



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA  
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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*August 2019*

## A Tale of Two Parishes



**By: Fr. William**

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was a shining and vibrant beacon of Christ in the city of Lexington, where the Gospel of Christ was preached and lived, and where every member of the congregation participated regularly in the life of His Church. It was a shade of its former self, the shadowy shell of what once was; a temple where the vestigial remnants of the congregation paid doleful homage to the desolation of what might have been.

It was the year of Our Lord, two-thousand and fifty. Three decades had passed since the community built its new temple. Three decades since the former priest had laid the tile and set the marble. Three decades since the icons long venerated in the community had been placed in the iconostasis. Three decades since the community looked forward with anticipation toward a bright future.

Yet in 2050 there were two communities. They were the parish of the “could yet be”, and the parish of the “might have been”. The first parish was founded and grounded on and in Christ and looked excitedly and energetically toward the opportunities to be seized in the future. The second parish was vaguely attached to Him and looked wistfully and mournfully at the missed opportunities past. One was composed of those who lived the Gospel each day of the week; one was composed of those who happened to listen to the Gospel when they bothered to attend to their “obligation” on Sundays.

Membership in the second parish was reckoned by two bars, and both of them were set only a hairsbreadth from the floor. And for each of these bars, there were two groups of parishioners in the parish: those who met the expectations, and those who barely exceeded them. Long ago, there had been a third group, but those who took no notice of the crude expectations had long since fallen away. One gauge of membership was occasional attendance. Like most Americans, these parishioners considered themselves regular churchgoers if they managed to

sit and suffer through a liturgy once or twice a month. While even someone who showed up once a year on Pascha was considered a faithful member of the community, those who came on Sundays were considered model Christians and veritable saints. Beyond Sunday, there was no liturgical life in the parish.

But they were unconcerned about worship, for, to them, the other gauge of membership was more important by far: the “Dues”. And the members of the second parish, for decades, had proudly recounted that they were paying their \$300.00, just as their parents and grandparents had before them. The fact that the bills they paid at home had continued to rise during that time never quite made an impression on their view of the needs of the Church. But, in fairness, they did pay. And while they had not been growing for quite a while, they never imagined that anything might happen to them as long as they simply kept doing what they had been doing.

Yet one Sunday, around ten years back, the members of the second parish had found themselves dispossessed of a priest. They stopped coming to Church on Sundays at that point. Many of them were relieved; after all, they were promised that they would still have someone come down to celebrate the liturgy on Pascha. And so they had... for another several years. Yet one year ago this day, in the year 2049, even that had been taken away from them, for the Church had seen little purpose to keeping a building open for the fifteen or so parishioners who showed up once a year.

Last year the doleful day had come: the property had been sold to a developer who planned to tear the Church down and expand his complex of townhomes onto the land. Today the building was being demolished, yet even at her funeral there were only a few of the remnants of the congregation willing to attend to mourn her. Those whose faith was still alive were long gone, having decided to worship elsewhere. The rest had lost their sense of connection to the community long ago. Even those few who gathered to mourn, as the wrecking ball crashed through the wall of the sanctuary, could not have told you why they were there. Neither could they explain the tears that rolled involuntarily down their cheeks as they watched the roof of the Church collapse upon what was left of the altar on which Christ had offered Himself. They stood mournful, but they had no idea as to either why or what they were mourning as scattered debris took the place where the sacred Body and Blood had been laid out. For the light of Christ’s understanding, having been left untended, had long since guttered into a dim ember, and it was well-nigh extinguished.

Yet once the Church was gone, even those who had had only the faintest connection to her missed her. Indeed, they wondered why she had fallen so low. Why had “*the others*” not “done something”? They blamed the parish council. They blamed the priests who had served. They blamed those who regularly went to Church. In short, they blamed everyone but themselves. To be fair, they didn’t even consider how much time and energy each one of them had wasted in the past, either arguing about various small things, or complaining that someone else was not taking on responsibilities they refused to shoulder. And so they each man satisfied himself that it was someone else who was at fault. But all the blame in the world could not replace

what they had lost. And the state of the heart of each member represented both the proximate cause of, as well as a fitting testimonial to, the gradual decay of Orthodoxy in the Commonwealth — hearts that were microcosms of mediocrity and metaphors to be meditated on by historians studying the decline of faith in America.

At the very same time this second parish was collapsing, the first parish thrived. Her people worshiped God joyfully, and were not only willing but eager to attend to this relationship throughout the week, rather than once a week on Sunday. “Indeed,” they reasoned, “what could be more important than singing praises in a choir with the angels and the saints, beholding the glory of Heaven made present on Earth, and receiving divinity through the sacrificial gifts that Christ offers us?” Because they understood this in their hearts, the *average* parishioner came to worship at least twice a week, and many came even more than that, recognizing the need to reconnect to Christ, who was the source of their strength, and to rejoice in their relationship with Him.

When it came to supporting the material needs of the Church, the tithe was the standard. Ten percent was a small offering for them to make. Once again, they reasoned: “If Christ was willing to offer his broken body, and to pour out his blood for us on the Cross, surely one tenth of what he has blessed us with is an easy standard to meet!” The members of other parishes wondered how they could make such a large offering; the members of the first parish wondered how Christ, having offered so much, could accept something so small, and supported the special causes that came up throughout the year as well. And yet their material treasure was only one of many things they were willing to offer up for the glory of God: they also gave generously of their time and offered up their talents in the various ministries and fellowships which their vibrant community was able to sustain. It was a community where almost everyone was volunteering for something; There was nobody who viewed “just showing up” as the standard for the Christian life. And not a single one of them would ever have thought to not show up at all. Indeed, it was hard to keep them *out* of Church!

Yet while the members of the first parish certainly exceeded the members of the other in the two standards of membership that the second parish used, the most important thing they had was an attitude of gratitude toward God for one another. They abided in His love, and saw His image in the hearts and minds of their fellow Christians. Because this love was so present in every aspect of their lives, and so indelibly engraved on their hearts, there was no room to despise one another. Because they were joyfully united in purpose, they did not have room for dissensions within the community. And because love for one another was constantly on their lips, coming from the abundance of their hearts, not a one of them would ever think about insulting, complaining about, or otherwise denigrating any of the others.

In short, the Church was not a *part* of their lives, to be compartmentalized and attended to when it was convenient; rather, the Church was the *very essence* of their lives. For, indeed, they recognized that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is the place where we receive life and receive it abundantly. And this understanding, coupled with their love and unity of

purpose, informed the rest of their lives, so that they were shining examples of Christ, radiant with His light. Seeing this radiance, many people were won over to Christ, and the first parish doubled and then tripled in size while the second parish shrank into a shadow of its former self.

And here is the surprise, my friends: The two parishes had the same name! What is recounted above is a tale about two different visions of the future. And it is the tale of every Orthodox parish throughout the nation. Every day every single member of every parish across the country makes decisions that will contribute to determining which vision of the future becomes a reality. There is *never* “someone else” who is going to take care of our responsibility for us. Which vision we live here in Lexington is up to each and every one of us. What will *you* do?

With solemn prayers that we each choose to seize Christ’s blessings upon our future, I remain,

Fr. William

## President’s Message

**By: Delores Minor**

As I am preparing my brief notes for the Parish monthly bulletin, I am hearing the most recent news reports of two mass shootings. One in El Paso, Texas and one in Dayton, Ohio. I ask myself, what can we do so that we do not become numb to these often-occurring senseless acts of violence?

During the August 4, 2019, homily, Father William discussed the power of prayer. Before learning of these two incidences, I had planned to write about the many opportunities our church offers to all of us to practice our faith. In August, during the Dormition Fast, we can attend services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 p.m. We can also submit names asking the Theotokos to intercede for the living. We can attend Saturday evening Great Vespers. And of course, we can attend Sunday Matins and Liturgy.

As we try to come to grips with the sadness in our nation, let us use the power of prayer to help us cope and to help us find ways to understand and to heal as a nation. Solutions still need to be found and as Orthodox faithful we can be a part of positive outcomes. We can pray together, be mindful of what we are thankful for and most importantly, we can continue to practice acts of kindness daily.

In Christ,

Delores Minor

# Pastoral Notes

## NEED FOR YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

If we are to continue to have the youth ministries that we currently have, we will need as many additional youth volunteers as possible. If volunteers are not forthcoming, then we *will* have to start shuttering ministries and Sunday School classes. If you have children in our ministries currently, it is the expectation that you will consider becoming a registered Youth Volunteer. The Religious Education Team [RET] will present the details we have with regard to the process of registration and training. However, we need to run as many background checks as possible as early as possible, since there is a delay on approval. The cost of the background checks will be subsidized by the parish. If you are interested in ensuring that our ministries can continue by becoming a registered Youth Volunteer, please speak with Fr. William.



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## Philoptochos Corner

**By: Judy Kleronomos**

Now that August is here and summer is drawing to a close, we begin to think of others like those at Bluegrass Hospice care center at St. Joseph Hospital and the UK Markey Center. We have four Sundays to participate in providing them with comfort items that are sorely needed. You will be receiving a sheet listing all of the items requested. Let's fill up the baskets provided for the next four weeks and thank the Lord for all of our blessings. It's so gratifying when helping others knowing that we are doing God's work.

## Reflections on My Call to Ministry...

**By: Alyssa Eliopoulos**

I, Alyssa Eliopoulos, have answered the call to youth ministry. There, I put it in writing for the first time. I rarely see my decision to attend Hellenic College Holy Cross as a calling; I see a need for women and men who love the Orthodox Church to step up. I see a nationwide need for more involvement in the Church at every level. I see a need for not just passive involvement, but active involvement in Church worship. I see a need for more service to the body of Christ, not just as committee members. I see a need for active role models the youth can look up to. I see a need for kind, patient and nurturing youth ministry workers who there are to answer the children's numerous questions, not proselytize or chastise. I see a need I can fill with all the talents God has granted me. With these thoughts in mind, I pray I can serve God, to the best of my ability. That is not only my calling but every faithful servant's, to serve God to the best of my abilities, with all of my talents. Please keep me in your prayers; as I keep each and every one of you in mine while I am away from my home, *Panagia Pantovasilissa Greek Orthodox Church*.

# Y'ALL Ready for This?

## Young Adult League of Lexington (Y'ALL)

**By: Alyssa Eliopoulos**

The Young Adult League of Lexington (Y'ALL) is a fellowship group for students and young professionals aged 20-40. Anyone looking to build or strengthen their connection to the church and it's members is welcome to join us! We require a minuscule commitment of just showing up with your fun hats on! We meet monthly for dinner and happy hour, in addition to another monthly outing. Last month we went to karaoke. In 2018, we visited the Cincinnati Greek Festival, picked apples at the local orchard, enjoyed pizza and beers at Mirror Twin Brewery for pizza and adult beverages and hosted a cookout for coffee hour. Anyone interested please send your email, name and phone number to Alyssa Eliopoulos at [aceliopoulos@gmail.com](mailto:aceliopoulos@gmail.com) or 859-519-6652.

# St. Nicholas Summer Camp Recap

**By: Fr. William**

In 2019, we had campers from our parish! Proteos, Teleos, and Xenia Wines made the trip down to the Leitchfield area for a week of faith and fun at Camp Loucon. Alyssa Eliopoulos also made the trip, and served, for the second year, as a camp counselor. The St. Nicholas Summer Camp is an opportunity for the youth of the Metropolis of Detroit to gather together with their peers from other parishes, and form lasting friendships founded on faith. Generally, the younger the youth are when they start camping, the easier they will find it to adapt and to form these friendships. Please consider sending your children to Camp next year. The dates will be announced in late winter, and there is always a discount for early registration. In cases of financial need, there are scholarship opportunities available, both through the ministries here in our parish, as well as through national organizations.



## FiftyUp

**By: Jim Hangis**

It's time to get back into the swing of things. Hope August 10<sup>th</sup> 12:00 noon. Works for you? We are having another "Brown Bag Lunch" Planning session. The church has created our calendar. So without acceptance, we can now plan get together, events, and some fun dinners, etc.

Hope ALL can make that important time and date. Please reply to confirm. Kitty should be back from Greece. Topics: Jimmy's Dinner – Gyros & Souvlaki; Dinners other locations; Plays; Outings; New Horse Park; Theatre; Monastery-Holy Cross Heritage; Please join us... [Kitty 859-227-9820 & Jim 859-948-8489]



## GOYA

**By: Sarah Nash**

Hello GOYA Families! It is my pleasure to be able to serve Holy Mother Queen of All and our youth as the Chair of our GOYA chapter this year. There are a few of you I have yet to meet, so please feel free to catch me after service so that we can introduce ourselves. I'll keep a watch out for you as well. I'm not hard to miss... the lady with 5 tween / teens. The calendar is set with fellowship outings and service opportunities both within our parish and our community. I hope all of the youth can be involved because, quite simply, the more that come the more fun it is! To kick off August we have not 1, Not 2, BUT 3 opportunities for getting to know each other! I want you all to come so I can meet both parents and teens and learn about your families! We will be attending a **Legends Game**, taking in a **Renaissance Festival at The Castle** and having a **Sunday School kickoff party**. Details will be forthcoming by email, so keep watching. Lastly, I want to say that I am only the Chair of GOYA. This youth program is the responsibility of us all. It takes our commitment as parents to bring our kids to events, to encourage them to be involved, and to cultivate friendships. I am always open to suggestions and discussions regarding our GOYA program so please feel free to contact me anytime. I look forward to getting to know you all as well as our wonderful youth!

August 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
					6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	6:00 PM – Great Vespers 6:45 PM - Confession
4 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	5 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	6 Transfiguration 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 7:30 PM – Y'ALL Dinner at Athenian Grill	7 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	8	9 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	10 12:00 PM – FiftyUp Brown Bag Luncheon 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 6:35 PM – Family Life Legends Game
11 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 2:00 PM – GOYA Legends Game	12 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession	13 7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting	14 6:00 PM – Festal Vespers at Assumption GOC [Louisville]	15 Dormition of the Theotokos 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	16 <i>No Paraklesis</i>	17 10:00 AM – GOYA Renaissance Faire Outing at the Castle <i>No Vespers</i>
18 SCS Registration and Party 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – Sunday School Registration and Back to School Party 12:00 PM – Parents Seminar and Q&A	19	20	21 6:00 PM – Vespers 6:45 PM - Confession	22	23 6:00 PM – Paraklesis	24 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 6:45 PM - Confession
25 SCS First Day of Class 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – Sunday School First Day of Class	26	27	28 6:00 PM – Vespers 6:45 PM - Confession	29	30 6:00 PM – Paraklesis	31 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 6:45 PM - Confession

## Parish Ministries and Organizations

**Altar Servers:** Fr. William, Joel Scott, Michael Knierim  
**Adult Education:** Fr. William, Elizabeth Smith  
**Cantors:** Chrisi Karounos, Nick Douglas, Chris Covington  
**Choir:** Helen Pantazakos  
**GOYA:** Sarah Nash, Mandy Xenos, Emily Wines  
**FiftyUp:** Jim Hangis  
**Philoptochos:** Carolyn Janssen  
**Sunday Church School:** Delores Minor, RET Team  
**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