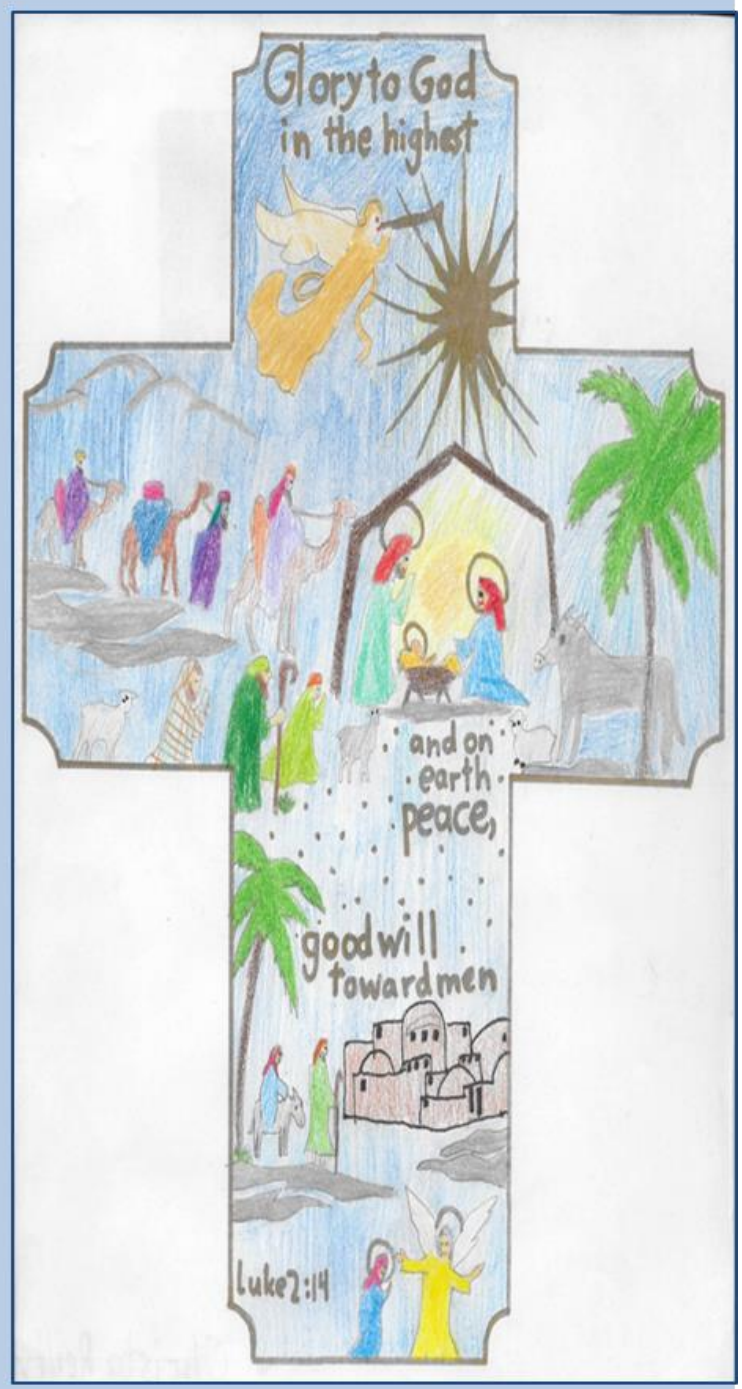
Holy Apostles
Greek Orthodox Church
Priest: Fr. George Alexson
(cell) 703-314-6421
www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org
phone 703-421-7515, fax 703-956-9498



Artwork by Christa Reilly, age 14,
2nd place winner of the 2018 Parish Christmas
Card Cover Contest. Theme: "Glory to God"

EPISTLE READING:

St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

GOSPEL READING:

The Gospel According to Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges,… (**Continued on the back**)

Philoptochos Afternoon Tea
January 12th, 1-3pm at church
RSVP by Jan. 4th to
apcphiloptochos@gmail.com

GOYA New Year Celebration Party, January 12th, 7pm
Home of the Economou family
All teenagers are invited to celebrate the start of the new year! Contact Lia Economou for details. (liaecon@comcast.net).

PAREA (Our Company of Friends) Lunch, January 15th
11:30am at Olive Garden
45970 Waterview Plaza, Sterling
RSVP to Marina (571-969-9234).

Weekly Liturgical Schedule for December

Dec. 24 Great Hours, 10:00 AM
Christmas Liturgy; 7:00 PM Orthros, 8:30 PM Divine Liturgy
Dec. 27 St. Stephen 8:15 AM Orthros, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Thank you to our **Hope and Joy** youth group for sponsoring today's coffee hour.

Didn't get our December newsletter? Contact Lia Economou for your copy (liaecon@comcast.net).

What if you could make a bigger impact? You can! Donate stock or make a monetary donation to our Capital Campaign by year-end. There are tax benefits for you and the church! Contact Lia Economou today to find out how (liaecon@comcast.net).

From the Greek School and Sunday School Teachers and students. Join us after Liturgy for our Program.

Merry Christmas - - - Καλά Χριστούγεννα

The spirit of Christmas is love. God loves us so much that He gave His Son to us. Let us celebrate His birthday. Close your eyes and feel how CHRIST works in your life. Look back and be thankful for all the blessings you received. And for staying strong despite all odds that came your way. May the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ, surround you all the days of your live. For unto us a child was born, The Messiah who saves the world. **May your Christmas be great as ever in the light of the Savior's love!**

PAREA (Our Company of Friends), Platters of Sweets to the elders in our parish, TODAY

PAREA will continue this tradition in a humble effort to show our love, respect and gratitude. HOPE and JOY will accompany the platters with beautiful handmade Christmas cards! Questions: Marina (703-349-1842)

Collection for Inova Moblie Hope Unit, At church through Dec. 23rd

Pick a tag off our giving tree in the church hall. Bring in new, unwrapped **hats, scarves and/or gloves** per the tag's request. Indicate the age and gender on your items. Thank you to Philoptochos and GOYA for organizing this collection.

Volunteer2Cheer with Special Olympics VA, January 5th

Join Hope & Joy to volunteer with Special Olympics VA by cheering on athletes competing in their 2019 Basketball Invitational Tournament. The game will take place at a Leesburg school (exact location TBD). Contact Ashley Joiner with questions (ashleydjoiner@gmail.com)

Hope & Joy Meeting. January 7th 6:30-7:30pm at church

Contact Ashley Joiner. (ashleydjoiner@gmail.com)

WEEKLY FEATURE: On Love by Saint Isaac The Syrian

Just as oil maintains the light of a lamp, so charity feeds the soul with true knowledge of God. The key for the heart to acquire divine gifts is given through love for our neighbour. How wonderful and praiseworthy is love for our neighbour, provided, of course, such concern doesn't distract us from the love of God. How sweet is the company of our spiritual brothers and sisters, as long as we can preserve our love for God, as well. If you're busy making a living, doing manual work, and you receive help from others, you have an obligation to give alms. If you neglect this, your hardness of heart will be contrary to the Lord's commandment. Suppose a monk's been given a rule to stay in his cell and pray for seven weeks or a week and, when he's completed the rule, he meets up with and keeps company with others and is consoled by their companionship. If he then is indifferent to any suffering among his brethren, thinking that his weekly rule is sufficient in itself, he's being uncharitable and harsh. Because, if he has no charity in his heart, if he's disdainful and contemplates what's false, then he won't condescend to share the pain of his brothers. If you scorn the pain of others, you aren't going to see the light of God. And if you turn your face from someone who's in trouble, your day will be a dark one. The Lord said that we should behave towards others the way we want them to behave towards us (Luke 6, 31). But if you haven't got the material goods or the bodily strength to put your love for others into practice, it's enough for God if you love them by intent. Love that comes from the things of this world is like the light of a lamp that's kept going with oil, or like a torrent that flows only when it rains and dries out when it stops. But love that comes from God is like a spring that wells up and never stops flowing. And when it falls on someone in abundance, it makes that soul ecstatic. This is why the heart of those who've felt it experience an uncommon change. The person's face becomes red as fire and joyful, and their body heats up. Fear and shyness ('bashfulness') depart from them and they become ecstatic. The power that concentrates the mind is lost and the person passes into a state beyond thought. Dread death is thought of as joy and the mind never ceases to gaze upon and contemplate things heavenly. Although it's not bodily in the heavens, it speaks as though it were, without anyone else seeing it there, of course. It loses its natural knowledge and its natural sight; it loses the sense of movement within a perceptible environment. Because whenever it does something, it doesn't feel it at all, since the mind is suspended in the contemplation of the heavens. It was this spiritual inebriation which affected the apostles and martyrs. The apostles travelled… **(Cont. on back)**

(Gospel Reading Cont.) and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

(Weekly Feature Cont.) all over the world, enduring labors, exhaustion and mockery, while the martyrs had their bodies cut up into little pieces. Their blood ran like water but, although they underwent the most terrible tortures, they didn't lose heart. Rather, they bore up with courage and, although in fact they were wise, other people considered them witless. There were also others who wandered What they did was considered improper, but for God it was most proper. May God grant that we, too, might attain to such foolishness!

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*Today's memorial is in memory of **Dr. Dionysios Adamis (20 years)**, beloved father of Eleni Hadjimichael. May his memory be eternal.*

Congratulations to our winners of the 2018 Parish Christmas Card Cover Contest

1st - Maria Koutsourais, 2nd - Christa Reilly
3rd - Hazel Lorentz

See all the submissions in the church hall. Thank you to all our parishioners who contributed to this fundraiser!

Need a gift? Check out the many items in the **Philoptochos bookcase** in the church hall. We have icons, jewelry, ornaments, and sale items.

GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION: Holy Communion is offered in the Orthodox Church only to those individuals baptized and Chrismated (Confirmed) in the Orthodox Faith. One must be in good standing with the Church spiritually (for example, married people must have had their marriage blessed in the Church; and, all must be without grave sin on their hearts). For all Orthodox Christians, the proper preparation for Holy Communion must be observed: that is, examination of conscience, confession, reading the prayers for Holy Communion, and the proper fasting and abstinence prior to Holy Communion. If you have any further questions about this, please speak with our Parish Priest. Women should remove all lipstick when approaching for Holy Communion.