

DECEMBER 2025



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey



Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

THE CONCEPTION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS BY SAINT ANNA - TUESDAY DECEMBER 9TH

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS - SUNDAY DECEMBER 7TH

HIERARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY - SUNDAY DECEMBER 14TH

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - SUNDAY DECEMBER 14TH

CHRISTMAS LITURGY - SUNDAY DECEMBER 24TH

Saint Andrew Family News

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On Sundays we celebrate

Orthros @ 8:15 AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM

For other services please check our website or call the office

OFFICE HOURS

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The Saint Andrew Family News is published monthly except in July and August and is distributed free of charge to all members. Submissions are accepted **only as electronic files, (via e-mail attachment)**. Pending availability of space and permission from Editor-in-chief, submissions will be in next month's issue.

Please submit your articles and information on time to
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*Deadline for the **JANUARY 2026 ISSUE** is December 15th*

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DIVINE SERVICES

DECEMBER 2025

Thursday	4	+ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR *Relics
Saturday	6	+ST. NICHOLAS ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA
Sunday	7	10th Sunday of Luke
Tuesday	9	THE CONCEPTION OF +ST. ANNA
Friday	12	+ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER OF TRYMITHOUS
Sunday	14	11th Sunday of Luke; +ST. ELEUTHERIOS THE HOLY MARTYR CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
Sunday	21	Sunday before the Nativity
Monday	22	+ST. ANASTASIA THE GREAT MARTYR
Wednesday	24	+EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, +EUGENIA THE RIGHTEOUS Orthros, Great Hours, Great Vespers Liturgy of St Basil the Great @8am
Wednesday	24	+HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom @5PM
Saturday	27	+SAINT STEPHEN, Archdeacon and First Martyr
Sunday	28	Sunday after Nativity; Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
Wednesday	31	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION ST. BASIL Great Vespers @7:00pm

JANUARY 2026

Thursday	1	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION OF ST. BASIL @8:15AM
Sunday	4	Sunday before Epiphany, Forefeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Monday	5	EVE OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: Orthros, Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom & Great Agiasmos (Fasting Day)
Tuesday	6	HOLY THEOPHANY, BAPTISM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and Great Agiasmos
Wednesday	7	THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET, BAPTIST +Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Sunday	11	Sunday after Epiphany; Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Saturday	17	+ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT
Sunday	18	12th Sunday of Luke +ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT & CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA
Sunday	25	15th Sunday Luke Godparents' Sunday
Friday	30	+SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS: +BASIL THE GREAT; +GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN; & +JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (<i>CELEBRATING Three Hierarchs Program on February 2 (HAS & RelEd)</i>)

Sundays: Orthros begins @ 8:15AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30AM

Weekdays: Orthros begins @ 8AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:15AM

*Relics(We have this saint's Relics at our Saint Andrew Reliquary) **

Religious Education Students will attend Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am, receive Holy Communion and then proceed to their Sunday School class.

Δ Ε Κ Ε Μ Β Ρ Ι Ο Σ 2 0 2 5

Πέμπτη	4	+ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ *ΛΕΙΨΑΝΑ
Σάββατο	6	+ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΥΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Κυριακή	7	Γ' Λουκά
Πέμπτη	9	Η ΣΥΛΛΗΨΗΣ ΤΗΣ +ΑΓΙΑΣ ΘΕΟΠΡΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ ΆΝΝΗΣ
Παρασκευή	12	+ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΡΙΜΥΘΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Κυριακή	14	ΙΑ' Λουκά +ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΙΑΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ
Κυριακή	21	Κυριακή προ της Γέννησης
Δευτέρα	22	+ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΡΙΑΣ
Τετάρτη	24	+ΠΡΟ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, +ΕΥΓΕΝΙΑΣ ΟΡΘΟΣ, ΜΕΓΑΛΑΙΩΡΑΙ, ΜΕΓΑ ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΟΣ, ΚΑΙ ΘΕΙΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΩΡΑ 8:00ΠΜ
Τετάρτη	24	+Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΟΡΘΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΙΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΗ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΥ <u>ΩΡΑ 5:00ΜΜ</u>
Σάββατο	27	+ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ
Κυριακή	28	Κυριακή μετά την Χριστού Γέννησι
Τετάρτη	31	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ ΜΕΓΑ ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΟΣ 7:00ΜΜ

Ι Α Ν Ο Υ Α Ρ Ι Ο Σ 2 0 2 6

Τετάρτη	1	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ ώρα 8.15πμ
Κυριακή	4	Παραμονή των Φώτων Θεοπέμπτου και Θεωνά των μαρτύρων (Νηστεία) – Όρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Ιωάννη Χρυσοστόμου και Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
Δευτέρα	5	Παραμονή των Φώτων Θεοπέμπτου και Θεωνά των μαρτύρων (Νηστεία) Όρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Ιωάννη Χρυσοστόμου και Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
Τρίτη	6	Τα άγια Θεοφάνεια του Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού - Όρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου και Μέγα Αγιασμός
Τετάρτη	7	Η Σύναξις του Προδρόμου και Βαπτιστού Ιωάννου - Όρθρος & Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου
Κυριακή	11	ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ; ΜΕΘΕΟΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ
Σάββατο	17	+ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Κυριακή	18	ΙΒ' Του Λουκά +ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ
Κυριακή	25	ΙΕ' ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΥ (ΤΗΣ ΧΑΝΑΝΑΙΑΣ) <i>ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΝΟΝΩΝ</i>
Παρασκευή	30	ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ +ΜΕΓΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ, +ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ, +ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ (ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ –στις 1 ^η Φεβρουαρίου)

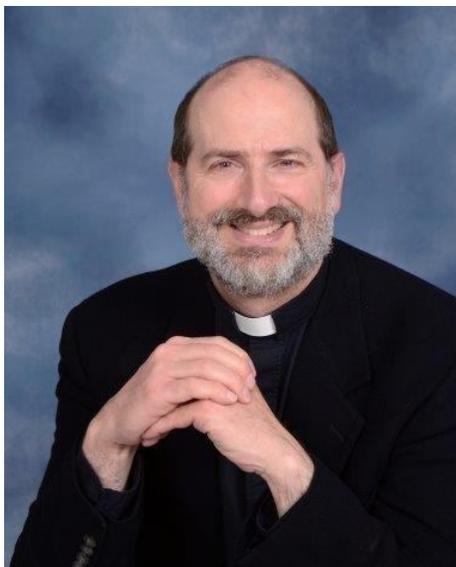
Την Κυριακή – Όρθρος - ώρα 8.15πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9:30πμ
Τις καθημερινές – Όρθρος - ώρα 8πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9πμ

Λείψανα (Έχουμε τα Λείψανα του Αγίου στην Λειψανοθήκη της εκκλησία μας)

Οι μαθητές του Κατηχητικού σχολείου θα έρθουν πρώτα στην Θεία Λειτουργία ώρα 9:30πμ, μετά την Θεία Κοινωνία θα συνεχίσουν στις τάξεις τους.

THE ROLE JOSEPH THE BETROTHED IN THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AND HIS INFLUENCE ON OUR LIVES

As we draw near to the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our hearts naturally turn to the wondrous events surrounding His birth. We contemplate the humble cave, the silent adoration of the Theotokos, the heavenly hymn of the angels, and the awe of the shepherds. Yet there is another figure who often stands quietly in the background—humble, obedient, steadfast—Joseph the Betrothed, the Guardian of the Virgin and the earthly protector of the Christ Child.



Let's turn our attention to this righteous man, whose role in the mystery of the Incarnation is often overlooked but is essential, profound, and deeply instructive for our own spiritual lives.

The Gospel tells us that Joseph was a just man (Matthew 1:19). This simple phrase carries enormous meaning. Joseph's righteousness was not merely moral or legal—it was a righteousness rooted in deep faith, humility, and total trust in God.

When Joseph discovered that Mary was with child, he faced a situation that no human reasoning could make sense of. In that moment, he had every opportunity to act according to social expectations or to protect his own reputation. Instead, he chose mercy. He chose compassion. He chose to shield Mary from shame.

And when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and revealed the divine mystery, Joseph did not argue. He did not resist. He did not calculate the cost. **He obeyed!**

He accepted his role in the greatest story ever told—not with grand speeches, but with quiet, steady faith.

In this, Joseph becomes a mirror for our own lives. How often do we resist the will of God because it is confusing or costly? How often do we hesitate when faith asks more from us than we expected? Joseph teaches us that obedience to God, even when it defies our understanding, opens the way for God to accomplish His saving work through us.

The Fathers of the Church call Joseph the "Guardian of the Virgin" and the "Protector of the Mystery." His role was not incidental—it was necessary.

Through Joseph, God provides for the earthly safety of the Mother of God and the Christ Child. It is Joseph who leads the Theotokos to Bethlehem. It is Joseph who finds the cave when there is no room at the inn. It is Joseph who rises in the middle of the night at the angel's warning and takes the family into Egypt, shielding them from Herod's murderous intent. It is Joseph who works with his hands to sustain the Holy Family.

Think of this: the One who created all things, who holds all life in His hands, entrusted His very life—His infancy, His vulnerability—to Joseph. What immense honor. What immense responsibility. And Joseph accepts this calling with courage, diligence, and selfless love.

In this, Joseph teaches us the holiness of responsibility. He reminds fathers, husbands, godparents, and all Christians that protecting the vulnerable, providing for others, and

offering steadfast presence are sacred acts. Joseph shows us that holiness is found not only in visions and miracles, but in labor, protection, sacrifice, and faithfulness.

Joseph is, in a remarkable way, the first defender of the truth of the Incarnation.

He receives the angelic revelation that “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20). He is the first to hear the divine name: Jesus, meaning “the Lord saves.”

He is the first to be entrusted with the mystery that the Messiah is coming—not through human will, but by divine initiative.

Joseph becomes the guardian of this mystery not just physically but spiritually. He guards it in silence. He guards it in obedience. He guards it in his unwavering protection of Mary and the Christ Child.

In this, Joseph models for us how to hold the mysteries of God—with reverence, humility, and silence. Not everything God reveals to us is meant to be shouted. Some things are meant to be treasured in the heart, protected, nurtured, and lived.

There is a profound theological truth in Joseph’s presence at the Nativity: God redeems and sanctifies fatherhood through him.

Joseph is not the biological father of Christ. Yet he is truly, fully, and lovingly the earthly father of Jesus. He gives the Child His name. He teaches Him the Scriptures. He raises Him in the carpenter’s shop. He provides for Him and guides Him.

In Joseph, God shows us that fatherhood is not merely biological; it is sacrificial, spiritual, and relational.

In an age where fatherhood is often confused, diminished, or abandoned, Joseph shines as the

image of the father who protects without controlling, who provides without boasting, who leads without dominating, and who loves without conditions.

He is the father who stands in the background—not absent, but humble. Not silent from indifference, but silent from reverence.

You may notice that Joseph speaks not a single recorded word in the entire New Testament.

And yet, he speaks volumes through his actions.

He speaks through obedience.

He speaks through courage.

He speaks through purity.

He speaks through his protection of Mary.

He speaks through his care for Christ.

He speaks through his faithfulness to God’s unexpected plan.

In a world full of noise, Joseph teaches us the power of a holy life lived quietly before God. He shows us that greatness in the Kingdom of God is not found in publicity, position, or prominence—but in humility, faithfulness, and love.

As we prepare for the Nativity, let us draw near to Joseph—not simply as a supporting character in the story of Christ, but as a profound teacher of the spiritual life.

Let us learn from him:

- Obedience when God’s will is hard to understand
 - Courage when the path ahead is uncertain
 - Humility that does not seek recognition
 - Faithfulness in protecting those entrusted to our care
 - Silence that reverences the mysteries of God
- May Joseph the Betrothed intercede for us, guiding us to approach the manger not merely with awe, but with the same obedient and trusting heart that he brought to Bethlehem. And may we, like Joseph, become faithful guardians of Christ in our own lives—protecting His presence in our hearts, our families, and our world.

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Pastoral Message of His Eminence Metropolitan

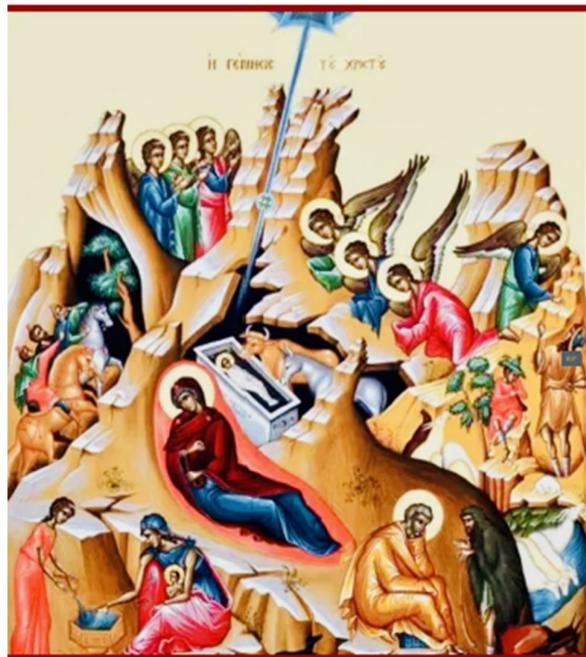
Apostolos of New Jersey

for the Inception of the Nativity Fast

15 November 2025

Beloved and faithful children in the Lord,

As we enter the blessed period of the Forty-Day Fast in preparation for the Holy Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I extend to you my heartfelt paternal blessing and spiritual embrace. The Church once again calls us to walk the path of repentance, illumination, and inner stillness, that we may worthily behold the mystery of the Incarnation—“the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us” (John 1:14).



The Nativity Fast, gentle yet profound, invites us to reorient our hearts toward the things of the Spirit. Fasting, as Holy Scripture teaches, is not merely abstention from food, but an offering of the heart: “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness... to share your bread with the hungry?” (Isaiah 58:6–7). Let our fasting be filled with compassion, our restraint crowned with mercy, and our discipline adorned with love.

Let us also enrich these days with fervent prayer. The Apostle exhorts us: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In our homes, in our parishes, and within the quiet chambers of the soul, may prayer become the warm light that leads us toward Bethlehem—the place where heaven bends low to meet humanity. As we chant the sacred hymns of anticipation, may our hearts echo the joy of the Prophet who proclaimed: “For unto us a Child is born... and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6).

Beloved children, in these holy days, let us cultivate peace within ourselves and extend that peace to one another. Let us heal old wounds, seek forgiveness, and renew the bonds of unity within our families and communities. For Christ comes not only to be born in the manger of Bethlehem but to be born anew in the manger of the human heart.

As your Metropolitan, I pray that this holy fast becomes for each of you a wellspring of spiritual strength, a season of inner transformation, and a living witness to the hope that does not fade. May the approaching Feast of the Nativity fill your homes with the radiance of divine grace and your lives with the joy proclaimed by the angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men” (Luke 2:14).

With paternal love and blessings,

Met. Apostolos of NJ

† APOSTOLOS

Metropolitan of New Jersey

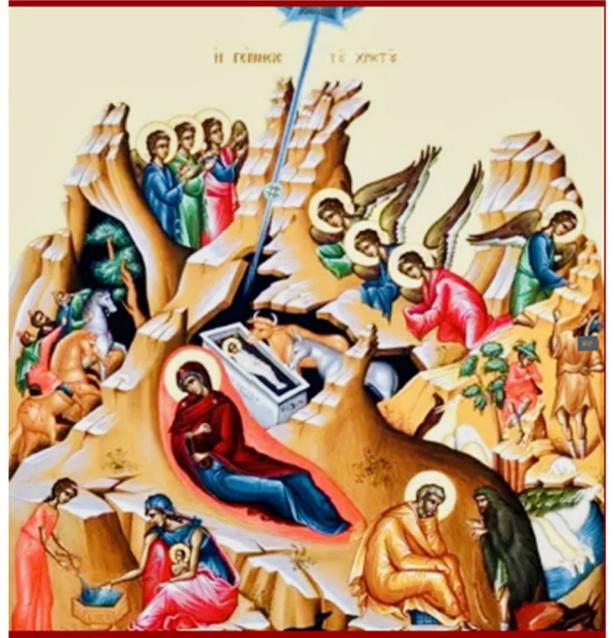
Saint Andrew Family News December 2025

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ
**ΠΑΤΡΙΚΟ ΜΗΝΥΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΕΒ. ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ
ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ**

**Γιά τήν Ἐναρξη τῆς Ἁγίας Σαρακοστῆς τῶν
Χριστουγέννων**

15 Νοεμβρίου 2025

Καθώς εἰσερχόμαστε στήν εὐλογημένη περίοδο τῆς Ἁγίας Σαρακοστῆς τῶν Χριστουγέννων, πού μᾶς ὁδηγεῖ στή μεγάλη ἑορτή τῆς κατά σάρκα Γεννήσεως τοῦ Κυρίου καί Σωτῆρος μας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, σᾶς ἀπευθύνω τήν πατρική μου εὐλογία καί τήν ἐγκάρδια στοργή μου. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μᾶς καλεῖ καί πάλι σέ μία πορεία μετάνοιας, ἐγρήγορσης καί ἐσωτερικῆς ἀνανέωσης, ὥστε νά ὑποδεχθοῦμε ἄξια τό μέγα μυστήριό τῆς θείας Ἐνανθρωπήσεως, κατά τό ὁποῖο «ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καί ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν» (Ἰω. 1,14).



Ἡ νηστεία αὐτή, ἥπια ἀλλά βαθιά, μᾶς προσκαλεῖ νά στραφοῦμε περισσότερο πρὸς τά πνευματικά καί νά ἀνακαλύψουμε ἐκ νέου τόν ἐσωτερικό μας κόσμο. Ἡ Ἁγία Γραφή μᾶς διδάσκει ὅτι ἡ ἀληθινή νηστεία δέν περιορίζεται στήν ἐγκράτεια τῆς τροφῆς, ἀλλά ἐκφράζεται μέσα ἀπό ἔργα ἀγάπης καί ἐλέους: «Οὐχί τοιαύτην νηστείαν ἐξελεξάμην; λυε πάντα σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας... διάθρυπτε πεινῶντι τὸν ἄρτον σου» (Ἠσ. 58,6-7). Ἄς συνοδεύσουμε, λοιπόν, τή νηστεία μας μέ καλοσύνη, τή σωματική ἄσκηση μέ φιλανθρωπία, καί τήν ἐγκράτεια μέ ἀγάπη πρὸς τόν συνάνθρωπο.

Ἄς ἐνισχύσουμε ἐπίσης τήν προσευχή μας, σύμφωνα μέ τήν προτροπή τοῦ Ἀποστόλου: «ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε» (Α΄ Θεσ. 5,17). Στά σπίτια μας, στίς ἐνορίες μας, καί στή σιωπή τῆς καρδιάς μας, ἡ προσευχή ἄς γίνε φῶς πού μᾶς ὁδηγεῖ πνευματικά πρὸς τή Βηθλεέμ, ἐκεῖ ὅπου ὁ οὐρανός συναντᾶ τή γῆ. Ἀκούγοντας τοὺς ὕμνους καί τά ἀναγνώσματα τῆς περιόδου, θυμόμαστε τήν προφητεία: «Ὅτι παιδίον ἐγεννήθη ἡμῖν... καί κληθήσεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Θαυμαστός, Σύμβουλος, Θεὸς Ἰσχυρός» (Ἠσ. 9,6).

Στή διάρκεια αὐτῶν τῶν ἱερῶν ἡμερῶν, ἄς καλλιεργήσουμε τήν εἰρήνη μέσα μας καί ἄς τήν προσφέρουμε καί στοὺς γύρω μας. Ἄς συγχωρήσουμε, ἄς συμφιλιωθοῦμε, ἄς ἀναζωπυρώσουμε τοὺς δεσμούς ἐνότητας στίς οἰκογένειες καί στίς κοινότητές μας. Διότι ὁ Χριστός θέλει νά γεννηθεῖ ὄχι μόνο στή φάτνη τῆς Βηθλεέμ, ἀλλά καί στή φάτνη τῆς ἀνθρώπινης καρδιάς.

Ὡς Μητροπολίτης καί ποιμενάρχης σας, προσεύχομαι αὐτή ἡ Ἁγία περίοδος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας νά γίνε γιά ὄλους σας πηγή πνευματικῆς δύναμης, περίοδος μεταμόρφωσης καί ἀνανέωσης, καί ὁδός ἐλπίδας πού μᾶς ὁδηγεῖ στό φῶς τῆς Γεννήσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Εἴθε ἡ ἐρχόμενη ἑορτή νά γεμίσει τά σπίτια σας μέ τή χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ καί τίς καρδιές σας μέ τή χαρά πού ἀνήγγειλαν οἱ Ἄγγελοι: «Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ, καί ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία» (Λουκ. 2,14).

Με πατρική ἀγάπη ἐν Κυρίῳ,

† Ο ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of New Jersey

Archpastoral Visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey



Orthros and Hierarchical Divine

Liturgy

Sunday, December 14, 2025

9:00 AM

St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church

1447 Sussex Turnpike

Randolph, NJ 07869



AHEPA CHAPTER 300 & AHEPA CHAPTER 375

BOURBON NIGHT & CHRISTMAS PARTY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18TH, 2025 | 6PM - 9:30PM

JERSEY SPIRITS DISTILLING

1275 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE, BUILDING 7 UNIT 40B, FAIRFIELD, NJ 07004

TICKETS:

Before Dec 11th \$50

Dec 12th & After \$60

SPREAD THE CHEER - WEAR CHRISTMAS ATTIRE

A DRINK OF YOUR CHOICE

SERVING CATERED BAR FOOD

DISTILLERY TOUR AVAILABLE BY OWNER



BUY TICKETS

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL: INFO@AHEPA300.ORG

QUESTIONS:

TJ: 973-769-0291

EJ: 973-600-7675



Vasiliki (Bessie) Petrakos

Retirement Party

January 18th - 1:30 P.M.

Knolls Country Club

12 Knolls Lane, Boonton, New Jersey

RSVP By 01/03/2025

Adults \$75

Children 16 years old & under \$40

Checks Payable to: St Andrew Greek Orthodox Church

Venmo: @StAndrew-Events (#8967)

Memo: Bessie & Your Email Address

Credit Card: Contact Christen 973-584-0388



Saint Andrew Financial Summary 2025

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

The financial report compares the first 3 quarters of 2025 to the budget. The income is below budget by \$37,000 mainly due to income coming in a bit slower in the summer months. We should start seeing a recovery as we head into the fall and winter months. The good thing is expenses are under budget also by just over \$19,000.

Income fell short of expenses and expenses for the first 3 quarters by just under \$18,000.

Unrestricted cash, which is used for operating expenses, is still lower than we would like. We are optimistic that our round up campaign with stewardship will continue to grow with all your help and we can fund all church activities through stewardship in the future and not have to rely on fundraising.

We hope that you keep these things in mind when considering support for the community.

We have work to do and together we will get it done.

Thank you,

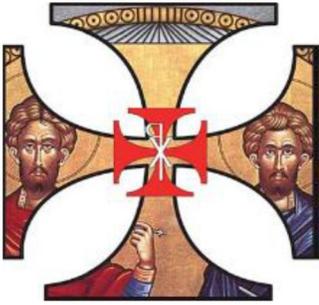
Thomas J. Borzeka, Treasurer

	Jan-Sep	Budget	\$ over Budget
INCOME			
CONTRIBUTION INCOME	358,419.30	391,019.00	(32,599.70)
EDUCATION/DANCE NET INCOME	31,695.45	30,500.00	1,195.45
SUMMER CAMP NET INCOME	-	-	-
FUNDRAISING EVENTS NET INCOME	144,857.50	180,625.00	(35,767.50)
OTHER INCOME	101,526.09	71,163.00	30,363.09
TOTAL INCOME	636,498.34	673,307.00	(36,808.66)
EXPENSE			
STAFF EXPENSE	272,150.29	288,278.00	(16,127.71)
CAR EXPENSE	8,095.72	9,000.00	(904.28)
INSURANCE EXPENSE	42,221.55	57,375.00	(15,153.45)
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	3,070.20	4,372.00	(1,301.80)
EQUIPMENT	2,423.53	3,545.00	(1,121.47)
BANK CHARGES	3,480.43	3,373.00	107.43
MORTGAGE PAYMENT (Principal & Inte	100,293.57	100,332.00	(38.43)
TELEPHONES/INTERNET EXPENSE	4,298.37	4,150.00	148.37
ADVERTISING	-	425.00	(425.00)
PERMITS	100.00	300.00	(200.00)
RE TAXES	695.60	675.00	20.60
LITURGICAL	-	3,751.00	(3,751.00)
UTILITIES	47,181.71	44,251.00	2,930.71
SUPPLIES & PRINTING EXPENSE	22,937.16	22,928.00	9.16
BLDG & GROUNDS EXP.	48,384.52	49,238.00	(853.48)
POSTAGE & HANDLING	3,354.32	3,752.00	(397.68)
MINISTRY EXPENSE	65,689.58	64,899.00	790.58
EVANGELISM/OUTREACH	7,493.62	9,125.00	(1,631.38)
CONVENTIONS & SEMINARS	4,270.57	3,000.00	1,270.57
TRANSPORTATION	-	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
MISC.	18,238.39	-	18,238.39
TOTAL EXPENSE	654,379.13	673,769.00	(19,389.87)
NET CASH RECD (SHORT)	\$ (17,880.79)	\$ (462.00)	\$ (17,418.79)

From Operations

Unrestricted Cash Balance 9/30/25

36,155.14



It is Philoptochos' tradition to mail a **CHRISTMAS CARD** to the entire church family. The card features drawings from the children in our parish and includes names of all who donate. If you would like your name to be printed in the Philoptochos Christmas Card, please make a donation...

By Check : All checks made payable to Saint Andrew Philoptochos

- Please write "Christmas Card" in the memo of check
- Provide how you would like **your family name** to appear in the Christmas Card.
- Mail or give Checks to the Church office

OR • SCAN THE QR code below / Make sure to add in the comment of the payment how you would like **your family name** to appear in the Christmas Card.

Philoptochos SaintAndrew
@StAndrewPhiloptochos



The donations you make will be set aside and will only be used to assist our Saint Andrew families in need.

Suggested donation: \$25, \$50, \$75, \$100, all contributions are welcome!

The deadline for donating is **Sunday, December 7, 2025.**

FOR ALL SAINT. ANDREW YOUTH (6-18 YEARS)

SAINT ANDREW FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARD

Each Child is asked to submit One DRAWING:

1. DRAWING MUST be in COLOR on white computer paper 8 ½ x11.
2. **Original** drawings **only** will be judged
3. No tracing, or computer drawings
4. It must also be drawn with the religious theme of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ
5. Include on the **back** of drawing: Date of Birth, Grade, First & Last Name and Telephone number of participant



The selected drawings will be published in our Saint Andrew Family News

DEADLINE IS SUNDAY December 7th 2025.

St. Andrew Religious Education: Important Updates

1. Oratorical Festival

Every year we provide our youth an opportunity to express their Orthodox faith through this event. Both junior and senior divisions are offered a selection of topics and then after having chosen one, the student prepares a short speech to be presented during a competition in which all the Orthodox Churches participate. Students are encouraged to participate, but we need parents engagement and support. There are numerous resources that are available for preparing the speech and we strongly encourage all the St. Andrew youth to rise to this challenge. It is an excellent way to draw closer to their faith and learn the importance of public speaking. Nothing is more important to the success of this Festival than parental support and encouragement. Please take an active role in helping your child be a confident presenter and make our Church proud.



2. Attendance Religious Education Classes

There has been an issue in students attending religious education program. This is a crucial time in a young person's life to begin moving into a more mature spiritual direction and to learn how important Orthodox praxis must become an essential part of their learning process. Our faith calls us to a responsible engagement of spiritual truths with our daily living. We are not called to just believe occasionally but to "walk the talk"! Once again this calls for you the parents too actively participate and bring the children to classes. Please take this responsibility seriously and participate in this crucial spiritual education of your children. Come to class! Sign up your children and participate!

3. St. Andrew Name Day: November 29th & 30th

It will be an honor to come to Church on St. Andrew Day on November 29 and November 30th. Our church is celebrating St. Andrew the first of the Apostles.

We will be joined by many priests and parishioners from other churches to celebrate in the liturgy with us. Please try to come with your parents to hear the this beautiful service.

4. Christmas Program - December 14th

We cannot stress the urgency to prepare so you must make every effort to bring the children to Sunday classes. The program needs your participation. We will also be blessed by having Bishop Abostolos in attendance. St. Andrew is our community and this special program is a way for us to show the Bishop how the birth of Christ is central to our Orthodox faith. Please, make a special effort to come these next weeks and help us put this program together so that we can all be very proud!

5. Snacks after Communion:

An issue that we are calling to your attention as parents is to provide food for your children after Communion. A small snack before they head into religious classes can be a big help. The food setting is for the coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy and is not to be distributed to the children. Efforts are being made to have the teachers provide some snacks in class, but we really need you, the parents, to provide some food for your children. Please be mindful of how important this is for the religious education classes to be fully utilized for teaching the faith.

In the Service of the Lord,

Maro Nicolaou Schuster



GREEK
ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF
NEW JERSEY

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. John Theodosion
Pastor

“Rise up and Build”

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP 2026 PROGRAM

Dear Parishioners of Saint Andrew,

How do you respond to God’s blessings in your life? This question is rarely asked of us, but it is one that should be answered daily. We may wake up each morning and thank the Lord for the new day **but often we forget that all we have comes from Him**. Without God’s blessings and enlightenment, we have nothing. We cannot do what we do. We cannot be who we are.

How can we commit our lives to Christ and acknowledge that our salvation can only be achieved by faith in Him?

One of the most meaningful ways to respond to God’s love is through stewarding our resources back to His church. Our church is made up of talented, hard working and generous people, yet as we prayerfully reflect on the blessings in our lives, are we able to say we have given back to His church in proportion to what we have received? Are we able to say our church is reaching its full potential?

One way to reach our potential is to round up our pledge amounts each year until we’ve become a 100% tithing supported parish.

What does it mean to grow to be a **“rounding up to tithing”** parish? It means that we meet our entire budget through stewardship, including the budgets of all our ministries and outreach programs. It means things like

- having the resources to serve the needy,
- provide day care to the elderly members of our community,
- supply backpacks to every impoverished child in the area,
- hire a Youth Minister
- provide meals to Faith Kitchen multiple times each month
- sponsor missionary work both here and abroad
- beautify Saint Andrew to be Morris County’s light of Orthodox Christianity on the hill** and broaden our outreach in countless other ways. It would mean that the proceeds of our annual festival would be used to expand our ministries rather than to merely meet basic expenses.

How do you round up to tithe? To keep with Holy Scripture, if you are a new Steward, we ask that you give as much as you are able starting at 1% of your yearly income and working to increase your contributions towards the Biblical goal of tithing. If you are a returning Steward, we ask that you consider “rounding up” to tithing (10%), by incrementally increasing year to year until you reach the Biblical goal.

With your offerings to the church, we can move beyond constant fundraising. No fees. No tuition. No trays. No dues. We need to do this so that we can focus our energy on serving God and our community.

Have you been blessed abundantly? If your answer is yes, then give abundantly. Please consider rounding your pledge up each year until you reach the 10 percent tithe. **You will witness that the more we give, the more our blessings from God will continue and our cup will overflow.**

With gratitude in Christ,



Rev. Fr. John Theodosion

«Εγέρθητε και Κτίστε»

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΩΝ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΩΝ 2026

Αγαπητοί Ενορίτες του Αγίου Ανδρέου,

Με ποιό τρόπο ανταποκρίνεστε στις ευλογίες του Θεού στη ζωή σας; Σπάνια μας γίνεται αυτή η ερώτηση, αλλά είναι κάτι που πρέπει καθημερινά να απαντάτε. Ίσως όταν ξυπνάμε κάθε πρωί να ευχαριστούμε τον Κύριο για την καινούργια μέρα αλλά συχνά ξεχνάμε πως ό,τι έχουμε έρχεται από Εκείνον. Χωρίς τις ευλογίες του Θεού και φώτιση, δεν έχουμε τίποτε. Δεν μπορούμε να κάνουμε όσα κάνουμε. Δεν μπορούμε να είμαστε αυτό που είμαστε.

Πώς μπορούμε να αφιερώσουμε τις ζωές μας στον Χριστό και να αναγνωρίζουμε πως η σωτηρία μας μπορεί να επιτευχθεί μόνο με την πίστη μας σε Εκείνον;

Ένας από τους πιο σημαντικούς τρόπους να ανταποκριθούμε στην αγάπη του Θεού είναι να δωρίζουμε τους πόρους μας πίσω στην εκκλησία Του. Η εκκλησία μας αποτελείται από ταλαντούχους, σκληρά εργαζόμενους και γενναιόδωρους ανθρώπους, και όμως αν μέσω της προσευχής μας σκεφτούμε όλες τις ευλογίες της ζωής μας, μπορούμε να πούμε ότι έχουμε επιστρέψει ανάλογα με όσα έχουμε λάβει; Μπορούμε να πούμε πως η εκκλησία μας έχει φτάσει στο μέγιστο των δυνατοτήτων της;

Ένας τρόπος να φτάσουμε τις δυνατότητές μας είναι να στρογγυλεύουμε τα ποσά που έχουμε δεσμευθεί να δώσουμε μέχρι να γίνουμε μία ενορία που το 100% υποστηρίζει την εισφορά του ενός δεκάτου των εισοδημάτων της.

Τί σημαίνει η ενορία μας να **μεγαλώνει** «υποστηρίζοντας την εισφορά του ενός δεκάτου των εισοδημάτων της»; Σημαίνει ότι ανταποκρινόμαστε στον προϋπολογισμό μας μέσω της οικονομίας, συμπεριλαμβάνοντας και τον προϋπολογισμό όλων των ποιμαντικών έργων και κοινωνικών προγραμμάτων. Σημαίνει πράγματα όπως

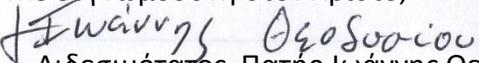
- να έχεις πόρους να βοηθήσεις όσους είναι σε ανάγκη,
- να παρέχεις καθημερινή φροντίδα στα ηλικιωμένα μέλη της κοινότητάς μας,
- να εφοδιάζεις με σακκίδια κάθε πτωχό παιδί της περιοχής,
- να προσλαμβάνεις έναν νέο Εκκλησιαστικό Λειτουργό,
- να παρέχεις γεύματα στην Κοινωνική Κουζίνα πολλές φορές κάθε μήνα
- να χορηγείς ιεραποστολικά έργα και εδώ και στο εξωτερικό
- να μορφαίνουμε τον Άγιο Ανδρέα και να γίνει το φως της Ορθοδοξίας του Morris County**
- ο Χριστιανισμός να είναι ψηλά και να διευρύνουμε την εμβέλειά μας με αναρίθμητους άλλους τρόπους. Αυτό θα σήμαινε πως τα έσοδα του ετήσιου φεστιβάλ μας θα χρησιμοποιούνται να επεκτείνουμε τις διακονίες μας και όχι να προσπαθούμε απλά να συντηρήσουμε τις βασικές μας ανάγκες.

Πώς στρογγυλεύεις το ποσό να δώσεις το ένα δέκατο; Για να είσαι σύμφωνος με την Αγία Γραφή, αν είσαι νέος οικονόμος, ζητούμε να δώσεις όσο μπορείς ξεκινώντας με το 1% του ετήσιου εισοδήματός σου και να το δουλέψεις να αυξήσεις την συνεισφορά σου φτάνοντας τον στόχο του ενός δεκάτου των εσόδων σου. Εάν είσαι οικονόμος που επιστρέφει μετά από απουσία, ζητούμε να σκεφτείς την «στρογγυλοποίηση» στο 10% των εσόδων σου αυξάνοντας σταδιακά χρόνο με τον χρόνο μέχρι να φτάσεις τον στόχο της Βίβλου.

Με τις προσφορές σας στην εκκλησία, μπορούμε να προχωράμε χωρίς συνεχόμενους εράνους. Δεν θα έχουμε συνδρομές. Ούτε δίδακτρα. Ούτε δίσκους. Ούτε χρεώσεις. Χρειάζεται να το κάνουμε αυτό για να εστιάσουμε την ενέργειά μας στην υπηρεσία του Θεού και της κοινότητάς μας.

Έχετε ευλογηθεί πλουσιοπάροχα; Εάν η απάντησή σας είναι ναι, τότε δώστε πλουσιοπάροχα. Σας παρακαλούμε να σκεφτείτε να στρογγυλοποιήσετε τη συνεισφορά σας προς τα πάνω κάθε χρόνο μέχρι να δίνετε το 10% των εσόδων σας. **Θα γίνετε μάρτυρες του γεγονότος ότι όσο περισσότερο δίνετε, τόσο περισσότερο θα συνεχίσουν οι ευλογίες του Θεού και το ποτήρι μας θα ξεχειλίζει.**

Με ευγνωμοσύνη στον Χριστό,


Αιδεσιμότατος Πατήρ Ιωάννης Θεοδοσίου



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF
NEW JERSEY

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. John Theodosion
Pastor

December 2025

Dear Steward,

As members of the Election Committee, we are notifying you of the Parish Council election on Sunday, December 7th, 2025, in the church's assembly hall after services until 1:00pm. The purpose of the election is to fill seven vacancies on the Parish Council. The election is held according to the Uniform Parish Regulations Article VIII.

The list of nominated candidates follows. Each candidate (for the Parish Council) may prepare a resume indicating their qualifications, education, and general background, which will be posted on the Church Bulletin Board until December 7th 2025. We urge you to read the resumes and then participate in the voting process.

We would like to remind you that in order to vote in the election, you must be a steward in good standing of Saint Andrew Church and to have fulfilled at least 90% of your 2025 Commitment. You have until Thursday, December 4th to fulfill 90% of your pledge or to return your signed 2025 Commitment Card with 90% of your pledge.

The list of eligible voters will be posted in the Church office. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please refer them to the Stewardship Committee and the Election Committee by December 4th, 2025. ALL VOTES ARE RECORDED.

If you have any questions about the election process, do not hesitate to call the Church office.

In Christ's name,



+Rev. John Theodosion

Nick Monokandilos, Dimitra Pallis, Manny Christakos

Saint Andrew Election Committee – 2025

Parish Council Nominees 3 Year term 2026-27-28

Athena Borzeka, Thomas J Borzeka, Pavlos Giannikopoulos, Konstantinos Merkos,
Steven Mitrakos, John Paitakes, John A Paxos, Peter Sedereas

Parish Council Seats being vacated:

Athena Borzeka, Thomas J Borzeka, Pavlos Giannikopoulos, Steven Mitrakos,
John A Paxos, Peter Sedereas.

Auditing Committee for 2025

Peter Ioannou, James Andrews, Athina Christatos, Veronica Rotsides



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF
NEW JERSEY

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. John Theodosion
Pastor

Δεκέμβριος 2025

Αγαπητοί Ενορίτες/Στουαρτ,

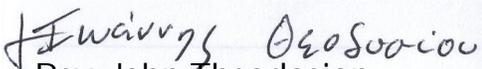
Σαν μέλη της Εφορευτικής Επιτροπής σας γράφουμε αυτό το γράμμα για να σας ενημερώσουμε για τις Εκλογές του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου στις 7 Δεκεμβρίου, Κυριακή, στην αίθουσα της εκκλησίας μετά την λειτουργία ως τις 1:00μ.μ. Ο σκοπός των εκλογών είναι να συμπληρώσουμε τις επτά κενές θέσεις του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου .

Ο κατάλογος των υποψηφίων (μέχρι σήμερα) βρίσκεται παρακάτω. Κάθε υποψήφιος του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου θα ετοιμάσει μια περίληψη σχετικά με τα προσόντα τους, μόρφωση και γενικότερα το ιστορικό τους και θα τοποθετηθούν στον πίνακα ανακοινώσεων μέχρι τις 7 Δεκεμβρίου, 2025. Σας καλούμε να διαβάσετε τα βιογραφικά και στη συνέχεια να συμμετάσχετε στη διαδικασία ψηφοφορίας

Σας παροτρύνουμε να διαβάσετε αυτές τις ανακοινώσεις και σας υπενθυμίζουμε ότι πρέπει να είστε στούαρτ της ενορίας του Αγίου Ανδρέα και να έχετε πληρώσει το 90% από το ποσό που έχετε υποσχεθεί για το 2025, για να ψηφίσετε. Έχετε διορία μέχρι τις 4 Δεκεμβρίου, 2025 να εκπληρώσετε αυτή την υποχρέωση σας. ΚΑΘΕ ΨΗΦΟΣ ΜΕΤΡΑ!

Αν έχετε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με το δικαίωμα ψήφου, ή τις εκλογές, παρακαλώ τηλεφωνείτε το γραφείο της εκκλησίας.

Με αγάπη Χριστού,


+Rev. John Theodosion

Nick Monokandilos, Dimitra Pallis, Manny Christakos

Saint Andrew Election Committee – 2025

Parish Council Nominees 3 Year term 2026-27-28

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John A Paxos, Peter Sedereas.

Auditing Committee for 2025

Peter Ioannou, James Andrews, Athina Christatos, Veronica Rotsides



Join us for a festive New Year's Eve Party!!!

Dinner, Dessert, Vasilopita, & Champagne Toast
Games, & Photo Ops!!!!
Fun for the whole family!

Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

Early-Bird Tickets
On or before 12/14

Adult \$75
Teen \$35
Children under 12 Free
Dance only 10:00 p.m. \$35

BYOB

On or After 12/15

Adults \$85
Teens \$45
Children under 12 Free
Dance only 10:00 p.m. \$35

Payment Options

Check / Cash:

Please see Dimitra Pallis or Irene Baroulakis

Venmo:

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<https://NYESAGOC.rsvpify.com>



THE CONCEPTION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS BY ST. ANNA

The conception of the Most Holy Theotokos by St. Anna is a significant event in Christian tradition, commemorated on December 9, celebrating the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.

Background of St. Anna and St. Joachim

St. Anna and St. Joachim were a devout couple who lived in Nazareth. They were childless for many years, which was a source of great sorrow for them, as childlessness was often viewed as a punishment from God. Despite their grief, they remained faithful and devoted to God, praying fervently for a child. Their prayers were answered when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to them separately, announcing that they would conceive a daughter who would be the mother of the Messiah.

The Miracle of Conception

According to tradition, after years of barrenness, St. Anna conceived through divine intervention. This miraculous conception is celebrated as a pivotal moment in salvation history, as it led to the birth of the Virgin Mary, who would bear Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The event signifies God's grace and mercy, breaking the bonds of barrenness and fulfilling His promise to the righteous couple.

Significance in Orthodox Christianity

The Orthodox Church commemorates this event on December 9, recognizing it as a feast of great importance. The conception of the Theotokos is seen as a precursor to the Incarnation of Christ, emphasizing the sanctity and divine selection of Mary. The Church teaches that Mary was filled with grace from her conception, preparing her for her role as the Mother of God.

Liturgical Commemoration

During the liturgical celebration of this feast, hymns and prayers are offered, reflecting on the joy of St. Anna and St. Joachim and the significance of their daughter, the Virgin Mary.

The Troparion for the feast expresses the joy of the event, stating, "Today the bonds of barrenness have been broken, for God has heard the prayers of Joachim and Anna".

Conclusion

The conception of the Most Holy Theotokos by St. Anna is a profound event that highlights themes of faith, divine intervention, and the fulfillment of God's promises. It serves as a reminder of the importance of prayer and the belief in God's mercy and grace in the lives of the faithful. This event not only honors St. Anna and St. Joachim but also celebrates the beginning of the story of salvation through the Virgin Mary.

Apolytikion

Against all hope, the bonds of barrenness are loosed today. For, God has hearkened unto Joachim and Anna clearly promising that they would bear a godly maiden. He who commanded the angel to cry out to her, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you," will be born of her, the infinite One Himself, becoming man.

The Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos by Saint Anna December 9

The righteous Joachim and Anna were childless for fifty years of their married life. In their old age the Archangel Gabriel appeared to each one of them separately, telling them that God had heard their prayers and that they would give birth to a daughter, Mary. Then St. Anna conceived by her husband and after nine months bore a daughter blessed by God and by all generations of men: the Most-holy Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.



Saints Joachim and Anna

St. Joachim was of the lineage of Judah and a descendant of King David. Anna was the daughter of Matthan the priest, from the lineage of Levi, as was Aaron the high priest. Matthan had three daughters: Mary, Sophia and Anna. Mary married, lived in Bethlehem, and gave birth to Salome; Sophia married, also lived in Bethlehem, and gave birth to Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Forerunner; Anna married Joachim in Nazareth, and in old age gave birth to Mary, the Most-holy Theotokos. Joachim and Anna had lived together in marriage for fifty years, and yet had remained barren. They lived devoutly and quietly, and of all their income they spent one third on themselves, distributed one third to the poor and gave the other third to the Temple, and they were well provided for. Once when in their old age they came to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice to God, the high priest Issachar reprimanded Joachim, saying: "You are not worthy that a gift be accepted from your hands, for you are childless." Others, who had children, pushed Joachim behind them as one unworthy. This greatly grieved these two aged souls and they returned home in great sorrow. Then the two of them fell down before God in prayer, that He work a miracle with them as He once had with Abraham and Sarah, and give them a child as a comfort in their old age. Then God sent His angel, who announced to them the birth of "a daughter most-blessed, by whom all nations on earth will be blessed and through whom the salvation of the world will come." Anna straightway conceived, and in nine months gave birth to the Holy Virgin Mary. St. Joachim lived for eighty years and Anna lived for seventy-nine, at which time they reposed in the Lord.

St. Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue of Ohrid – Volume Two

ΣΥΛΛΗΨΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΆΝΝΗΣ

Στις 9 Δεκεμβρίου η Εκκλησία μας εορτάζει τη σύλληψη της Αγίας Άννας, μητέρας της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου.

Η Αγία Άννα ανήκει στα ιερά πρόσωπα που η Θεία Χάρη αξίωσε να συμμετάσχουν ενεργά στο σχέδιο της σωτηρίας των ανθρώπων. Καταγόταν από τη βασιλική γενιά του Δαβίδ και ο πατέρας της, Ματθάν, ανήκε στην τάξη των ιερέων. Σύμφωνα με την παράδοση της Εκκλησίας, ο Ιερέας Ματθάν απέκτησε τρεις θυγατέρες: τη Μαρία, τη Σοβή και την Άννα. Η Μαρία, αφού παντρεύτηκε στη Βηθλεέμ, γέννησε εκεί την Ελισάβετ, τη μητέρα του Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή. Η Άννα παντρεύτηκε τον ευσεβή Ιωακείμ, που και αυτός με τη σειρά του, καταγόταν από τη γενιά του Δαβίδ.

Η παράδοση αναφέρει ότι η οικία του ευσεβούς ζεύγους Ιωακείμ και Άννας βρισκόταν κοντά στην κολυμβήθρα της Βηθσεδά και στο Ναό του Σολομώντος. Καθημερινά ανέβαιναν στο Ναό για να προσευχηθούν και να παρακαλέσουν το Θεό να χαρίσει σε αυτούς «καρπὸν κοιλίας». Η ατεκνία ήταν κάτι που τους πλήγωνε βαθιά, γιατί σύμφωνα με τον ιουδαϊκό νόμο, τα δώρα των ατέκνων δεν γίνονταν δεκτά στο Ναό.

Τα χρόνια περνούσαν και το πολυπόθητο τέκνο δεν ερχόταν. Παρ' όλα αυτά δεν έχαναν την πίστη τους και παρακαλούσαν θερμά το Θεό να τους χαρίσει ένα παιδί. Χρόνια ολόκληρα πολιορκούσαν με θερμές προσευχές το θρόνο του Θεού με αυτό το αίτημα. Υποσχέθηκαν, αν αποκτούσαν παιδί, να το αφιέρωναν στην υπηρεσία Του.

Τελικά ήλθε το πλήρωμα του χρόνου, όταν το ζεύγος έφτασε σε πολύ προχωρημένη ηλικία. Ο Θεός τόσα χρόνια δοκίμαζε την πίστη και την υπομονή των πιστών δούλων του, όπως «τον χρυσό εν χωνευτηρίω», για να αναδειχθούν αντάξιοι της τιμής να γίνουν γονείς της Θεοτόκου.



Η παράδοση αναφέρει ότι για εντονότερη προσευχή ο Ιωακείμ πήγε στο όρος και η Άννα σε περιβόλι, για να παρακαλέσουν μαζί και οι δύο τον Θεό. Η Άννα μάλιστα υποσχέθηκε, αν αποκτούσε τέκνο θα τον αφιέρωνε στο Θεό. Εκεί της παρουσιάστηκε ο Αρχάγγελος Γαβριήλ για να της αναγγείλει το χαρμόσυνο γεγονός της τεκνογονίας. Κατόπιν, ο Αρχάγγελος εμφανίστηκε και στον Ιωακείμ.

Το θαύμα της σύλληψης της Παναγίας από την Άννα που ξεπερνούσε τους νόμους της φύσης προετοίμαζε ένα ακόμα μεγαλύτερο. Η Θεία Βούληση προετοίμαζε την «άσπορον σύλληψιν» και «άφθορον γέννηση» του Χριστού από την Παρθένο Μαρία. Η ηλικιωμένη και στείρα για τον κόσμο Άννα απέκτησε με τη Θεία Χάρη κόρη, τη μητέρα του Σωτήρα.

Οι ηλικιωμένοι γονείς δέχτηκαν με δάκρυα χαράς το δώρο του Θεού και δοξολογούσαν το Θεό για την ασύγκριτη Χάρη και τη θεία τεκνογονία που αξιώθηκαν. Δεν ξέχασαν την υπόσχεσή τους και μόλις η Παναγία έγινε τριών ετών την αφιέρωσαν στο Ναό ενώπιον του Αρχιερέως Ζαχαρία.

Άπολυτίκιον

Σήμερον τῆς ἀτεκνίας δεσμὰ διαλύονται· τοῦ Ἰωακείμ γὰρ καὶ τῆς Ἄννης εἰσακούων Θεός, παρ' ἐλπίδα τεκεῖν αὐτοὺς σαφῶς, ὑπὸ σκνεῖται θεόπαιδα· ἐξ ἧς αὐτὸς ἐτέχθη ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος, βροτὸς γεγονώς, δι' Ἀγγέλου κελεύσας βοῆσαι αὐτῇ· Χαῖρε Κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.

<https://www.orthodoxianewsagency.gr/vioi-agion/9-dekemvriou-syllipsi-tis-agias-annas/>

GOYA DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2025

As we wrapped up the month of November, our GOYA came together for two wonderful events filled with fellowship and service. On Friday, November 21st, we held our annual



Friendsgiving celebration. After church, all of our GOYAns gathered to share food, spend time together, and play games. Volleyball being one of the favorites of the day! It was a beautiful way



to kick off the holiday season as a GOYA family. The next morning, on Saturday, November 22nd, our GOYA participated in Faith Kitchen. Together, we prepared sandwiches for the homeless and then

delivered them to those in need. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and helped make a difference in our community.

Looking ahead to December, we have an exciting and festive month planned! On Saturday, December 13th, we will be going Christmas Caroling, visiting the homes of parishioners as well as senior citizens to spread Christmas spirit throughout our community. We hope to see many GOYAns join in sharing joy through song. Our Basketball and Volleyball playoffs will be held on the weekend of December 6th and 7th. We wish the best of luck to all our athletes. Go St. Andrews! To end the month on a fun note, Roseland will be hosting the annual GOYA Christmas Dance on Sunday, December 28th. This is always a great opportunity for GOYAns across the area to come together and celebrate the season.

As we move forward into the new year, we look forward to even more fellowship gatherings, service opportunities, competitions, and new memories. Thank you to all our GOYAns and families for your continued support and enthusiasm.



Stamatina Mousis
-Vice President

HOPE & JOY GRATITUDE CRAFT



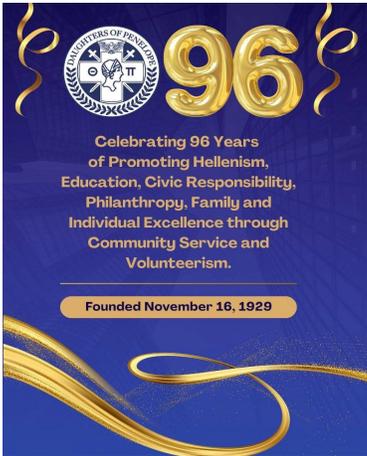
We had a great turnout for our November 16th gratitude craft. The children created a wheel that showcased six things they are thankful for and shared their joy with one another. Looking forward to our next event, decorating Christmas cookies!



Daughters of Penelope Alexander # 250

Congratulations to the **Fifth District AHEPA Family Research Foundation** on another fabulous Gala- raising awareness, hope, and providing research grants all in the same evening!

Do you know that the @ahepad5crf has raised over \$1.3 MILLION for cancer research, since 1988.



Join the DOP today to help make a difference!!

Contact Dimitra Pallis
DOP.Alexander250.Randolph@gmail.com



**Thank you
Peter Bosco
for sharing your
inspiring survivor
story!**



PARENTS' CORNER

By Alexandra Protopapas

December 2025 - Christmas - What Has Changed?

Happy December! I hope everyone had a good month, a blessed Thanksgiving, and we should always thank God for all we have!

I look forward to Christmas, but what has changed for me? Christmas holds a special place in the Greek Orthodox Church, but I've noticed a shift in its meaning for many people. The holiday's religious significance seems to be overshadowed by commercialism and cultural celebrations. In October, I wrote about diversity, focusing on different religions and tolerance. As a parent, I wonder about confusing our children with different figures who bring gifts – **"Santa Claus"**, **"Saint Nicholas"**, and **"St. Basil"**. When we sing Greek traditional carols, "St. Basil" is the one who brings presents, but it's easy to get mixed up! I like to approach topics from the heart, but I recently found myself looking into the story of **"Santa Claus"**. I have no problem with celebrations of the winter solstice or even that Christmas is celebrated on different dates by various Christian denominations, such as other Eastern Orthodox churches, on January 7. Let's dive into what I discovered.

In the Greek Orthodox Church, "Saint Nicholas" is revered as a historical figure, a 4th-century bishop of Myra, and a saint, celebrated for his generosity and kindness, especially towards children and protecting sailors. He's often depicted in traditional Greek attire and is associated with the feast day of December 6 Saint Nicholas Day, where children receive gifts and is associated with the feast day December 6th, Saint Nicholas Day, where some children in Greece receive gifts and treats. In Greece, "Saint Nicholas" is a primary figure, and his

legacy is deeply rooted in Greek Orthodox tradition. The idea of "Santa Claus", "Good Ole St. Nick" as we know him in the USA, is less prevalent, and "Saint Nicholas" remains a beloved saint, symbolizing generosity and kindness.

"Santa Claus", on the other hand, in the United States, for example, is a modern, westernized figure, often depicted as a jolly, gift-giving figure in a red suit. He's associated with Christmas Eve (December 24th) and is a blend of "Saint Nick" and other cultural influences. He is a legendary figure inspired by "Saint Nicholas" and other folklore.

In the Greek Christmas carols, "Agios Vasilis Erhete" — "St. Basil is Coming" may confuse some, so Santa Claus being a major figure during Christmas for most children, do you not think it is time to focus more on THE BIRTH OF **JESUS CHRIST**? Of course, it is okay to take photos with SANTA CLAUS, and they do see him in the news, in schools, at the mall, as he will bring gifts and put them under the tree on Christmas Eve, and your children will look forward to opening their gifts. Do not take them away from that. However, bring them to church, and if they are in Sunday School, encourage them to be part of our Christmas Pageant. Celebrate the **Birth of Jesus Christ** with the Christmas Story and read it to them. The Nativity story is important. I am not saying do not focus on Christmas parties and gift giving and decorating, but focus more on why we celebrate **Christmas**.

I would like to wish you all a **Joyous December, a Blessed Merry Christmas, and a Healthy and Happy New Year, 2026!**

This month's Table Prayer Guide Prayers: *CHRISTMAS ROYAL HOURS, 9TH HOUR*

"Today is born of a Virgin, He who holds creation in the hollow of His hand. As a mortal, He is wrapped in swaddling rags; He who is His being cannot be handled. God lies in a manger, who of old established the heavens in the beginning. He is "with milk from the breast, He who rained Manna on the People in the desert. He summons Magi, the Bridegroom of the Church. He accepts their gifts, the Son of the Virgin. We worship your birth, O CHRIST. Show us also your divine Epiphany.

Today, the Virgin gives birth to Him who is above all being, and the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach; Angels with Shepherds give glory, while Magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a little Child, God before the ages.

Saint Romanos the Melodos, 6th Century, Constantinople"

Feel free to email me or call with your comments and suggestions for our "Parents' Corner" at: alexandraproto@gmail.com | (973) 214-2583 (You can also find me on FACEBOOK under my name, Alexandra Alex Protopapas) | **Alexandra Protopapas MEd** Certified Teacher of the Handicapped & Social Sciences – Retired, part-time at Educational Services Commission of Morris County (ESC).



HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL

Join us for a cozy afternoon of Greek language stories, laughter, and warmth as we celebrate the joy of reading together this winter season. Bring a blanket, and your love for stories!

Hot Cocoa and Cookies will be served!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Ages: 5 to 12

Knitting, Crochet & Pillow Ministry



The Philoptochos Knitting Group lovingly knits and crochets blankets and other comforting items for those in need; new parents bringing their infants to St. Andrew for the 40-day blessing, patients in local hospitals and dialysis centers, residents of nursing homes, and

veterans in our community.

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at **11:00 a.m.**, and on the second Wednesday at **6:00 p.m.** New participants are always welcome!

Please consider joining us or supporting our efforts so we can continue creating blankets and pillows that bring warmth, comfort, and care to others.



SEPTEMBER SENIOR GROUP PRESENTATION

In September, the Agape Group welcomed **Dr. Martin Blackwell**, a local dermatologist, provided an overview of common skin concerns in the elderly. He discussed prevalent issues such as dryness, thinning, and increased sensitivity, explaining each and options in treating.

Dr. Blackwell also reviewed the **most common types of skin cancer**, illustrating their appearance and helped us to recognize early warning signs. He emphasized the importance of **yearly skin checks**, noting that regular screenings are one of the best ways to detect problems early and ensure effective treatment.

To support the group further, he generously provided dermatologic sample products for everyone to take home.

We are grateful to Dr. Blackwell for sharing his expertise and helping our members better understand how to care for their skin as they age.



To maintain healthy skin, senior citizens should watch for the following concerns:

- Dryness: Skin often becomes thinner and loses moisture, leading to dryness.
- Wrinkles: Natural aging causes loss of collagen, resulting in fine lines and wrinkles.
- Age Spots: Increased sun exposure over the years can lead to hyperpigmentation.
- Skin Cancer: Regularly check for new moles or changes in existing ones, as risk increases with age.
- Delayed Healing: Skin may take longer to heal from cuts and bruises due to slower cell turnover.
- Itchiness: Commonly caused by dryness or skin conditions like eczema, which can worsen with age.

SENIOR OCTOBER GROUP MEDICARE PRESENTATION

At our October Agape gathering, we were pleased to welcome **Luis Castro, Medicare Sales Executive for Aetna Health Insurance**, who delivered a very informative presentation on upcoming changes to Medicare. His clear and detailed explanation helped our members better understand what to expect in the year ahead.

Mr. Castro highlighted **three major changes**:

1. Prescription Drug Costs

- Annual out-of-pocket costs for prescriptions will be capped at **\$2,100**.
- Medications in **tiers 3, 4, and 5** are expected to increase by **\$615**.

2. Part B Premium Increase

- Medicare Part B premiums will see an **11% increase**.

3. Medicare Advantage Plans

- Some companies may eliminate certain Advantage plans, which could affect coverage options for current enrollees.



He also emphasized the importance of **registering for Medicare and a Medicare prescription plan as soon as you turn 65**, even if you are still working and have employer-provided benefits. Failing to register on time may result in significant penalties later on.



The presentation was greatly appreciated, and our group left with a clearer understanding of what these changes may mean for them. We are thankful to Mr. Castro for sharing his expertise and helping our community stay informed.

SAM AND GOLLUM: THE TWO SIDES OF FRODO

by Lia Lewis

We all have that annoying little voice inside of us that urges us to do good or bad things—we call that voice our conscience. In Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo's conscience is personified in the guises of Sam and Gollum. From the moment Frodo and Sam meet Gollum, Sam and Gollum are in constant conflict with each other. Sam is the voice in Frodo's heart that says: "this is hard but I believe in you and I have faith in God that you will succeed and He loves you." Gollum is the part of Frodo that says: "Submit to your passions and let them lead you."

How many times have we heard these two conflicting voices? We are in a perpetual state of war with our conscience. God gives us free will because He loves us and would never force us to do those things that we do not want to do. God lets us choose where we put our faith: in Him or completely ignore Him and give in to our passions. If we choose faith in God, He asks us to pick up our cross and follow Him. He loves us so much that He only lets us carry what we can. He picks up the "slack." Like Sam, He's urges us to believe in Him and in ourselves and to have faith in His love for us. All he asks in return is for us to love Him.

Gollum on the other hand is the type of creature who needs to satisfy his every need because it's easier to do what satisfies the ego than to care for those around you. Gollum is vanity. The kind of love that keeps us isolated from God and from the world around us.

Frodo succeeded because Sam and Gollum (in an odd sort of way) were there for him. In the movie as they get closer and closer to Mount Doom and Frodo cannot walk one more step, Sam picks up Frodo and carries him all the way to Mount Doom. How many times in our lives have we sat down and felt as if this was the end and we would die here and now because there was nothing left inside of us to go on? During these moments, Christ is with us. He picks us up and carries us until we are strong enough to walk on our own. It's like the Footprints poem—in our lives there are two sets of prints and during the worst moments of our lives there's only

one set. There is only one set because Christ is carrying us when we are in pain. Christ's cross is our sins and pains that He willingly died for us so we could have eternal life.

After Frodo and Sam reach Mount Doom, Frodo gives in to the same addictions and passions as Gollum. He decides that he wants to keep the Ring and, therefore, takes one step closer to becoming Gollum—a slave to his passions. However, Gollum is so consumed by his desire to possess the Ring that he mutilates Frodo's finger to retrieve "his Precious."

When the Ring and Gollum are finally consumed by the fires of Mount Doom that forged the Ring, Frodo finally understands that he became Gollum—not really alive but existing in life—the living dead. During Frodo's journey when he and Sam find Gollum, Frodo begins to see the terrible cost of the Ring in Gollum. Frodo begins to sympathize yet Frodo becomes afraid of what can happen to him if he submits to the Ring's corruption. It's because of what Frodo became that he forgives Gollum. Frodo tells Sam, "But for him [Gollum], Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive him [Gollum]." (p. 241—*Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*).

With that simple phrase "...So let us forgive him," Tolkien is revealing to us the theme of the Lord of the Rings—forgiveness, mercy and grace for our enemies and friends and that love ultimately destroys all evil in the end (see: "[The Lure of the Obvious in Peter Jackson's The Return of the King](#)" by Ralph C. Wood in Christianity Today, Dec. 17, 2003). Christ knew this when He was hanging on the cross. Christ had the power to save Himself from a horrible death but for His love for us He didn't. He knew that His death would be the ultimate sacrifice and that by His death, He destroyed death and gave us eternal life. Without Sam and Gollum, Frodo would have failed. Sometimes all we need is to recognize our passions and forgive ourselves in order to complete our journey towards Christ.



There Was No Inn in the Room

Fr. Mark Sietsema

Every good story needs a villain — even a Sunday-School Christmas pageant. Of course, the original Christmas story from Matthew and Luke had a super-villain: King Herod. But for a Sunday School production, it doesn't really work to have grade-school kids acting out the Slaughter of the Innocents, so there isn't room for a Herod. In his place, therefore, a new villain must be found. And so now the bad guy of every Christmas pageant is ... the innkeeper! That cruel, heartless, money-driven petty tyrant who couldn't find a space in his inn for a pregnant woman and her weary husband. Because of his indifference, the holy family winds up—not in a room at the Bethlehem Motel Six—but in a barn, in a stable, amidst hay and cattle ... and all that stuff that turns up when cattle and hay come together. It is a picture of consummate inhospitality toward the infant Christ.

And it comes straight from the Gospel of Luke, right? "And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." But is this what the Gospel means in the original? The problem is that ancient Greek had a word for "inn"—pandocheion. It is similar to the modern Greek word for hotel, xenodocheio. We find this word later in the Gospel of Luke in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan brings the wounded Jewish man to an inn, pandocheion, and pays the innkeeper to take care of him. But the word in the Christmas story is not this word.

In chapter 2 of Luke we find another word: katáluma. Katáluma means a place to sleep, usually in the sense of a guest room, a spare room. But not a guest room in an inn, but a



guest room in a home. The word katáluma comes up again in the Gospel of Luke in connection with the Last Supper, when Jesus instructs two disciples to ask about a room where he can eat the Passover with his disciples. He tells them to ask for a katáluma.

We think of the Last Supper as taking place in an upper room, a space on the second story of a house. And that is generally an accurate picture of where the guest quarters would be in an ancient home in Judea. The average person's house was nothing more than four walls enclosing a single room with a flat roof. Your bedroom was your living room, which was also your dining room and your den. If there were guests to be accommodated, often the guest room would be set up on the roof of the house. This would be the katáluma. Luke

tells us that when the holy family got to Bethlehem, ouk een aftois topos en to katalúmati, "there was no space for them in the guest area."

Whose guest area? The innkeeper's? Highly unlikely! First of all, Bethlehem in the first century was a tiny, tiny village off the main roads. It probably didn't have an inn of its own: there wouldn't have been enough business to keep it open. If you were going to Bethlehem, it was because you knew someone there. And Middle Eastern hospitality meant that you stayed at the home of the person you were visiting—a relative or a friend—in their special guest room, their *katáluma*. We know that Joseph and Mary had relatives in Bethlehem: that's the whole reason they went there, so that Joseph could return to his familial hometown for the census. It would have been normal and natural that they would stay in the home of a family member. It would have been strange and unexpected for them not to stay with family: it would have been an insult, in fact, one way or the other.

Can you imagine going back to Greece to visit the chorio and not staying with the family? After I finished my undergraduate degree, I went to Europe for a few weeks to see the family's ancestral homes in Holland and Denmark. I didn't ask my relatives there for a list of local hotels, and they didn't offer me one. I stayed in their homes, in their guest rooms. And if that is the case for Westerners in the 20th century, how much more so for Middle Easterners in the first century?

But, of course, Joseph and Mary were not the only relatives coming back to the old stomping grounds that Christmas. All of Joseph's other relatives who had left Bethlehem would have been required to return. And so it only makes sense that all of the family *katalúmata*, guest-rooms, would have been full. The slowest to

arrive would have found that there was no space in the *katáluma* for them. And a man traveling from Nazareth way up north down to Bethlehem in the south, with a pregnant wife, would probably have been the last to arrive.

By the way, while we are playing Mythbusters today, we should probably also give up the Christmas pageant idea that Jesus was born just as Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem, and that everything happened super-fast before there was time to get decent accommodations. The Gospel of Luke says clearly that Mary's labor began after they had arrived (Luke 2:6): "And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered." No indication that they made it to town just at the last moment before her water broke—quite the opposite. Even so, the houses in town would have been full to bursting already when they arrived.

But would they then have been pointed to the shed to sleep with the cows? No—because there probably wasn't a separate shed for the animals. Just like nowadays, most of us have garages attached to our houses that are on a level a few steps below the floor of the house; back then, the average home had an area—within the four walls of the one-room house!—for the animals to spend the night. Archaeologists have found lots of these simple split-level homes with a dugout area in one end of the house where the animals would be brought in for the night, to keep them warm (and to use their body heat to help keep the whole house warm) and to keep them from being stolen. And so the people slept in one part of the room and just a few feet away and a few steps down, the donkey, the ox, the sheep would have slept as well. And just in case the animals needed a nosh in the middle of the night, oftentimes a feeding trough would be carved into the floor of the higher living area,

so the animals could stand and eat hay. This trough was the manger.

Why would you put a new mother and her child down by the animals? Well, first of all, maybe there weren't any animals there at that time. Maybe that part of the house could have been cleaned out for human occupation while the animals were housed overnight with a friend or relative nearby. In that case, then the lower area with the mangers would have been a good place for the baby. It would have had a little more privacy and quietude than the rest of the house. It would have been close enough for help but far away enough for separation.

And so, perhaps after all there is no villain on Christmas night. Perhaps there are only average people doing the best they could to help under the circumstances. It's not quite the superhero story of a lone mother and child braving rejection and the elements. It is less story.

dramatic than the last-minute birth scenario we have been accustomed to, but it is also more true to life and true to Luke's Gospel. The poor people of Bethlehem—and poor they were in that village at that time—they were not the villains of Christmas Eve.

But in a sense that's the point. When Christ came to the poor and the powerless, they received Him. They were not the ones who rejected him. It was the rich and powerful, the high and mighty, the best and the brightest, the movers and shakers—these were the ones who would prefer to see Christ left out in the cold. But the common people received him gladly, during His ministry and from the moment of his Incarnation. And so it is still today. Blessed are the poor—and the poor in spirit—for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the message of Christ, and the message of the Christmas

Fr. Mark Sietsema is the Presiding Priest at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Lansing, MI

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Fridays @10:30AM

Dec 5, 12

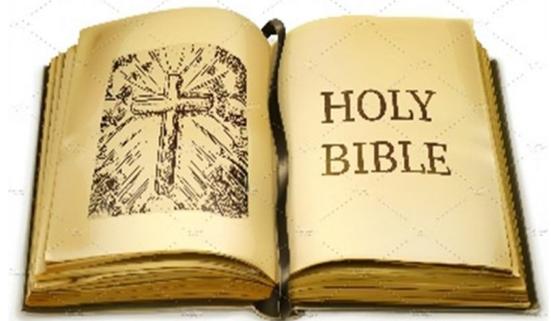
ORTHODOXY 101

The following Tuesdays we will discuss the Divine Liturgy and other topics on December 2, 9

ORTHODOXY ON TAP

Local events for Young Adults (YAL) seeking connection and a deeper understanding of our faith – look out for upcoming dates and times.

Link to YAL group chat https://groupme.com/join_group/69219680/U70hb9Gj



«Το κινητό που έχασε το σήμα του»

Ο Νίκος ήταν όπως οι περισσότεροι νέοι της εποχής του πάντα με το κινητό στο χέρι. Εκεί είχε τα πάντα: φίλους, μουσική, ειδήσεις, ακόμη και τα όνειρά του. Κάθε πρωί, πριν ακόμα πει "Καλημέρα", άνοιγε το κινητό του. Κάθε βράδυ, το έκλεινε τελευταίο. Μια μέρα, καθώς πήγαινε εκδρομή με την παρέα του, το σήμα χάθηκε. Προσπάθησε να ξανασυνδεθεί, αλλά τίποτα. Στην αρχή εκνευρίστηκε. Ένωθε «κομμένος» από τον κόσμο. Χωρίς internet, χωρίς ειδοποιήσεις, χωρίς... ζωή, όπως νόμιζε. Κάθισε τότε λίγο μόνος, στην άκρη ενός λόφου. Ησυχία. Για πρώτη φορά εδώ και καιρό, άκουσε τον άνεμο και μετά, κάτι ακόμα μια φωνή μέσα του, ήσυχη αλλά δυνατή: «Παιδί Μου, έχεις πάντα σήμα με Εμένα. Μόνο που Εσύ δεν το αναζητάς.» Σώπασε..... Κατάλαβε ότι τόσο καιρό έψαχνε "σήμα" παντού στους ανθρώπους, στα likes, στην φασαρία μα όχι στην καρδιά του, εκεί όπου ο Θεός περίμενε πάντα να "συνδεθεί". Όταν γύρισε σπίτι, το κινητό του ξαναβρήκε σήμα. Αλλά κάτι είχε αλλάξει. Τώρα, κάθε πρωί, πριν ανοίξει το κινητό, ανοίγει πρώτα την Αγία Γραφή, έστω ένα μικρό απόσπασμα, όσο χρόνο θα ξόδευε να σκρολάρει στα κοινωνικά δίκτυα. Και ανακάλυψε πως λίγα λεπτά με τον Θεό, γεμίζουν περισσότερο την ψυχή του από ώρες ολόκληρες στην οθόνη.

«Δεν ζει ο άνθρωπος μόνο με άρτο, αλλά με κάθε λόγο που βγαίνει από το στόμα του Θεού.» (Ματθαίος 4:4) Αν διαθέταμε στην προσευχή και στον Λόγο του Θεού όσο χρόνο δίνουμε στις οθόνες μας, ο κόσμος μέσα μας θα είχε φως, ειρήνη και νόημα. Το σήμα του Θεού δεν χάνεται ποτέ, μόνο χρειάζεται να θυμηθούμε να ανοίξουμε το "Wi-Fi" της ψυχής μας.

"The mobile phone that lost its signal"

Nikos, like most young people of his time, was always with his mobile phone in his hand. There he had everything: friends, music, news, and even his dreams. Every morning, before he even said "Good morning", he would turn on his cell phone. Every night, he closed it last. One day, as he was going on an excursion with his friends, the signal was lost. He tried to reconnect, but nothing. At first he was irritated. He felt "cut off" from the world. No internet, no notifications, no ... life, as he thought. Then he sat a little alone, on the edge of a hill. For the first time in a long time, he heard the wind and then, something else a voice inside him, quiet but loud: "My child, you always have a mark with Me; Only You are not looking for it."



Be silent..... He realized that for so long he had been looking for a "signal" everywhere in people, in likes, in the fuss but not in his heart, where God was always waiting to "connect". When he returned home, his cell phone found a signal again. But something had changed. Now, every morning, before turning on the mobile phone, he first opens the Holy Bible, even a small excerpt, as much time as he would spend scrolling through social networks. And he discovered that a few minutes with God, fill his soul more than hours on the screen.

"Man does not live only on bread, but with every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) If we devoted as much time to prayer and the Word of God as we give to our screens, the world within us would have light, peace and meaning. We only need to remember to open the "Wi-Fi" of our soul.

BAPTISMS – ΒΑΠΤΙΣΙΣ

STELLA NOELLE IBRAHIM, daughter of Christopher and Amanda (Yaccarino) Ibrahim, was Baptized & Chrismated according to the rights of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church on, Sunday, November 2nd, 2025, at 1:00pm and given the name **ΣΤΥΛΙΑΝΗ - STELLA**, Godmother was Karlie Ibrahim.



OBIT & FUNERAL SERVICE – ΝΕΚΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ & ΚΗΔΕΙΑ

Sylvia (Argyroula) Kalamaras, 90, was born on February 2, 1935, in Vasilionikon, Chios, Greece as the third child of Efthimia and Constantine Patapis. At the age of fourteen she emigrated to the United States with her three siblings and her parents, residing in New York City.

She passed away peacefully on Monday, November 3, 2025, at 90 years of age. Sylvia is survived by her sons Dean (Melissa and Justin) and Paul (Peggy), her granddaughters Victoria and Nicole, her brother Isidor Patapis (Ruth) and numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her son Gregory, her brother Steve Patapis (Penny) and her sister Francis Ritsos (George).

A visitation was held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Westfield, NJ followed by a funeral service. She was laid to rest at Fairview Cemetery, Westfield, NJ.



Constantine Nikolas Demos, 92, (aka Costa or Charlie) passed away on October 31, 2025. Born in Sparti Greece on July 31, 1933, to Nikolas and Maria Demos. He and his parents along with his brother Jimmy (Mimi), left Greece and immigrated to the US in 1944.

Costa attended high school in the US and completed college at Saint Peters University. Charlie joined the United States Army and fought in the Korean war. Upon his return to the US, he owned and worked in multiple businesses. He met Maria Drivas from Lambertville, New Jersey, and in 1962 they were married.

They moved to Rockaway, New Jersey, and opened a char-broil restaurant, the Bonfire. He worked there with his wife and along the way, had two sons.

Through the years he owned and managed successful businesses, including two bicycle shops with his longtime partner and friend John Christopoul.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years Maria, his sons Nick and George, his daughter Karen and his grandsons Tyler and wife Katherine, and Ryan and partner Patrycja. As well as many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Viewing and funeral was held at Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Randolph, New Jersey on Wednesday, November 5. Arrangements by Tuttle Funeral Home.

Interment at Gate of Heaven cemetery 225 Ridgedale Ave East Hanover NJ 07936

Donations in honor of his blessed memory can be made to Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church.

DONATIONS RECEIVED +IN MEMORY OF:

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+Christos Anagnost**
John Anagnost & Family

+Helen Ballos
Panagiota Theodoropoulos
Mary Ellen Donachie

+Katie Belekos
Maria Tsitsigaros

+Constantine (Costa) Demos
Plato Demos & Family
Anne Mavroudis
Joanne Varratos Diamantidis
Chrysanthe Borzeka & Family
Nicholas & Christina
Koumarianos
Mary Demos
Demos & Afrodite Paxos

+Constantine (Costa) Demos
Nicholas & Sophia Seretis &
Family
Soultana Seretis
Joanna Lignos
Niki Vagias
Maria Tsitsigaros
Anna Zamora
Mary Kotsopoulos
Irene Demos Argepakis
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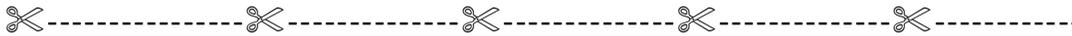
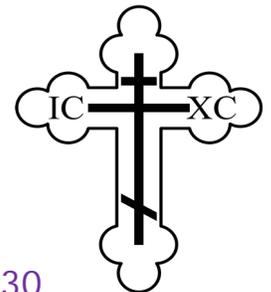
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+John Pallis
Betty Pallis

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+Constantinos Seretis
Angeliki Brouard

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Kindly accept the memorial gift as a token of Love and Respect in his/her memory.

The deceased was the beloved _____ (husband, wife, father, mother, other) of bereaved*

Please **ACKNOWLEDGE** my/our gift to a member of the family.

NAME & ADDRESS OF BEREAVED* _____

NAME & ADDRESS OF DONOR(S) _____

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SAINT ANDREW CALENDAR

* UPDATES IN WEEKLY E BULLETIN OR ON WEBSITE [Parish Calendar - St Andrew Greek Orthodox Church](#)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sundays after Holy Communion

BAKING GROUP Tuesdays **9am**

GOYA Volleyball Tuesday **@7:30-9pm**

GOYA Basketball Wednesday **@6:30-9pm**

KNITTING & PILLOW 1ST & 2ND Wednesday **@11am**
2nd & 3rd Wednesday **@6pm**

Hellenic Afternoon School Thursday **4:30pm**

Greek Dancing Thursdays **@6:30 pm**

Greek Dancing GOYA Thursdays **@7:15 pm**

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN DEC.: 12/7 PHILOPTOCHOS, 12/14 PTA, 12/21 DOP, 12/28 GOYA

12/1 @7:30 PARISH COUNCIL

12/2 @7:30 ORTHODOXY 101

12/3 @11:00PM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 12/10 @6

12/5 @10:30AM ADVENT BIBLE STUDY NEXT ON 12/12@10:30

12/6 @8AM GOYA PLAYOFFS @9AM NNJYC
TOURNAMENT

12/7 Elections for Parish Council

12/7 HAS READ ALOUD

12/7 HOPE & JOY Gingerbread house decorating

12/10 @6:00PM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 12/17@11

12/13 GOYA Christmas Caroling

12/13 @10am-4pm Holiday Party External /gym

12/14 Hierarchal Divine Liturgy at Saint Andrew

12/14 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT RELED & HAS

12/16 METROPOLIS CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

12/17 @11:00AM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 1/7 @11

12/18 AHEPA CHRISTMAS PARTY IN FAIRFIELD NJ

12/19 @6:30 GOYA CHRISTMAS PARTY

12/21 SNOW DATE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

12/23 @7:00PM PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING

12/27 FAITH KITCHEN - DOP

12/28 @6:00PM GOYA CHRISTMAS DANCE

12/31 @7:30PM NYE PARTY at Saint Andrew

2026

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN JANUARY: 1/4 PHILOPTOCHOS, 1/11 PTA, 1/18 DOP, 1/25 GOYA

1/1 @7:15 GOYA/MDF DANCE PRACTICE

1/4 COMMUNITY VASILOPITA IN CHURCH

1/5 @7:30 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1/7 @11AM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 1/14 @6

1/8 @7:15 GOYA/MDF DANCE PRACTICE

1/11 @12PM HPE JOY VASILOPITA

1/11 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

1/14 @6PM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 1/21 @11AM

1/14 RETIREMENT PARTY FOR BESSIE

1/15@ 7:15PM GOYA/MDF DANCE PRACTICE

1/16 @8:00AM LIFE LINE SCREENING

1/21@11AM KNITTING CROCHETING NEXT ON 1/28@6PM

1/22 @7:15 GOYA/MDF DANCE PRACTICE

1/23 @6PM GOYA RETREAT

1/24 Faith Kitchen PARISH COUNCIL

1/24 @2 HOPE JOY Ice Skating

1/27 @7 Philoptochos Meeting

1/28 @6 Knitting Crocheting Next on 2/4 @11

1/29 @7:15 GOYA/MDF DANCE PRACTICE

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN FEBRUARY: 2/1 PHILOPTOCHOS, 2/8 PTA, 2/15 DOP, 2/22 GOYA

2/1 TRIODION BEGINS

2/1 3 HIERARCHS HAS & RELED PROGRAM

2/7 MARDI GRAS PTA

Reservations for Saint Andrew Community Center Gym, Social Hall or Classrooms must be made with Church Office.

DOP-Daughters of Penelope | GID -Greek Independence Day | HAS – Hellenic Afternoon School | PC -Parish Council | PH -Philoptochos | RELED-Religious Education

GATEWAY DENTAL

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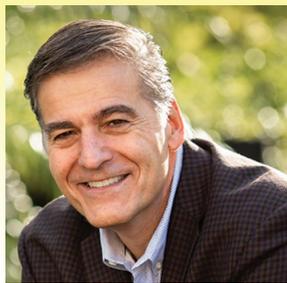
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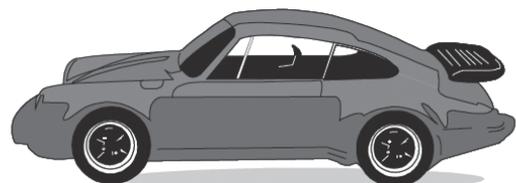
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Salomi Massaras, *Choir Director*

HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Fr. John Theodosion, Athena Borzeka, Vasilias Christodoulou, Maria Galvin

HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL

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TEACHERS: Haroula Christodoulou, Eleni Zeris, Stacey Papanikolaw, Alexandra Kontogiannis, Effie Kritharis, Vasilias Christodoulou, Yiota Louca, Nicole Pazvanti

MINISTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Ladies Philoptochos Society: Marina Venizelos, *President*

Knitting, Crocheting & Pillow Ministries: Ellen Manetas & Antonia Clapsis

Bakaliko: Maria Stamoutsos

Coffee Hour: Irene Laoudis

Agape Group: Betty and Jack Kelly & Julie Ioannou, Irene Laoudis, Joanne Varratos

AHEPA: Peter Tsilios, *President*

Daughters of Penelope: Dimitra Pallis, *President*

PTA: Katerina Corona, *President*

Little Angels Playgroup (LAP) *need chairperson*

HOPE – JOY : Stala Jellis, Jenny Manis, Pam Kotsaftis

GOYA

Zoe Sifonios, *GOYA President*

Pavlos Giannikopoulos, Christina Kalavrouziotis, Anna Sifonios, Irene Baroulakis, George Baroulakis, Sotiria Hambos *GOYA Advisors*

Hellenic Dance

GOYA Angelo Gergatsoulis, *Instructor (assisted by: Pavlos Giannikopoulos)*

Jr & Sr Groups Angelo Gergatsoulis, *Instructor*



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

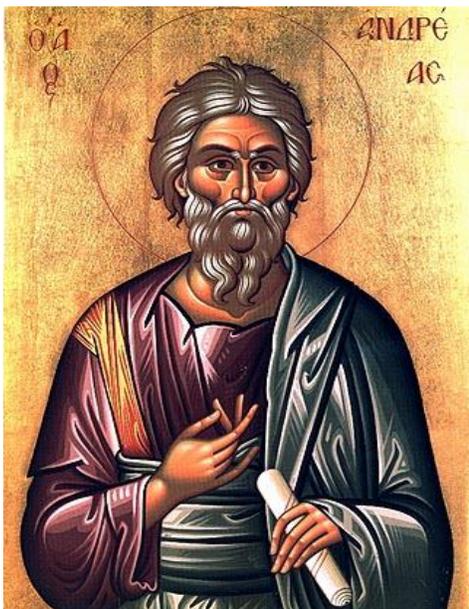
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You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World

The base from which we serve as the *Voice of Christ in a Changing World* is the parish. A strong parish provides opportunities for sharing the Good News of Christ, for welcoming those that are searching for a spiritual home, and a base from which we are sent out into the world. The parish also provides a place for worship, community and education in the faith. To be stewards of the Gospel, we need to be stewards of our parish. This requires the vision and inspiration to see the parish, not as it is, but as it could be. We are called to offer ourselves and our treasure to make our local church all that it can be.

HYMN OF THE APOSTLE SAINT ANDREW

As first called of the Apostles and brother of Peter the Preeminent, O Andrew, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace to the whole world, and great mercy to our souls.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΟΥ

Ως των Αποστόλων πρωτόκλητος,
και του κορυφαίου ατάδελφος,
τον Δεσπότην των όλων Ανδρέα ικέτευε,
ειρήνην τη οικουμένη δωρήσασθαι,
και ταις ψυχαίς ημών το μέγα έλεο.

THE SAINT ANDREW VISION STATEMENT

Our Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church is a welcoming place where our family is committed to God, and salvation through Orthodox worship, Christian education, philanthropy, and sharing of Hellenic culture, for the benefit of those whose lives we touch.