



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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The Panagia Icon: The Light which Leads us Home



This summer, at the end of my week at the St. Nicholas Summer Camp, I set out for home at around midnight. I had stayed late so that the campers would not be deprived of Cabin Talk, as several of the clergy had left that morning, and, consequently, we were short-staffed. I packed in the dim light of the cabin, after which I walked to my car in near-total darkness, carrying my pack and a flashlight to avoid tripping over any obscured obstacles which might be shrouded in the shadows of the night. And my heart was darkened as well, for I was leaving the camp—a ministry of ministries, which I anticipate with joy and gladness throughout each year.

Yet, as I got into my car and wended my way along the backroads of the Western Bluegrass, something amazing happened: A light pierced the shadows of the night and the spirit of sullenness that had taken up residence in my heart. And the amazing thing was this, my friends: the light was cast from the reflection of Our Lady which stands enshrined in our iconostasis, and which was, at the time, over a hundred miles away. Yet though the visible reflections of the candles from Her gilded robes could not traverse the many miles between us, an invisible yet deeply meaningful light lit my heart as I pondered the blessed icon of the Panagia Pantovasilissa, which I suddenly realized I missed so desperately. And this light, which she bestowed, illuminated one central and certain truth: I was coming home.

I do not mean, merely, that I was coming back to Kentucky, for, indeed, my route home was entirely through our beloved Commonwealth. Nor do I mean that I was returning to Lexington, where my house happens to be. Rather I mean that my heart was restless, and my soul eager to return to my spiritual home, the parish community through which I am blessed to receive the Eucharistic offering of our Lord for salvation and life everlasting. For it is this community which has become, for me and my house, the firm foundation of our prayers on behalf of the salvation of her people and the forgiveness of our collective sins. To put it simply, it *is* home, as surely as any house or city ever shall be. My wife and I know we are blessed to share this home with others. Yet we have, in a special sense in this parish, an intercessor much more fervent than our fellow parishioners, who prays for us and with us as we gather together. For indeed, my brothers and sisters, the distinct truth is this: That the blessed Theotokos, has made *Her* home in this parish.

This is not something to be said lightly. Indeed, our icon of the Theotokos as the Panagia Pantovasilissa (All-Holy Queen of All) is one of only a handful of such examples in the world. And we are the only parish in America named for this representation of our Blessed Lady. This icon which you see in our iconostasis is based on an ancient, wonderworking icon, through which the grace of Christ still flows and pours forth miracles on the faithful. It is an icon which is said to be one of four to have been painted by St. Luke the Evangelist, himself.

This icon of our Lady was enshrined in the iconostasis when Justinian raised the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom. Thus was our Queen enthroned in the Queen of Churches which was the radiant jewel of Constantinople. She looked on as the heresies were cast down. She listened when the Emperor Heraclius fervently prayed before Her as he prepared to sally forth against the unconquerable hordes of Persians and Avars. She sent forth Her Holy Protection, covering the Queen of Cities with her intercessions during the countless sieges laid by the Muslims and Pagans.

And, ultimately, when the Turks stormed the city, She was cast into the sea, to prevent Her being profaned by the Turkish hordes on that dark day in which they overran the Queen of Cities and desecrated the Churches of Christ. And yet, by the miraculous power of God, the icon of the Pantovasilissa washed up on the shores of Asia Minor intact, and was cared for by the faithful there. And She was moved, once again in the face of persecution and desecration, to Attica, where today She stands surrounded by the faithful who faithfully protect the image of their Faithful Protectress.

This, my friends, is the Woman referred to as Our Lady, the All-Holy Queen of All—and the fact that she is, indeed, *Our* Lady is particularly true for those of us in Lexington, KY. For the icon of the Pantovasilissa enshrined in our iconostasis is a copy of that same, ancient icon which stood, oblivious to the sands of time, in the Great Church of the emperors and the patriarchs. And the light which shines forth from Her is that same light which illumined the faithful down through the centuries. A window into heaven, and the divine light reflected in the person of the Theotokos, who gave birth to the Christ God, the True Light which illumines the world.

From the implacable hordes of the plundering barbarians to the uncaring waves of the frigid sea of Marmara, the forces of the dark Prince of this World have sought to batter the icon of our most fervent bulwark and intercessor. Yet here She stands, enthroned in our iconostasis, as the faithful sing triumphal hymns before Her, asking Her to intercede with Her Son and our God, that He might save our souls. Let us remember this and rejoice: That, so long as we worship here, my friends, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. For in this parish it is His Own Mother who looks down upon us as we gather together in His Name!

With love in the service of Christ, and prayers for the intercession of His Mother, Our Blessed Lady the Panagia Pantovasilissa, I remain,

Fr. William

Weekly Opportunities for Worship and Fellowship

SUNDAY

9 AM - Matins and Liturgy

This is the meeting of the Eucharistic community, the Body of Christ, on the Lord's Day. It is the time we set aside to come together to receive God, that we might be united together with Him and in Him. The Liturgy, should be *the* most important thing in our weekly schedules. For the Christian, this day, and this service, is the center and source of life, given by Him Who is Life! Nothing can take precedence over receiving that which God offers to us!

12 PM – Agape Fellowship

This is the time when the Body of Christ, having received our Lord together, comes together to rekindle the bonds of fellowship that have just been set aflame by the reception of our Lord.

WEDNESDAY

6 PM – Vespers

This service is an opportunity to come together in the middle of the week to worship our Lord, and to recall the works of His saints. It gives us a chance to take stock of our lives and rededicate them to Him, as well as to reflect on how He has comforted, uplifted, and transformed us during the week. There is an opportunity to plug back in to the source of our power, to help us to get through the trials and tribulations of the weekly grind!

6:45 PM – Orthodoxy 101 and Potluck

On Wednesday nights, we gather together in a fellowship meal provided from the fruits of our labour, and we learn together about our faith. Currently, our curriculum is Orthodoxy 101, which is basic Christian catechism, and which represents an opportunity for inquirers into the faith to be introduced to Orthodoxy, as well as for current Orthodox Christians to expand upon their knowledge. Adult Study will continue on Wednesday nights throughout the year, though the format will change from session to session.

FRIDAY

6 PM – Paraklesis

This service is an opportunity to ask the Theotokos, our beloved patron and God's mother, to intercede with Him on our behalf, as well as on behalf of those whom we know who stand in special need of His grace due to challenges or suffering that they may face. Blank lists for names will be in the narthex before the Paraklesis.

6:45 PM – Bible Study

On Friday nights, we gather together for our Bible Study. The Church reads the Scriptures in the context of the interpretations of the Fathers, who show us the activity of the Holy Spirit, which has guarded the Church against theological errors from the time of the Apostles to the present. Presently, we are studying the Book of Genesis.

SATURDAY

6 PM – Great Vespers

This is the service at which we prepare for and welcome the Lord's Day, on the night before we gather together to receive Christ. At the midpoint of the service, when we sing "O Gladsome Light", the Church, which was dimly lit, becomes awash with light. This is the transition from the Sabbath to the Day of the Lord, on which we shall receive His Body and Blood, thereby sacramentally becoming the Body of Christ. We gather the night before to prepare ourselves.

7 PM – The Sacrament of Confession

Though Confession is always available during the week by appointment, starting on December 9th, and henceforth, the time following the conclusion of Great Vespers will be set aside for those among the faithful who feel burdened and wounded by sin to come to Confession as we prepare to receive our Lord together the following day. If you wish to confess, please plan to be at the Church by the conclusion of Great Vespers (approximately 6:45 PM).

Pastoral Information

BAPTISMS

BAPTIZED: AMY DONALDSON
JULY 14, 2018

SPONSOR: KATINA DOUGLAS

BAPTIZED: TYLER GULLETT
AUGUST 25, 2018

SPONSOR: NIKKI BURNS

WEDDINGS

MARRIED: LORI JOHNSON AND
ALEXANDER MAROUDIS

SPONSOR: DESPINA KAPOURALES

FUNERALS

JOHN DRAGOS
AUGUST 13, 2018

IMPORTANT - DO YOU READ THE BULLETIN? - IMPORTANT

Though we distribute the bulletin through our email list, I do often wonder how many people open the attachment and actually read what is contained therein. There is a great deal of important information in the monthly bulletin, from our calendar, to the announcements and recaps of our various ministries and events. Consequently, as a sort of informal test, to gather some idea of how many people are reading this, I would ask you, if you have read this, to respond to the email thread in which it was distributed with "I read it." Also, at some point in the next week or two, I will say the word "bully" in the Church. When you hear this word, if you have read this, please raise your hand. Please do *not* mention this test or discuss it with others, as it would further call into question the data gathered from what is, already and admittedly, an unscientific study.

FRIDAY PARAKLESIS AND BIBLE STUDY

At the beginning of this ecclesiastical year, we added in another weekly service. Each Friday we gather to chant the Paraklesis, wherein we ask our patroness, the Theotokos, to intercede on our behalf, and on behalf of those who stand in need of her help as they seek grace and mercy from her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Lists of names will be placed in the Narthex before the Paraklesis service. These lists are only distributed on Friday, and, in contrast to the Paraklesis services during the Dormition Fast, are *not* kept from week to week.

HOPE/JOY

This summer we will be founding our local chapter of HOPE/JOY. This is a combined ministry which focuses on youth, grades K-5, and seeks to provide an atmosphere of fun and fellowship while complementing the SCS and VCS programs and curricula. If you are interested yourself, or know someone who may be, please contact Fr. William. Leslie Bliziotis has graciously agreed to act as the founding Chair. The ministry will first meet in October.

OVER 50S GROUP

Our Fifty UP fellowship meeting will be held on Saturday, September 15, at 11:30 AM, in the Social Hall. Jim Hangis, as the first appointed Chairman of the club will facilitate the meeting and the discussion. At this first meeting, we will be soliciting ideas for events and seeking new ways to help those members of our community who have a difficult time making it to Church.



I'll Help You All The Way Home.

Thomas P. Finsand, Realtor®, ABR®, SRS®

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KW BLUEGRASS
KELLER WILLIAMS, REALTY



Clergy Laity Recap: Priest Delegate Perspective

By: Fr. William

The 2018 Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America [CL] was held in Boston, from July 2nd to July 6th. The CL is an opportunity for the faithful of the Archdiocese, both the clergy and the laity together, to gather in fellowship and to devote their attentions to the needs and challenges confronting the Church in America. Carolyn Janssen, who was elected by the Spring General Assembly in our parish, and I, as your Presiding Priest were your delegates to this assembly.

At the CL, the main challenge facing the Church was the revelation that we had been running a deficit for several years, which had never been corrected. Once this was discovered, the Archdiocese moved to replace the members of the finance department with individuals from the private sector who have experience returning corporate entities to solvency. Within six months, they presented a fact based, balanced budget to the delegates at the Plenary Session of the 2018 CL. At the Plenary, the clergy and lay delegates voted to amend the budget, adding additional expenditures for the support of the Clergy Pension Program, which is currently underfunded and the support of Hellenic College-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. The delegates also voted to authorize the executive council to cut the existing expenditures to rebalance the budget. The ramifications of these actions by the delegates at the Plenary Session, for good or ill, will become clearer in the coming months.

At the 2018 CL, your lay delegate, Carolyn Janssen, and I took the opportunity to meet together and discuss how we might best serve the ministerial needs of the parish by taking advantage of the opportunities presented. There were a series of seminars that were put on by various departmental heads and ministry leaders from throughout the Archdiocese. Carolyn attended the seminar on Youth and Young Adult Ministry, while I attended the seminars on Stewardship and Parish Growth. In the coming year the benefits of the exchange of ideas that takes place at these seminars will become clear as Carolyn and Philoptochos work more closely with our Y'ALL group, and as we all seek to work together to foster the continued growth of our common parish home.

Clergy Laity Recap: Lay Delegate Perspective

By: Carolyn Janssen

Attending the Clergy Laity conference is an experience I will never forget. I have always been involved in my local church community but aside from reading the Orthodox Observer (often a few months behind) I have never experienced the larger Orthodox community. The National Philoptochos and the Choir association were holding their meetings as well so there were about 1200 people attending. The congress opened on Sunday with an Othros & Divine Liturgy at Annunciation Cathedral. To attend the service with so many of the church Hierarchy participating! Beautiful and moving for sure. The Opening and Keynote address were open to everyone and then each organization proceeded with their own agenda. There were topics ranging from Parish Software to Communication to Youth and Family Ministries to discussions of Stewardship etc. as well as large chunks of time devoted to the financial situation that we are currently in. Father kindly let me know that if I was tired it was ok to take a break to rest but I really didn't want to miss a minute. In addition to spending large chunks of time in the sessions devoted to the financial situation, where again many were encouraged to ask questions and to express concerns, I was able to attend 2 wonderful Panel discussions: Are We Doing Things Correctly and Youth Protection Manual by Steven Christoforou, who proved to be a top notch presenter. The discussions he encouraged gave many clergy and laity a chance to express their thoughts and concerns.

We spent an afternoon at Holy Cross where it was fun to see many of our clergy reminiscing about their time there and meeting some of the current students. Cultural Night was a wonderful surprise. An amazing group of musicians entertained us with some music from some of my favorite Greek composers that brought back wonderful memories. As the night went on it was hard to stay in our seats and many of us couldn't resist the urge to dance. I didn't want the night to end.

On a personal level it was wonderful to spend time with Father John from my parish in Massachusetts and to talk with Father George and Father Joseph and Despina. I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to attend. I came back energized and impressed with the commitment and the depth of love that I saw from those who presented and from the many people I had conversations with.

2018 Vacation Church School – A Time for Acts

From July 16–20, we held our 2018 Vacation Church School. Participation in the previous Pan-Orthodox model for this program had dropped precipitously over the past decade, and, as we were looking at the potential for having 0 students signed up this year, we were forced to entertain a new model. The model we arrived at was a step forward, with 12 students participating, along with 5 adult and 3 youth volunteers. We look forward to seeing where this new approach will take us in the coming years.



Next Year's VCS – HEROES OF THE BIBLE!

St. Nicholas Summer Camp

By: Fr. William

From July 22–27, Alyssa Eliopoulos and I participated in the St. Nicholas Summer Camp in Leitchfield, KY. As you can see from the pictures, Despina Wilson was also there, and the three of us wondered where all the campers from our parish were! For me, there was a distinct sense of *deja-vu*, as I recalled taking the same tongue-in-cheek picture to the bottom left four years ago.

When I began my tenure as the Assistant Priest in Cincinnati, back in 2014, the parish had sent 0 campers for years. Gradually, during my three-year tenure, we built up the program. It took hard work and dedication on the part of the parents and youth, but just as it was done there, so it can be done here. Once the kids got to camp, they all loved it. The trick was getting them to try it out in the first place. I encountered two hurdles, which hampered us the first year.

The first was something I heard over and over again: “I’ll ask little Johnny if he wants to go to camp.” The problem is that little Johnny is not spending the winter and Spring thinking about Church Camp in July; he’s thinking about the new video game he wants, or the girl he has a crush on in math class. The second hurdle was the oft-repeated question: “Who else is going?” The problem, as is apparent, is that if everyone is asking this question up until the registration deadline, none of them will register, even though many of them might be interested. Ultimately, the first group of parents took the plunge and *told* their children that they were going to camp. Those first campers enjoyed it, encouraged their friends, and helped to promote the program in the parish and develop it into what it is today. This year, Cincinnati sent around 15 campers and 6 staff.

My friends, we can make it happen here too. Camp is an unparalleled chance for children to engage in faith and fellowship over the course of a week, in a thoroughly Orthodox environment. It is a chance for them to ask the clergy questions that they might not otherwise feel comfortable asking. And it is a chance for them to meet and befriend their Orthodox peers from throughout the Metropolis, who can provide them with love and support for the rest of their lives. Don’t let your kids miss out next year!



Where are all the campers? We’re so lonely here!



*But, ultimately, we still had a good time.
And you can too, by coming next year!*

September 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Ecclesiastical New Year 10:00 AM - Agiasmos
2 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	3	4 7:30 PM – Y'ALL Fellowship Dinner	5 6:00 PM – Vespers	6	7 Eve of the Nativity of the Theotokos 6:00 PM – Pan-Orthodox Festal Vespers and Artoklasia 7:00 – Reception	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession
9 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – SCS Kick Off Party 12:30 AM – Special General Assembly	10	11 7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting	12 6:00 PM – Vespers	13	14 6:00 PM – Paraklesis	15 11:30 AM – FiftyUp Meeting 4:30 PM – GOYA Outing to St. Andrews Heritage Festival
16 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	17	18	19 6:00 PM – Vespers 7:00 PM – Adult Study	20	21 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 7:00 PM – Bible Study	22 12:00 PM – Y'ALL Apple Picking 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession
23 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	24	25	26 6:00 PM – Vespers 7:00 PM – Adult Study	27	28 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 7:00 PM – Bible Study	29 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession
30 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy						

Parish Ministries and Organizations

Altar Servers: Fr. William, Joel Scott, Michael Knierim
Adult Education: Fr. William, Elizabeth Smith
Cantors: Chrisi Karounos, Jacob Kaylor, Nick Douglas
Choir: Helen Pantazakos
GOYA: Mandy Xenos
HOPE/JOY: Leslie Bliziotis
FiftyUp: Jim Hangis
Philoptochos: Carolyn Janssen
Sunday Church School: Aimee Cox
Y'ALL: Alyssa Eliopoulos, Joel Scott, Angela Brown

Parish Council

President: Delores Minor
Vice President: Vlad Radulescu
Secretary: Peter Sawaya
Treasurer: Dennis Karounos
Members: Virgil Cornea, Nick Douglas, Thomas Finsand, Ken Kiriapoulos, Joel Scott, Elizabeth Smith, Eleftherios Xenos