

## 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, February 13, 2026

### Congratulations and Welcome to the Newly-Illumined Dele



With joy and thanksgiving to God, we congratulate Dele, who was chrismated into the Holy Orthodox Church this past Sunday, taking as his patron saint St. Moses the Black—the great model of repentance, perseverance, and transformed life in Christ.

Supported by his Godparents, Perry and Aimee, and joined by his family, Dele entered fully into the life of God's Holy Body. We welcome him with love and prayer, and we encourage his active service, knowing the Holy Spirit has granted him gifts for the upbuilding of Christ's Church. May the example and prayers of St. Moses strengthen him as he grows deeper in faith, humility, and spiritual courage.

### **A Prayer for the Newly-Illumined**

O Lord Jesus Christ  
our God,  
Who desires that all  
should be saved and  
come to the  
knowledge of the  
truth,  
we thank You for  
enlightening Your  
servant Dele



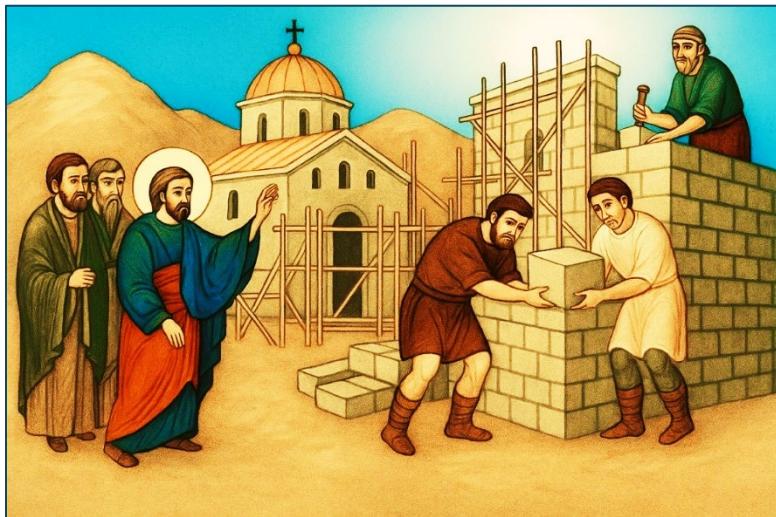
and sealing him with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Guide him in every good work, establish him in Your holy commandments,  
and protect him under the shelter of Your wings.

By the prayers of St. Moses the Black,  
grant him steadfastness, repentance, love, and boldness in the life of faith.  
Strengthen also his godparents and family,  
that together they may walk the path that leads to Your Kingdom.

For You are the Light of the world, and to You we give glory—  
to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## Thank You, St. Christopher Parishioners!



When the people of Israel returned from exile to rebuild the Temple, they faced unexpected obstacles, discouragement, and far fewer resources than they had hoped. Yet the

Lord spoke through the prophet Haggai, reminding them that the work was still His and that His providence had not departed from them: *"Be strong... and work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts"* (Haggai 2:4). Though the task before them seemed heavier and more costly than anticipated, God assured them that faithfulness—not fear—was required, and that the glory of what He was building would ultimately surpass what they could imagine.

In the same spirit, while economic realities have increased the cost of our project, we trust that God remains present in this work and thank you for your prayerful support and unity as we move forward together following our General Parish Assembly last Sunday. Let us pray each day for God's strength, guidance, and offer Him thanksgiving and praise for blessing us. Amen!

## A Parish Kitchen Story...

For years—*many* years—our parish kitchen has been a place of holy patience and heroic endurance. We didn’t talk about it much, but everyone knew the truth: our two brave parish stoves had seen better days in the two decades of their existence.

They had control knobs that liked to fall off at the most dramatic moments... usually when someone was carrying a pan of spanakopita.

The ovens had temperature dials that believed in “approximate spirituality”—you might set them to 350°, but they would respond with something between “warm as a candle flame” and “forge of Mount Olympus.” Still, we worked with them, prayed over them, and tapped them just the right way, like seasoned musicians coaxing sound from aging instruments.

And then *one day*—without fanfare, trumpets, committee meetings, or even a whisper—we walked into the kitchen and stopped in our tracks.



There they were.

Two bright, shining, fully functional, *gloriously modern* stoves. Sitting side-by-side like two stainless-steel angels ready to assist the faithful in their duties of baking, roasting, and coffee-hour preparing.

No spotlight. No announcement. No ribbon-cutting.

Just a quiet gift.

Only later did we learn that Julie and George—without wanting attention or applause—had simply seen the need and acted. Not for recognition, but out of love for their parish family and for the countless moments of hospitality, fellowship, and ministry that begin in our modest kitchen.

Because of their generous and unexpected stewardship, our cooks, bakers, and culinary volunteers can now serve the parish with more ease, more confidence, and a lot fewer loose oven handles and stove knobs.

So today, we give thanks—first to God, and then to Julie and George—for blessing our community in such a simple, beautiful, and practical way. Their generous and unexpected stewardship was offered in the same spirit as so much of the unseen ministry in our parish: quietly, prayerfully, and with love.

Because of their kindness, every tray of cookies, every potluck meal, every Lenten dish, every bake sale project will now be prepared with far less stress and far more joy.

And now, dear parish family, one important note: Since these new stoves were given with such care and generosity, let us all do our part to look after them. May we treat them gently, clean them faithfully, and use them responsibly—so that this gift may bless our community for many years to come.

With gratitude to God—and to them—may every meal prepared upon these shining helpers bring fellowship, nourishment, and joy to our parish. **+Fr. George Tsahakis**

**The safest thing in life is  
to forgive, the most  
dangerous is to seek  
revenge.**

**St. John Chrysostom**

## Beloved in Christ,

She was only ten the first time she stepped into the Panagia Chapel at the Alexios Retreat Center. The moment she crossed the threshold, her eyes widened—the soaring arches, the soft glow of candlelight, and the great chandelier shimmering above made her feel as if she had walked into a piece of heaven.

As the Summer Camp Paraklesis Service began, she slid quietly into a seat, taking in every icon, every curve of the dome, every whisper of prayer rising like incense. Then, suddenly, she heard the Priest say it – her name – now joined with her friends' names as the Priest prayed for their health and salvation amidst the litany of supplications.

Her face lit up.

For a moment she could not move.

She felt seen, held, and wrapped in something far bigger than herself.

Sitting there beneath the great arches, surrounded by the beauty of the Kingdom of God depicted all around her, she whispered to her best friend, *"If I am blessed to be married one day... I want it to be here."*

And in her heart, the chapel felt like home.

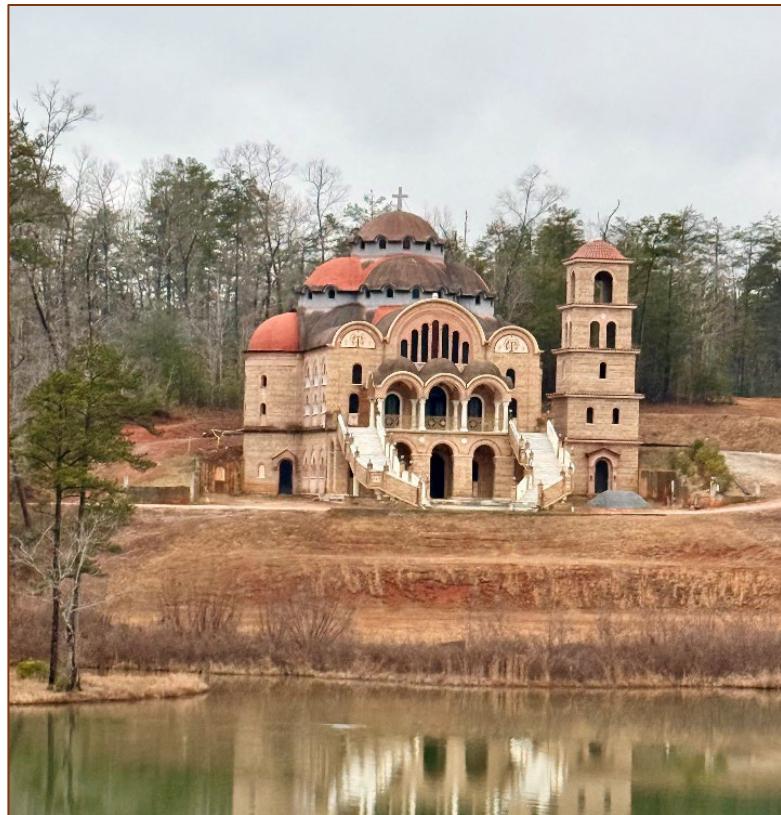


My brethren, this true story captures the vision of our Former Metropolitan Alexios, whose dream was to build the Panagia Chapel for the long-term future – not just for us today, but for our children's children and for all our families who would be blessed to worship there.

Last week, His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos asked all clergy to invite our faithful to offer a renewed and heartfelt gift to the Alexios Retreat Center (ARC) to help complete the construction of the Panagia Chapel. This sacred project began last November to honor the retirement of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, whose vision and leadership blessed our Metropolis for decades. Through His guidance, this exquisite retreat center was acquired—a spiritual home that will serve generations to come. The Panagia Chapel is the centerpiece.

In thanksgiving for his devoted ministry, I feel strongly that we as a parish should step forward and support this initiative, which soon will welcome even more pilgrims and retreatants to experience the peace and beauty of the ARC.

Last November, I was thankful to be one of two families among our St. Christopher parishioners who made personal contributions in response



to the Metropolis-wide goal of raising \$500,000 to complete the Panagia Chapel. Unfortunately, that goal was not met and to prevent further delay on this project, I am seeking your help now.

Feeling strongly that every parish has an obligation to ensure that Metropolitan Alexios' vision for Panagia Chapel is achieved, I am rallying our parish with this opportunity to offer a formal gift in our parish's name supporting Metropolitan Sevastianos' renewed appeal. I invite all our parish families to join and pool what we can offer in the name of our beloved St. Christopher Church.

Please put in context that we are uniting our efforts with our 74 sister parishes across the Metropolis to help complete Metropolitan Alexios' legacy of the Panagia Chapel during this holy Lenten season—especially meaningful as we will gather every Friday for the Salutations to the Mother of God, whose blessed name "Panagia" this Chapel bears.

For this renewed effort, I am setting a parish goal of \$5,000. To lead this offering, Presbytera Marinda and I are contributing the first ten percent—\$500. If we can raise more than our goal, that is an even greater blessing that will enable smaller parishes who are not as blessed some leeway, so that in the end Panagia Chapel is completed. If you feel inspired to support this Lenten effort, I thank you and invite you to do two (2) things:

1. **Designate your willingness to offer a pledge using this link to share your family name and pledge amount.**

2. Place your check in the Narthex collection tray with the memo: “ARC Gift.” If you prefer to give online, include “ARC Gift” as a note with your payment.

Our deadline to receive pledges and family offerings is the Friday of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos (March 27, 2026) so that our parish may present one unified check on behalf of the faithful of St. Christopher Church. Your donation will appear on your St. Christopher giving statement as an extra donation in addition to your stewardship and building fund gifts. Our joint parish offerings will be forwarded to the Alexios Retreat Center to help complete the construction of the Panagia Chapel.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity, your love for our Metropolis, and your desire to strengthen the ministries that nurture and renew the Holy Body of Christ. Through the prayers of the Theotokos—whose Chapel bears witness to her love and devotion to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—may God bless and guide us in this sacred effort.

With gratitude in Christ’s service, +Fr. George

**Note:** This photo was taken during last week’s Winter Clergy Retreat hosted at the St. Gregory Chapel in the basement of Panagia Chapel. Both levels of the Panagia Chapel are gifts that will sustain us until our Lord’s Blessed Return. I pray you will be part of this opportunity to help complete our Panagia Chapel. **Thank you!**



## Join Us Often with Your Family

### Saturday, February 14, Saturday of the Souls

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service (You are invited to bring Kolyva to share)

### Sunday, February 15, Sunday of Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:45 Religious Education Classes (for all ages)

Noon YAL Book Club Meeting & Philoptochos General Meeting

**[Dairy Permitted This Week]**

### Saturday, February 21, Saturday of the Souls

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service (You are invited to bring Kolyva to share)

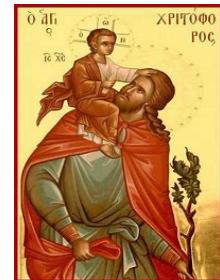
### Sunday, February 22, Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare Sunday)

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, followed by Service of Forgiveness

11:00 Religious Education Classes (for all ages)

12:15 **Let's EAT!** at Broadway Diner



THIS  
WEEK'S SCHEDULE

**1<sup>st</sup> Day of Great Lent begins with the Sacrament of Holy Unction**

**on Clean Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 7:30 am to 9:00 am. Join us before work.**