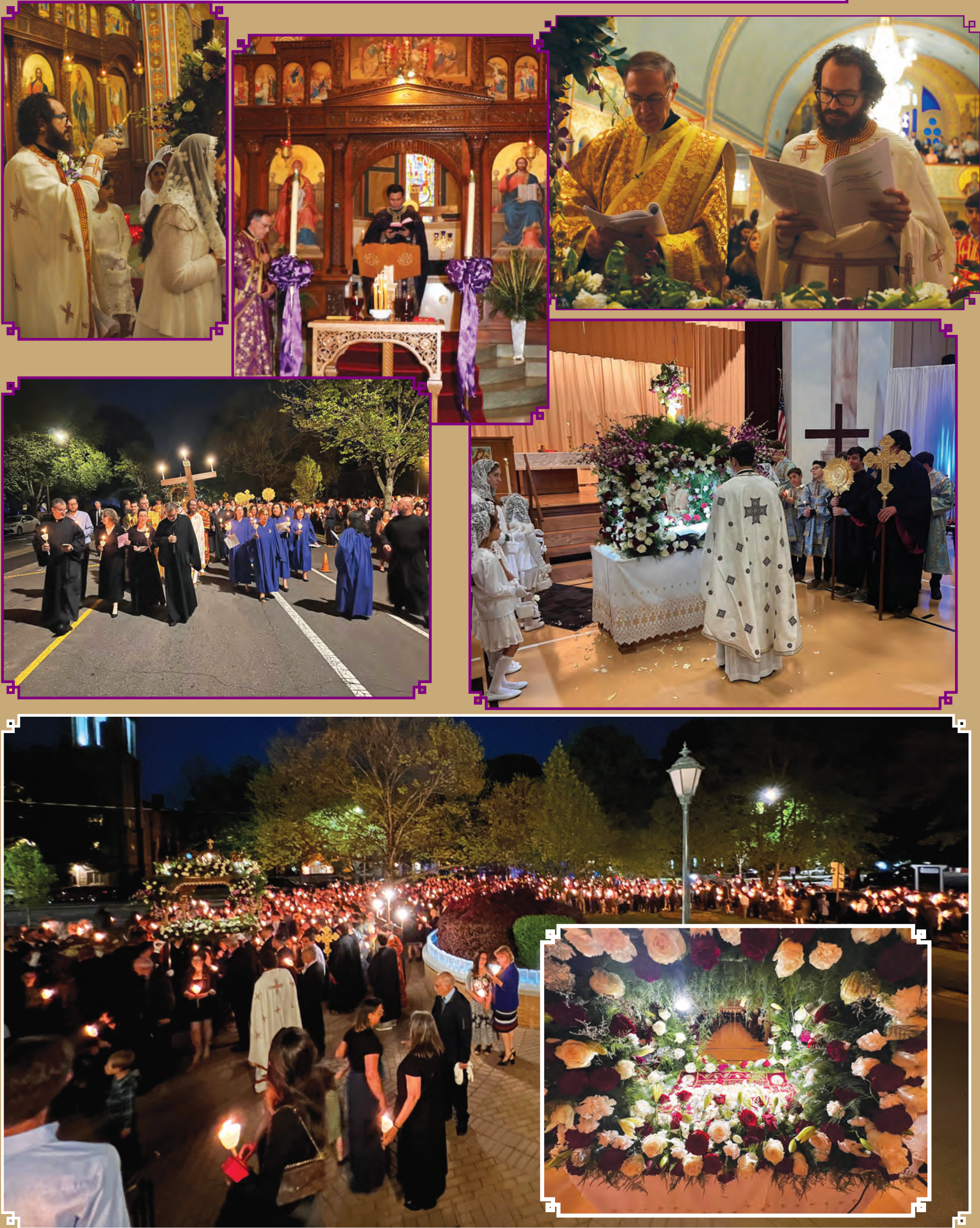
## Greek School Program's March 25 Celebration

*Read about the celebration and Larry Peroulas on page 5*





HOLY WEEK AND GREAT PASCHA





**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE** by Nick and Carmen Kallelis**Stewardship Misconceptions**

There are several misconceptions regarding the stewardship committee.

Misconception #1. There is a sense that the stewardship committee is always asking for money. This is a misconception since all the committee does is report on the status of the financial support which the parishioners approved when the budget was voted on at the annual General Assembly Meeting. The stewardship committee does not determine or request financial contributions. The committee communicates to the parishioners the need to fulfill their obligation, which was set by an approved budget. The committee is not asking for money, but rather issuing a report card on how the church members are fulfilling their commitment and fully supporting Holy Trinity.

Misconception #2. In the past it was considered that our festival was the main source of income, which should be used to cover stewardship shortfall. This is another misconception. Financial support by way of stewardship is the way we are to do the Lord's work. The previous two years are evidence that we need to be self-supporting and cannot rely on the festival to cover our expenses. Depending on the Charlotte community, or in the case last year the government, to support our expenses is not living up to our responsibility to sustain our financial commitment.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP VOTED TO INCREMENTALLY INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FESTIVAL INCOME THAT WAS TO BE DEDICATED TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS. Within the next few years all festival income will be reserved for capital improvements and stewardship will have to pay for all approved expenditures. We need to address this now and not when it becomes a crisis.

Misconception #3. Some parishioners feel attending the Liturgy their only obligation to be a member of good standing. How can we fulfill the vision of Holy Trinity if we all just attended liturgies? To truly fulfill the mission and vision requires ALL to be involved spiritually, financially, and participating in ministries.

Misconception #4. There is no need to fill out a pledge card since I am an active member. There are several reasons why this is a problem.

- Our records need to be kept up to date. Many times, contact numbers change and the office staff and our Priests waste time trying to locate individuals.
- Families status changes and we need to be advised for proper accounting of our membership and family situations.
- In order to establish a budget the Parish Council would be greatly assisted if the projected income was known. Currently, the budget is proposed in hopes that the income will be generated by stewardship support. In the past the shortfall was covered by the festival income. This will not be available in the future. Therefore, it is imperative we know the proposed financial support will be available to cover our church expenses.

If we all commit to fulfilling the vision of Holy Trinity, we need to attend Liturgies, financially support the church, and participant in its ministries.

**FROM THE CHOIR LOFT** by Olga Yamalis

Our choir and chanters are in the midst of the Lenten season. Thank you to both our choir members and chanters commitment during this preparation period leading up to Holy Week and Pascha. The beautiful sound of music enhances the services whether you chanted the Sundays, the Presanctifieds, the Great Complines, the Great Vespers, the Salutations, or the Akathist Hymn services. We thank you for your dedication and diligence during this time period of prayer and fasting. The commitment remained strong through the services of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and His Resurrection.

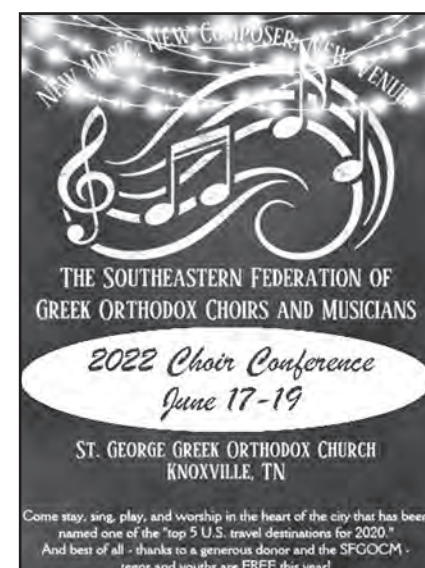


*Olga Yamalis leading a Hymnology session during a Sunday school class.*

The Sunday School rotating Hymnology program is well underway this calendar year for students in grades Pre-K to Fourth Grade. These grades receive 15 minute sessions from a choir member in learning both Greek and English Liturgical responses and hymns. This program serves to educate students and teachers of our Liturgical music used in weekly worship life whether for lifelong knowledge, sustaining tradition, for congregational singing or choir group singing. Overall, this program offers the Sunday School

students some variety and fun to their traditional class structure.

Our choir is looking forward to the upcoming Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (SFGOCM) choir conference to be held at St. George Church in Knoxville, TN on June 17, 18, and 19. Holy Trinity's choir director Lucy Pappadakes will be guest conductor. The conference will feature new music, new composer, and a new venue. This year's Liturgy will debut the music composed by Joann Andros Metropoulos organist at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Tarpon Springs, FL. She will be the guest organist of the conference. This year, thanks to a generous donor, teen and youth can attend the conference for FREE. In addition, a free district wide area rehearsal is planned to take place at Holy Trinity Charlotte on Saturday, May 14 to practice the music leading up to the conference. If interested, please see or email choir member Olga Yamalis at [olga3music@gmail.com](mailto:olga3music@gmail.com) for more information on this fantastic event.

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AROUND CHARLOTTETOWN by Kathy Xyrafakis

Politis - Varlan



Dr. Maria Dimitrios Politis and Peter Alexander Varlan were married on Saturday, February 19, 2022, in a ceremony at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Maria is the daughter of Dimitrios and Andromache Politis. Peter is the son of Georgiana Varlan. A reception was held at the Father “C” Hall in Charlotte, NC. The couple took a honeymoon trip to Finland and Estonia, and reside in New York City, NY.

PHILOPTOCHOS by Pamela Bostian

Our annual Philoptochos Membership Drive was held on March 1st at Meres Wine and Cheese Shop. **A reminder to all members to please pay your 2022 membership dues.**

Our chapter collected donations for Hellenic College/Holy Cross on March 27th, after Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross church service commemorations. Thank you to everyone for your generous donations!

Our Board and General meetings were held on April 12th. A Lenten Covered Dish dinner was enjoyed by members after the General meeting.

In preparation for Easter, egg dyeing was held at the church on Holy Wednesday, April 20th.

This year’s **Easter Bake Sale** included tsoureki and koulourakia and were sold on Palm Sunday after church service.

Five applications have been submitted and are under consideration for this year’s Presbytera Kathryn Tuntas Constantinides Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to a top female applicant in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Greek Festival Preparations will begin this summer; more information to follow.

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

Hello!

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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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Charlotte, NC 28209  
AdoniosT20@gmail.com  
443-226-9906



CATHEDRAL FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

To Holy Trinity Community:  
The Foundation is pleased to report that 2021 was another productive year that included a return to in person meetings starting in mid-year. In total, the Foundation held seven meetings in 2021.

Financial results show the approximate value of assets at the end of the year was just below \$1.7 million, up 9% from the end of 2020. Restricted funds of \$1,172,855 represent the total of all memorials, donations, and bequests received since 1973. Restricted funds can never be spent. Revenues totaled \$252,279 in 2021 comprised of \$167,000 in gains on sale of securities. Grants and donations made totaled \$57,984 (details below), or approximately 3.5% of average assets.

2022 marks the beginning of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation. A series of articles will appear in The Voice between now and then. We will cap the celebration by holding the traditional memorial service and the reading of names on Sunday, February 5, 2023, in the Cathedral. We hope that you will join us then.

Please reach out to any of the 2022 Trustees listed below with questions or email us at [info@htgof.org](mailto:info@htgof.org).

----- THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

GRANTS AND DONATIONS MADE IN 2021	
(sorted largest to smallest amount, then alphabetically):	
RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral (Centennial Celebration)	\$20,000
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral (General fund)	\$12,000
Individuals/Families in Need	\$7,484
Alexander Youth Network	\$2,000
Crisis Assistance Ministry	\$2,000
Hospice & Palliative Care	\$2,000
International Orthodox Christian Charities (I.O.C.C.)	\$2,000
Orthodox Christian Mission (OCMC)	\$2,000
Safe Alliance	\$2,000
Second Harvest Food Bank	\$2,000
St. Hermione Home, Inc.	\$2,000
Thompson Child and Family Focus	\$2,000
Saint Basil Academy	\$500
Total Donations and Grants	\$57,984

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## 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*

### Fr. Theodore S. Kyritsis

(1929 – 2022)

Fr. Theodore S. Kyritsis passed away, peacefully surrounded by his family on Monday, April 25, 2022. He was born in Northern Epirus, Greece on December 29, 1929, to Spyridon and Evdoxia Kyritsis. Fr. Theodore received his degree in Theology from the Hellenic College at Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, MA in 1952.

Fr. Theodore is survived by his wife of 68 years, Presbyteria Maria Kyritsis; his children, Evdoxia (Eve) Liapis and her husband, Peter, Niki Chomick and her husband, Steven and Spiros T. Kyritsis. Also surviving are his grandson, Stamati Liapis; his brother, Evangelos Kyritsis and his wife, Anthoula; nieces, Dr. Evdoxia Kyritsis and Eleni Kyritsis and sister-in-law, Joanna Andrinopoulos and her children and their families. He was predeceased by his parents, Spyridon and Evdoxia Kyritsis.

Funeral Services for Fr. Theodore were held on Saturday, April 30, 2022, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 600 East Blvd. in Charlotte beginning with a Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM. The funeral service followed immediately thereafter. Interment was at Evergreen Cemetery. The family greeted family and friends for thirty minutes prior to the Divine Liturgy beginning at 8:30 AM at the church.

May His Memory Be Eternal.

### George Peter Leventis

(1931 – 2022)

Mr. Leventis, 90, passed away on March 30, 2022. He was born on September 30, 1931, to the late Peter George Leventis and Barbara Maydanis Leventis in Tarboro NC. "Tarboro" was to become his nickname in the young Greek community of Charlotte NC, where he would spend the remainder of his childhood.

Mr. Leventis was predeceased by his parents and sister Nellie L. Boudoucies. In addition to his wife Dianne, he is survived by his brother Dr. Sam Rigas (Ann) of Rome GA, sister Sophie L. Kametches of Raleigh NC and sister Christine L. Pfister (Walter) of Charlotte.

A Trisagion Memorial Service was held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at 2:00 P.M. Mr. Leventis was interred at a private, graveside service on April 6, 2022.

### Presvytera Janet Kokenes Mamalis

(1926 – 2022)

On March 8, 2022, Presvytera Janet (nee Kokenes) Mamalis, age 95, of

Richmond, Virginia, fell asleep in the Lord. Born to Constantine and Vasiliki Kokenes on November 2, 1926, in Charlotte, NC, as the youngest of five children.

Janet married Demetrios Nicholas Mamalis on June 26, 1951. After his ordination to the priesthood, Father James and Presvytera Janet became a loving, supportive couple and devoted their entire life to serving the Greek Orthodox Church.

She is survived by her daughter, Emily Bartz (Father William) and her daughter-in-law, Carla Mamalis. She is preceded in death by her husband, Father James Mamalis, and her son, Dr. Nicholas Mamalis. She adored and loved her grandchildren, Joanna Nicolaidis (Evan), Christina Mamalis, Maria Bartz, Stephanie Appelgate, George Bartz (Katherine), and great grandchildren, Emilia, John, and Magdalena Nicolaidis; Abigail Appelgate; and Reagan Bartz.

On Thursday, March 17, 2022, a Trisagion Service was offered at 10 AM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Charlotte, NC, which was followed by a visitation. The funeral service began at 11 AM. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

### George John Velonis

(1932 – 2022)

George John Velonis, 89, of Charlotte, NC, passed away peacefully at home with his wife and daughters by his side on Monday, April 18, 2022.

Born on May 1, 1932 in Aliquippa, PA to John George Velonis and Mary Panagiotou Velonis, the family moved to Greensboro in 1946. Upon graduating from Guilford College, he served in the United States Army during the Korean War (in his words, "fighting the battle of Waikiki every weekend") and earned his MBA at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An exuberant stockbroker until retiring in 2002, he deeply valued his genuine relationships with his clients and exemplified an old-school personal touch.

His legacy of kindness, integrity and devotion to family will live on through his wife of forty-six years, Pauline Paliouras Velonis; daughters, Marianne George Velonis and Suzanne George Velonis and his sister, Chris Miller. Also surviving are his nephews, John Miller and his wife, Cheryl of Matthews, George Miller of Charlotte, Evan Miller of Charlotte and Christopher

*continued on next page*

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## In Memoriam

*continued from previous page*

Miller and his wife, Katy of Columbia, SC; the Paliouras and Poulos families and godsons, Jim Meletiou and George Vahamikos.

Funeral services were held at 12:30 PM on Monday, April 25, 2022 the feast day of Saint George, at Saint Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church, 5108 Kuykendall Road, Charlotte, NC with interment at Evergreen Cemetery. The family greeted friends an hour prior to the service at the church.

## Condolences

Our condolences to Mr. and Mrs. Charles "Gus" Euripides on the passing of his father, **Mr. Kyriacos "Charlie" Euripides** of Washington, DC. He was 89. The funeral was held on April 18, 2022 in Falls Church, VA May his memory be eternal.

Our condolences to Dr. Steven and Mrs. Constance Ross on the passing of his mother, **Mrs. Margaret Ann Ross**, 96, of Columbus, Ohio. She was the grandmother of Stephanie Ross and Sarah Vastis. May her memory be eternal.

## HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX FOUNDATION OF CHARLOTTE, NC THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY 1973 - 2023

*Editor's Note: The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Foundation of Charlotte, NC, also commonly referred to as the Foundation or HTGOF, is celebrating its 50th anniversary beginning in 2022. This is the second in a series of articles about the Foundation's history, goals, and impact on the community.*

By Nick Kantsios, Foundation Chair

In the JAN/FEB 2022 issue of The Voice, we discussed the inception of the Holy Trinity Foundation in 1973 and its mission to promote generosity and charitable giving by supporting religious, humanitarian, and educational programs that benefit Orthodox Christian and Hellenic communities.

A large part of the grants and donations of the Foundation goes back to the church in various forms, which include facility improvements, church expansion and support of our Greek community members.

One example is the completion of the Evergreen Cemetery improvement project in 2015 (approved in 2014). The Foundation's goal was to establish a comfortable place for visitors to spend time at a special loved one's final resting place and provide solace and a sense of closeness to that person.


This project began with the setting of three new granite benches in a semi-circle facing the chapel and included resurfacing the chapel table and cleaning the chapel dome, columns, and walk area. This final stage included the removal of overgrown existing shrubbery and plants around the chapel. They were replaced with fresh new plants and pine straw as you can see in the initial pictures.

Hopefully you have seen the beauty Evergreen Cemetery chapel offers visitors as a shining example of a memorial to our community.

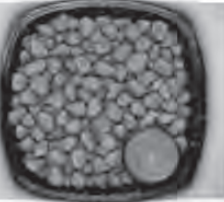


*Photos of the chapel at Evergreen Cemetery. The Foundation had three granite benches installed to provide a place for rest and reflection by family and friends.*






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