

Greek School started yesterday, but you are still in time to register. For more information please contact the church office (773) 334-4515

Sunday School Registration It's back to school time for all students in preschool (ages 2+) through high school! We have an exciting year planned with Orthodox education, outreach programs, and lots of fun. Register today on the Church website or in the office. Questions? Contact Tracey Lazos at 773-230-4648 or sasschicago@gmail.com

Sunday School Teachers Needed: Are you looking for a way to give back to the community? Do you like spending time with kids, shaping the next generation of Orthodox Christians? Join the St. Andrew's Sunday School staff as a part-time, full-time or substitute teacher. Contact Tracey Lazos at 773-230-4648 or sasschicago@gmail.com for more information or to volunteer.

Mommy and Me will be meeting on Friday, September 21st @ 10:30 am in the pre-school room. Holy Cross lesson and craft. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Stephane Collopy at sacollopy@gmail.com

Saturday, September 29, 2018: 12th Annual Walk The Walk for IOCC- St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church – Registration: 8:00 AM; Walk/Run: 9:00 AM. Breakfast served in the Auditorium following the Walk. Register online at: ioccc.org/Chicago – Registration \$20 before 9/14; Registration \$25 after 9/14; and \$10 for Children under 12. Your participation and support is very important for this worthy cause! For more information, e-mail iocccchicago5k@gmail.com Please stop by the Philoptochos table after services to help assist with set-up Friday, evening, September 28th or to help serve breakfast following the Walk.

Save the Date for our Annual Boxing Event: Friday, November 16th, 2018.

St. Andrew's has Graves for Sale @ Elmwood Cemetery, Section 3B. Please call the church for additional information if you are interested (773) 334-4515



Saturday: September 1st, October 6th, November 3rd, and December 1st: First Presbyterian Church Soup Kitchen Volunteers Needed: Please send a note to Timi Papas (timpapa417@yahoo.com) if you are available to participate from: 11:15-12:45. Thank you!!

Sarah's Circle - Friday September 21, 10:30 am. at church. Join us in our monthly Outreach Project as we prepare sandwiches for those in need. Contact Vicki Karagianis at 773-327-3194 or vonnies@karafotias.com if you can help. If you'd like to make a donation, see the container located in the narthex. **Remaining dates for 2018:** Friday, October 19th, Friday, November 16 and Friday, December 14th. **Everyone is welcome!!**

Sarah's Circle's 3rd Annual Interfaith Breakfast. – Sarah's Circle invites you and your congregation to join us on **Friday, October 12th, from 8:30 to 10:00 AM at the Midwest Buddhist Temple** at 435 W Menomonee St, Chicago, IL. Breakfast will be served and a panel of Sarah's Circle staff members and clients will come together to discuss the current state of homelessness in the city. The aim of this conversation will be to inform as well as to inspire new ways to help the most vulnerable people in Chicago. We hope you will be able to join us for this meaningful gathering. If you'd like to attend, please RSVP by emailing dchisholm@sarahs-circle.org, or by calling 773-751-7454. **ALL ARE WELCOME!!!**

Welcome to Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church
"Proclaiming Orthodoxy Since 1926"



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Fr. John N. Kalomas – Proistamenos
Fr. Athanasios Minetos - Associate Priest
Fr. John Kutulas – In Loving Memory

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2018 (Sunday Before the Elevation of the Holy Cross)

STEWARDSHIP QUOTE– The Main Reason Our Lord Gives For Not Worrying About The Future Is That It's Completely In His Hands. Let Us Focus On The Present And Be Good Stewards Of God's House.

MEMORIAL

Angel Kourchoumov - 2 years

May His Memory Be Eternal!!!

Altar Steward - Roumen Kourchoumov in loving memory of his father.

40 DAY BLESSING

Nicholas Stratte Tzakis

We invite the entire Parish Family to join in prayer as the servant of God, Nicholas Stratte along with his parents, Taylor & Stephen Tzakis, present him to God within the church following the fortieth day of his birth. We offer congratulations and prayers that God continue to bless them with health and happiness.

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FOR NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS: *We welcome those Christians not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions of Christianity that we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist and for which we must all pray. We do however invite you to receive the blessed bread that is given out to all at the end of service. Thank you for coming and worshipping with us.*
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Born Again as a New Creation: Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

It is amazing how blind we can all be at times to truths that are staring us in the face. For whatever reason, we sometimes simply do not grasp even the most obvious points. That is how Nicodemus, a Pharisee and expert in the Old Testament law, responded to Jesus Christ's teaching that we must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Though Nicodemus thought that the Lord spoke of a second physical birth, Christ was speaking of a new life in Him, a spiritual rebirth through water (meaning baptism) and the Holy Spirit whereby we participate personally in the eternal life of God. Nicodemus was shocked because he thought of religion in terms of obeying laws, not in terms of becoming a new creation. So the Savior gave Nicodemus a practical example from the Old Testament. Moses once lifted up a bronze serpent on a rod to cure the Israelites from poisonous snake bites. Through this act by Moses, the giver of the law, the Jewish people were spared from death on a particular day. But when Jesus Christ is lifted up on the cross, He makes it possible for those who believe in Him to be born into eternal life, to become a new creation in Him. For our Lord is not merely a prophet or the giver of the law, He is the One Who came down from heaven, the only-begotten Son of the Father. Purely out of love for us, He went to the cross, not to condemn us, but to make it possible for us to be born again in the joy and blessing of life eternal.

This was too much for Nicodemus to understand; he had probably never heard such things in his life. But by the end of the gospel of John, we read that Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathea prepare the Lord's body for burial after His crucifixion. He became Saint Nicodemus and gave his own life for Christ, following Him in the way of the cross as a martyr. Why would Nicodemus have done that? He had a respectable position among his own people as a Pharisee. But perhaps he sensed in Jesus Christ something completely new and for which he longed deep in his soul. In this unconventional Messiah, he found an unexpected God Who took the condemnation of the law upon Himself. He found a Father Who would offer His own Son to death out of love for those who are condemned by the law. He found a Lord Who would be slaughtered as the Passover Lamb and rise in glory for our salvation. Like Nicodemus, the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee who changed completely, ultimately becoming an unparalleled evangelist and missionary and the author of so much of the New Testament. In Christ Jesus, St. Paul experienced what he called "a new creation." For our Lord is the new Adam in which all that has gone wrong with human beings and the world since the fall of our first parents has been set right. He has taken the condemnation of the old Adam—of sin, death, and corruption—upon Himself with

His cross. He has brought us all up from the pit of hades to the heights of heaven in His glorious resurrection and ascension.

A legal code cannot do that, but the God-Man Jesus Christ can and did. So Paul learned, as had Nicodemus, to boast in nothing except the cross of Christ; in other words, the unfathomable love of the Father Who gave His only-begotten Son, the great Mystery of the Eternal Word of God who became a Passover Lamb, became the basis of a new life for these former Pharisees, a new life that was worth dying for as martyrs. Even as we speak today of being born again into a new life and becoming a new creation in Jesus Christ, we remember the birth of His Holy Mother the Theotokos to Sts. Joachim and Anna. Think about that for a moment. We cannot tell the story of God's salvation becoming present in the world without mentioning particular people who offered themselves as agents of the new creation, as instruments of His new life. This is not a faith about a book or a set of laws that falls from the sky; instead, our faith is about true personal participation in the life of One Who shares and fulfills our existence in this world as we know it. Yes, to be our Savior as the God-Man, the Son of God had to have a mother and grandparents like the rest of us.

Joachim and Anna were a righteous, childless, and old couple, like Abraham and Sarah. God worked through these particular people and the miraculous conception of their daughter to bring the eternal life of Christ into the world. Perhaps laws and ideas can simply be taught or written down in general, but God's salvation is personal and must be embodied in the lives of unique human beings. The Holy Trinity prepared for the incarnation of the Son through so many generations of the Hebrew people, culminating with a particular couple who in old age miraculously give birth to the one holy, pure, and obedient young woman who in turn brought Christ into the world through her own maternal love. This narrative is the unfolding of a new creation that cannot be reduced to a set of rules or abstractions. It is not about general ideas of any kind. It is, instead, a particular and personal story that cannot be told without reference to matters as intimate as marriage, conception, and pregnancy; it involves men, women, the young, and the old; and its fulfillment extends from the Virgin's womb to the Cross and empty tomb. The shocking good news is that Jesus Christ calls each of us as powerfully and personally as Joachim and Anna were called to become the parents of the Theotokos. He calls us all to new life in Him, to share in the new creation of His salvation, as the distinct and unrepeatable people that we are in His image and likeness. So it is not enough simply to know the words of John 3:16, as spoken to Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." As participants in the new creation, you and I must actually live out this new life that Christ has brought to the world in our daily challenges with all the quirks, peculiarities, and weaknesses that each of us possesses. Every bit of who we are must become the stuff of the new creation, must be shine with the light of the new birth in our Lord.

The same sacrificial, humble, forgiving love that is our salvation must become evident in our lives, must become characteristic of who we are as real living and breathing people. For to live as one born again through Christ is not merely to have a feeling or experience a one-time event; instead, it is the full-blown personal reality of sharing in His life, of participating in His salvation, of living as His faithful disciples each day in response to whatever challenges come our way. It is the joy of being part of a new creation, the New Adam, the Body of Christ. It is the blessing of life everlasting, of the salvation of God, which the cross of Christ has brought into the world. Of course, if this new life were about being perfect in the sense of never falling short, none of us would know anything about it because we all have room to grow in holiness. None of us fully manifests the righteousness of Christ; remember, however, that He came to save and heal, not to judge and condemn by a legal standard. So whatever progress we make in the Christian life is ultimately a sign of His mercy and blessing. When we hold our tongues when we are tempted to curse and condemn, when we struggle mightily to turn our attention away from unholy thoughts of any kind, when we pray for those who irritate us, and when we feebly turn our attention to God in prayer and at least make it to Liturgy with some regu-

larity, we take small and real steps in opening our lives more fully to a deeper personal relationship with our Savior. We embrace at least a bit His new life and become more fully His new creation by His grace.

Judge you or me by a legal standard alone, and there will be no hope for us because we all fall short. But in the mercy of the God Who worked through Joachim, Anna, Nicodemus, and Paul to bring salvation to the world, we have great hope as those born again in Jesus Christ. He did not come to bring a new set of laws, but to fulfill the old ones as the Person in Whom we are all able to participate in eternal life and to become a new creation. If you have not figured it out, that is what we pray for in every service and hopefully every day of our lives. So just as the Theotokos and Her parents and all the Saints have played their unique roles in the salvation of the world, let us do the same with trust that, in ways that we cannot possibly know, this is all part of bringing the new creation in Jesus Christ to its fulfillment. As hard as it may be to believe, the story of God's salvation of the world continues each day through you and me.

Given by Fr. Philip LeMasters Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics

EPISTLE READING Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of

Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen

GOSPEL READING: John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

UPCOMING SERVICES

Friday, September 14th, 2018

Holy Cross

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.