

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

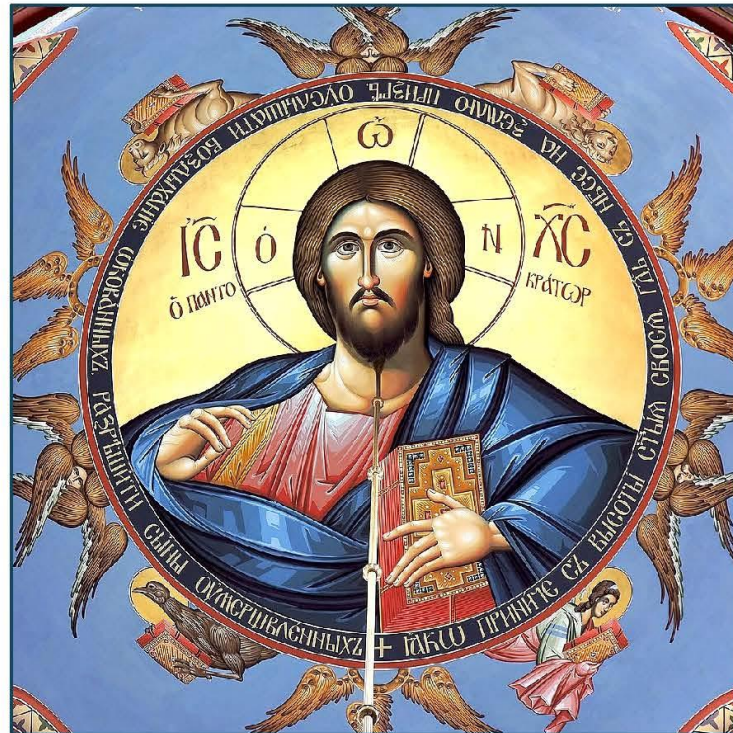
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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
Stephen Sarantis, President, Parish Council
Jackie Sarantis, Office Administrator

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, June 2, 2025



Christ Pantocrator in the Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky, Belgrade, Serbia

“True Freedom in Christ”

Please share this reflection with your family and friends on July 4th

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Beloved in Christ,

As we commemorate the founding of our nation this Independence Day, we give thanks to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty and the sacrifices made to secure it. Yet we must remember: the highest and most enduring freedom is not granted by governments, but by God.

The Apostle Paul proclaims:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

This is not a freedom of self-indulgence, but of transformation—a freedom from sin, from fear, and from death. It is the freedom to love, to serve, and to live in holiness.

St. Peter exhorts us:

“Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves.” (1 Peter 2:16)

Here lies the paradox of Christian liberty: we are most free when we become servants of God. In obedience to His will, we find peace. In surrender, we find strength. In Christ, we find our true independence—from the tyranny of the passions and the bondage of the world.

As citizens of this earthly nation, let us be grateful. But as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, let us be faithful. May our celebration

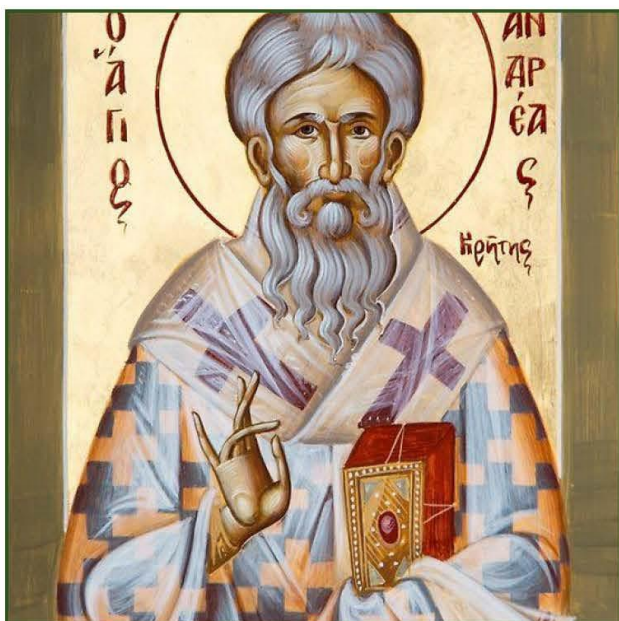
of independence be a renewed dedication to live as those truly free in Christ.

Glory to God for all things.

Prayers for a safe holiday with your family and friends. +Fr. George

Highlight of a Saint Remembered in July:

St. Andrew of Crete, commemorated on July 4



Saint Andrew was from Damascus; his parents' names were George and Gregoria. He became a cleric and secretary of Theodore and Patriarch of Jerusalem; from this, he is called "the Jerusalemite." He was present at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, which was

convoked in 680 during the reign of Emperor Constantine IV (668-685). He became deacon of the Great church in Constantinople, that is, the Church of the Holy Wisdom of God, then Archbishop of Crete. He reposed in 720 or 723. Beside his other sacred writings, he also composed various hymns, among which is the famous Great Canon, which is chanted during Great Lent (see the Thursday of the Fifth Week of the Fast).

St. Andrew's Festal Hymn

A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheepfold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Andrew, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

Kontakion of St. Andrew the Hymnographer

While trumpeting forth the songs of God with clarity, you also proved to be a blazing light for all the world, O most righteous Andrew, who shines with the light of the Trinity. Wherefore, we all cry out to you: Cease not to entreat the Master for us all.

Excerpt of St. Andrew's Teachings:

*Condemning Our Own Sins and
Forgiving the Sins of Others*

By St. Andrew of Crete

All of us should seek two things: to condemn our sins and forgive the sins of others. For whoever sees their own sins becomes more forgiving towards others. And whoever condemns others condemns and convicts themselves, even if they have many virtues. It is truly a great thing, my brethren, to not condemn others but to condemn ourselves.

Anger Towards God in Times of Grief

Anger towards God and to fellow human beings is said to be one of the strongest sins in religious life and in societies at large. It is something we dare to express in a direct way. Anger though is very real and can become very destructive. What we do not realize is that what triggers anger is pain that comes from loss, rejection, unfulfillment, disappointment and dismay.

In literature, such as in the works of Dostoyevsky, anger and discontent are very well portrayed as a part of life that cannot be avoided. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan rebels against God for the injustice and loss people must endure, such as the early death in childhood. In *Crime and Punishment*, the suffering peasants express their discontent and feelings of worthlessness for all they must encounter.

What we forget is that if we have an open and free relationship with God, our human emotions, such as anger, cannot be hidden. If we have an honest relationship with Him, we will express our anger, doubts, fears and discontent to Him in a direct and honest way.

Job, who is often portrayed as the ultimate example of patience, curses the day of his birth and laments his existence, expressing a profound sense of despair (Job 7) and he laments that he cannot find God to present his case and questions why the wicked prosper while the innocent suffer (Job 23-24).

Christ, in experiencing the totality of human suffering on the Cross, cries out the words *"My God, My God why have you abandoned me"*. Cyril of Alexandria taught that this cry demonstrates that Christ's suffering is real, not merely an illusion, affirming the truth of the Incarnation. St. Maximos the Confessor states that here, Christ expresses his solidarity with the human race. The Cross declares suffering caused by a need to reaffirm one's self in reaffirming one's power in destructive ways. The Crucifixion is the result of pride, rejection and hatred, when one denies and separates oneself from God and rejects others. All of these are expressions of destructive anger. Yet Christ on the Cross remains righteous, without sin, in that He remains in a loving and obedient relationship with His Father.



The Righteous Job the Long-Suffering with his friends

Tavye, in the play *“Fiddler on the Roof”* has a direct relationship with God. During one of the scenes of the play, the Cossacks, a quasi-military force that guards borders and performs police duties, violently disrupts his daughter’s joyous wedding celebration, overturning tables, damaging the wedding gifts and causing destruction in the village. In the next scene, Tavye comes on to the stage, lifts his head toward the heavens and in a low and distraught voice tells God: *“That was quite a dowry you gave my daughter Tzeitel at her wedding. Was that necessary?”*

“Was that necessary?” The *“why”* behind this question expresses a type of anger that is associated with frustration, an expression of pain, the inability to accept loss, and mostly the difficulty to understand *why* and *what* happened.

Job and Tavye, portray life’s predicaments. They are bitter because they feel their personal dignity, their *“human right”*, has been defamed. God’s response to Job puts a perspective on this when he asks Job: *“Will you condemn me so that you may be righteous?”* (Job 40:8).

Expressing our anger and discontent to God is part of an open relationship with Him. For there are truly times when we feel that all has been destroyed in our life in a very unjust and inhuman way; a time when we cannot understand the *“why”* behind our losses. The danger comes when we hold to and cultivate our anger in different ways. It is then that anger and bewilderment become a hatred and destructive bitterness. It is

then that we run the danger of acting out our anger in a destructive way to others and to ourselves, which, in the end, will only cause more suffering and pain for all.

Even more, we will run the danger of cursing God and totally rejecting him and breaking our relationship with Him. In doing so, we will demolish the only hope for ultimate justification, salvation and mercy found in His love. We will not allow Him, who is the true Comforter, to comfort us in our dismay.

Job is rebuked because he speaks as if he can understand and know all the works of God. Tavye reacts to the destruction that he has suffered in a way where he knows that he cannot understand everything. Both have difficulty in accepting what has happened. *At the end, they come to realize that they cannot fully understand the “why” behind what has happened.* This adds to their personal dignity in that it makes them humble persons who struggle with their faith and their relationship with Creator.

In like manor, during our times of discontent, in cultivating this humility we will be able to face God as Job did and say: *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You”* (Job 42:5).



*Written by Fr. Stavros Kofinas, Coordinator,
Network of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for
Pastoral Health Care*

GOD'S VOICE		SATAN'S VOICE
CALMS		OBSESSES
COMFORTS		WORRIES
CONVICTS		CONDEMNS
ENCOURAGES		DISCOURAGES
ENLIGHTENS		CONFUSES
LEADS		PUSHES
REASSURES		FRIGHTENS
STILLS		RUSHES



Beloved in Christ, this is our call to action! The Lord has equipped each of us with gifts not meant to be hidden but shared for the strengthening of His Holy Church. Whether your voice lifts in song, your smile welcomes at the door, your hands guide our children, or your spirit inspires our youth—there is a place for you in God's work. Let us rise together in joyful service, so that through every greeting, every note sung, every lesson taught, we declare His glory and build His kingdom among us. ***Will you answer the call? Join us on Sunday, July 13th at 10:45 a.m. to respond!***

Join Us with Your Family

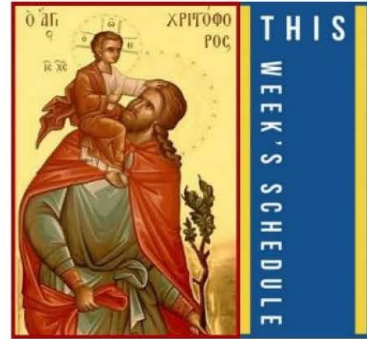
**Friday, July 4th – American
Independence Day**

**Sunday, July 6th – 4th Sunday
of St. Matthew**

7:30 Orthros

8:45 Service of 40-Day Blessing

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Five Loaves (offered by
Helen & George Psihountas) & July Commemorations



Saturday, July 12th

9:00 Philoptochos – Rolling Day

2:00 Sacrament of Baptism (Tentative)

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

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

11:00 Parish Council Meeting

Saturday, July 19th

8:30 Philoptochos – Koulourakia Day



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

~ ~ 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, Turlou Turlou
- 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/>

Click below to Sign Up to Volunteer:

<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 – gsis401mq@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: stchristopherphiloechochos.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. 5th*

Faithfully,

Anna Naydenova, "Hands of Love" Philoechochos Ministry Chair



SUMMER 2025

CAMPER REGISTRATION

St Stephen's Summer Camp offers teens of the Metropolis of Atlanta entering 6th through 12th grades when school begins in the fall, an opportunity to spend a week at our Diakonia Retreat Center.

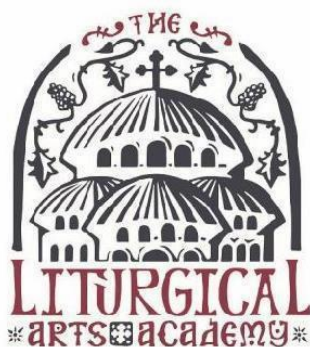
REGISTER TODAY!



amazon

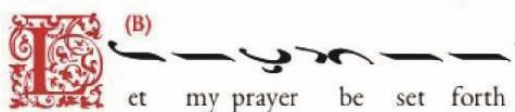
wishlist

St. Stephen's Camp Wishlist



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](#)



[Click Image for Online Giving](#)

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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