



## The History of Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Greek Community of Charlotte

### *In The Beginning*

The first Greek immigrants settled in Charlotte around 1910. They comprised a small colony of about twenty individuals. At the start of World War I the colony of immigrants had grown to about fifty men, women and children. In 1923, the Greek Orthodox Parish of Charlotte was organized under the sanction and with the blessings of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, which was headquartered in New York. The first Church services were held at the chamber of commerce building until the local American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association chapter rented and provided an upstairs hall on East Trade Street. At this time, the young parish and the first Greek School began their mission of maintaining the religious and cultural qualities of the Greek people. In 1929, approximately 50 families from the Charlotte Parish purchased the former Westminster Presbyterian Church for \$32,000. Mr. Matthew Karres offered his signature and personal collateral so that the purchase could be made. This Church was located at 1439 South Boulevard and was renovated with a Greek Orthodox sanctuary. The Iconostasion, icons, chandeliers and pews were acquired from an Orthodox Church in Baltimore Maryland. The Church was consecrated, dedicated and named after the Holy Trinity.

### *The Jones Mansion*

In 1951, The Holy Trinity community purchased the J.A. Jones Estate at 600 East Boulevard. The estate, which covered a whole square city block, would fulfill the vision of a new Church and Educational Center. On the middle of the property there was the Jones Mansion, a large two-story building that was used as the community center from 1951-1967. The Jones Mansion housed the parish offices and educational room used by the Sunday School and Greek School, as well as serving as headquarters for the 5th Diocesan District.

### *Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral*

After many months of construction following the groundbreaking in 1953, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral opened its doors in the Spring of 1954. The initial cost of the church was \$350,000. This cost did not include the iconography, which was done at a later date. The seating capacity for the new Church was 600 people. By the middle of the 1950's the community had grown to more than 250 families.

### *The Hellenic Center*

The Jones Mansion was entirely inadequate for the multiplying needs of the ever-growing parish of Charlotte. Immediately after the opening of the Cathedral in 1954, parishioners

began planning for the new Hellenic Center and Educational building. The Groundbreaking services were held July 3rd 1966. The construction work started immediately and continued at a very fast pace. On July 16, 1967 the new Hellenic Community center was ready to serve the Charlotte Greek Community.

### *Holy Trinity Today*

Our parish has grown from approximately 30 families in 1923 to more than 2,500 families in the Charlotte area today. Our ministries range from youth related activities to educational, athletics, cultural, liturgical and much more. We have a thriving youth program and a very active parish, led by the Dean of our Cathedral Fr. Vasileios Tsourlis and Fr. Theodore Ehmer.

### *Our Mission:*

To become faithful followers of Christ and thus active Greek Orthodox Christians by accepting and submitting to the Will of our Lord so that we may realize salvation and enter into the Kingdom of God.

Please visit our Church website: [www.htgo.org](http://www.htgo.org)

Historical facts were provided by the Xenophon Nixon Holy Trinity Archival Collection. Contributors: Mr. James M. Karres, Penelope Karagounis, Dr. Bessie Chronaki, Helen Beleos