Christ is Risen!

Did you know that the Orthodox Christian Church is the church of the living human sacrifice? As you know, Adam and Eve were created and lived in the Garden of Eden with God. However, they disobeyed God and were expelled from the Garden. As a result of their disobedience, they lost direct fellowship with God. Over time, humanity’s memory and understanding of God grew cloudy. Instead of knowing the one God, they came to believe in many different gods; usually of this mountain or that river, this harvest or that season.

The scandal of the Hebrews was to remind humanity that there was only one God, not many. Their monotheism stood in stark contrast to the prevailing religious understanding of their neighbors and they were severely persecuted because of it. As part of God’s instructions, the Hebrews were told to sacrifice, through priests, living animals as substitutes for themselves and their sins; a way to say they were sorry for their sins by giving up something valuable.

In an agricultural economy such as theirs, few things were more valuable than prize livestock. Not only were your herds your source of food, they were also your source of barter, transportation, and status. To sacrifice a prize bull or ram was to offer something very valuable indeed. More important than the monetary cost, however, was the concept of offering one life as a sacrifice for another life. The Hebrews were not told to offer the life of another human being for their sins, but the life of an animal. They were told to offer something, not someone.

In the fullness of time, God transcended this instruction and offered Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, as both the priest and the sacrifice; a sacrifice of Himself for our sins, personally and physically, once and for all time. In this sacrifice, Christ is our model. As He sacrificed Himself for us and for the life of the world, so are we to sacrifice ourselves for others.

With each Divine Liturgy we celebrate His sacrifice for us by way of the Holy Eucharist. It is called the bloodless sacrifice because it involves neither the physical blood of man nor beast. It is also in direct contrast to those ancient pagans who offered to God the sacrifice of human blood. They misunderstood God thinking that a life unwillingly offered was acceptable to Him. Rather, He wants a life willingly sacrificed. In His good pleasure and time, God became incarnate in Christ to offer Himself as a living human (and divine) sacrifice for our sins.

This is our own personal mission, should we choose to accept it. We are, following Christ’s lead, to offer ourselves as a living human sacrifice for our salvation and that of those around us. No, we are not to physically die; we are to die spiritually to ourselves in the form of humility, patience, and love . . .
In our prayers

Pat Baker    Ethan Barnard    Sylvia Belk    Helen Beleos    Jodie Boyce    Sandy Brewer    Marie Callahan
Nikki Chomakos    Kathy Clewell    Dee Coccins    Nick Collins    Barbara Cook    Bessie Demas
Cleo Demopoulos    Pamela Dizes    Shannon Elliott    Michael Flaherty    Ted Gillis    Bill Griggs
Nancy Guthery    Catherine Kalivas    Andrew Karres    Nick Kefalas    Helen Keramidas    Dan Kiser
Dean Kondilis    Dawna Lawrence    Elton Longshore    Mary Longshore    Peter Mannering    Catherine Manthos
Casey Martinez    Peggy McGraw    Tony McGraw    Iris Medvid    Michael Christopher Mentavlos    Tish Merrill
Calliope Milios    Christina Nixon    Kay Owens    Barry Dale Price Jr.    Irene Rodriguez    Mary Roupas
Teziah Stalling    James Tekin    Mary Thayer    Ernest Tsitouris    Steve Tsitouris    Marion Zablotsky

And the persecuted Christians in the Middle East and the non-Christian World and several unnamed requests

And for those in service to our country

Helene Carras    Buddy Craft    Jordan James Dunn    Krassimire Ivanov
Michael Constantine Mentavlos    Zack Millsaps    Matthew Millsaps    Amanda Moril
Elias Nickolopoulos    Anton Savin    Danielle Zervakos Nickolopoulos

Congratulations

To Mary & Perry Diamaduros on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary
April 24, 1966 (Pictured at right)

To Kim and Paul Tatsis on the birth of their daughter, Sophia Amy Tatsis

To Stephanie Whitley on receiving her Masters in Public Administration from the
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

To Christina Bonderer on winning the American Heart Association’s 2016 Faith-
Based Lifestyle Change Award

To Marlena Heracklis on being chosen as a finalist by the Charlotte Observer as one
of the region’s most accomplished & promising high school seniors for her work with special needs children and
young adults

To Nina Edwards on being selected Assistant Teacher of the Year

To Dimitra and Nick Sitaras on the marriage of their daughter Maria to Vasili Tsiaras
To Rachel, Todd, Owen, Ella, Ava & Livia Whiting on their Chrismations
To the Katerina & Rick Coker on the baptism of their son, Philip O’Neil Coker
To Danielle Zervakos and Elias Nickolopoulos on their marriage
To Virginia Broome and Peter Fotinos on their marriage
To Rachel and Nathan Pierce on the baptism of their son, Daniel Cohen Pierce
To Maria and Daniel Siragusa on the baptism of their daughter, Sophia Siragusa
To Kristy, Taylor and Xan Rankin on their Chrismations
To Jennifer and Tommy Williams on the baptism of their son, Harrison Zacharias Williams
To Sara and Chris Thompson on the baptism of their daughter, Sofia Thompson
To Kathryn and Chris Mason on the 40 day blessing of Audrey’s brother, Jesse Elias and mom

Sympathy

To the Callender family on the passing of Melissa “Page” Callendar

To the Kanelos family on the passing of Sharon’s father, Robert Allen Bumbulucz

To the Saylor family on the passing of Jacob’s wife, Anita

To the Boukedes family on the passing of Litsa Boukedes
To the Pasiali, Vatsis and Zackheou families on the passing of Varvara’s grandmother, Ermine Zackheou
To the Sextone & Peponakis families on the passing of Theodora’s brother-in-law, John Peponakis in NY
To the Lakkis and Saad families on the passing of Rula’s uncle Michel Yacoub Lakkis
To the Stamatakos family on the passing of Demetra’s husband, Steve

In appreciation

Thank you to Elizabeth Kleto and Tim Klund for the photos they submitted. I really appreciate it. I also want to say a special thank you to Sam Kleto and Chris Levantis for doing such a beautiful job and for always being there when I can’t be and for your cheerful attitudes.

Kim Braswell (Clewell)

Thanks to Diane Gilbert and Copycat for printing the Church Bulletin and Newsletter.

Please contact the church office with information we may share with the community or to add someone to the prayer list.
Also, please contact the office when someone is in need of a clergy visit.
CHRIST IS RISEN!

Paschal Greetings from Around the World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albanian:</td>
<td>Krishti U Ngjall!</td>
<td>Vertet U Ngjall!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic:</td>
<td>El Messie kahm!</td>
<td>Hakken kahm!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian:</td>
<td>Kristos haryav ee merelotz!</td>
<td>Orhnial eh harootyunuh kristosee!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrean-Tigre:</td>
<td>Christos tensiou!</td>
<td>Bahake tensiou!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian:</td>
<td>Christos t'ensah em' muhtan!</td>
<td>Exai' ab-her eokala!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian:</td>
<td>Kriste ahzdkhah!</td>
<td>Chezdmaridet!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek:</td>
<td>Christos anesti!</td>
<td>Alithos anesti!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian:</td>
<td>Kristus telah bangkit!</td>
<td>Benar dia telah bangkit!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian:</td>
<td>Hristos a inviat!</td>
<td>Adeverat a inviat!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian:</td>
<td>Khristos voskresse!</td>
<td>Voistinu voskresse!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian:</td>
<td>Cristos vaskres!</td>
<td>Vaistinu vaskres!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish:</td>
<td>Cristo ha resucitado!</td>
<td>En verdad ha resucitado!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swahili:</td>
<td>Kristo amefufukka!</td>
<td>Kweli amefufukka!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian:</td>
<td>Khristos voskres!</td>
<td>Voistinu voskres!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our Journey through Lent

The Veneration of the Holy Cross

As each of the five Sundays of Lent has its own theme, the third Sunday focuses on the cross of Christ. After the matins service the Cross was processed around the inside of the nave and then brought to rest in the middle of the Narthex for all to venerate. It encourages the faithful to continue on their Lenten Journey as the Cross is the sign of victory.

Hymns of the Feast Day

The Trisagion is replaced by the hymn:

Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify. (Thrice)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
And Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.
Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.

Troparion

O Lord, save Your people,
And bless Your inheritance.
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians,
over their adversaries.
And by virtue of Your Cross
Preserve Your habitation!

Kontakion

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;
It has mysteriously been quenched by the wood of the Cross!
The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;
For You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell: "Enter again into paradise."
SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

TEACHING DIVINE LITURGY

YOUTH RETREAT
Youth decorating their Pascha Votive Candle
Elaine Miller teaching about each Holy Week service
for a better understanding for the children
Gerry Clonaris teaching and re-enacting the Last Supper

PALM CROSS MAKING
Commemorating our Lord’s Entry into Jerusalem

After the Gospel reading during Matins, the palm crosses so meticulously made on the previous Saturday, were blessed. The palms are the “symbols of victory” as it says in the hymn for the feast day (see below), and which was sung repeatedly throughout the service. This victory is not only our Lord’s victory over death, but also any personal victory over one’s sinful passions, which was the hope and purpose of Lent.

With great joy, our young ladies in the Narthex welcomed and dutifully distributed the crosses to all. Everyone held their palms during the entire service and especially during the procession of the icon of the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, which took place at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Hundreds of children lined the center aisle, waving their palm fronds as the Holy Icon passed by.

“Before Your passion, You confirmed the resurrection of all, by raising Lazarus from the dead, O Christ our God. Therefore, like the children of old, we also carry symbols of victory, and to You, the Victor over death, do we cry out: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”
Holy Unction on Holy Wednesday

Is any among you sick, let him call for the presbyters of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

James 5:14-15

Bridegroom Services

For the first three evenings of Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday, we observed the Bridegroom Services. The name comes from the central figure in the well-known parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).

The title Bridegroom suggests the intimacy of love. It is not without significance that the kingdom of God is compared to a bridal feast and a bridal chamber. The Christ of the Passion is the divine Bridegroom of the Church. The imagery connotes the final union of the Lover and the beloved. The title Bridegroom also suggests the Parousia. In the patristic tradition, the aforementioned parable is related to the Second Coming; and is associated with the need for spiritual vigilance and preparedness, by which we are enabled to keep the divine commandments and receive the blessings of the age to come. The troparion "Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night...", which is sung at the beginning of the Orthros of Great Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, relates the worshiping community to that essential expectation: watching and waiting for the Lord, who will come again to judge the living and the dead. - See more at: http://lent.goarch.org/bridegroom_services/learn/#sthash.7sgTPFvw.dpuf
I have always found the afternoon church service on Good Friday in which Christ is taken down from the cross after being crucified to be quite emotional. This year I was honored to be selected to assist in removing Christ from the cross. Having learned earlier in the week that I would be part of the service, I knew that I would be affected for the rest of my earthly existence by this one solemn event. The anticipation was overwhelming.

Good Friday 2016 arrived. Kathy and I took our respective seats in St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church. I was in the first pew closest to the cross with [George Stephenson, Perry Diamaduros, and Tony Manousos] who were chosen for the service and Kathy was seated nearby.

When Father Steve called on us to hold the symbolic white cloth that would be used to enshroud Christ, my eyes began to swell with tears as the head of Christ was placed upon my shoulder. At that moment, I experienced a tremendous sadness just as Joseph of Arimathea must have felt when he removed Christ from the cross over two thousand years ago.

This was truly an experience of a lifetime; one that I will never forget. Thank you Father Steve and Father John for allowing me to be part of such a moving spiritual experience.

Chris Pakuris
HOLY WEEK: HOLY FRIDAY LAMENTATIONS

Myrrh-bearing women

Kouvoulkion bearers

Welcome Team & Ushers
Above & Below
**Holy Saturday Morning Pre-Resurrection Service**

Above: Deacon Paul sprinkles petals and bay leaves symbolizing the shattered gates and broken chains of hell and celebrating the triumph over death.

Below: Blessing of the food baskets in the Russian tradition.

**Resurrection Service — Christ is Risen!**

The once dark church now aglow from the one flame spread to proclaim our Lord’s resurrection.

The eggs representing the empty tomb of Christ, dyed red in remembrance of His blood shed at the crucifixion.

**Gospel Readers at the Agape Vespers Service**

MANY HOURS OF SERVICE & PREPARATION FOR HOLY WEEK

Food preparation

Setting up tables

Egg dyeing & decorating

Working with flowers

Holding it steady while the ladies finish decorating
Many Hours of Service & Preparation for Holy Week

Folding Missals

Above: Preparing the luminaries
Below: Placing the luminaries on the pathway

Working in the sanctuary

Preparing baskets for shut-ins

Assisting in the Altar

Supervising Youth

Serving at the picnic

Behind the scenes and behind the camera

Chanting Services
Agape Vespers dismissed. The enticing aroma of lamb on the spit welcomed the crowd. Music filled the air. Hundreds of people lined up. Kitchen crew had been working several days, peeling potatoes, seasoning the meet, preparing salad, and more, all to feed 900 of our church family and friends. Eight buffet lines readied with roasted lamb, potatoes, rice, salad, spanakopita, grilled chicken, bread. Everyone was hungry. Workers busy. “Christ is Risen!” the crowd directors proclaimed as they kept the line moving, food runners kept the buffet replenished. The line ran the length of the church for a little while. “How’s the wait,” one was asked. “Not bad at all,” they replied. The line kept moving.

Chopping away at the grilled lamb tent, the crew prepared portions so all could have a taste. Dedicated workers arrived at 7:00 a.m. to put six lambs on the grill. And some of them were at church for the Resurrection Service ‘til 2:00! What dedication! In case you did not know, the rains came. Move some tables, shift into Plan B. The rains stopped just as the church service was starting. While the rain kept some home, over 800 were served. All around were workers at the dessert station, workers at the coffee and beverage areas, lots of joy, lots of good food, lots of music and dancing.

And then the piñatas appeared hung from the tent beams, kids lined up to take a whack and kids the ready to grab the falling treats. The little ones offered a gentle tap. Bigger kids held nothing back. Smack and out pour the treats. Three piñatas filled with lots of candy were gone in moments. Three o’clock arrived all too soon. The crowd started to thin out. Workers were satisfied with a successful job done. Talk of next year started with what to do better, how to serve more of our church family and the planning began.

➢ Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!  

Evelyn Klund
“To educate and prepare our youth for a lifetime of spiritual growth as Orthodox Christians.” This is the Mission of our Youth Ministries, and it is never more present in our thoughts and actions than during Lent & Holy Week. We set our Parish Oratorical Festival on a Wednesday to follow the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. (Winners 2016: Zack Kontakis, Eleni Ouzts, George Karavokiros; represented us at the District Level.) The Friday before Holy Week begins, we scheduled our GOYA LOCK-IN, which began with prayers for many and then a service project—letters for our soldiers—and continued through the night with a Lip Synch Battle, late night talks and an early breakfast.

By midday on Saturday of Lazarus, we began our JOY-HOPE HOLY WEEK RETREAT with palm cross creations, a visit to the Sanctuary to learn about what happens at all the Holy Week services, then a recreation of the Last Supper (with participation), and finally decorating vigil candles to help us RECEIVE THE LIGHT. On Palm Sunday, a group of our young ladies acted as PRESENTERS of the PALMS, and near the end of the service, all our youth were invited to line the center aisle and wave their palms for the PROCESSION OF THE ICON OF JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM. Throughout the week, our young men and women helped at the Holy Week services by singing, chanting, and serving as ushers or in the altar. Finally, following the Agape Vespers, our GOYA once again, for the FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW, set up and served in the Beverage Stations at the AGAPE PICNIC. Thanks to all of those who served!!

CHRIST IS RISEN!!
Construction Update
- First Phase Pavers installed
- Accepting orders for next phase of paver installation
- Fountain has been waterproofed, tile installed, and received electrical inspection
- Landscaping installed
- Benches on order
- Temporary icon installed.
- Mosaic installation will be during the summer

Please note that the Dedication will be held at the conclusion of Great Vespers on August 14.

Pavers may be purchased for second installation phase. Forms are available in Spiritual Life Center or call the church office for more information. Our Goal is 100% participation.

Proceeds provide for the repair and maintenance of our beloved St. Nektarios campus.
Parents, please inform your children that this is not a play area.

Financial Matching Trivia

A. 48,000  C. 125,298  E. 25,650
B. 7,781  D. 12,000  F. 12,000

Match the above amount to the category below.
1. ___ Archdiocese Allocation we pay
2. ___ Priest Health Insurance Premium
3. ___ Cost of Candles
4. ___ Property Insurance cost
5. ___ Equipment Maintenance Contracts & Inspections Costs
6. ___ Number of offerings processed in 2015

Stewardship Ministry
Offering of Treasure
So You Know . . .

April Operating Income
$74,822 — Monthly Budgeted Expenses
$59,022 — Actual Stewardship Received
$27,320 — Other Income Received
2016 Stewardship Goal is $725,764
Have you made your pledge?
Our Journey Continues

Celebrations!

The months of May and June are laden with celebrations, beginning with our most glorious, the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We gathered to celebrate as one faith, one family, at the annual Agape Picnic. The celebrations in May continue with Mother’s Day, a round of graduations leading into June, followed by Father’s Day. We have much to be thankful for in our family and faith journeys.

As we continue in our journey as a parish, it is time to recommit to our mission and purpose. We have grown from 71 families to 600 families in 18 short years, and today we stand ready to serve each other and our community. All members are respectfully asked to participate in some meaningful way in the “Burn the Mortgage/Build the Ministry Center” capital campaign so that we may all continue to provide for our vibrant and active parish.

Thank you to the 100 members who have turned in pledge cards! Have you turned in yours?!

Campaign Pledge Pyramid

Everyone’s participation is needed at one of these levels to reach our goal of $7.5 million.

And So You Asked . . .

What is the difference between the Stewardship Campaign and the Capital Campaign?

The Stewardship Campaign is an annual campaign for all parishioners to support our church’s sacramental life, ministry, programming and operations. In other words, these are the funds that keep our church doors open. Stewardship is the only source of this income.

The Capital Campaign is a three to five year campaign for all parishioners to help fund building projects, facility maintenance and repair. Although Capital Campaigns have been crucial for a new parish such as ours, we have not launched a new campaign since 2011.

For Reflection . . .

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today.
He comes through the Sacrament of Baptism to bestow upon us His love, to call us His very own.
He comes through the Sacrament of Chrismation to fill us with His presence, to make our bodies temples of His Holy spirit.
He comes through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession to cleanse us of sin, to restore in our souls “the peace of God that passes all understanding.”
In every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon.
Through the Sacraments of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts.
He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest.
He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church.
He comes with healing and forgiveness. He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, “the blind see, the lame walk, and prisoners are set free.”
It is by offering our blessings back to God that He will be able to continue His . . .

. . . forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the church.
For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris

Honouring the friends of God with much reverence, the Prophet-King David says, "But to me, exceedingly honourable are Thy friends, O Lord" (Ps. 138:16). And the divine Apostle, recounting the achievements of the Saints, and setting forth their memorial as an example that we might turn away from earthly things and from sin, and emulate their patience and courage in the struggles for virtue, says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every burden, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

This commemoration began as the Sunday (Synaxis) of All Martyrs; to them were added all the ranks of Saints who bore witness (the meaning of "Martyr" in Greek) to Christ in manifold ways, even if occasion did not require the shedding of their blood.

Therefore, guided by the teaching of the Divine Scriptures and Apostolic Tradition, we the pious honour all the Saints, the friends of God, for they are keepers of God’s commandments, shining examples of virtue, and benefactors of mankind. Of course, we honour the known Saints especially on their own day of the year, as is evident in the Menologion. But since many Saints are unknown, and their number has increased with time, and will continue to increase until the end of time, the Church has appointed that once a year a common commemoration be made of all the Saints. This is the feast that we celebrate today. It is the harvest of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world; it is the "much fruit" brought forth by that "Grain of wheat that fell into the earth and died" (John 12:24); it is the glorification of the Saints as "the foundation of the Church, the perfection of the Gospel, they who fulfilled in deed the sayings of the Saviour" (Sunday of All Saints, Doxasticon of Vespers).

In this celebration, then, we reverently honour and call blessed all the Righteous, the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Shepherds, Teachers, and Holy Monastics, both men and women alike, known and unknown, who have been added to the choirs of the Saints and shall be added, from the time of Adam until the end of the world, who have been perfected in piety and have glorified God by their holy lives. All these, as well as the orders of the Angels, and especially our most holy Lady and Queen, the Ever-virgin Theotokos Mary, do we honour today, setting their life before us as an example of virtue, and entreat ing them to intercede in our behalf with God, Whose grace and boundless mercy be with us all. Amen.

http://www.goarch.org

"Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA, used by permission. All rights reserved."