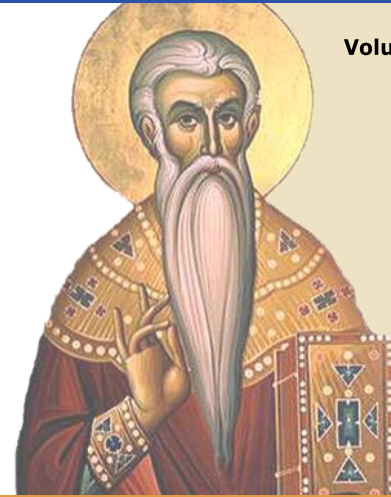


in Touch

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**Blessing of the Waters
on Epiphany, January 6**

Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

Epiphany Services

On the 12th day of Christmas, Jan. 6, the Orthodox Christian Church celebrates the baptism of our Lord, Jesus Christ, known as Epiphany or Theophany. At the time of His baptism by John in the Jordan River, the three persons of Holy Trinity were revealed: the voice of God the Father; Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him in the form of a dove.

The service schedule begins with the reading of the Royal Hours of Epiphany at 9 am on Thursday, Jan. 5, and continues with the Divine Liturgy at 4 pm that afternoon. The Blessing of the Waters will be celebrated following the liturgy with Holy Water available in pre-filled bottles, or parishioners can bring their own Holy Water bottles.

On Friday, Jan. 6, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 9am, again followed by the Blessing of the Waters.



Christmas Angel Gifts and Food Drive



Thank you to all our Christmas Angels whose generous donations of food and gifts shared the love of the Christmas season with families in our community by partnering with the City of Peoria Community Action Program! Thank you to Presvytera Kristin Pallad for organizing all the Angel tree gifts and food boxes for pickup and delivery by the City of Peoria staff.

Christmas Celebration

Happy faces for the Ornament Exchange at our Christmas party!



Portico Project

We are well on our way to funding the construction of a front entry portico for the entrance of our church! Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated to help us build this wonderful addition to our building.





The Feast of Epiphany

The 12th Day of Christmas is Jan. 6, the Feast of Epiphany, the day our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan River. The holy water in the beautiful silver font (front cover) is given for everyone to drink, and is also put into the sprinkler that is used to bless houses.

If you've recently moved into a new home, or it has been a while since your current house was blessed, contact the church office to schedule your New Year's house blessing with the date that works best for you and your family. Yes, this is a family event!

The Epiphany Blessing, the Holy Water, reminds us of the Lord's baptism. John the Baptist was already baptizing many who had come to him, confessing their sins. When he saw Jesus approach, John said, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. (Matt.3:13-15)

This was an interesting exchange between Jesus and John. All who came to John to be baptized did so confessing their sins. John, however, recognized Jesus as the Son of God, and knew that Jesus was without sin. It was quite natural, then, for John to stop and consider why Jesus had come to him.

Did Jesus come to confess His sins, like all the others had come to do? No, there was no need for Jesus to confess any sin. Jesus responded to John that He was there to fulfill all righteousness. Listen to an explanation from St. Jerome:

"For three reasons the Savior accepted baptism from John. First, because he was born a man, that he might fulfill all justice and humility of the law. Second, that by his baptism he might confirm John's baptism. And third, that by sanctifying the waters of the Jordan through the descent of the dove (Holy Spirit), he might show the Holy Spirit's advent in the baptism of believers."

Jesus was not baptized for His sake, but for John's, and for ours. By Jesus consenting to baptism, John's baptism was given ultimate credibility. By the Lord consenting to baptism, he gave us an example to follow.

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first step in our conversion to being a Christian. We are changed by the grace of God, through the baptismal waters. The change is sealed with the Sacrament of Chrismation, and we receive the Holy Spirit with the anointing of Chrism.

The grace of God sanctifies water on the feastday of Epiphany. The prayers read during the Holy Water Blessing service ask God to bless those who drink, or who are sprinkled with, the water. This is why we bless water at Epiphany, and bless houses, businesses, cars and animals with the holy water, at any time, but particularly at the start of the year.

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first step in our conversion to being a Christian



**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

www.stharalambos.org

Rev. Michael Pallad

Sunday Worship

Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

[Services live online](#)

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Hours

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parish Council

Cynthia Bekiaris	Vivian Teska
Deborah Chionchio	Mary Wysmierski
Hope Evangelinos	Ray Wysmierski
Anna Kinniburgh	Solomon Woldesilassie
Dan Teska	

Parish Council News

By Anna Kinniburgh, President

This will be my last article as President of the Council, and I want to thank everyone for their participation in church activities.

During the year we have had several successful fundraisers:

- Two Food Truck Fundraisers
- Philoptochos had two successful Pastry Sales
- The Easter Potluck Dinner was very successful, and we are hoping to have it again in 2023.
- The 35th Anniversary Dinner was enjoyed by all

- A very successful Christmas Party was enjoyed by many.

We have a newly elected Parish Council of 9 and officers will be elected in January.

I will still be in the Parish Council for one more year and I will continue working on the Portico. With God's help and everyone's participation and outside donations, I hope to finish the project this year. Your participation as a steward of St. Haralambos is vital to our stability and growth. Please pledge your stewardship.

Birthdays



Suad Bastell (1)
Sharon Magnani (3)
Ruth Panousopoulos (5)
Judy Farr (12)
Philemon Russom (13)
Elaine Giannias (14)
Naomi Solomon (21)
Ocbai Tesfay (27)
Catherine Baxter (28)
Mary Wysmierski (29)
Frosene Bravos (31)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.

Parish Council Elections

Congratulations to the following parishioners who were elected to serve on the Parish Council: Cynthia Bekiaris, Deborah Chionchio, Dan Teska, Vivian Teska, Mary Wysmierski, Ray Wysmierski,

and Solomon Woldesilassie. May our Lord bless and guide our Parish Council to administer our Church community with love and dedication.

Book Club

For many of us, reading is a joy and a passion. By joining a Book Club, you can turn this hobby of one into a platform for many--meeting to share ideas, learn from each other's perspectives, and for the joy of fellowship. Be part of the planning and

organizing of this new ministry and come to the Fellowship Room Sunday, Jan. 29. Maria Lafayette and Irene Nathanson will be there to gauge parish interest and answer your questions.

House Blessings

Starting on Monday, Jan. 9, parishioners can contact the church office by phone or email to schedule their House Blessing. A return phone call or email will be sent to confirm the day and time.



Stewardship

The 2023 Stewardship brochures have been mailed to all parish families. Additional brochures are available at the church. Please print legibly, and enter your contributions of time, talents and treasure. Completed brochures can be mailed to the office or dropped off on Sundays.

There are no Membership Dues, there is no required minimum or maximum donation. But we should all take seriously caring for our Church, and not leaving its care to others.

The teaching on Christian Stewardship remains consistent to help us learn to be good stewards: we give back to God what is already His. We come into this world with nothing, and we leave it with nothing. All that we have in this life comes from God's blessings, and returning back a portion to God through His Church, is our way of acknowledging the source of our blessings.

Our financial contributions should be a percentage of our income. This continues the biblical teaching on deciding an appropriate amount each year. It is fair because percentage giving is not a fixed amount applicable to all families, and it is biblical because of the teaching of the tithe, or a 10% gift back to the Church.

Above all, our giving should be cheerfully given, recognizing our desire - not simply obligation - to give back to God a portion of our blessings we receive from Him.

Being a Steward of St. Haralambos Church implies much more than membership. Our parish will continue to grow according to how each of us gives our time, talent and treasure in support of our mission to be a "loving Christ-centered community whose mission is to keep, practice, and proclaim our Orthodox Christian faith as a living presence to those around us."



New Book Signing Celebration

Longtime parishioner of St. Haralambos Church, Magda Demou-Gryparis recently published her second book, *The Transformative Power of Art*. In it, she shares how art and her love for painting saved her from the trauma and depression which resulted from unsuccessful hip surgery. The book is an incredible unfolding of her healing journey and is a testament to the power of art.

Similar to her first book, *The Village, The war and the occupation through the eyes of a four-year-old*, the book

illustrates many of Magda's beautiful oil and watercolor paintings. Both stories are bravely written and unforgettable, ones which will inspire you to read over and over again. So please come and support Magda by attending an exclusive book signing event in the Fellowship Room on Sunday, Jan. 22. Stop by to hear a few words from Father Michael and talk to Magda about her accomplishments. Both of her paperbacks will be available for purchase at the signing. See you then!



Eternal Memory

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of His servant, Roy Christian, who fell asleep in the Lord on Dec. 27, 2022. Roy was a very active and devout member of our

church community from its beginning days. May God grant loving comfort to his family, and may his memory be eternal.

JANUARY 2023

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Saint Basil the Great New Year's Day	2	3	4	5 9:00am Royal Hours of Theophany 4:00pm Divine Liturgy Eve of Theophany Blessing of the Waters	6 9:00am Divine Liturgy Theophany Blessing of the Waters	7
8 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Philoptochos	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Vasilopita Sunday	16	17	18 9:00am Divine Liturgy Sts. Athanasios and Cyril	19	20	21
22 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	23	24	25 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Gregory the Theologian	26	27	28
29 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	30 9:00am Divine Liturgy Three Great Hierarchs	31				