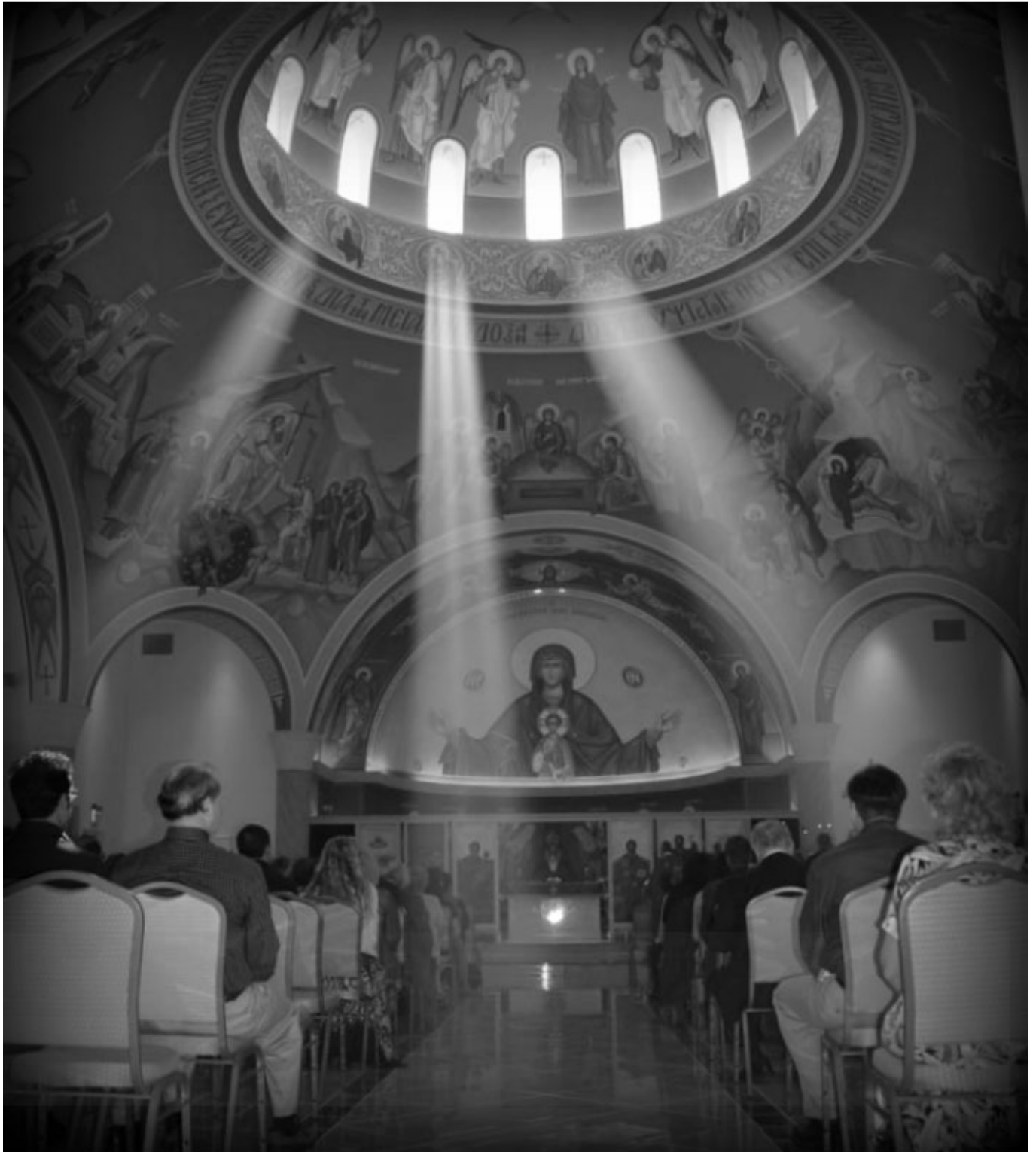


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## **Transforming the Heart of a Community: From Dues to Stewardship**



## Stewardship Ministry Profiles: Holy Trinity Church – Pittsburgh, PA

Fr. John Touloumes arrived at Holy Trinity in August 1993 with a mandate from then Bishop (later Metropolitan) Maximos: Transition the parish of almost 200 families from dues to stewardship. Within four months, the team built its stewardship ministry – in Greek and English – and the parish has never looked back. After 88 years on Pittsburgh's north side, Holy Trinity broke ground in December 2011 on a new complex that Metropolitan Savas opened on Pentecost weekend in June 2013 (the 90th anniversary of the parish). The parish is on target to pay off its mortgage by 2020 – or sooner.

Today, Holy Trinity is over 270 families and, in 2018, it celebrates its 95th anniversary as well as 25 years of Fr. Touloumes' ministry. "In truth, I believe the best days and years still lie ahead for this parish," said Fr. Touloumes. "When Holy Trinity first adopted stewardship, it was applied at the most basic level. Now, stewardship is entirely organic in our parish. It's integrated into everything in the life of the community."

Embracing stewardship at Holy Trinity began by recognizing that everything its parishioners and clergy have emanates from God – their very lives, their health and all worldly possessions. In recognition of this, the parish gives its time, talents and treasure (the three Ts) as thanks to God and does not view stewardship as an obligation, dues or a tax. "Our stewards are energized and committed to the mission of the church," added Mike Kritiotis, stewardship committee member.

That commitment stems from the personal nature of the stewardship program, which is most effective according to Stewardship team members. When people are approached and asked in a one-to-one manner about giving their time and talent to Holy Trinity they almost always respond in the affirmative. "We have spent years building trust within our parish – they trust our council, our ministry leaders and our clergy," said stewardship committee member Charlie Petrides. "And people respond to trust and to the personal nature of our stewardship program."

In return, parish and ministry leaders are open about their annual goals (not just financial) and they report on progress against those goals to the entire parish. Further, Holy Trinity surveys its parishioners (anonymously) and is open to suggested changes and responsive to criticism. This, too, is part of the personal approach Holy Trinity takes to stewardship and another way it engages parishioners of all ages and backgrounds. "Stewardship is personal," said

stewardship committee member Ted Stewart. "It's about connecting and engaging people. The face of our parish is many faces and many stories. Successful stewardship shows people a familiar story they can connect with, whether they are a millennial, a young family or senior citizens whose children and grandchildren are part of the parish. Stewardship is not just about numbers or need, it's about our relationship with God."

#### Stewardship Lessons Learned from Holy Trinity Pittsburgh:

- Build on, and recognize, the successes of the past;
  - Learn from successful models;
  - Harvest the talents of individuals who believe in – and can develop and promote – stewardship;
  - Uses existing resources and adopt them to fit your parish needs;
  - Engage all constituencies of your parish – leave no one out so you get buy-in from the community;
  - Use outside resources and professional talent whenever possible;
  - Promote and build enthusiasm while also being open to feedback and answering questions;
  - Stewardship is stewardship, not dues in disguise;
  - Stewardship always works when done properly and will increase parish income over dues;
  - In your church, everything is stewardship;
  - Change the language to stewardship;
  - Adopt new technologies and workflows that integrate a stewardship mindset;
  - Stewardship is a synergistic process of clergy and laity;
  - Stewardship is an act of faith, not a gamble or just a way to balance the books;
  - Keep stewardship fresh and continuously build momentum – or it will die;
  - Celebrate stewardship on a community level; and
- Build a stewardship team. There are laborers The Lord has sent to the vineyard and they are ready to plant along with you. We plant. He will make it grow.

Many thanks to Holy Trinity Stewardship Team Leaders: Mike Kritiotis, Ted Stewart, Charlie Petrides, and Fr. John Touloumes

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# Saint Joseph the Hesychast

