



THE VOICE

CELEBRATING CHARLOTTE'S GREEK COMMUNITY NEWS AND HISTORY

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THE KOINOTITOS

VOL. 82 NO. 04	HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL  https://www.facebook.com/HolyTrinityGreekOrthodoxCathedralCharlotte/	600 EAST BLVD CHARLOTTE, NC 28203	704-334-4771 www.htgo.org	JUL/AUG 2022
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Sunday August 14, 2022: Clergy after the ceremony following the bestowing of offikia on both our priests. Pictured above, L-R: Deacon George Politis, Fr. Jonathan Resmini, His Grace Bishop +Sebastian, and Father Christian Siskos. Read more in the News Roundup beginning on page 5.

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

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THE EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers:

Happy New Year!



We find ourselves in a period of “newness” for many reasons here at Holy Trinity. First and foremost, we enter a New Ecclesiastical Year on the First of September. Secondly, we enter into this new church year with new employees at our Cathedral. Finally, the last bit of newness comes from changes to The Voice staff. As announced previously, George Zogzas is stepping down from his post after a long and successful tenure as editor. We are indeed blessed by his service, his innovation, and his leadership as we transition. Please join me in welcoming Roxanna Dimitriu and Chrys Nikopoulos to our team!



As we enter into a new season, let it be a new beginning for us all to rededicate our lives to Christ and His Holy Church.

Roxanna, Chrys, John

voice@htgo.org

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Sep 14	ELEVATION AND EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
Saturday Sep 17	FEASTDAY OF AGIA SOPHIA & HER DAUGHTERS FAITH, HOPE, LOVE Philoptochos Feastday Luncheon
Monday Sep 19	Preschool Begins with Agiasmos & Open House
Tuesday Sep 20	Greek School begins with Agiasmos
Sunday Sep 25	Sunday School begins Ministry Showcase in Fr. C Hall after the Divine Liturgy
Tuesday Oct 18	FEAST DAY OF SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST
Wednesday Oct 26	FEAST DAY OF SAINT DEMETRIOS THE MARTYR
Thursday Oct 27	Centennial Celebration at Palmer Building 6-8PM

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

704-334-4771

www.htgo.org

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

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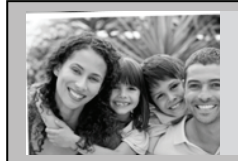
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Next Issue: SEP/OCT 2022 DEADLINES:

for articles or photographs is:

Friday, October 21, 2022

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

for advertisements is:

Monday, October 10, 2022

Email to **voice@htgo.org**

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PULPIT



by

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Resmini,
Interim Dean of the Cathedral

Dwelling in the Love of God: Heaven and Hell as Our Response to God's Love

Orthodox Christians have a tendency to claim the infallibility of Orthodox doctrine. They stand atop the pillar of historicity and right doctrine shouting the triumphal song of the truth. The Orthodox, however, have little proof of their claims—that is, they cannot quantify their faith. It is not possible for Orthodox Christians to prove their faith—at least by the standards of contemporary reason. Faith is not a collection of doctrinal statements and conciliar decrees; neither is it a blind adherence to a book—even a divinely inspired one. It is, instead, a lived experience of the presence of God in practice and the trust that one has in God as a result.¹

The experience of God is the experience of God's love; “for God is Love (1 John 4:8).” God's love is given to us indiscriminately—to the good and the evil, the just and the unjust (cf. Matthew 5:45). The love of God for His creation is everywhere present and eternal:

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

According to the Apostle nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God.” If God is love and his love is eternal and indiscriminate and inescapable, then it stands to reason that there is nowhere God is not present.² Not even Hell.

Heaven is not the place of God's love and Hell the place devoid of God's presence. As we stated above, however, God is even found in Hell. How is this possible? How could God be in Hell? To answer these we will first have to answer the question: What are Heaven and Hell? In this brief chapter we will come to see that the notion of Hell as a place of fiery torment and Heaven a place constant joy and feasting are not to be taken literally, but, rather figuratively. We will not present Heaven and Hell as realities that are off in some distant uncertain future, but as experiences of God's love, which human beings are called to actualize in the

present—experiences that continue into eternity. Finally, we will emphasize our own uncertainty about the future, leaving God to His own affairs.

A Utopian View of Heaven and Hell

First, it must be stated that the Orthodox understand Heaven and Hell in many ways—none of which present them as literal places. The Orthodox believe Heaven and Hell are relational realities, that is, they are reflections of the way in which the human being perceive the love of God—which is freely given to all.³ Therefore, both Heaven and Hell are utopias, in the literal sense of the term (no-place). If Heaven and Hell are not places, how are they understood by the Orthodox?

A Threefold Perspective of Heaven and Hell

There are three perspectives concerning Heaven and Hell, which we will discuss in this chapter. They are: 1) Heaven and Hell are our location in relation to God in eternity—that is, in the age to come 2) Heaven and Hell are the manner in which human beings experience the intermediate state between death and resurrection to new life in eternity 3) Heaven and Hell reflect the way in which human beings exist in the present reality, while positively or negatively actualizing Heaven or Hell.

Heaven and Hell in Eternity

We have already stated above that the Orthodox have little assurance concerning the age to come. They do, however, have a profound hope in the “resurrection from the dead and the life of the age to come” (Nicene Creed). Not much is known about this future life in eternity. The scriptures are relatively silent about eternal life. The only hint given about eternal life is found in the Gospel of John. During the farewell discourse the Evangelist writes:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (John 17:1-3)

Eternal life according to this passage is to know “God, and Jesus Christ whom [he] has sent.” Thus, eternal life is an eternal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Jesus is “the way, the truth, and life” (John 14:6) of all. Orthodox Christians believe that God will resurrect everyone from the dead on the Day of Judgment. Depending on the state of each person in this life, that resurrection will be to either the joy of the Eternal Kingdom or to eternal condemnation. This eternal

3 In his book *The Science of Spiritual Medicine: Orthodox Psychotherapy in Action*, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos writes: “According to these views, Hell and Paradise do not exist from God's perspective, only from man's point of view... Just as the sun rises now upon the righteous and the unrighteous, so then he will send His grace to everyone, the sinners as well as the just. Sinners, however, as they will not have acquired spiritual sight, will feel the caustic properties of the light. This will be their Hell... The problem facing us is not whether we will see God at the Second Coming, but whether God will be Light for us and not fire.” Thus, Heaven and Hell are not places, but the experience or perception of the love of God. We will return to this below as we discuss the judgment of God.

state, as we will see below, is not a result of God's punishment, but, rather, on our own perception of God's love. This is what Orthodox Christians believe about the age to come *after* resurrection. What happens after death, but *prior* to the resurrection?

Heaven and Hell as Intermediate States

As with the hope of the resurrection and the life of the age to come, little can be said definitively about the intermediate state of the soul—that is, the state of the soul after death and prior to the resurrection of the Dead. There have been numerous attempts to offer theological opinions concerning the “journey” of the soul after death.⁴ Orthodox Christians, with some consistency, describe this intermediate state as a foretaste of the life of the age to come. Depending on the manner in which the one lives one's life in the present age, the intermediate state will be either a foretaste of Heaven or Hell. It is clear that the human experience of God after death and eternal position are intimately connected to one's the life of this age.

Heaven and Hell as the Experience of God's Love Here and Now

Orthodox Christians believe that Heaven and Hell are experienced in the present. They are experiences of God's love, which begin here and now. This means that we are capable of making the world around us either Heaven or Hell by the choices we make in this present age.

The choices we make with regards to love continue into the future and determine how we will experience eternity. If in life we choose to be selfish and unloving, our eternal state will be one of torment—but a torment of our own creation. Thus although the Orthodox speak of a judgment, in accordance with the Scriptures, they do not believe that God punishes anyone—He does not, however, reward anyone either.

God Does Not Punish Us nor Does He Reward Us

As we have stated repeatedly, God does not punish us by sending us to Hell, our choices determine our experience of God's love in life, after death, and into eternity. John of Damascus writes:

And so we know, that God does not punish anyone in the future, but everyone makes themselves receptive to share in God. And so to share in God is a delight, while not sharing in Him is hell. (*Against the Manicheans*, PG 94:1545D-1548A)⁵

Everything we do in this age makes us either receptive or unreceptive to the fullness of God's love, which will be freely given to everyone in the age to come. In this view, we can offer a profoundly different interpretation of the Scriptural passages associated with the

4 It goes beyond the scope of this article to address the multiform image of this intermediate state according to Orthodox theology. For a detailed presentation of a number of these perspectives see: Conostas, Nicholas. “To Sleep, Perchance to Dream: The Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 2001, 91-124.

Several contemporary texts have attempted to offer a unified perspective of life after death.

5 Sanidopoulos, John. “MYSTAGOGY.” Saint John of Damascus on Hell. December 4, 2013. Accessed May 27, 2015. <http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2013/12/saint-john-of-damascus-on-hell.html>.

Final Judgment. God does not send the goats to the eternal fire anymore than He sends the sheep to the joy at His right hand (cf. Matthew 25). He does not create a creature destined to eternal punishment. We choose to be tormented by the love of God from this life into eternity. It is our choice to exist, or not to exist, as love that determines our present and future experience.

Whereas some Christians think of Heaven and Hell in terms of some future bliss or punishment respectively, the Orthodox always speak about both in terms of the present. The Kingdom of God in within (cf. Luke 17:21). It is found in the heart of the believer. Hell, likewise, is a present reality that takes root within the hearts of those who live contrary to the love of God.

We Know Not Their Hearts, We Seek Only To Love

Orthodox Christians cannot assume that they will receive God's love as joy by virtue of their Orthodox Christianity. They cannot also assume that those who are not Orthodox, or Christian, or believers, will not receive the love of God as light as opposed to fire (cf. Vlachos, 2010. 57). We are not in it—the Christian life, that is—either to avoid punishment or receive a reward. Neither are we Christian to pass out punishments or rewards to others. Orthodox Christians seek to fulfill the commandments of God, because that is what makes us authentically human. It is enough for us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and our entire mind, and our neighbors as ourselves (cf. Matthew 22:37-40). We cannot know what the future place of anyone will be; for we do not know the inner hearts of others (cf. Romans 2). Furthermore, God is free to love whomever He pleases—His love is indiscriminate. He will have mercy upon and harden the hearts of whomever he chooses (cf. Romans 9:18). Orthodox Christians hope all will come to the knowledge of God and experience the love of God as Heaven, but they acknowledge the human freedom to choose.

Conclusion

How can God be in Hell? It is because there is no difference between Heaven and Hell. Heaven and Hell are not places, but, rather our experience of God's love. We can live our eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven even in the present moment, if we choose to actualize the love of God. Heaven and Hell are to dwell in the love of God, but it is up to us to choose it.

Recommended Readings

Larchet, Jean-Claude. 2012. *Life after Death according to the Orthodox Tradition*. Rollingsforth, NH. Orthodox Research Institute.

Panteleimon, Archimandrite. 2012. *Eternal Mysteries Beyond the Grave*. Jordanville, NY. Holy Trinity Publications.

Roth, Catherine P. 2002. *Gregory of Nyssa: On The Soul and Resurrection*. Crestwood, NY. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Vlachos, Metropolitan Hierotheos. 1995. *Life after Death*. Leviaia, Hellas. Birth of the Theotokos Monastery.

2010. *The Science of Spiritual Medicine: Orthodox Psychotherapy in Action*. Leviaia, Hellas. Birth of the Theotokos Monastery.

Editor's note: Father Jonathan wrote this chapter for the book Re-Introducing Christianity edited by Amir Azarvan. The book is available in the Hosanna Bookstore

1 About the Christian hope, the Orthodox Christian theologian and philosopher Christos Yannaras writes, “We have to compromise with a modest agnosticism... We know nothing of life after death.” See: Yannaras, Christos, and Gregory Edwards. *The Meaning of Reality: Essays on Existence and Communion, Eros and History*. Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2011. 9.

2 The Orthodox Prayer to the Holy Spirit begins: Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are everywhere present and filling all things...”

STEWARDSHIP 2022

as of 8/31/22

YTD Financials	2022	2021
Stewardship	\$436,325	\$473,099
Candles, Rentals, Centennial, Other	\$297,471	\$234,790
Building/IRRC/Renov. Donations	\$93,668	\$127,953
Minus : Operating Expenses	-\$715,303	-\$570,920
Minus : Building Fund Expenses	-\$100,320	-\$46,037
NET Income (Deficit)	\$11,841	\$218,885

★ **Stewardship is needed year-round** - financial and volunteerism. The summer month collections & volunteerism were low when all were on vacations even though the Church facilities remained open. We hope and pray everyone will return to Church as a family especially now that regular school & Sunday School are starting. We need God in our lives year-round, in good times or in bad time - when we need something or when we do not.

God and the Church are always here for us year-round.

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.

2022 Stewardship Budget	\$756,000
2022 YTD Pledges (219 families)	\$269,451

© Many stewardship forms are being returned without pledge amounts. Please try and estimate how much you will donate so that we can better plan Church finances. Only 219 families gave an amount of the 294 forms received. We need 100% participation of all our approximate 1000 households.

Yiasou Festival 5K



Saturday, August 27: Above, Holy Trinity runners after completing the race, Below young volunteers on hand to help everything run smoothly. See more Festival coverage next issue.



OCF at UNCC

On August 31st, Fr. Jonathan met with college students at the UNCC campus for the 1st time this school year. After an Agiasmo/water blessing, they enjoyed a dinner and some fellowship together. You can see in the picture, at left, that 11 students attended. Hopefully, more will be there next time.

Parents, please encourage your college students to reach out to the Cathedral office to make sure we have all their current contact information no matter what school they attend. We want to keep in touch with them. We also want to encourage them to seek out their school's OCF organization and join in that fellowship. It's always nice to be surrounded by others with whom you have something in common - in this case, it's their Orthodox Faith.



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NEWS ROUNDUP by The Voice Staff

Offikia Bestowed on Our Clergy

On Sunday, August 14th, Holy Trinity was blessed with a liturgical visit from His Grace, Bishop +Sebastian of Zela, Assistant to our Metropolitan +Alexios of Atlanta.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, His Grace bestowed two offikia (title/award) on Father Jonathan and Father Christian. As is customary for those who are new to pastoring a flock, Fr. Jonathan received the offikion of "Economos" which historically indicates a priest responsible for finances.

Fr. Christian received the offikion of "Confessor" which grants him the blessing of hearing confessions. Up until that moment, only Fr. Jonathan was permitted to offer that sacrament. Now, both of our beloved priests may offer the prayer of absolution in order to cleanse our souls.

Fr. Jonathan was ordained into the priesthood by His Eminence Metropolitan +Alexios at Holy Trinity just over three years ago on Sunday April 7, 2019. Later that same year, on October 6, 2019, His Eminence Metropolitan +Alexios returned to Holy Trinity and ordained Father Christian into the priesthood.

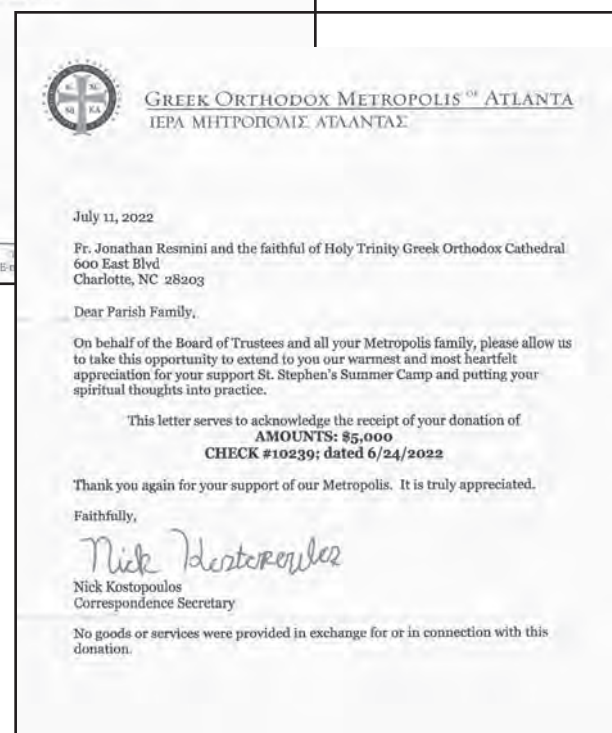
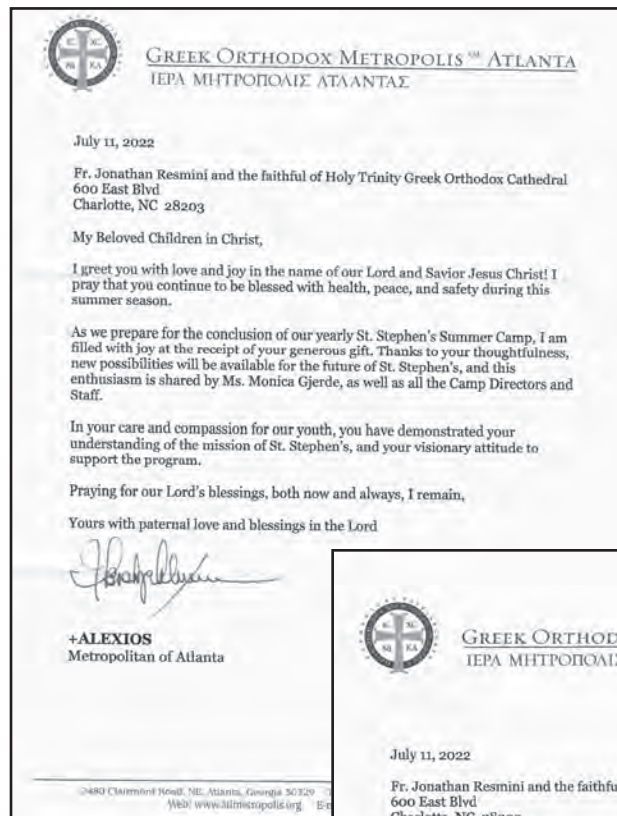


August 14, 2022: Pictured above, His Grace Bishop +Sebastian bestows the offikion of Economos on Father Jonathan, the interim dean of the Cathedral. Below, Associate Priest Father Christian receives the offikion of Confessor.



Follow-up: Donations Made

It was reported in the MAY/JUN 2022 issue that donations were made to several charitable organizations with funds collected from the Cathedral Christmas card project. The following acknowledgements were received:



7/19/22

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WE ALSO APPRECIATE THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF VAKI KARAMPOURNIOTIS OVER THE YEARS. HE COORDINATES WITH SEVERAL OF YOUR FOLKS, AND IT'S ALWAYS AN EXCITING DAY WHEN THEY COME.

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SPECIAL TO THE VOICE: Father Polycarpus Krithinakis has been laid to rest. Again. by Ken Garfield

*Editor's Note: This article was written by Ken Garfield and is reproduced here with his permission. Mr. Garfield wrote a weekly religion column for **The Charlotte Observer**. Our thanks to him for sharing this article.*

Ken Garfield is a freelance writer/editor who specializes in obituaries. Reach him at garfieldken3129@gmail.com.

His connection to Charlotte goes back nearly a century to when he was the first full-time priest assigned to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The story we are about to tell is how his journey brought him back to Charlotte — Evergreen Cemetery specifically — one July morning all these years later.

Father P, as we will respectfully refer to him for simplicity's sake, was born in 1882 on the Greek island of Crete. In 1915, at age 33, less than a month after being ordained, he sailed to America aboard the SS Patri. It was known as an immigrant ship for obvious reasons.

He devoted his short life to serving as a priest in the Greek Orthodox Church. Records from a century ago are hard to come by. Here's what we found. During his 23 years in our country, Father P led 10 parishes in seven states. His stops included Syracuse, N.Y.; Akron, Ohio; Canton, Ohio; Charlotte, Akron again, Detroit and finally Minot, N.D.

Charlotte and Minot are the two stops pivotal to this story.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Charlotte was founded in 1923. Father P was the first full-time priest assigned to the parish, serving from 1926 to '28. The hope was that his arrival might spark construction of the congregation's first building. Parishioners first met in the Chamber of Commerce office uptown. But for reasons lost to time, he wasn't in Charlotte long enough to make it happen. In 1928, he was assigned for a second time to the Akron parish, then to another in Detroit.

In 1937, he was transferred to the Greek Orthodox parish in Minot. The city, home to fewer than 20,000 people at the time, was attracting Greek immigrants to help build and maintain the Great Northern Railway that ran from Minneapolis to Seattle. The parish needed a leader. Alas, Father P had to resign due to poor health. Fifteen months after arriving in Minot, he died on Aug. 10, 1938. He was 56.

Father P was buried at Rosehill Memorial Park in Minot. Perhaps owing to English being parishioners' second language, the headstone identifies him as a GREEK PREIST.

Vivian Maragos Zimmerman has spent her entire life in Minot, worshipping at the Greek Orthodox parish. Her father emigrated to America from his Greek village in the 1920s. Laying railroad track, he worked his way west. For reasons lost to time, he got as far as Minot and stopped. She was too young to have known Father P. But she has vivid childhood memories of her mother taking her to Rosehill to visit the graves of relatives. There they would take a few moments to pause at Father P's gravesite.

"My mom always had a sense of sadness when she stood by his monument," Vivian recalled. "She said he was a kind and good man, sensitive to the people, but he seemed depressed."

She has long wondered if his depression came from being assigned to what was then a small city in the north central part of a cold and desolate state. Might this have contributed to his early death? "In this day and age," Vivian said, "it would be characterized as he wasn't eating and just kind of faded away."

Dead and buried, you would assume the story ends there.

Not so fast.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2023. It has grown to become a flourishing faith community with 1,100 families, its East Boulevard campus a Charlotte landmark.

For those who still can't place it, Holy Trinity is home to the Yiasou Greek Festival that welcomes thousands for food and all things Greek. This year's festival is Sept. 8-11.

To create excitement for the centennial, Holy Trinity is organizing monthly events to mark the occasion. Enter Father P.

"What better way to celebrate an anniversary then by bringing our first priest home to us, where he can be taken care of and not forgotten," said Father Jonathan Resmini, Holy Trinity's spiritual leader.

The idea was inspired. Now to execute it.

Holy Trinity got permission from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to disinter Father P and reburial him in Charlotte. Disinterment is the process by which a body is legally exhumed from its "final" resting place. Here there is a large Greek Orthodox community to watch over Father P. There in Minot, there isn't much left of the parish. While the city today is home to nearly 50,000 people, the original Greek Orthodox parish closed down. A new parish has 30 members. It's not many, but at least enough to operate a food truck selling gyros at the North Dakota State Fair held each July in Minot.

Virginia was at the cemetery on July 11 for the disinterment, though she chose to leave before she could see what was left of Father P.

Working for four hours in the summer heat, not knowing what they would find, cemetery workers dug down to the wooden casket, eight feet rather than the typical six. The dirt was moist. First they used a backhoe, then shovels so as not to damage whatever remains remained. Eighty-four years after Father P was buried, they arrived at their destination. They found his skeleton intact, including skull, jaw and legs. There was more: They retrieved the rubber sole of one shoe and pieces of his cloth vestment, green with gold border.

"I was filled with amazement and awe," said funeral director Andrew Bahanovich of Charlotte, who led the effort with Minot funeral director Ben Slind. "Being Orthodox and the son of a priest, it was very personal to me, a once-in-a-lifetime experience." Andrew works with Kenneth W. Poe Funeral Service, which handles many Greek funerals in Charlotte.

The remains were brought up on a wooden board that apparently formed part of the bottom of the casket. It was placed in a metal container lined with plastic and flown to Charlotte on Delta Air Lines.

Father P arrived on July 22. Four days later, 40 Holy Trinity parishioners offered an official welcome home at a brief service in the sanctuary. Father Remini told the gathering that while time passes, we remain connected by the relationships we forged long ago. That includes the priest who was there at the start of Holy Trinity's journey.

The motorcade to Evergreen Cemetery off Central Avenue took 30 minutes. Father P was laid to rest in a simple casket made of poplar.

Vivian, who visited Father P's grave as a little girl, wishes she could have come to Charlotte for his second burial. At the moment Father P was being laid to rest for presumably the final time, she was baking spinach and cheese triangles to sell out of the parish food truck at the State Fair.

"Having been at his gravesite so many times," Vivian said, "I would have liked to have been there for the last chapter."

You can find this article online at: <https://charlotteledger.substack.com/p/6f7009a2-3ead-43e1-a5a2-30d1b4ac49d6>



Cemetery workers disinter Father P from his gravesite in Minot, N.D. (Photo contributed by Andrew Bahanovich of Kenneth W. Poe Funeral Service)



Father Jonathan Resmini kisses the casket at the reburial of Father Polycarpus Krithinakis at Evergreen Cemetery in Charlotte. (Photo by Ken Garfield)

GREEK SCHOOL by Olympia Koutsokalis

Dear Holy Trinity Community,

The start of the 2022-2023 school year is on the horizon and registration is well underway. Thank you to everyone who has reached out with welcoming words and supported my transition as Greek School Director. The warmth and caring of our community honors and humbles me. It is with great anticipation that I look forward to meeting many of you in months and years ahead. After a year of transition, the Greek School program is forever indebted to the service of Mr. Larry Peroulas who has led the program with pride and passion all these years. I also want to voice my appreciation to Mrs. Roula Skenteris, whose leadership as interim director 2021-2022 has ensured that the school remains strong and true to its mission during a time of transition.

Holy Trinity has a vast history of providing an exceptional opportunity for individuals to learn the Greek language. Even through changes and adjustments, our program graduated another class of students last May! If you have a child or grandchild, offer them the opportunity to learn our rich Greek language. My most treasured memories are from my years in Greek School, and it is my mission to ensure that our students have the same opportunities and experiences. Our program fosters life-long relationships and memories that will bind our students beyond their childhood years.

Supported by the leadership in our community, our work this summer has remained in full swing. As you can imagine, we are busy preparing for the Greek Festival and preparing our classrooms to welcome everyone back. In addition to cleaning and painting, we have consolidated the Sunday School and Greek School offices, have welcomed several new teachers, digitized the registration process, and have been working to make the Greek School part of the Centennial Celebrations ahead. However, our work is just getting started. Over the next few weeks, our teachers will be updating curriculum and preparing their lessons for the upcoming year. We look forward to welcoming back our students on Tuesday, September 20th with the Agiasmos blessing of our Cathedral's Dean, Fr. Jonathan. If you have not registered your child, forms can be found on the Greek School page at www.htgo.org. We are still in need of teachers for the 2nd and 3rd grades! Any interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to send their resumes to griekschool@htgo.org as soon as possible. For those interested in adult classes, registration will be open at the end of September and classes begin in October. Be on the lookout for adult registration announcements.

With our community's volunteerism and support, our Greek School will be a better place to learn and grow. As director, I welcome your participation and support during the school year and look forward to celebrating our students' achievements with you. Thank you for allowing us to serve the needs of your children and I look forward to the start of an exciting new school year!

Sincerely,
Olympia Koutsokalis
Greek School Director

BACKPACK BLESSING AUGUST 28, 2022

On Sunday, August 28, 2022, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, children came forward to have their school backpacks blessed. Fr. Jonathan and Deacon George offered a prayer to our youth for a good beginning to the academic year and blessed their backpacks with Holy Water. Photos submitted by Sarah Vastis.



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FROM THE CHOIR LOFT by Olga Yamalis

The summer of 2022 brought back a full choir.

This year, the 44th annual conference of the Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Musicians (SFGOCM) of our Diocese, was held on June 17-19 in Knoxville, TN.

Lucy Pappadakes, choir conductor at HTC, was the *guest conductor* at the event. JoAnn Andros Metropolis of Dunedin, FL attended as the Guest Organist and Music Composer. Bishop Sevastianos participated throughout the conference.



Highlighting the event, there was an excellent and vibrant Friday evening choral performance, a Saturday night banquet held in the heart of downtown Knoxville's Market Square, and the rich, uplifting and glorious sounds of Sunday morning's Liturgy.

During the Agios O Theos/Holy God/Trisagion, a 'pop up' youth choir consisting of HTC Dean John's granddaughters and Niko Vastis, son of Sarah Vastis, sang ever so angelic, and was absolutely outstanding.

Awards were presented following the conclusion of the Liturgy. Connie Ross (HTC) received the Patriarch Athenagoras Medal for her contributions in the music ministry, outstanding supports towards the National Forum brochure, SFGOCM Vice President Board position and conference co-

Lucy's contribution to the event was fantastic, being a stellar conductor for the HTC choir, whose engagement was amazing. All choir members were remarkable. Gratitude will also go to St. George of Knoxville, TN for being an exceptional host for this year's fun conference!

Also this summer, the 46th annual meeting of the National Forum took place on July 2 to July 7 in New York, NY in conjunction with the 46th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress. The National Forum is the nation's music ministry. This event enhances and perpetuates the liturgical music of our church for both our Metropolis and Archdiocesan Federations for church musicians.

Lucy Pappadakes, HTC choir conductor, attended and diligently worked at the event. This year highlights include singing at the Sunday's Hierarchical Liturgy and the opening session of the Archdiocese Centennial Historical Exhibit; also, choral performances were held at the National Forum Reception dinner and the Metropolitan Museum of Art Concert.

Rehearsals and meetings were alternating between performances. There was an important discussion and decision regarding the translation in English of the original music-work by composer Anastasiou. Two teams consisting of Forum's members had begun the collaboration on this project, in minor and major settings.

Great appreciation is directed, again, to Lucy Pappadakes for being a conference- delegate, for the performances representing our Atlanta Diocese, and for continuing her position as Publication's Chair for the Forum.

What's forthcoming on HTC Choir's agenda? It's time for choral performances at Yiasou festival, the new ecclesiastical school year, and glorious holiday-concerts. Would you like to join us? You

are welcome!



Above: Elaina receiving scholarship from His Grace Bishop Sevastianos and other clergy.

chair duties. High school senior Elaina Yamalis received the Gallos and Zanakos Music Scholarship for her high school music contribution, for continuing her education with a minor in music performance, and for the participation in the marching band at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC, this fall.

In addition, Olga Yamalis was sworn into the SFGOCM Board as Secretary and Youth Initiatives Chair for the next two years.

Conference's participants from HTC Choir (pictured at right) included Lucy Pappadakes, Dean Johns, Olga Yamalis, Elaina Yamalis, Sarah Vastis and Olga Kleto

**PHILOPTOCHOS** by Pamela Bostian

Over the summer, our Agia Elpis Philoptochos chapter has been busy with Yiasou Festival preparations.

The 2022 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention was held in New York City, July 2nd through July 7th. The convention was considered a great success as everyone reunited in person to celebrate the achievements of our organization as it reached its 90th Anniversary. A total of 317 registered delegates were in attendance. This included 33 delegates from the Atlanta Metropolis with 2 delegates and 2 observers from our Agia Elpis Holy Trinity Chapter. Highlights of the Convention included the traditional Biennial Convention Work and Reports, inspirational Speaker Sessions, the Consecration of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, a

4th of July Celebration at the Yacht Club in NJ, the AGAPE Awards Breakfast, a Centennial Reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Grand Banquet together with the Clergy-Laity Congress who celebrated the Centennial of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Access to reports, speaker presentations and more are available on the National Philoptochos website: www.philoptochos.org.

Save the Date: the Agia Elpis chapter's Name Day Celebration luncheon will be held at Red Rocks Cafe on Providence Road on September 17th. More information can be found at htgo.org.

Details regarding our annual Holiday Bake Sale will be announced after the Yiasou Festival.



July 2022: Chapter delegates and members pictured with His Eminence Archbishop of America Elpidophoros. L-R: Pam Bostian, Christina Besseas, Diane Ramsay, His Eminence, Irene Politis, Cathy Poulimenos, Evelyn Zehia.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE by Nick and Carmen Kallelis

As summer draws to a close, we will soon resume full activity at Holy Trinity. Thanks to our Priests, altar boys, and our cantors for allowing our devotions to continue without pause during the summer months.

This summer there was activity in preparation for the Festival. We thank all the volunteers who were involved in these festival preparations and all who worked diligently during the festival prep three day event. All these volunteers are a fine example of true stewardship.

Our ministries will be in full swing and we owe a word of appreciation to the chairs and ministry members for their time and dedication. We always need more help. Consider volunteering for one of our ministries. We NEED your talents, your viewpoints, and your experience.

The stewardship committee is organizing the 2023 stewardship program and welcomes any suggestions to enhance stewardship. The committee needs some younger members in order to have a more diverse committee and those who can offer the committee their digital skills.

Coming soon are several important events, the election for the Parish Council (December), the pre-budget meeting, & General Assembly Meeting (both in October). In the past only, a small segment of our church community has participated. The strength of Holy Trinity is best achieved if everyone participates by being involved at these meetings. Please consider attending and becoming knowledgeable about our needs and future plans.

Let's show our commitment to supporting Holy Trinity by being a Member in Good Standing* and attending these important functions and demonstrating our dedication. Your presence at these vital meetings contribute to the "heartbeat" of Holy Trinity.

*A member in good standing as described in the church by-laws must be 18 years of age or older; meeting the baptism and Chrismation requirements, attended Liturgies, and fulfills their financial obligation.

AROUND CHARLOTTETOWN by Kathy Xyrafakis

Parker-Demas



Anna Caitlin Parker and Agesilaos Panagiotis (Peter) Demas were married on April 30, 2022. The wedding ceremony took place at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Caitlin is the daughter of Dave and Barb Parker. Panagiotis is the son of Pete Demas and Shelia Dillion. A reception in Founders Hall followed the ceremony. After a honeymoon trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica, the couple reside in Rock Hill, SC in the Riverwalk development where they are opening a new restaurant called Blend: Fresh Healthy Food.

Stathopoulos - Qaoud



Christina Stathopoulos and Khaled Qaoud Flores were married on Saturday, June 25, 2022 in a ceremony at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral officiated by Father Christian Siskos. Christina is the daughter of Harry and Regina Stathopoulos, and Khaled is the son of Kayed and Dulce Qaoud of Madrid, Spain. A reception was held at The Terrace at Cedar Hill in Charlotte. The couple is planning a future honeymoon trip to Africa and Asia, and they will make their home in Malaga, Spain.

Attention Newlyweds and Graduates

To place your wedding or graduation announcement in *The Voice's* Around Charlottetown, please email a photo (JPEG format) and a brief writeup to Kathy Xyrafakis (kathy@htgo.org). We will include it in the next issue.

Stewart – Gonzalez



Sheldon Anastazia Stewart and Felix Gonzalez, Jr. were married on Saturday, June 18, 2022 in a ceremony at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. A reception followed immediately at Father C. Hall. Sheldon, or Shel, is the daughter of Paul and Tina Stewart. Felix, Jr., is the son of Felix and Yvonne Gonzalez, Sr. The couple have known each other since middle school. After a honeymoon trip to Greece, they will return to their home in Ballantyne with their two dogs, Marley and Bonzai.

Congratulations College Graduate

Helen McGinnis graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science, and a minor in Entrepreneurship. While at UNC, she participated in OCF and she was on the Dean's List. Helen was a photographer and photo editor for The Daily Tar Heel newspaper. Helen also photographed for UNC's athletics department. She volunteered at St. Stephens camp for two summers. Helen is currently doing freelance photography in the Charlotte area. Helen is the daughter of Cliff and Elise McGinnis.



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 another in a series of articles about the Foundation's history, goals, and impact on the community.

by Nick Kantsios

Previously in this series, we discussed the inception of the Foundation in 1973 and its mission to promote generosity and charitable giving. Subsequently, we explained how a significant portion of the Foundation's grants and gifts have been returned to the church in a variety of ways, such as facility upgrades, church growth, and assistance for the members of our Greek community.

Here we cover some of the basics of the Foundation and different methods of making a donation. **Remember – making a donation in someone's name is honored in perpetuity during the annual reading of the memorial names.**

The Foundation is based upon an endowment - a permanent fund, the principal of which is never touched,

but the earnings of which can be used in accordance with the terms of the trust policies which established the Foundation.

All contributions and gifts are maintained forever and invested. Allowed distributions are for medical, religious, educational, and charitable causes. The assets of the Foundation grow through sound investment policies and from additional gifts.

There are a variety of methods to donate. The most common method is cash, however donations can be made in a variety of other forms, such as: Bequest in a Will; Life Insurance; and Charitable Annuity Trusts, Lead Trusts and/or Annuities

Reach out to a trustee to discuss options for donating and what will work for you via email at info@htgof.org.

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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

Ekaterini Georgiou

(1955 - 2022)

Ekaterini Georgiou, age 67, fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday, August 18th, 2022. Funeral services were held on Friday, August 19th, 2022 at St. Demetrios Church in Pavlopoulo, Evrytania Greece.

She is survived by her children: Theodosia (Sia) and Billy Georgiou (Foteini), her granddaughters: Stephanie and Maria Ioanna Georgiou, her siblings: Elisavet Housiadas (Sam), Vivia Tsoulos, George Drosinis, Dimitria Galatas (Thomas), Anna Mantis (George), and lots of nieces, nephews and friends. Ekaterini was proceeded in death by her husband, Ioannis Georgiou, her parents, Ioannis and Eleni Drosinis, and her brother, Evangelos Drosinis.

Evanthia Haralambous

(1923 - 2022)

Waxhaw, North Carolina - Evanthia Haralambous, 98, passed away

peacefully at home on Saturday, July 9, 2022, surrounded by her family.

She was born on August 10, 1923 in Nostimo, Evrytania Greece, the daughter of the late Georgios and Eleni Stathopoulos.

She was predeceased by her husband Ioannis Haralambous, sister Georgia Anagnostopoulos, brothers John Stathopoulos and Christos Stathopoulos.

She is survived by her children Panagiotis Haralambous (Vicky), Georgia Elefandis (John), Maria Polizos (Nick) and Helen Karras (George); grandchildren Bill Polizos (Eleni), Elizabeth Townsend (Michael), John Polizos (Kaliopi), Maria Elefandis, Pete Elefandis (Renee), Vasilis Karras, Evelyn Karras, Yianni Haralambous (Lucy) and Niko Haralambous (Gina). Great-grandchildren George Hatzikostopoulos, Yianni Hatzikostopoulos (Mercedes), Maria E Polizos, Niko B Polizos, Sophia Polizos, Maria K Polizos, Faye Polizos, Niko J Polizos, Michael Polizos, Zoe Townsend, Yianni Elefandis, Vasiliki Elefandis and Josephine Haralambous; and great great-grandchildren Niko Hatzikostopoulos and Aurianna Kensington.

She is also survived by her sister Rena Mageras of Karpenisi, Greece, sister in law Panagiota Stathopoulos of Winchester, VA and numerous nieces and nephews.

The Trisagion and funeral service was held at 11:00 am on Friday, July 15, 2022 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Helen Valanos Holmes

(1928 - 2022)

Helen Valanos Holmes passed away on Saturday, July 9, 2022. The beloved wife of the late John William "Bill" Holmes, Jr.; mother of Georgia (Speros) Nixon, Barbara Brown and

John William Holmes, III; grandmother of Christina Nixon, Nicole (Eliott) Michael, Katelyn and Eleni Brown, Ava Holmes and the late Stephanie Nixon Bell; great-grandmother of Stavros, Alexandros and Arianna Bell, also survived by many nieces, nephews and Godchildren. Friends celebrated Helen's life at the Kalas Funeral Home & Crematory, 2973 Solomons Island Rd., Edgewater, MD on Sunday from 1 to 5 pm. Funeral service was held at Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church, 2747 Riva Rd., Annapolis, MD on Monday, July 18 at 10 am. Interment followed at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Annapolis.

Apostolos "Paul" Katopodis

(1937 - 2022)

Paul Katopodis, of Charlotte, NC passed away Sunday, July 3, 2022 at his vacation home in Ocean Isle Beach, NC, his "Happy Place"! He was surrounded by his loving family. Paul was born in Karya, Lefkada, Greece on February 15, 1937, the son of Dimitrios Katopodis and Ourania Stavrakas.

Paul is survived by his loving and devoted wife of over 60 years, Loula along with their children: Jimmy Katopodis (Sandy), Kiki Ballas (Nickolas) and Tammy Katopodis. He was Blessed with four Grandchildren, Paul Katopodis, Angelika Ballas, Jaimee Ballas and Sydney Ballas; and Kristi Miller and Jordan Meggs and Great Grandson Davis Meggs. He is survived by his Brothers: Bill Katopodis (Theodoula), Art Katopodis (Olga), Phillip Katopodis (Maria) and Sister: Lula Katopodis (Angelo) and sister in law: Mary Koutsokalis along with many nephews and nieces. He was also predeceased by his sisters: Vickie Mikronis (Spiro), Effie Koucouliotis (George); Andy Koutsokalis and Daniel Meggs.

Visitation was held at 10:00 AM on Friday, July 8, 2022 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral followed

by Funeral Services at 11:00 AM. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Efrosini Koutsokalis

(1936 - 2022)

Efrosini Koutsokalis, 86, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, surrounded by her family. She was born on March 12, 1936, in Kalesmeno Evrytania Greece, the daughter of the late Evangelos and Yianoula Triantafilopoulos.

Efrosini is survived by her son, Dimitrios Koutsokalis and his wife, Maria; grandson, Alexandros Koutsokalis; sister, Maria Kokotou of Karpenisi Evrytania and step-grandchildren, Kostantinos Kakouras and Ioannis Kakouras. Also surviving are her many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, Alexandros Koutsokalis; sister, Penelope Kolovaki and brothers, Georgios Triantafilopoulos and Stefanos Triantafilopoulos.

Funeral Services were held at Noon on Friday, July 22, 2022 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The family received friends one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Stavros "Steve" Politis

(1933 - 2022)

Stavros "Steve" Politis, 88 of Charlotte passed away on Sunday, July 31, 2022 at Harris Hospice. Born in Greece on December 4, 1933, Stavros was the son of the late Hlias and Helen Traskelis Politis.

He is preceded in death by his wife Pinelopi. Survivors include his 2 children Loues of Charlotte, Helen (John) Lontas of Lakeland, FL., 2 grandchildren John Michael Thomas Lontas and Lisa Marie Lontas. Also

continued on next page

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In Memoriam

continued from prior page

surviving are his 2 brothers Pete and Angelo Politis and sister Theodora Tsoulos.

Services took place on Monday, August 8, 2022 starting with the visitation from 10-11AM at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral followed by a funeral service with Reverend Dr. Jonathan Resmini, presiding. Burial took place at Evergreen City Cemetery.

Helen Skiouris

(1928 – 2022)

Helen Skiouris passed away peacefully on Monday, August 15, 2022, surrounded by her family. She was born on March 20, 1928, in Karyaes, Laconia, Greece, the daughter of Theodore and Vasiliki Kerhoulas.

Helen is survived by her son, Dr. John Skiouris; daughters, Vickie Bakos and her husband Larry, and Aphroula Couchell and her husband, John; her grandchildren, Renee Pournaras, Lena Skiouris, Kyriakos Skiouris and his wife, Carla, Stephanos Skiouris and his wife, Danielle, Patricia Beckas and her husband, Kosta, Dr. Ellen Couchell, Nicholas Couchell and her great-grandchildren, Yano Pournaras, Carlo DiBenedetta, Kyriaki and Kalliopi Beckas, Louise and Christina Skiouris. She is also survived by her siblings, Demetra Mentavlos, Michael Kerhoulas and his wife, Louisa, and Panagiota Maragos along with many nieces and nephews. Helen was predeceased by her husband, Kyriakos J. Skiouris; sister, Georgia Sotos and brothers, John and Chris Kerhoulas.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 AM on Monday, August 22, 2022 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The family received friends one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Ronald Herbert Wheatley

(1951 – 2022)

Ron Wheatley, 71, of Charlotte, NC and Ocean Isle Beach, NC died August 30, 2022 following a six-year struggle with declining health. A native Charlottean, Ron was born January 9, 1951 to Rex and Rosalie Wheatley.

Ron is survived by his wife, Maria, who provided him with selfless and loving care for the past six years; his children, Johann, Robbie and Evan; grandsons, Hunter and Christian and their mom, Ashley; father-in-law, John Polites; sister-in-law, Loula Plyler and her husband, Jim, and brother-in-law, Alec Polites and his wife, Windy; and many nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and nephews and cousins.

In addition to his parents, Ron was preceded in death by his sister, Janet Wheatley and mother-in-law, Lemonia Polites.

Visitation was at 10:00 AM on Friday, September 2, 2022, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral followed by Funeral Services at 11:00 AM. Interment followed at Evergreen Cemetery.

Condolences

To the family of Reverend Father Regis Alexoudis who served St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Wilmington, NC.

In Appreciation

The family of Efrosini Koutsokalis would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, phone calls and love during her illness and passing. May her Memory be Eternal.

WHOOO'S IN THE NEWS AT HTGO



The preschool hallways are always quiet during the summer months without the sounds of the children's voices. July and August are a time for us to reflect on the previous year and to prepare for the upcoming school year. The preschool will begin on Monday, September 19th with an Open House and Agiasmos/Blessing of the preschool. The first day of classes will be on Tuesday, September 20th. The teachers are eagerly awaiting the children's return to preschool and looking forward to an exciting year.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Preschool is a religious based half day program for ages 18 months old to 4/5 years old. Our hours are 9:15 am to 1:15 pm. Since the preschool experience is a child's first step into the world beyond the family, we strive to accept each child as a unique individual. We approach the children's emotional and educational needs in a loving and supportive manner helping them become independent and confident in their abilities. Our goal is to provide each child a challenging experience with opportunities to build relationships with other children and to enrich them with a variety of Greek language and

Orthodox Christian centered activities. Our mission is to allow each child the opportunity to master the appropriate skills needed for school readiness. We are committed to the fulfillment of each child's developmental needs and work to create a positive learning environment in which each child can grow to his or her full potential.

In late August and early September, we will turn our focus to the Yiasou Greek Festival. The Play-land Beverage Booth is operated by the preschool staff and parents and all the proceeds benefit the preschool. The week following the festival, the teachers will back at preschool preparing their classrooms for the arrival of the children and the beginning of the school year.

If you are interested in registering your child, need additional information regarding the preschool or to check on class availability, please contact the Preschool Office at 704-333-4961 or preschool@htgo.org, or call the Director, Maria Kleto, at 704-564-5842. Many blessings to all our preschool families, friends and parishioners as the new school year begins.



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