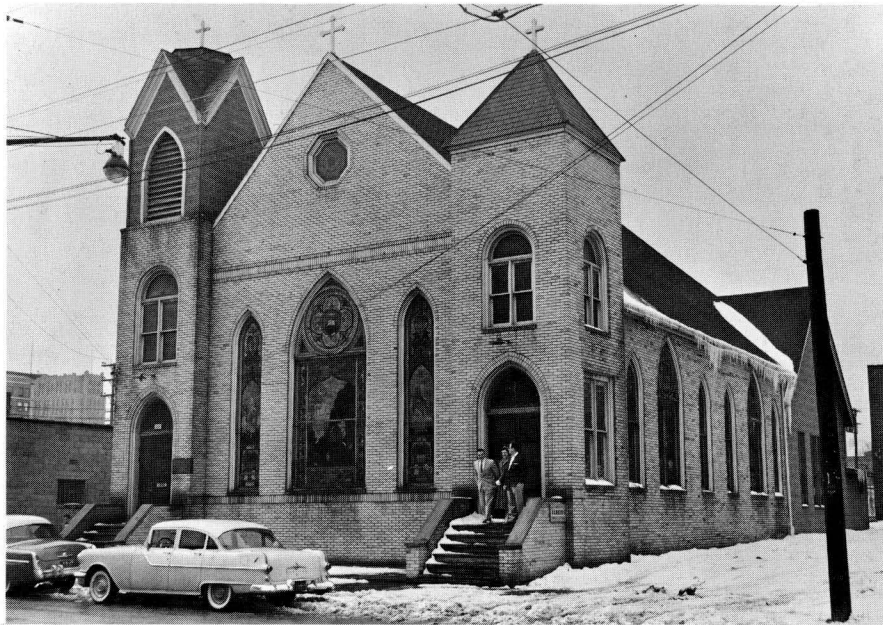


OUR CHURCH HISTORY . . .



OLD CHURCH

THE history of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Youngstown, Ohio, is one full of reminiscences. Because of liberal immigration laws in the early twentieth century, we find a massive influx of Greeks to all parts of the United States. The history of the Greeks in Youngstown perhaps reflected or simulated the history of Greeks throughout the United States. Men and women left their poor homeland of Greece, desirous of the opportunity to come to America to improve their economic status, to educate their families, and to enrich their particular Grecian villages through their philanthropic gifts. Greeks in America initially offered considerable resistance however to assimilation into American habits and social structures. Thusly, the first generation Greek settlers banned together to work, to socialize, to promote Hellenism, and to worship according to the canons of The Greek Orthodox Church. America proved indeed a great light and hope, wherein mothers found a freedom not known in their native land of Greece — free from want, cooking meals with regularity, planning cultural development for their children, dressing in their Sunday finery, organizing the Church, etc.

The Hellenic community was organized in Youngstown, in December 1915, in a meeting of Greek immigrants in a storeroom on West Federal Street. Church services were held regularly at the downtown YMCA (Young Men's Christian As-

sociation) until 1916 when the first Greek Orthodox Church, St. John, was erected on West Woodland Avenue. The turbulent years, 1915-1930, in Greece undoubtedly were responsible for the factionalism and division of the Hellenic community that was established in Mahoning County. Thusly, on May 2, 1919, Articles of Incorporation were prepared to create the separate community of St. Nicholas, bearing the signatures of Messrs. Christ Antarakis, Demetrios Cassis, Pericles Chengelis, Spyros Chengelis, John Hondrogian, Stefanos Johnson, and Vasilios Zoyes. On May 5, 1919, the charter was issued by The State of Ohio, formally establishing The St. Nicholas Greek Eastern Orthodox Church of Youngstown, Ohio. A vacated Welsh Church was immediately purchased, on the present site, at 220 North Walnut Street, to become the original St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

To fully comprehend this origin of local Churches, one must again refer to the national scene. Between 1900 and 1922, over sixty percent of our present Greek Orthodox parish structures were erected in the United States without authorized leadership! It was not until 1922 that The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America was incorporated and duly recognized. The turbulent political events in Greece divided Greeks throughout the Americas. The modern and organized Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas emerges from the administration of then Archbishop Athenagoras I during the period 1931-1948 (whereafter the Archbishop was elected and elevated as His Holiness, Athenagoras I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople). The impact of factionalism was certainly felt at St. Nicholas, for records show that in less than the two-year period of 1921-1922, four different priests served the parish of St. Nicholas!

Following the early 1920's, the years were marked by a difficult and decaying national economy. The people of St. Nicholas prayed together — well-knit, cooperative, dedicated and productive. During these later years however, little notice of the community appeared in local newspapers.

Occasionally, readers found articles as the following: (May 11, 1919) "Greeks Clash in Mat Sport (Jim Londos vs. George Vassill, at Chelekis Hall, Youngstown, Ohio)." . . .; also, (March 24, 1929) "Greeks in City to Celebrate Independence Day, . . . Under the leadership of Constantine Economus, the local chapter (Lincoln Chapter No. 89) of Ahepa (American Hellenic Education and Progressive Association), national Greek Lodge, will provide a banquet on the night of March 31 at Central Auditorium. . . ." One of the earliest notices or listings of Church Services or activities is recalled herein (from the edition of Saturday, Jan. 18, 1930):

"St. Nicholas—220 N. Walnut St.; Pastor, Rev. D. Cassis; Bible school supt., Miss X. Gorra; Director of music, Mr. Nicholas Cassis; Bible School 10 a.m.; morning services 11:30; Subject, "Jesus and Zaccheus"; Young people's meeting 4 p.m.; Choir practice every Wednesday 6:30 p.m.; Young people's orchestra practice every Thursday 6:30 p.m."

During the 1930's and 1940's, the youth of the parish were indeed fortunate to receive instruction in Greek language and culture from the master teacher, Mrs. Xanthipi Karavaras. The community began to prosper and expand, until early in 1955 when Campbellites departed to found the Archangel Michael Church. In January 1955, parish councilmen from St. John and from St. Nicholas met to

(Continued)



1st Level



2nd Level



3rd Level

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES 1974



4th Level



5th Level



6th Level

plan a merging of congregations and to form a United Hellenic Community. Unfortunately the plans were set aside, due to the lack of agreement on various issues, and therefore these parishes remain separate entities.

During the late 1950's, the St. Nicholas Church was in dire need of maintenance and repair. With a segment of the Church property condemned by The City Health Department, a pulling-together, a union of membership occurred to dream for and to plan for a new structure. Under the strong leadership of Fr. George J. Hadjis, Parish Priest, and of Parish Council Presidents, Messrs. Theodore Baxevandes, Theodore Chengelis, Nicholas Deniakis, Gust Kolutsos, and Nicholas Masters, the Building Fund drive proved a smashing success. Under the superb direction of the Building Fund Chairman, Mr. Harry Meshel, in excess of \$200,000 was raised, from contributions and pledges, in a relatively short period of time. Architects Boucherle, Hanahan, and Strollo were consulted to plan the new (and presently existing) structures, within a two-phase program — constructing the new social hall, followed by construction of the new Church. Daniel Terrari and Sons, building contractors, presented the acceptable bid to construct the new Church. Ground-breaking ceremonies were held in 1958, and the new Church complex completed in 1960 — a dream fully-realized.

The spirit of our Patron Saint, Saint Nicholas, remains alive throughout the parish. The dreams of the founding parents truly realized, as the religious, educational, social, and professional levels of the parishioners steadily improved. Many children of St. Nicholas have matured into successful lives, as community and governmental leaders, business people, educators, attorneys, doctors of medicine, priests, and other significant professional careers. Mr. Meletios Diacandreaou, a Youngstown resident from 1920 until 1938, was the first and only member of St. Nicholas to be named as Bishop, in 1964, as The Titular Bishop of Arestias, and assigned to the South American diocese. Further talent was revealed in that, during the sesqui-centennial (150th year) celebration of The City of Youngstown, which took place over the five-day period, Sept. 26-30, 1953, the most beautiful float in the parade was the "Cradle of Civilization" entered by the Greek Community — St. Nicholas, St. John, and Lincoln Chapter No. 89, Order of AHEPA. The lovely daughters of the Greek community were costumed as maidens representative of themes as religion, liberty, democracy, philosophy, and the arts. Also, thanks to the efforts and actions of local Hellenes and supporters, the Greek Orthodox religion was declared as the fourth major faith in the state of Ohio, in 1956.

Presently, the membership of St. Nicholas exceeds three hundred members, active, strong and productive, with a total enrollment of 120 in Greek school and Sunday School classes combined, and with an annual operating budget of \$60,000. After more than a half century of operation and service, with marked success in its trials against man and time, the new St. Nicholas Church and complex was Consecrated on September 8, 1974, under the spiritual leadership of Fr. George Kostan.

The Consecration preparations were elaborate — extensive committee structures, renovations to physical plant, receptions, etc. — capably directed by Mr. William G. Glaros, General Chairman, and co-chairpersons, Mrs. Mamie Coutris, Mr. Gregory Demetri, Mrs. Bessie Mageros, and Mr. Stephen Niarhos. The members of the Parish Council, assisted by parishioners, under the superb efforts of Mr. Glaros, of Mr. Edward Mayorga, chairman of the Building Committee, and of Mr. Niarhos, chairman of the Banquet Committee, labored tirelessly to complete the preparations. The Holy Service of Consecration was co-celebrated by the great spiritual leadership and hierarchy of The Greek Orthodox Church: His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos; His Grace, Bishop Gerasimos; Deacon, Fr. Methodius Tournas; Fr. George Kostan, parish priest; Fr. George Hadjis, of Huntington Beach, California, past parish priest; Fr. John Alexandrou, pastor of St. John Greek Orthodox Church; and other invited Orthodox clergy. The climax of the Con-

secration Banquet, held at the St. Nicholas Social Hall, was indeed an affair of celebration and Christian love, with an address by His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos. Distinguished guests, sharing in the joyous celebration, included: His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of The Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America; His Grace, Bishop Gerasimos, Titular Bishop of Abydos, Sixth Archdiocese District; His Excellency, The Most Reverend James W. Malone, Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown; Mr. Stanley Engel, Director, Jewish Federation of Youngstown; Rev. Richard D. Speicher, representing The Youngstown Council of Churches; Rev. Fr. George J. Kostan, Pastor, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church; Rev. Fr. John Alexandrou, Pastor, St. John Greek Orthodox Church, and representative of The Youngstown Clergy Association; The Very Rev. Fr. George J. Hadjis, Huntington Beach, California, past Parish Priest of St. Nicholas; The Deacon or Aide to The Archbishop, Fr. Methodius Tournas; Mr. William G. Glaros, Vice President of Administrative Affairs at St. Nicholas, and General Chairman of The Consecration Executive Committee; Mr. Gus Mavrigian, President of The Parish Council of St. Nicholas; Mrs. Bessie Mageros, President of The Philoptochos Society of St. Nicholas; The Honorable State Senator Harry Meshel, Banquet Toastmaster, and representative of The Governor of the State of Ohio; The Honorable Charles J. Carney, United States Congressman, 19th District; The Honorable Emanuel Catsoules, City of Youngstown Councilman, Third Ward, and representative of the Mayor of The City of Youngstown; and also pianist Mrs. Diane Anastasiades, soprano Mrs. Mary Demetri, and baritone Dr. Nicholas Pappas, who presented musical selections with excellence.

The St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Youngstown, Ohio, has now been baptized, anointed, sanctified, and dedicated to God for eternal use as an Orthodox Christian House of Worship.



NEW CHURCH

over →

PARISH PRIESTS

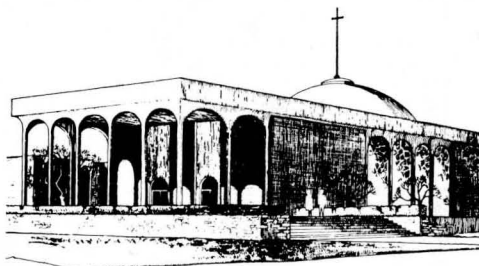
1919 to ~~1975~~ 1982

Rev. Nicholas HADJIVASILIOU	1919
Rev. Louis PANAGIOTOU	1921
Rev. Leontios LINARDATOS	1922
Rev. Paraskevos PAOATHEOFRASTOU	1922
Rev. Michael THOMAS	1922
Rev. Christ HADJIGEORGE	1929
Rev. Demetrios CASSIS	1929
(non-canonical)	
Rev. George THALASINOS	1931
Rev. Basilios MIKELIS	1932
Rev. Demosthenes TSIMARDAS	1934
Rev. Angelo KONTONICOLAOU	1937
Rev. Demetrios MITTACOS	1937
Rev. Emanuel PAPADOGEOURAKIS	1947
Rev. George BARTZ	1948
Rev. Spiridon ECONOMOU	1951
Rev. George HADJIS	1952
Rev. George KOSTAN	1971
Rev. Paul Michaelidis	1975
Rev. James Dokos	1978
Rev. George Georgiadis	1980



TRIBUTE

The congregation of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church respectively thanks its sister parishes for their continual support.



St. John Greek Orthodox Church
Rev. John Alexandrou, *Pastor*



Archangel Michael Greek Orth. Church
Rev. George T. Pappas, *Pastor*

PARISH PRESIDENTS

1919 - ~~1974~~ 1982

Mr. Steve YIOYIANIDES
Mr. Pericles CHENGELIS
Mr. Sam BAHARIS
Mr. James MAMONIS
Mr. Steve MASTRONESTIS
Mr. Nicholas DENIAKIS
Mr. James PAPPAS
Mr. Harry GADINES
Mr. Nicholas MASTERS
Mr. Theodore BAXEVANDES
Mr. Theodore CHENGELIS
Mr. Gust KOLITSOS
Mr. Charles SENANEFES
Mr. George MAYS
Mr. Gus MAVRIGIAN
Mr. Socrates Kolitsos
Mr. Gregory Demetri
Mr. Chris Ladas



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