Dear Beloved Parishioners,

Over the past several weeks, the Scripture readings have been a tremendous call to the Church—the people of God—to act. Both Jesus in the gospels and St. Paul in his epistles to the Early Church emphasized that Christianity is not only something to think about, to analyze, and feel good about, but also something to act upon, to use as a basis for real ministry in the Church.

As you will see within this issue, the month of January was not only special for me as your priest but, according to so many of you, it was special for this whole community. Close to $25,000—monies that were earmarked for the poor and needy and held by our GOYA—were disbursed to some truly worthy charities both here and abroad.

As your priest, it was a great honor to represent you and it brought me such great joy to see the faces of those who were receiving this very unexpected gift. To all of you who have contributed in some way toward this end, I want to not only thank you but congratulate you. As you will see from the photographs inside (on page 6), some of these ministries received several thousand dollars. In a time of pandemic, when many people are conserving their resources, and limiting their giving, it was a tremendous outpouring of love and support from our community to them.

Beyond that, if you have been in church and seen the man who often stands outside our door, you know that his left leg was amputated the day before Christmas. You also know that he was released from the hospital four days later with the same broken down wheelchair and no place to live. Thanks to the generosity of one of our own parishioners and to all of you, he was given a new, motorized wheelchair and a place to sleep through the month of February. We are working to find a permanent residence for him now.

All of these things are signs of true Christian ministry, indications of faith in our people, and philanthropy, honoring others simply because they are children of God and for no other reason. In the early days of the Church, this was what differentiated the Church from the rest of the world: philanthropy.

My point is this: with the wealth and blessings we have accumulated, there is no good reason why the Church should not be continuing that type of ministry. We are the only thing holding us back, preventing our own progress as families, and limiting the influence of Christ’s holy Church. Let’s commit to changing that and be the Church.

Trivia Night Draws 5 Teams

It was to be expected that this year’s Trivia Night would not be as successful as last year’s event but we still drew close to half of what we had last year and those in attendance enjoyed the game and the fellowship. There is an important element to consider though: coming together just to come together, just to simply be with others. This is an important step forward in revitalizing our community: simply getting together to create relationships and nothing else. That night, we did it well.
Dear fellow Parishioners,

Although this has been a challenging year, we are still blessed to be able to join together in prayer each week. We are taking exceptional care in keeping the Cathedral clean and sanitized during such difficult times. We thank our custodians, Andreas Karampinas and Arian Haxhiu, who have worked diligently to ensure our safety.

I would like to welcome newly-elected Parish Council members: Dean Alexandrou, Pam Gertsios, Telly Kassos, Maggie Moraitis, and Nicholas Paleologos. Each member comes with a wealth of knowledge and expertise which will undoubtedly enhance the work of our Cathedral.

Our Preschool continues to welcome the children in-person and has remained a safe haven for learning. We all appreciate the diligence of our Preschool Director, Lori Picard, who devoted an exceptional amount of time and energy to make our Preschool such a successful program.

As last year ended on a low note in terms of meeting our Stewardship goals, I would like to encourage everyone to include the Cathedral in their financial planning this year, as the Cathedral truly depends on your generosity to function effectively and meet its philanthropic activities.

On a final note, I’d like to wish everyone a safe journey throughout this pandemic we are all facing. We, the Parish Council, remain dedicated to support you in every way possible. Please know we are available to respond to any questions or concerns you may have.

Yours in Christ,

Georgia Parafestas, Parish Council President

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**The President’s Post**

Dear fellow Parishioners,

Although this has been a challenging year, we are still blessed to be able to join together in prayer each week. We are taking exceptional care in keeping the Cathedral clean and sanitized during such difficult times. We thank our custodians, Andreas Karampinas and Arian Haxhiu, who have worked diligently to ensure our safety.

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Yours in Christ,

Georgia Parafestas, Parish Council President

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**The Food Pantry Needs Your Help!**

For the past several months, we have gone above and beyond our normal distribution of food items and given out something special to those who come to us. In January, we distributed hats and gloves. In February, we will be giving out 200 personal hygiene bags filled with things like shampoo, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, etc. We would very much appreciate your support as well as we continue to expand our offerings and make a true difference in people’s lives.

Donations can be made through St. Spyridon with Orthodox Food Pantry in the memo. Please see page 7 for more news.

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**Bible Study: Returning to our First Love**

Q. What does it mean to have left your first love?

A. In Biblical terms, the expression comes from Revelation 2:1-7 which contains Jesus’ message to the church in Ephesus, the first of seven exhortations to various churches in the Roman Empire. Ephesus had some unique challenges for a Christ-follower in that it was home to the Emperor’s cult and the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis (Acts 19:23-40). Because of these influences, the Ephesian believers had developed great discernment when it came to false teachers and heresy. Christ commended them for this discernment, but He faulted them for having lost their “first love.”

Our first love, like any person we may love, is very special to us. We usually never forget that person. As Christians, we are called to be in love with God in a way not too different than we are with another human being. We should want to know that person better, talk with, listen to, and be with that love of our life as much as possible. As Orthodox Christians, nothing can take the place of worship but Bible Study helps us tremendously to understand God and His Church, what He has done and continues to do, and what the Church has done over the years in giving us a holy and sacred Tradition to follow. Part of that Tradition is the written Tradition, i.e., the Bible. If you’re interested at all in joining us, I hope that you’ll send Father Chris a message and let him send you the link each Monday, OR, just join us in person at 6:30 pm.
**All Things Orthodox Finally Hits the Airwaves**

Well, since practically nothing is on the actual airwaves anymore, you know what we mean. It’s on TV, it’s on social media, it’s on Roku, it’s on the station’s website (WCCATV.com). On January 18, our show began airing locally. The schedule for each week will be as follows:

Beginning on Monday at 7 pm, a new show will air for the week. The other times it will run are on Tuesday at 11:30 pm, Saturday at 8 pm, and Sunday at 9 pm. At this point, it can be seen on Channel 194 in Worcester or, at the same time, on the WCCATV.com and Roku.

Father Chris and Father Greg have filmed four shows to date with Father Luke Veronis and Father Nick Apostola scheduled for future episodes. The theme of the show is exactly what the title says: we’ll discuss any and all aspects of the Orthodox Christian faith. Over time, we hope to include shows on iconography, liturgy, social issues, Scripture, and holy Traditions. The possibilities are endless. At this point, we’re starting with the most basic elements: who are we, where did we come from, and what do we believe?

We have already set up a Facebook page—*All Things Orthodox TV*—and we hope that you will “like” the page. We would love to see the show being spread around through your account to people—Orthodox and non-Orthodox—everywhere. It’s been great working with the cable station and the priests are just as eager to provide this service to their parishioners. So, we look forward to something great over time.

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**GOYA News**

At our first meeting of 2021, our GOYA cut their Vasilopita and watched a few interesting videos about Epiphany and how it is celebrated in areas like Tarpon Springs! We spent time discussing some ideas and possible activities such as a bowling night, escape room night, and paint night, and are excited to put these plans into action. More importantly, we decided to donate some of our funds to St. Innocent Orphanage, to the Orthodox community in Kenya, and to the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester. We are excited to be able to give each of these deserving charities a little bit of extra funding through these difficult times and know that they will be extremely grateful.

As always, we encourage our youth (13-18 years old or 7th-12th grade) to join us almost every Tuesday night for fun activities and meaningful lessons! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Effie Paleologos at 508.948.5940.

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**JOY on February 20**

The third Saturday of the month every month is our weekend and you know what that means - YES - JOYful time! We look forward to seeing all our young children at the church starting at 11 am on the 20th. Please remember to bring a non-perishable item so that we can make a donation on behalf of JOY to the food pantry.

As always, we have a great day planned with lots of fun and activities. In January, we learned about baptism and Fr. Chris “baptized” one of the children in the font and explained the sacrament of baptism. The children had fun making a few crafts related to the lesson. February JOY will be just as fun. See you then!

*God bless,*

*Presvytera Penny*
Due to COVID-19, the Facilities Committee continues to only go forward with work that is required, privately-funded, or can be completed in house. The repairs to the Cathedral roof made at the end of 2020 stopped the leak so that rainwater is no longer entering the rear interior Cathedral wall near the narthex. The damage to the wall will be repaired and painted prior to the start of Great Lent.

At the start of 2021, we are focusing on possible savings obtaining bids to reduce electric and gas supplier costs and to convert our phone system to Charter Cable or VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). All thermostats in the facility have also been reprogrammed so that when a parishioner raises or lowers the thermostat in a room the system will automatically revert to the energy saving unoccupied temperature within four hours.

In early spring, the Facilities Committee will determine if the Cathedral domes require repainting this summer or whether we can wait a year or two longer. We will likely reseal the brickwork of the bell tower and south facing side of the Cathedral this year as suggested by the contractor that repaired the roof.

With the upgrade of the digital audio electronics, microphones, wiring and video camera installed in February 2020, there is one remaining action completing our audio/video system, the installation of new Cathedral speakers. We anticipate the estimated $15,000 cost for the speaker install to be funded mainly by private donations. If you are interested in helping to fund this project, please contact Fr. Chris. The Facilities Committee will present the proposed speaker system at the spring General Assembly for their approval.

With the completion of the rear entry overhang in 2020 we have only one open long-term project, the renovation of the office and adjoining hallway. The facilities committee will look to complete this work in phases and only if funds are available. The initial phase would be the replacement of the hallway and office windows with energy saving thermal dual pane windows.

I would like to thank the entire Facilities Committee for their assistance in 2020 and, going forward, through 2021. In December, we lost George Economou, who was past Chairman and a member of the Facilities Committee for over 25 years. George was a master carpenter and his works and expertise can be seen throughout the Cathedral, Preschool, Family Center, and Parish House. May his memory be eternal.

Michael Dionis, Facilities Chairman
Special Services for February

February 2—The Meeting of our Lord (with Simeon and Anna), Orthros at 8:30 and Liturgy at 9:30 am

February 10—St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr, Orthros at 8:30 and Liturgy at 9 am

February 17—St. Theodore the Recruit and Great Martyr, Orthros at 8:30 and Liturgy at 9 am

Holy Trinity News and Updates

COVID-19 UPDATE – All staff and residents continue to be tested every 3 days. At this time there is one staff member out with COVID, and all of our residents remain COVID-19 free at this time. There is still an admission freeze. The second COVID vaccine will be offered to staff and residents on February 2nd. To those who did not receive their first vaccine, that will also be offered. Our medical director, Dr. Nedelescu, presented an informative talk regarding the vaccine and transmission of COVID-19. His presentation will be posted on the Holy Trinity website and Facebook page beginning Monday, February 1, for all those interested.

VISITATIONS – There are no changes in the visitation policy. For the protection of residents and family members, all in-person visits are suspended.

JOB OPENINGS – Holy Trinity is hiring, and the staff is excellent to work with. At present, there is an opening for Director of Maintenance, and an HR Generalist. Also, openings for entry level housekeepers for multiple shifts; nurses and CNAs all shifts. Click here for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. People familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

THE ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT. As January comes to an end, the residents will be giving it a send-off with a Ladies’ Tea Social, appropriately distanced by being held in the doorways. There will also be manicures and musical presentations and several types of doorway games for everyone to enjoy. Nova, (our Saint Bernard pup) is now 4 ½ months old and has completed her initial 7-week puppy class. She will begin her Canine Good Citizen Program for the next 14 weeks as the initial step to receiving her AKC pet therapy certificate. Continued on page 10

As a very small token of our parish’s appreciation to Georgia and Taso Parafestas for their extraordinary generosity to our community, Father Chris presented Georgia with an icon of their patron feasts: the Resurrection (Anastasi for Anastasios) and St. George (for Georgia). This icon was commissioned by the parish soon after the gift was made in October 2019 but, due to limitations on gathering, there was never a truly good time to present to them formally. Our local iconographer, Dimitri Cika, who is responsible for all of the icons at St. Mary’s Assumption Church on Salisbury Street, created the icon just for Taso and Georgia.

In the future, we hope to have a more formal ceremony and more appropriate expression of our thanks to them but, for now, they have a precious icon as an expression of our gratitude.
It was a HUGE month for St. Spyridon in the way of philanthropy. Due to the generosity of our community over the past few years, we were able to disburse over $20,000 to various charities, only some of which are shown here. Father Chris delivered the funds and made a connection with each charity, with the hope of further cooperation in the future. Our GOYA also contributed $4,000 to various charities including the Orthodox Church in Kenya, Project Mexico, and the Interfaith Hospitality Network (above). We thank Savvas Fotiadis who donated a motorized wheelchair to a man we see around our church almost on a daily basis, RJ Harthorne. After his leg was amputated, he was not given any assistance—not a chair nor a place to live. We are looking now to find him a place to live with assistance for his physical needs. In addition, a lady who houses him was given $500 so that he can get in out of the cold each night. We have literally changed his life and we hope to continue reaching out to him and others.
As the pandemic continues, we are seeing a great need for our services in the Worcester community. Our Food Pantry continues to serve approximately 50 families each Saturday. In January, we assisted the Massachusetts Department of Public Health COVID-19 Relief team by doing local deliveries to needy families who were unable to pick up food at the pantry due to quarantine. Thank you to our volunteers, Matthew Mshooshian and Alexa and Arianna Kassos, who stepped up to the plate during these trying times. Next week, we will be packaging 200 health and beauty care packages that will be distributed to our clients throughout the month of February. The packages include toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, mouthwash, hand sanitizer, bar soap, wipes, face cloths, dental floss, Q-tips, band-aids, moisturizer and nail clippers. A special thank you to our health and beauty care package committee – Ann Armour, Carolyn Baltas, John Baltas, Kathy Mshooshian, Joanne McMahan and Penny Stamas.

New volunteers are always welcome to join our food pantry family either to assist with food distribution on Saturdays or assist with transportation of food from the Worcester County Food Bank to the pantry during the week. As we expand our efforts and diversify some of the products we will be distributing, we are also looking for volunteers to assist with grocery shopping. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me, Maria Kassos, at: amkassos@townisp.com.
In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” ~ Acts 20:35

Our prayer shawl ministry group got together for the first time recently after church and gained another five members!! Everyone is so excited to get started and some have already completed several shawls/blankets, so we are off to a great start. THANK YOU. Since so many or our members are experts at either knitting or crocheting, everyone wanted to meet again and this time, we could socialize (safely) and learn from those who know more than others. So we will meet again as we did last time after church on Sunday, February 7th. Please come and join us and if you can’t knit/crochet, now is a great time to learn. We look forward to seeing you all on the 7th. Bring your knitting needles, hooks, yarn and we may even have some treats!!

At left, Father Chris takes the very first prayer shawl and blesses it on the gospel book at the altar. Each shawl will be blessed in the same way and distributed to those who are ill with the prayers and blessings of our Church community.

At right, Jodi and Angie Walsh came by the Family Center to drop off some of the prayer shawls and lap blankets that they had started long before the church ministry began. For them and for others, it’s been a true selfless labor of love as they know how valuable and appreciated people find them to be when they receive them.

Our immediate goal is to provide one of these to all of the residents at Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, to those who are homebound, and to those who may be in other facilities around the area. As we continue to knit/crochet more blankets, we hope that others will help us in providing support in any way you can, i.e., either knitting your own or providing resources for our ministry. Many, many thanks to all those who have already given.

Above are only some of the ladies who came to our first meeting shown here with some completed shawls and lots of donated yarn to do great things! We hope you’ll join us on February 7 for the next get together.

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Spread the Word: It’s Scholarship Time!

GWCF’s application for college scholarships is now open! College-bound students seeking financial assistance for the 2021-22 academic year should apply by Monday, March 1, 2020.

Scholarships are one of the ways the Foundation creates opportunity for our region’s high school and college students. In 2020, 400 students beginning or continuing their college education benefitted from $700,000 in GWCF scholarships.

Worcester County high-school seniors are primarily eligible to receive awards, but several scholarship funds accept applications from current college students as well students who live outside the county.

For more information, go to their website: greaterworcester.org You may also see information on our bulletin board outside the office for the Liazos Scholarship.
Opportunity for High School Graduates

We are delighted to share an exciting new initiative, ideal for high-school graduates of Greek heritage: Know Thyself while exploring Greece, volunteering for a worthy cause, and adventuring on cultural immersion. An exceptional way to enrich the students' educational and life experiences, and a unique opportunity to deepen the connection and understanding of Greek culture.

**College Year in Athens (CYA)** is offering two opportunities for **Gap Year students**: one for those passionate about antiquity with the program "Archaeological Field Work: Excavation, Workshops and Digital Technologies" and one for those interested in learning more about activism and diversity, with the program "Understanding Activism, Diversity, and Equity: the example of Greece".

While gaining a fuller understanding of a different culture via interactive learning methods, students will create an e-portfolio as a record of what is learned and accomplished through this program. Field trips within Greece will not only allow the broadening of perspective and expanding of the worldview but mainly grant them a unique chance to come into a close encounter with the land of their ancestors whose cultural heritage became the pillar of the western civilization.

CYA, recognizing the difficult times that COVID-19 has created, has established the Fall 2021 Gap Flight Award. A student who will be accepted in the Fall 2021 Gap program, will receive $1,000 to offset the cost of the round-trip ticket to/from Athens, Greece.

**College Year in Athens (CYA)** is a non-profit educational institution, which, since 1962, provides English-speaking undergraduates (more than 10,000 to date) the transformative experience to study in Athens and familiarize themselves with the Greek culture. To find out how Greece & CYA is faring up, please check out the COVID-19 FAQ on our website [here](#).

If you think this option may be of interest to you, we would welcome the opportunity to provide additional details. In the meantime, please feel free to follow CYA's social media [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Linkedin](#), [YouTube](#). If you wish to stay up to date with the CYA programs, please subscribe to our email list using this link.

In any case, we are looking forward to hearing how College Year in Athens can help you keep the flame burning! Θερμούς χαιρετισμούς από Ελλάδα,

CYA Administration
College Year in Athens
**617-868-8200 | info@cyathens.org | cyathens.org**
CrossRoad is an engaging 10-day program for Orthodox Christian high school juniors and seniors of all jurisdictions that takes place every summer on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross in Boston, MA (Session 1 & 2). Anyone interested in this tremendous opportunity should go to their website at: crossroadinstitute.org The deadline for this program is February 16. Don't wait and be left out.

Applicants can choose from one of the following three sessions for summer 2021:

• **Session 1:** June 12-June 22 (Boston)
• **Session 2:** June 29-July 9 (Boston)

*Covid Update: At this time, we are preparing to host the program in-person in summer 2021. However, given the ever-changing nature of this pandemic, we are prepared to host the program virtually, if necessary. A decision will be made by April, 2021 whether we will be in person or virtual. We thank you in advance for your patience as we navigate these unprecedented times. Rest assured, CrossRoad 2021 will be happening!

Wisdom Seekers Society is an interactive discussion group for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors covering philosophy, history, and theology. The only requirement for admission: students have to want to do it themselves, and so to apply must submit a 1-minute video or audio message introducing themselves, the questions or ideas they are passionate about, and their general interests.

Led by young adults, the discussion group will bring in Orthodox priests and other Orthodox academics of various backgrounds to lead discussions on particular topics. Topics will be chosen based on students’ real interests!

Given COVID restrictions, this first session will be online, but once in-person gatherings are safe, we will explore the possibility of having future sessions meet in person.

**Cost:** Upon acceptance, there is a registration fee of $80 to cover program expenses. Full and partial financial aid is available, no questions asked: don’t let the registration fee stop you from applying! FOR MORE INFORMATION, reach out to Panos Coufos at pcoufos@boston.goarch.org

**TREASURED GENERATIONS ANNUAL APPEAL** – This past year has been a difficult one for Holy Trinity’s staff and residents. Now, more than ever, we need your help, and every donation makes a difference. If you wish to donate to the Treasured Generations fund please click [here](#) or, if you are reading a hard copy, go to our website to find the link. Please remember to type ”Treasure Generations” in the memo field. We thank you for your support!

**DIVINE LITURGY** celebrations have been suspended until the current COVID surge has been contained.

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**High School Seniors**

You are invited to apply for the following college scholarship from Greater Worcester Community Foundation:

- **Chris and Helena Liazos Scholarship Fund for Saint Spyridon’s Families**
  - For graduating high school seniors who are themselves members, or have immediate family who are members of the Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Worcester, MA

**Apply now at [www.greaterworcester.org](http://www.greaterworcester.org)**

Application deadline: March 1, 2021

Submit 1 application, and you’ll be considered for all of the Foundation’s 130+ scholarships for which you are eligible.

Questions? (508)755-0980
scholars@greaterworcester.org
Support for Feeding Ministry and Orthodox Food Pantry

Do you know that we’re providing food and assistance to needy people every single week through our Food Pantry and, once each month, many of those same people are coming to us for a hot, delicious meal? Do you know that St. John Chrysostom said that it is a greater thing to feed the hungry than it is to raise the dead? So, we need your support. We would like to expand our services and truly do the work of the Church better and more often. Lend your support. Lend a hand. Lend your wallet and help support this beautiful ministry coming right out of our own Family Center.

Giving Opportunity Through Amazon

Practically everybody with a computer is purchasing things online now and Amazon is, for many, THE go-to place for everything from A to Z. Do you know that a percentage of every purchase can be sent to Saint Spyridon? That’s right! Through your Amazon account, you can simply choose us as your favorite charity and, every time you buy something, Amazon sends us something.

It’s easy to do. Just log onto: Smile.Amazon.com and sign in. Follow the prompts and type in (or click here) Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral. We appreciate all of your contributions and hope that you will take advantage of this one as well.
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED