



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
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Pastoral Message from Fr. George, February 18, 2026

Beloved in Christ,

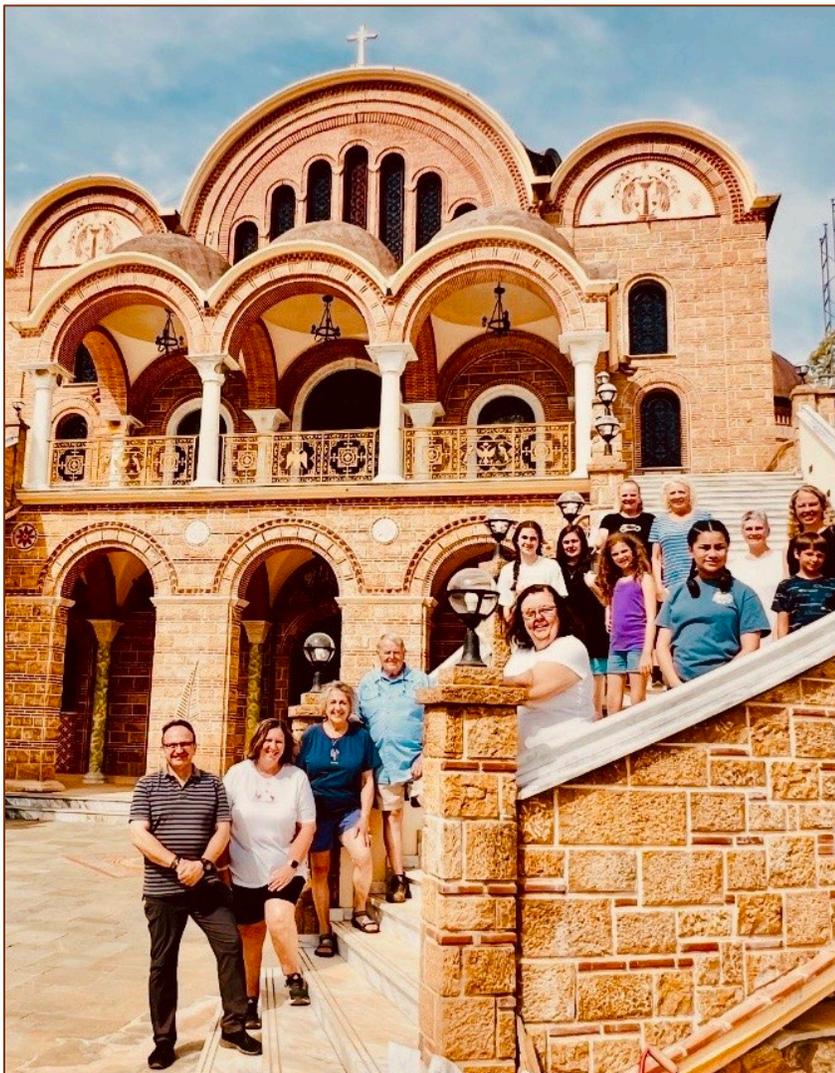
I am seeking your support in honoring His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios because the very existence of our parish is inseparably tied to His faith, His courage, and His unwavering belief in our community. *As the first*



Bishop of our St. Christopher parish, He guided us through our earliest and most vulnerable years. In a remarkable act of trust and pastoral care, He permitted me as Chancellor to share my ministry so that I could serve in Peachtree City and help nurture our mission from its infancy. For twenty-two years we have worshipped in leased facilities, and now, by God's grace, we are preparing to construct our permanent

church. This long-awaited milestone is the direct fruit of Metropolitan Alexios' vision and personal investment in our future.

Upon His retirement, Metropolitan Alexios did not request a banquet, a program, or any formal expression of honor. Instead, under the guidance of our current Bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos, our parishes have been invited to honor Him in a manner consistent with His life of humility and service—by helping to complete the Panagia Chapel at the Alexios Retreat Center. This sacred chapel represents decades of personal sacrifice and dedication by



Metropolitan Alexios. It already serves as a place of formation and prayer at Summer Camp, clergy retreats, parish retreats, Philoptochos retreats, and Lenten retreats. It will continue to strengthen generations of faithful throughout our Metropolis.

Because the initial fundraising goal was not met, this project now requires renewed assistance to avoid

further delay. As a parish that Metropolitan Alexios Himself helped shepherd and sustain, we bear a particular responsibility to respond. Supporting this effort is not merely a financial obligation; it is an expression of gratitude, respect, and continuity—an act of honoring the Hierarchy who believed in us, encouraged us, and helped make our present growth possible.

Keep the Flame Strong

As this blessed Lenten season invites us to renew our faith and deepen our devotion, I ask you to join our 74 sister parishes in keeping the flame of our Panagia Chapel burning brightly.

Just as a fire is strengthened when many logs are placed together, so too does our shared offering—each gift, each family, each parish—kindle the light of Christ's love in our midst.

Across the lake, the Panagia Chapel stands as a beacon of hope and prayer. Dedicated to the Mother of God, it is being built in honor of Metropolitan Alexios' faithful and transformative ministry. We



thank our families that have pledged their support, helping this sacred vision rise with beauty and purpose.

I hope all of us will follow their example and help keep our flame strong by supporting the completion of the Panagia Chapel. Please join our collective effort [by clicking here](#).

May the warmth of your generosity radiate outward and kindle our parish's spirit of gratitude for the love and devotion of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios.



Fr. George will offer Divine Liturgy, followed by Saturday of the Souls Memorial Service this Saturday, February 21. He will read the FIRST NAMES of our departed family and friends during the Memorial Service [provided they are submitted at this link by noon on Friday, February 20th](#). If you prefer, you can bring names on Saturday, February 21st, provided they are printed legibly. For those who wish to offer Kolyva, we welcome your kindness and will distribute it to those present. May the memory of our faithful be eternal.

Pastoral Message for Forgiveness Sunday

Opening Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God,
You are gentle and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in mercy.
You stretched out Your arms upon the Cross to reconcile all creation to Yourself.
Open our hearts this day to the grace of forgiveness.
Cleanse us from resentment, soften our hardened thoughts,
and grant us the humility to seek forgiveness from one another.

By the prayers of the holy Desert Fathers and Mothers—
who taught us the way of repentance, humility, and peace—
guide us into the bright dawn of Your Kingdom.
For You are the source of mercy and the giver of peace,
and to You we give glory: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Beloved in Christ,

This Sunday, following the Divine Liturgy, our parish will gather for the sacred *Service of Forgiveness*, the holy doorway through which we step into Great Lent. I believe this moment is a profound opportunity for every soul connected to our parish—faithful stewards, those who have grown distant, and our dear catechumens—to be present, to participate, and to experience the healing grace of mutual forgiveness.

How the World Responds—and How the Church Heals

We live in a world quick to judge and slow to understand. Modern life often encourages us to point fingers, to condemn, to distance ourselves from those who stumble. People who make mistakes can find themselves isolated, shamed, and alone. In such an environment, the human heart can grow hopeless.

But the Church is different.

Christ founded His Church as a spiritual hospital, a place where the broken are welcomed, the wounded are tended, and sinners find not judgment but restoration.

St. John Chrysostom famously taught:

"The Church is not a courtroom; it is an infirmary for sinners."

This is the ethos of Forgiveness Sunday.

Here, we do not condemn—
we reconcile.

Here, we do not cast out—
we heal.

Here, we do not isolate—
we restore one another in love.

The Witness of the Desert Fathers

The Desert Fathers, our earliest spiritual physicians, spoke clearly about the danger of condemnation and the healing power of forgiveness.

Abba Moses the Black said:

"If we keep our own faults before our eyes, we will never see those of our brother."

This is not a call to self-criticism but to compassion.

Abba Poemen taught:

"Do not give your heart to that which does not satisfy the heart."

Condemnation never satisfies; only forgiveness brings peace.

An Elder said:

"We have not been commanded to accuse our brothers, nor condemn them, nor speak evil of them, but rather to forgive them."

This is the pure Gospel lived honestly and humbly.

Why Mutual Forgiveness Is Essential

The Fathers remind us that sin—*amartía*—is “missing the mark,” a wandering of the heart. Often our words or actions cause harm without our awareness. *Mutual forgiveness becomes essential: it restores relationships, heals unseen wounds, and strengthens our parish as a family journeying toward the Resurrection.*

Our Lord Himself teaches with clarity:

“If you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your trespasses”
(Matthew 6:14–15).

This commandment is not symbolic; it is essential to our salvation.

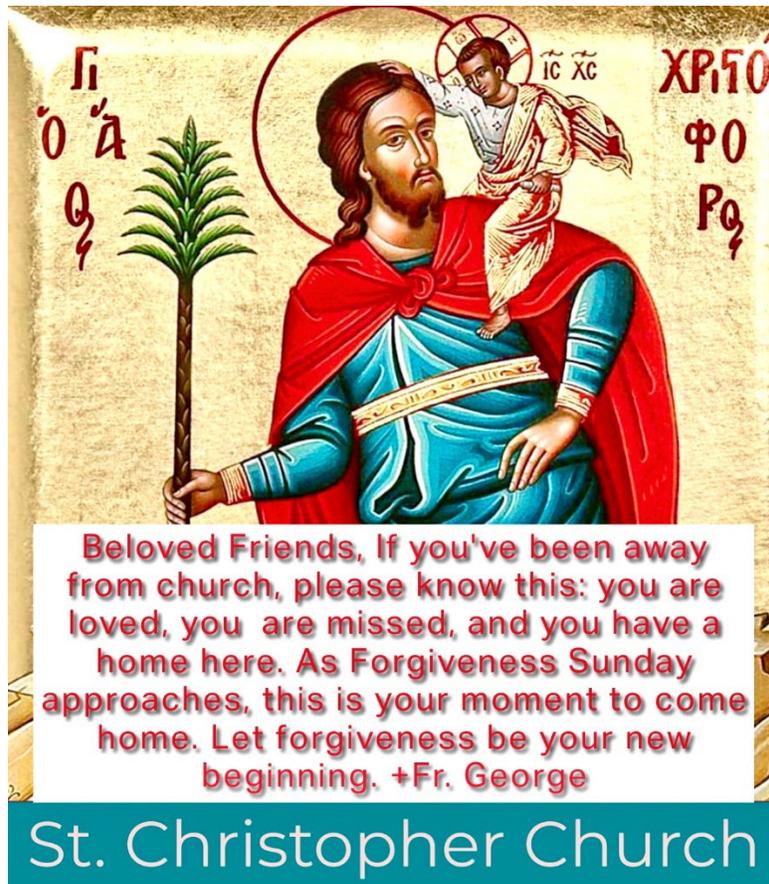
As your Priest, I pray that each of us finds the courage this Sunday to come forward—to ask forgiveness, to grant forgiveness, and to begin the Lenten journey with renewed humility and love. When we bow before one another, we do not bow to shame, but to Christ Himself, present in each person.

May this holy service soften our hearts, unite our parish, and open for us a Lent filled with repentance, healing, and hope.

Closing Prayer

O Master and Lover of mankind,
Plant within us the spirit of reconciliation
and make our hearts fertile ground for Your peace.
Grant that no bitterness remain in us,
no resentment take root,
no memory of wrong darken our souls.
Strengthen us to forgive as You forgive—
freely, fully, and without measure.
Renew our parish family in unity and love,
and lead us together into the radiant joy of Your Holy Resurrection.
For You are our forgiveness and our salvation,
and to You we offer glory,

together with Your eternal Father
and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit,
now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



If you are carrying burdens, wounds, or any lingering hesitation, bring them with you and place them before God. The Service of Forgiveness is a simple, grace-filled path to healing.

"Forgive me, and God forgives us."

No pressure, no expectations—only welcome.

**With love in the Lord,
+Fr. George**



Holy Unction: The Sacrament of Healing –

February 23, 2026

*Join St. Christopher's
parish family to pray
for healing of the
souls and bodies of
our faithful – Monday,
February 23, from 7:30
a.m. – 9:00 a.m.*

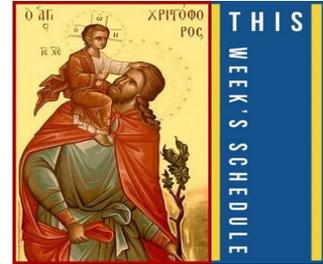
Holy Unction is a sacramental act whereby the Church seeks wholeness and well-being for its members, especially the sick and the suffering. It provides both physical and spiritual healing with holy oil blessed by the Holy Spirit.

In Greek, the mystery is called Εὐχέλαιον (*Euchelaion*, from εὐχή, 'prayer', and ἔλαιον, 'oil'). The oil carries God's grace both to renew the body and to cleanse the spirit. The service follows the apostolic tradition mentioned in the New Testament: *"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven."* (James 5:14-15).

Holy Unction is a mystery of great comfort to the faithful. It provides uplifting and asks for patience to accept the will of God whatever the physical outcome. *This service begins early to minimize work absence.*

Join Us Often with Your Family

[Dairy Permitted This Week]



Wednesday, February 18, Metropolis Chapel

Join Fr. George as he offers Orthros at 8:00 a.m. & Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. at Archangel Michael Chapel at our Metropolis headquarters.

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)

7:45 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

Clean Monday, February 23, First Day of Great Lent

7:30 a.m. Sacrament of Holy Unction – Join us before work