



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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**Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
Stephen Sarantis, President, Parish Council
Jackie Sarantis, Office Administrator**

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, October 8, 2025

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,



A special gift from God is my family's beloved Caleb, a Mountain Cur whose drawing you see—a sketch that captures not only his form, but his spirit. Caleb is not just a dog. He is a companion in the truest sense. His loyalty is unwavering, his discernment keen, his presence a balm in times of trial.

Mountain Curs are known for their intelligence, their endurance, and their protective instincts. Caleb embodies all of these. He often senses danger before it arrives. He guides us with quiet confidence. He remains faithful in chaos and steady in uncertainty. In his eyes, I see the watchfulness of a shepherd and in his posture, the strength of a guardian. He chooses to stay near us, to protect, to love—not out of duty, but out of something deeper. Something revered.

I named our dog **Caleb** because of the strong devotion the Old Testament Caleb had for God. His unwavering faith and courage continue to inspire me—not only through Holy Scripture, but through the past 12 years of daily companionship from our adopted dog we found as a stray to the Diakonia Retreat Center. Had we not adopted him, he would have been taken to a shelter and euthanized. Our choosing him is God's reminder to us that we receive new blessings each day. Caleb's trust and devotion resemble his Old Testament namesake.

From the biblical accounts, we see Caleb as a faithful man who trusted God to fulfill His promises, even when others allowed fear to override their small faith. His devotion did not waver with age; into his later years, Caleb remained steadfast in belief and obedience. God blessed him for his faithfulness and patience, and his life stands as a powerful encouragement for us to believe God wholeheartedly.

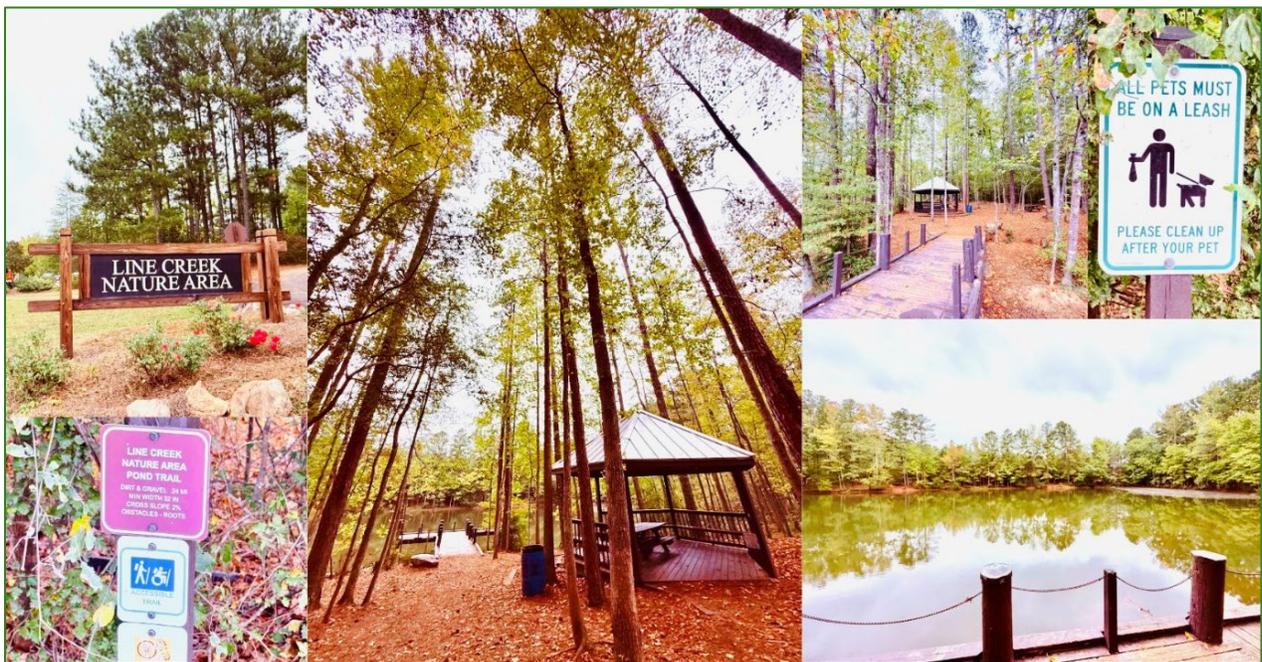
Like the biblical Caleb, we, God's people, are called to follow Him in every circumstance—patiently waiting for our Lord to fulfill His

promises and ready to act when the time is right. In our own lives, may we reflect the same trust and devotion. I am reminded of this daily through Caleb, whose loyalty is unwavering and whose trust in me and his family is complete. He follows us without hesitation, listens to our voices, and rests peacefully in our presence—never questioning our care and never doubting our intentions. His devotion is not earned through grand gestures, but through the quiet consistency of love and presence. In many ways, Caleb's companionship mirrors the kind of faith we are called to have in our relationship with God: a faith that walks beside Him without fear, that waits patiently for His guidance, and that responds with readiness when He calls. Through Caleb—both the faithful servant of Scripture and my beloved companion—I am reminded of the profound blessings that come from walking loyally and trustingly with our Lord.

In response to the gifts we receive from our animal companions, I invite our St. Christopher families to join me for a few minutes as I honor our beloved animal companions through prayer and blessing. All our pets—large and small—are welcome!

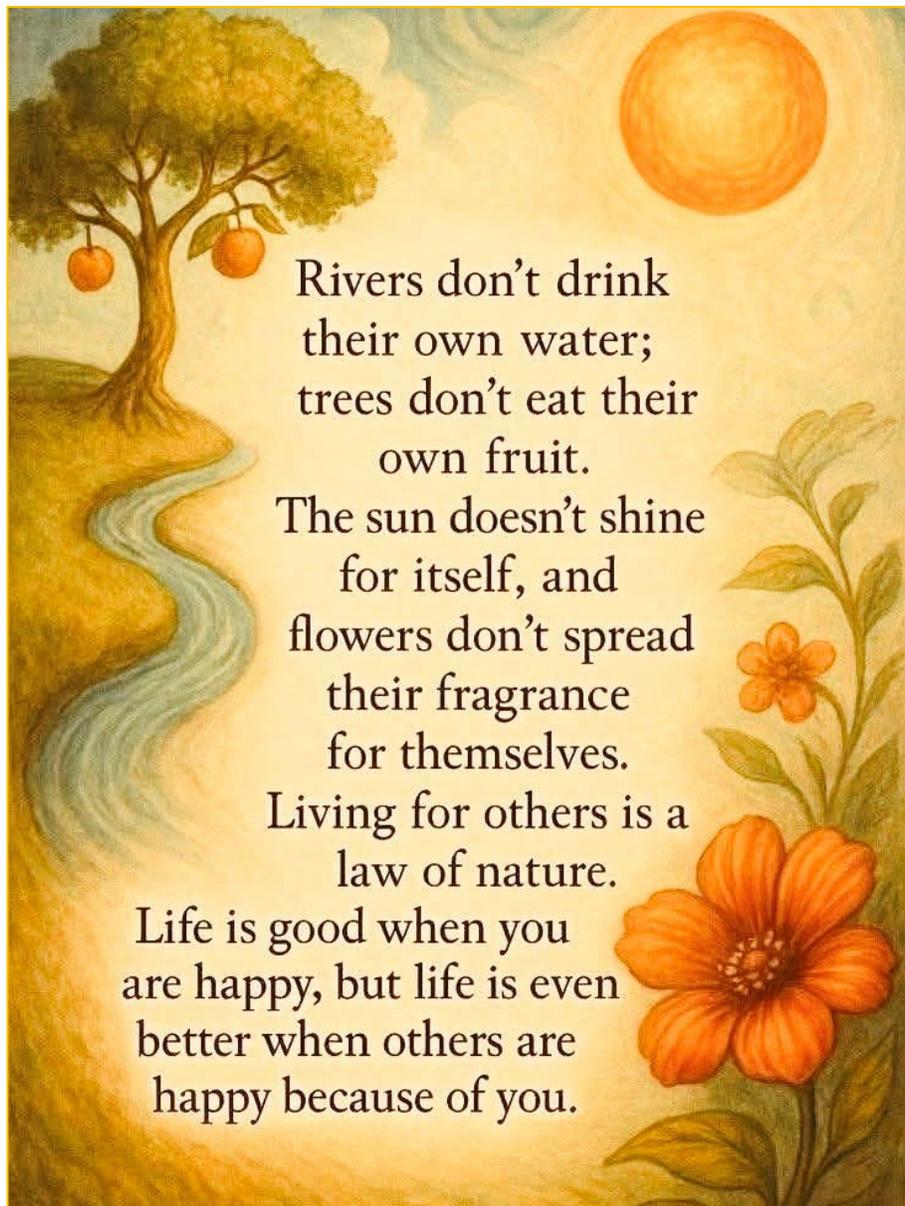
This **Blessing of the Animals** is reserved for our parishioners' pets and will be on Sunday, October 26th from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. It will not be promoted publicly since we are planning a public community event next Spring. This will be a family opportunity for us to thank God and to bless our pets for their loyalty, their love, and their companionship that do not ask for anything in return. May we learn from them. May we be as faithful, as discerning, and as courageous. And may we never forget to give thanks—for the seen and unseen blessings that walk beside us every day.

Please be aware that this Fall's **Blessing of the Animals** is for St. Christopher parishioners who are visiting Line Creek Nature Park Pond Trail in Peachtree City, Georgia, on Sunday afternoon, October 26th, between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. Remember to bring your pets on leashes or in carriers, so all may enjoy the day safely. If you join us, please clean up after your pet so we leave this nature trail near our parish's backyard as nice as when we arrived. For this event, we will not be distributing treats to pets or people or any handouts... just Fr. George's animal blessings! The Nature Area has easy and beautiful walking paths with scenic views of bodies of water for us to enjoy on a beautiful Fall afternoon. *These photos beckon you to join us.*



Looking ahead, Fr. Geoge is pleased to announce that with the help of volunteer parishioners, he is planning our first-ever community-wide public **Blessing of the Animals** event in the Spring at one of our Peachtree City Parks that will be open to both our parishioners and our friends and neighbors. The date and place will be announced next year when plans are finalized and approved. At this event, we will

offer what Fr. George shared with parishioners a couple weeks ago – an Orthodox blessing with Scripture readings, sermon, and sprinkling of holy water on each animal. In addition, we will share pet adoption information in partnership with local animal shelters, offer children’s crafts and stories about St. Modestos, patron saint of animals, refreshments for people and treats for pets, and prayer card blessings. We hope you will invite your friends and neighbors.



Rivers don't drink
their own water;
trees don't eat their
own fruit.

The sun doesn't shine
for itself, and
flowers don't spread
their fragrance
for themselves.

Living for others is a
law of nature.

Life is good when you
are happy, but life is even
better when others are
happy because of you.

Viewed on social media:



**Get your kids
in church.**

Not just when it's convenient.
Not just on holidays.
Not just when life is a mess.

Get them in consistently.

One day, they'll need
what you planted.

Don't wait. Start now.

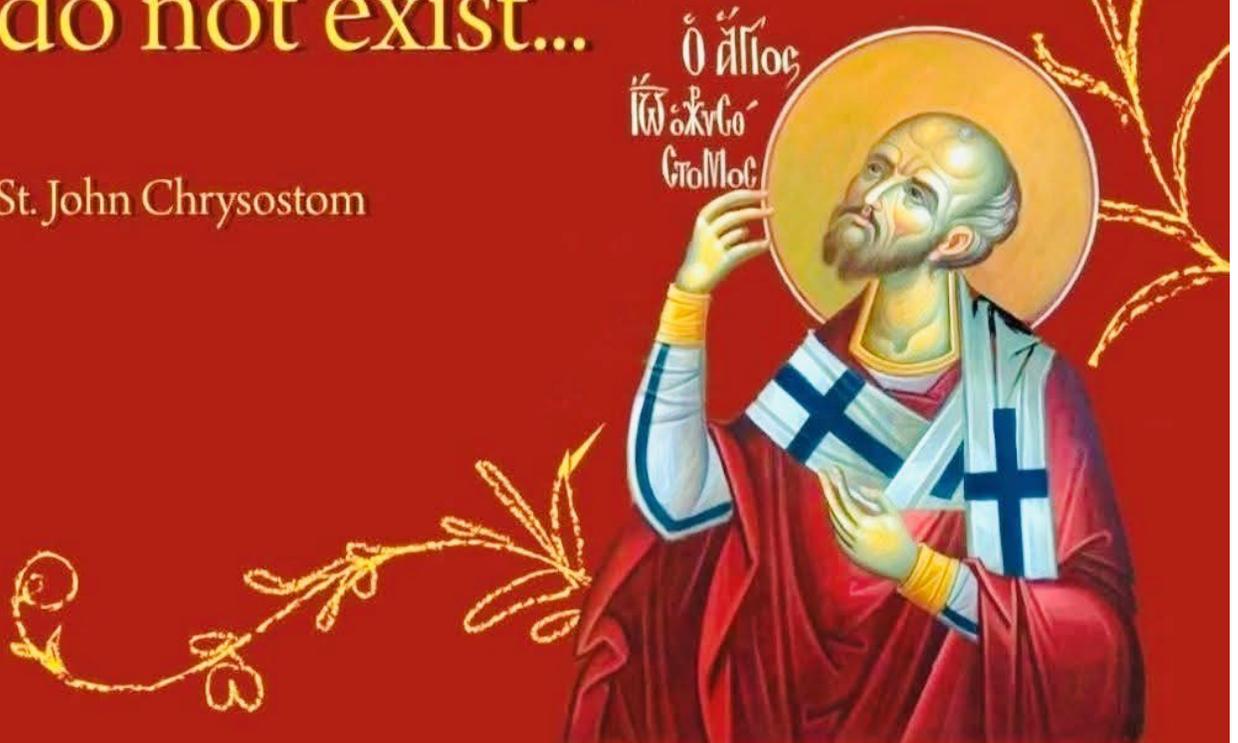


**“Love every person, regardless
of his sinful state. Sin is sin, but
the basis of a human being is one
and only - the image of God.”**

- St. John of Kronstadt   @discoverorthodoxchristianity

"Love forgives
many mistakes,
while hatred
imagines mistakes
even where they
do not exist..."

St. John Chrysostom



Join Us Often with Your Family

Sunday, October 12th – Sunday of the 2nd Ecumenical Council

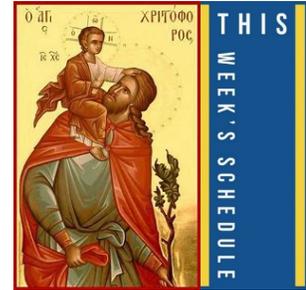
8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:45 Religious Education Classes

[Our Adult Religious Education will discuss Chapter 3, pages 80-99 of our textbook.]

12:00 Joint Finance Committee & Parish Council Meeting



Wednesday, October 15th

8:00 Orthros & 9:00 Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel (Metropolis Office)

8:30 Philoptochos Fall Pastry Sale - Tiropita Batter

Friday, October 17th

8:30 Philoptochos Fall Pastry Sale - Tiropita Folding

Saturday, October 18th

8:30 Philoptochos Fall Pastry Sale - Tiropita Folding

Sunday, October 19th – 3rd Sunday of St. Luke

8:00 Orthros

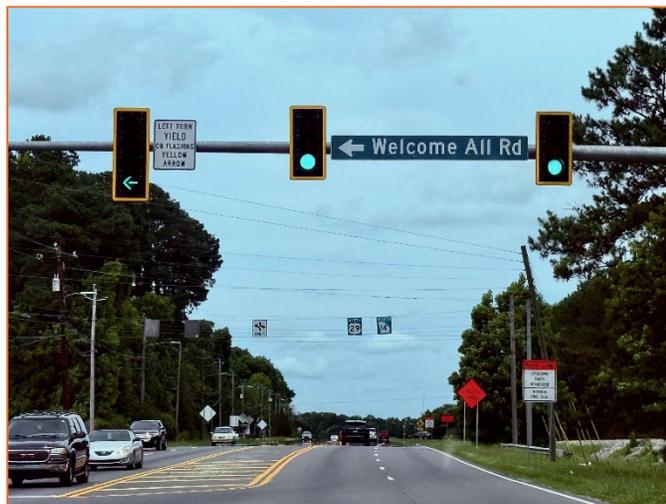
9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:45 Religious Education Classes

11:45 Philoptochos General Meeting

A Spiritual Reflection from Fr. George – “Let Us Welcome All”

Not too far from our parish, we encounter this intersection—marked by the sign “**Welcome All Road**”. As we gaze upon this image, we are reminded that the road to God’s heart is never closed, never gated, and never reserved for a select few. It is open, wide, and paved with grace. Just as this



road welcomes every traveler, regardless of where they’ve come from or where they’re headed, so too does our parish welcome every soul into our midst.

In the life of the Church, we are not merely spectators—we are participants. Each person who walks through our doors brings with them a sacred offering: their time, their talents, their stories. And when these gifts are shared, they become part of our collective worship, returning thanks to God and building up the Body of Christ.

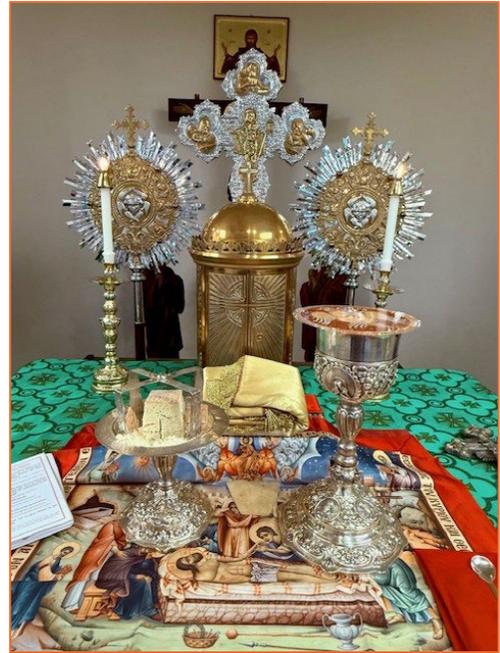
Let the above image be a gentle nudge to us all: to greet the stranger with warmth, to honor the quiet contributions of others, and to recognize that in welcoming all, we welcome Christ Himself. For as Scripture reminds us, “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.*” (Hebrews 13:2)

May our community be a living road sign—one that reads not just **Welcome All**, but **You Belong Here**.

With a heart full of gratitude, I offer my sincere thanks to each of you who so generously give of your time, talents, and treasures to support the ministry of our parish. Your selfless service—whether in the altar, the choir, the chantors, the classrooms, the kitchen, and behind the

scenes—reflects the love of Christ and the spirit of true stewardship. Through your dedication, our parish becomes not only a house of worship but a living body of faith, compassion, and community. May our Lord bless you abundantly for your labors and may St. Christopher intercede for you always as you continue to serve with joy and humility.

This past Sunday, I appreciated receiving and using the fresh prosfora offered by Helen and Julie S. and the wine donated by Eva S. and her family. These earthly gifts became the Divine Gifts of the Holy Eucharist. We are blessed with our teams of bakers who prepare fresh prosfora for every Divine Liturgy.



Thanks to Dedee, Kirk, and Maria for preparing the five loaves of bread used for our Thanksgiving Sunday Artoklasia on October 5th. There is always plenty of bread, and while many will say, “Just one piece, Fr. George”, like our Antidoron, the Artos can be taken home and enjoyed

later in the week. This past Monday, Presbytera Marinda toasted ours and served it with breakfast, reminding us once more of the special blessings we witnessed during the October commemorations highlighting our birthdays, anniversaries, Name Days, and more from our parish family.

On the third year following the falling asleep of her beloved father, Maxim, I commend Larisa for asking me to offer the Memorial Service using the traditional koliva she made and shared with her parish family. Sometimes we forget that it is you and I who stand in for



her relatives living far away in Russia like we did this past Sunday. A heartfelt thank you to Larisa for sharing her special ethnic dishes. The flavors and stories carried with them a deep sense of heritage and love, and we were honored to partake in such a meaningful tribute.

On Sunday, we honored all those involved in church music and it was my pleasure to present our choir members, chantors, and readers with a Calla Lily in celebration of National Church Music Sunday. I commend



their efforts and further recognize those unable to join us Sunday, including Lydia, Anna, George, John, Eleni, Chris, Julie, & Marcus. Thank you all!

I offer appreciation to Susan, Pete, Androniki and all who assisted them this past Sunday with the delightful surprise luncheon following church services. Their creativity and generosity in repurposing the egg whites and supplies from the Pastry Sale preparations the day before brought everyone together in such a joyful and nourishing way. It was a beautiful example of community spirit and resourcefulness, and we are truly grateful.

To those who helped behind the scenes—whether in the kitchen, with setup, or simply lending a helping hand—your contributions did not go unnoticed. Thank you for making Sunday morning and afternoon so special.

I am always reassured when parents choose to bring their children to church and in turn permit them to attend Religious Education Classes. Our teachers are committed and enthusiastic as they help grow the Body of Christ stronger and closer to Him. I have been impressed with the attendance and class discussion of our adult students as we study early Church History and how our faith grew from the Old Testament into the New Testament and now is entrusted to us.



As we departed church services, my grandson surprised his family by offering to treat us to ice cream with caramel and chocolate syrup. Papou and Yiayia could not have been prouder, and in waiting for our dessert, we encountered our dear friends and clergy from All Saints Anglican Church who were eager to learn of our



parish's progress as well as encourage our efforts to build our new church soon. Fr. Cass asked me to give a shout-out to his friend, Steve Theodorakis! Every pastor feels blessed when non-parishioners praise and lift up others.

As we walk together on this road that truly *welcomes all*, may we continue to be a community that reflects the boundless love of Christ. My deepest desire is to lift up our parish family—not only in prayer, but in purpose. By honoring each person's presence, embracing their gifts, and encouraging their service, we become a living testament to God's grace.

Let us continue to build a parish where every heart finds a home, every talent finds a place, and every offering—no matter what amount—is received with gratitude and joy. In doing so, we don't just worship *with* one another; we worship *as* one body, giving glory to God who unites us all.

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, 12:4–6a: *"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us."*

St. Paul's words beautifully affirm our shared calling: to welcome all, to honor each person's unique gifts, and to offer them in service to God. May it be the heartbeat of our parish family. Amen! +Fr. George Tsahakis

