



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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**Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
Stephen Sarantis, President, Parish Council
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Pastoral Message from Fr. George, July 18, 2025





SAINT CHRISTOPHER
HELLENIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Call to Action:

Reaching, Shining, Building Together

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, let us look to a surprising image for divine inspiration: the giraffe. With its neck stretched toward heaven, it reaches for leaves no other creature can touch. It moves with quiet dignity, not struggling to fit in but embracing its purpose in God's creation.

This noble creature reminds us of our own spiritual calling. Christ tells us in Matthew's Gospel:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

These are not simply poetic words—they are a call to action. We are meant to reach upward and outward,

to let our faith find expression in service, and our joy take root in community.

Faith Finds Fruit When We Serve

Just as the giraffe seeks its sustenance in the treetops, we too must seek the fruits of the Spirit through prayer, sacrifice, and devotion. But this journey doesn't stop with personal nourishment. It blooms when we serve one another—especially within our parish.

St. Christopher Church is not merely a building—it is the living Body of Christ. And every member, every family, every child and eldest member, has something beautiful to offer. Be it the gift of teaching, music, woodworking, kindness, or simply time—each talent is a leaf waiting to be shared for God's glory.

Let Your Light Shine in Our Parish

We are called to be visible lamps, not hidden away. The ministries, programs, and worship here at St. Christopher grow strong only when we show up, not just with attendance, but with our hearts and hands.

When you serve, you shine. When you give of yourself, your faith begins to breathe and move—and inspire others.

Joy Takes Root in Community

Let your joy find its roots here. In fellowship. In shared meals. In working together to beautify this holy space. In teaching our children. In visiting the sick. In praying as one. The giraffe reaches for nourishment above—but brings it back down to support the body. So must we. Let us build God's Holy Church—together.

A City on a Hill. A Lamp on a Stand. A Giraffe Reaching High. A Parish Called to Serve.

May we answer this call with boldness. May we rise up—not for comfort, but for Christ. May we, the faithful of St. Christopher Church, lift one another up

—by sharing, serving, and loving—

So that this parish may shine like a beacon of God's Kingdom on earth. Amen.

+Fr. George Tsahakis, 7.13.25

St. Christopher Church: “A Call to Action”



“Cast your nets at His word.” – Luke 5:5

As Christ stood on the shore and called His disciples to trust and act, so He calls each of us today. In the sacred rhythm of Orthodox life, our gifts are nets—woven through prayer, tradition, and love—ready to be cast into the waters of ministry. Beginning 7.13.25, Fr. George introduced ***“A Call to Action”***. Let us not hesitate, but respond with faith, knowing that in obedience, the catch is always abundant. This resource is also posted on our website.

Discover Your Gift. Serve with Joy.
Build Up the Body of Christ.

Beloved Parish Family,

Have you ever wondered how your unique talents—your voice, hands, heart, or skills—can become a sacred offering to the

Church? This summer, we're opening wide the doors of ministry, and inviting YOU to take part in the beautiful work of parish life.

With over **80 opportunities** across liturgical service, youth and family engagement, outreach, hospitality, education, and more, there's a place for everyone to offer their gift. Whether you sing, teach, greet, organize, mentor, bake, troubleshoot tech, or simply care deeply—you belong here.

New or unsure where to begin?

Check out our **Parish Ministry Interest List** below where you can easily explore options and let Fr. George know what calls to your heart.

Let your faith find expression in service. Let your joy take root in community. Let us build God's Holy Church—together.

“Each one has received a gift.

Use it to serve one another...” – 1 Peter 4:10

Please review the categories below and check any areas where you feel drawn to serve or would like to learn more. Your response will help Fr. George guide and strengthen our parish with joyful service and fellowship.

“There are different gifts, but the same Spirit.” – 1 Corinthians 12:4

Parish Ministry Interest List

Family Names: _____

Phone or Email: _____

PLEASE CHECK THE MINISTRIES YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OR JOIN.

Liturgical & Educational

- ☐ Church Reader (non-chanting)
- ☐ Epistle Reader (English – Females)
- ☐ Epistle Reader (Greek)
- ☐ Chantor (Byzantine Greek/English)
- ☐ Altar Server (Youth & Adults)
- ☐ Myrrhbearer (Youth & Adults)
- ☐ Religious Education
- ☐ Youth Ministry (Hope, Joy, GOYA)
- ☐ Young Adult Fellowship
- ☐ Church Choir
- ☐ Hellenic Language & Culture
- ☐ Prosfora (Offering Bread baking)
- ☐ Koliva (Memorial wheat)
- ☐ Artoklasia (Feast Day bread offering)
- ☐ Other: _____

Youth & Family Engagement

- ☐ Playground Support
- ☐ Family Retreats & Family Nights
- ☐ Parent Support for Youth & Culture
- ☐ Family Game or Movie Nights
- ☐ Youth Choir
- ☐ Music Ensemble
- ☐ Summer Church School
- ☐ Youth Athletics
- ☐ Mentoring / Big Brother–Sister Program
- ☐ Other: _____

Parish Life

- ☐ Ushering / Greeters
- ☐ Visitation of Elderly/Shut-ins

- ☐ Event Cooking
- ☐ Event Set-up
- ☐ Coffee Fellowship
- ☐ Church Decorations
- ☐ Church Flowers
- ☐ Bookstore Support
- ☐ GreekFest Volunteer
- ☐ Golf Classic Volunteer
- ☐ Fundraising Volunteer
- ☐ Volunteer for Special Events
- ☐ Blessing of Animals
- ☐ Philoptochos (Women's Ministry)
- ☐ Prayer Shawl (Knitting/Crocheting)
- ☐ Inventory & Church Property
- ☐ Facilities Maintenance
- ☐ Church Office Support
- ☐ Medical Support
- ☐ Legal Guidance
- ☐ Finance / Accounting Volunteer
- ☐ Real Estate / Construction / Trades
- ☐ Parish Council
- ☐ Welcome Committee
- ☐ Parish Directory
- ☐ Let's EAT!
- ☐ Other: _____

Technology & Communication

- ☐ Livestreaming Volunteer
- ☐ Audio Volunteer
- ☐ Publicity & Design
- ☐ Social Media Support
- ☐ Parish E-Bulletin
- ☐ Website Support

- ☐ Sunday Liturgical Guide
- ☐ Other: _____

Community Service

- ☐ Food / Clothing Drives
- ☐ Homeless Outreach
- ☐ Environmental Clean-Up
- ☐ Prison Ministry Support
- ☐ Blood Drives
- ☐ Habitat for Humanity
- ☐ School Supply or Meal Distribution
- ☐ Disaster Relief Coordination
- ☐ Community Garden
- ☐ Soldiers Angels
- ☐ Just Our Soldiers' Helpers (JOSH)
- ☐ K9s for Warriors
- ☐ Toys for Tots
- ☐ Other: _____

Outreach & Evangelism

- ☐ Welcoming Newcomers
- ☐ Neighborhood Canvassing
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Interfaith Outreach
- ☐ Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA)
- ☐ Sharing the Faith with Inquirers
- ☐ Church Tours
- ☐ Other: _____

Stewardship

- ☐ Stewardship Committee
- ☐ Annual Campaign Support
- ☐ Stewardship Education & Events
- ☐ Writing or Speaking on Stewardship
- ☐ Helping Others Discover Their Gifts
- ☐ Other: _____

Other Talents or Interests

Describe below anything else you'd like to share about your skills or ideas for ministry! _____

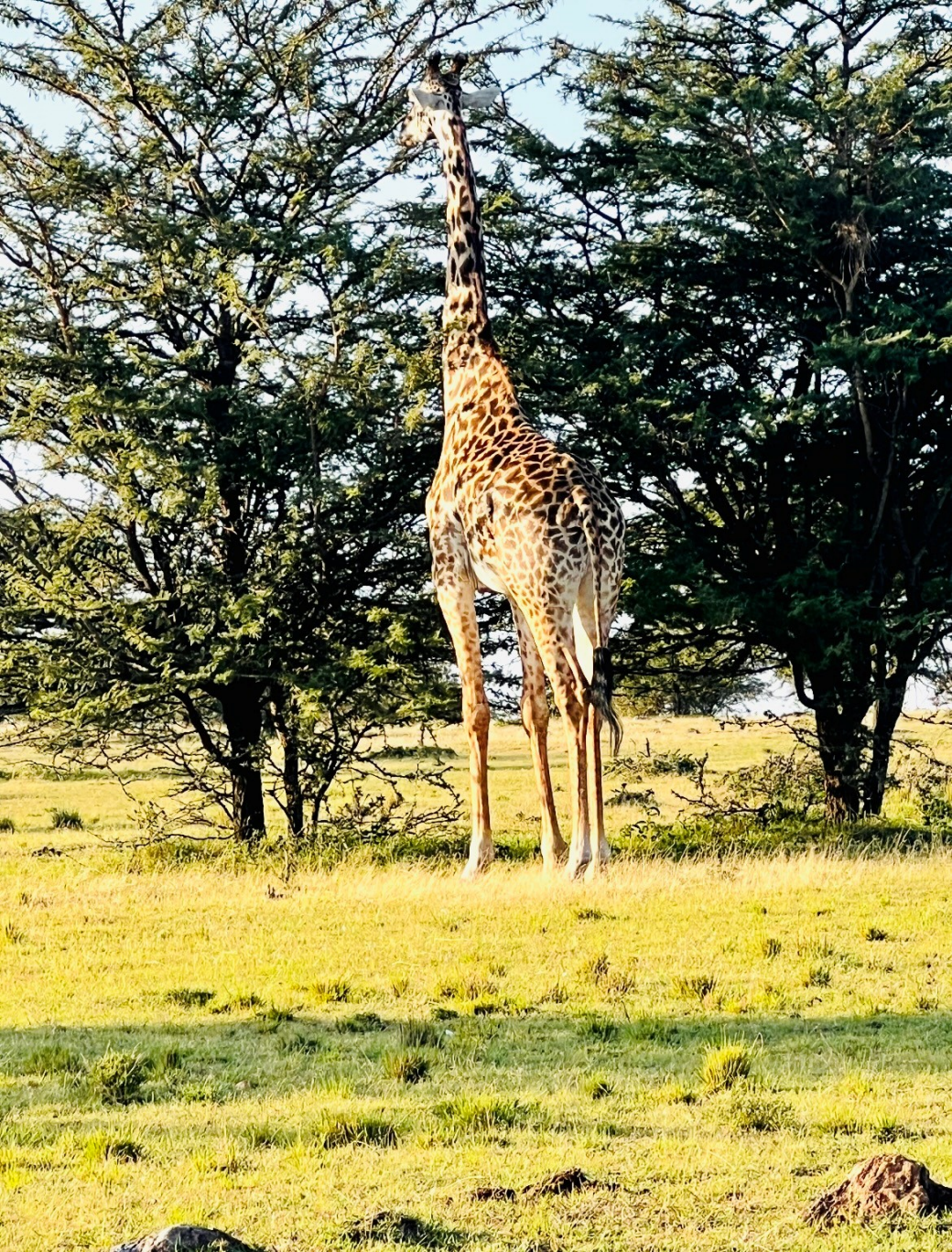
“There are different gifts, but the same Spirit.” — 1 Corinthians 12:4

Thank you for sharing your gifts with our parish family! Please email or call Fr. George so he can reach out to you soon with next steps or ways to get involved. May your offering of time and talent be a blessing to others and a joy to your heart.

Together, we build the Church—one faithful soul, one loving act, one ministry at a time.

With gratitude in Christ, +Fr. George Tsahakis

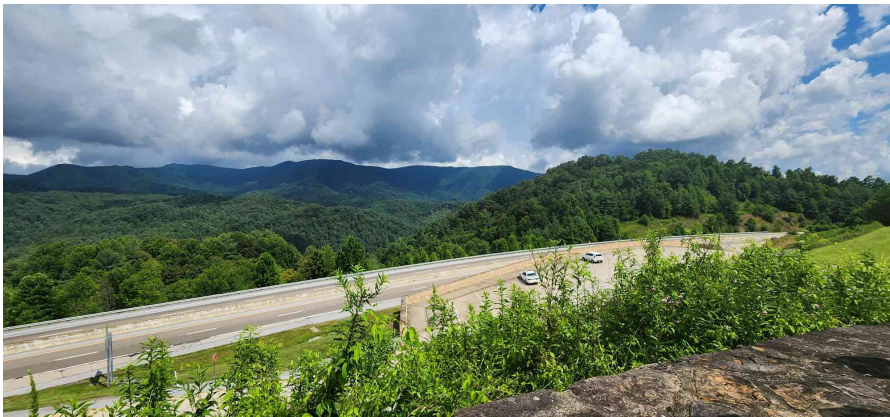




"Through Mountains and Mist: Seeing the Lord in Creation"

When parishioners travel, I often ask them to share photos with me which I find soothing and informative. After receiving the following photos from John and Brigid, I prayed and reflected on what spiritual nuggets they might offer. My thoughts below were inspired by their photos and captions. Like artwork, beautiful and unexpected photos can take us to new realms of understanding.

On a sunlit morning last week, John and Brigid began their journey to Michigan with prayer and joyful expectation. As they traveled through the



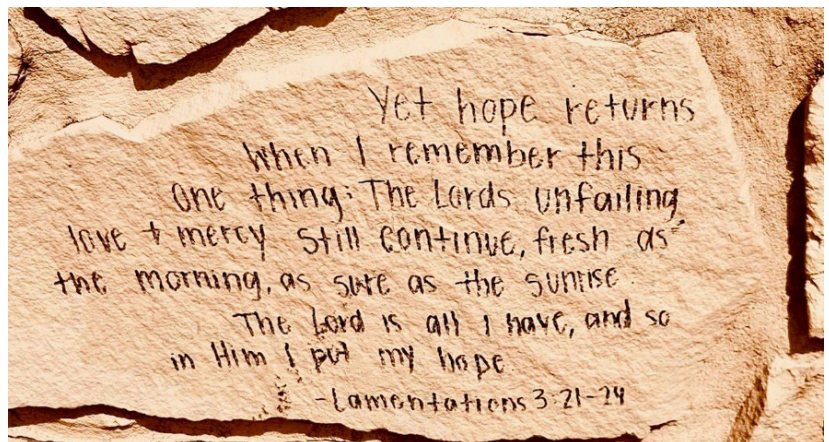
lush folds of Tennessee, with the mountains rising, they encountered many scenic overlooks. For me, mountains remind me of the soul's upward journey—

challenging yet glorious. In their height we're prompted to answer the calling to holiness and the pilgrimage toward divine presence.

While driving in the mountains, their eyes were drawn to a rock witnessing a message etched from the Book of Lamentations: "*Yet hope returns when*

I remember this one thing:

The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The Lord is all I have, and so in Him I put my hope." (from Lamentations 3:21–24)



This Old Testament passage poetically lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE gives rise to serious reflection. Even in sorrow, there is renewal. Even in silence, God speaks. I offer thanks to the Lord Who inspired someone to inscribe such majesty into the landscape to be shared with all who are blessed to discover and read its message.



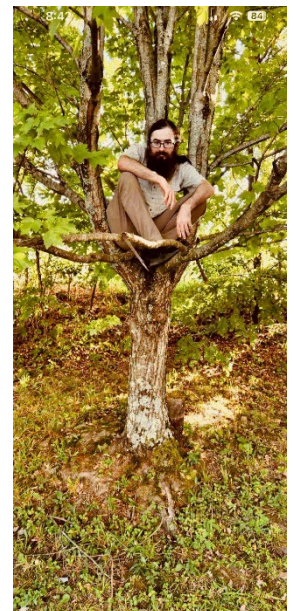
John and Brigid came upon a high overlook where the land opened wide—mountains rising, valleys sinking, and a thick fog clinging to the ridges and hollows. The vapor rolled in soft

waves, obscuring the depths with mystery. For me, fog is not an obstacle, but resembles a holy veil—a reminder that faith often requires us to trust what we cannot yet see. Just as the light still touches the hidden valleys beneath the mist, so too does God's mercy reach us even when clarity eludes us. The overlook's obscured valleys become a metaphor for the soul's unseen paths, where God's mercy is present even when direction isn't clear. It's in the fog we learn to walk by faith, not by sight.



In Elizabethton, Tennessee, the town glows with quiet beauty. A mural stretched across a brick wall,

radiant with color exhibits local flora and fauna. Nearby, an old tree stands strong, drawing John to leave behind his earthly cares and ponder the stillness of time, so richly surrounded by God's natural creation. The tree represents spiritual endurance—the kind forged through seasons of trial. Its roots reflect the unseen depth of faith that



anchors us through storms, like the Prophet expressed: “*He shall be like a tree planted by the waters.*” (Jeremiah 17:8)



A bridge arches gracefully over the Doe River, inviting travelers to cross not just water but into community, memory, and prayer. The bridge seems to whisper: *Mercy has a way of crossing any divide*. Indeed, a bridge invites movement from separation to union, echoing Christ’s role as mediator between humanity and divinity. Every crossing over it is a spiritual act of reconciliation and peace.

During their trip, John and Brigid spent time with their close friends, Lazarus, Zacharias and Sydney. Their spirit offers a vision of sanctified friendship—a fellowship that reflects the unity of the Trinity and the Church. To love another faithfully is to shine Christ’s light into the world.



By the lake in Kalamazoo, Michigan, they paused to savor the joy of their friendship, and the possibilities God always provides. They shared stories—not just of faith, but of daily renewal... how each morning brings fresh mercy and how God’s light, as referenced in this past Sunday’s Gospel lesson from Matthew, shines in every loving act: *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”* This is lived out through these friends’ witness and joy.



In addition, the still waters reflect the soul at peace, mirroring God’s renewal through baptism, confession, and quiet contemplation. Lakes call us to drink deeply of divine serenity, like in Psalm 23: *“He leads me beside still waters.”*

Our Orthodox faith invites us to see sacraments everywhere—not just in the chalice, but in coffee shared with friends, trees that whisper songs, and bridges that echo unity. *“If the world is God’s cathedral, every breath is liturgy.”* The word “liturgy” indeed is derived from two Greek words meaning “work or service for the people”. For me, these images offer reminders of God’s presence in our midst; they enable us to see the Lord’s hand in creation.



Upon seeing the images that Brigid took and John shared with me after their return, I am reminded of how God's wonders are easily seen in the mural, the bridge, the tree, the mountains, and the lake. Their journey through Tennessee and Michigan reflect our soul's own movement toward God every day. His created world reflects His handiwork and His presence. It is our choice to follow life's roads that lead us to new encounters. When we do, we use our potential and discover new opportunities to serve God.

I thank John and Brigid for sharing their photos; they reflect the divine made manifest through God's blessings. Indeed, their trip to be with cherished friends heartens us to spend time enjoying the range of nature, engaging in fellowship with our family and friends, and seeking human warmth by gathering with others that we love and appreciate.

In closing, I am grateful for being reminded that our Lord's mercy is renewed each morning, even when fog covers the valley. As His children, we are called to trust in God's steadfastness. In confronting life's darkness, St. Paul offers us steadfast hope: *"Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us."*

My brothers and sisters in Christ, this Scriptural passage assures us that even in the darkest seasons, suffering is not wasted. It becomes the soil from which endurance and character grow—and ultimately, hope. And this hope is not fragile or fleeting; it's anchored in the love of God and poured into us by the Holy Spirit. *Just like the earlier photo of the fog, the mist may obscure our path, but the light of hope still burns within, guiding us forward even when the way is hidden.* "Glory to God for all things." Amen.





Congratulations to our brother in Christ, Todd, who was baptized on 7/12 with the name Paisios.



Our thanks to our GreekFest Co-chairs, George, Emilia, Julie, Claudia, & Tammy (not pictured).



Our appreciation to Gail for hosting last Sunday's Memorial Luncheon and those who assisted her.

Join Us Often with Your Family

Saturday, July 19th

8:30 Philoptochos – Koulourakia Day

Sunday, July 20th – Sixth Sunday of St. Matthew

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service, followed by Memorial Brunch offered by Philoptochos

11:00 Philoptochos Board Meeting

Friday, July 25th

9:00 Divine Liturgy

Saturday, July 26th

8:30 Philoptochos – Kourambiethes Day

Sunday, July 27th – Seventh Sunday of St. Matthew & Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Blessing of the Apples

11:00 Let's EAT!



Come, and be strengthened in your witness of Orthodoxy through regular worship, fellowship, and service with us.