

# The Veil

*A monthly publication of Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church  
Oakmont, Pennsylvania*

December 2025

Volume 3, Issue 12



**Saint Markellos, Abbot of the Akoimeton Monastery**  
December 29th

# DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

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## GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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12 Washington Avenue - Oakmont, Pennsylvania 15139

Church: (412) 828-4144 - [www.dormitionpgh.org](http://www.dormitionpgh.org)

Rev. Fr. Michael A. Gavrilos - Parish Priest

Janine Michael – Parish Administrator

*Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.*

### **Parish Council Members**

**President** – Christos Ioannou

**Vice President** – Christina Contes

**Secretary** – Dr. Michael Contes

**Treasurer** – Chris Aivaliotis

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Ted Ioannou

John Kamarados, esq.

Zoe Lardas

Bryan Romanelli

George Spiridonakos

Dimitri Tsambis

### **Service Times**

Sunday Orthros – 8:00 a.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Please check our calendar for other services and times

### **Confession: By Appointment**

If you would like an article, or photos in **The Veil**, submit them electronically to Fr. Michael ([fmg@dormitionpgh.org](mailto:fmg@dormitionpgh.org)) no later than the 15th of the month.

**“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” -James 5:14**

If you or your loved one is sick, in the hospital, or need a priest, please contact Fr. Michael so that he will be able to visit them.

# 2025 Stewardship

*Thank you for all of your pledge campaigns for the coming year!*

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Mr. Philip Dimopoulos	Mr. Andron Kavouras	Evangelia Koumbaridou	

# **COVER ICON – Saint Markellos, Abbot of the Akoimeton Monastery**

December 29th

Saint Markellos (Marcellus), abbot of the Monastery called "the Unsleeping Ones" ("Akoimeton"), was a native of the city of Apamea in Syria. His parents were wealthy, but died when he was young. He received his education first at Antioch, and then at Ephesus. All his possessions left him by his parents he distributed to the poor, thereby sundering his ties to the world.

Under the guidance of an experienced elder at Ephesus, Markellos entered upon the path of asceticism. He later went on to Byzantium to Saint Alexander, abbot of the Monastery named "the Unsleeping Ones." The Monastery received its name because in it psalmody was done constantly, both day and night, by alternating groups of monks. As the biographer of both these Saints writes: "Later, a venerable monastery was established near the mouth of Pontus - that is, the place where the Black Sea tracts into the Bosphorus - and he introduced a rule that, though new, was superior to any found elsewhere; that is, that henceforth they should never be any cessation in the hymnody offered to God, but that through an unbroken succession of those that served in turn, there should be achieved this continuous and unceasing glorification of our Master." The practice of never-ceasing service to God spread throughout the Empire, in both the West and the East. The monks were divided into three companies according to the language they spoke: Greek, Latin, or Syriac; each company took its turn celebrating the services in its particular language, and thus every hour of the day was given over to God's glory. The monastery not only grew but gave birth to others, such as the famed Studion Monastery in Constantinople which was founded by monks from Alexander's Monastery. Saint Alexander accepted Markellos and tonsured him into the monastic schema. Zealous in the works of watchfulness, fasting and prayer, the Saint received great spiritual talents and the gift of clairvoyance. Markellos foresaw the day of Abba Alexander's death and his own election as abbot. However, since he was still young, he did not want to rule others. So he slipped out of the Monastery to visit other provinces and other monasteries, where he received edification from the monks who lived there.

After the death of Saint Alexander, when Abba John had already been chosen as abbot, Markellos returned to the great joy of the brethren. Abba John made Markellos his own closest assistant. After John's death, Markellos was chosen abbot of the Monastery in spite of his own wishes, and in this position he remained for sixty years.

News of his saintly life spread far. People came to Markellos from afar, both the illustrious and the common, rich and the poor. Many times they saw angels encircling the Saint, attending and guarding him. With the help of God, the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones flourished. So many monks came to place themselves under the direction of Saint Markellos that it became necessary to enlarge the Monastery and the church.

Saint Markellos received donations from believers for expansion, and built a beautiful large church, a hospital, and a hostel for the homeless. By his prayers the monk treated the sick, cast out devils and worked miracles. For example, one of the monks was sent to Ankara and fell ill. Being near death, he called out mentally to his elder. At that very hour Saint Markellos heard his disciple in the Monastery, and he began to pray for him. He who was sick recovered at once.

When a ship with his monks came into danger on the Black Sea, the Saint calmed the tempest by his prayers. Another time, when they told him that a fire was raging at Constantinople, he prayed tearfully for the city, and the fire subsided as if extinguished by the tears of the monk.

John, the servant of a certain Arian nobleman named Ardaburios, was unjustly accused of something, and he hid out at the Monastery to escape his master's wrath. Ardaburios twice demanded that Markellos hand John over to him, but he refused. Ardaburios then sent out a detachment of soldiers, who surrounded the Monastery, threatening to slay anyone who interfered with their mission. The brethren went to the elder, asking him to surrender John and save the Monastery. Markellos signed himself with the sign of the Cross, then boldly went out alone through the Monastery gate towards the soldiers. Lightning flashed in the sky, thunder rumbled, and the Cross appeared shining brighter than the sun. The soldiers threw down their weapons and took to flight. Ardaburios, learning from the soldiers what had happened, was frightened, and because of Saint Markellos he pardoned the servant.

Saint Markellos took part in the Synod of Chalcedon, defending Orthodoxy against the Monophysite heresy both at the Synod and in the years that followed. His generosity and contempt for worldly wealth were known to all: anyone who came to the Monastery in need received alms, but God always replenished the funds so that more could be given. When Markellos inherited his family's fortune upon his brother's death, he kept none of it either for himself or even for his Monastery, but distributed it to poorer communities and to the needy.

Venerable Markellos peacefully departed to the Lord in the year 485. His faithful disciple Lucian grieved terribly over him, but on the fifth day after the death Saint Markellos appeared to him and comforted him, foretelling his own impending end.

## **Apolytikion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone**

The image of God, was faithfully preserved in you, O Father. For you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By Your actions you taught us to look beyond the flesh for it passes, rather to be concerned about the soul which is immortal. Wherefore, O Holy Markellos, your soul rejoices with the angels.



# December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 5:30 p.m. Greek School	3	4	5 <b>St. Nicholas</b> 6:30 p.m. Great Vespers at St. Nicholas Cathedral	6 <b>St. Nicholas</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Cathedral
7 10th Sunday of Luke  Sunday School	8	9 5:30 p.m. Greek School	10	11	12	13 <b>Half Pan Sale Pick-Up</b> 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
14 11th Sunday of Luke  Sunday School  4:00 p.m. Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concert	15 <b>Half Pan Sale Pick-Up</b> 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.	16 5:30 p.m. Greek School	17 <b>Half Pan Sale Pick-Up</b> 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.	18	19	20
21 Sunday before Nativity  NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	22	23	24 3:30 p.m. Royal Hours  5:00 p.m. Vespereal Divine Liturgy	25 <i>(Offices Closed)</i> <b>Nativity of Christ</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy	26 <i>(Offices Closed)</i>	27
28 Sunday after Nativity  NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	29 GOYA Ice Skating	30	31 <b>5:00 p.m.</b> Great Vespers, Orthros, Divine Liturgy (St. Basil)			

# January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 (Offices Closed)	2	3
4 Sunday before Theophany NO SUNDAY SCHOOL <i>Parish Council Affirmation of Of- fice</i>	5 5:00 p.m. Royal Hours, Vespers Divine Liturgy, Agiasmos (Forefeast of The- ophany)	6 8:00 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Agiasmos (Holy Theophany)	7	8	9	10
11 Sunday after Theophany <u>Vasilopita</u> <u>Sunday</u> NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	12	13 5:30 p.m. Greek School	14	15 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy	16 GOYA Basketball Tournament -Hosted by Holy Trinity-Canton, OH	17 GOYA Basketball Tournament -Hosted by Holy Trinity-Canton, OH
18 12th Sunday of Luke Sunday School GOYA Basketball Tournament -Hosted by Holy Trinity-Canton, OH	19	20 5:30 p.m. Greek School	21	22	23	24
25 15th Sunday of Luke Sunday School	26	27 5:30 p.m. Greek School	28	29	30 GOYA Basketball Tournament -Hosted by Annunciation- Akron, OH	31 GOYA Basketball Tournament -Hosted by Annunciation- Akron, OH

# PHILOPTOCHOS HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to our parish for supporting the work of Philoptochos this month.

Our First Responder Thank You Luncheon went very well. Thanks to parish donations and our good will collections, we raised \$540 and shared it with the four departments that attended. We appreciate everyone who helped cook, serve and give.

Thank you to Rosalyn Denillo for coordinating our monthly Lunch Bunch. This gathering continues to bring fellowship and joy to our parish.

Membership for 2026 is now open. All women ages 18 and older are welcome to join. Forms and dues can be submitted by cash, check or online.

We will announce the date soon for our International Womens Day event in early March.

Thank you again for your steady support. Your involvement helps us serve both our parish and the wider community.

Kind regards,  
Kay



# FESTIVAL UPDATE

Many thanks to all who helped prepare half pans for our Fall "Greek to Go" frozen half pan sale and GyroFest 2025.

Our GyroFest in late October once again was huge success. Final sales were \$37K about \$1000 more than last year's record setting year and profit was \$23K. Thanks to all who helped prepare the week before as well as helping over the weekend. It was such a joy to see all the youth that showed up to volunteer. They all worked hard and did a great job. Some of the adult volunteers remarked that it was easy work for them with all the youth working so hard.

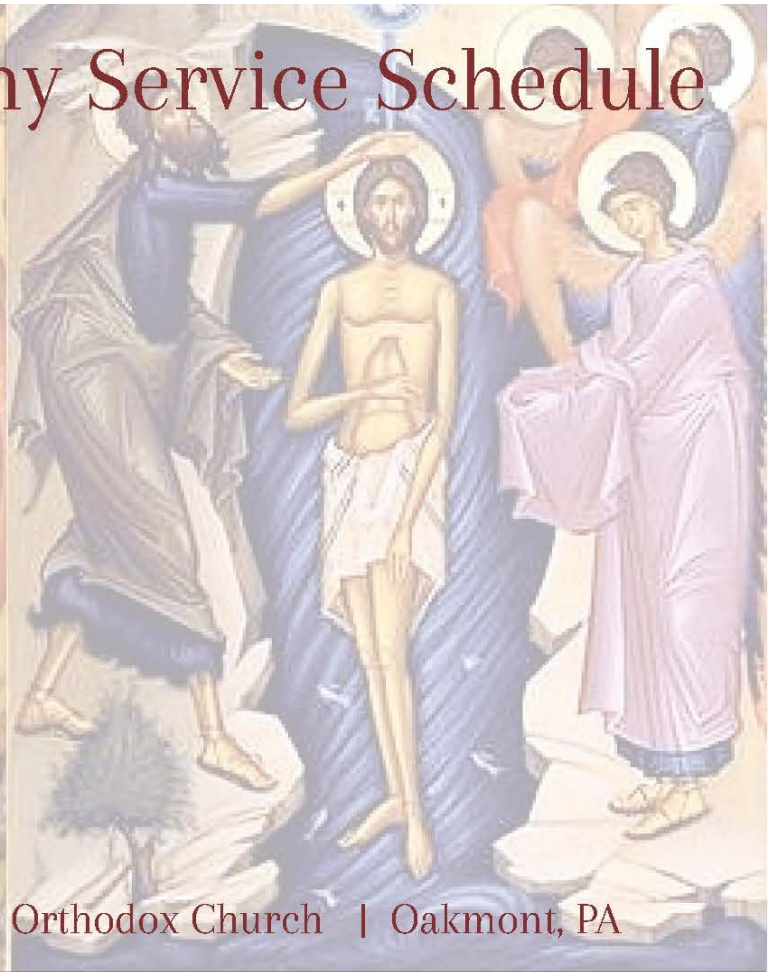
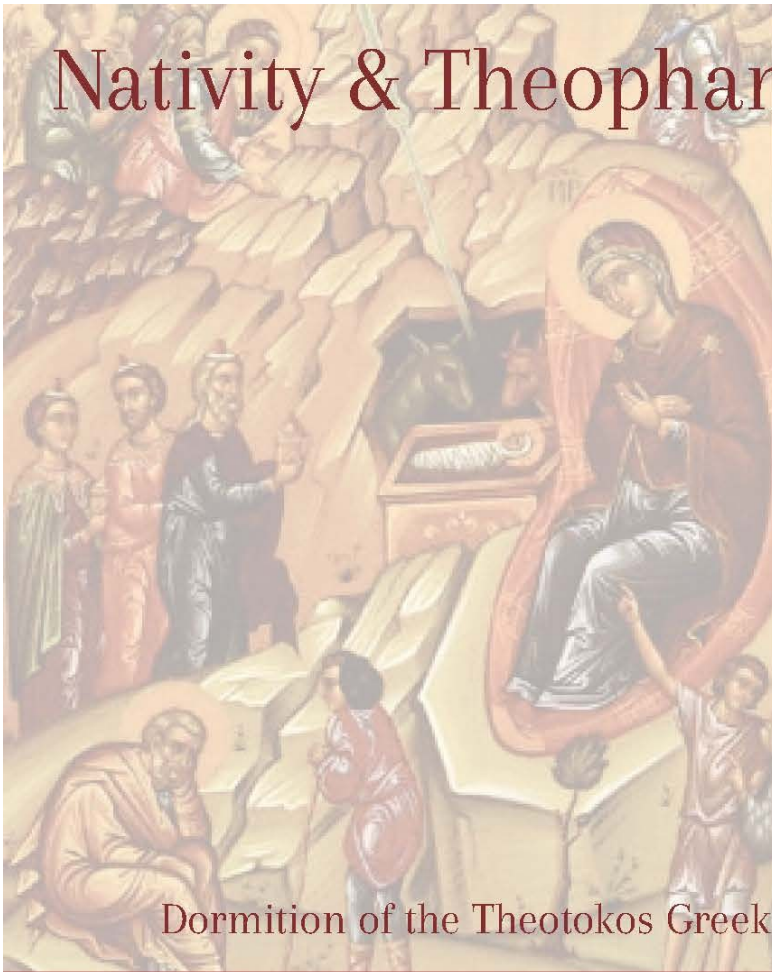
Our "Greek to Go" frozen half pan sale is ongoing, on-line orders and GyroFest sales account for over 75% of what we prepared. We are estimating final sales of \$19K and a profit of \$11K. If you have not yet ordered to secure your pans for holiday entertaining, you can click here to place your order: [Payment](#). Then just show up on any of the pick-up dates to retrieve your order.

Food Festival 2026 is June 26-27-28, planning starts in January and cooking/baking starts in February. Think about getting involved, we need everyones help and ideas to ensure the success of our annual food festival.

Again, thanks to all who have volunteered their time for our Fall fundraisers,

Andy & Chris

# Nativity & Theophany Service Schedule



Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church | Oakmont, PA

Wednesday 3:30 p.m. Hours of the Nativity; 5:00 p.m. - Vespersal Divine Liturgy  
December 24th *Eve of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Thursday 8:30 a.m. - Orthros & Divine Liturgy  
December 25th *Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Sunday 8:00 a.m. - Orthros; 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
December 28th *Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Wednesday 5:00 p.m. - Great Vespers, Orthros, Divine Liturgy  
December 31st *Saint Basil the Great*

Sunday 8:00 a.m. - Orthros; 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
January 4th *Sunday before Theophany*

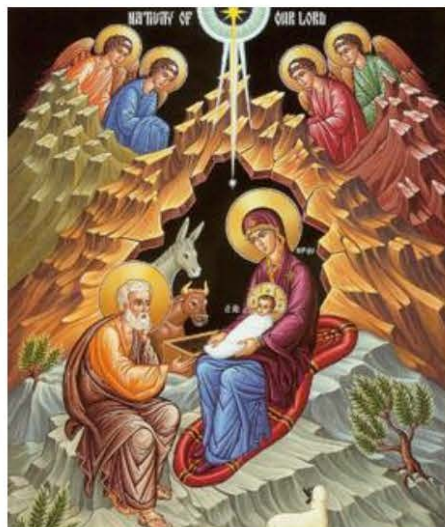
Monday 5:00 p.m. - Royal Hours, Vespersal Divine Liturgy, Agiasmos  
January 5th *Forefeast of Theophany*

Tuesday 8:00 a.m. - Orthros; 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy; Agiasmos  
January 6th *Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ*



# **“SING PRAISES TO OUR GOD, SING PRAISES”**

## **THE ANNUAL PAN-ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS CONCERT Returns!**



**FEATURING: CHOIRS FROM MULTIPLE  
ORTHODOX JURISDICTIONS**

**AND**

**THE PAN-ORTHODOX CHOIR OF GREATER  
PITTSBURGH**

**Sunday, December 14, 2025, 4:00 pm**

**St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church  
2110 Haymaker Road, Monroeville**

**SPONSORED BY: THE ORTHODOX CLERGY BROTHERHOOD OF GREATER PITTSBURGH**

**Fellowship following the concert • Freewill offering to benefit various Orthodox Charities**

# TOGETHER WE CAN HELP!

St. Barbara's Philoptochos is collecting these items to  
bless others in need...

**Please consider helping our mission!**

## SOCKS



*New socks of all sizes for women, children and men are needed for local shelters.*

## CAKE KITS



*One cake mix, one container icing and one can of soda in a disposable cake pan is all it takes to give supplies so someone can celebrate a special day!*

**Collection boxes located in the hall.**

## HYGIENE ITEMS



*Items for young men and women who need help with everyday supplies.*

## STUFFED ANIMALS



*Cuddly teddies (or other animals!) are given to Neighborhood Resilience Project for children in need during traumatic times.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF BLESSING OTHERS!**

**DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS CHURCH, OAKMONT, PA**







## MERRY CHRISTMAS

from St. Nectarios Bookstore

*Come see our new look, shop our new items,  
see our sales and pick up \$1 Christmas Cards*

*from Greece*



We are ready for Christmas and the New Year. Stop in and browse our selection of ornaments, icons and beautiful designs from Greece, Ukraine, Russia and many monasteries, including our own *Nativity of the Theotokos Orthodox Monastery.*

Call us for hours at 412-828-4144





# WINTER GEAR DRIVE

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*Coats | Hats | Scarves | Gloves | Boots*

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**Our Sunday School is collecting new or gently used winter items to donate to the Neighborhood Resilience Project.**

**Please bring items to church by January 11!**

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church | Oakmont, PA



# GREEK TO GO

## 2025 Frozen Half Pan Sale

Order now and pick-up later for the holidays!

- Spanakopita** (16 servings).....\$35  
Spinach and cheese mixture baked into a filo dough crust, baking instructions included
- Pastitso** (12-16 servings).....\$40  
Layers of pasta & ground beef topped with béchamel sauce, baking instructions included
- Moussaka** (12-16 servings).....\$40  
Layers of potato, eggplant & gr beef topped with béchamel sauce, baking instructions included
- Gyro Party Kit** (10 gyros).....\$50  
2½lb fully cooked gyro meat & 10-pack pita bread, heating instructions included  
16oz tzatziki sauce (tzatziki sauce is refrigerated and keeps for about a month)
- Lamb Shank** (5-6 pieces about 1lb each) .....\$75  
A tender shank w/diced vegetables braised in a tasty tomato/wine sauce, baking instructions included
- Traditional Baklava** (4 pieces).....\$11  
Filo pastry filled with chopped walnuts and sweetened with syrup
- Apricot Baklava** (2 pieces) or **Pistachio Baklava** (2 pieces) .....\$7  
Filo pastry generously stuffed with an apricot or chopped pistachio filling and sweetened with syrup

Show up on any date  
and pick-up your order:

Thursday, November 20, 4pm-6pm  
Saturday, November 22, 11am-1pm  
Monday, November 24, 4pm-6pm  
Saturday, December 13, 11am-1pm  
Monday, December 15, 4pm-6pm  
Thursday, December 18, 4pm-6pm

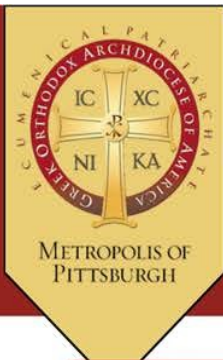
CLICK HERE  
TO ORDER  
AND PAY

RESERVE NOW  
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

EMAIL US AT: [FOODFESTIVAL@DORMITIONPGH.ORG](mailto:FOODFESTIVAL@DORMITIONPGH.ORG) WITH QUESTIONS

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church - 12 Washington Ave - Oakmont, PA 15139



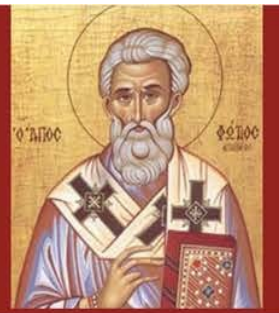


VOLUME 9 NO. 8 ISSUE: 83

DECEMBER 2025

# A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

## NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



### The Investiture of Three New Archons of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh

On Sunday October 19, 2025, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, along with His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, His Eminence Gerasimos of San Francisco, and His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey, presided at the investiture of thirty-eight new Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate from throughout the United States which included three of our own from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. The Divine Liturgy was held at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City. The investiture was the final event of the annual Archon Weekend of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The newly invested Archons, like their distinguished brethren, have dedicated themselves to the protection and defense of the Mother Church of Constantinople. AXIOS!



L-R: James Trakas and John Trihas of St Paul, North Royalton, and Nick Spanakis of Holy Trinity, Canton, Ohio.

*Happy Name Day to  
His Eminence Metropolitan Savas*

FEAST OF ST. SAVAS THE SANCTIFIED  
DECEMBER 5TH

## 20 Athletic 26 Seminars



For Advisors,  
Clergy,  
Coaches, and  
GOYA Officers!

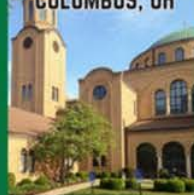
December 6 at 1 PM

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/Dec6Athletic>

December 7 at 5 PM

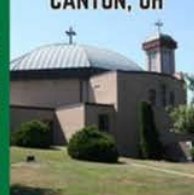
Register at <https://tinyurl.com/Dec7AthleticSem>

ANNUNCIATION  
COLUMBUS, OH



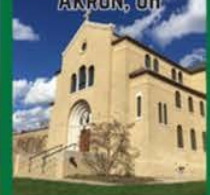
T1: JANUARY 16-18

HOLY TRINITY  
CANTON, OH



T1: JANUARY 16-18

ANNUNCIATION  
AKRON, OH



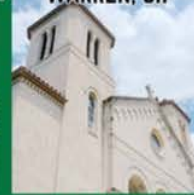
T2: JAN 30-FEB 1

ST. CONSTANTINE & HELEN  
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OH



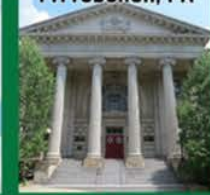
T2: JAN 30-FEB 1

ST. DEMETRIOS  
WARREN, OH



T3: FEBRUARY 13-15

ST. NICHOLAS  
PITTSBURGH, PA



T3: FEBRUARY 13-15

## 2026 GOYA BASKETBALL HOST PARISHES





## Spotlight on 2025 Metropolis of Pittsburgh St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Winners

### Junior Division Essay Topic 1

*"Philanthropy is an important part of the Church's mission. It involves more than giving money. Why is it important to support people in different ways besides donating? In what ways can we offer support and how can these other forms help make a difference in the lives of individuals and the community?"*

### Junior Division Essay Winner - Claire Gaitanis, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Camp Hill

#### More Than Giving Money

The effort to increase the well-being of humankind, as by charitable act or donation: philanthropy. Simply speaking, philanthropy is an act of kindness, usually giving or donating, to help someone in need. There's another definition of this word, one that I think is a bit more important than the first: love to humankind. If you're familiar with 1 Corinthians 13, you would know that out of faith, hope, and love, the greatest of these is love. Philanthropy should be more than just giving money—you should give your time, talent, and treasure.

But how do you give your time, talent, and treasure? Giving money, for one thing. But while donating to the poor and needy can be good, it is better if you can do something better for them. Specifically, helping them through their hardships. Things like clothing or food drives or even giving a school common supplies like pencils or paper, would be better than simply donating money. Instead of giving people something they could use to get what they need, why not provide what they need to them yourself?

One reason for this lies in Matthew 25:35-36, Christ says, *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."* When questioned, He replies, *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

When you show kindness to someone, you show kindness to Christ. Giving money isn't the only way to be kind. You can show people kindness by giving your time, talent, and treasure—anything you can do to help them. Even if it is a simple act, like giving food or clothing to someone in need. Giving money isn't the only form of philanthropy. Use philanthropy to show people kindness and love.

**Junior Division Essay Winner - Claire Gaitanis,  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Camp Hill**

Please consider donating to the Metropolis Scholarship Fund so that we may continue to offer scholarships to our talented youth. To contribute please scan the QR code. Checks can also be mailed to the Metropolis, made payable to the "Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh." Please write "Oratorical Scholarship" in the memo line of your check. Thank you!



### PLEASE SUPPORT OUR METROPOLIS MINISTRIES!

It costs approximately \$1,000 per day to operate our Metropolis - including Metropolitan Savas's Archpastoral visitations, preparations for summer camp and GOYA retreats, our vital registry, and more.

Please consider sponsoring a day in the life of the Metropolis:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

412-621-5529 (Main) 412-465-0460 (Camp) 412-621-8543 (Youth)

pittsburgh.goarch.org info@pittsburgh.goarch.org



**Dormition of the Theotokos**  
**Greek Orthodox Church**  
12 Washington Avenue  
Oakmont, Pennsylvania 15139

