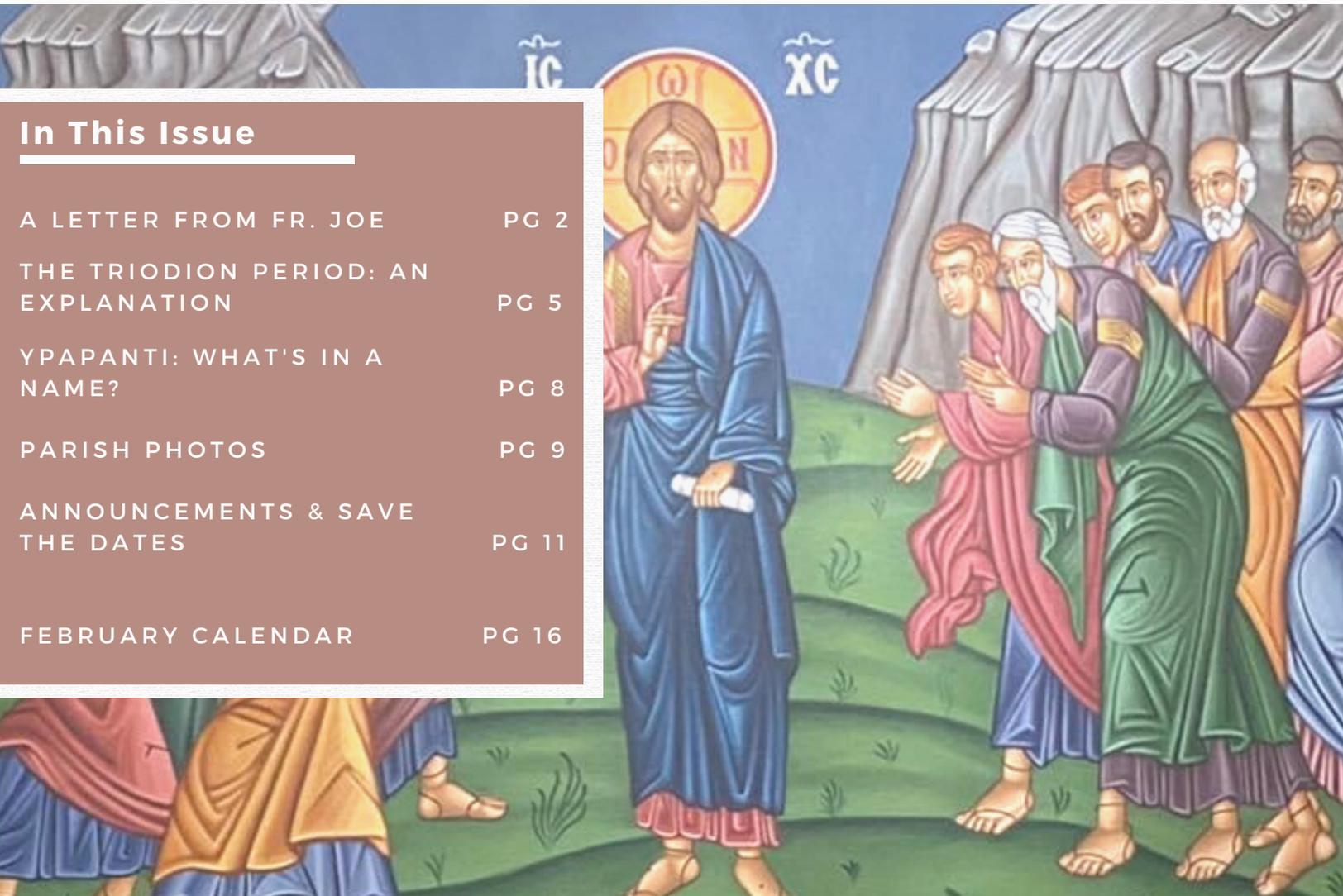


# THE CURRENT



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## BIBLE VERSE SPOTLIGHT

*Love is patient, love is kind.*

*It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*Love never fails.*



## DEAR FAITHFUL OF YPAPANTI PARISH,

It seems everywhere we turn, we are being asked to give for a variety of good causes, which sometimes produces the opposite effect, as at times, one may feel overwhelmed, thereby being reluctant to give at all.

That said, it's all the more important to understand the spiritual dimension and to adjust attitudes toward giving. To begin with, it's important to understand the differences between alms, contributions, tithes, donations, support and fund raising.

Alms are a freely given gift to a poor person in need, or to the poor in general, and usually given out of compassion (ex. our parish food pantry).

A contribution is supplying or furnishing a share, along with others, to a fund or cause.

A tithe refers to a biblical portion of income given to support the Church. This amount, in the Old Testament, was generally set at one tenth. A donation is a gift to a charity or cause. Support implies a responsibility based upon physical, spiritual or emotional relationship. Fund Raising is a concerted effort, using a variety of methods, to collect funds for a project or a cause. All of these usually refer to money, but are not exclusive of time, energy, and material goods, etc. (ex. the annual food festival). In all cases, there is a motivation factor involved: compassion, duty or responsibility, philanthropy, which is a sense of goodwill and sharing of one's blessings, a desire to see a project or cause succeed, and an attitude born of the spiritual relationship to God. This last item is an important focus as it relates to giving within the context of Church, and ultimately the building of the Kingdom.

The manner and control of how one shares his or her goods, is termed Stewardship. At the outset, although fund raising would seem to be an umbrella term over all of the others, there is a distinct difference. Fund raising is a designed method with a sole purpose of accumulating money. Even though there may be some aesthetics involved in the giving, there is generally some return for the effort -- satisfaction that a cause is being advanced or that a monetary need, with which one is in agreement, is being met. This is the distinction between secular motivation and spiritual giving. As indicated, alms, tithes, and donations, normally could fall under the general heading of spiritually

motivated giving, but even these can be born out of wrong attitudes, as we see in the Old Testament, where the people were directed/commanded to tithed 'under the Law'. For years, there have been fund raising requirements for those sending their children to a parochial school, hinging upon consistent use of one's offertory envelopes; gambling and games of chance, where regardless of the professed, "I don't mind because it helps the church", there is the built-in desire to win a value which is more than was contributed. This is not to ridicule or degrade the work which is able to be carried out with the net proceeds, but to acknowledge that seeking after right hearts and attitudes is the directive of Our Lord, "Seek first the Kingdom and God and His Righteousness, then all these (other) things shall be added unto you."

The point of this is not just about giving or increasing the offertory collections, the logical place to start would be to define the needs, relate the current statistics about how much the current individual donations are, and then exhort or appeal to everyone to dig a little deeper. The resultant increases (?) may be the result of sacrifice, or guilt, or a desire to help out, but in any case, the overall reason would probably be that one has an interest or stake in the endurance of the Church. The important matter is to convey or reaffirm what our relationship is to God. The Lord, Jesus, said (Mark 4:11) "The mystery of the kingdom of God has been granted to you...." So that, in seeking the Kingdom, we encompass our own right understanding of God.

One of the most difficult aspects of addressing "giving," is that the entire message be both given and received as a message of love, rather than one of exhortation, or worse yet, one of threat or chastisement. To convert the perception of the message from, "All they ever do is talk about money!", to something like, "Since God loves a cheerful giver, I want to learn how to be one." Another difficult aspect is that of the burden the messenger feels because of the negative attitudes born of the constant needs and exhorting for more and more money to support the ministry of the Church, from the parish, to the metropolis, to the archdiocese.

Regardless of all the nuances and difficulties, the total solution to the challenge is, we all need an enhanced understanding which can result in a healthy attitude! Our focus has to be on a loving relationship with our Lord, which just naturally will result in our desire to return a portion back to Him, of all that He has so graciously enabled us to accumulate. We will want to share, rather than grudgingly or resignedly handing over a portion of our own funds. Again, this is not to say that we don't have willing and faithful stewards, but statistics and needs show that some church members do not give in proportion to what God has given them, and the prevalence of voiced emotions do not often convey a cheerfulness about giving. We all know that in the beginning, God created the

heavens and the earth, and all that is, including all that has been, is now, and yet to be manifested (that is, what is seen, known, understood) since His original creation. The Lord said (John 16:15) "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." Therefore, God will always bless and multiply the resources of a giving community! May God richly bless our community and all of you!

Your Servant at the Lord's Holy Altar,  
Father Joseph Cervo



# THE TRIODION PERIOD

*BEGINS FEBRUARY 5TH, 2023*

FIRST PHASE:

## **First Phase: The Prelenten Period (Preparation for Lent)**

It is a one-month period that includes 4 Sundays:  
The Publican and Pharisee - The Prodigal Son –  
The Sunday of Judgement (Meatfare Sunday) -  
The Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare Sunday).  
Note: This period includes the Saturday of Souls,  
which precedes the Sunday of Judgment.

TRIODION SUNDAYS

## **Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14) February 5, 2023**

On this Sunday, the gospel reading is the parable given by the Lord about the virtues of repentance and humility. It shows how much these virtues are dear to God, even more than the apparent sacrifices and worship with a spirit of pride and arrogance.

Consequently, the Church warns that the cornerstone of Great Lent is the humility with a spirit of repentance.

Setting the Gospel of the Publican and Pharisee on the first Sunday is mostly to emphasize humility. When St. Macarius was asked, "What is the greatest virtue?" He replied, "Just as arrogance brought down an angel from the highest and caused the first humans to fall, so does humility raise the person endowed with it from the lowest pit."

Saint Isaac the Syrian says on humility: "The one who sighs every day because of his sins is greater than one who raises the dead. It is better to deserve beholding one's sins than beholding angels".

# THE TRIODION PERIOD

CONT.

## **Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) February 12, 2023**

On this Sunday, the gospel reading is the parable given by the Lord about the profligate son who wasted his father's wealth, but then repented and returned to him.

This parable is mainly about the endless love of God who awaits our return to Him. We are all children of God by adoption, while true repentance is a kind of resurrection and life.

Most beautiful in this proverb is the expression "he came to himself". Coming to oneself is a turning and correction point. When a person calms down from the inside, they begin to think about their condition and discover that there is no peace, no salvation, nor tranquility except in returning to the embracing paternal home, especially after they realize the bitterness of alienation from God and the sweetness of returning to Him.

TRIODION SUNDAYS

## **Sunday of Judgement (Meatfare) (Matthew 25:31-46) February 16, 2023**

On this Sunday, we read the Gospel of Judgment, just as Jesus Christ describes His Second Coming in the Gospel of Matthew. He compares the humans whom He created to cattle, because the image of the shepherd is common about God in the Old Testament, and it is also a common image of priests (see the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel 34:11). In the New Testament, Christ likens himself to the Shepherd, knowing that it is also the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Since He suffered for our sake, only His love can judge the ingratitude of the world.

This gospel on Meatfare Sunday is meant to make us realize the importance of true love towards others because our neighbor is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; it is as we are standing before Him.

One is his own judge; all his actions are revealed plainly before God's righteous judgment. St Jerome (4th century) says: Remember Christ each time you stretch your hand to give... The true temple of Christ is the believer's soul; adorn this, clothe it, offer gifts to it, welcome Christ in it. What use are walls blazing with jewels when Christ in His poor Matthew 25:40 is in danger of perishing from hunger?

St Cyprian of Carthage highlights the importance of adhering to Christ with all our life, says: "But it may be, dearest brethren, that Christ himself is the kingdom of God, for whose coming we daily ask. For since He is our resurrection since in him we rise again, so also the kingdom of God may be understood to be himself since it is in him that we shall reign".

On this Sunday we stop eating meat (food without blood) to enter little by little the peaceful condition of the kingdom of God like the first humans before the Fall.

TRIODION SUNDAYS

# THE TRIODION PERIOD

*CONT.*

TRIODION SUNDAYS

## **Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare) (Matthew 6:14-21) February 26, 2023**

It is also the memory of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. On this Sunday before the commencement of Great Lent, the Church assigns to read a Gospel from the Sermon on the Mount, and stresses the importance of mercy and reconciliation with people before the sacrifice of fasting is brought near.

This gospel on Sunday before the beginning of Lent is meant to help us realize the importance of forgiveness. We ask God to forgive us our sins after having forgiven others; it is a sine qua non. We cannot fast while hating others! God does not accept the prayer of a person who holds grudges!

Fasting is a journey of reconciliation with God. But the Lord equals us to Himself; he even equals our neighbor to Himself saying: If you do not reconcile with your relative, you cannot reconcile me, and vice versa. The Lord Jesus did not comment on any request in the Lord's Prayer other than asking for forgiveness: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Starting this Sunday, complete fasting begins to stop dairy and meat food.

## Ypapanti – What’s in a name?

- Our Feast Day, celebrated on February 2, is known in the Orthodox Church as The Presentation of Christ in the Temple.
- Another name for the feast is The Meeting of our Lord. Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians call the feast, The Purification of the Holy Virgin.
- “Ypapanti” is the Anglicized version of the Greek name for the feast, «Υπαπαντή» with the same meaning: “presentation” or “encounter.” Another term in Old English was “Hypapante,” whose roots come directly from the Greek word.
- We are the only church in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America consecrated as Presentation of Christ – Ypapanti.
- The Feast Day is one of the oldest in the Orthodox Church – originating from the 400s AD. Byzantine Emperor Justinian elevated it to a major holiday in 542 AD, to be celebrated on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. At the time, it was to ask the Lord's intercession for a plague that had struck the empire.
- Folklorically, the date is a cross-quarter day of the four seasons (lambs are first seen to produce milk - a halfway point to spring), and in household economics, it was said that one should have used only one-half of the winter firewood by the Hypapante.
- On the island of Crete, an old proverb states that good weather on Ypapanti indicates more winter weather will occur in March, especially hail. An old German saying states, “If the sacred bear from his den [sees/does not see] his shadow on the Feast of Meeting the Lord,”... this particular weather proverb developed into an American meteorological tradition that is well-known on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- About 450 AD in Jerusalem, people began holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day. Therefore, some churches in the West refer to this holy day as Candlemas. See below an example of our church’s stationery in 1949:



**Greek Orthodox Community “Candlemas of Jesus Christ”**

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ Η “ΥΠΑΠΑΝΤΗ”  
EAST PITTSBURGH, PA.

*Μαΐου 21 = 1949*

Sources: goarch.org, wikipedia.org, Orthodox wiki, sansimera.gr, maleviziotis.gr, Open AI.

Compiled by Chris Kouklis and Chrys George.

# January Open Mic Night





Our "Oakypap" (Oakmont Dormition of the Theotokos & Ypapanti) attended their second tournament in January. The tournament was hosted by Annunciation Akron. Our Bella Stupakis was on the court, with Lia Armstrong and Athena Neuschwander supporting from the sideline!

With coaching from Ypapanti's Stellanie Kyros, and cheering together with our incredible "OakYpap" parents (Nick Stupakis), the girls brought home the 3rd place trophy! Congratulations to all!



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](mailto:PresentationOfChristOffice@gmail.com) and use the Subject Line "Photos for The Current." Thank you!

# PRESENTATION OF CHRIST CHURCH

## + ANNUAL LENTEN SERVICE PROJECT 2023 +

This year we will again prepare

*Hygiene Care Packages* for the

McKeesport Homeless Shelter

Supplies needed to prepare 150 packages include:

- 150 Cotton Hand Towels
- 150 Cotton Washcloths
- 150 Tubes of Lip Balm (sealed)
- 150 Nail Clippers
- 150 Bath Size Bars of Soap (in the wrapper)
- 150 Toothbrush (packaged)
- 1,500 Standard Size Band-Aids
- 150 Gallon size Zip Lock Bags

**Kindly bring donated items to the Church Community Center by March 13, 2023.**

We look forward to welcoming our guest speaker, Fr. Stefan Djoric, and assembling the hygiene kits at our Annual Parish Family Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 18, 2023.

Alaina G. has graciously created an Amazon Registry for the kits, but any items can be purchased in stores and brought to the Church by March 13, 2023. Link to the registry:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/7V8N4L3L4OIT?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/7V8N4L3L4OIT?ref=wl_share)



# OPEN MIC NIGHT

**SATURDAY  
FEB 18  
6-8pm**

IC	XC
NI	KA

**OLYMPIA HALL**  
1575 Electric Ave.  
E Pittsburgh, Pa 15112

**Doors Open:  
5:30**  
Food, Refreshments,  
& Live Music

PRESENTATION OF CHRIST CHURCH

PRESENTS:

***“LEARN TO DANCE GREEK!!”***

Join us in learning some fun Greek Folk Dances

**Friday, February 24, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

in

**Ypapanti's Olympia Hall**

*ALL AGES ARE WELCOME! BRING A FRIEND!*

***IT'S A PRE-LENTEN PARTY!!***



**What to expect:**

- Easy to follow instruction offered by members of the popular Grecian Odyssey Dancers!
- Lots of food... Pizza and More!
- Plenty to drink... Feel free to "BYOB" if you'd like!
- A fun Friday gathering before the start of Lent!

# PRESENTATION OF CHRIST CHURCH

YPAPANTI'S ANNUAL FAMILY LENTEN RETREAT  
SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2023 • 10:30 AM until 1:00 PM

## THIS YEAR'S THEME:

*"A contemporary  
Orthodox Saint, who  
even walked in the  
Turtle Creek Valley"*

## GUEST SPEAKER:

**Fr. Stefan Djoric**

*(Pastor of St. Nicholas Serbian  
Orthodox Church in Monroeville)*

## SERVICE PROJECT:

**Hygiene Kits**

*(Assembled for the McKeesport  
Homeless Shelter)*

## LUNCH:

**A Lenten Meal**



Our theme this year will focus on the fascinating life of Saint Nikolai (Velimirovic), a modern saint who spent his later years in the USA, until he reposed in 1956.

**ALL AGES ARE WELCOME !**

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN US !**

**FEEL FREE TO BRING A LENTEN DISH TO SHARE !**

**THE EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE CHURCH'S COMMUNITY CENTER - OLYMPIA HALL**

**PRESENTATION OF CHRIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

1672 ELECTRIC AVENUE | EAST PITTSBURGH, PA, 15112 | 412-824-9188 | YPAPANTI.NET

• **SERVICES ARE LIVESTREAMED ON FACEBOOK** •

# REMINDER

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## Did you turn in your 2023 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](http://WWW.YPAPANTI.NET)



# FEBRUARY



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6:30pm Great Vespers	2 Presentation of our Lord Into the Temple 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	3	4
5 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 11:30am Panegyri	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School 12:00pm Philoptochos Meeting	13	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	15	16	17	18 5:30pm Open Mic Night @ Olympia Hall
19 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School	20	21	22	23 9am Grocery Drop Off for Pop Up	24  6pm Learn to Greek Dance Event	25 11am Food, Clothes & Hot Meal Pantry
26 8:30am Matins 9:30am Divine Liturgy 10:45am Sunday School	27 Great Lent Begins 	28 10am Sandwiches for Rankin Christian Center				

# 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

**2023 PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Marguerite Ellis, President  
Steve Markantone, 1st Vice President  
Ernie Kampetas, 2nd Vice President  
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GOYA Stellanie Kyros

Outreach Ministry Tasso Athans

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Filia Arvanitis  
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