

CROSS CURRENTS – WINTER 2018

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OPEN TO RECEIVE CHRIST

by Father Peter Salmas, Pastor

Dear Stewards of Holy Cross,

May the Grace and Peace of the Holy Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ embrace and strengthen you and your family this Christmas.

The Birth of Christ changed our world forever. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14.) The reality that God is in the world, living with us and experiencing our daily existence, is the fundamental Truth. God loves us and will sacrifice His Only Son because of His love for us. Our response to Him- is, in fact what determines the success or failure of our lives. Our response is so very important because, as much as God loves us, and because of God's love for us, He cannot force us to love Him enough to make Him more important than our greatest earthly treasures and possessions. This we must choose to do willingly.

As simple as this may seem, we experience on a daily basis the huge challenge of loving as much as God loves us. Are we not inspired to see how all of creation responds to our Lord's Birth? Bethlehem prepares a manger and the earth prepares a cave. The angelic hosts give glorious song and the shepherds are drawn to give witness and thanks at this wondrous miracle. And Magi, Wise men from the East, see His star and bring their very best gifts, placing them alongside the animals that offer Him warmth. Over two thousand years ago, all aspects of Creation chose to wisely respond to what they knew to be God's Gift to His Creation. And then, fear and jealousy crept into the hearts of humanity and, instead of embracing this Child of light, mankind looked for ways to destroy Him who is Light and Life.

Perhaps the best of gifts we can give to ourselves and to others is to determine our own response to God. We offer gifts to one another, we decorate our homes and places of business with lights and greenery. Yet, the simplicity of the Manger escapes us unless and until we look upon it and truly see it. Or, do we choose to look away because we are bound too closely to the world in which we live, a world of chaos, of hatred, and of anger. Tragically, in a world which is devoid of accepting God as our Creator and King, change is, all too often, just too difficult.

Let it be now as then for us and for our families. Let the strength of the manger draw us to gaze upon this vision of grace, peace, and tranquility, as we choose to kneel, as did those who gathered that sacred night.

Let us look from within the depths of ourselves to see outside of ourselves, to see Christ in others. The manger in Bethlehem should represent our hearts, open to receive Christ, the Savior of mankind.

A joyous and blessed Christmas to all.

In Christ, *Father Peter*

FALL/WINTER COLLECTION

by Konstantine Salmas

Christ's work replaced the tree of Paradise with the Cross. it doesn't seem super exciting to us. In a real way its less exciting than most of the things in our life. Its less exciting than coffee, its less exciting than the newer model car we are going to get, and less exciting than playing with our kids. The Cross can't compete with soccer and it can't compete with social media posts.

But neither can studying, preparing for exams, preparing work presentations, facing difficult realities. Work that helps us accomplish something can't compete with play. It's not supposed to. Work is of a different class of things. As is the Cross. The Cross makes no sense in light of effortless activity, play, but it makes much more sense as work.

A parish is meant to create a framework where people can experience what life can be like when the Cross is planted in our life in place of Eden's Tree of life. It's not just new or renewal, it's theological renewal. It's a new set of words that represent real shifts in the world. The cross gives us a different measure for life.

We do things at a parish that will help us experience the presence of God in our way of life. Play doesn't put forward an expectation. Work implies a standard. This is why the Cross makes more sense when looked at in light of work. It gives us a standard.

Parish activity is a model that is close to where we live. It is meant to serve as a model for our home life.

Our parish is meant to serve not only as a standard, but also as a standard of what is most excellent as a way of being. It is not a standard for judging who has the best Fall/Winter Collection, or whether the latest car models have missed the mark, or whether there is a better Fund for my money. There are other standards and criteria for those things that when applied make apparent the strengths and weaknesses of those things. The excellence that the Cross is a standard bearer for is excellence of life because when the Cross is applied to our lives it makes apparent the things in our way of being that require adjustment. The Cross of Christ, when used as the mark of excellence for our existence, makes apparent not only my personal restlessness, my inability to prioritize, my social insecurities, but also makes apparent that these are my sins because they have become invisible enough to me that I no longer think they play any role in my personal behavior and how I organize my home. The Cross is the measure of excellence that makes my sins visible to me, which is what a legitimate standard in every realm of society does.

BELMONT GREEK FESTIVAL

by Mary Clay, 2018 Greek Festival Chair – festivalchairs@goholycross.org

Happy New Year!

2017 Greek Festival is the festival that continues! Thanks to Chris Canellos and our Parish Council, sales of left-over items have flourished. Total sales POST Festival is hovering over \$15,000 +. So, you ask... was 2017 Festival successful? YES! It was successful, and the books are soon closing on the 2017 Festival. It's important that we give back to our local community and support our surrounding neighbors. I'm happy to announce the list of organizations that Belmont Greek Orthodox Church can contribute to from our fund-raising efforts: Notre Dame High School, Congressional Church of Belmont, Bonnie J Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, New Red Shoes, Legal Aid, and Samaritan House.

It's time to talk 2018 Belmont Greek Festival! And I'm starting early this year! We have great ideas to help increase our revenues and drive our profits. To make these come to life, we need to start now, and we need everyone's good ideas, creativity, and talent. Stay tuned for an all hands meeting coming early this spring... date TBD.

In the meantime... Learn more! Get involved early!

What are your interests?

What are your talents?

Thank you to **Konstantine Salmas** who has very generously offered to take on the recruitment of volunteers. Please connect with either Konstantine k.konstantine@gmail.com or myself festivalchairs@goholycross.org and we'll match you to your perfect volunteer opportunity.

If you or someone you know is interested and / or well versed with the following, please contact me at festivalchairs@goholycross.org. I'm actively looking for volunteers as we plan for more revenue producing opportunities. Looking for....

- Festival co-chair
- Kalamari Booth Chair
- Food Tent Manager
- Marketing Manager
- Website Manager
- Social Media assistance
- Connections to local grocers / Greek grocers



So much to do! So much to create! And so excited to get it done! Join me and let's make 2018 Belmont Greek Festival one to remember!

The Belmont Greek Festival - It's a big deal!

ORDER OF RESPECTED ADULTS

by Daisy Fernando, O.R.A. President

Attention all Seniors ---age 55+ -- Have you reached that magical number 55+? Do you enjoy delicious lunches, guest speakers, day trips but most of all the fellowship of old and new friends??? Then, ORA is the place to be! Our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in The Oaks:

- Meet & greet at 11:00 AM
- Brief meeting at 11:30 AM
- Hot Lunch at Noon

Annual dues are \$20.00

This past January, **Jim Lucas**, President of the San Francisco Greek Historical Society presented a short history on the early Greek settlers in San Francisco. During the coming year we plan to invite additional speakers who will speak on various topics.

On behalf of the ORA Board, Vice President **Virginia Coppock**, Secretary **Helen Valavanis**, and Treasurer **Cathy Zamenes** we invite both Holy Cross parishioners and members of our Sister parishes to come and share in the fellowship & fun afternoon.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

by the Philoptochos Board

Happy New Year from the Philoptochos! We have been busy once again as we geared up for the holidays! Along with our own family preparations, we had to think about our parish family and parish celebrations as well.

On December 9, approximately 20 Holy Cross Philoptochos and parish members journeyed to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Sacramento for the annual ***Light the Path*** luncheon, helping to raise money to then distribute to seminarians at Holy Cross Seminary who commit to serve in our Metropolis. This support is not given out automatically. Each seminarian's case of need and achievement is assessed by a committee headed by **His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**. The seminarian is also asked to provide service back during his journey at Holy Cross. Each case is evaluated individually. Bishop Anthony of Blessed Memory began this San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos ministry and had the dream to support seminarians who qualified to begin their ministry debt free if possible. This is still the wish of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, and the Philoptochos are the stewards of this fund and raise money yearly to meet the needs that occur. Last year the Philoptochos distributed \$120,000 to qualified students. The San Francisco Metropolis is the only metropolis in the United States that offers this level of support. We here at Holy Cross have been the beneficiaries of the wonderful young and vibrant assistant priests who have served here.

The following day on December 10, the Philoptochos changed gears quickly and hosted the ***Annual Christmas Tea***. Historically this event has been a way for our Parish family to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord together as a family. Once again, the table was laden with

delicious food and the room festively decorated. In addition to celebrating together, we have always raised money to support the Family Sharing program run jointly with the Parish Council to deliver much needed food and gifts to families in need. We were able to donate \$2,000 to this program. Thank you to the entire Board and all the ladies who brought food to our table.

Also, each December the Philoptochos helps to fund and host the *Receiving Home Christmas Party*. Children in foster care or who are wards of the court are invited to celebrate with us. They have pizza for dinner, yummy desserts, play games and get to see Santa who presents them with gifts and surprises. These children have faced more difficulties in their short lives than we can imagine. Each child has a story to tell. Thank you, **Sonia Risting**, for organizing this event.

Finally, we just celebrated the cutting of the *Vasilopita* with a Luncheon on January 7. One of our national ministries is the support of Saint Basil Academy and Home in Garrison, New York. The property is an asset of the Philoptochos and the home is a haven for children who are either orphaned or temporarily homeless due to a life crisis. It is a ministry of the Philoptochos to keep the property in good order and to help pay for the costs of housing and feeding anywhere from 20 to 30 children and families. This year our Vasilopita was able to send \$3000 to Saint Basil's through your generous donations and attendance. At this event we also present a check to our Benevolence Fund from the proceeds of our Tea to help people here locally who are in need and this support is offered very confidentially. Just as an aside, the remains of the table were boxed up and brought to the Maple Street Shelter in Redwood City. We in the Philoptochos are trying to get into the habit of doing this on a regular basis. While everyone here enjoys a "to-go" box, there are many hungry people out there that we should be serving.

Finally, just a note that we are trying to enter the world of *technology* a bit more by having a Facebook page, keeping a webpage going on the Holy Cross website and getting our own "square" so that we can always have charging capabilities at our events. Please visit us and like us on Facebook. You will be receiving membership information for 2018 and as you know you can sign up to join Philoptochos online. Our membership goal for 2018 is 200!

Again, Happy New Year and thank you!

CHOIR GEARING UP FOR EASTER

We can't believe it's already that time of year, but here we are, rehearsing music for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Some of the most beautiful music of our Church is sung during this holiest season, and we look forward to worshipping with our Holy Cross family during these important days.

Our Sunday School-aged singers are doing a great job, learning their music and participating wonderfully during the liturgy. We have several students singing with us, and some of their parents, too. We invite more young girls and boys to join in this meaningful ministry.

We recently enjoyed a fabulous post-Christmas party, highlighted by delicious food, fun singing, and fabulous friendship! The gathering evolved into a musical theater revue, complete

with impromptu tap dancing by **Leslie Cardiasmenos** and **Raisa Gagas**! Huge thanks to our gracious host, **John Cladis**, who offered his usual amazing hospitality and put up with us invading his gorgeous home!

We were sad to lose one of our long-time singers, **Ted Pappas**, who passed away shortly after Christmas. Ted was a mainstay in our bass section for many years, and he kept everyone in good spirits with his smooth voice, big smiles, and cheerful personality. We're so pleased that Ted's wife **Mary** still sings with us faithfully, anchoring our alto section with her sweet voice and vast knowledge of the hymns. May Ted's memory be eternal, as he now sings with the angelic choir.

A good Lent to all!

GREEK SCHOOL – KICKING OFF 2018

by Katerina Papachristou-Chiotis, HCGS Director

Happy New Year Greek School Families and Friends! I hope that you enjoyed your Winter Break and had lots of opportunities to celebrate with family members and friends.

I warmly welcome students and their parents back to school from the winter holidays with renewed enthusiasm. I am confident that this New Year will be a good one for the school community, as well as for the students and their families.

The month of December was an exciting month for us here at Greek School, in which was filled with hard work and devotion from students and teachers to be able to present Christmas carols at our annual Community Christmas program and School Programs. I once again personally congratulate all students and their teachers for the hard work and effort, but as well would like to extend my thanks to all families who joined our celebrations. We are very proud of our students.

Another crucial point from our last month of the year was the election of PTO officers. In fact, we elected new PTO officers, and I would like to extend my thanks to the parents, nominees and newly elected officers for your support of the PTO and our Greek school community. We're looking forward to seeing our PTO grow and receive support for our students.

We had many beautiful opportunities at the Greek School this year, one of which we had more adults join our Adult Program which was very exciting and uplifting for our Greek School Community. Our classes for adults provide and include culturally enriching opportunities while enhancing writing and oral skills. We also offer ***B1 Certification Exams for adults, teens and ex-Greek School students***. Therefore, I strongly encourage any adult who is curious or would like to ameliorate or learn some Greek to join. Remember it is never too late to learn some Greek!

Our Holy Cross Greek School celebrates the Three Hierarchs every year; one very important event for our Greek culture. I would also like to express that our Greek School is sponsoring the Coffee Hour honoring the Greek Letters Day. Hope to come join us on ***Sunday January 28th*** immediately after the Liturgy in The Oaks!

I would also like to express my thanks to all the volunteers for their constant support of our Greek School community. The constant support throughout the years has helped make our

Greek School community stronger and larger, and for that we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Our goal is to be able to spread the Greek language and to keep in touch with our roots.

My thanks also go to **Rika Tsitsinia**, who as a School Administrator has given me her support and has achieved the school's priorities. Thank you!

The month of January is all about fresh beginnings and positive change. I love the promise of the New Year and all the opportunities which exist for our children here at Greek School. A new year always ushers in the sense of renewal – a renewal of purpose and collective commitment to excellence in teaching, learning and service to our community.

We are actively pursuing opportunities to develop new programs.

I thank you in advance for your continuous support to our school!

For info you can contact either

- Katerina Papachristou-Chiotis at chiotiskaterina@gmail.com or [650-868-0728](tel:650-868-0728), or
- Rika Tsitsinia Papadopoulos at tsitsinia@gmail.com at [650-210-6348](tel:650-210-6348).

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

We missed including some names in the Community Christmas Card. We include them here along with our hopes that you and your family have a blessed, healthy, and prosperous year.

The Bangs Family
Chris, Eva & Christian Canellos
Jim & Joanne Fetsco
Julia Gavros & Daughters
Michael & Athia Giotinis & Family
Michael, Thalia, & Jonna Hohenthal
Julie Karbo / Anjelica & Emma Christon

Ted & Angela Koros & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Latham
Philip & Laila Louridas
John & Margaret Papadakis
Kathy Polychroniou & Family
Arthur Smith Jr.
The Zarganis Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BAPTISMS & CHRISMATIONS

November 4 – Alexandra Dimitra, daughter of Nathaniel D'Amico & Sophia Vourthis; Yvonne Pawlowski, sponsor

November 11 – Paul Anthony (Pavlos Andoni), son of Christian Stamates & Calliope Copoulos; Arthur Smith, Jr. & Ana Elena Smith, sponsors

November 18 – Leah (Evangelia) Charlotte, daughter of Christian-Andre Johansson & Andrea Milanos; Ashley Brenner, sponsor

November 18 – Nikitas Karim, son of Karim Azar & Kristen Jadelrab; His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas & Larissa Geleris, sponsors

December 9 – Pandora Emerson, daughter of Andrew Pickering & Belen Arguelles; Irene Ritterman, sponsor

December 23 – Alec Patrick (Patrikios), son of Alan Johnson & Maria Iuppa; Anirban & Nomiki Banerjee, sponsors

January 20 – Iliana Niki, daughter of Angelo Metaxas & Andriana Nikoloutsopoulos;

Kyriakoula Vallianos & Nicos Christofi,
sponsors

January 27 – Dayna Rene (Mavra) Pettit,
daughter of Robert Pettit & Maureen
Garvey; Irene Ritterman, sponsor

WEDDINGS

December 9 – George Vellis & Gale
Vaillancourt; Steve Agelopoulos, sponsor

FUNERALS

Themistoklis Drolapas, who fell asleep in
the Lord, October 23
Angelo Tekos, who fell asleep in the Lord,
November 3

Theodore Pappas, who fell asleep in the
Lord, December 27

Bill Hopkins, who fell asleep in the Lord,
December 28

Angeliki Belesis, who fell asleep in the
Lord, December 29

Spiro Mitsanas, who fell asleep in the Lord,
December 30

Dorothy Kirkonis, who fell asleep in the
Lord, January 16

Antonios Kounalakis, who fell asleep in the
Lord, January 22

Jean Maridakis, who fell asleep in the Lord,
January 29

Please let the church office know if we are missing your sacrament or have incorrect information.

DATES TO LOOK FORWARD TO:

(Please check our website or the Sunday Bulletin for details or for any changes)

Tuesdays – **Bible Study** continues, Contos Library, 10 AM

Wednesdays – **Studies in the Faith Class** continues, Contos Library, 7 PM

Sunday, February 18 – **GREATER BAY AREA FORGIVENESS VESPERS** - 5:30 PM. With the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, all are invited to begin Great Lent by participating with other Bay Area communities in the Forgiveness Vespers Service. / The homily will be offered by Rev. Father Aris Metrakos, Proistamenos at Holy Trinity Church in San Francisco. / A *makaronada* reception will follow graciously hosted by our community.

Sunday, February 25 – **SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY – PAN ORTHODOX VESPERS** - 5:00 PM. At Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Hosted by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. / Concelebrated by: His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of San Francisco; His Grace Bishop Maxim Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America Diocese of Western America; His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco; His Grace Bishop Daniel Orthodox Church in America Diocese of the West; His Grace Bishop Irinej Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russian Western American Diocese – Bishop of Sacramento. / Guest Homilist: His Grace Bishop Daniel. / Reception to follow

Saturday, March 3 – **CRAB FEED** – presented by our Hostess with the Mostest, Mrs. Jenny Hatzopoulos. Hors d'oeuvres will be served starting at 6:00 PM and the crab will be marched in at 7:30 PM. Menu: Greek salad, Greek-style pasta, fresh crab, dessert. Greek music. There will be a no-host Full Bar with drinks and soft drinks. \$60 for adults; \$30 for kids 4-12 years; children 3 and under, free. To RSVP, email office@goholycross.org with name, #of guests, contact phone number. We are accepting both individual and full table of 10 reservations. Seating will be open except for full tables. Make your reservations by **February 25!** Bring your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers! Seating is limited!

Saturday March 10 – The Holy Cross Philoptochos Invites You to a **WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS MEMBERSHIP TEA** - The Road to Good Health...without Medicine. 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. In The Oaks. The theme this year is “non-medical” strategies for healing, disease prevention, brain stimulation, and general good health. Some of these paths to good health are on the cutting edge of current, non-medical treatment and some are founded in the very faith we practice every day. Come and hear experts on: Food as Medicine, Music Therapy and the Power of Prayer. Presentations will be brief and interactive with plenty of time for your questions. A light, Lenten luncheon will be served. A suggested donation of \$10 will be kindly received at the door. RSVP by **March 1** to Mary Peros at mperos911@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 17 – **SAINT JOHN VISIT** We will be led on a guided tour of the places connected to Saint John Maximovich, including venerating the incorrupt body of this Saint, who was the Bishop of Shanghai and San Francisco. The cost for a tour bus seat and lunch is \$40 per person. Details to come about lunch. We depart Holy Cross at 9:15 and return by 2:30. Send an email to konstantines@goholycross.org

Sunday, March 18 – **PARISH ORATORICAL FESTIVAL** Calling all young people in grades 4-12! This year's topics for the Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival are available. Children in grades 4-6 can present a speech on any topic, those in grades 7-12 must select a topic from a set list. Children of all ages benefit by having public speaking experiences. Encourage your children to participate in this inspiring faith-sharing festival! of See link below for topics and information or contact Allison Virsik at ali_virsik@yahoo.com and <https://www.goarch.org/-/2018-st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival-topics>

Sunday, March 25 – **GREEK SCHOOL** Greek Independence Day Celebration & The Annunciation of the Theotokos – Holy Cross Greek School invites you to celebrate this special day for Hellenism! After Divine Liturgy, join us for a Lenten Luncheon followed by our Greek School Student's Program.

Saturday, March 31 – **SATURDAY OF LAZARUS** Palm Folding and Communion Breakfast – immediately following Orthros at 8 AM and Divine Liturgy at 9 AM.

Sunday, April 1 – **PALM SUNDAY** services (Orthros at 8:45 and Divine Liturgy at 10 AM). Luncheon to follow.

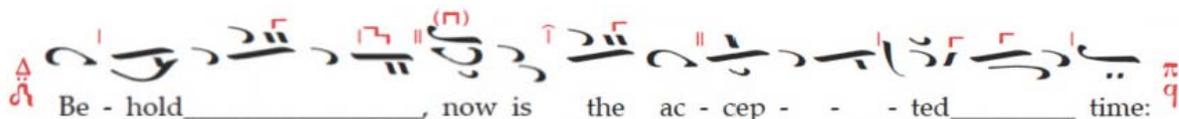
Sunday, April 8 – **AGAPE VESPERS, EASTER PICNIC & EASTER EGG HUNT** – Join us beginning at 11:30 AM.

Sunday, April 15 – **SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING** – immediately following Divine Liturgy in The Oaks. All members in good standing are encouraged to join us for this important gathering of the church. Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting will be available shortly.

Saturday, April 28 – **FASHION SHOW** - Save the date for "Let's Tango," the annual Fashion Show and Luncheon presented by our Holy Cross Philoptochos. The ladies are preparing an exciting event with a colorful Argentinian theme. Proceeds will benefit student scholarships and Philoptochos charities.

“Behold, now is the accepted time...” *

by Ross Steven Ritterman, Chanter



Taking a break from the “But where is the Bible?” series, we thought it would be an acceptable to time to talk about what’s on the horizon for us as a Church and what that means for us involved in our musical ministry. In a few words, it’s as if a sign post along the road has told us to “Get Ready!” As I write this we are a few days removed from the 15th Sunday of Luke, that is, the Sunday of Zacchaios, which signifies that the Triodion period, the period preceding Great Lent, is to begin the following weekend at Great Vespers. We thought we’d take this opportunity to share a few of the highlights from these upcoming Triodion and Lenten services.

The beginning of the Triodion period also marks the point where we start to add the hymns from the Book of the Triodion into our services and we begin to explore the themes the Church gives us these weeks such as humility (Publican & Pharisee), repentance (Prodigal Son) and judgement (Meatfare Sunday). During the Sunday Orthros service, following the chanting of Psalm 50, the quintessential psalm of repentance, the usual hymns are replaced with 3 hymns: “Τῆς μετανοίας...” / “Open to me the gates of repentance...”, “Τῆς σωτηρίας...” / “Guide me in the paths of salvation...” and “Τὰ πλήθη...” / “When I ponder in my wretchedness...”. These three hymns mirror the themes of those Sundays of the Triodion exactly and give us the opportunity to acknowledge our shortcomings and entreat God for mercy and compassion. We’ll chant these hymns on each of the Sundays of the Triodion and Great Lent.

Beginning with the evening of Cheesefare Sunday, the final Sunday before Great Lent begins, the Church offers what are called ‘Vespers of Compunction’ (in Greek: κατανοητικὸς εσπερινός) with the first of these known as ‘Forgiveness Vespers’ (Gr.: εσπερινός της συγχωρήσεως) at which all those in attendance ask one another for forgiveness. After the first set of hymns and the chanting of “O Gladsome Light...” (Gr. “Φῶς ἱλαρὸν...”) we begin the chanting of one of the Great Prokeimena of our Church, a beautiful hymn taken from Psalm 68^{LXX}:

“Μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπὸ τοῦ παιδός σου, ὅτι θλιβόμεναι, ταχὺ ἐπάκουσόν μου. Πρόσχευε τῇ ψυχῇ μου καὶ λύτρωσαι αὐτήν.” / “Turn not your face away from your child for I am afflicted; hear my speedily. Give heed to my soul and redeem it”

and it is during these moments as we chant that Great Lent is inaugurated and the clergy change the altar cloths as well as their vestments from bright colors to purple or sometimes black.

The next evening, we begin the chanting of Great Compline services where we hear chanted the hymns “God is with us” taken from the Book of Isaiah, and “Lord of the Powers” (Psalm 45^{LXX}). These are typically chanted antiphonally with two choirs alternating the verses and refrains. These are among some of the most popular and well-known hymns of Great Lent, with easy to remember (and easy to chant) refrains.

The Presanctified Liturgies which are offered Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings during Lent, give us additional opportunities to receive Holy Communion. These are especially moving services in which we experience the entire psalm readings of the vespers services with hymns focused on Lent, and then several very beautiful hymns during the liturgy that replace what we normally hear during a Sunday or weekday liturgy.

“Now the Powers of Heaven are invisibly worshiping with us. For behold, the King of glory enters in. Behold, a mystical and perfect sacrifice is coming forth. Let us come forward with faith and desire that we may become partakers of eternal life. Alleluia.”

With the gifts already sanctified, notice how the text specifically reflects this: ...the King of Glory enters in.” Notice also how this differs from our usual Cherubic hymns which by comparison anticipates our reception of the King of All which, by that point in the service, is yet to take place. We are also given the special Communion Hymn from Psalm 33 “Γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ Κύριος. Ἀλληλούϊα.” / “O Taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia.”

As you can tell there’s a lot on our plates with the increase of services during the Lenten period (to say nothing of Holy Week!). Not only are we entreated to increase our prayer and draw closer to Christ, but we also have much more chanting to do! We invite any and all interested persons to join us for the chanting *as we sail across the great sea of the Fast** whether that’s standing with us to observe what we do or coming to our meetings to review the services and practice these wonderfully enriching hymns (send an email to ross.ritterman@gmail.com). We’ll see you there. *Behold, it is the accepted time!* *

*From the hymn “Ἐλαμψεν ἡ χάρις...” / “Your Grace has shown forth...” chanted at the Aposticha of Forgiveness Vespers.

^{LXX} refers to the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms, the numbering used by the Orthodox Church

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

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Thank you to the 161 parishioners and parishioner families who have sent in their 2018 pledge forms.

If you haven't done so yet, please consider sending in your pledge for 2018. Use the pledge form and return envelope that were sent to you in November, or make your Stewardship Pledge, and send in your Stewardship and other donations on-line at our website.

Visit www.goholycross.org and click on the "Stewardship 2018" banner at the top. Thank you for your support of Holy Cross Church!