

THE CURRENT

In This Holiday Issue

A LETTER FROM FR. JOE	PG 2
THIRD ANNUAL ANGEL TREE ANNOUNCEMENT	PG 3
STEWARDSHIP LETTER	PG 4
FEATURE LETTER: "IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HURT THERE"	PG 5
PHOTOS	PG 7
FUNDRAISERS	PG 9
ANNOUNCEMENTS & SAVE THE DATES	PG 12
FUNDRAISERS	PG 13
DECEMBER CALENDAR	PG 15



BIBLE VERSE SPOTLIGHT

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced
with great joy!*



Dear Faithful & Friends of Ypapanti Parish,

The Orthodox services and hymns for the Nativity of our Lord are incomparable, deeply mystical, gems of liturgical worship and theological reflection. It is only right that we commemorate the birth of the Son of God with special reverence and solemnity. What kind of parish would we be if we ignored the majesty of Christmas?

Our tradition calls for a full complement of liturgical services on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. The day beginning in the morning of Christmas Eve (the paramon of the Feast) and extending into the evening, with Great Vespers and Artoklasia, into the morning hours of Christmas Day. There is a definite parallel between the Feasts of the Nativity and Holy Pascha. The only variation is that for the Nativity, we move Orthros and the Divine Liturgy from midnight hours, to morning daylight hours. As directed by our Metropolitan Savas, we will celebrate the services accordingly.

As an older priest, with many experiences, I feel compelled to remind you, with love and concern, that if we neglect the services of Christmas, we dishonor our Lord and minimize our faith, crippling our witness to the world and robbing our souls of the Word of Life. It is an extremely sad sight to see the church sparsely occupied on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning, when the nave should be full and the air resplendent with the sounds of joyous hymns as we welcome the Birth of God's Only-Begotten Son. "This is the reason why the Word of God was made flesh, and the Son of God became Son of Man: so that we might enter into Communion with the Word of God, and by receiving adoption might become Sons (and daughters) of God." (St. Irenaeus of Lyons).

We compromise our faith with regard to Christmas, if we ignore the beautiful services of the Church. It is tragic that so many have relegated Christ to a minor role in this Holy Season. When family holiday traditions once centered around Church services, now for many they do not include them at all! Under the circumstances the remedy is to work to conform our holiday observances to the Church, not to ask the Church to conform to our own.

Remember: "He that loves father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37).

With heartfelt love I greet you all, as we approach the Great Feast of our Lord's Birth. May the Lord bless us, our families and our troubled world.

Yours in the Incarnate Word,
Father Joseph Cervo





Dear Ypapanti Family,

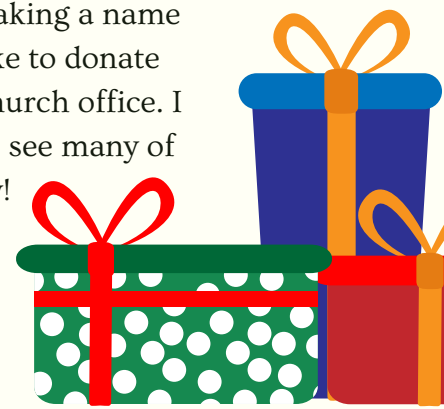
I'm the type of person who starts listening to Christmas music on November 1st, eats more sugar than the average elf, and whose favorite toy growing up was a well-loved Rudolph doll that I picked out from my stroller when I was little. All that to say, Christmas is my favorite time of year. There is so much happiness that surrounds us during the holiday season, from beautiful lights and decorations to wonderful carols and spending more time with family. Something that always tugs at my heart strings the most though is watching children light up with excitement as they experience the joy of the season.

As a Christmas enthusiast, I try to spread joy in any way I can. We are blessed with the opportunity again this year to spread joy to our neighbors with Ypapanti's Third Annual Christmas Angel Tree. The Angel tree tradition was actually started in Virginia in 1979, when a couple decided they wanted to help local families who wouldn't be able to afford clothes or toys for their children at Christmas. This couple set up a Christmas tree at a local mall and attached cards to it with the names of children and some items they needed written on those cards (many of the cards were decorated with angels, which is how the tree got the name "angel tree") for local shoppers to pick up. You might have noticed a version of that in the Narthex of our church. Well, that's our very own Angel Tree!

I think the Angel Tree is important for many reasons, but I will share a couple with you. First, it's so easy to get caught up in the festivities of the season that we can forget what we are really celebrating, which is Jesus's birth. I love that with the Angel Tree, we remind ourselves to "keep Christ in Christmas." It's nice to take a step back to remember that this is a season for giving and making others happy, which is such an amazing feeling. Second, as someone who loves working with young children, and I believe every child should get to experience the excitement of opening a present on Christmas morning. Jesus loves children, and with the Angel Tree, we get to exemplify that love to our sweet young neighbors.

I love to imagine the surprise they must feel when they get presents from our parish that they were not expecting to get due to financial hardships at home. So, I encourage you, if you're able, to spread joy with me this year by taking a name off of our Angel Tree. If you can't make it to church but would like to donate towards a gift for our young friends, feel free to email or call the church office. I appreciate your help, and I know the children do as well. I hope to see many of you in church this season as we prepare for the big day!

Thank you, and Merry Christmas!
Paulina Neuschwander





Presentation of Christ Greek Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Rev. Father Joseph Cervo, Protopresbyter

Stewardship 2023 and prize incentive,

When did stewardship begin? The original stewards were the Wise Men when they brought their gifts. When you tithe, you are trusting God with your finances.

“Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back”(Luke 6:38).

We are going to kick off our 2023 stewardship program at the annual Philoptochos Christmas party. In the spirit of Christmas it is a great time to give. We are going to be giving away a 43" flat screen television. All you need to do to be eligible is to fill out a stewardship card between now and the Christmas party, December 18. You can drop off your stewardship card in the box in the Narthex, mail it to the church office, or give it to a parish council member.

People always ask why do I need to fill out a stewardship cards? Your stewardship commitment is needed to help in the budgeting for the ministries and fellowship of Ypapanti.

Last year as in the past the parishioners of Ypapanti demonstrated that Love, Faith and Family can and will overcome, anything with God's help. Once again we would like to thank you for your dedication and support.

God has destined Ypapanti for great success, we can accomplish this together. Your love and loyalty is appreciated. When you fill out your stewardship card please let us know of any goal or vision you have for our church.

We would like to wish you a happy, healthy, and Blessed Christmas and New Year

Father Joseph Cervo
Ypapanti Parish Council

ITS NOT SUPPOSED TO HURT THERE

By: Father Chris Metropulos

When you go to a doctor for your annual check-up, he or she will often begin to poke, prod, and press various places, all the while asking, “Does this hurt? If you cry out in pain, one of two things has happened. Either the doctor has pushed too hard, without the right sensitivity. Or, more likely, there’s something wrong, and the doctor will say, “We’d better do some more tests. It’s not supposed to hurt there!”

I feel this way when I speak to my congregation about stewardship. If they cry out in “pain” after hearing my sermons on giving, I wonder if I’ve pushed too hard, or if there is need in their lives for the Great Physician because a Christian isn’t supposed to “hurt there.” Giving should be second-nature to Christians.

St. Paul tells the Corinthians that God loves a “cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). He even teaches them “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity...”(2 Corinthians 9:6,7). This Christian mindset toward sharing our “wealth” is just the outward “symptom” of a deeper healing of our souls.

How can one become a “cheerful giver?” How can we learn how to avoid giving “grudgingly or of necessity?” What kind of transformation of a man’s soul makes this kind of attitude possible?

The simple (not easy) answer is love.

Wait; don’t get too far ahead of me. I’m not talking about the syrupy sentimentality that all too often passes for love nowadays. And I am certainly not talking about a guilt-ridden emotional manipulation that seems to shame us into giving. No, I am talking about the “agape” first shown to us by God that, when received, actually “changes” us. It is this sharing of love between Man and God that can liberate each of us from a soul destroying selfishness that makes true spiritual freedom an elusive dream.

Take a moment to consider these three invitations to love that will, by God’s grace, transform you into a “cheerful giver.”

First, The Invitation to Receive. The amazing truth is that until you and I can receive God’s love, our souls are far too small to truly consider giving or sharing our lives as a joyful act. You must first open your heart to receive what St. Paul called God’s “indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15). It is in daring to believe that God truly loves me unconditionally and has already shared ALL He has with me in the gift of eternal life in His Son, Jesus. God has given completely and freely with no guarantee of any return on His eternal gifts. He knows He never will diminish Himself by sharing all He has with us, so He invites us to receive His gift of love. If you have the courage to accept this invitation, His selfless love will enlarge your soul and make you a cheerful giver.

ITS NOT SUPPOSED TO HURT THERE

Continued...

Second, The Invitation to Respond. The wisdom of the Church in calling me to do the hard work of Christian prayer and worship is precisely to constantly encourage me to stay open to the love of God. This is an everyday battle because we live in a world consumed with self-interests and fear. But God's love invites me to respond to Him and His willingness to cheerfully give. And the only proper response to such a loving Gift is gratitude. It is exactly this heart of gratitude that is at the center of the Church's emphasis on prayer and worship. At the heart of Orthodoxy is the Eucharist, which is humanity's act of gratitude in return for the loving gift of life from our Creator.

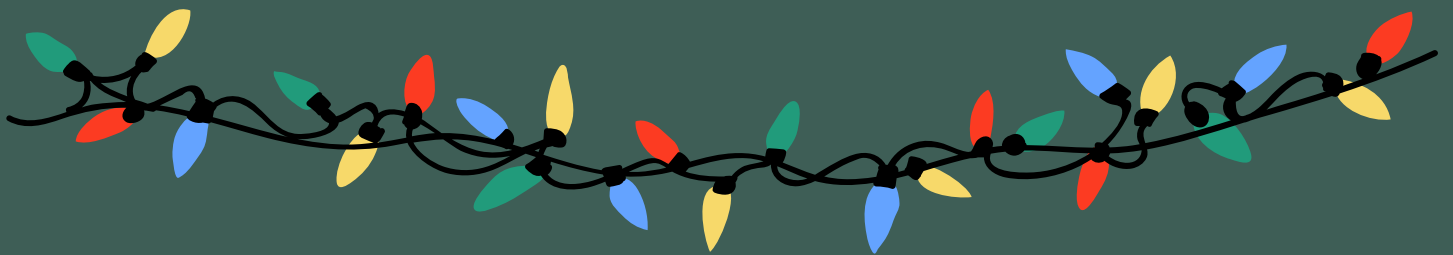
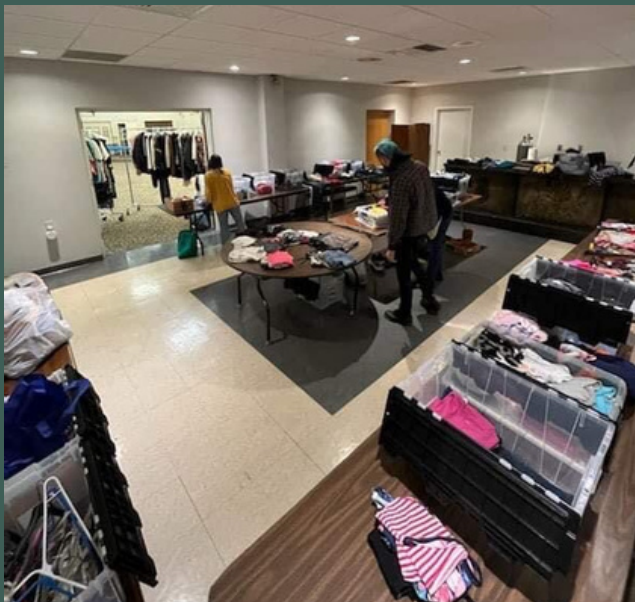
Finally, The Invitation to Reveal. After having Received God's Love and Responded to God's love, we are now invited to Reveal God's love. When I stay awake to God's gracious and cheerful Gift of eternal life through applying the wisdom of the Orthodox faith to my everyday living through daily prayers, fasting, feasting, and alms giving, I make visible in my everyday choices and actions that God's love isn't just the empty rhetoric of a half-hearted religion, but a true and authentic relationship with God. I reveal my true faith; I reveal my true motives, my true attitudes, when I choose to cheerful share of what I have in direct response to all God has given me.

Becoming a cheerful giver is actually about becoming an authentic Christian. At the heart of the Christian message is giving as God gives us His Son so that we could live forever. How you give of your time, talents, and treasures makes visible who you really are and what you really believe. In any event, encouraging you to become a "cheerful giver" isn't pushing too hard because, for a Christian, it isn't supposed to hurt there. If it does, then ask yourself if you have received, responded, and revealed the love of God.



Thank you to all who helped decorate our beautiful Ypapanti for Christmas!





Do you have photos you want to be included in The Current from a fellowship event, baptism, wedding, service or more? Email PresentationOfChristOffice@gmail.com and use the Subject Line "Photos for The Current." Thank you!



ST. CATHERINE PHILOPTOCHOS

Christmas Spanakopita Log Fundraiser

What could be better for the holiday season than some homemade Spanakopita Logs? The aroma is wonderful, they look great and taste delicious!

All profits benefit outreach programs, special projects, to assist persons in need, to help the poor and destitute, to promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic purposes.

All orders are due on or before December 1st. Distribution dates will be December 11th and December 18th, 2022. All checks (made out to St. Catherine Philoptochos) or cash should be turned in to Gail Mantzouridis, Lucy Koutsavlis, or placed in the Philoptochos mailbox in the office.

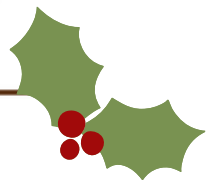
Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of logs: _____ (\$10 per log)

Total Donation: _____

Thank you for your support!



2022 YPAPANTI

Community Christmas Card



It's that time of year again for our annual Christmas card project – a wonderful way to send your greetings of the birth of our Lord to the entire parish community. Please print your name the way you would like it to be published on the card (English).

*In order for your name to be included, please return this form with your donation of \$15.00 to the office by **December 4, 2022**. It can be placed in the collection basket or mailed to the office or brought to the office.*

Name(s) _____

Please print your name on the above line the way you would like it to appear on the card. Thank you for supporting our Christmas Card Campaign.



2022 Poinsettias Donation Form

You can honor your loved ones, or commemorate your departed loved ones, or simply wish to beautify the church during the Nativity of Christ holiday season and support our Church at the same time by sponsoring one or more beautiful poinsettias for Christmas. A donation of \$20.00 is requested. Please submit your order by December 4, 2022 Thank you.

Name: _____

Number of plants _____ **@\$20.00 each** _____

Traditional Greek
NEW YEAR'S BREAD

(with "Good Fortune" coin for 2023)

"Vasilopitas"

by

Grecian Odyssey Dancers of Ypapanti
\$10.00 each

Orders must be placed by 12/12/22

Pick up vasilopitas at the Olympia Hall, East Pittsburgh,
on Sunday, December 18, 2022
from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

--cut--

ORDER FORM

NAME.....PHONE.....

AMOUNT

of Vasilopitas w/sesame seeds.....@\$10.00 =.....

of Vasilopitas without sesame.....@\$10.00 =.....

Total number ordered.....Total amount enclosed.....

Make checks payable to: Grecian Odyssey Dancers, and mail it with your order to:

Mary Doreza

3813 Burnaby Drive

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

(phone—412-877-3415)

or give it to a Grecian Odyssey Dancer,
before December 12.



OPEN MIC NIGHT

**SATURDAY
DEC 10
6-8pm**

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OLYMPIA HALL

1575 Electric Ave.
E Pittsburgh, Pa 15112

**Doors Open:
5:30**

Food, Refreshments,
& Live Music

 **PRESENTATION OF CHRIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH** 

Celebrate *the festive season!*

Join us for our annual Presentation of Christ *Christmas Social*

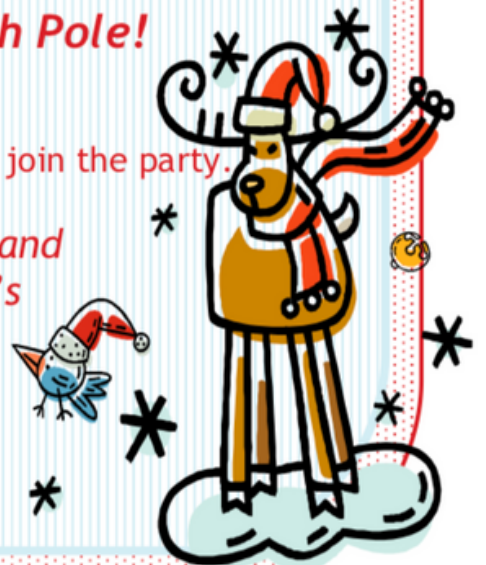
Sunday, December 18, 2022

Immediately following Divine Liturgy
In the Community Center

Featuring a special visit from our
Jolly Friend from the North Pole!

Encourage your family and friends to join the party.

*This Event is graciously Hosted and
Sponsored by our St. Catherine's
Ladies Philoptochos Chapter*



REMINDER



Did you turn in your 2022 pledge card?

Just click the "giving" tab on the church website,
or mail in/bring your pledge card to Church (just
don't forget to fill out the back!)

WWW.YPAPANTI.NET



DECEMBER

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Feast of St. Barbara 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School 12:00pm Philoptochos Meeting Parish Council Elections Christmas Card & Poinsettia Deadline	5 Feast Day of St. Savas the Sanctified 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy	6 Joined by Metropolitan Savas @ St. Nicholas Cathedral in Oakland: 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	7	8	9	10 5:30pm Open Mic Night @ Olympia Hall
11 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School	12 Vasilopita Order Deadline	13 7pm Parish Council Meeting	14 6:30pm Clothing Pantry Set up	15	16	17 11am Food, Clothes & Hot Meal Pantry*
18 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School 12pm Parish Christmas Social	19	20	21	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4pm Great Vespers & Artoklasia for Christmas
25  8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy	26	27 11am Sandwiches for Rankin Christian Center	28	29	30	31 

PRESENTATION OF CHRIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

1672 Electric Ave, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112 | 412-824-9188

For more information, find us at:
www.PresentationofChristPgh.org

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram: @PresentationofChrist

Under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Eminence Elpidophoros Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. The mission of the Presentation of Christ is to proclaim with joy the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to teach and spread the Orthodox Christian Faith and to be a community devoted to and energized by the love of God and our neighbor.

Rev. Father Joseph Cervo

Email: frjcervo@sbcglobal.net

Cell Phone: 330-284-8353

*While Fr. Joe will be in the office regularly, feel free to contact him if you wish to set up a time to meet.

Sunday Services

Matins: 8:30AM

Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM

To live stream, click "Live Services" on our website

Karry Kraeer

Office Administrator

Email: PresentationofChristOffice@gmail.com

Office Phone: 412-824-9188

Office Fax: 412-824-9740

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