

THE **LAMPLIGHTER**

FEBRUARY 2011

"Yea, Thou dost light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness...." (Psalms 18:28)

Thank You to Our February Sponsors: Fr. George & Doris Economou and Nicholas Limber. This issue is dedicated to Nicholas' father, William Limber, who passed away in 1965.

**SAVE THESE DATES**

**Tuesday, Feb. 22**

Interfaith Day held at Plymouth Congregational Church. See Dee Vosovic for tickets.

**Sunday, Feb. 20**

Loukoumathes served at coffee hour

**Sunday, Feb. 27**

Comfort Food Sunday Lunch following the Divine Liturgy

**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**

1701 E. Saginaw St.  
Lansing, MI 48912  
(517) 482-7341  
holyltrinitygreek@sbcglobal.net



*Pastoral Reflection* | **RAINING GRACE** by Fr. Mark Sietsema

This year, with a late start to Great Lent (March 7), we have an extra long time for the season of house blessings. I love to be invited into your homes, to call down God's grace on your families, and to share some time and conversation with you, as well as to thank you personally for your family's stewardship to the community of your time, talents, and treasure. Please, if your home has not had a blessing in recent years, consider asking for one this year. Though I will be away on vacation in the first part of February, we still have a great deal of time to accomplish the house blessings.

To outsiders it surely must seem strange to invited a black-robed man to come into your house and throw water around. And yet this unusual activity has deep spiritual roots. Throughout the Scriptures, water—and especially water in the form of rain—is a symbol of the grace of God. For grace is like water in so many ways: abundant, free, refreshing, even lifegiving; but also unpredictable and beyond the control of man. For example, Jesus Christ said that God "makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Grace, like the rain, falls without discrimination.

When we celebrate Christ's Baptism at the Feast of Epiphany and perform the Great Blessing of the Waters, we make it rain down divine grace. We unite our hearts in prayer and ask the Spirit of God to enter into water, so that it becomes a visible vehicle of an invisible blessing, the very presence of the Lord. And then we make it rain all throughout the sanctuary!

Sorry to say, some people don't like rain. How often have you heard the local weatherman on TV bemoan a forecast of precipitation ... as if rainy weather is bad weather?!? That's TV people for you: nothing like a pretty face to mask an empty head. Without rain we would soon have no water flowing from our taps—and no food on our table, no life across our land. Even so, for some people, the rain is an inconvenience, and so stupidly they curse the clouds that water the earth.

(continued on page 3)

**Parish Council Update by Elaine Christofilis**

- The Capital Campaign Planning Study report has been received by the Parish Council from the Department of Parish Development. Laura Paulus reported the finding at the January Parish Council meeting. A special General Assembly will take place where the findings will be presented to the community. Please keep a look out for the announcement of this Special General Assembly.
- The Parish Council has appointed Stacie Neros to the council. We thank her for stepping up and filling the position.
- The 2011 Parish Council includes: Elaine Christofilis *President*, Alexis Popoff *Vice President*, Nick Gavrillides *Treasurer*, Dan Skorich *Secretary*, Stella Economy, Yvonne Joseph, Curt Kosal, Nick Limber, George Mansour, Mark Millis, Stacie Neros, and Elan Nichols.
- **Stewardship 2011**  
To date we have 106 stewardship units who have pledged \$144,600 for 2011. Please remember to submit your stewardship pledge form as soon as possible. Make your contributions easier, sign up for the EFT program today! All forms are available in the church lobby and from the parish office.

## PHILOPTOCHOS

### by Secretary Elan Stavros Nichols

**Please note:** We have decided to cancel the annual Zorba Family Night Dinner Dance originally set for Saturday, February 26, 2011 due, in part, to lack of interest.

However, **PLEASE** come the next night to our “Comfort Food Sunday Lunch,” honoring Meatfare Sunday, before Great Lent begins. It will be on Sunday, February 27, following the Liturgy, and tickets will be very affordable. The menu will be non-Greek, but traditional American “comfort food” – probably meatloaf, green beans, and dessert. Stay tuned for more details.

Upcoming important dates:

- Feb. 7 – Next General Meeting at 7 p.m.
- Feb. 22 – Interfaith Day.

Remember that 2011 dues of \$25 are payable to our treasurer Angela Vlahakis – Philoptochos has members of all ages, and is always seeking new members to begin new traditions as it carries on its Christian mission!

## ODYSSEY GREEK LANGUAGE & CULTURAL PROGRAM

### BY Zana Litos

#### Vasilopota with Greek School Youth

On Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup> 2011, Fr. Mark presided over the cutting of the Vasilopita for your young and adult Odyssey students, teachers, and board members. A special thank you goes to Betty Vlahakis for preparing the Cretan Vasilopita. It was enjoyed by all.

#### Pizza and Movie V “Zorba the Greek”

The Odyssey Board would like to send out a special thank-you to everyone who attended the “Pizza and a Movie V” fund raiser on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The feedback from those attending was that it was an evening well spent. Their supporting of Odyssey Program means a lot to us and we really appreciate it very much.

A special thank you note goes to George and Ann Lafkas.

George’s variety of delicious pizza and baklava once more hit the record and made this evening very special for all of us.

Also, we send out an additional thank-you to Georgio’s Gourmet Pizza for donating supplies to this affair and all those who helped in the food preparation and serving.

### Upcoming Event

**Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**LOUKOUMATHES served at coffee**  
**hour following the Liturgy.**

**Don’t miss it!**

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

- Scholarships to Hellenic College are available to graduating seniors. For more information, visit the Hellenic College website at: [www.hchc.edu/holycross/admissions/anniversary-scholarship-continued.html](http://www.hchc.edu/holycross/admissions/anniversary-scholarship-continued.html)
- Now available in the Church Office are copies of the **2011 Scholarship Application** from the **Order of the AHEPA District #10** Educational Foundation. Stop by the office during the week to obtain a copy.

## AHEPA HONORS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

AHEPA honors our high school seniors at the annual Palm Sunday AHEPA Fish Plaki Luncheon. Families with students who are graduating this year should forward this information to Phillip Frangos at [ptfrangos@aol.com](mailto:ptfrangos@aol.com) so that your son or daughter can be included in the honors.

**Please respond today!**

Bulletin announcements should be communicated to the Church office by e-mail or phone by Thursday morning.

The parish e-mail is : [holytrinitygreek@sbcglobal.net](mailto:holytrinitygreek@sbcglobal.net)

*(Pastoral Reflection continued)*

For some people, God's grace is a nuisance. It upsets the apple-cart of their philosophy. Like the rain that over time dissolves the mountains into plains, God's grace erodes distinctions like class and gender and race and worldly success. God's grace is the great leveler of humankind. In the house of the Lord, we all receive an equal portion from the Lord's Table, for in God's heart, we are all equally of value as His children. Recognizing God's grace in our own lives forces us to extend grace to those around us—to forgive, to get over the past, to look forward in hope. This idea remains repugnant to some. That's the way of God's grace, raining alike on the just and the unjust, the deserving and the undeserving.

Do you want grace to rain on you this year? God's grace is yours for the asking. You have only to invite Him into your life, into your home, and your work, and your recreation. He will come, gladly, willingly, and water your world with His love. You have only to summon the priest. But like the natural rain that shapes and carves the landscape upon which it falls, God's grace will inexorably change the world into which it comes—including your home, your family, your life.

Are you ready for those changes? Are you ready for the effects of the rain?

The Epistle to the Hebrews (6:7-8) says, *"For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned."*

You are responsible for what you do with the blessings of God that come to you. You have an answer to give for the harvest of good works that God looks for after He sends His rain. Freely you have received, freely give to those in need. Freely share your worldly goods, your good will, your forgiveness, your friendship, your love.

And in the year of God's goodness that lies ahead, in you will be fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah (55:10-11): *"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it."*

This is the promise of grace that comes to all of us today, saint and sinner, just man and unjust. Glory be to God who is revealed at the banks of the Jordan River, whose goodness is tasted in every drop of rain, and in every sprinkling of grace!

***Like the rain that over time dissolves the mountains into plains, God's grace erodes distinctions like class and gender and race and worldly success. God's grace is the great leveler of humankind.***

**Lamplighter sponsorships are needed for March, April, and May.**

Sponsoring the monthly newsletter is a great way to commemorate a loved one, offer a prayer for the health of family and friends, or celebrate a special occasion or anniversary.

The donation is \$200 for an issue. Please call the church office (482-7341) if you are interested in sponsoring an issue.

If you would be willing to assist some parishioners by offering a ride to church from time to time, please contact Mary Simmons at 394-2269 or e-mail at theacre9@gmail.com

There is a rotating schedule, so that volunteers are responsible only once a month or so.

**Thank you!**

## TREASURER'S REPORT—2010: End-of-the-Year Report

by George Mansour

Throughout 2010, the media regularly reported on the sad state of the economy, especially Michigan's economy. Toward the end of the year, they indicate some glimmers of a change for the better.

Contrary to the reported general state of economic affairs, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox community consistently contributed to the parish's missions. In fact, one would be hard pressed to judge Michigan or the national economy on the response of parishioners. In 2010, Holy Trinity not only made its budgetary goals, but it exceeded them and ended the year with almost a \$5000 surplus!

This certainly does not mean that parishioners were not pushed by the constrained economic factors of the Lansing area; it means that parishioners – in spite of the economy and very likely at times through sacrificial effort, contributed their time, talents, and treasures to help sustain Holy Trinity and support its ministries. Their financial contributions helped, and their time and talents regularly helped to increase revenue and reduce costs.

The end-of-the-year financial statement appears elsewhere in this issue of the Lamplighter, and a more detailed statement is posted on the parish's bulletin board. Summary:

- a. Stewardship:  
Budget: \$272,875  
December 31, 2010: \$276,343
- b. Total Revenue:  
Budget: \$329,625  
December 31, 2010: \$345,069
- c. Disbursements:  
Budget: \$329,625  
December 31, 2010: \$340,083

These data show:

- a. Stewardship exceeded what was budgeted
- b. Total revenue exceeded what was budgeted
- c. Parish expenses were greater than what was budgeted

**AND**, a surplus of almost \$5000 was achieved.

### Financial Standing from the End-of-Year Balance Sheet

#### Checking & Savings

Capitol National Bank - Operations Fund	\$ 16,994.91
Capitol National Bank - Capitol Fund	\$ 6,687.31
Capitol National Bank - Iconography Fund	\$ 2,914.76
Capitol National Bank - Memorial Fund	\$ 25,717.82
PNC Bank - Fr. John Poulos Fund	\$ 5,058.55
PNC Bank - N. Revelos Bequest	\$ 10,447.78
Capitol National Bank::	
Library CD	\$ 5,000.00
CD 21122	\$ 17,595.16
Petty Cash	\$ 50.00
Total Current Assets	\$ 90,466.29
Other Assets – Pauline Geovanes Bequest	\$ 14,155.32
Total Assets - Excluding 'Fixed Assets'	\$104,155.32

#### Long Term Liabilities

Long Term Liabilities	\$312,818.43
Facilities Improvement, Loan—Bank	\$ 50,000.00
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$362,818.43

**Consistency in Stewardship Giving**

2010 has been a good year for Holy Trinity in many ways. Looking specifically at Stewardship, one can easily see that parishioners have recognized the importance of consistent giving – making their stewardship offerings throughout the year, rather than waiting and doing it in one or two checks.

Enrolling for automatic bank transfers of stewardship not only simplifies meeting one's pledge, it benefits the parish by having stewardship offerings made regularly, even when one is away or not in attendance church services.

To become part of this program, please complete the form below and return it to the parish office.

\* \* \* \* \*

**AGREEMENT FOR DIRECT STEWARDSHIP PAYMENTS TO**

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Lansing, Michigan

I (We) authorize HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF LANSING, MICHIGAN, (HTGOC) to initiate transfers of my stewardship from my (our) account specified below at the financial institution named below. In addition, I (We) acknowledge that the direct payment (EFT) transactions from the account must comply with the provisions of U.S. law.

I (We) further acknowledge that if a transfer fails because of Insufficient Funds, Closed Account, or Wrong Account Number, I (we) may be responsible for any fee which the financial institution may assess HTGOC.

**NAME OF YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOUNT NAME:** (e.g., Special Checking, Money Market Savings, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOUNT NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] Checking [ ] Savings

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ROUTING Number** (This 9-digit number, which identifies your bank, appears on the bottom line of your checks:: \_\_\_\_\_

**AMOUNT TO BE TRANSFERRED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FREQUENCY:** [ ] Every Month [ ] Each Week

**IF MONTHLY, ON WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

This authorization will remain in full force and effect until HTGOC has received written notification from me (us) of its termination in such time and in such a manner as to afford HTGOC and the Originating Financial Institution a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return completed form to the Parish Office**

**Holy Trinity Revenue Disbursements Budget vs Actual- Dec. 31, 2010**

YTD			2010
Dec. 31, 2010		Jan - Dec. 10	Budget
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Stewardship Donations	25,548.80	276,343.14	272,875.00
Hall Rental	200.00	3,125.00	2,000.00
Lamplighter Income	300.00	1,500.00	1,200.00
Loose Offering			
Candles	964.00	12,266.61	11,000.00
Cash from Collection Tray	855.50	6,231.87	6,000.00
Total Loose Offering	1,819.50	18,498.48	17,000.00
Second Tray			
Haiti Relief Fund	0.00	1,316.50	1,200.00
Chile	0.00	483.00	0.00
Nashville Flood	0.00	207.00	0.00
Holy Cross Seminary	0.00	647.00	0.00
Other	0.00	219.00	0.00
Parishioner Support	350.00	650.00	2,500.00
Philoptochos	3,000.00	3,500.75	3,000.00
Fundraising Events			
Taste of Greece	0.00	15,039.40	20,000.00
Gyro	100.00	13,488.00	0.00
Work Free	245.00	345.00	5,000.00
Total Fundraising Events	345.00	28,872.40	25,000.00
Agape Dinner	0.00	1,493.00	1,500.00
Other Donations (Prosfora, Rewards, etc.)	0.00	1,228.06	3,000.00
Baptism & Wedding Custodial Fee	0.00	440.00	0.00
Interest Income - N.Revelos Bequest	1.72	14.99	350.00
Interest income - CD	336.19	336.19	0.00
Odyssey	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Miscellaneous Income	0.00	6,195.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>31,901.21</b>	<b>345,069.51</b>	<b>329,625.00</b>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>			
PAYROLL: Guest Clergy, Choir Director,			
Custodian, Odyssey, Secretary, Bookkeeper,			
Priest)PAYROLL TAX EXPENSE	11,510.84	100,725.10	166,983.00
	1,277.57	15,882.92	17,185.00
LOCAL PRIEST BENEFIT-YMCA Membership	312.00	936.00	525.00
EDUCATION & LITURGICAL PROGRAMS	2,895.49	6,099.91	8,200.00
NATIONAL MINISTRIES	3,017.13	36,206.00	38,500.00
ARCHDIOCESE BENEFITS PROGRAM	950.00	6,175.00	5,700.00
PARISH COUNCIL DONATIONS			
G.O.Archdiocese	0.00	5,000.00	0.00
Metropolis of Detroit	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Rose City Camp Donation	0.00	250.00	250.00
<b>TOTAL PC DONATIONS</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>7,250.00</b>	<b>2,250.00</b>
ORATORICAL FESTIVAL	0.00	412.00	50.00
LOCAL CHARITY	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
SECOND TRAY	0.00	2,446.50	1,200.00
<b>OPERATIONAL COSTS</b>	<b>16,821.54</b>	<b>121,260.19</b>	<b>110,532.00</b>
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>34,558.07</b>	<b>340,083.02</b>	<b>329,625.00</b>
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>-2,656.86</b>	<b>4,986.49</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
 1701 East Saginaw Street  
 Lansing MI 48912  
 Office: 517-482-7341 Fax: 517-482-8524

8:45am ORTHROS SERVICE  
 10:00am DIVINE LITURGY  
 Fellowship coffee following Liturgy

# February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Souper Bowl Sunday School hosts coffee	7 Philoptochos General Meeting, 7pm	8	9	10	Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm 11	12
13	14 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm St. Valentine's Day	15	16	17	Odyssey Classes, 4:30-6:30pm 18	19
20	21 Lampighter Deadline President's Day	22	23	M.A.R.S.P. Lunch Meeting, 11-2pm St. Theodore 24	NO Odyssey Classes 25	26
Odyssey hosts Loukoumathes Coffee		Interfaith Day			Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm	First Saturday of Souls Liturgy 10 pm
27 Philoptochos hosts Comfort Food dinner Meatfare Sunday	28 Philoptochos Board Meeting, 7pm					

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# March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 <b>Sunday of Forgiveness</b> AHEPA hosts coffee Parish Oratorical Festival <b>Forgiveness Vespers,</b> 5 pm	7 <b>GREAT LENT BEGINS</b> Philoctochos General Meeting, 7pm	8	9 <b>Presanctified Liturgy,</b> 4:00 Children's potluck to follow	10	11 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm <b>Salutations Service,</b> 6:30 pm	12 <i>Second Saturday of Souls</i>  <i>Third Saturday of Souls</i>
13 Parish Council hosts coffee <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b>	14 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	15	16 <b>Presanctified Liturgy,</b> 5:30 pm	17	18 Odyssey Classes, 4:30- 6:30pm <b>Salutations Service,</b> 6:30 pm	19 Odyssey Rehearsal, noon
20 Odyssey hosts coffee & Independence Day Program	21 <i>Lamplighter Deadline</i>	22	23 <b>Presanctified Liturgy,</b> 5:30 pm	24	25 <b>Annunciation of the Theotokos, 10am Liturgy</b> Philoctochos hosts lunch <b>Salutations Service,</b> 6:30 pm Odyssey Classes, 4:30pm	26
27 <b>Sunday of Cross Veneration</b> OCF hosts coffee	28 Philoctochos Board Meeting, 7pm	29	30 <b>Presanctified Liturgy,</b> 5:30 pm	31		