Dear Parishioners,

As we begin this new year of the Church and her ministries at St. George, we should consider for a moment where we stand as a community. By most external metrics, we are very healthy - we have as many young people as ever in our Sunday School, Greek School, and GOYA programs, and the Church is as full as I have known it to be as we conclude the service. On the financial side, our parish is able, through the hard work of our St. George faithful, past and present, and the good stewardship of the parish council, to pay all our bills promptly, and to do all the work that is necessary to maintain and improve our Church, the Grecian Center, and the entire property. For all these blessings, we offer our thanks to the Lord, and to all of you.

However, not all is well. Since Fr. Philemon retired almost seven years ago, we have buried over 120 faithful members of the Church. We grieve their loss, we pray that their souls may rest with the righteous, and we commit ourselves to remember them always - but the work of maintaining and building up the Church, not just the building, but also the community, rests with all of us. This is a matter with which we struggle. I am frequently approached by members who are concerned that the shared life of the community feels as though it is in decline. As I reassure them, and you, that in fact, by every measurable standard, all remains exactly as I found it to be when I arrived in 2013, I have come to understand that the decline that is felt is nonetheless real. It is simply a decline over a longer period, and particularly in comparison with the vibrancy and activity of the parish a generation ago, in the '70’s and '80’s.

This is a decline which is, in fact, universal throughout the United States. It is not difficult to discern why this is so. In the 70’s and '80’s, the generation that had come here from Greece after the 2nd World War were in their prime - the Church buildings that dot our Greek-American landscape had been recently completed, and the communities of that era were united in celebration of that fact. More specifically, that generation were in their prime as parents, specifically, and were determined that their children would receive the fullness of their heritage as Greek Orthodox Christians and as Hellenes. I have heard, countless times, that the parents of that generation did not allow their children to date, or to be out alone with friends at night – but Church events were absolutely mandatory. And therefore there were many Church events - GOYA was active, and Greek School was full, and Sunday School was bursting, and almost every month (if not more often) there was a Dance somewhere in the community.

The Trophy-Bearer
Published by St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Southgate, Michigan

A Matter of Priorities
Rev. Fr. Anthony Cook

October 2019

Regular Schedule

Sunday
8:40 am – Orthros (bilingual)
10 am – Div. Liturgy (bilingual)

Saturday
5 pm – Great Vespers (English)
Holy Confession by appointment

Please see included calendar for meetings & weekday services, and for any variations to this schedule.

Community Updates

Baptism
September 21, 2019
Lucas Christopher
William Richard
Parents: Ryan & Calliope Capra

If you have announcements that you would like for us to include in the Community Updates above, please call or email the Church Office.

Coming Events

Sunday, October 6, 2019
Choir Spaghetti Luncheon following Divine Liturgy
St. George Outreach - Sandwich Prep
2:00-4:00 pm

Sunday, October 13, 2019
Ministries Ice Cream Social
12:15 pm (Activity Room)

Sunday, October 20, 2019
Fall General Assembly following Divine Liturgy
GOYA Greenfield Village Outing
2:00-5:00 pm

Friday, October 25, 2019
Harvest Party (LOL host)
7:00-10:00 pm
metropolitan area, and the Churches themselves were full on Sundays, full of all the Faithful for whom they had been built.

So what has changed? What has changed is that we are no longer, fundamentally, an immigrant community. 40 years ago we did not have much - but we had each other. Our co-workers neighbors might not have been able to understand us, but at the Church, we would find people who spoke a common language, who shared a common experience of Greece during the war, and the long trip to the United States, and the hopes and fears for our children. At the Church, we could taste again what we had left behind, and gain a sense of belonging, of safety and security, of home that was all-too-absent from the rest of our lives.

But now, we belong. We own grand homes, we drive quality cars, we wear beautiful clothes. We are successful wherever we go - but we worry still about our children, and how they will fare in the world of the future. So we enroll them in the best schools, and ensure that they are able to participate in every possible activity, whether sports, or music, or math club, or debate. And thank God, in all of these things, our children excel. But - with all of that, the centrality of the Church and its community and ministries has declined. We don’t come to Church every Sunday anymore - when we do, we come late. We make sure not to miss the part where attendance is taken (Sunday School), but that has come to be the standard of timeliness. When we weigh the importance of Greek dance, and Greek School, and GOYA, versus football and baseball and band and space camp, we feel that the latter are far more likely to advance our children in their future careers, and choose the latter over the former. Not all the time, of course - we are all struggling to keep our balance. But on average, it is clear that the amount of time spent investing in the “extracurricular” activities of the world far exceeds the time spent at the Church.

The problem with this is that our children are noticing where our priorities are. They can tell that, all too often, the Church, and our heritage, come second, or third, or sometimes even dead last. And that means that, when another three decades have passed, and they have taken up the mantle of responsibility for the Church - well, it means that we cannot assume that they WILL assume the mantle of responsibility for the Church. This year, I believe it is necessary for all of us to reflect with open eyes on this problem, and to do all that we can to ensure that we succeed in making the Church and the St. George community an active priority in our lives. Part of this is consistency and predictability - it is difficult for us to make the Church a priority when our schedules have already filled up with other commitments by the time we see the Church’s schedule. Part of this, however, is simply resolving that we will make a change, that what is easy and convenient is not and cannot be a good guide for what we choose to do. I hope that understanding the consequences of our actions in the long term will help, but whether it does or not, the only way for us to succeed as a Church is if each one of us individually, each couple, each family, makes a commitment to make Jesus Christ and His Church a greater priority in our lives.

There are four pieces of this. The first is that we must learn to pray in our homes, as a family. We have
already sent to all the Sunday School families a recommendation that each family set aside a time every day to pray the Trisagion Prayers together. This is a matter of less than 5 minutes, but it can, and should, be the foundation of our life together. We include a copy of those prayers with this newsletter.

The **second** is an active and intentional participation in our Sunday worship. Sunday morning, above all, is the time that we come together as a community, as a family, as the Body of Christ. Our goal should be to arrive at 10 am, not at 10:30, and no later than 10:15, not 10:45. I know this is difficult, and I urge strongly that no one judge anyone else for tardiness (for we all struggle with this matter) - but we cannot be a Church family if we are not together for the primary work of a Church family, the offering of ourselves, and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

The **third** is a regular participation in the various Church ministries. Moving forward into this year, we will set aside Saturday night as the regular time for the Church ministries. Once a month, I will keep the Church, and my schedule, open for the HOPE/JOY groups (children 3-11), the GOYA, (kids 12-18), the Young Adults (ages 19-35), and the Orthodox Parents Association (for parents and everyone else ages 35 and up) to meet on a rotating basis, to attend the Vespers service that evening, and to share a meal or an outing together, between 5 pm and 7 pm. I do not expect that this will catch on immediately, but it has the advantage of being a time that most other commitments have left alone, of being an appropriate time in our tradition for us to gather together, and of helping us to set aside Saturday evening as preparation for Sunday morning. I know you all will face the choice of whether to choose the Church’s event - but I hope and pray you will help us make this a success. We will be meeting with all the ministries after the Divine Liturgy on October 13th to discuss this further.

In addition to these three things, we are working hard to increase the opportunities for involvement in the life of the Church for all our Faithful, with an emphasis right now on the young women of the Sunday School. We are working to reinvigorate our music and worship ministries, with both the choir and the chanters. We are increasing our parish’s efforts in Greek Dance, adding both additional teachers and more regular practices. We are offering a regular Bible Study Tuesday evenings - participation via the internet is available for those who are interested. We are continuing to invest our effort and resources into the Greek School, for the kids, as always, and hopefully for adults as well. For all of these, and more, please continue to watch this space and the weekly bulletin for more information. But all of these are “extra” - they are important, and they will help. But the three points above are critical - if we can make them an active priority, we will find that we are standing on a firm foundation for the future, both as individuals, and as a parish. For if we commit ourselves to Jesus Christ, He will not forsake us, He will always sustain us, and even the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church.

With love in Christ,

+Fr. Anthony Cook

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*Our weekly Bible Study is held Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Those who are unable to attend in person, but would like to participate, should send a text message to Fr. Anthony, and he will send a link to the live stream by text or email. Those interested in digging deeper into our Faith can also check out Fr. Anthony’s catechetical podcast at [http://theruleoffaith.typepad.com](http://theruleoffaith.typepad.com).*

*The young women of the parish are asked to participate in the changing of the Kalimata (cloth covers) for the Icon Stands, and to help to welcome parishioners and visitors in the Narthex each Sunday. More information will be forthcoming - the next change of the Kalimata will be Nov. 17, as we change to Blue for Panagia.*

*Our choir practices each Monday at 7 pm. All are welcome to join. Those who would like to learn Byzantine Chant should speak with Fr. Anthony AND join the choir.*

*Please note, as well, that we live stream each Sunday's Orthros & Divine Liturgy on our parish Youtube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/c/franthonyc-stgeorgesouthgate](https://www.youtube.com/c/franthonyc-stgeorgesouthgate). A recording of the Sunday Sermons is also posted on the YouTube channel.*

*As we are speaking of our internet offerings, please remember to check the parish website: [http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org](http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org), for announcements, and for an updated calendar of feastdays, readings, services, and events.*
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St. George Calendar of Events • October 2019
Saint George Greek Orthodox Church
Enopia Aioy Georpiy
16300 Dix-Toledo Southgate, Michigan 48195

Pastor: Rev. Fr. Anthony Cook
Residence: 734 / 716-2268
Email: franthonye@mac.com

Church: 734 / 283-8820
Fax: 734 / 283-8866
Email: stgeorgesouthgate@gmail.com

September 27, 2019

Dear Parishioners,

We pray this letter finds you and your family well.

Our General Assembly will be held on Sunday, October 20, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, approximately at 12:30 p.m. The issues to be discussed are of utmost importance to the future of our Parish. We ask that you make every effort to attend. A light luncheon will be served only for those who stay for the meeting.

The Agenda is as follows:

I. OLD BUSINESS
1. Opening Prayer
2. Confirmation of Members in good standing present
3. Election of Chair
4. Parliamentarian Appointed
5. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the previous General Assembly meeting
6. Report of the President
7. Report of the Pastor
8. Report of Treasurer—for the first ten months of 2019 and approval of 2020 Budget
9. Deaconess Report by the President of the Board of St. George Housing for Seniors

II. NEW BUSINESS
1. Other
2. Closing Prayer

In order to participate in the General Assembly, please remember that you need to have paid at least $250 toward your 2019 Stewardship Commitment. For seniors, you need to have paid at least $170. Please be sure to do so, and please attend!

In His service and yours
Nicholas Minton, President
Parish Council

With love in Christ,
Fr. Anthony Cook
Parish Priest

/sbs
Join us for a Fun Family Outing at

DEBUCK’S CORN MAZE and PUMPKIN PATCH
"THE FAMILY FUN FARM"

SUNDAY, OCT. 13 at 2pm

Everyone is invited to participate in this Ladies of Lydia special event! Plan on meeting at DeBuck’s after church. If you cannot come right away, come when you can. They are open until 6pm on Sundays.

There is always tons to do at DeBuck’s for all ages. Wagon Rides to the Pumpkin Patch, Double Trouble Slide, Giant Corn Box, Pedal Go Karts, Cannons, Kat Race, King of the Hill, Jump Pad, Bounce Houses, Barrel Train Rides, Cider & Doughnuts, & Much More!

Don’t forget the awesome Corn Maze! There are several levels.

Admission is $15/person
Kids, under 23 months are free and there are Senior/Military Discounts.

To check out DeBuck’s and all there is to do, go to
www.debuckscornmaze.com

HARVEST PARTY
SPONSORED BY LADIES OF LYDIA

Friday, October 25, 2019
Grecian Center—Parthenon Hall
7:00-10:00 pm
Cost: FREE
Each family brings a dessert

EVERYONE IS INVITED!
You are encouraged to wear your best costume!!

FOOD BEVERAGES MUSIC GAMES PRIZES CANDY
Trisagion Prayers

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Glory to You, our God, glory to You.
Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who are present everywhere and fill all things, treasury of blessings and source of Life, come and abide in us, cleanse us of every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your Name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Through the Prayers of the Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Τρισαγίαι Εὐχαί

Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Άγίου Πνεύματος, Αμήν.

Δόξα Σοι, ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, δόξα Σοι.

Βασιλεῦ Οὐράνιε, Παράκλητε, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς Ἀληθείας, ὁ πανταχοῦ παρών καὶ τὰ πάντα πληρών, ὁ θησαυρὸς τῶν ἄγαθῶν καὶ ζώης χορηγός, ἐλθὲ καὶ σκηνωσόν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ καθάρισον ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης κηλίδος, καὶ σώσων, Αγάθε, τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

Ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἁγιος Ἱσχυρός, Ἁγιος Αθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Ἁγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἁγιος Ἱσχυρός, Ἁγιος Οὐρανίας, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Ἁγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἁγιος Ἱσχυρός, Ἁγιος Αθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Άγιῳ Πνεύματι, καὶ νῦν καὶ αἰώνιο, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Αμήν.

Παναγία Τριάς, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Κύριε, ἱλάσθητι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν. Δέσποτα, συγχώρησον τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν. Άγιος, ἐπίσκεψαι καὶ ἵασαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος Σου. Κύριε, ἐλέησον. Κύριε, ἐλέησον. Κύριε, ἐλέησον.

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Άγιῳ Πνεύματι, καὶ νῦν καὶ αἰώνιο, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Αμήν.

Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά Σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία Σου· γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημα Σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

Δι’ εὐχῶν τῶν Άγίων Πατέρων ἡμῶν, Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Αμήν.
Altar Group

At our seminary of Hellenic College/Holy Cross, all the first-year students are assigned to an “Altar Group,” which has the responsibility on a rotating basis to care for the Chapel at the seminary for one week out of each month. Male and female students together arrive early before morning and evening services to prepare the chapel, and during the services the male students serve in the altar while the female students manage the candles and other responsibilities in the Narthex and throughout the chapel. Following the service, all of them clean the chapel together, leaving it ready for the next service.

This year, we will be taking this beautiful tradition as a model for a new program in the parish. We have always had a strong and active group of Altar Boys, who serve the essential tasks of helping the priest behind the Iconostasis - this year, we will ask the young women of the parish to fill a similar role outside of the altar, taking on an active responsibility for the good order and care of the Church.

There are many jobs that need to be done throughout the Church, but in order to not overburden our young people and families, we will start small and begin by asking all the young people of the Sunday School age 8 and up to help with the regular changing of the beautiful new altar cloths that have been generously donated by several of our parishioners. As we move through the Church year, the tradition of the Church calls for the colors of the altar covers to change, depending on the season. We use burgundy and gold for feasts of the Lord, blue for feasts of the Panagia, purple for Lent, green for Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and some of the “normal seasons” of the Church year, and bright white for Pascha. In this way the vestments of the Church change with the season, just like the vestments of the Priest.

The next change, from gold to blue, is coming up Sunday, November 17, in preparation for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple on November 21st. On that Sunday, we ask the young people and their families to arrive a little early, between 9:30 and 9:40 am, to prepare and replace the altar coverings throughout the Church during the final minutes of Orthros. The young women will change the covers on the four icon stands at the front of the Church and the four icon stands in the Narthex, while the young men will help me to change the altar covers inside the Altar. This is also an appropriate time to clean the glass on the Altar table and on all the icons.

Each Sundays, we ask the young women to help in the Narthex during the services - to welcome parishioners and visitors, to help manage the candles, and to otherwise assist the Parish Council. We will be holding a planning meeting for this soon, but we welcome the help of our young women from now on, as their initial experiences will provide valuable information as we work to standardize responsibilities and schedules. Please speak with me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your participation, and for your love for the Lord.

+Fr. Anthony Cook