St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
760 West Wattles Road
Troy, Michigan 48098-4500
(248) 362-9575
Fax: (248) 362-9578
Website: stnicholastroy.org
Archdiocese Website: goarch.org
Rev. Fr. Michael Manos
Asst. Priest
FrMichael@StNicholasTroy.org
Emergency Phone (313) 590-0354

Sunday Services
Orthros-9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy-10:00 a.m.
Catechism Classes-10:30 a.m.

McKenna Osborn, Office Administrator
Office@StNicholasTroy.org
Catechism School Office
Cated@StNicholasTroy.org

ECHO STAFF
Pulpit…………………Fr. Michael Manos
Council Secretary…….George Manolias
Catechism………………Karen Cosmos
Philoptochos………….Angela Seaborn
Argonauts ……………..Lela Filias
G.O.Y.A………………Vasi Andreopoulos

ERNIE’S CATERING
(586) 286-8435

February 2020

“The Echo”

Saint Nicholas

St. Vlassios

“If I could just see a miracle with my own eyes, I would believe forever—it would change my life; everything would make sense and I would have no reason to doubt.” As Christians, especially as Christians living in the 21st century, it is natural to seek some sort of sign, some sort of affirmation, from God. With all of the different religions, sciences, philosophies and “spiritualities” buzzing around in our world and our heads, it would be nice to have Christ come into church one Sunday, or into our room one night, and say, just once: “Don’t worry, you’re on the right track.” If this happened it would be easy to believe, easy to throw ourselves head first into living out our faith. Wouldn’t it? Maybe. Maybe not.

In the 4th Century there was a holy bishop named Vlassios who lived in what is now Armenia. He was born into what is known in Christian history as the “Great Persecution,” a time when Christians were persecuted by Romans, Jews, and Persians alike. As a bishop, St. Vlassios was the target of much persecution, and, as a saint, he was able to perform many miracles even in the face of this persecution. One of St. Vlassios’s most memorable miracles took place right before his death. Having been imprisoned for refusing to worship the Roman idols, St. Vlassios was forced to watch as the Roman governor executed his Christian brothers and sisters. Even after this horrible experience, St. Vlassios maintained his faith in Christ. The Roman governor, enraged by Vlassios’s unwavering resolve, ordered that he be drowned in a lake. The soldiers took Vlassios to the edge of the water, followed by a crowd of people who were waiting to see the bishop pushed into the lake and drowned. You can imagine their surprise when St. Vlassios did not try to run from the executioners but, instead, simply bent down and made the sign of the Cross over the water. He then moved forward and, astonishingly, began walking on the surface of the water—just as Christ had walked on the Sea of Galilee! Once he reached the middle of the lake he turned back towards the shore and shouted for the pagans to walk on the water as he was—if, that is, their gods could help them to do so. Sixty-eight pagans accepted this challenge: sixty-eight pagans drowned. After this, St. Vlassios walked back across the water to the shore and, instead of being praised for this miracle, was beheaded by his Roman executioners.

The crowds gathered by the lake that day saw the laws of nature turned upside down. They saw a man, a Christian bishop, walk on water. If this had simply been a trick or a coincidence, surely one of the pagan priests would have been able to recreate it. And yet, they couldn’t. This was Christ’s power, clear and before their eyes. St. Vlassios did not proclaim to be a mystic; he did not claim to have powers himself; instead, he pointed directly to Christ. This miracle was a sign—just like the one that we are so often waiting for!

(continue on page 5)
PARISH COUNCIL

Office News
We are still in need of a maintenance man to replace Ty, our longtime handyman who has retired. The work is part time, 15 hours per week, for “light handyman” type of activity. Anyone interested in encouraged to contact our church office at 248-362-9575.

His Eminence is actively searching for a new priest for our community following Father Stratton’s retirement. All Sacraments plus Divine Liturgies will be covered by a clergyman from the Metropolis.

Council's Report
There is a Metropolis Hellenic Dance Festival which started last year in Toledo. Other Metropolises do a similar event. This year, we have been approached to be the host church. Requirements would be to support a Friday-Saturday-Sunday event. No date set yet.

Ernie’s Catering continues to grow on site here at our facility and as a result, the Council will be reviewing some potential additions to our kitchen equipment in the coming months. The ability to host more events and of a wider menu variety would be possible.

Thank You letter from Methodios, Metropolitan of Boston and Interim President of Hellenic College for our parish's "generous donation of $25,000 to Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology"

Council Calendar 2020
Feb – Mar TBD / potential Macaronatha
April 19 Anastasi / Resurrection
May 17 Spring General Assembly
Jun 19-21 OpaFest

Welcome Father Bill Bartz!

Beginning on February 1st through the end of March, Father Bill Bartz has been assigned as our Proistamenos while His Eminence continues the search for a permanent replacement.

The contact information for Fr. Bartz is as follows:
Email address: frbilltroy@gmail.com.
For non urgent matters phone numbers, please use the Church number: 248-362-9575.
For urgent matters, please use 317-900-6325.

Father William J. Bartz, son of Father and Mrs. George Bartz, was born in Scranton, PA and raised in Akron, OH. He graduated from Hellenic College in 1975 with a Bachelors of Arts and from Holy Cross School of Theology in 1978 with a Masters in Divinity with Distinction. He became a United States Navy Chaplain in May 1977 and a Priest in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in March 1982.

Father Bill served in the US Navy as a Chaplain for 34 years, of which 27 years were on active duty. During his last five years on active duty, he was the most senior Orthodox Priest in the US military. The Navy Chaplain Corps selected him to be the 2010 recipient of the John H. Craven Award, a peer-nominated and peer-selected Award by Navy Captain Chaplains, recognizing his exemplary servant-leadership among Chaplains.

In June 2003, he received the ecclesiastical Offikion of Protopresbyter.

After retiring from the Navy at the rank of Captain, he served His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas as the Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit from August 2011 to August 2013.

Father Bartz was appointed by the Chairman of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America to be the Endorsing Agent for Military Chaplains in November 2011.

On 1 September 2013, Father Bill became the Presiding Priest of Holy Trinity Church in Carmel, Indiana (Indianapolis area). Under his leadership, the entire interior of the Church was completed, including iconography, flooring, pews, liturgical furniture, and sound system. Holy Trinity Church was elevated to the dignity of a Cathedral by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas and announced by the Archdiocese of America in November 2018.

Father Bartz retired from the active parish ministry on 1 August 2019 and moved to the Richmond, Virginia area.

Father Bill is married to the former Emily V. Mamalis, daughter of Father and Mrs. James Mamalis. They have three children, Joanna Nicolaides (Evan), Maria, and George; and three grandchildren, Emilia, John, and Magdalena Nicolaides.

Father Bill:
We are blessed, honored and look forward to you joining us during these next two months.

Father Bill:
PHILOPTOCHOS

February is Heart Health month! Collectively, we are the HEART of the church and it is important to maintain our Church’s strong health. During the month of February, Philoptochos will be exercising our hearts by spreading love and living our spiritual calling of being a friend to the needy. Please COME JOIN US in the following activities:

February 2 - Godparents Sunday: Show your Nouna and Nouno how much you love and appreciate all they do by giving them a 3 rose bouquet on Godparent’s Sunday! Pre-ordering is available, and your generosity will benefit Autism! Cost of each bouquet is $5 or single roses $2.

Wednesday, February 12 @ 7:00: Come join us at our next meeting featuring a speaker from the Open Hands Food Pantry. We will be discussing the challenges and impacts on the community.

Month of February: Open Hands Food Pantry collection. Now that the holidays are over, many food pantries have depleted their supplies. Please help us restock the Open Hands Food Pantry with items listed below. Drop off boxes are located outside of the Church office.

More about Open Hands Food Pantry

Hunger is real in Oakland County
• Started in a small closet to provide food for neighbors in need since 1982
• Provided food to nearly 14,000 people in 2017
  • All volunteer staff
• Food distributed twice a week to Oakland County residents with clients receiving 2-4 days supply of food based upon need
• Open Hands is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
• A member of Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan

Needs/Donations:
Non-Perishable Food items:
○ Canned Fruit (no heavy syrup) ○ Canned Vegetables ○ Peanut Butter (in plastic jars) ○ Healthy Cereal/Oatmeal ○ Hearty Soups, Stews ○ Canned Spaghetti ○ Pasta Beans (black, kidney, pinto or refried) ○ Canned meats (Tuna, Salmon, Chicken) ○ Pasta, Macaroni & Cheese, Rice ○ Pancake or Baking Mixes ○ Baby Food or Formula
Immediate need: Feminine Hygiene products

In January, we celebrated the new year with our Vasilopita lunch. Congratulations to the Sunday School winning the coin this year! A big THANK YOU to Cindy Crosson, Pat Crosson and the Vasilopita Committee. They decorated the room, prepared, cooked and served all the delicious food. All proceeds will benefit St. Basil Academy and your generosity is appreciated!

If you would like to get involved, please join us at our meetings and share your ideas. You can also stay connected by following our Facebook page (Philoptochos St. Nicholas Troy) or submitting your email address to Philoptochos@StNicholasTroy.org to receive the monthly newsletter. THANK YOU again to everyone! Many hands make for light work and we could not do it without you!
CATECHISM

January came in with a vengeance, but it didn’t put a damper on our Vasilopita class tradition. Again, this year all the classes celebrated with their own Vasilopita. They learned the meaning and traditions behind it along with the story of St. Basil. The bread is cut, and the pieces are handed out carefully in a special order.

The first piece is for Christ. There will be pieces for the Virgin Mary, for Saint Basil (Agios Basilios), and a piece for the needy. Then to the class. First, the teacher then each student in order even those not present and one for the class.

We would like to congratulate the winners of the lucky coin:
Pre-3- Luke Gorman,
Pre-4- Ms. Gina,
Kindergarten– Michaela Lezos
1st Grade – James Charbonneau
2nd Grade – Jesus
3rd Grade- Steven Choukourian
4th Grade- Catherine Corombos
5th Grade – Sebastian Feles,
6th Grade- Sophia Samson
7th Grade – Sofia Lisnek,
8th Grade – Andreas Spyridakis,
9th-10th – Andrew Borchardt,
11th-12th – Eve Bournias

We wish all the recipients "Kali Chronia" (Good Year).

Catechism was the lucky recipient of the coin during the Vasilopita Luncheon!

As the Lenten season approaches the students will once again be collecting for the Orthodox Missions as part of our CSP. Each child will be given a container for their donations. The office once again will credit all students that donate to the Missions. We ask that you return your containers even if they are not used. In addition to the Lenten Mission Collection, Catechism will host the Saturday of Lazarus breakfast and cross making. Again, all students that attend will receive credit toward their award pins at graduation.

We ask that any acolytes who are attending church during Lenten services to serve in the altar even if they are not assigned for that service. We are also asking for students to read the Epistle on Sundays and for Holy Wednesday services. Stop by the office and sign up.
But what happened to those who witnessed this miracle? What happened to those crowds of people who saw a man walk on water? And what about that 68th pagan priest—didn’t he realize that if the 67 before him didn’t make it, his chances weren’t so great either? The crowd saw a man walk on water and did not even think to hear what he had to say—instead, when he returned to shore, they executed him. The pagan priest saw 67 of his brothers drown in the name of their religion and did not even think to consider that perhaps Christ, by whose name this man was walking on water, really could be the one true God.

What this story teaches us is that faith is not simply a matter of the mind. Though our world demands hard evidence of God, it is reasonable to think that even hard evidence would not be enough. We must accept this. We must learn to be patient with those who cannot see God even where we think He is most obvious. We must realize that what is clear to us is not always clear to others, and that we will not convince them of anything that they are not ready to be convinced of.

In addition, we must be patient with our own selves and our own faith. We all have some degree of faith in God, even if evidenced only by the fact that we are reading The Echo right now. Something in our heart is telling us to look for God, and yet, there are, and probably always will be, shadows of doubt. This is not a problem. We do not need to panic when we feel a wave of doubt entering our hearts, nor do we need to scramble for evidence to convince ourselves one way or the other. We do not need a miracle—miracles can confirm faith, but they cannot bestow it. What we need, simply, is to imitate the man from the book of Mark. We need to call on God, the One who grants the gift of faith, and to say: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.”
St. Nicholas Argonauts
Valentine’s Luncheon

Join us for lunch on
Thursday, February 13, 2020
At 12:00pm

For more information or to make reservations, please contact:

Lela Filias at 248-221-7065 by
Monday, February 10th

Please contact McKenna in the
Administration office at 248-362-9575 If
you would like to be added to our
mailing list, if your address has changed,
or if you would like to be removed from
the list.
ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
for Campers and Staff

VISIT GOMDSC.ORG TO REGISTER

Program for Young Adults (Entering Senior Year or College)
Week Zero JUNE 21 - JUNE 27, 2020

Programs for Youth Entering Grades 3-11
Week 1 JUNE 28 - JULY 4, 2020
Week 2 JULY 5 - JULY 11
Week 3 JULY 12 - JULY 18
Week 4 JULY 19 - JULY 25
Week 5 JULY 26 - AUGUST 1

Young Adult Weekend
(Entering College Sophomore Year to Age 35)
Labor Day Weekend JUNE 21 - JUNE 27, 2020

248-909-MDSC [6372] • gomdsc@gmail.com

Connect with us on social media!
Facebook Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp
Instagram @gomdsc
SAVE THE DATE

JOY BOWLING NIGHT

Friday, February 28 at 6:00pm at Avon Lanes in Rochester Hills

$12 per bowler, includes 2 games, shoes, 2 slices of pizza, and pop

$6 non bowler includes 2 slices of pizza and pop

Register online via the JOY page at www.stnicholastroy.org
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