

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

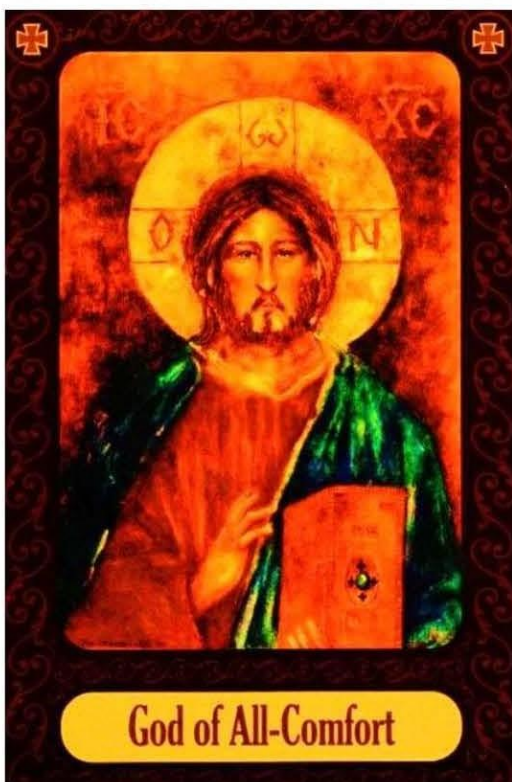
313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
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Phone: (770) 347-PRAY (7729)

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

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, July 11, 2025



“God of All-Comfort” – The Icon from Solitary Confinement

*As we anticipate Orthodox Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday on July 27th,
Fr. George shares this special icon with you and your family.*

The Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) offers this deeply moving icon called “**God of All-Comfort**” (pictured above), which was created by a prisoner named Michael who lived in solitary confinement.

The story behind the icon:

- Michael had only crayons to work with, and he used his own face as the model for Christ.
- Despite years of spiritual resistance, he eventually asked to be baptized into the Orthodox Faith.
- His icon, drawn from the depths of isolation, became a symbol of hope and transformation.

After Michael’s passing, OCPM began distributing copies of this icon to other prisoners. Many found comfort and healing through it — some even overcame years of addiction by praying with it.

The following powerful story of this extraordinary icon appeared in the 3/27/23 edition of the ***Orthodox Observer***:

When OCPM founder, Fr. Duane Pedersen, began corresponding with Michael in prison, Michael was quick to say he preferred if Fr. Duane would stop writing about God. Despite showing no indication that his heart was changing, Fr. Duane faithfully wrote to him week after week, year after year.

After twenty years of correspondence, Fr. Duane received a surprising letter. *“I want to be baptized into the Orthodox Faith.”*

But this was only the beginning. Soon Fr. Duane received something even more surprising than Michael’s wish to be baptized: Michael’s first icon. This was unlike any icon Fr. Duane had ever seen before, and not just because Michael had written it with a set of crayons, the only tools available to him.

Michael lived in solitary confinement. To paint the Face of Christ he used the only model he had: his own face. And what did Michael name this icon? *“God of All-Comfort.”*

Shortly after Fr. Duane received this icon, Michael’s health rapidly declined, and soon he fell asleep in the Lord. In the wake of Michael’s passing, Fr. Duane began printing copies of *“God of All Comfort”* to send to other prisoners, many of whom were freed from years of addictions by praying with it.

Truly, Michael’s icon speaks to all of us. Are we willing to see the face of Christ in the faces of those in prison? Are we willing to believe, as Michael did, that Christ dwells in each of us, as near to us as our own reflection? Do we sincerely believe each one of us is an icon of Christ?

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) is an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States.

For Orthodox Christians who have been arrested for crimes, OCPM helps them return to the Faith, offering forgiveness and reconciliation with Christ. For both Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, OCPM provides spiritual care, enabling prisoners to find hope and purpose in their lives. For more information, please visit www.theocpm.org or follow us on Facebook and Instagram @theocpm.

Fr. George's "Prisoner Ministry Awareness Challenge" from This Past Sunday, entitled "Your Turn to Share"

After church services this past Sunday, Fr. George invited our faithful to consider writing an imaginary letter to a prisoner, as a means of raising our awareness of their spiritual needs and the support they need. In support, he has written a hypothetical letter from a prisoner, reflecting his tone of humility, spiritual searching, and a desire for connection with the Church.

*After reading it, I encourage you to prayerfully write a response to the imaginary prisoner, answering issues raised in the letter. Your reply doesn't have to be long. Email your reply to Fr. George, frgeorge@saintchristopherhoc.org and specify if you approve me sharing it if time permits. Our aim is to raise awareness of the spiritual needs and ministry of Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry. **The deadline for Fr. George to receive is July 20th.***

Hypothetical Prisoner Letter Received by Fr. George

Dear Fr. George,

I pray this letter finds you well and under the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to you from a place I never imagined I would be. The walls around me are made of concrete and steel, but the heavier burden is the one I carry inside—regret, sorrow, and the weight of choices that cannot be undone. I have been sentenced to spend most, if not all, of my life in prison. That reality is still sinking in.

I was raised Orthodox, though I wandered far from the Church in my younger years. I remember the smell of incense, the chanting of the hymns, the flicker of candlelight during Holy Week. I didn't understand it then, but now I find myself longing for it. I don't know what brought me to write you—perhaps it is the memory of midnight on Pascha, when we sing "*Come receive the light,*" and I wonder if that light can still reach someone like me.

Father, I don't ask for pity. I know what I've done. But I do ask for guidance. Is there still a place for someone like me in the Church? Can a man who has wasted so much time still find repentance? I read the Scriptures when I can, and I find comfort in the Psalms—especially when David cries out from the depths. I feel like I'm in those depths now.

If you have any prayers, readings, or words of encouragement, I would be grateful. I want to learn how to pray again. I want to understand the feasts and fasts, and how I might live a life of repentance even here, behind bars. I know I may never walk freely again, but I hope my soul can still be free.

Please pray for me, Fr. George. My name is Ody, and I am trying to find my way back to Christ.

With respect and hope,

Ody [Prison ID 8699283162]

“A Call to Action” Scheduled for This Sunday



“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 this Sunday

which we have named **“A Call to Action”**, let us not hesitate, but respond with faith, knowing that in obedience, the catch is always abundant. If you’re away, check our website when you return.

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.

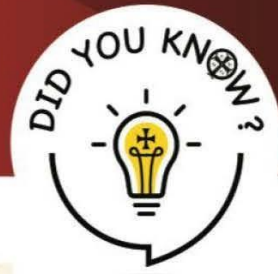
With over **80 opportunities** across liturgical service, youth and family engagement, outreach, hospitality, education, and more, there’s a place for everyone to offer their gift. Whether you sing, teach, greet, organize, mentor, bake, troubleshoot tech, or simply care deeply—you belong here.

New or unsure where to begin?

Check out our **Parish Ministry Interest List** where you can easily explore options and let Fr. George know what calls to your heart. *Beginning this Sunday, you can pick it up at church or view it on our website from home.*

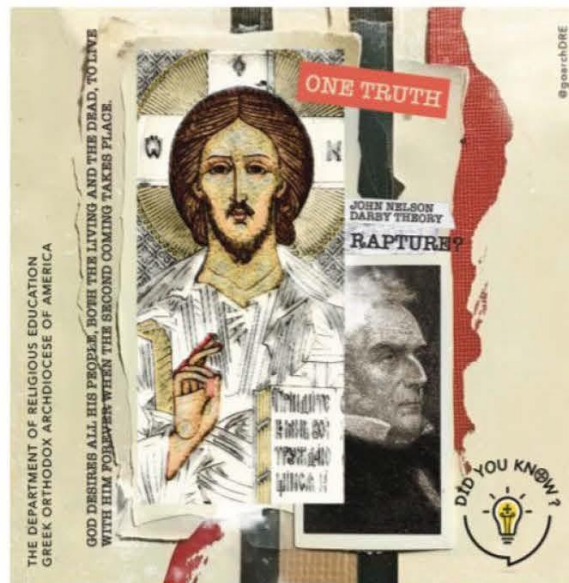
Let your faith find expression in service. Let your joy take root in community. Let us build God’s Holy Church—together.

***“Each one has received a gift.
Use it to serve one another...” – 1 Peter 4:10***



THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RAPTURE

July 8



Did you know the idea of the “Rapture” is not Biblical?

The popular “Rapture” theory — where believers suddenly vanish from the earth before a time of tribulation — is a recent invention. It was first promoted in the 1800s by John Nelson Darby, an Anglican clergyman. In the early 2000s, the Left Behind TV series popularized the apocalyptic theory of the “Rapture.” It claimed that Jesus would take Christians up to Heaven before His Second Coming, leaving non-Christians behind on earth for seven years of “great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14), in which the Antichrist reigns. But no one ever taught this for the first 1,800 years of Christianity.

Those who support the Rapture often point to 1 Thessalonians 4:17 — “we will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord” — but the Apostle Paul is clearly speaking about the Second Coming, not a secret event before it. He says the dead in Christ will rise first, and then those alive will join them to meet the Lord: this is the Resurrection and the Final Judgment — not an escape from it.

Jesus also warns in Matthew 24 that His coming will be after tribulation, not before it. The idea that Christians will be taken away while unbelievers are “left behind” isn’t supported by the Holy Scripture. The word used for “left” (ἀφίεται in Greek) actually means “released” or abandoned.

For 2,000 years, the Orthodox Church has taught one Second Coming, one Resurrection, and one people of God. The Rapture isn’t part of that — and never was.

God desires all His people, both the living and the dead, to live with Him forever when the Second Coming takes place.

Send us your questions at: religioused@goarch.org

Follow us    @goarchDRE

Subscribe at: religioused.goarch.org



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Be sure to guard in your heart the joy of the Holy Spirit, and do not allow the evil one to pour out his bitterness. Beware! Beware, lest the Paradise that exists in you turns into Hell.

St. Nectarios of Aegina

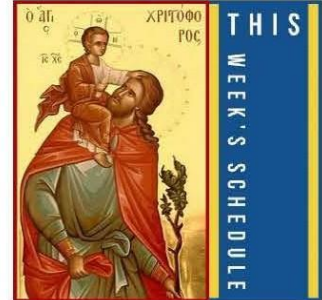
Focus on your partner's strengths – not their flaws. No one is perfect. What you focus on magnifies. See their good. Celebrate their beauty. Speak their greatness aloud. A loved partner becomes even better.

Join Us Often with Your Family

Saturday, July 12th

9:00 Philoptochos – Rolling Day

2:00 Sacrament of Baptism - Todd Bryan



Sunday, July 13th – Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Memorial Service, A Call to Action & GreekFest Update, followed by Memorial Brunch offered by Gail Ericsson

12:00 Parish Council Meeting

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

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



Philoptochos



Calendar of Upcoming Events

July	10	Batter Day! 8:30
	12	Folding Day! 9:00
	19	Koulourakia Day! 8:30
	20	Board Meeting
	26	Kourambiethes Day! 8:30
Aug	2	Baklava 8:30
	12	Dolmathes 8:30
	16	GREEK FEST
	24	Philoptochos Meeting (30min)

Greek Fest Baking



Sign up [here](#)



Includes:
Appetizers, dolmathes,
cookies and baklava

Questions? Call Helen 770-298-4493



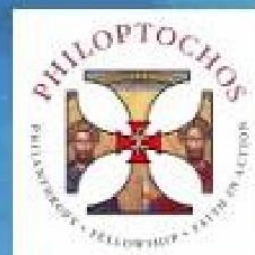
Join us for

A Night in Greece

We're bringing Greece to you!

Everyone welcome for this community event.

PROCEEDS BENEFIT:



Saturday, August 16th, 2025

6 PM Appetizers | 7 PM Dinner

The Shipyard at Trilith



Tickets include an all-you-can-eat Greek buffet, open bar, live Greek music, Greek dancing, & more!
To purchase, please scan the QR code or visit
www.GreekFestFayette.com

Questions? Contact Emilia at greekfestfayette@gmail.com or 678-749-1550
Brought to you by St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



Join us for

A Night in Greece

We're bringing Greece to you!

Sponsorship Levels

Proceeds benefit St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church's building fund, Beyond Performance & local charities. Thanks for your support!

OLYMPIAN \$5000

10 Tickets with Reserved Seating
Program Recognition
Title/Name Mentioned During Event
Full Page Ad in Program

ATHENIAN \$3000

10 Tickets with Reserved Seating
Program Recognition
Title/Name Mentioned During Event
1/2 Page Ad in Program

SPARTAN \$2000

10 Tickets with Reserved Seating
Program Recognition
Title/Name Mentioned During Event
1/4 Page Ad in Program

AGAPI \$1000

4 Tickets with Reserved Seating
Program Recognition
Title/Name Mentioned During Event
1/4 Page Ad in Program

OPA! \$500

2 Tickets with Reserved Seating
Program Recognition
Title/Name Mentioned During Event

PILLAR \$150

1/8 Page Ad in Program

August 16th, 2025 at The Shipyard at Trilith
6 PM Appetizers | 7 PM Dinner

To purchase a sponsorship, please scan the QR
code or visit www.GreekFestFayette.com



Questions? Contact Emilia at greekfestfayette@gmail.com or 678-749-1550
Brought to you by St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



“A Night in Greece” – 2025 ***Saturday, August 16th***

**~ ~ We need EVERYONE's Help to Sell Tickets
and Sponsorships ~ ~**

Share the link below with family, friends, coworkers!!

Click for Sponsorships & Tickets: <https://www.greekfestfayette.com/>

**This is a Fundraiser to support OUR Building Fund and
Charities within OUR community.**

With a \$125.00 ticket OUR Guests will Enjoy ALL of this!

- Appetizers - Spanakopita, Tiropita's, and Dolmades
- Dinner - Greek Chicken, Potatoes, Salad, Green Beans, Pastitsio, Souvlaki, Gyros, Giouvetsi, Fresh Baked Bread, Tzatziki Tzatziki
- Dessert - Baklava, Kourambiedes, Koulourakia
- Water, soft drinks, beer and wine

***Guests will enjoy a Live Greek Band and Greek Dancing – OPA!**

Facebook link to share with friends and family!!

**[https://facebook.com/events/s/greekfest-fayettes-a-night-in-
/1146921094115751/](https://facebook.com/events/s/greekfest-fayettes-a-night-in-/1146921094115751/)**

Click below to Sign Up to Volunteer:

**[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050D4CA4A62FA4FE3-47913143-
greekfest#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050D4CA4A62FA4FE3-47913143-greekfest#/)**

Any Questions?

Contact your GreekFest Tri Chairs

Emilia Moraitis – emoraitis@bellsouth.net

Claudia Sliwinski – claudia.sliwinski@yahoo.com

Julie Skouteris – gsjs401mg@gmail.com

Thank you for YOUR Support!



Building Our Future: Join Our \$1.5M Capital Campaign

Dear Parish Family,

We are excited to announce the launch of our \$1.5 million Capital Campaign, a five-year endeavor to build our future home. This is an incredible opportunity for us to come together as a community and create a space that will serve and inspire for generations to come.



To make this vision a reality, we encourage everyone to fill out pledge cards now. Our lenders are looking for a strong show of commitment from the parish, and your early pledges are crucial to meeting their requirements. As we consider discussions with outside donors, our ability to demonstrate the Parish Family's commitment to the capital campaign is an integral part of the process and success to raise funds from outside our parish. During our last campaign, we raised an impressive average of \$264K per year, and with your continued support, we are confident we can do it again.

Your participation is vital. Please continue your existing commitment to the stewardship fund and start giving to the new capital campaign or consider increasing your existing building fund pledge amount. Together, we can turn our dreams into reality.

Let's build our future home with faith, dedication, and collective effort. Please consider completing the online pledge card today, [St Christopher Capital Campaign Pledge Card Link](#), so we can show the lenders our unwavering commitment and take the next steps toward our shared goal.

Here are some examples to consider:

GIVING SCENARIO 1: Currently giving \$100/month <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$40 to Building Fund• \$60 to Operations <i>During the Building Fund Campaign</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$80 to Building Fund• \$60 to Operations <div>Total Giving Increase = 40%</div>	GIVING SCENARIO 2: Currently giving \$200/month <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$100 to Building Fund• \$100 to Operations <i>During the Building Fund Campaign</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$200 to Building Fund• \$100 to Operations <div>Total Giving Increase = 30%</div>	GIVING SCENARIO 3: Currently giving \$300/month <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$100 to Building Fund• \$200 to Operations <i>During the Building Fund Campaign</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$200 to Building Fund• \$200 to Operations <div>Total Giving Increase = 33%</div>
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Please consider giving with your heart.

With gratitude and hope,

Tom Farmakis





In July 2025 "Hands of Love"
will be accepting monetary
donations to benefit
Soldiers' Angels



In 2022
Soldiers' Angels
served **877,224**
active-duty
military,
veterans and
their families.
Soldiers' Angels
is approved to
work in the
Atlanta and
Dublin VA
hospitals.

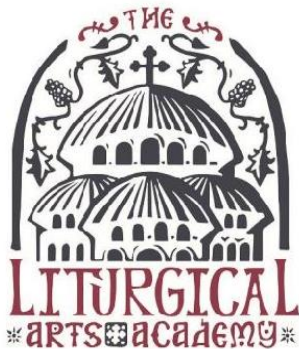
You may Place your monetary donation in the red box in the narthex or
donate online at: stchristopherphiloptochos.square.site

For more ways to support and opportunities to volunteer
virtually and in person, visit www.SoldiersAngels.org

*May No Soldier Go Unloved,
May No Soldier Walk Alone,
May No Soldier Be Forgotten,
Until They All Come Home. 7th*

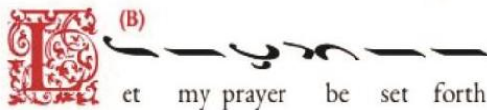
Faithfully,

Anna Naydenova, "Hands of Love" Philoptochos Ministry Chair



Now accepting applications for The Liturgical Arts Academy August 17 -23, 2025

Diakonia Retreat Center, Salem, SC



Byzantine Chant

This is a 1-week intensive in-person training that offers Intermediate, Advanced and Master Class levels.

Instructors: John Boyer, Samuel Herron
and Photini Downie Robinson



Byzantine Iconography

A week of intensive instruction in gilding and painting an icon at the Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Instructors: Fr. Anthony Salzman

Visit TheLiturgicalArts.org

info@theliturgicalarts.com



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[CLICK HERE TO VIEW PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SERVICES](#)



For questions, please email communications@saintchristopherhoc.org

or call the church office at (770) 347-7729.

[Click here](#) for Online Giving Instructions



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