

SYNDIAKONIA

THE MONTHLY BULLETIN

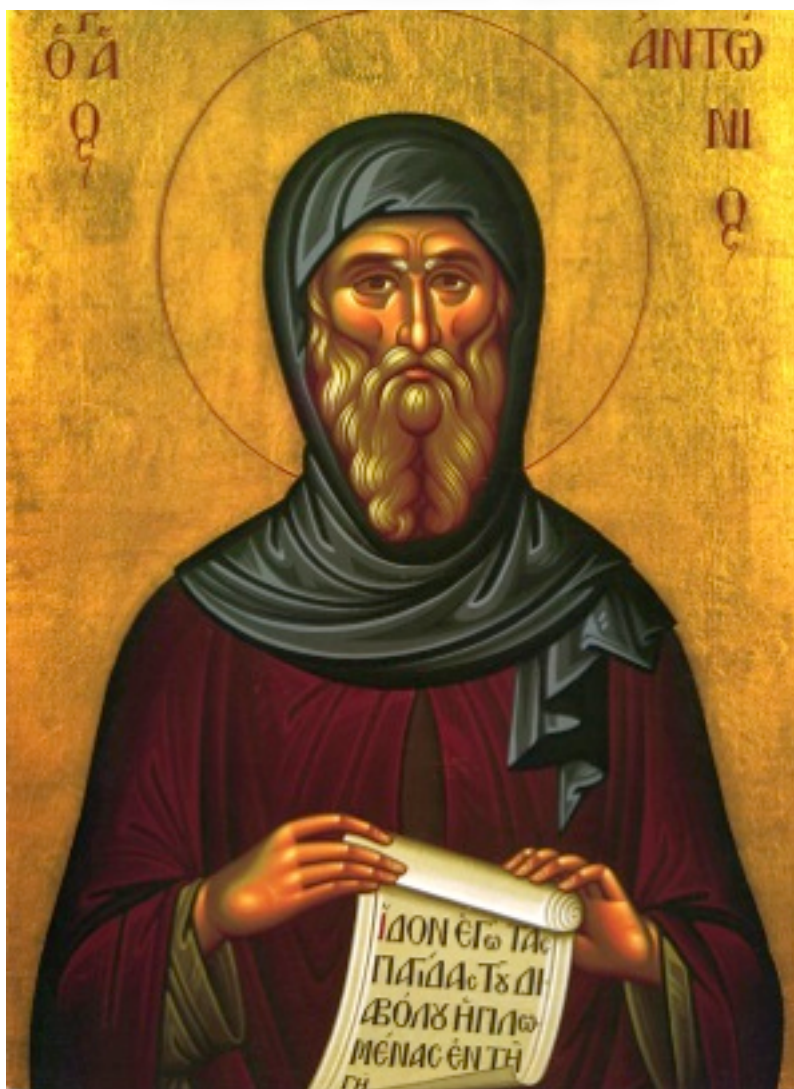
OF THE

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΩΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ

Marietta, GA

JANUARY 2013



Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

O Father Anthony, you imitated the zealous Elijah. You followed the straight paths of the Baptist and became a desert dweller. By prayer you confirmed the universe. Wherefore, intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

*3431 Trickum Road
Marietta, GA 30066*

Tel. 770 924-8080

Fax 770 924-3030

Website: www.holytrans.org

CHURCH OFFICE

Open Monday-Friday, 9:30 am - 5:30 pm

Secretary: Anne Wilcocks

E-mail: holytrans@comcast.net

SUNDAY SERVICES

Orthros..... 8:30 am Divine Liturgy..... 10:00 am

PARISH CLERGY

*Rev. Father Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D.,
Presiding Protopresbyter*

Rev. Father George Pallas, Protopresbyter

Pastoral Assistant: Paul Lundberg

PARISH COUNCIL-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President.....Maria Alberts

First Vice-President.....Pete Bilson

Recording Secretary.....Randy Rogers

Treasurer.....Steve Steffas

Assistant Treasurer.....Christopher Hansard

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Cathy Costarides, Ellen Linebaugh, George Lopos, Alex Miltiades,
John Moustoukas, Jim Tidwell, Athan Tsarouhas

Directions to our Parish:

FROM I-75 Exit at 267-A. At 1st light, turn right (Sandy Plains Road). Continue for 3-4 miles until you see a CVS Pharmacy on your left. At that light turn left onto Trickum Rd. Proceed Approx 1/2 mile. Church will be on your left. Can't miss it!

<http://www.holytransfiguration.info/directions/>

Happy New Year 2013



*May the New Year 2013
bring to all of you
abundant blessings from God!*

Best wishes from

*The Orthodox Christian Community
of the Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church,
Marietta, Georgia.*



*We are an Orthodox Christian parish in
continuity with the apostolic traditions of
the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church*

OUR MISSION IS FROM CHRIST



Christ's message to the world spread quickly in the first century through the work and sacrifice of the Apostles. It was a message of hope to a world suffering from inequality and abuse, hard labor and sickness and the ultimate death to darkness and nothingness.

Christ's message of the defeat of death and the promise of eternal life brought hope to the average person and meaning to the intellectuals of the time.

The Apostles, following the "Great Commission of Christ" (Matt. 28:19-20), empowered by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and equipped with both the "message" and personal conviction, stood bravely in front of tyrants and the learned men of the time

preaching the power of Christ over death and His promise of eternal life. They moved from town to town proclaiming the "Good News" to all who would listen, baptizing those who would accept the "message" and teaching them how to observe those things which Christ had commanded them. The Apostles established Christian communities which continued to proclaim the "Good News", adding more and more members to those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

The main concern of the Apostles and the leaders of the Early Church was the salvation of human beings by bringing them to the Faith in the Risen Lord and attaching them to the Church (the Body of Christ). Their life as a community was simple, centered around the teaching and preaching of the words of Christ and the joining together in the "Agape Meals", the Eucharistic dinners where the more affluent brought food for everyone and they all shared in a meal before they received from the blessed bread and cup-the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Early Christians were characterized by the love they had for God and the affection and kindness they showed to each other. This was a major factor in the growth of the Early Church, as people of the surrounding community impressed by the love of these Christians joined the ranks of the Church as followers of Christ.

As Christians of the 21st century, we have much to learn by looking at the Early Church. There, we will find how we can live authentic Christian lives, not as we desire, but as Christ intended for us. From them we will learn what made Christianity attractive to others in the midst of an abusive and uncaring society. We will certainly learn that the Central Mission of the Parish (the Christian community) is to help people discover Christ's message and convince them to follow His teachings so that they may also have eternal life. Our Faith, our life example, and our love for God and each other will be the greatest arguments for fulfilling the Mission of the Parish.

The Great Commission of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded to you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. Amen."





3431 Trickum Road

Marietta, GA 30066

Tel. 770-924-8080, Fax 770-924-3030

Rev. Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D., Protopresbyter

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

January 2013

January 1, Tuesday, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ, Feast of St. Basil the Great
Orthros 9:15 am & Divine Liturgy 10:15 am.

On Monday afternoon (December 31st) Great Vespers at 6:00 pm.

January 5, Saturday, Forefeast of Theophany (Kalanta). Προεόρτια τῶν Φώτων (Κάλαντα).

The Great Hours of Theophany 9:30 am

Today we hold a strict fast in preparation to receive the Holy Water of Theophany - Oil and wine are allowed because it is Saturday.

On Saturday Evening - Vespers of Theophany 5:00 pm

January 6, Sunday, Holy Theophany. Feast of the Baptism of Christ. Τά Ἁγία Θεοφάνεια.

Orthros, 8:15 am and Divine Liturgy 9:30 am, followed by the Great Ayiasmos (Great Blessing of the Waters)

Note: At the end of the Divine Liturgy everyone will be able to take bottles of Holy Water with them.

Σημείωση: Φεύγοντας μποροῦν νά πάρουν ὅλοι μπουκαλάκια μέ ἁγιασμό.

January 12, Saturday, Great Vespers, 5:00 pm.

January 13, Sunday after the Feast of Theophany, Κυριακή μετά τά Φῶτα.

Orthros 8:30 am & Divine Liturgy 10:00 am.

Vasilopita Sunday. Today we will celebrate the Vasilopita for the benefit of St. Basil's Academy.

January 17, Thursday, Feast of St. Anthony the Great. Today we also celebrate the feast of Sts. Athanasios and Cyril, moved from January 18.

Orthros 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy 10:00 am.

January 19, Saturday, Great Vespers, 5:00 pm.

January 20, Sunday, 12th Sunday of Luke. IB Κυριακή Λουκᾶ (Τῶν Δέκα Λεπρῶν).

Orthros 8:30 am & Divine Liturgy 10:00 am.

January 26, Saturday, Great Vespers, 5:00 pm.

January 27, Sunday, 15th Sunday of Luke. IE Κυριακή Λουκᾶ (Τοῦ Ζακχαίου).

Orthros 8:30 am & Divine Liturgy 10:00 am. **Celebration** of the Three Holy Hierarch's / Day of Greek Letters. Ἑορτή γιά τούς Τρεῖς Ἱεράρχες καί τά Ἑλληνικά Γράμματα

January 30, Wednesday, Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs. Μνήμη τῶν Ἁγίων Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν.

Orthros 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy 10:00 am.



THEOPHANY OR EPIPHANY **THE FEAST OF LIGHTS (TA PHOTA)**

SPECIAL SERVICE OF THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS. TODAY HE WILL BLESS THE WATER SO THAT, IN THE WORDS OF THE PRAYER:

"THOSE WHO POUR AND PARTAKE THEREOF (OF THE HOLY WATER) MAY RECEIVE IT FOR THE CLEANSING OF SOULS AND BODIES, FOR THE HEALING OF SUFFERING, FOR SANCTIFICATION OF HOMES AND FOR EVERY NEED."

WHEN LEAVING THE CHURCH WE SHALL ALL TAKE A BOTTLE OF THIS HOLY WATER WITH US TO BLESS OURSELVES AND OUR HOMES. IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BISHOPS THROW A CROSS INTO THE SEA, OR A RIVER, TO BE RETRIEVED BY A SWIMMER. IN THIS WAY THEY BLESS THE WATERS, PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO TRAVEL THROUGH THEM TO BE PROTECTED.

CHILDREN SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO KEEP A SMALL BOTTLE OF HOLY WATER AND PLACE IT NEXT TO THEIR ICON AND USE IT THE YEAR ROUND. THEY CAN PARTAKE OF THE HOLY WATER WITH A SPOON IN THE MORNING BEFORE THEY EAT AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN THEY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE A SPECIAL NEED FOR THE LORD'S PRESENCE IN THEIR LIVES. THUS, THEY WILL KEEP EPIPHANY THE YEAR ROUND.

THIS FEAST IS REMEMBERED BY SOME OF THE WESTERN CHRISTIANS AS THE VISITATION OF THE MAGI. THIS WAS PROBABLY THE EMPHASIS GIVEN TO THE DAY IN THE WESTERN CHURCH FROM EARLIER TIMES.

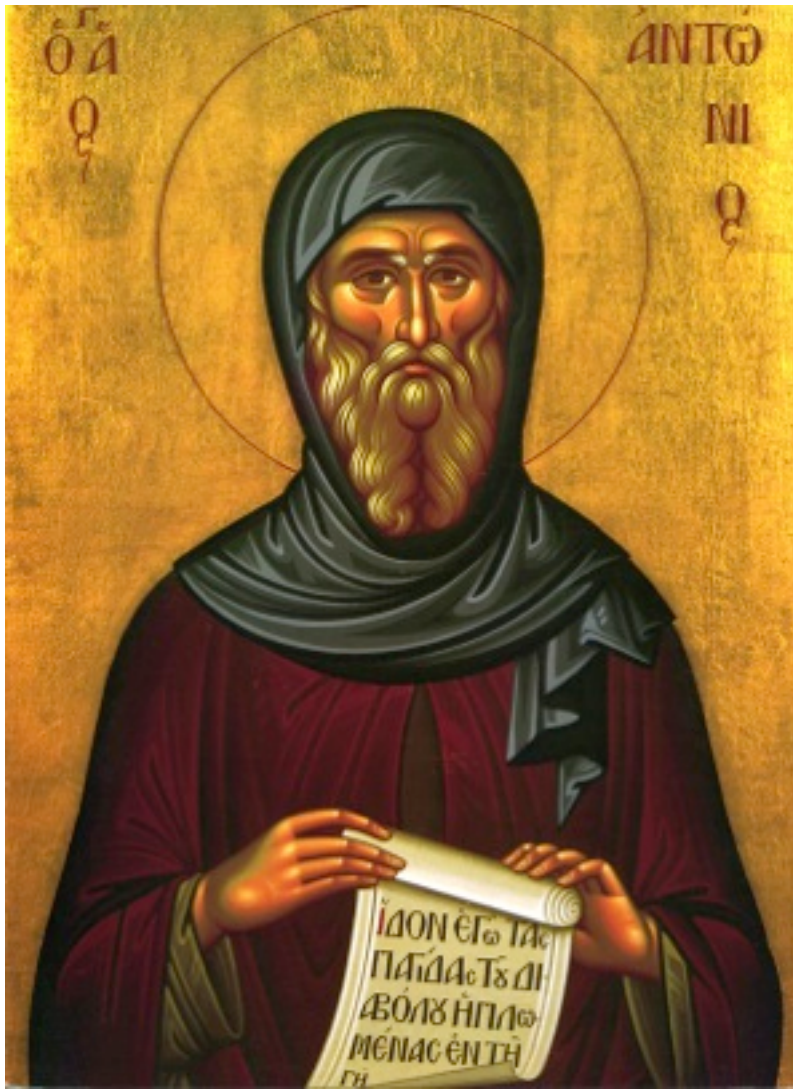


ON JANUARY 6, WE CELEBRATE THE GREAT FEAST OF THEOPHANY OR EPIPHANY, ONE OF THE MAJOR HOLY DAYS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH. IT WAS ON THIS DAY THAT CHRIST APPEARED BEFORE JOHN THE BAPTIST AT THE RIVER JORDAN AND ASKED TO BE BAPTIZED BY JOHN. DURING HIS BAPTISM THE HEAVENS OPENED AND GOD WAS REVEALED AS TRINITY. THEOPHANY MEANS THE APPEARANCE OF GOD. SIMILARLY, EPIPHANY MEANS THE APPEARANCE. THIS FEAST IS ALSO CALLED THE FEAST OF LIGHTS BECAUSE THE DIVINE LIGHT SHINES INTO THE WORLD WITH THE COMING OF THE LORD.

A FEW DAYS AGO (CHRISTMAS) WE SAW CHRIST AS A NEW BORN BABE. TODAY (THEOPHANY) WE SEE HIM A FULL GROWN MAN OF 30 BEGINNING HIS MINISTRY AMONG THE PEOPLE. GOD WHO SHONE FORTH FROM THE VIRGIN SHINES TO DAY FORTH INTO THE WORLD TO BEGIN HIS MINISTRY.

TODAY THE SMALL ENTRANCE OF THE DIVINE LITURGY IS EXPANDED INTO A FULL CELEBRATION. IN THE PROCESSION OF COMING FORTH FROM THE HOLY ALTAR CARRYING THE GOSPEL ALOFT, THE PRIEST REPRESENTS CHRIST COMING FORTH INTO THE WORLD TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO ALL PEOPLE. THE SMALL ENTRANCE OF THE DIVINE LITURGY IS IN REALITY A SMALL EPIPHANY OF THE LORD.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LITURGY ON THEOPHANY THE PRIEST WILL PERFORM THE



St. Anthony the Great

January 17

Saint Anthony, the Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city.

The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by

the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life.

Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Savior. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints_view?contentid=389

The Mystical Life in Christianity



Inspired by Christ's teaching and example, [men](#) and [women](#) through the centuries withdrew from life in the Mediterranean cities to the [Sketes](#) in the deserts, where either as solitary individuals or communities lived lives of austere simplicity oriented towards [contemplative prayer](#). These communities formed the basis for what would become known as [Christian monasticism](#). Mysticism is integral to Christian monasticism because the goal of practice for the monastic is [union with God](#). [Eastern Christianity](#) has especially preserved a mystical emphasis in its theology and retains a [tradition of mystical prayer](#) dating back to the beginnings of Christianity.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_mysticism#Eastern_Christianity

The **Desert Fathers** (there were also [Desert Mothers](#)) were [hermits](#), [ascetics](#), and [monks](#) who lived mainly in the [Scetes](#) desert of Egypt beginning around the [third century AD](#). The [Apophthegmata Patrum](#) is a collection of the wisdom of some of the early desert monks and nuns, still in print as *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. The most well known was [Anthony the Great](#), who moved to the desert in 270–271 and became known as both the father and founder of desert monasticism. By the time Anthony died in 356, thousands of monks and nuns had been drawn to living in the desert following Anthony's example — his biographer, [Athanasius of Alexandria](#), wrote that "the desert had become a city." The Desert Fathers had a major influence on the development of Christianity.

The desert monastic communities that grew out of the informal gathering of hermit monks became the model for [Christian monasticism](#). The eastern monastic tradition at [Mt. Athos](#) and the western [Rule of St. Benedict](#) both were strongly influenced by the traditions that began in the desert. All of the monastic revivals of the Middle Ages looked to the desert for inspiration and guidance. Much of [Eastern Christian spirituality](#), including the [Hesychast](#) movement, had its roots in the practices of the Desert Fathers. Even religious renewals such as the German evangelicals and [Pietists](#) in Pennsylvania, the [Devotio Moderna](#) movement, and the [Methodist Revival](#) in England are seen by modern scholars as being influenced by the Desert Fathers.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert_Fathers

The **Desert Mothers** were female Christian [ascetics](#) living in the desert of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in the 4th and 5th centuries CE. They typically lived in the monastic communities that began forming during that time, though sometimes they lived as hermits. Other women from that era who influenced the early ascetic or monastic tradition while living outside the desert are also described as Desert Mothers.

The [Desert Fathers](#) are much more well known because most the early Christian texts were written or compiled by men. There are no writings directly attributed to the Desert Mothers—the occasional stories about them come from the early Desert Fathers and their biographers. The [Apophthegmata Patrum](#), or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, includes forty-seven sayings that are actually attributed to the Desert Mothers. There are several chapters dedicated to the Desert Mothers in the [Lausiac History](#) by [Palladius](#), who mentions 2,975 women living in the desert. Other sources include the various stories told over the years about the lives of saints of that era, traditionally called *vitae* ("life"). The lives of twelve female desert saints are described in Book I of the so-called [Vitae Patrum](#) (*Lives of the Fathers*).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert_Mothers

Hesychasm ([Greek](#): ἡσυχασμός, *hesychasmos*, from ἡσυχία, *hesychia*, "stillness, rest, quiet, silence") is an [eremitic](#) tradition of [prayer](#) in the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#) practised (Gk: ἡσυχάζω, *hesychazo*: "to keep stillness") by the **Hesychast** (Gr. ἡσυχαστής, *hesychastes*).

Based on Christ's injunction in the [Gospel of Matthew](#) to "go into your closet to pray", hesychasm has been the process of retiring inwardly by ceasing to register the senses, in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God (see [theoria](#)).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hesychasm>

Feast of the Three Hierarchs

JANUARY 30



Feast of the Three Hierarchs - Celebration of Hellenic Learning

In 11th century Constantinople every conversation turned to the same controversy: Which of the three 4th-century saints was the greatest in the Orthodox church? Was it St. Basil the Great, the beloved spiritual leader who created orphanages and hospitals and left a legacy of great spiritual and theological writings in the finest form of the Greek language? Was it St. Gregory the Theologian, whose leadership kept the church together during a time of theological crisis and also contributed beautiful works of poetry and prose to the literary corpus of Hellenic learning? Or was it St. John Chrysostom, the wonderful speaker who had "a mouth of gold" and left behind a great legacy of writings in the Hellenic tongue which parallel the great philosophers and rhetoricians of classical times? In 1081, Bishop John of Galatia had a vision in which the three saints appeared to him telling him that they were equal in the eyes of God. The church set aside a day to commemorate their equality. Since then, Hellenes around the world have celebrated this day as the holiday of the Three Hierarchs, honoring the contribution of the three great saints to Orthodoxy and Hellenic Learning.

CELEBRATION OF THE THREE HIERARCHS AND HELLENIC LEARNING

at Holy Transfiguration on Sunday, January 27

Lecture by the Honorable Consul of Greece in Atlanta

Mr. Vasilios Gouloussis

Theme: *"The Value of Hellenic Learning in Contemporary America."*

Place: Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church

Time: Sunday, January 27, 2013

immediately following the Divine Liturgy at 12:00 pm
in the church hall (PLC)

Luncheon offered by AHEPA in co-operation with Hellenic Studies

All proceeds to support the AHEPA Scholarship Fund

Please secure your tickets by calling the church office

Kollyva

(the boiled wheat)

Kollyva (the boiled wheat) is connected with a miracle by St. Theodore of Tyron (a military saint of the Church) dating back to 361 AD when Emperor Julian the Apostate (emperor of Constantinople and ardent supporter of paganism) in an attempt to embarrass the Christians at the beginning of the Great Fast, ordered that all the food set out for sale in the market of Constantinople be sprinkled with the blood of animals sacrificed on the altars of the pagan gods.

St. Theodore appeared in a dream to the Patriarch Eudoxios warning him of the contamination and urging the Christians to boil wheat and eat it for three consecutive days until the sacrificed food spoiled (there was no refrigeration). We celebrate this victory over paganism on the first Saturday of Great Lent. Commemoration of this miraculous event reminds the faithful to honor the fast of Great Lent.

Tradition has connected this celebration with the two preceding Saturdays of the Souls, in which boiled wheat (Kollyva) is also used to remember the dead. The connection between wheat and memorial services is based on the words of Jesus in reference to the resurrection, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit" John 12:24. The teaching and practice of the Church has thus seen in wheat a symbol of the Christian belief in the resurrection. We add sugar and spices to the boiled wheat thus symbolizing the Church's belief in the sweetness of the Kingdom of God.

The prepared white mound of Kollyva set on a tray bearing a cross and the departed person's initials symbolizes the Christian message of everlasting life and our hope in the joys of God's Kingdom.

Like all things in our Orthodox Church, the ingredients have symbolic meaning too.

Wheat for everlasting life,

Raisins for sweetness,

Walnut and almonds for God's gifts

Pomegranate seeds for plenty and sweetness,

Sugar for the sweetness of heaven, and

Parsley for "the green pastures" of God's Kingdom

Usually, we offer prayers along with kollyva for the deceased on the 40th day after their departure and then again on the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th months. After this, it is typical to prepare the Kollyva each year in memory of your departed loved ones around the anniversary of their passing. Other days when special prayers for the departed are offered are on the Saturdays of the Souls.

Memorial services held in the church, accompanied by the preparation of Kollyva, are opportunities to offer prayers for the souls of our departed loved ones hoping in the mercy and loving-kindness of God. These are also opportunities of our own bereavement and attaining of peace as we surrender our loved ones in the hands of God.

References: A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy by Rev. Nikon D. Patrino

A Guide to Greek Traditions and Customs in America by Marilyn Rouvelas

The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers by Stanley S. Harakas

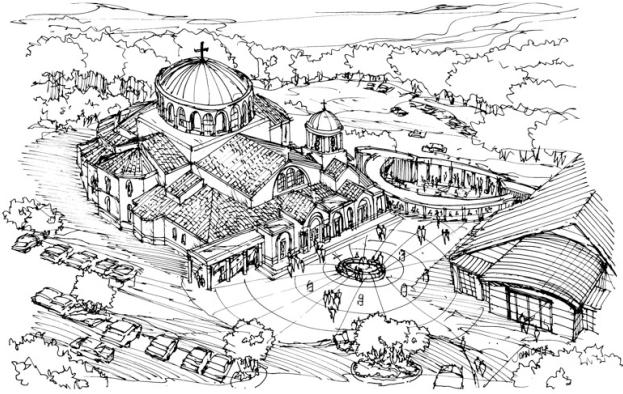
See also our church website at: <http://www.holytransfiguration.info/kollyva/>

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - JANUARY

1/1/2013	Matins: John 10:1-9 Gospel: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12	
1/2/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 5:4-10		Gospel: John 3:1-15
1/3/2013	Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 10:44-48; 11:1-10		Gospel: John 1:18-28
1/4/2013	Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 10:44-48; 11:1-10		Gospel: John 1:18-28
1/5/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 3:13-16; 4:1-5		Gospel: Matthew 3:1-6
1/6/2013	Matins: Mark 1:9-11 Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7	
1/7/2013	Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 19:1-8		Gospel: John 1:29-34
1/8/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:3-11		Gospel: John 3:22-33
1/9/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 2:1-10		Gospel: Mark 1:9-15
1/10/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13		Gospel: Luke 3:19-22
1/11/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:7-16		Gospel: Matthew 11:27-30
1/12/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-17		Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11
1/13/2013	Matins: John 21:1-14 Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13	
1/14/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 10:32-38		Gospel: Luke 12:32-40
1/15/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2		Gospel: Luke 12:32-40
1/16/2013	Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 12:1-11		Gospel: John 21:14-25
1/17/2013	Matins: Matthew 11:27-30 Gospel: Luke 6:17-23	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:17-21	
1/18/2013	Matins: John 10:1-9 Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:7-16	
1/19/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2		Gospel: Matthew 6:22-33
1/20/2013	Matins: John 21:14-25 Gospel: Luke 17:12-19	Epistle: St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15	
1/21/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 1:12-20		Gospel: Luke 12:8-12
1/22/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 1:3-8 Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30		
1/23/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1-3		Gospel: Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-5
1/24/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2		Gospel: Matthew 22:2-14
1/25/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2		Gospel: John 10:9-16
1/26/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10		Gospel: Mark 1:1-8
1/27/2013	Matins: Matthew 28:16-20 Gospel: Luke 19:1-10	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2	
1/28/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2		Gospel: Luke 6:17-23
1/29/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 10:32-38		Gospel: Mark 9:33-41
1/30/2013	Matins: John 10:9-16 Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19	Epistle: St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 13:7-16	
1/31/2013	Epistle: St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8 Gospel: Matthew 10:1, 5-8		

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Love One Another



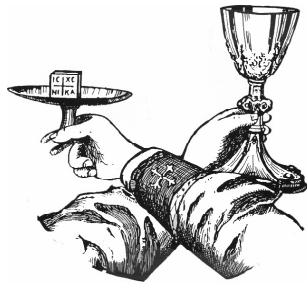
This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.I choose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,These things I command you that you may love one another.

John 15:12-17

Please fill out your Membership/Stewardship Form today and bring your offering to the Lord.

If you have not done so yet, please send in your
2013 Membership/Stewardship Form

*"Honor the LORD with your substance and with the first fruits
of all your produce." (Proverbs 3:9)*



***"YOUR OWN GIFTS,
OF YOUR OWN,
WE OFFER UNTO YOU."***

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

Stewardship is the act of returning to God what is His. We offer ourselves and all creation to the Lord at every Divine Liturgy with the words, *"Your own gifts, of Your own, we offer to You."* We acknowledge that everything we offer to God is a gift from Him. We take what God has given to us and we return it to Him as an act of our thanksgiving and praise.

As stewards of God's gifts, we return to Him a portion of our time, talents and treasures so that Christ's work on earth might be accomplished through His Church.

Please join the Stewardship program so that you may receive the joy which He gives to those who love Him!

*"We praise you, we bless you,
we thank you, O Lord and we
pray to you O our God."*

The Necessity of Stewardship

Our Parish depends on the Stewardship of its members. Our Parish is funded by us.

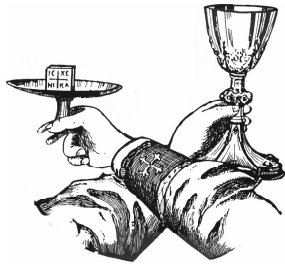
Let us offer to our Parish from the Gifts of God to us. Let us offer in proportion of His Gifts to us. Let us bring our offering with a joyful heart.

You will be Blessed greatly if you support the work of our Parish and the work of His Church.

Have you submitted your Stewardship Form? If not, please do so today.

Christ is asking for your Stewardship toward His Church

***Our Church needs our financial support.
Let us offer from the gifts God has given us.***



***"Your Gifts, of what is Yours, we offer
unto You, in behalf of all, and for all."***

*Τὰ Σὰ ἐκ τῶν Σῶν, Σοὶ προσφέρομεν
κατὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντα.*

*Ta sa ek ton Son, Si prosferomen kata
panta ke dia panta.*

***From the
Anaphora of the
Divine Liturgy***

We offer ourselves and all creation to the Lord at every Divine Liturgy with the words, "*Your Gifts, of what is Yours, we offer unto You.*" We acknowledge that everything we offer to God is a gift from Him. We take what God has given to us and we return it to Him as an act of our thanksgiving and praise.

As stewards of God's gifts, we return to Him a portion of our time, talents and treasures for Christ's work on earth through His Church.

The Christian Stewardship Program is an opportunity to respond to Christ's love by perpetuating His ministry through the Church. Stewardship places the responsibility to support the Church exactly where it belongs, on us. Let us offer then from the goods He has given us back to Him: "*Your Gifts, of what is Yours, we offer unto You.*"

How much should I offer to the Church in order to support the work of God?

Proportionate giving: This involves two things; Firstly, that our level of giving rises out of our level of income. Secondly, that our giving is an offer of thanksgiving for His blessings.

We should ask ourselves "what is a worthy level to determine my Stewardship?" The Bible gives much guidance by teaching us that direct giving to God and His work should be proportionate to our income, wealth and possessions. Each person is to give according to his or her own ability.

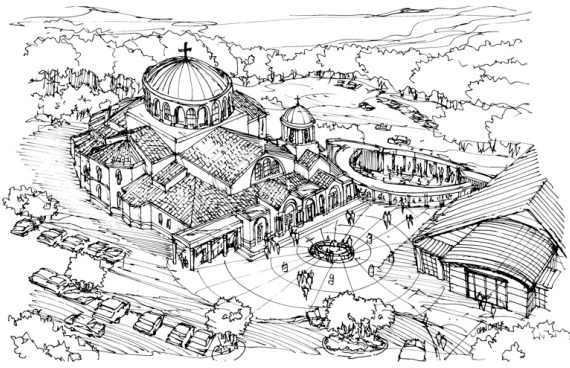
The Old Testament laid down the standard by asking for a percentage of one's income. This provides for us the principle that giving should be in proportion to our income. Each Steward should determine what percentage of his or her income will be committed to Christ and the Church for the current year.

We should consider what we spend on cable television, holidays, pets, dining out, sports events, vacations and so on. How do these compare with our giving for God's work?

We should ask ourselves if our Stewardship Commitment is serious and responsible before God. Is our gift a genuine response to the Lord: "*Your Gifts, of what is Yours, we offer unto You.*"?

Offer your Stewardship each Sunday. Family members over 18 years of age, who are employed, should make their own Stewardship Commitment.

Participation in the Christian Stewardship Program allows each Greek Orthodox Steward to vote and to seek elective office in the administration of the parish as provided in the Archdiocesan and Parish By-laws.



Love One Another

MEMBERSHIP/STEWARDSHIP FOR 2013

THANK YOU TO THE FAITHFUL STEWARDS WHO
HAVE SUBMITTED FORMS FOR 2013!

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Adamson
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Alberts
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bafas
Miss Dorian Bafas
Miss Eleni Bafas
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Bakatsas
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Baleno
Mr. & Mrs. Tony Blasetti
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Bliss
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Botni
Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Bourgeois
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Bridgers
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bundros
Mr. & Mrs. Allen Castro
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Catrakilis
Ms. Cherie Cookorinis
Mr. George Coundouriotis
Mr. Shawn & Dr. Despina Dalton
Ms. Eleni Dodys
Mrs. Marty Driscoll
Mr. & Mrs. Drew Dudley
Mr. & Mrs. Cedric Dunkerly
Ms. Chelsie Durie
Ms. Marilyn Eleftheriou
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Farina
Mr. & Mrs. Matt Foster
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Frangis
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Frank
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Gavalas
Mr. Michael Gavalas
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Gavalas
Dr. & Mrs. Larry Gess
Mr. & Mrs. George Gianaris
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gilbert
Miss Martha Gingles
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Gormanos
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Hanes
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Hansard
Mr. Patrick Hartnett
Dr. & Mrs. Floyd Hendrix
Mrs. Diana Honey
Mr. & Mrs. Reed Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Johansen
Dr. & Mrs. Steve Kargas
Mrs. Irene Kipreos
Mr. Steve Kipreos
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Klementzos
Mr. & Mrs. Athanasios Kollias

Ms. Connie Kollias
Mrs. Athena Kontrafouris
Mrs. Mary Koss
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Koutouzis
Ms. Amanda Kudratov
Dr. Anne Lambros
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Levine
Mr. & Mrs. George Lopos
Mr. David & Dr. Stephanie Lukens
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Macris
Mr. & Mrs. Dean Marianos
Mr. & Mrs. Filipos Mavromatidis
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Mavromatidis
Mr. & Mrs. Francis McAteer
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn McCollum
Mr. & Mrs. Michael McLean
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Miltiades
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Miltiades
Mr. & Mrs. John Moustoukas
Mr. Paul Moustoukas
Mr. & Mrs. Theofilos Moyssiadis
Mr. & Mrs. George Nakos
Mr. & Mrs. Costa Neocleous
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Nichols
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Nikolich
Fr. George and Presbyteria Pallas
Mr. Tasi Pallas
Mr. & Mrs. Konstantine Papadimitriou
Mr. & Mrs. Aristotle Papadopoulos
Fr. Panayiotis and Presbyteria
Papageorgiou
Mr. & Mrs. Jon Papastrat
Mr. & Mrs. Casey Pater
Mr. Alex Paulson
Ms. Joann Polos/Aristidis Kovaci
Mr. & Mrs. Tony Porter
Mr. & Mrs. Morris Potter
Fr. George E. Prassas
Mr. & Mrs. Francesco Quinterno
Mr. & Mrs. Randy Rogers
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Sampanes
Mr. & Mrs. George Sarris
Mr. & Mrs. Gheorghe Schipor
Mr. & Mrs. Constantine Seraphim
Mr. Mike Serkedakis
Mr. & Mrs. Antonios Sideris
Mr. & Mrs. Anastasios Skarpelis
Mrs. Mary Smith
Mrs. Vasiliki Smith

Mr. & Mrs. Manning Smith
Ms. Robbin Sotir/Alton Simms
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Sprouse
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Steffas
Mrs. Mary Stiakakis
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Tassopoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Ovidiu Teodorescu
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Thompson
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Thorne
Mr. Steve Tingas
Mr. & Mrs. Dimitrios Tsoukalas
Ms. Becky Valagohar
Mr. & Mrs. Plutarch Vamvakias
Mr. & Mrs. Dimitri Vastakis
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Wysmierski
Mr. Basile Zafiroulis

Total Members: 113

Membership in the Parish has its Privileges

If you have submitted
your Membership/
Stewardship Form to the
Parish you are entitled to
participate in the Parish
Assembly and vote for
decisions regarding the
life of the Parish. You may
also be eligible to become
a member of a committee
or even a Member of the
Parish Council.

**Please submit your
Membership/
Stewardship Form today
and serve God in the way
you are able.**

FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

Greetings from the Parish Council

We hope that you all had a Merry Christmas and wish you and your families a happy, healthy and blessed New Year.

Thanks for a great 2012. We couldn't be more pleased with the work that everyone has done to bring ourselves to a more spiritual place. We have a lot to look forward to in 2013 with the Consecration of our church. Mark your calendars for the following events, dates and times:

Friday, April 26th – 7:00 pm Vesper Service, followed by a reception; heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Saturday, April 27th – 8:00 am Orthros; followed by the Consecration Service at 9:00 am. A formal luncheon will be served following the service. Tickets can be purchased in advance by responding to the invitation you will receive.

We would like to thank the outgoing members of the Parish Council who served in 2012:

Maria Alberts

Pete Bilson

Ellen Linebaugh

John Moustoukas

We continue to work to assign our Parish Council responsibilities for 2013 with the addition of 4 new members to the Parish Council. We will share more about that in the next issue.

On December 8, 2012, we held a Strategic Planning meeting with the Parish Council, Council of Ministries members, and Facilities Planning Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to define our Mission, Purpose and Values as well as lay the ground work for future growth of our Parish and its facilities. To begin the process, Father shared with us his vision for our Parish. We also revisited the Strategic Plan developed in 2009 -2010. Some key developments from this meeting were that we need to build upon the vision that was set forth in the 2009-2010 plan and take it to this current year and look to the future. There is still plenty of work that needs to be done to define the vision, but we are all working together and moving forward in the right direction. You will hear more about this as the Strategic Plan is fine tuned.

We look forward to serving you in 2013.

You are cordially invited to join us at:



"Friends of Cyprus" Night

*Saturday, February 2, 2013, Parish Life Center
6:30 pm - Following the Great Vespers service*

Pot Luck Dinner – Please bring a Cypriot dish to share

*Our guest presenter is **Polixeni Potter, Cypriot Consul of Atlanta.**
She will inform us of her role as Consul and updates on the present situation in Cyprus.*

*Please feel free to invite Cypriot Americans in the Atlanta area so we can get to know one another.
It will be a great night of fellowship.*

*For more information and to RSVP, please contact Maria Alberts, mariaalberts@comcast.net
or 404-966-6694.*



Furnishings/ Religious Items and Iconography Donation Update

A Donation Catalogue had been developed to assist those who would like to donate items towards the furnishing and completion of our Sanctuary in preparation for the upcoming Consecration. Copies are available in the Narthex and can be found on the church's website's home page.

Your response has been overwhelming! Thanks to all those who graciously pledged and/or donated money towards the items shown in the Donation catalogue.

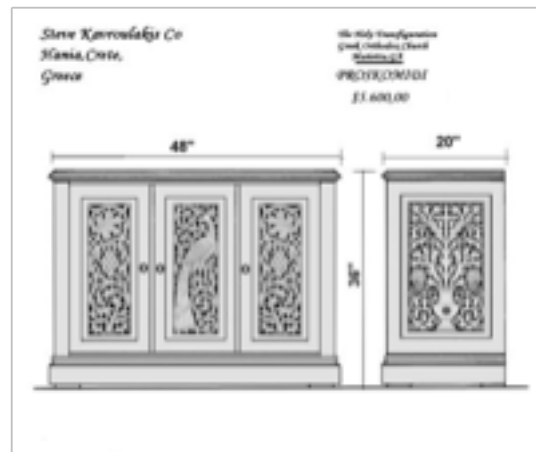
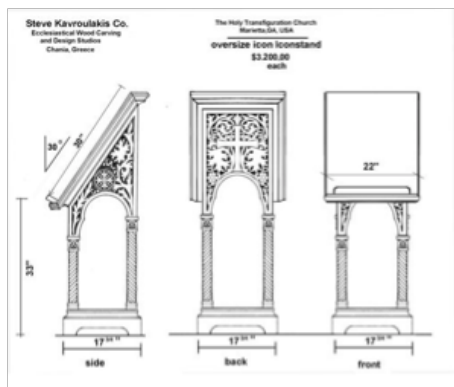
Here is a list of all items donated in full:

Page # Item

8	Christ the Lifegiver Mosaic for Exonarthex
12	Transfiguration candeli for Narthex
12	Theotokos candeli for Narthex
15	Solea - St. George full length icon
20	Solea-Byzantine Imperial Crested Rug
21	Solea-Brass Manuallia (right side)
21	Solea-Brass Manuallia (left side)
33	Holy of Holies: Righteous Melchizedek Icon
34	Holy of Holies: Icon of Great Humility
35	Holy of Holies: Altar rug set
36	Holy of Holies: Artoforion
7	Holy of Holies: Silver Chalice & Paten
39	Main iconostasion: Christ candeli
39	Main iconostasion: St John Forerunner candeli
39	Silver censer with 12 bells
41	White liturgical covers <i>(Red and Purple are still available)</i>
42	Baptistry Area: New Baptismal Font

Furnishings

The order for the furnishings (e.g., Icon Stands, Pankari tables, Proskomidi table, etc.) has already been placed, and paid for from the Building Fund, so that they arrive in time for the Consecration. Donations are being accepted towards the furnishings will directly offset the cost for the production of these items.



Iconography

There are still many items available including the icons that have been commissioned to be completed by our iconographer for the Altar area. **Would you like to commemorate a Saint for yourself or on behalf of your loved ones? Here are the ones that are available, in part or in full:**

Page # Item

10	Transfiguration Icon for Narthex
10	Theotokos Icon for Narthex
15	Solea - St. Demetrios full length icon
22	Holy of Holies: St. Basil icon
22	Holy of Holies: St. Athansios of Alex. Icon
22	Holy of Holies: St. Cyril of Alexandria Icon
22	Holy of Holies: St. Gregory of Nyssa Icon
27	Holy of Holies: St. John Chrysostom Icon
27	Holy of Holies: St. Gregory of Theologian Icon
27	Holy of Holies: St. Spyridon Icon
27	Holy of Holies: St. Nicholas Icon
32	Holy of Holies (Center) Christ the High Priest Icon

Please consider making a pledge and donation towards any item still available. You do not need to pledge the entire amount of the cost of each item. Partial donations are welcome. Please contact the church office if you have any questions.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED IN
CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST. ALLELUIA.

Evangelia (Ava) Pentzakis - December 8, 2012
Photini (Monali) Maitra - December 22, 2012
Emmanuel (Manning) Smith, IV - December 29, 2012
Maria (Claudia) Smith - December 29, 2012 (Chrismation)



Hellenic Studies

Below are some updates regarding our Hellenic Studies program...

Please check in with us frequently at: www.holytransfiguration.info/hellenic-studies/

A friendly reminder to
all of our students:

Regular classes will resume on **Tuesday, January 8th** for our *adult* and *youth* program. Our New Testament class will resume on **Saturday, January 5th**



~~~ Save the Date ~~~

Our annual *Apokriatiko Glendi* will be
held on

Saturday, March 9th

Last year's event was a great success, and
we hope to have a repeat this year!

More details to follow under a separate flyer.

*** **



"As Iron Sharpens Iron, One Man Sharpens Another" (Proverbs 27:17)

Upcoming Events--BLOCK YOUR CALENDAR!

Our monthly meeting will held on Tuesday, January 8, 6:30 pm in the PLC.

Greek Letters Day Luncheon - Sunday, January 27, in the PLC following the Liturgy . There will be a speaker during the luncheon. Details to follow.

Questions about AHEPA? Interested in being a member of this great organization? Please contact any board member.

Your Board: Harry Kipreos, Jim Tidwell, Zack Kollias, Dr. Phillip Vodas

Vice Presidents: Alan Levine, Michael Gavalas, Theodore Georgacopoulos, Ron Sprouse

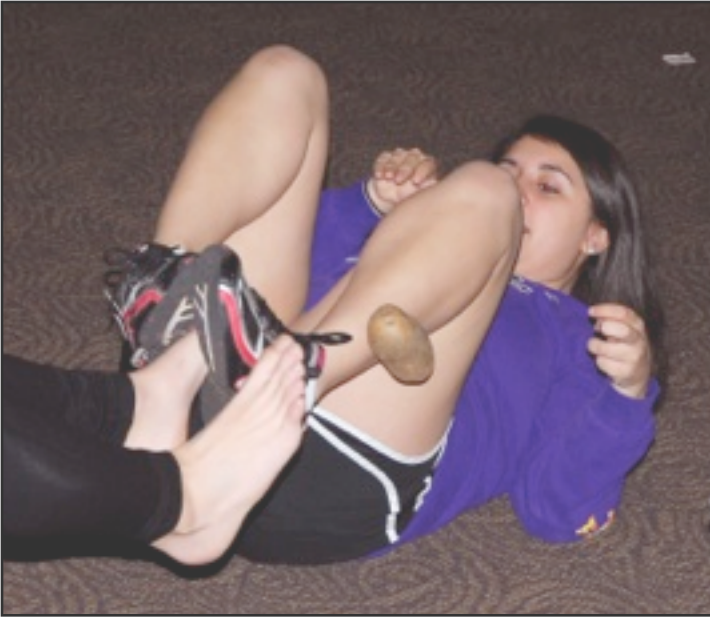
Blessing of the Animals



Above, Cathy and her dog receive blessings. Below, Athena receives a blessing from Fr. Panayiotis. We believe, in the spirit of Genesis 2:15, that it is our responsibility as human beings to love and care for God's earth. We believe that God created and blessed every creature that swims in its oceans, walks or crawls on its soil, or flies in its skies. It is for this reason that we as the caretakers of His creation also bless His animals.



GOYA in December



From top left, clockwise: Eliana and her partner lose control of their potato during a relay; junior GOYA members stuffing the parish Christmas card; Matthew and Eleni finishing the *kollyva*; Cassie with her *kollyva* teacher Robbin; the finished product.



GOYA Gatherings in January

The purpose of GOYA is to create a safe, friendly, and fun environment in which middle and high school youth can grow further into Orthodox Christian faith, piety, and life by developing deep, Christ-centered friendships with each other.



GOYA meets on Wednesday nights
from 7-9pm, beginning in the Parish Life Center

GOYA Advisers

Michael Gavalas, Leslie Hansard, Tina Johansen,
Smith Levenson, Paul Lundberg, & Spiro Nicolopoulos

January 2 nd	 Waterworks
January 9 th	 The Life of Moses
January 16 th	 Just Deserts
January 23 rd	 Σοφία
January 30 th	 Rest

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION

SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB



The next Spiritual Book Club will be held on **January 27th** from 6:30 - 8:30 pm in the PLC. The book we are reading is: *Proof of Heaven - A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* - MD Eben Alexander III. The author, Dr. Alexander, is a highly respected, Harvard-educated neurosurgeon. With the skepticism of a scientist, he could never really reconcile his knowledge of neuroscience with the idea of God, heaven or the soul until his own brain shut down completely and he lay in a coma for seven days.

BOOK REVIEW

"Proof of Heaven - A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife" - MD Eben Alexander III.

What does it really feel like to die? What actually happens when the essence of a person, in other words, the soul, separates from the body and journeys into the afterlife? The answers to these questions are not clear because very few people come back to tell us about this experience. And even when some people do come back to tell their stories, we don't really believe them. Doctors and scientists are especially skeptical of such phenomena.

Dr. Eben Alexander was one of those doctors who did not believe in near-death experiences. He is a highly trained neurosurgeon educated at Duke and Harvard. He argued that near-death experiences are simply fantasies produced by brains under extreme stress. Then one day, his own brain was attacked by a rare form of meningitis. His brain shut down completely. For seven days, while his body lay in a coma, Alexander journeyed beyond this world. He encountered an angelic being who guided him into the deepest realms of super-physical existence. Before he underwent this journey, he could not reconcile his knowledge of neuroscience with any belief in heaven, God or the soul. Today he is a doctor who believes that God and the soul are real and that death is not the end of personal existence. When he returned to life and examined his medical records and x-rays, he knew that that part of his brain which normally would have explained away a near-death experience, *hadn't been working at all*. And yet, despite this, he knew that he had been alive, and truly aware in a universe characterized above all by love, consciousness, and reality.

His discoveries make for fascinating reading. He writes about: our role on earth which is to grow toward the Divine (p. 84); about thinking that is not dependent upon linear deduction, but that moves fast as lightning, making our ordinary thought hopelessly slow and fumbling (p.84); the sum total of all that is evil on earth is like a grain of sand on a vast beach compared to the goodness, abundance, hope and unconditional love in which the universe is literally awash (p. 83); communicating with God as the most extraordinary experience imaginable, but at the same time the most natural one of all because God is present in us at all times (p.161).

If one were given an assignment to find the most highly qualified person to speak about a near-death experience, there would not be a more perfect candidate than neurosurgeon, Dr. Eben Alexander. His story is a compelling piece for scientists, skeptics, believers and seekers. We will be discussing his book from an Orthodox perspective at our next Spiritual Book Club meeting on January 27th in the PLC at 6.30 PM. Come join us for what promises to be an exhilarating discussion.

HELLENIC DANCE

HELLENIC DANCE NEWS

This year's Hellenic Dance Festival (HDF) competition will be held in Winston Salem, NC over the course of Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend...

January 18-21, 2013

Please show your support and encouragement to our dancers as they prepare for this important event!

Final practice schedule for HDF

Wed. Jan 2nd (11am-1pm), *lunch will be provided*

Sun. Jan 6th (1-4pm)

Wed. Jan 9th (7-9pm)

Sun. Jan 13th (1-5pm)

Tues. Jan 15th (7-10pm) *at BAPA dance studio*

Wed. Jan 16th (7-10pm) *at BAPA dance studio*

Thurs. Jan 17th (7-9pm)

Fri. Jan 18th - leave for HDF!!!

Practice schedule for Marietta Greek Festival

Practices for ALL groups will begin on **Tuesday, January 22nd** and **Sunday, January 27th**
(see below for your group's exact start date)

Palamakia (K and 1st)...Tuesdays, starting @ 4:30pm

Asteria (2nd and 3rd)...Tuesdays, starting @ 4:30pm

Petaloudes (4th and 5th)...Tuesdays, starting @ 7:15pm

Phoenix (6th-8th)...Sundays, starting @ 1:30pm

Eleftheria (9th-12th)...Sundays, starting @ 1:30pm

A friendly reminder to all dancers and dance parents:

If you have any article of costume/ clothing borrowed from the dance closet, please see that it is returned promptly to either Dorian Bafas or Paulina Vastakis. As we gear up for our festival, we need our complete inventory of costumes accounted for, so that they can be cleaned and prepared for use during the festival.
Thank you for your kind cooperation.



PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Thanks to our vendors and shoppers that helped make our first St. Nicholas Market a success!

Ellen Linebaugh – Cake Pops/Aprons/Gourmet Foods
Anthea Nichols/Michelle Frangis – Cakes and Candies
Lee Nichols – Design Jewelry
Ann Zakreski – Olive Oils and Beauty Products
Renee Tiller – Initial Bags
Tina Vamvakias – Pottery
Mary and Penny Miltiades – Spanakopita/Pastitsio and Ornaments
Anne Fairchild – Pampered Chef
MaryAnn Medford – Tupperware
Kathy Shoji – Jewelry
Amanda Kudratov – Farmers Insurance
Philoptochos Bookstore

In October, the **Soup Kitchen** served 105 people at Must Ministries with chicken, rice salad and apples. A special thank you to **Tina Vamvakias, Marty Driscoll, Donnis Gavalas, Kally Niarchos, Kathy Bylos, Niki Gess, Christine Sprouse, Linda Lopos, Leslie Hansard, Irene Hammond, Dorothy Macris, Basile Zafiroulis, Michael Gavalas, Judy McCall & Athena Burke.**

The next **Board Meeting** is Monday, January 21, at 7pm, in the OCR.

SAVE the DATE: **Metropolis Philoptochos Retreat** at the Diakonia Center - Friday, January 18, through Sunday, January 20. All women are invited to attend. The speaker for the retreat is Father Paul Costopoulos, Dean of Holy Cross- Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Birmingham, AL. His topic is "Overcoming Anxiety by Keeping Our Focus on Christ". The deadline for the retreat is in mid-January. Carpools will be organized.

The next **Book Club** will be Thursday, **January 24, 6:30 pm** at the home of Margaret Kollias. The book is

Volunteers are needed to join the **Godparents' Luncheon Committee**. The luncheon is **February 17**. There are opportunities for helping with: theme/favors/décor, advertising/invites, tickets, menu/cooking, food donations/sponsors, favors-photo frames, set up, serving and clean up. Come be a part of this special event. Please contact Penny Miltiades at pmiltia@gmail.com or 404.630.7083.

Spiritual Retreat
Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos
January 18 - 20, 2013 Diakonia Center, Salem SC

OVERCOMING ANXIETY BY KEEPING YOUR FOCUS on Christ



Presented by Fr. Paul Costopoulos

Dean, Holy Cross-Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Birmingham AL

All Women of the Metropolis are Welcome
Located at the Beautiful Diakonia Center in Salem, South Carolina
Registration Information will be sent to all Chapters in November
Registration Deadline is January 9, 2013

Cost per person is \$150.00. To register, please contact Irene Politis,
105 Kuralt House Court, Charlotte, North Carolina, 28210 or
704.451.4243, ipolitis3@yahoo.com .

Visiting The Christian Community In Iraq

<http://www.pravmir.com/visiting-the-christian-community-in-iraq/>

[Sean McLachlan](#) Dec 24th, 2012

Before Iraq was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century, it was one of the oldest centers of Christianity in the world. Even after the Arab conquest, Christians made up a sizable minority of the population – sometimes tolerated, sometimes persecuted, but always surviving.

Now it's facing its biggest threat in centuries.

The Christian Community in Iraq is a lot smaller than it was in 2003 when the Coalition invaded. During the occupation, radical Muslims claimed the Christians were helping the invaders and used this as an excuse to attack them. Churches and shops were bombed and individual Christians were murdered or told to leave on pain of death.

In an interview with the BBC, the priest at St Joseph's Chaldean Church in Baghdad said that in the past nine years his parish has shrunk from 1,200 families to 300. The *New York Times* reports that before the war the Christian population was estimated to be as high as 1.4 million, and has now dropped to less than 500,000.

I met few Christians in my 17 days in Iraq other than some shopkeepers and the owners of a liquor store when I went on a beer run in Basra. I was anxious to see some of the early medieval centers of Christianity that make the country so important to Church history. The Christian community in Iraq is splintered into more than a dozen different churches, including the Assyrian Church of the East, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Catholic Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and many more. Many of their rites and beliefs are from a markedly different religious tradition than what we are familiar with in the West.

Above is a photo of the entrance to Mar Mattai monastery, run by the Syrian Orthodox Church. Located in Kurdistan in the far north of the country, it sits on the slopes of Mt. Maqloub. It was founded in 363 A.D. by the Saint Mar Mattai and is thus one of the oldest monasteries in existence.

Much of the monastery is modern, with a few crumbling ruins dotting the slopes to hint at its long history. The assistant abbot welcomed us in careful, practiced English and told us how the saint converted Prince Behnam and Princess Sarah from paganism to Christianity. Sarah had been suffering from leprosy and was miraculously cured after her conversion.

When their father King Senchareb found out, he had them put to death. He soon regretted his act, became a Christian himself, and as penance built Mar Behnam Monastery.

This monastery is much better preserved. Its stone interior is intricately carved in the style of the Atabek Emirate, which lasted from the 11th to the 13th centuries before being wiped out by the Mongols. The style is a strange one: a sort of mix of Turkish design with Christian



symbolism and elements from ancient Assyrian art. See the gallery for some images, and there are more [at this site](#). St. Behnam monastery survived the Mongol invasion and even managed to make a few converts. Some of the inscriptions in the crypt are in Mongolian.

Walking through these two monasteries I could feel the absence left by the departure of so many from the community. We saw almost no one, and the monasteries felt more like museums than places of worship. Perhaps we just went on quiet days. Both are centers for pilgrimage, though, so I was hoping to meet and talk with pilgrims like I had at the [Shia holy places](#). But it was not to be.

While the situation for Christians, indeed all Iraqis, has calmed down considerably in the past couple of years, the persecutions continue. Iraq has broken down along sectarian lines, with Sunni and Shia Muslims fighting it out and Christians being targeted by radical Muslims.

Being such a small minority, it's difficult for the Christian community to defend itself. Government soldiers and police guard churches and monasteries, and man checkpoints at the edges of Christian neighborhoods, but as with sectarian attacks against Muslims, the terrorists often find a way to hit their targets.

There's hope, though. As we studied the inscriptions in the crypt of St. Behnam's monastery, I noticed our guide and one of our guards, both Muslims, lighting candles. I went over to the guide, who I knew to be a devout Shia, and asked him why he was lighting candles in a Christian holy spot.

"In my office there are a lot of Christian women. They asked me to light candles for them," he replied as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

This man, who went off to pray every time we visited a mosque, saw no conflict with his faith in doing this or with working with Christian women. If his tolerance can become common enough to push out the intolerant radicals, the Christian community in Iraq may survive after all.

New Patriarch of Antioch Urges Christians to Stay in Syria

<http://www.pravmir.com/new-patriarch-urges-christians-to-stay/>
[admin](#) Dec 24th, 2012

Syria's new Greek Orthodox patriarch in Damascus called Saturday for Christians to remain in the country.

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East John X Yazigi also appealed to warring parties to renounce violence "in all its forms" and to start a process of dialogue.

In his first news conference since succeeding Ignatius IV

Hazim, who died on Dec. 5, he said: "We Christians are here in the country and we will stay here.

"We believe that Christ is always present in this region, which is where Christianity was born."

The patriarch sought to play down dangers faced by Christians.

"What is happening to us is happening to others too. We are in the same situation as everyone else, Muslims and Christians, shoulder to shoulder, facing the difficulties," he said.

There are some 1.8 million Christians in Syria. Many have remained neutral in a conflict that erupted in March 2011. Others, fearing a rise of Islamism, have taken Assad's side.

The messages came two days after U.N. investigators described the 21-month conflict as "overtly sectarian in nature."





25 December 2012

Related Story

[1 Suicide attack at Nigeria church](#)

Gunmen in the northern Nigerian state of Yobe have shot dead at least six Christians, army and local officials say.

They say a church in Peri village near Potiskum, the economic capital of Yobe, was set on fire in an attack on Christmas Eve.

No group has so far said it carried out the attack.

The Boko Haram Islamist militant group has targeted a number of churches in the north

since 2010. It has killed hundreds in its campaign to impose Sharia law.

A series of bomb attacks carried out by the group across the country at Christmas 2011 - including two at Christmas Day church services - left almost 40 people dead and many more injured.

'Savage acts of terrorism'

The head of the Network for Justice human rights group, Zakari Adamu, told the BBC that the gunmen also attacked the homes of Christians following the attack during the midnight mass service.

Boko Haram carried out a series of attacks on Christians this time last year

The AFP news agency reported that the pastor of the church - a branch of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) - is among the dead.

Military Spokesman Eli Lazarus told the Reuters news agency that six people were killed in the violence, which happened when "unknown gunmen attempted to attack Potiskum but were repelled by troops".

"While they were fleeing, they attacked a church in a village," he said.

The attack comes on the same day that the Pope - as part of his Christmas Day address - prayed for harmony in Nigeria, lamenting what he called "savage acts of terrorism" that frequently target Christians.

The head of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Yobe, Idi Garba, told AFP that many worshippers at ECWA "are still missing".

"I have been informed that six bodies have been recovered," Mr Garba said.

He said that some worshippers who lived near the church "fled their homes during the attack and it is assumed that they are still hiding in the bush".

Correspondents says that while Yobe's population is overwhelmingly Muslim, Potiskum has a significant Christian minority. Peri is just 2km (1.24 miles) outside the city.

Boko Haram has been able to carry out so many attacks in Yobe because it borders Borno state where the insurgent group is based.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous state and its biggest oil producer. Most people in the south are Christian, whereas the north has a Muslim majority.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20842225>



ON CHILDREN WHOSE MURDERS DON'T MAKE THE NEWS

Analysis by [Benjamin Radford](#)

Wed Dec 26, 2012

Twelve days ago, America experienced one of the worst school shootings in history. Twenty children and six adults were killed when Adam Lanza burst into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut and opened fire with guns and rifles. The massacre shocked the world and caused the country to ask how and why it happened. The children of Sandy Hook are the highest-profile murder victims, but they are not the only ones. According to figures released by UNICEF, **over the past decade more than 20,000 American children have been killed in their own homes by family members.**

America has the [worst record of child abuse in the industrialized world](#). More children die each week in America than died in the school shooting on that day: Twenty children died on Dec. 14, and it, quite rightly, outraged the world. Twenty-seven children died the week before and the week after and nobody noticed. Americans and the news media pay little attention to children murdered every day across the country.

A small sample of children killed (or nearly killed) by parents making news in the weeks before and after the Sandy Hook killings: Camilia Terry of Cleveland was arrested for killing her three-year-old son Emilliano; she claimed he'd been kidnapped but after his body was found in a trash bag at a landfill, her story changed. Nicole Fitzgerald of Baltimore stabbed her two-year-old son to death. Jennifer Lynn Emerick of Huron, Michigan, suffocated her 23-month-old son. Jessica Elizabeth Rhodes of Pennsylvania beat and shook her 14-month-old son so badly it nearly killed him; he suffered brain bleeding and swelling, and eye hemorrhaging.

Kristine Davis of New Hampshire poisoned her seven-month-old son. Veronica Herrera of Boise, Idaho, killed her 2-year-old daughter and burned her body in a barrel in the back yard of her home. Lashay Patterson and her live-in boyfriend, both of Philadelphia, beat and burned her five-year-old son to death.

[BLOG: Kids Sent to School With Armored Backpacks](#)

It's a national tragedy when one man with a gun kills 20 children at once, but when parents do it one at a time every single day in this country it barely makes the local news or raises an eyebrow. Why?

Part of the reason is that the Connecticut shooting perfectly fits the typical "Stranger Danger" social narrative: [an evil male](#) preying on other people's innocent children. It's the stereotypical murder, something we can all recognize and fear. But when it's [a mother](#) (or, less often, a father) killing her own child, it's often ignored because, after all, as horrific and tragic as the crime is, at least it's her own child, not someone else's.

The News Media Bias:

It's also a largely invisible crime because of how the news media reports the killings. The murder of children by parents is so common that stories about it merit only a few seconds on the nightly local news, or a paragraph or two in a newspaper or website. Unless it's a sensational case (such as Susan Smith who drowned her two boys after claiming a Black man abducted them, triggering a national search in 1995), these killings never make the national news and stay off the social radar as a serious issue.



When we briefly hear about a local parent who killed their child, it's easy to think of it as a rare, horrific aberration instead of something that happens every single day in towns and cities across the country. If each of these child murders made the national news -- an average of three or four every day -- the public would react as they have in the wake of the recent massacre.

The Sandy Hook victims were also brought into [vivid, emotional detail](#) by the press. We know their names, their faces, their interests, their favorite music, and what they wanted to be when they grew up. Except in rare, high-profile cases -- such as Caylee Anthony, for example -- children killed by their parents are quasi-anonymous; usually the only details offered are their names, ages and how their bodies were found. They are presented in news stories as grim statistics, not real children, so why would the public care about them?

Another reason the murders are treated different is that public tragedies like the Sandy Hook massacre can be related to, or used to support, specific social agendas, including addressing gun control, mental health issues and even bullying. But when the issue is parents killing their children, the causes are much murkier and harder to address.

Solutions may involve improving community service support for families, drug treatment programs, and domestic violence intervention -- mundane social services that aren't as headline-grabbing as gun bans.

The children killed every day in our communities are no more important than those who died in Sandy Hook, but they are no less important, either.

<http://news.discovery.com/human/when-killing-children-doesnt-make-the-news-121226.html#mkcpgn=rssnws1>

ANALYSIS: U.S. Guns by the Numbers, Analysis by [Talal Al-Khatib](#), Thu Dec 20, 2012

With nearly 300 million guns in the country, the United States has the highest number of guns per capita of any developed nation. Perhaps not surprisingly, the United States also has the highest number of gun-related fatalities.

[According to a global study on homicide by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime released in 2011](#), 9,960 homicides were committed using a firearm in 2010, representing the cause of 67 percent of the total homicides that year. Violent crimes, however, have been trending downward for decades. Homicide statistics provide an incomplete picture, however.

[As reported in a white paper by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Gun Policy and Research](#), pulling from data aggregated from government and academic sources, over 31,000 deaths occur annually in the United States as a result of gunshot wounds. Although homicides tied to firearms have declined, gun-related deaths have remained steady over the past decade. [As Discovery News' Lori Cuthbert notes in a recent post](#), firearm-related deaths are due to outpace traffic fatalities by 2015.

Furthermore, more than 70,000 are treated in hospitals every year for non-fatal gunshot trauma, and guns are implicated "an estimated 337,960 nonfatal violent crimes."

NEWS: Can Gun Laws Save Lives?

In addition to the human cost, gun-related deaths and injuries in 2005 cost the United States economy an estimated \$32 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses, as noted in the Hopkins report. In 2010, that number grew to \$42 billion, [according to a report by the Center for American Progress](#). The latter figure includes the costs of police, courts and prison facilities for gun offenses.

Guns are also a major industry in the United States. [According to ABC News'](#) rundown of firearms statistics, there are over 129,817 federally licensed firearms dealers in the United States. To provide a baseline for comparison, there are only 36,569 grocery stores. [As reported by the Fiscal Times](#), "the firearms industry now generates roughly \$12 billion a year in sales," though estimates vary.

<http://news.discovery.com/human/us-guns-by-the-numbers-20121220.html>

January 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WYR Sunday after...ivity of Christ 8:30 AM Orthros 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:30 AM A 40 day Memorial Service is given by 11:30 AM A 40 day Memorial Meeting is given by 11:40 AM A 40 day Memorial Service is given by	31 Circumcision...sil the Great 6:00 PM Great Vespers 9:30 PM New Year's Eve Dance	New Year's Day	2 11:30 AM Presentation to Scouting Group	3 11:30 AM Presentation to Scouting Group	4	5
The Theopha...Jesus Christ 8:30 AM Orthros 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:15 AM Catechism	7 7:00 PM Parish Council Meeting	8 5:30 PM Hellenic Studies 7:00 PM Intro. to Orthodoxy 7:00 PM EYC Committee Meeting	9 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM GOYA Meeting	10 7:00 PM Bible Study	11 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers	12 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers
13 Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 AM Orthros 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:00 AM Blessing of 2013 Stewardship Forms 11:15 AM Catechism 12:00 PM Philoptochos Vasilopita	14 7:00 PM Parish Council Meeting	15 5:30 PM Hellenic Studies 7:00 PM Festival Meeting 7:00 PM Intro. to Orthodoxy 7:00 PM EYC Committee Meeting	16 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM GOYA Meeting	17 10:00 AM Bible Study	18 Philoptochos Met. Retreat 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 12:00 PM Strauch Baptism (Anna) 1:00 PM Tidwell Baptism (Tentative) 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers	19 Philoptochos Met. Retreat 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 12:00 PM Strauch Baptism (Anna) 1:00 PM Tidwell Baptism (Tentative) 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers
20 Philoptochos Met. Retreat Twelfth Sunday of Luke 8:30 AM Orthros 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:15 AM Catechism 11:40 AM A Memorial Service is given by Diana Honey for her parents, Damianos and Maria Tsifopoulos. May their	21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Meeting	22 4:15 PM Asteria Dance Practice (2nd & 3rd) 4:30 PM Pitsirikia Dance Practice (Pre-K) 4:30 PM Palamakia Dance Practice (K & 1st) 5:30 PM Hellenic Studies 7:00 PM Intro. to Orthodoxy 7:15 PM Petaloudes Dance Practice (4th & 5th)	23 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM GOYA Meeting	24 10:00 AM Bible Study 11:30 AM Soup Kitchen 6:30 PM Philoptochos Book Club	25 8:30 AM Catechism Teachers' Workshop 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers	26 8:30 AM Catechism Teachers' Workshop 10:30 AM New Testament Greek Class 4:00 PM Byzantine Chant Class 5:00 PM Great Vespers
27 Fifteenth Sunday of Luke 8:30 AM Orthros 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:15 AM Catechism 12:00 PM Three Hierarchs-AHEPA/Hellenic Studies 1:00 PM Phoenix/Elftheria Dance Practice 6:30 PM Spiritual Book Club	28 7:00 PM Parish Council Meeting	29 4:15 PM Asteria Dance Practice (2nd & 3rd) 4:30 PM Pitsirikia Dance Practice (Pre-K) 4:30 PM Palamakia Dance Practice (K & 1st) 5:30 PM Hellenic Studies 7:00 PM Intro. to Orthodoxy 7:15 PM Petaloudes Dance Practice (4th & 5th)	30 10:00 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM GOYA Meeting	31 10:00 AM Bible Study	1 Groundhog Day 7:00 PM Cyprus Night	2 Groundhog Day 7:00 PM Cyprus Night

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Web Page: www.mariettagreekfestival.org

Rev. Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D., Protopresbyter

Rev. Fr. George Pallas, Protopresbyter

Paul Lundberg, Pastoral Assistant

Anne Willcocks, Parish Secretary



Scan to view our Website

DATE	PARISH COUNCIL DUTY	ACOLYTES	GREETERS	PROSFORO
Jan. 6, 2013	TBA	Team I	D. Bafas/E. Markley	TBA
Jan. 13, 2013	TBA	Team II	P. Koutouzis/M. Csonka	TBA
Jan. 20, 2013	TBA	Team I	A. & T. Johansen	TBA
Jan. 27, 2013	TBA	Team II	S. Lukens/M. Niarchos	TBA

Team 1: Chris Alberts, Matthew Azimzadeh, Nicholas Azimzadeh, Gabriel Beneda, Christopher Bilson, Evan Bilson, Alex Brewer, Nick Brewer, Chris Bridgers, Daniel Bridgers, Michael Bridgers, Nicholas Brotsis, Anthony Bundros, Cole Foster, George Gavalas, Constantine Gavalas, Jacob Harrah, Stephen Harrah, Zayne Isaac, Paul Jacobs, Andrew Levine, Luke Melissas, Zach Melissas, Evan Papadopoulos, Lucas Porter, Matthew Shanahan, Mike Steffas, Luke Turner, Matthew Turner, Yianni Turner, Nicholas Zakreski

Team 2: Theo Bliss, Matthew Buchan, Brody (Thomas) Brooks, Christos Costarides, Yianni Costarides, Chris Danos, Nick Danos, Leo Frangis, Manuel Frangis, Niko Gekas, Alex Gekas, Alexander Georgacopoulos, Yianni Gormanos, Morgan Lilly, Michael Marianos, Gabriel Mavromatidis, Jeremy Mavromatidis, Jacob Mavromatidis, Eli Nichols, Angelo Nichols, Evans Nichols, Tommy O'Brien, Michael Papadimitriou, Dean Papastrat, Matthew Paulson, Alex Skarpelis, Mitchell Starks, Evan Strakes, Luke Tassopoulos, Nicholas Tassopoulos, Braden Thorne, Alex Thorne