

Desert Springs

October 2025
Volume 10
Issue 9



September 14—Exaltation of the Cross

Newsletter of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

1973 E. Maryland Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85016

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Monday–Friday, 9:00am–3:00pm

Sunday Worship

8:00am Orthros

9:30am Divine Liturgy

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The 25th of each month

Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Wednesdays, 12 noon

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Vice President: Sandy Annos

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Alexander Harding, Art Kostaras,

Jill Leach, Niko Panagiotakopoulos,

Chris Petroulakis, John Schneider

Holy Trinity Cathedralwww.holytrinityphx.org**Metropolis of San Francisco**www.SanFran.goarch.org**Archdiocese Website**www.goarch.org

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- **Desert Diamonds (50+)** — Julie Karoutas: juliekaroutas@gmail.com
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Attention Organizations:

Please check the listings on this page and confirm that the information is correct. Email is the default contact type, but listings can be changed to text or phone if preferred. Email any changes to both the Office at manager@holytrinityphx.org and Kristen at kristen.vasilarakos@outlook.com. **It is the organization's responsibility** to inform Heidi or Kristen of any updates to your listing.

A Message from Father Alexander

Philoxenia



At the heart of Greek Culture is the word “Philoxenia,” translated literally as friend of the stranger. Nothing shows this better every year than our wonderful Greek Festival where thousands of our neighbors pile into our grounds to eat our food but also see our love

and hospitality in action! Months of hard work lead up to a weekend of even more hard work just to be together and serve others, what a monumental and great accomplishment every time we pull it off! I’m always in awe of how our community comes together to show love and welcome those who come to us.

But we’re beginning to see many people pile into the church, not just one weekend per year, but every weekend of the year! I’ve lost count on how many people tell me they turn around in church and don’t recognize half the people, what are we to do?! It’s a pretty simple answer, do as you do in the festival, do as you would do if someone you didn’t know came to your home! We welcome them, we show them in, we tell them our story and ask them theirs, we share our life together and as they come more and more our home becomes their home and our community grows. This is incumbent upon us as Christians!

It may feel unfamiliar but so are 95% of the faces at our festival and yet we are excited to see them and show off our home to them. Why would every Sunday be any different? It may be uncomfortable and different but soon, it will make you understand more deeply why you are

here yourself and push you to be more knowledgeable about your faith and more at home here at your church. Soon the visitor and inquirer will become for you a welcome face because they help give you purpose in your own faith too.

So the next time you turn around in church and feel the feeling of, “Who are these people?” change the tone in the question from one of discomfort or distrust to curiosity. You’ll find you are not actually threatened by any means but in fact a valuable resource of faith and also community input to those entering the Church.

And to you group entering into the Church, don’t be afraid to say hello, and jump in wholeheartedly to this parish, you’ll see most of the time that is the key to joining community, some sweat and blood equity! Learn the stories of the families who themselves came from a different country but their first priority was to build a community and church from their own last pennies and dimes to worship God and be together.



In this way we’ll ensure this community and God’s Church continues on and grows as it was intended to and with the spirit that has been infused in the Greek culture by God to love and serve and open our homes to the world around us. Turn to your neighbor in church (who maybe, heaven forfend is sitting in your usual spot) and bring them to coffee hour and get to know who they are and see how God brings them and you closer to Him!

Let's Meet Our Parishioner Neighbors!

The Pardhe Family



Daniel and Anna were born and raised in India. Daniel was from a Roman Catholic background while Anna was raised in a Protestant household. They were married in December of 1996 and, in March 2002, moved from India to Phoenix. At the time, Mary was three years old and Joshua three months. Elizabeth was born in 2006. While Daniel built his career as a software architect, Anna homeschooled the children until they started attending Barrett, the Honors College at ASU.

While attending a nondenominational church, they soon realized that they had more questions about theology than answers. They first learned about Orthodoxy in 2011 and were invited to attend the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity by Telly and Evelyn Macrodimitris. After a period of studying, the whole family was baptized in February 2012. Shortly afterwards, Daniel and Anna got married again in the Orthodox church and have been a part of the Holy Trinity community since then. The children began studying the Greek language and chanting. Joshua and Elizabeth have both served as chanters at the cathedral and the family has been active with the Celebration Committee, Living Orthodox young adult group, and other parish ministries.

Mary has her PhD in molecular and cellular biology and pursued entrepreneurship with her biotech company. Joshua has a double master's in

computer systems engineering and finance and is currently working at Ernst and Young in Manhattan. Elizabeth is at Barrett, the Honors College at ASU and is pursuing a double major in data science and economics.

We would love to meet you during coffee hour!



Photo of Joshua chanting at Patriarch Bartholomew's visit to the Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral in Manhattan. September 2025

Fall Bible Study

Bible Study on the Book of Romans has begun with Fr. Alexander in the Chapel and on Zoom and is open to all every Wednesday after Paraklesis.

Learning to Live an Orthodox Life

The Fall semester of catechism is held on **Saturdays at 3:30pm** before Vespers. This year's theme is "Learning to live an Orthodox life" with an emphasis on the practical application of the Orthodox faith to our daily lives. The class is open to all Cathedral members and lasts for one hour. Please contact Fr. Apostolos to register.

Our catechism class assignment for this week is to attend and enjoy the Festival! To meet new friends, watch our young dancers perform, volunteer to help if you can, take the guided tours of the Cathedral, and learn why our Holy Trinity Cathedral family is so much fun! Of course, this means our class will not be meeting.

Let's Meet Our Parishioner Neighbors!

The Carver Family

Our journey to Holy Orthodoxy began in the throes of the pandemic. While losing connection with our former church, Amanda began streaming Holy Trinity's services on our TV. Chad was hesitant at first, but he occasionally watched and listened. Sundays continued as such until one day, Father Apostolos' homily referenced the *Lord of the Rings* –more specifically, he was speaking on Boromir, one of Chad's favorite characters from the book; from that moment, Chad was drawn in. We watched liturgy for months until we felt ready to mask our kids up and go into the church for the first time. With a warm welcome from both fathers and the reassurance from them that the "Cathedral exists for our kids," we came back week after week.

In retrospect, the Orthodox church has always been in the background of our lives. Although she never met him, Amanda's great grandfather had immigrated from the Greek island of Samos, and she grew up fascinated by her Greek ancestry – spending her time researching his baptism, death, and marriage records in Greece, all recorded by the local parish in Samos. On top of this, it was a shared love for all things Greek history and archaeology that brought Chad and Amanda together as graduate student nerds in Ancient Greek at U of A Classics. All this made Amanda ponder the lost faith of her family, and her curiosity in Orthodoxy only strengthened over the course of several years –a course that eventually brought her family to the faith.

We feel blessed to be part of the Holy Trinity community that has welcomed us with open arms! Some of the ministries at Holy Trinity that our family has been blessed to be part of are Greek school, Greek dance, 4F, Altar boys, and Sunday school. Outside of church you'll find Chad working as a Latin teacher and at our neighborhood Trader Joe's, as well as creating artwork to share at comic cons. Amanda is a former Special Education

Teacher turned Program Manager at the nonprofit Paideia Institute. Please come say hello to us at church, if we haven't already met! We'd love to get to know you!



With love in Christ,
-Chad, Amanda, Charlie, Henry and George

OPA Car Wash

Get your car washed during Coffee Social on **Sunday, October 19** down by the Large Hall.

All proceeds to benefit OPA and our Dance program.



Contribution Envelopes

If you have not signed up for yearly contribution envelopes, please email the office at htfrontoffice@holytrinityphx.org before October 15 so we can get you on the list for 2026.

If you have been receiving envelopes, we will reorder for 2026 unless you notify the office to cancel.

Stewardship

By Sandy Meris



2025 THEME: “Your Own From Your Own”

Holy Trinity Cathedral “Why Statement”:

“To be a welcoming community, sharing Christ’s love through faith and service.”

WHAT DOES STEWARDSHIP LOOK LIKE IN OCTOBER?

October is an extremely busy month at Holy Trinity with the Greek Festival which feels all consuming. October is “Festival Season” for our Cathedral family. But this is a short lived time of frenzied and organized chaos and once November hits we get “back to normal.”

So let’s examine how we can ride this wave and how embracing the festival and all it entails is part of our call to true Stewardship. We know that Stewardship means to care for something precious that does not belong to us but is our responsibility to foster. And for the month of October (and many months prior) that is the festival.

We are asked to give of our **TIME** (volunteering at the festival), **TALENT** (lending our talents in areas that help the festival), **TREASURE** (perhaps donating to Friends of the Festival or purchasing gift certificates or admission tickets for non-HTC friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.)

Not only does the festival raise almost half of our operating capital for the year, when you fully engage in the planning, set-up, working a booth and clean-up, you feel the deep pride and satisfaction of a job well done. And when working side by side with your fellow parishioners, the fellowship that takes place is irreplaceable. So if you haven’t already signed up for working multiple shifts throughout the weekend, now is the time. Your church needs you!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR FALL PARISH-WIDE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Saturday, November 22nd Noon - 2 PM

Mark your calendars and get ready to join us for our Fall Parish-Wide Community Outreach Project as we fill emergency food boxes for those in need at St. Mary’s Food Bank.

We only have 50 spots available and sign-ups are required. Specific details and a link will be emailed out to the entire parish after the festival.

Catechumen Reception

September 20, 2025



Catechumen Reception
September 20, 2025

After Vespers we hosted all our catechumens for a reception to get to know each other and some members of the Parish

Council and other key support members for our Welcome and Catechumen ministries. A big thank you to those who helped out and may God continue to open their hearts and minds to bring them into His Church!

[Click for Reception Photos](#)

Holy Trinity's St. Katherine Philoptochos

Kristen Vasilarakos, President



Next Meeting: Sunday, November 9, 2025, 11:45am
Lounge of the Speros Community Center



Check in on a Parishioner—Circle of Angels

Do you have a family member or friend who has not been able to come to church lately? Please let us know! Call or Text Julie at 850-225-4978.



Liturgical New Year— Blessing of the Waters



Tuesday Coffee Group

We will resume on **October 14!**

For those with a flexible schedule:
Join us for coffee and talk. Included within the social are activities related to Philoptochos' **Circle of Angels**, other chapter support, sometimes church office support, and just plain hanging out with friends.

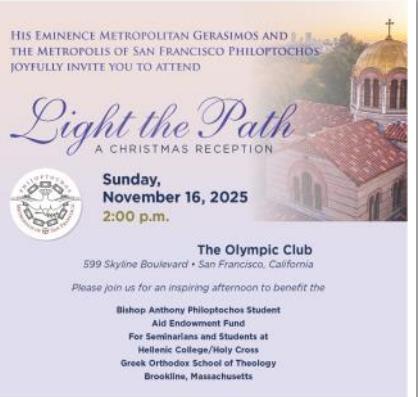
Come hang out if you can!



September Meeting



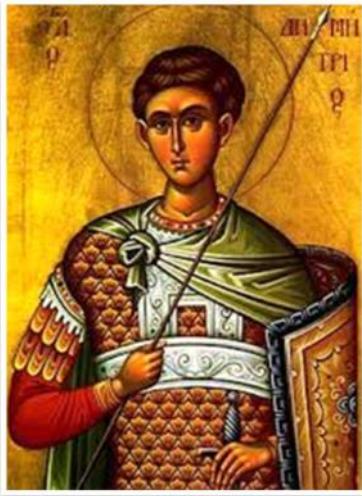
Seminarian Support



St. Nectarios Books & Beyond

Submitted by Rita Papaspyrou
stnectariosphx@gmail.com

The Holy Great Martyr Demetrios the Myrrh-streamer



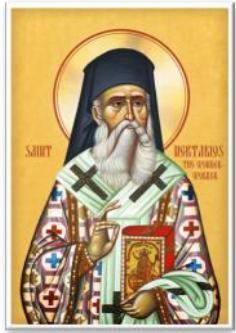
On **October 26**, we have the opportunity to commemorate the Holy Great Martyr Demetrios the Myrrh-streamer.

Saint Demetrios was a Thessalonian, a most pious son of pious and noble parents, and a teacher of the Faith of Christ. When Maximian

first came to Thessalonica in 290, he raised the Saint to the rank of Duke of Thessaly. But when it was discovered that the Saint was a Christian, he was arrested and kept bound in a bath-house. While the games were under way in the city, Maximian was a spectator there. A certain friend of his, a barbarian who was a notable wrestler, Lyaeus by name, waxing haughty because of the

height and strength of his body, boasted in the stadium and challenged the citizens to a contest with him. All that fought with him were defeated. Seeing this, a certain youth named Nestor, acquaintance of Demetrios', came to the Saint in the bath-house and asked his blessing to fight Lyaeus single-handed. Receiving this blessing and sealing himself with the sign of the precious Cross, he presented himself in the stadium, and said, "O God of Demetrios, help me!" and straightway he engaged Lyaeus in combat and smote him with a mortal blow to the heart, leaving the former boaster lifeless upon the earth. Maximian was sorely grieved over this, and when he learned who was the cause of this defeat, he commanded straightway and Demetrios was

pierced with lances while he was yet in the bath-house. As for Nestor, Maximian commanded that he be slain with his own sword.



Retired Men's Coffee Group

Calling all retired gentlemen! Join us for a weekly coffee group beginning Thursday, June 12th at 10:00 am in the church office conference room. Meet us each Thursday morning for a cup of coffee and some fellowship. No agenda, just an opportunity for some fellowship and good



4F Night

Join us on **Saturday, Oct 18 at 4:30pm** for **Movie Night**. All youth grades 1-12 are welcome.



God's Corner

This corner is available on Sundays during Coffee Socials for our little ones to play in and learn together. If you're interested in helping, please contact **Mara Contes** at mara.contes18@gmail.com.



Celebration Committee



On the first Sunday of each month, the Celebration Committee organizes a luncheon during coffee hour to celebrate all the special events in parishioners' lives and birthdays that take place in that month. Please join us every month to celebrate!

The Celebration Sunday was a celebration of all September birthdays! The hall was decorated with red tablecloths, graciously donated by Dr. Suzie Schumaker and her daughters, Delia and Sadie, in memory of her husband, Eric.

If you want to support the ministry or join the team, please email htcpixeevents@gmail.com and/or talk to Terri Alexon or Mary Pardhe!



October Celebration Sunday

Celebration Sunday for October is being moved to **Sunday, October 19** as we celebrate October birthdays! If you have an anniversary or special occasion coming up, please let us know at htcpixeevents@gmail.com.

Communal Cooking Event

Join us for our next communal cooking event on **Saturday, Oct. 18 at 11:30 am** in the Holy Trinity kitchen! Open to all ages and cooking levels.

Communal Cooking Event

For the September Celebration Sunday, the Communal Cooking crew led by Phillip Panagiotoglou served wraps (gyro and chicken), pasta salad, cake, and desserts.

If you are interested in helping out or joining us for future cooking events, please email htcpixeevents@gmail.com.

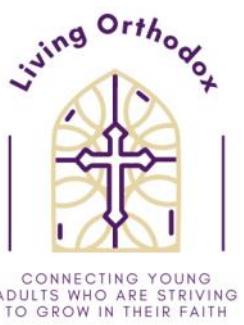


October Birthdays



Living Orthodox Young Adult Ministry

Living Orthodox is a national, pan-Orthodox ministry that is building a community of young adults (18-30s) who are striving to grow in and connect with their faith. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/LOconnect> for our email/SMS lists!



“Called to Serve: Living the Liturgy After the Liturgy” Missions Retreat and Family Event

On September 13th, we welcomed Fr. Stephanos Ritsi (OCMC Mission Center Interim Missionary Director), Anastasia Pamela Barksdale (Parish Engagement Coordinator), and over 100 people from 3 states and 8 parishes for our missions retreat and family event! The event was co-hosted by OCMC, Living Orthodox, and OCF.



The morning retreat included a keynote presentation by Fr. Stephanos Ritsi; panel discussions with parish representatives and metropolis

ministry leaders; small-group discussions; and plenty of opportunities for people to connect. Lunch was prepared by Phillip Panagiotoglou.

The evening event was a family night with a service project, “Youth on a Mission” activity, adult reception, and community dinner.

Following dinner, we watched the movie “American Orthodox”. For the “Youth on a Mission” activity, the kids received passports and a gift bag for a “world trip” to various countries that host OCMC missionaries. Volunteers at each table shared



information about Orthodoxy in the country, provided cultural snacks/beverages, and taught the kids how to say Orthodox-related words and phrases.

Due to generous donations, the registration cost was fixed at \$15. The evening dinner was graciously sponsored by the Panagiotakopoulos family. Special thanks to OPA and all the volunteers who freely gave their time and talents to make the event a success!

“American Orthodox” Movie Synopsis: Travel to California’s coastal Fort Ross, where an icon mysteriously washed ashore, sparking a legacy of faith. Encounter St. Peter the Aleut, a Native American saint who courageously planted the seeds of Orthodoxy and gave his life as a martyr. Through the lives of early saints, this evocative film reveals the hidden stories and sacred connections that continue to shape America’s spiritual landscape. Visit <https://orthochristian.com/170403.html> for more details! If you are interested in seeing the film but were unable to make it, please email livingorthodoxministry@gmail.com. If we have enough interest, we will plan another movie showing!

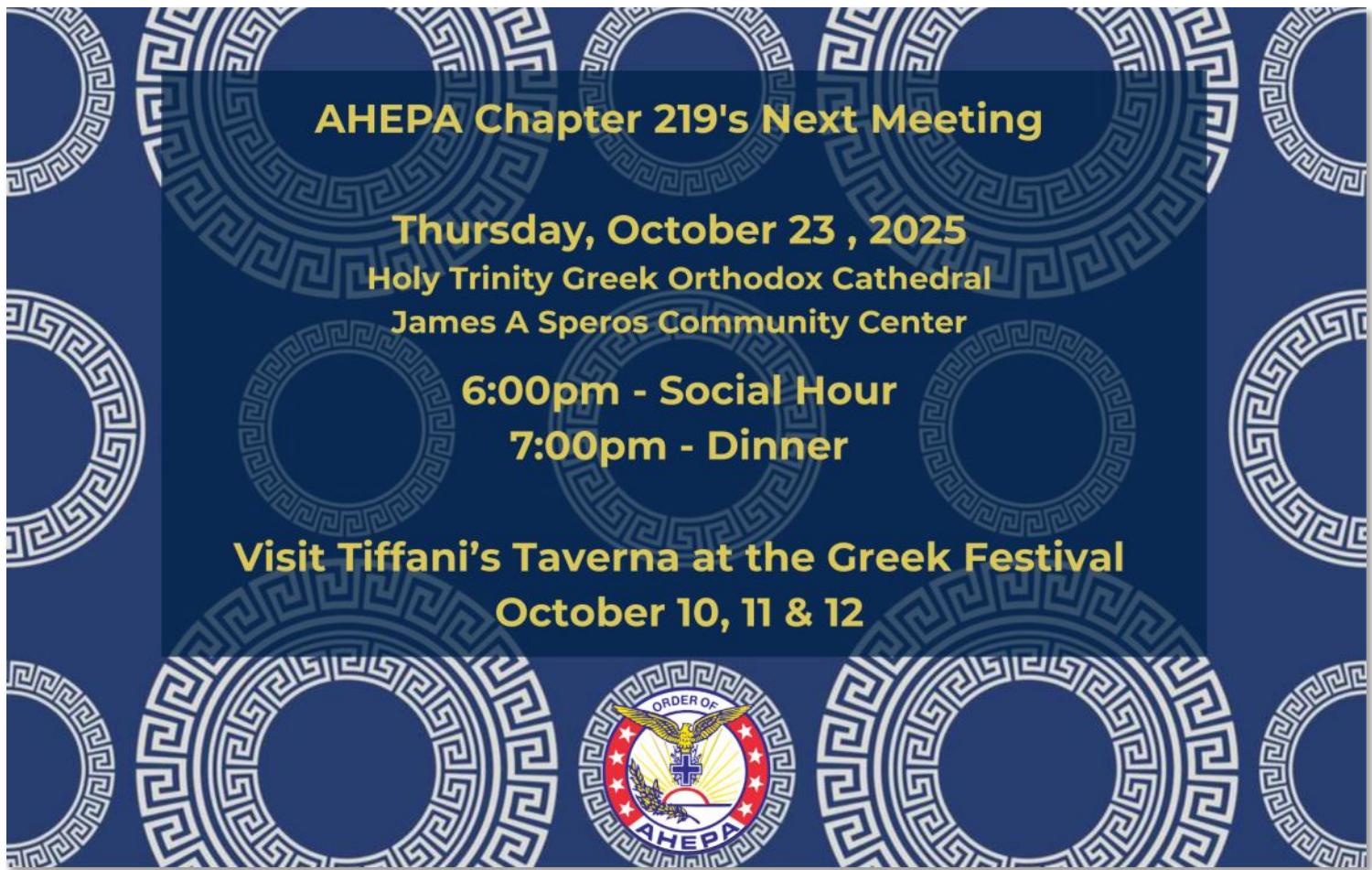
To be informed of upcoming events, please follow us on Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/living_orthodox_ministry/) or sign up for our email newsletter (<https://bit.ly/LOconnect>).

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about Living Orthodox, please email us at livingorthodoxministry@gmail.com! You can also visit <https://linktr.ee/livingorthodox> for links to our social media.

[Click for Retreat Photos](#)

[Click for Family Night/4F Photos](#)

AHEPA Chapter 219



AHEPA Chapter 219 2025/2026 Scholarship Application

The AHEPA 219 (your local Phoenix chapter) Scholarship Foundation has awarded over \$163,000 dollars in scholarships. The 2025/2026, AHEPA Chapter 219 Scholarship Application is now available and can be found at www.AHEPA219.com.

All high school seniors, full-time university undergraduate and graduate students, and vocational training students are encouraged to apply. According to our previous winners for the time and effort they put into the application they earned \$75 an hour, with a minimum award of \$500.

The application submission deadline is November 16th, 2025, and the winners will be announced at our annual Scholarship Luncheon on January 3, 2026. Please direct any questions that you may have to Nicholas Petsas, npetsas@outlook.com (602) 710-0840.



Our Church Family

Baptisms

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Galatians 3:27



09/20/2025

Lucas, son of Alexandrix & Victor Gunnerson
Godparents: Briana & Christopher Lopez
God's Blessings be upon him.

Edmunston Nicholas, son of Laurel & Nicholas Petsas
Godparents: Abbigail & Peter Schneider
God's Blessings be upon him.

Funeral

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.”
Psalm 23:6



09/11/2025

Evelyn Nickalew
May her memory be eternal.

Presv. Laura Eliades Baby Shower

A baby shower for Pres. Laura is being held

October 19th,
Sunday evening for dinner
at 5:00 pm in the Community Center.



Please RSVP to
htfrontoffice@holytrinityphx.org
on or before Oct 14th.
[Click here to view the registry](#)

Coffee Socials Following Sunday Liturgies

The September Coffee Socials were sponsored by **OPA** and the October Coffee Socials are sponsored by **Choir**.

THANK YOU!



Original Phoenix Greek Festival

phoenixgreekfestival.org

October 10, 11, & 12, 2025



Festival Notes:

- Our annual Greek Festival happening October 10, 11 & 12. The Festival will open at 3:00 pm on Friday.
- Volunteer Sign-up - We need ALL HANDS ON DECK that weekend - Loads of fun and get to know your fellow parishioners!
- 2025 Festival T-shirts will be sold during booth set up on Wednesday, Oct. 8. See Sandy Meris to purchase your shirt or during the Festival for \$20.
- The cost for parking in our church parking lot during the Festival is \$10. Volunteers with a volunteer pass will only pay \$5 for a spot if the volunteer lot is full.
- Sunday, October 12, Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00 am.
- Everyone's help is needed for Festival Clean Up - Monday, October 13, 8:00 am.



70+ Baking Photos!



THE ORIGINAL PHOENIX

GREEK Festival

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025

GREEK FOOD, MUSIC, DANCING & MORE

FRIDAY, OCT. 10

3pm - 10pm

SATURDAY, OCT. 11

11am - 10pm

SUNDAY, OCT. 12

11am - 6pm

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
1973 E. Maryland, Phoenix | phoenixgreekfestival.org

@originalphxgreekfest f OriginalPhoenixGreekFestival

ADMISSION

\$5.00 - for an entire day of fun

Children under 12 free

Seniors over 60 free entry on:

- Friday 3:00 - 5:00pm
- Saturday 11:00am - 3:00pm

*No pets permitted (service dogs excluded)



PARKING

FREE Parking at
Charles Schwab -
24th St. & Lincoln

Shuttles every 15 minutes

\$10.00 to park in
church parking lot



EAT. DANCE. SHOP. PLAY.

Authentic Greek Food • Homemade Pastries • Taverna with Greek Beer & Wines

Greek Dancing • Live Greek Music • Art, Jewelry & More • Village Market

Hellenic Museum of Phoenix • Cathedral Tours • Children's Rides & Activities

THE LONGEST-RUNNING AND LARGEST ORIGINAL GREEK FESTIVAL IN THE VALLEY