



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

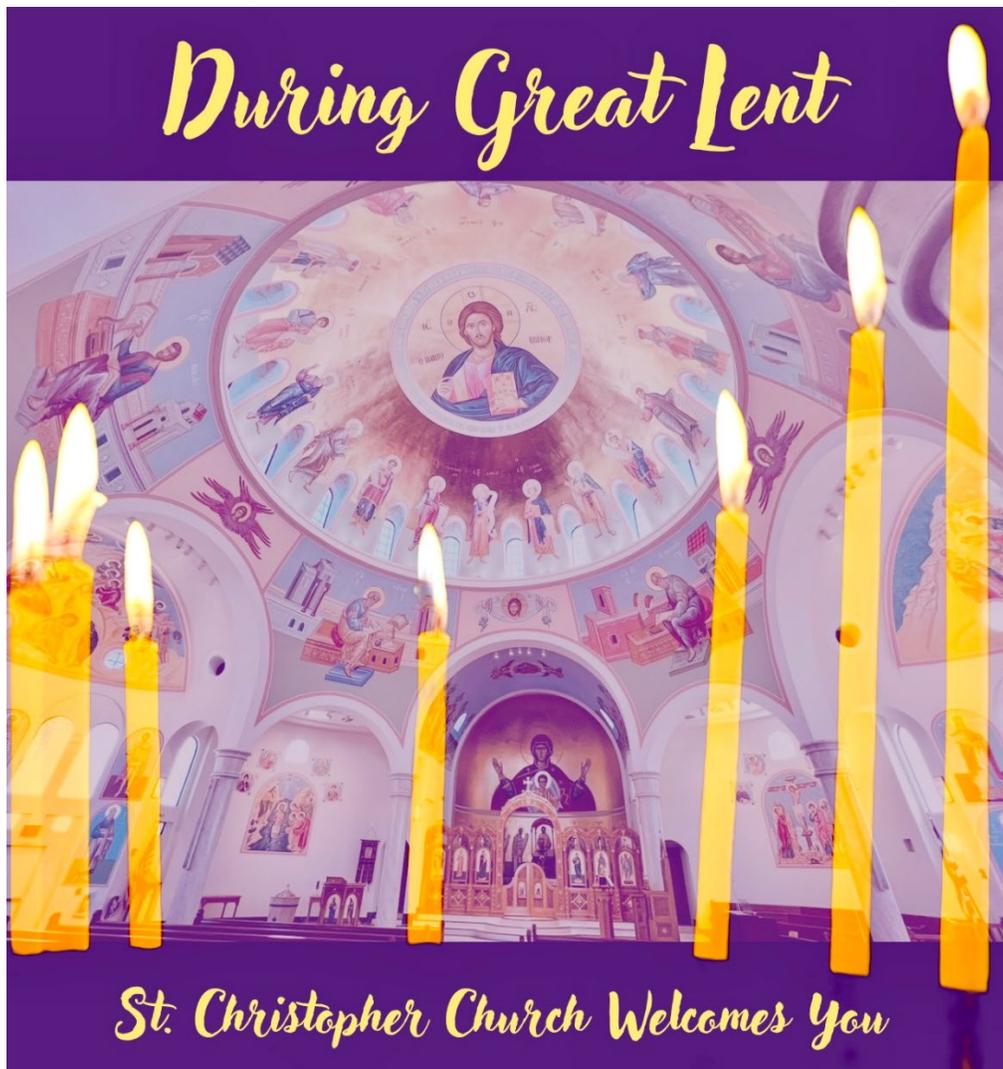
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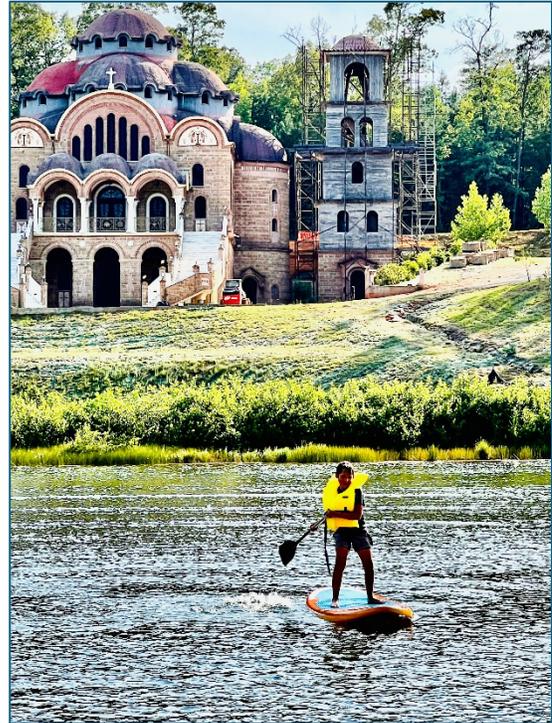
Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

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

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, February 27, 2026



When I reflect on the enormous blessings we have received through the Alexios Retreat Center, I cannot help but remember the extraordinary generosity of our beloved Metropolitan Alexios. When we first discovered the property more than two decades ago, he was the very first to pledge support, selling a valuable parcel



Our Loukas enjoying the lake

of land in Vermont that he had purchased decades earlier, imagining one day he might build on it. He sold it without hesitation so that this sacred vision could take root. He never stopped making donations to the Panagia Chapel which he hoped would serve generations to come.

Later, he went even further. He sold his personal home in Atlanta and used the proceeds to build the beautiful Bishop's House overlooking the lake at the Alexios Retreat Center, covering every cost himself and then donating the entire residence as a gift to the Bishops who would succeed him. It

stands today as a living testament to his humility, sacrifice, and deep love for our Metropolis.



Bishop's House Donated by Former Metropolitan Alexios

When I think of how generously—how sacrificially—His Eminence has given since the moment this property was acquired, my heart is moved to support this renewed appeal, and I hope you will join me.

If you feel inspired to participate, I invite you to do two things:

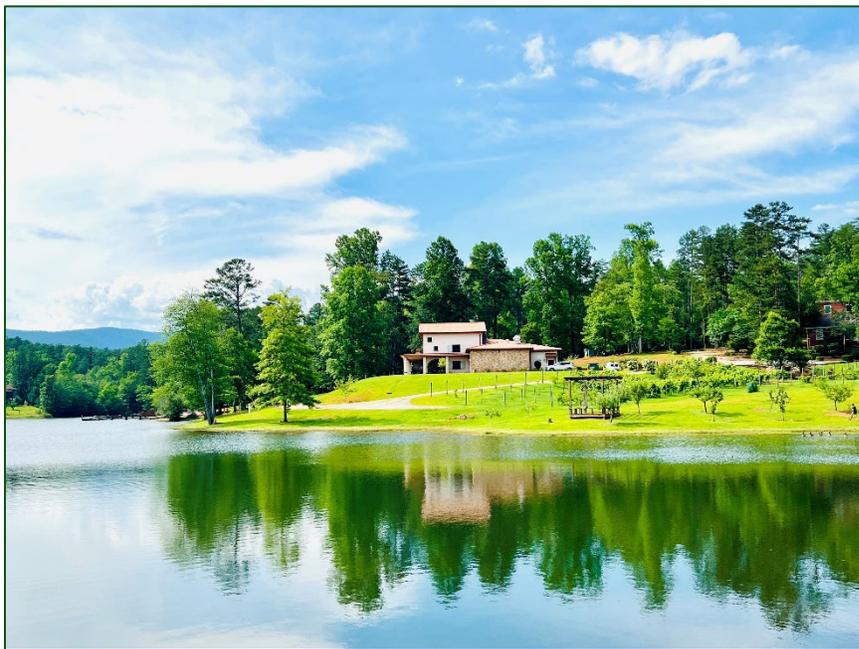
1. Designate your pledge by sharing your family name and offering amount using this link:

2. Place your check in the Narthex collection tray with the memo: "ARC Gift."

If you prefer to give online, please include "ARC Gift" in the memo or comment field so it can be properly directed.

Thank you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for the love, generosity, and faith you continually show in support of our Metropolis and its sacred ministries. Your willingness to join together in honoring Metropolitan Alexios—whose vision has shaped our retreat center and blessed countless souls—is a beautiful witness to the unity of our parish family. May our

collective offering not only complete the Panagia Chapel, but also give glory to God and express our deep gratitude for the shepherd who guided us for so many years. May



The Dining Hall at Alexis Retreat Center

the Lord bless you and

your families abundantly for your prayerful support.

Pastoral Message from Fr. George

Sharing a Eulogy for a Beloved Parishioner Most Have Never Met

(Fr. George's sermon for Perry Panos' Beloved Father whose funeral was Tuesday.)



Fr. George & Presbytera Marinda visiting Nick of blessed memory and Teddie

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we gather with hearts that are tender—hearts holding sadness and gratitude together—as we commend to God the soul of His servant, Nicolas—Nick—Panos. We grieve because love has been strong; and we take comfort because love does not end at the grave. In the Church we call this a falling asleep, not to diminish our sorrow, but to remind us that in Christ, separation is not forever.

If there is a single thread that ran through Nick's life, it is this: *he loved his family deeply, faithfully, and without reserve*. This love—steady, protective, and constant—was the daily language of his life.

For 65 years, he walked beside his beloved wife, Theodora—Teddie. Together they built a home that was patient, forgiving, and kind. Their exemplary marriage remains a quiet icon for all of us—a witness to the grace that grows when two people keep choosing each other, keep praying together, and keep loving through every season. What they shared was not loud, but it was strong; not showy, but it was enduring. And it gave everyone around them a living picture of faithful love.

Nick loved his sons, James and Perry. He took pride in the men you are, and in the homes you have built with Kathy and Aimee. He did not need many words to teach you—his life itself was the lesson: *be faithful, be dependable, be present*. And today, the Church gives thanks for you—for the loving care you and your wives gave your father and mother. Your attentiveness and quiet sacrifices honored them both. In caring for them, you lived the Gospel in love—and this is holy work.

Nick loved his grandchildren—Peyton, Lauren, Nicole, and Paige—with a special, gentle pride. To you: *let your Papou's memory be a light in your life. Remember his steadiness, his kindness, and his faith—and carry those treasures with you as you grow. Your love for him, and his for you, is part of who you are*.

We also hold in prayer his sister, Dena who lives in Charleston—through whom my family and I came to know Nick and his precious family. Dena, your and your brother of blessed memory, George's love and closeness were a blessing to him, and through you his life touched many others. May the Lord comfort and strengthen you now.

Nick's love for family was never separate from his love for the Church; it was nourished by it. From Holy Trinity in Charleston—where he was born and raised—to the Cathedral in Atlanta, and finally at Saints Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene in Cumming, the faith planted in Charleston found fuller expression in Atlanta and blossomed here. What he received in the Church—grace, guidance, strength—Nick brought into his home; and what he lived in his home, he offered back to God with gratitude.

At St. Nicholas, Raphael, and Irene Church, Nick's love took practical form. He offered steady leadership and faithful stewardship, supporting the parish through its building and growth, encouraging others to give and serve, and lending his voice and presence to the work that made this community a spiritual home for many. Beyond the parish, his dedication extended to the broader Greek-American community. Nick was especially active in the building of the AHEPA House in Atlanta—giving his time, his effort, and his heart to a project that continues to support and serve others. His contribution to this important ministry stands as another lasting testament to his generosity, vision, and love for his community.

And when he moved closer to me, although he and Teddie could not be physically present at Saint Christopher Greek Orthodox Church in Peachtree City, he was known, loved, and cherished as one of our own. We held him in our prayers and truly considered him part of our church family. Distance never separates us in Christ.

Outside the church walls, Nick excelled in his work with the same integrity he showed at home. After serving in the United States Army and studying at the College of Charleston, he devoted three decades to public service as an Investigator with the Office of Inspector General in the Department of Agriculture. His diligence and sense of duty reflected a heart formed by responsibility and honor—the same heart that loved his family so well.

When our own words feel fragile, the Church gives us words that hold us. We have chanted the Funeral hymn:

*“With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of Your servant,
where sickness and sorrow are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.”*

This is our comfort. We believe that Nick now rests in God’s care—where weariness gives way to peace, where sorrow yields to consolation, and where faithful love is fulfilled, not lost. We pray the Lord will grant him rest in a place of light, a place of peace, a place of refreshment, where all that burdens the heart is gently lifted away.

Teddie, may the Lord who has walked with you through so many years hold you close in His compassion. May He surround you with peace and remind you that the love you shared remains precious and alive in God.

James and Kathy, Perry and Aimee, and dear grandchildren: may God be near to you in the days ahead. May Nick’s memory strengthen you—not only in tears, but in smiles and in gratitude for the love you were given.

Beloved in Christ, the best way to honor Nick is to love as he loved: to cherish family, to forgive quickly, to show up, to serve quietly, and to keep faith at the center. If we emulate his courage and convictions—speaking the truth in love, standing by the Church, supporting our community, and loving our families without reserve—his legacy will endure in us.

With soft hearts and trusting faith, we now commend the soul of His servant, Nick Panos, into the loving care of our Lord, and we say together:

May his memory be eternal.

With deep respect,

+Fr. George Tsahakis, 2.24.26

Homily — Forgiveness Sunday (Matthew 6:14–21)

This past Sunday, I received many encouraging remarks from parishioners who felt spiritually moved and deeply engaged in our *Service of Forgiveness*. Many of our faithful who worship online shared that they wished they could have participated as well. Unfortunately, the livestream was cut off prematurely during this sacred moment of repentance, and those viewing from afar were unable to witness or take part in this beautiful rite.

Because of that, and in the hope of offering something meaningful to those who could not join us fully, I am sharing the sermon I offered just before the Service of Forgiveness, so that you may still enter into the spirit and blessing of this profound beginning to Great Lent.

Beloved in Christ,

Earlier this week, I found myself reflecting on a simple moment at a local restaurant. Our server—someone who has come to recognize us over the years—greeted us with her familiar warmth. She worked diligently to seat us without delay, remembered the foods we enjoy, and even made sure we left with something extra for the road. On the back of her shirt were the words, *“Let us put a smile on your plate.”* And indeed, through her kindness and care, she lived those words beautifully.

That moment stayed with me because it reminded me of something profound about our parish family. People are drawn to places where they feel welcomed, known, and cared for—places where joy is shared,

where community is real, and where hearts feel at home. And by God's grace, that is what so many have found here at St. Christopher Church. I remember our beginnings—when our parish was just a handful of faithful families borrowing worship space from sister parishes and relying on donated items so we could gather in prayer. We were small, humble, and dependent on the kindness of others. Yet over the years, through perseverance and the dedication of our people, we have grown, matured, and gained the trust of an ever-expanding community of parishioners and new converts.

Today we are recognized throughout our region not only for our vibrant worship but for our sacrificial support of nearby ministries and charities, and for the events that invite others into our fellowship—GreekFest, the Charity Golf Classic, our Community Lenten Retreat in March, and the Community Blessing of the Animals in April. These are signs of a parish not just active, but alive.

But even in the healthiest families—and this includes the Church—there are times when some feel distant, hurt, or separated.

Relationships can become strained; misunderstandings can linger. And so today, on this Sunday of Forgiveness, the Church invites us to begin our Lenten journey tomorrow with clarity of heart and with peace.

Let us, therefore, seek mutual forgiveness for our shortcomings—both the ones we are aware of and the ones we are not. Let us resolve that this Lent will not simply be about restoring what may have been damaged, but about improving, strengthening, and building upon the history we have formed together—so that when others see our good works, they may give glory to God who is in heaven.

In today's Gospel — Matthew 6:14–21, our Lord gives us three clear guideposts for this very path:

1. Forgiveness (vv. 14–15)

"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Forgiveness is not optional—it is the doorway into Great Lent. Without passing through it, the spiritual journey cannot begin.

2. Fasting in Humility (vv. 16–18)

Christ teaches us to fast without display, without drawing attention to ourselves. True fasting is a hidden act of love, a quiet turning of the heart toward God.

3. Storing Treasures in Heaven (vv. 19–21)

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

We build not only a physical church, but a treasury of faith, mercy, and compassion that God alone sees and rewards.

My IHOP restaurant server's simple act of hospitality reminded me of the spirit we strive to reflect as a parish: warm, generous, attentive, and joyful. Yet the greatest difference is this:

Every Sunday, after receiving the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we leave not wearing a slogan on our backs—but with God's love sealed upon our hearts and souls.

It is this divine gift—Christ dwelling within us—that enables forgiveness, heals wounds, restores relationships, sanctifies our fasting, and teaches us where to treasure what matters most.

A Prayer of Forgiveness

Let us close
with a prayer
befitting this
holy day:

O Lord and
Master of my
life,
soften my
heart this
day.

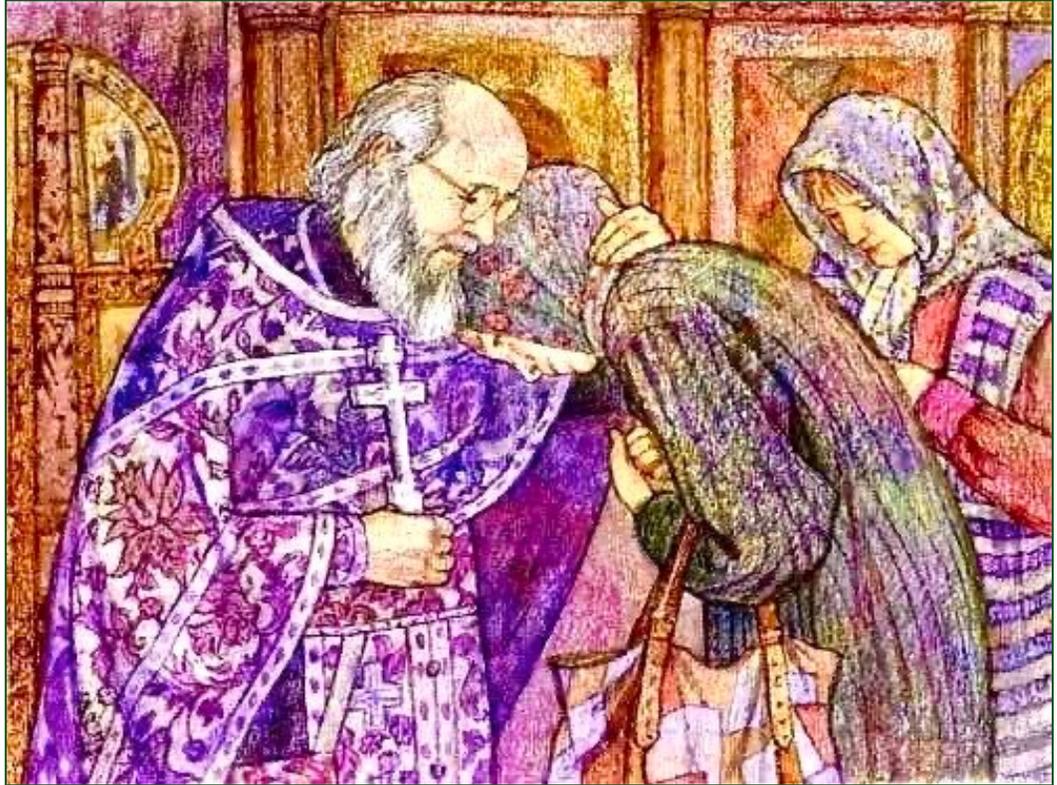
Grant me the
humility to

ask forgiveness from those I have hurt,
and the grace to forgive all who have hurt me.

Cleanse the wounds within me that have gone unattended,
heal the divisions that burden Your Church,
and restore in us the unity of love You desire.

Create in us a pure heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us,
so that as we begin this blessed Lenten journey,
we may walk together in peace,
and by our lives bring glory to You,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.





Lenten “Food” for Thought

- Fast from hurting words ...
and say kind words**
- Fast from sadness ...
and be filled with gratitude**
- Fast from anger ...
and be filled with patience**
- Fast from pessimism ...
and be filled with hope**
- Fast from worries ...
and have trust in God**
- Fast from complaints ...
and contemplate simplicity**
- Fast from pressures ...
and be prayerful**
- Fast from bitterness ...
and fill your hearts with joy**
- Fast from selfishness ...
and be compassionate to others**
- Fast from grudges ...
and be reconciled**
- Fast from words ...
and be silent so you can listen**



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

MARCH 1, 2026

VESPERS AT 5:00 PM

"PASCHA IS COMING: ARE WE (CLERGY AND LAITY) READY?"

2500 CLAIRMONT ROAD, N.E., ATLANTA, GA

GUEST SPEAKER: METROPOLITAN GREGORY OF NYSSA

Metropolitan Gregory was ordained a Deacon at St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte, NC on November 4, 2006 by His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. He was tonsured a Monk at Agia Lavra Monastery in Kalavryta, Greece on January 17, 2007, receiving the name Grigorios with St. Gregory Palamas as his Patron Saint. He was ordained a priest at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Atlanta, GA on January 28, 2007 also by His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite on the same day. On February 1, 2007, he was appointed as the Ierokyrix (Itinerant Preacher) of the Metropolis of Atlanta. On September 14, 2007, he received the offikion (rank) of Confessor at the Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Chapel in Atlanta, GA.

In July of 2013, in recognition of Metropolitan Gregory's experience in youth and young adult ministries, he was appointed by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA as Episcopal Liason to the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) Pan-Orthodox College Ministry. In 2016 he was elected Secretary of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA.

On August 29, 2018, Metropolitan Gregory was elevated to the rank of Titular Metropolitan of Nyssa by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.



Our Parish Is Growing



Our young adults have been coming together twice a month to discuss an informative & thought-provoking book, share a meal or coffee, and simply enjoy one another's company. It has been quite meaningful to gather and have honest, heartfelt

conversations about our faith, God, and the challenges and blessings we experience as Orthodox Christians today. It's more than just a book club — it's a space for connection, encouragement, and spiritual growth. Seeing these young adults build friendships while deepening their relationship with Christ is truly a blessing!

As we begin our journey through Great Lent, **I pause with gratitude for the many faithful parishioners who quietly serve behind the scenes to keep our parish strong, prayerful, and welcoming.** Their humble stewardship—often unseen—supports the sacred rhythm of worship and parish life, allowing the Church to flourish through faith, care, and dedication.

I commend our faithful parishioners who participated so



prayerfully in the **Service of Forgiveness**. What a profound and beautiful blessing it is to stand before one another, exchange mutual forgiveness, and begin the holy journey of Great Lent with hearts renewed. In that sacred moment, we were reminded that Lent does not begin with burden, but with grace—with a fresh start rooted in humility, reconciliation, and love in Christ.

We also rejoice in welcoming new inquirers and families into our parish community. Fellowship continued beyond the church walls as parishioners shared a joyful meal together at Broadway Diner, reminding us that breaking bread together deepens our bonds in Christ. **Let's Eat!** is an opportunity to share after church with new friends and parishioners—and give thanks to God for the blessings He bestows on us each time we gather in His Holy Name. Thanks Steve and Pamela for making sure we always have room on a crowded Sunday afternoon.



On Sunday afternoon, parishioners gathered to **decorate the church for Great Lent**, reminding us that the beauty of our worship space helps prepare our hearts to encounter the grace of God in the holy mysteries. Faithful hands working together in love strengthen both our parish and our prayer.

I am especially thankful for the vitality of our parish's sacramental life. **On the first day of Great Lent, Monday, February 22**, more than 20 parishioners received the Sacrament of Holy Unction. Through this holy mystery, we prayed together for the healing of soul and body and received the blessings of God's forgiveness, mercy, and strengthening grace. This shared experience reflects the heart of Orthodox life—being gathered, healed, and renewed together in Christ.





Love in Bloom

*New shoes and undies drive
for Bloom Our Youth*



February 15-March 1
All youth sizes ages 6-12

Love in Bloom

Volunteer Opportunity!

Sat, March 7, 9am-noon

Must pre-register with Bloom

[Bloomerang](#)

See directions to sign up

Assisting with our **Philoptochos**

ministries is another powerful expression of this sacramental life.

Service offered through Philoptochos is a true form of almsgiving, extending the grace we receive in the Church into the lives of those in need through compassion, generosity, and love.

As we continue our shared stewardship, parishioners are invited to participate in our **Church Clean-Up Day on Saturday, March 14.**

Additional ministries with service opportunities welcome your help and offer **sign-ups available in the dining room.**



Bringing the Light of Christ to those Imprisoned at Pascha

Please join us Sunday, March 1, 2026

(Immediately after the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival)

** EVERYONE YOUNG, OLD & INBETWEEN ARE WELCOME**

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We will have a fun "draw by numbers" card of the Paschal icon, that can be colored and then each of us are going to create an Pascha/Easter card with a short handwritten message to mail to a person in prison.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Imagine being confined to a prison cell—the isolation and sense of being cut off from the outside world. Imagine also what that is like at Pascha and having no way to mark a special and holy day. A heartfelt message on Pascha breaks through the sense of isolation and loneliness. Your card may well be the only one they receive. Your card lets our brothers and sisters in prison know that the Church remembers them, cares about them, and that they, too, are part of the Body of Christ.



May God bless all who labor in love for His Church—through prayer, worship, fellowship, and service—and may He strengthen us as we journey together toward Pascha. This season enables us to share, witness, serve, and commune with God's Holy Body. Join us often!

Each Sunday offers a quiet gift—the chance to encounter one another anew. Whether meeting a new inquirer or reconnecting with familiar faces, these moments of presence and care are where parish life truly takes root. God often works through simple gestures: a greeting, a conversation, a willingness to linger during coffee fellowship or after

religious education. I am grateful for those who take the time to do just that, creating space for encouragement and belonging.

Lenten Challenge: This week, let us make room for one intentional encounter—pause, greet someone you may not know well, and allow Christ to meet you in that moment. What has been one of your recent encounters that stayed with you? I would love to hear—[share with Fr. George](#).





During the two recent Saturdays of the Souls, our parish gathered in a spirit of reverence, love, and remembrance. After each Memorial Service, our parishioners shared heartfelt stories of their departed loved ones as we sat together and partook of the Koliva that had been lovingly prepared and offered. These moments—of worship, fellowship, and shared memory—reminded us how deeply our faith invites us to

honor those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

In these gatherings, we experienced the beautiful intersection of prayer and community: candles lit in memory, names spoken aloud in faith, tears and smiles shared across generations, and stories that revealed just how profoundly our departed continue to shape our lives. Our worship and fellowship give us countless opportunities to offer our love, preserve their memory, and show respect for those who lived before us.



May God grant rest to the souls of His servants, and may their memory be eternal.

One of the blessings in the life of a parish is an active and faithful **religious education ministry**. Each week, our teachers—serving with prayerful hearts and generous spirits—offer well-planned lessons that help form the minds and souls of parishioners of every age. Their ministry is not merely academic; it is spiritual, relational, and deeply rooted in love for Christ and His Church.

In their dedication, we see a living expression of Christ’s command to *“let the little children come to Me”* and His call for all believers to grow in the knowledge of the truth. Whether they are teaching young children to make the sign of the Cross, guiding teens through questions of faith and identity, or helping adults delve more deeply into Scripture and Orthodox practice, our educators are planting seeds of grace that will bear fruit for years to come.

Their preparation—often done quietly, at home, after work or between family obligations—reflects a

beautiful offering of time, talent, and prayer. And the lessons themselves are more than information. They become encounters with Christ: in stories of the saints, in Holy Scripture, in the beauty of our traditions, and in the fellowship shared within each classroom.

Through this ministry, our parish becomes a true “school of the soul,” where learning and discipleship walk hand in hand. We give thanks to God for each teacher, assistant, and



volunteer who helps our community remain anchored in faith. Their efforts strengthen our parish, deepen our unity, and nurture the next generation of Orthodox Christians.

May the Lord bless their ministry abundantly, granting them wisdom, patience, and joy in every lesson they offer. And may all of us—children and adults alike—continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.



The **St. John Chrysostom**

Oratorical Festival is a nationwide ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America that invites youth to explore and articulate their Orthodox faith through speech writing and public speaking. It begins at the parish level and progresses through district and Metropolis festivals, culminating in the National Finals hosted annually by a different Metropolis.

Participants in the Junior (grades 7–9) and Senior (grades 10–12) divisions deepen their understanding of the Church while gaining confidence in sharing their faith, with finalists receiving scholarships and awards.

This Sunday, Fr. George will be away, and Fr. Ken is serving on his behalf. Fr. George commends Katie Wilson, our St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Chair for working with our teachers and students to present both “sights and sounds” of our faith from our younger students who will not be judged, as well as presentations witnessed by our youth for advancement to the District Oratorical Festival hosted at Holy Cross Church in Macon. We commend them for their efforts and look forward to hearing and seeing their special offerings.

Join Us Often with Your Family

Wednesday, February 25, First Wednesday of Great Lent

8:00 a.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy



Sunday, March 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy & Procession of Icons, followed by Parish St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

11:00 Philoptochos Membership Drive & Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry Community Project *(all invited to join us)*

5:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at
Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta

Wednesday, March 4, 2nd Wednesday of Great Lent

8:00 a.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 6, 2nd Friday of Great Lent

8:30 a.m. Salutations Service – 2nd Salutations Service

Saturday, March 7

8:30 a.m. Love in Bloom Volunteer Effort

3:00 p.m. Sacrament of Holy Baptism at Archangel Michael Chapel (for Tanner Tatum) – *all parishioners are invited to witness the service.*

Sunday, March 8, Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:30 Philoptochos Membership Drive

10:45 Religious Education Classes (for all ages)

11:45 Parish Council Meeting