

# THE LAMPLIGHTER

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF LANSING

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

*This issue of the Lamplighter is sponsored by George and Barbara Platsis in honor of Georgiana Olivia Platsis, born to Maria Platsis on August 26, 2011 in Greenwich, Connecticut.*

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January 2012

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## Pastoral Reflection: **What's the Meaning of This?**

"What do you mean by this service?" This was the question that little Israelite children were taught to ask at the Passover Seder ritual (Exodus 12:26). This same question we too should ask in the month of January as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ. Through the liturgies of Epiphany and the blessings of homes, we also re-celebrate our own Baptisms, which are simply reenactments of His Baptism.

In the early Church the feast of Epiphany (also called Theophany) was THE big holy day apart from Pascha: Christmas as we know it was not celebrated at first. But the commemoration of Christ's Baptism was observed, and with grand festivities. Nowadays we hang up our lights for December 25, but in the early centuries January 6 was the Feast of Lights, when candles and lamps were hung aloft in joyous remembrance. Christ's Baptism was a theological goldmine, and one of the few events that all four Gospels recount (whereas the birth of Christ is found in only two, Matthew and Luke).

The Gospels paint a fairly simple picture of the scene: Jesus Christ enters the Jordan River with John the Baptist; He is immersed in its flow; as He comes out of the waters, the heavens open, a dove descends, and a voice of approval resounds from the skies. The significance of these details is not apparent at first reading. It might seem perhaps like just another extraordinary day in an extraordinary life.

But to comprehend the deeper meaning, you must cast your mind back to the book of Genesis. There we read of how God made all things, drawing forth the Creation from a dark and watery Chaos. We read then of how the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters. Here the verb in Hebrew connotes the behavior of a mother bird brooding over her nest, protecting and nurturing her offspring. The Spirit of God at the Creation was caring for the young world like a hen over her chicks.

Continued inside...

## Parish Council

by Elaine Christofilis

*The Parish Council would like to wish everyone  
a Blessed New Year!*

- ◆ Great job to the Sunday School students and teachers on their Christmas program. It was wonderful to see the children and teachers work together to tell us the Christmas Story.
- ◆ The Parish Council is always available if parishioners have concerns or questions regarding the parish. Please feel free to approach anyone of us. The 2012 Parish Council includes: Elaine Christofilis, Stella Economy, Nick Gavrillides, Yvonne Joseph, Curt Kosal, Nick Limber, George Mansour, Stacie Neros, Elan Nichols, Alexis Popoff, Dan Skorich, and James Stajos.

### Stewardship

- ◆ Thank you to the parishioners who submitted their 2012 Stewardship pledge forms in December. To date we have 62 stewardship units who have pledged for 2012. Please submit your stewardship pledge form as soon as possible. Forms are available at the church office and at the candle stand in the narthex.

### NOTICE

OUR PARISH IS IN NEED OF A NEW EDITOR  
FOR THE LAMPLIGHTER.

PLEASE CONTACT FR. MARK IF YOU ARE  
ABLE TO HELP!

### Call For Sponsors

Sponsoring an issue of the *Lamplighter* is a wonderful gift to your loved ones and to the parish.

Your issue can be dedicated as  
a commemoration of the departed or as  
a prayer for the health of the living.

Sponsors are needed for the following issues:

March, April, and May 2012.

Call the Church Office for more information.

## Philoptochos

- ◆ Thanks to the generous giving of our attendees at our Annual Christmas Potluck and some matching funds from Philoptochos \$500.00 was sent to The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army will help many during this season of giving and we are happy to help them.
- ◆ 2012 Dues this year are \$30.00 and are payable to our Treasurer, Angela Vlahakis. You can see Angela after Church Services; send them Angela directly, or to the Church Office c/o Philoptochos. Thank you for being a part of this organization!
- ◆ There will not be a meeting in January. The February meeting will feature Sophia Koufopoulou, Cultural Anthropologist, as our speaker. This meeting will be open to everyone in the community who is interested. Sophia was instrumental in the set up of our Odyssey Greek School Program. She will be discussing the current situation in Greece and Europe. Sophia's MSU Greek Summer Study Abroad program in Greece provides her current and first hand information. Students from our Church community have been participants in this program.
- ◆ The annual Vasilopeta cutting will be held on January 8, 2012 in the large social room. Glykeria Christofilis is chair. Philoptochos will have loaves for sale after the cutting. If you are interested in pre-ordering, please contact Glykeria directly.
- ◆ The Zorba Dance is tentatively scheduled for February 25, 2012. We are currently working out details and will post a flyer and make sure that everyone is notified as soon as we have the details are worked out.
- ◆ Interfaith Day is February 28, 2012 and we are hosting this year. We will need volunteers to help serve morning coffee and lunch. We may also need help in preparing food or dessert for this day. Contact Olga Pascalenos if you are willing to help. Lynne Karagoulis has tickets, they are \$10.00 each.
- ◆ February will be a busy month; our Comfort Food Sunday is scheduled for February 12th. This coffee hour will turn into a warm lunch at a minimal cost. This is our 2nd annual event, we are sure everyone will like this years fare.

We wish everyone a Wonderful and Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Healthy New Year to all!

## Pastoral reflection, continued

Day by day the Lord shaped and developed His world, forming the light, the heavens, the oceans, and the dry land, as homes respectively for the stars, the birds, the fish, and the animals. And finally, as the crown of His creation, He formed man. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” speaks the Triune Godhead. And resting from His work, the Lord pronounces His approval on the brand-new heaven and earth: “And behold, it was very good.”

But this world fell into brokenness and disharmony through the sin of our first parents. The Lord could have destroyed humanity and all His creation with them—He could have let it all slip back into the dark watery chaos from which it came back in the time of Noah’s flood.

But this was not His will. His desire is to redeem His world, to transform this universe into a new heaven and a new earth. And this He would do by joining His imperishable nature to our broken and perishable nature, so that we might live with Him in harmony forever.

What we see on Epiphany, then, is *a re-staging of the Creation*: the Spirit hovering like a mother bird, in the form of a dove; the approval of the Father thundering from the open heavens; and out of the dark waters emerges the new creation—but this time God starts from the end and works backward! The first creature to emerge from the waters is a *man*—Jesus Christ. And so it begins—the healing of our nature, the re-harmonization of all creatures, the reconciliation of all living things to God. In time the New Creation will embrace the whole Universe (or the whole Multi-verse, if your physics so dictate). “For in [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His Cross” (Colossians 1:19-20).

This is the meaning of the Baptism of Christ. And this is the meaning of our baptisms as well. For God chooses to populate His New World one person at a time, by drawing us out of the waters together with Christ, and citizens of the new creation with Him. But just as Baptism is first step and not the last in God’s plan of re-creation, so to for our spiritual lives.

Think of your parents or grandparents on Ellis Island. They were people betwixt and between. They were in America—but not yet Americans. They had a choice—they could press on through hardship to win their citizenship in the New World, or they could turn around and get back on the ship that brought them.

Baptism is our Ellis Island. It brings us into the Kingdom of God, but much, much is required for us to become real citizens there. In the wake of the feast of Epiphany, when you receive the waters of *Agiasmo*, the waters of chaos turned into the waters of life, the waters of the new creation—when you bring it into your houses and businesses and offices, for drinking and for sprinkling, you declare your intention to become a part of the new creation yourself, and to bring your family and your home and your work into the Kingdom of God, which makes all things new. It is an ongoing commitment that is to be renewed yearly, and even daily.

When you receive the spray of divine presence that comes from the River Jordan upon you through the Holy Water, you declare your intention to live no longer as a citizen of this world, according to its customs and habits, according to the laws of survival and self-advancement and pride. You declare your desire to live as a citizen of the New World, according to the rule of love, of mercy and justice and humility before God and man.

*This* is the meaning of the service we do at Epiphany and in the house blessings of January. It is our Christian Fourth of July, our declaration of Independence, our acceptance of Christ as our way of life and our commitment to following our leader and king into the new creation of God. A Blessed Epiphany to you and your loved ones, and to all.

*Kalè Chroniá!* Happy New Year!

## House Blessings

House blessings will be offered through January and February. A house blessing may be scheduled after January 6th by filling out a “House Blessing Request Form.” Mail it in or leave it at the Church Office.

A time should be chosen at which all the members of the family can be present, insofar as this is possible. Also, if you are able to have the blessing during the daytime hours, please try to arrange one then, since the evening and weekend times will be in highest demand. The service takes about half an hour, although I am always glad to visit longer if there are things to talk about. Your hospitality is always appreciated, but please do not feed the priest—a glass of water is enough! You will need to provide a crystal bowl with spring water, two taper candles, an icon of Christ, and a white hand towel.

House Blessing forms may be picked up in the Lobby.

## Announcements

### Condolences

- ◆ To Dan Skorich and family on the passing of Dan's mother Elena. May her memory be eternal!
- ◆ To Elaine and Nick Kritselis on the passing of husband and father Bill Kritselis. *Aionia aftou e mneme!*
- ◆ To Richard Vsetula and family on the passing of Rich's mother Ernestine. May her memory be eternal!

### Congratulations

- ◆ To Kathryn Mangopoulos and Ryan McCullough, who were wed on Sept. 17 at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kathryn is the daughter of Nick and Debby Mangopoulos; Granddaughter of Stavros and Maria Mangopoulos.
- ◆ To Tim and Corrin Stamatakos on the birth of Eliana on November 26. Proud Grandmother is Bess Stamatakos.
- ◆ To Robbert Wallick and Ashley Martinson on the baptism of Lukas Wallick on November 26 here at the church. *Na sas zisei!*
- ◆ To Marianna and Peter Perakis on the birth of Nicholas Theodore on December 9. Proud Grandparents are Manya and Errikos Constant.

## Odyssey

Greek school classes will start up again the week of January 9, 2012. All Odyssey students, parents and broad members are invited to join together and share the cutting of the Vasilopita by Fr. Mark on Friday, January 13, 2012, at 5:00 PM in the education wing of Holy Trinity.

### Mark Your Calendar!

From the same people who bring tasty loukoumanthes and great olive oil we proudly present the sixth year of **Pizza and a Movie**. Please see the flyer in this issue of the Lamplighter with all the details.

The movie will be **"Rembetiko"** Part one. This Costas Ferris's classic film is the tale of a Greek singer's remarkable career from the backstreet taverns of Pireas to the nightclubs of Chicago.

## Opportunities

- ◆ The **Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation** offers \$250,000 in awards each year to 40 exemplary students pursuing undergraduate studies. Applications are now available on their website until the deadline of January 31, 2012.
- ◆ A new project, launched recently by the Greek America Foundation in conjunction with the Libra Group, which will offer global internships to ten young people in our community. The Libra Group and the Logothetis family are offering university level internships for ten rising juniors and seniors in the summer of 2012. The Chairman and CEO of the Libra Group, George Logothetis, is a Greek America Foundation board member. These students will be placed, depending upon their area of interest and focus of study, in one of the of Libra Group's subsidiary companies in fields like shipping, aviation, hospitality, real estate and renewable energy at one of the group's 18 key international locations which include New York, Miami, London, Athens, Beijing and Buenos Aires. The internships will span the duration of the summer 2012 vacation and will include a stipend for travel and living expenses-- all covered by the generosity of the Libra Group and facilitated by the Greek America Foundation. Please see the link below for additional information. The application process has already commenced and the deadline is late January.

<http://www.greekamerica.org/libra-internship>

Odyssey Program Fund Raiser:

## PIZZA AND A MOVIE VI

### *“Rembetiko”*

Save the date: **SUNDAY, January 15, 2012, 6:00-9:00 PM**

**Holy Trinity Baryames Social Room**

#### THE MEAL

For the last five years, Holy Trinity members and friends were invited to come together to enjoy a very special pizza and movie night. Those that attended enjoyed themselves and asked that we do it again. Well, here we go again: same pizza; new movie.

The pizzas will be made by Odyssey board president, George Lafkas and his team of helpers. If you want to know if the pizza is worth it, ask someone who attended the affair last year. Most agree it is a great tasting pizza that you will enjoy. Only 60 reservations are available for the dinner part of the evening. For **25 dollars** you will be able to enjoy a salad, home made pizza, dessert, a beverage, and the movie. Reservations can be made at the church coffee hours in December and January or by calling **George Lafkas at 517/351-3121**.

#### THE MOVIE

Part one of the award winning movie *“Rembetiko”* will be shown. This movie deals with the rediscovery of rembetika music, the “Greek Blues.” This passionate, soulful music, born of the plight and pain of the poor, captured the hearts and imagination of the Greek people. Costas Ferris's classic film is the tale of a Greek singer's remarkable career from the backstreet taverns of Pireas to the nightclubs of Chicago. Award winning Greek actress Sotiria Leonardou, who also co-scripted, stars as Marika, a rembetika singer whose family immigrated to Greece from Smyrna after the Turks pillaged the city in 1922. The family's life in Pireas provides a colorful backdrop to explore the heart and soul of rembetika.

Because this movie is four hours long we will only be viewing the first half of *“Rembetiko”* at this event. Several options will be made available to attendees to view the second half of the film

If you want to pass on the dinner, everyone is invited to join the group for the movie, which will begin at 7:00 P.M.

#### MAKE YOUR RESRVATIONS:

For reservations call George Lafkas at: 517/351-3121.

Remember, only 60 dinner reservations are available, so call soon.

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
LANSING, MICHIGAN

**2012 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT**

In consideration of the blessings of God, I/we pledge to the Lord that we will support Holy Trinity in 2012 with time and talents, as well as with financial contributions in the amount of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Children (under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (s) \_\_\_\_\_

I/we want to stretch our stewardship dollars by keeping parish expenses down.  Please send the monthly Lamplighter newsletter by email only to the following email address(es). I no longer wish to receive a paper copy.

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send all parish correspondence by email only to the following email address(es) or check this box:  Same as above.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

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

# January 2012

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day St. Basil the Great Open Coffee	2	3	4 10 a.m. Mid-Year Calendar Meeting	5	6 Epiphany Day Liturgy and Blessing of Water 10 am	7
8 Philoptochos Sponsors Coffee Hour Vasilopita 40 Day Memorial William Kntsef's	9 Parish Council 7 pm	10	11	12	13 Odyssey Classes 4:30-5:30 p.m. Greek School Vasilopita	14
15 OCF Sponsors Coffee Hour Pizza and Movie 6:00 p.m.	16 1:30 Interfaith Day Meeting Lampfighter Deadline	17	18	19	20 Odyssey Classes 4:30-5:30 p.m.	21 OCF Dinner Dance
22 Choir Sponsors Coffee	23	24	25	26	27 Odyssey Classes 4:30-5:30 p.m.	28
29 Parish Council Spon- sors Light Coffee Hour 1 yr. Memorial Lou Stamatiakos 5:00 AHEPA Village Feast GOYA Movie Activity	30	31				

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 Lansing MI 48912  
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# February 2012

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Presentation Liturgy 10 am	3 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 p.m.	4
5 Odyssey hosts coffee with Ioukoumathes	6 7 pm Philopochos General Meeting	7	8	9	10 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 p.m.	11
12 Philopochos Hosts Comfort Food Luncheon	13 Parish Council 7 pm	14	15	16 MMRSP Luncheon	17	18 Soul Saturday
19 Goya Hosts Coffee Hour Mazaronada Meatfare	20 1:30 Intersain Day Meeting Lampfighter Deadline	21	22	23	24 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 p.m.	25 Soul Saturday Zorba Dance Family Night
26 Sunday School Hosts Hour GOYA Social Activity Cheesefare	27 Clean Monday Start of Great Lent Compline 7 pm	28 INTERFAITH DAY	29 Children's Presanctified Liturgy 4:15 pm			