

FEBRUARY 2026



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

Saint Andrew Family News

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

ST PHOTIOS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPOLE- FEBRUARY 6TH

PTA MARDI GRAS PARTY -FEBRUARY 7TH

SATURDAY OF SOULS- FEBRUARY 14^H, 21ST, 28TH

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY -FEBRUARY 22ND

GREAT LENT BEGINS- FEBRUARY 23RD

Saint Andrew Family News

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

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

Mon – Fri 10am-4pm

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E-mail info@standrewgonj.org

Web site <https://www.standrewgonj.org/>

NJ Metropolis Web: www.njgoarch.org G.O. Archdioceses Web: www.goarch.org

Father John Theodosion, *Editor in Chief*

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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
info@standrewgonj.org

*Deadline for the **MARCH 2026 ISSUE** is February 15th*

Please find magazine issues on our web site <https://www.standrewgonj.org>

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ABUNDANT APP



DIVINE SERVICES

FEBRUARY

Sunday	1	ST. TRYPHON OF PHRYGIA / RELICS* Triodion Begins Today
Monday	2	THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE <i>CELEBRATING Three Hierarchs Program (HAS & Religious Education)</i>
Friday	6	ST. PHOTIOS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE
Sunday	8	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Tuesday	10	ST. HARALAMBOS THE MARTYR / RELICS*
Sunday	16	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Saturday	14	1 st Saturday of Souls (<i>with Kollyva</i>)
Sunday	15	Judgement Sunday
Saturday	21	2 nd Saturday of Souls (<i>with Kollyva</i>)
Sunday	22	Forgiveness Sunday (Lent begins Monday) <i>Forgiveness Vespers @ time and location TBD</i>
Saturday	28	3 rd Saturday of Souls (<i>with Kollyva</i>) [ST. THEODORE commemorated]

MARCH

Sunday	1	Sunday of Orthodoxy
Monday	2	Office of the Great Compline @6:30pm GREAT LENT BEGINS
Wednesday	4	Pre-Sanctified Gifts Liturgy @6:30pm
Friday	6	1 st Salutations @6:30pm
Sunday	8	Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
Monday	9	Office of the Great Compline @6:30pm
Wednesday	11	<i>Pan-Orthodox</i> Pre-Sanctified Gifts Liturgy @6:30pm <i>Saint Andrew hosting</i>
Friday	13	2 ND Salutations @6:30pm
Sunday	15	Sunday of the Holy Cross
Monday	16	Office of the Great Compline @6:30pm
Wednesday	18	Pre-Sanctified Gifts Liturgy @6:30pm
Friday	20	3 RD Salutations @6:30pm
Sunday	22	Sunday of St. John Climacus HAS Greek Independence Day Program
Monday	23	Office of the Great Compline @6:30pm
Tuesday	24	<i>Great Vespers at Evangelismos GOC, Jersey City, NJ @6pm</i>
Wednesday	25	ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS Orthros at 8am Divine Liturgy at 9am Greek Independence Day “THE 25 TH OF MARCH”
Wednesday	25	Pre-Sanctified Gifts Liturgy @6:30pm
Friday	27	4 th Salutations @6:30pm
Sunday	29	Sunday of Mary of Egypt
Monday	30	Office of the Great Compline @6:30pm

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.

Ι Ε Ρ Ε Σ Α Κ Ο Λ Ο Υ Θ Ι Ε Σ

ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ

Κυριακή	1	ΤΡΥΦΩΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΣ*/ <i>Λείψανα Το Τριώδιο ξεκινά σήμερα</i>
Δευτέρα	2	+Η ΥΠΑΠΑΝΤΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ (ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ]
Παρασκευή	6	+ΦΩΤΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ, ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ
Κυριακή	8	ΙΖ' Λουκᾶ (τοῦ Ἀσώτου)
Τρίτη	10	+ΧΑΡΑΛΑΜΠΟΣ ἹΕΡΟΜΑΡΤΥΣ * <i>Λείψανα</i>
Κυριακή	16	ΙΖ' Λουκᾶ (τοῦ Ἀσώτου)
Σάββατο	14	Α' Ψυχοσάββατων (με κόλλυβα)
Κυριακή	15	Κυριακή τῆς Ἀπόκρεω
Σάββατο	21	Β' Ψυχοσάββατων (με κόλλυβα)
Κυριακή	22	Κυριακή τῆς Τυροφάγου (Ἡ Σαρακοστή ξεκινά τη Δευτέρα) <i>Εσπερινός - θα ανακοινωθεί</i>
Σάββατο	28	Γ' Ψυχοσάββατων (με κόλλυβα) ΑΓΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ

ΜΑΡΤΙΟΣ

Κυριακή	1	Κυριακή Α' τῶν Νηστειῶν (τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας)
Δευτέρα	2	Ακολουθία Μέγα Απόδειπνων <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ [<i>Νηστεία</i>]
Τετάρτη	4	<i>Παν ορθόδοξή</i> Προαγιασμένη Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ <i>στον Άγιο Ανδρέα</i>
Παρασκευή	6	Α' Χαιρετισμοί - <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Κυριακή	8	Κυριακή Β' τῶν Νηστειῶν - Γρηγόρου του Παλαμά Αρχιεπ. Θεσσαλονίκης)
Δευτέρα	9	Ακολουθία Μέγα Απόδειπνων <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Τετάρτη	11	Προαγιασμένη Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Παρασκευή	13	Β' Χαιρετισμοί - <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Κυριακή	15	Κυριακή Γ' τῶν Νηστειῶν (τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως) ; Μάρτυρος Ἀγαπίου)
Δευτέρα	16	Ακολουθία Μέγα Απόδειπνων <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Τετάρτη	18	Προαγιασμένη Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Παρασκευή	20	Γ' Χαιρετισμοί - <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Κυριακή	22	Κυριακή Δ' τῶν Νηστειῶν - τοῦ Ὁσίου Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ συγγραφέως) 25^η ΜΑΡΤΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΑΠΟΓΕΥΜΑΤΙΝΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟΥ
Δευτέρα	23	Ακολουθία Μέγα Απόδειπνων <u>ώρα</u> 6μμ
Τρίτη	24	<i>Εσπερινός στην Εκκλησιά JERSEY CITY ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ <u>ώρα</u> 6μμ</i>
Τετάρτη	25	Ο ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ «25η Μαρτίου» Ὁρθρος - <u>ώρα</u> 8πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - <u>ώρα</u> 9πμ
Τετάρτη	25	Προαγιασμένη Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Παρασκευή	27	Δ' Χαιρετισμοί - <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ
Κυριακή	29	Κυριακή Ε' τῶν Νηστειῶν - Ὁσίας Μητρὸς ἡμῶν Μαρίας τῆς Αἰγυπτίας
Δευτέρα	31	Ακολουθία Μέγα Απόδειπνων <u>ώρα</u> 6:30μμ

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

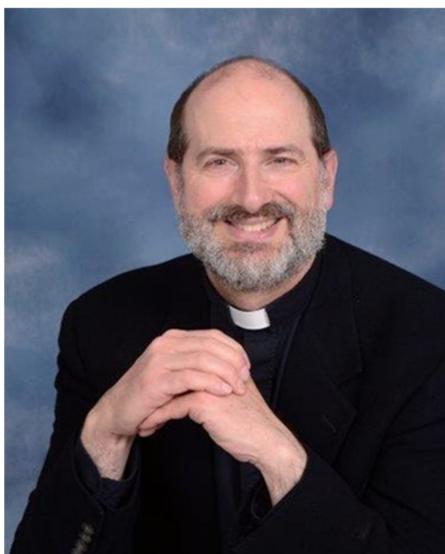
Λείψανα (Έχουμε τα Λείψανα του Αγίου στην Λειψανοθήκη της εκκλησία μας)

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

THE TRIODION: A SACRED JOURNEY OF REPENTANCE AND RENEWAL

Rev Fr John Theodosion

As the Orthodox Christian year moves toward its spiritual center—Holy Week and Pascha—the Church gently prepares us through a profoundly rich liturgical season known as the Triodion. This period is not merely a countdown to Pascha, but a carefully guided journey of the heart, inviting every believer into deeper repentance, humility, and renewed communion with God.



the soul. The parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10–14) establishes the central theme of the season: true repentance is born of humility. The Publican’s simple prayer—“God, be merciful to me, a sinner”—becomes the foundational prayer of the Triodion.

In the weeks that follow, the Church unfolds a spiritual pedagogy:

What Is the Triodion?

The word Triodion refers both to a liturgical book and to the season named after it. The term comes from the Greek tri- (three) and *ōdē* (ode), indicating the use of three-ode canons during weekday services, rather than the usual eight. This abbreviated form signals a change in rhythm—a sober, focused spiritual climate.

Liturgically, the Triodion begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and continues through Holy Saturday. Spiritually, it functions as the Church’s school of repentance, teaching us how to return to God with sincerity, humility, and hope.

A Gradual Call to Repentance

The Triodion opens not with strict fasting, but with a lesson in the proper disposition of

- **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son** reveals God’s boundless mercy and the joy of repentance.
- **Meatfare Sunday** (Last Judgment) reminds us that love and mercy toward others are the measure by which we will be judged.
- **Cheesefare Sunday** (Forgiveness Sunday) places reconciliation at the heart of the ascetical struggle, calling us to forgive before we fast.

Through these Sundays, the Church teaches us that repentance is not despair, but return—a coming home to the Father.

Great Lent: The Heart of the Triodion

With the beginning of Great Lent, the Triodion enters its most intense phase. The Church now invites the faithful into a rhythm of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and

watchfulness, not as ends in themselves, but as means of healing our souls.

The services of the Triodion are deeply penitential yet quietly hopeful. The repeated prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian becomes the spiritual heartbeat of the season:

“O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk...”

This prayer is not a condemnation of human weakness, but a plea for transformation—asking God to replace our passions with humility, patience, and love.

The Sunday commemorations during Lent continue the Church’s guidance:

- Sunday of Orthodoxy celebrates the victory of truth and right worship.
- Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas affirms the possibility of true communion with God through His uncreated grace.
- Sunday of the Holy Cross offers strength and encouragement at the midpoint of the fast.
- Sunday of Saint John Climacus points to the ascetical life as a ladder toward heaven.
- Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt proclaims that no sin is greater than God’s mercy.

The Triodion and the Inner Life

One of the most striking features of the Triodion is its honest spiritual realism. The hymns speak openly of sin, weakness, and

failure—but never without hope. Over and over, the Church places words on our lips that acknowledge our brokenness while affirming God’s compassion.

The Triodion teaches that repentance (metanoia) is not mere regret, but a change of mind and heart. It is our lifelong posture of turning toward God, learning to see ourselves truthfully and to trust wholly in His mercy.

From Repentance to Resurrection

The Triodion does not end in sorrow. Its final movement—Holy Week—reveals the full meaning of repentance as participation in the saving work of Christ. Through the Bridegroom services, the Cross, and the Tomb, the faithful are led to die with Christ so that they may rise with Him.

By the time Pascha arrives, the Triodion has prepared our souls to hear the proclamation not as a slogan, but as lived truth:

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death.”

Conclusion

The Triodion is a gift of the Church— it invites us to slow down, to listen, to repent, and to hope. It teaches us that the path to joy always passes through humility, and that resurrection is only meaningful when we have first learned how to die to sin.

In entering the Triodion with sincerity, we do not simply prepare for Pascha; we learn again how to live the Gospel.

Saturdays of the Souls

February 14th, 21st, 28th 2026

During memorial services, we commemorate the souls of all Orthodox Christians who have gone before us into eternal rest. In praying for those who have “fallen asleep in the Lord,” we continue to ask that God may have mercy on them in His divine judgment so they may gain the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The names offered during the “SATURDAYS OF THE SOULS” (February 14th , 21st, & 28th) at the beginning of the Lenten season will be commemorated.

Also remember your loved ones by not only submitting their names, but by attending the holy services to offer your own prayers for their eternal rest.



Anyone wishing to do so may also bring or order* a dish of memorial wheat (“kollyva”) for use during the service.

Please, bring your **list of names to the service**, or if not able to attend, call the Church Office 973-584-0388 ahead of time or send it by email to info@standrewgonj.org.

*Please contact the church office about participating in our Community’s Kolyva.

If you are unable to attend church, you can still participate by clicking on the menu bar **LIVESTREAM** on our Website or FACEBOOK page.

*Orthros at 8am, Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom approximately at 9am
May their memory be eternal.*



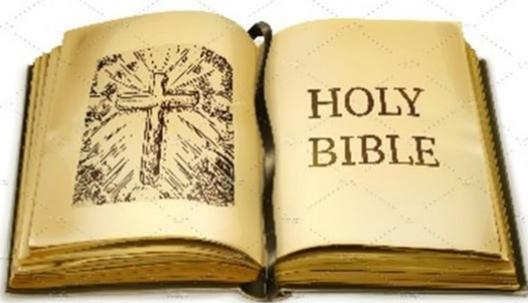
Orthodoxy 101

On the Following Mondays at 7:30
February 2 & 16

Bible Study

Thursdays at 7:30 pm:

Jan 15, 22, 29 & Feb 5, 12, 19



Lenten Study

Fridays at 10:30 am:

Feb 27, March: 6, 20, 27



Agape – Αγάπη

Luncheons on Thursday at 11:30am

Feb 26, Mar 26, Apr 23, May 28, Jun 11

For more information contact: Julie I. 201-602-1359,
Joanne D.V. 973-432-1950 or Irene L. 973-479-5221

Knitting, Crochet & Pillow Ministry

Looking for a meaningful and creative way to give back? Come be part of a warm and welcoming ministry at

Saint Andrew Social Hall on Wednesdays

DAYTIME: 11 AM – 2 PM on Feb: 4 & 18, Mar: 4 & 18,
Apr: 15 & 29, May: 13 & 27

EVENING: 6 PM – 8 PM Feb 10, Mar 10, Apr 21, May 20



This is a non-denominational ministry. All are welcome! Bring a friend and join us in crafting for a cause!



MARDI GRAS

ΑΠΟΚΡΙΑΤΙΚΟ ΓΛΕΝΤΙ 2026

HOSTED BY OUR ST. ANDREWS PTA

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 7, 2026

The Meadow Wood

461 Rt.10 East, Randolph NJ

.....
**COCKTAIL HOUR, DINNER
AND DESSERT**

LIVE GREEK BAND, TRICKY TRAY, 50/50
AND TRADITIONAL DANCES PERFORMED
BY OUR GOYA & JR DANCE GROUP

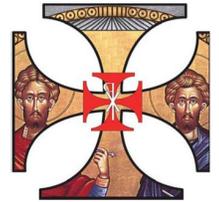
DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM

under age 4 (\$10), ages 5-13 (\$35), ages 14+ (\$65),
ages 18+ (\$85) | Cash bar



Geek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH **PHILOPTOCHOS**



Dear Philoptochos Members and Saint Andrew Family,
XRONIA POLLA - HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Longwood Gardens - On December 13th, Philoptochos sponsored a bus trip to Longwood Gardens, PA. We had 36 people join us for a wonderful trip of Christmas beauty and community fellowship. The Gardens were lavishly decorated with lights and music. The scenery was festive and in the Christmas Spirit!

Philoptochos Membership Drive - Our Philoptochos Membership Drive has begun for the New Year! To renew your membership or join for the first time, please see membership form. Membership is \$50 annually. We welcome all members to join us at our meetings on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7pm!

As we are called by God to live in service to our neighbors, Philoptochos responds to the needs of all those who ask for our help. In this way we make God's Love real and effective. Please join and help us in this act of compassionate service!

Christmas Card 2025: We thank our Saint Andrew parishioners for their donations for the Christmas card. We collected \$4,000, which will help families in our parish.

With apologies, the following names were inadvertently left off the Saint Andrew Christmas Card: Christen Demnitz, Mary Demos, Marion Economou, Dimitrios and Paraskevi Katsigiannis, Athena Mantgas, The Mitrakos Family, the Ervin and Lueda Mile Family and Stilianos and Susan Nikolaou.

Giving Thanks: NOTE: We would like to thank Maria Pappas for making and donating the cover to protect the Epitafio in storage. She is the owner of Batten the Hatches on Lake Hopatcong, and makes boat covers, seat upholstery and many other things.

In the Service of the Lord,
Maro Nicolaou Schuster, First VP, Philoptochos



Executive Board: *President*, Marina Venizelos; *1st Vice President*, Maro Schuster; *2nd Vice President*, Panayiota Louca ;
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Alexandra Protopapas. | *Advisor to Board:* Mary Michailidis | *Spiritual Advisor:* Fr. John Theodosion
Saint Andrew Family News November 2025

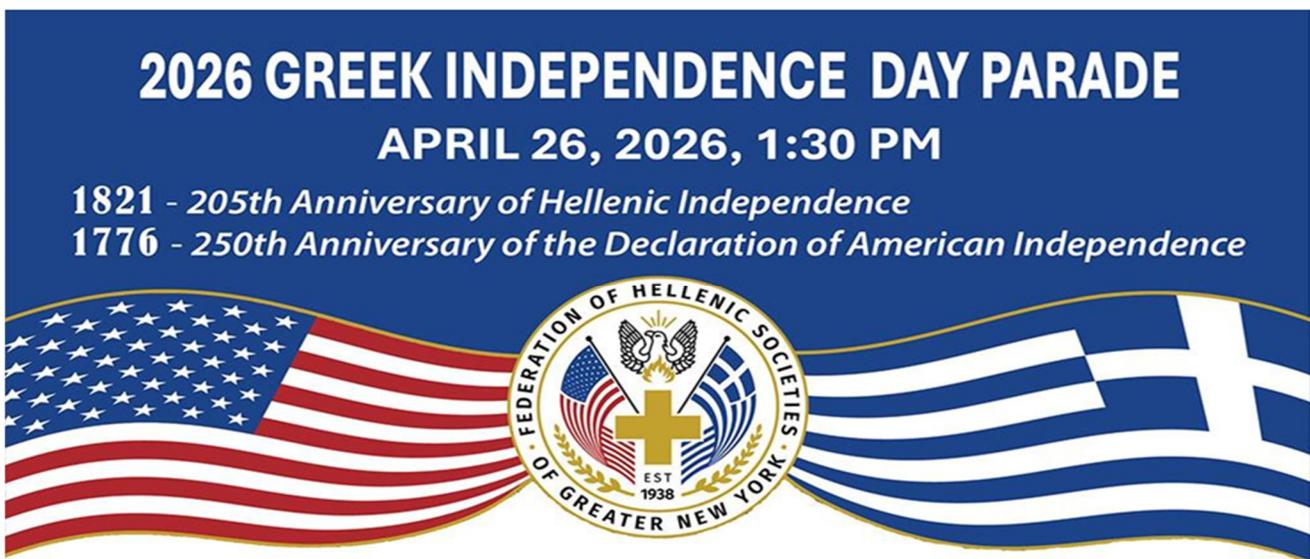
GOYA NEWS

The beginning of the new year has been a wonderful time for GOYA as we strengthened our connection to our faith and to one another. We especially enjoyed our GOYA retreat, where we had the opportunity to grow spiritually, build friendships, and create lasting memories together. As we look ahead to February, we are excited for several upcoming events. We are looking forward to the Valentine's Day Dance, which promises to be a fun and meaningful time of fellowship.



We are also excited to participate in the Metropolis Music and Dance Festival in Philadelphia, an event that consistently showcases incredible talent and dedication from dance groups across the Metropolis. In addition, our GOYA members have been practicing weekly in preparation for Sights and Sounds in March. This event always features impressive performances and submissions across all categories, highlighting the many talents within our GOYA community. We hope everyone has had a strong start to the new year, and we pray that the months ahead are filled with peace, purpose, and continued growth in faith.

Thanks, Dean



Hellenic Evening School



is pleased to announce that we will once again offer a Fall Session of classes in the Modern Greek Language.

Beginners & Intermediate Level will start on March 5th and run through May 14th 2026

Hellenic Evening School
Greek Language for Adults (Min 5 students)
will be taught by Haroula Christodoulou

Thursday nights 7:00-9:00pm

**SUBJECT TO MINIMUM REGISTRATION OF 5 STUDENTS
AND A MAXIMUM OF 8 | TUITION IS \$350**

The focus of the course is on the fundamentals of communicating in Modern Greek. Alphabet, pronunciation and vocabulary are taught so that students develop basic listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Ελληνικό Βραδινό Σχολείο Αγίου Ανδρέα

Greek Dance Classes for adults

March 4 to May 20, 2026

Wednesday nights 7:30-8:30pm

**SUBJECT TO MINIMUM REGISTRATION OF
5 STUDENTS | TUITION \$100 /10 CLASSES**

Dance classes will be led by Christie Papanikolaw

For more information contact the church office

info@standrewgonj.org

(973)584-0388



HOPE & JOY



On January 11th, HOPE and JOY enjoyed a wonderful St. Basil celebration! We began by decorating pots and giving each child basil seeds to plant at home. We hope that, along with the basil, we have also planted seeds of faith in their hearts.

Father John then joined us for a special Vasilopita cutting. Congratulations to George Delis, who won the coin for the second year in a row!

On Saturday, January 17th, we spent time together ice skating at SportsCare Arena. For some of the children, this was a brand-new experience. Important life lessons are learned when we step outside our comfort zones and try new things!

We look forward to celebrating Godparents Sunday on January 25th and hope to see you there.



A.H.E.P.A. News

On December 18th, the Morris Co. 300 chapter hosted its 2nd Annual Bourbon Night at Jersey Spirits Distilling in Fairfield. Bourbon was sampled and a tour of the distillery was given. Those in attendance had the chance to learn how bourbon is distilled. It was an enjoyable evening with approximately 40 people in attendance. \$1,700 was raised and how it will be disbursed will be determined at our February meeting.

On December 27th at the Graycliff in Moonachie a testimonial dinner was held in honor of the Past Supreme President, Savas Tsivicos. P.S.P. Tsivicos requested that proceeds from this dinner should be placed in the Journey to Greece program which he wants to make self-sustaining by raising at least one million dollars. This program fully funds a six-week educational and cultural trip to Greece. Student participants receive six college credits since it is an intense learning experience in Hellenic culture, the AHEPA covers all costs except for the airfare to get the student to Greece. The

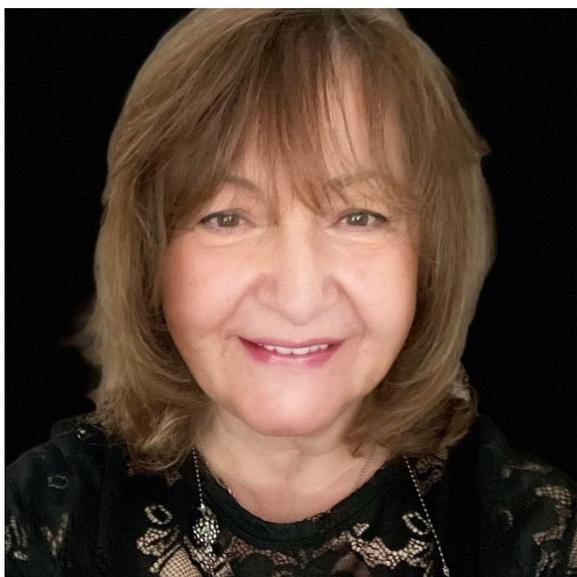


turnout was large and included our District Treasurer Tom Borzeka. The goal of One million dollars was attained that evening.

Leading off our 2026 events will be the District History Tournament which will be a series of questions on Greek history from ancient times to the present. Our chapter is sponsoring one team. The tournament will be held on Jan. 24 at the St. Thomas Church in Cherry Hill. The prize for the first-place team is \$1,000 for each member of the team

The chapter's first event will be Brew Night. It is scheduled for Mar. 24 at the Double Tap in Whippany. A tour of this facility is included in the night's festivities.

As always, we are looking to expand our membership. If you have not joined, please contact one of our members. The goals of A.H.E.P.A. will be explained. With stronger membership we can host more events. Many hands will lighten the load for whatever we tackle.



Vasiliki Bessie Petrakos'

RETIREMENT LUNCHEON

will be held on

Sunday, February 15th

After Liturgy at the

Saint Andrew

Community Center, Randolph NJ

All are welcome to attend.

Θνήσκων Φώτιος, ου ταράττομαι λέγει, Προς την τελευταίην, ων προητοιμασμένος.

Ο Μέγας Φώτιος έζησε κατά τους χρόνους που βασίλευσαν οι αυτοκράτορες Μιχαήλ (842 - 867 μ.Χ.), υιός του Θεοφίλου, Βασίλειος Α' ο Μακεδών (867 - 886 μ.Χ.) και ο Λέων ΣΤ' ο Σοφός (886 - 912 μ.Χ.), υιός του Βασιλείου. Γεννήθηκε το 810 μ.Χ. (κατά άλλους το 820 μ.Χ.) στην Κωνσταντινούπολη από ευσεβή και επιφανή οικογένεια, που αγωνίσθηκε για



την τιμή και προσκύνηση των ιερών εικόνων. Οι γονείς ήταν ο Άγιος Σέργιος (βλέπε [13 Μαΐου](#)) και Ειρήνη και καταδιώχθηκαν επί του εικονομάχου αυτοκράτορα Θεοφίλου (829 - 842 μ.Χ.). Ο Άγιος Σέργιος ήταν αδελφός του Πατριάρχου Ταρασίου (784 - 806 μ.Χ.) και περιπομπεύθηκε δέσμιος από το λαϊμό ανά τις οδούς της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, στερήθηκε την περιουσία του και εξορίσθηκε μετά της συζύγου του και των παιδιών του σε τόπο άνυδρο, όπου από τις ταλαιπωρίες πέθανε ως Ομολογητής.

Ο ιερός Φώτιος διέπρεψε πρώτα στα ανώτατα πολιτικά αξιώματα. Όταν με εντολή του αυτοκράτορα απομακρύνθηκε βιαίως από τον πατριαρχικό θρόνο ο Πατριάρχης Ιγνάτιος, ανήλθε σε αυτόν, το έτος 858 μ.Χ., ο ιερός Φώτιος, ο οποίος διακρινόταν για την αγιότητα του βίου του και την τεράστια μόρφωσή του. Η χειροτονία του εις Επίσκοπο έγινε την ημέρα των Χριστουγέννων του έτους 858 μ.Χ. υπό των Επισκόπων Συρακουσών Γρηγορίου του Ασβεστά, Γορτύνης Βασιλείου και Απαμείας Ευλαμπίου. Προηγουμένως βέβαια εκάρη μοναχός και ακολούθως έλαβε κατά τάξη τους βαθμούς της ιεροσύνης.

Ο ιερός Φώτιος με συνοδικά γράμματα ανακοίνωσε, κατά τα καθιερωμένα, τα της εκλογής του στους Πατριάρχες της Ανατολής και τόνισε την αποκατάσταση της ειρήνης στην Εκκλησία της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Αλλά πριν ακόμα προλάβει να την παγιώσει επήλθε ρήξη

μεταξύ των ακραίων πολιτικών και των οπαδών του Πατριάρχη Ιγνατίου, των «Ιγνατιανών». Οι «Ιγνατιανοί» συγκεντρώθηκαν στο ναό της Αγίας Ειρήνης, αφόρισαν τον ιερό Φώτιο και ανακήρυξαν Πατριάρχη τον Ιγνάτιο. Ο Άγιος Φώτιος συγκάλεσε Σύνοδο στο ναό των Αγίων Αποστόλων για την αντιμετώπιση του ανακύψαντος ζητήματος. Η Σύνοδος καταδίκασε ως

αντικανονικές τις ενέργειες των «Ιγνατιανών» και τόνισε ότι ο Ιγνάτιος, αφού παραιτήθηκε από τον θρόνο, δεν ήταν πλέον Πατριάρχης και ότι εάν διεκδικούσε και πάλι την επιστροφή του στον πατριαρχικό θρόνο, τότε αυτόματα θα υφίστατο την ποινή της καθαιρέσεως και του αφορισμού. Ο μεγάλος αυτός πατέρας της Εκκλησίας ιερούργησε, ως άλλος Απόστολος Παύλος, το Ευαγγέλιο. Αγωνίσθηκε για την αναζωπύρωση της ιεραποστολικής συνειδήσεως, που περιφρουρεί την πνευματική ανεξαρτησία και αυτονομία των ορθοδόξων λαών από εισαγωγές εθίμων ξένων προς την ιδιοσυγκρασία τους, με σκοπό την αλλοίωση της ταυτότητος και της πνευματικής τους ζωής. Διότι γνώριζε ότι ο μέγιστος εχθρός ενός λαού είναι η απώλεια της αυτοσυνειδησίας του, η φθορά της πολιτισμικής του ιδιοπροσωπίας και η αλλοίωση του ήθους του. Ο ιερός Φώτιος γνώριζε την ιεραποστολική δραστηριότητα του ιερού Χρυσοστόμου, αφού αναφέρεται πολλές φορές στο έργο αυτό και μάλιστα επηρεάστηκε από αυτή στο θέμα της χρήσεως των επιτόπιων γλωσσών και των μοναχών ως ιεραποστόλων. Επί ημερών του εκχριστιανίσθηκε το έθνος των Βουλγάρων, το οποίο μυσταγωγήσε προς την αμώμητη πίστη του Χριστού και το αναγέννησε με το λουτρό του θείου Βαπτίσματος.

[Περισσότερα](#) [Ορθόδοξος Συναξαριστής :: Άγιος Φώτιος ο Μέγας Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως](#)

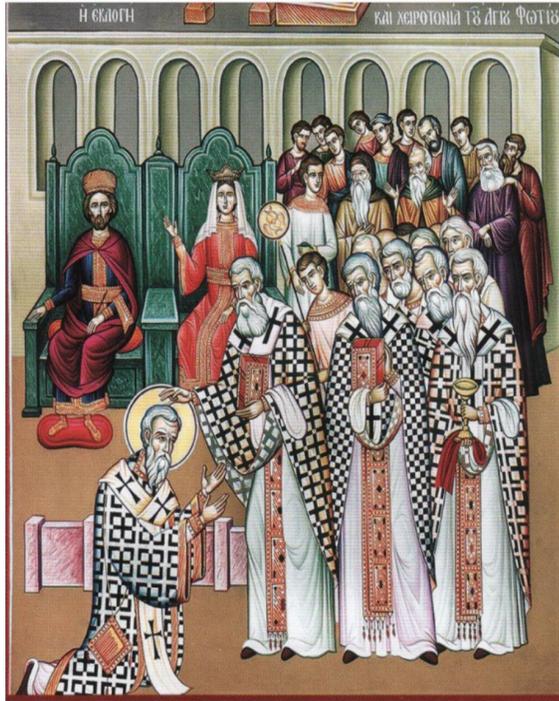
PHOTIUS THE GREAT

Our father among the saints **Photius the Great** (also *Photios*; Greek Φώτιος), Patriarch of Constantinople, is considered one of the greatest patriarchs of Constantinople. His feast day is celebrated on February 6.

St. Photius was condemned as patriarch by the Robber Council of 869-870, but the Eighth Ecumenical Council (879-880) affirmed his restoration to his see. Although he was accused of causing the "Photian" Schism, he was recognized as a major peacemaker of that time. He reconciled with Patriarch Ignatius, who named him as his successor (for a second time) upon Ignatius' death in 877.

Photius' parents were wealthy and pious Christians. His father was attached to the imperial court with the office of "Guardian of the Emperor and the Palace." They belonged to the party which venerated icons, but the current emperor was an iconoclast and thus was against the use of icons in the Church. They were exiled when Photius was seven, their wealth disposed of, and were eventually martyred. Photius referred to Patriarch Tarasius as "uncle from his father's side,"¹ and he was also related to John VII Grammaticus. He was known as one who was inclined to the quiet, prayerful, and monastic life. Byzantine writers report that Emperor Leo VI once angrily called Photius "Khazar-faced," but whether this was a generic insult or a reference to his ethnicity is unclear.

As soon as he had completed his own education, Photius began to teach grammar, rhetoric, theology, and philosophy. The way to public life was probably opened for him by (according to one account) the marriage of his brother Sergius to Irene, a sister of the Empress Theodora, who upon the death of her husband Theophilos in 842, had assumed the regency of the empire. Photius became a captain of the guard and subsequently chief imperial secretary



(*prōtasēkrētis*). In 855, at thirty-five years of age, Photius was recognized for his political skills and made the ambassador to the Persian caliph in Baghdad with the charge to negotiate an end to Christian persecution in the Muslim territories.

First Patriarchate

The dissension between Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople and the Caesar Bardas, the uncle of the youthful Emperor Michael III, concerning Bardas' illicit relationship with his daughter-in-law and other questionable

moral practices, led to Photius' promotion. Ignatius was arrested and exiled to the island of Terebinthos in 858, where he submitted his resignation. Photius, a layperson, was inducted into the priesthood and made a bishop within six days and then installed as patriarch. He resisted this appointment, as he wished for a more contemplative life. He was the most distinguished scholar at that time and was seen as being above suspicion because he was strongly opposed to the iconoclast party, which had caused his parents' death.

Several months after his exile, a few of Ignatius' supporters came together in the Church of Saint Irene and plotted to restore Ignatius to the patriarchate. They made an appeal to Pope Nicholas trying to discredit his rival Photius' appointment. This was signed by only six metropolitans and fifteen bishops. There were several monks in this camp who set out for Rome, even though Ignatius had voluntarily resigned. They were received by Pope Nicholas I, who was eager to assert his power over the Eastern church. Pope Nicholas had previously been successful in bringing the Western church under his absolute control, and he now sought the same power over the East...continued at orthodoxwiki.org/Photius_the_Great

Elections for the Parish Council - December 7th 2025

A Parish Council is the administrative body of a Church community elected by its stewards for the purpose of working together with the Parish Priest or Proistamenos in fulfilling the mission and goals of that community.

Historically, clergy and laity have worked together in dealing with matters of the Church's life. The Parish Council is an example of the synergy of clergy and laity; it is a vehicle for implementing the ongoing mission of the Church and planning the necessary strategies, policies, procedures, and activities that will enable the Parish to move forward in accomplishing God's work.

On Sunday January 11th the Saint Andrew Parish Council took the following oath:

"I, (name) do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogmas, teachings, traditions, holy canons, discipline, worship and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the Charter and Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and that I will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council. So, help me God."

The following evening, Monday January 12th at the 1st Parish Council Meeting 2026, the New Executive Board was elected. (see below positions on the 2026 PC Board)

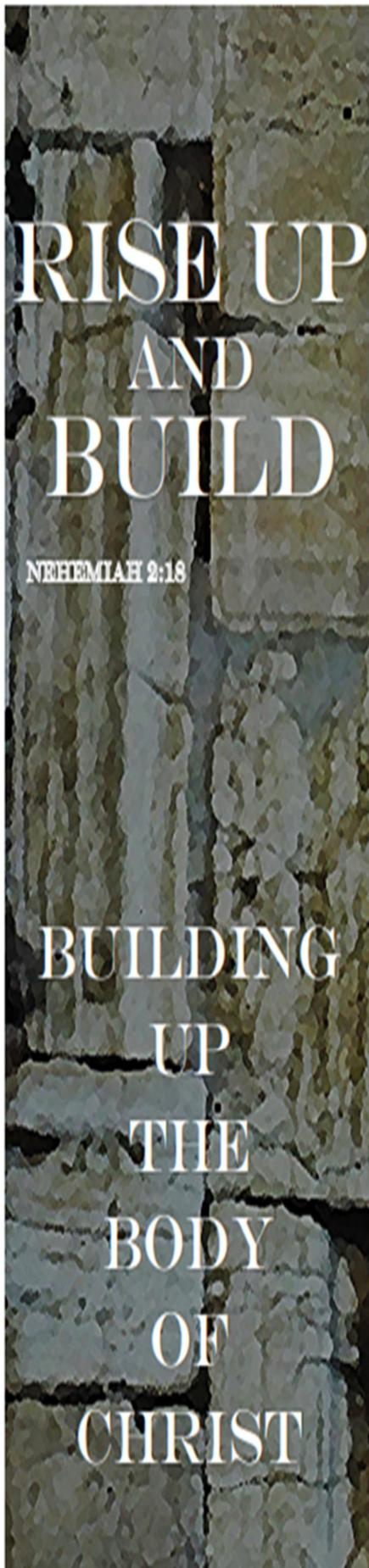


Above picture from left to right: Maro Schuster, *Peter Sedereas *Corresponding Secretary*, *Thoms J. Borzeka *Assistant Treasurer*, **Konstantinos Merkos, Michael Serghiou *President*, Sotiria Hambos *Treasurer*, Fotios Kontogiannis, *Athena Borzeka, Fr. John Theodosion *Pastor*, Nikolaos Monokandilos, *Steven Mitrakos, *John A Paxos, Herbert Schuster, *Pavlos Giannikopoulos *Vice President*, Chris Tsamutalis, George Papanikolaw.

Not included in above picture: George Baroulakis *Assistant Treasurer*, John Jelis *Recording Secretary*, Nicolaos Karkanias, Andrew Zezas.

With gratitude to God, we thank them for their devoted service and commitment to our Community of Saint Andrew, and we look forward to their continued labor for the glory of God and the good of the Parish in the New Year.

**re-elected member **newly elected member to serve through 2028*



Barriers to Generous Giving

The Stewardship Committee invites all parishioners to reflect prayerfully on the call to round up our pledge amounts each year until we become a 100% tithing supported church. We understand that this invitation is rooted in scripture and tradition. We also understand that tithing can be difficult. Many people face real barriers that make percentage giving a challenge. Naming these barriers can help us move forward together.

1. Financial and Medical Hardship

For many families, the greatest obstacles to tithing are straightforward. Rising costs of living, limited wages, and unpredictable expenses can make percentage giving feel overwhelming. Additionally, unexpected illness or long-term health challenges can bring emotional, physical, and financial strain. We recognize these realities and encourage you to come and discuss your circumstances with Father John.

2. Too Many Places to Give

There is no shortage of worthy causes. Humanitarian organizations, school fundraisers, charitable drives, online appeals, and community initiatives all ask for support. Even within our church, we are asked to support fundraisers by all of our various ministries. By splintering our generosity, we may, inadvertently, give to the church only what remains instead of the “first fruits.” (Proverbs 3:9-10). We ask parishioners to remember that one of the most meaningful ways to respond to God’s love is through stewarding our resources back to His church and that God should always take priority.

3. Lack of Mindfulness About the Church’s Needs

Sometimes the barrier to giving is not financial but simply a matter of awareness. Many parishioners forget that the church relies on the consistent support of its members to continue serving all.

4. Misplaced Priorities

We live in a culture that strongly encourages spending on comfort, appearance, and status. It is often easier to justify a new outfit, a nicer car, or the latest device than it is to prioritize giving to the church. Stewardship challenges us to reorder our priorities. We ask that you choose God first and allow your spending to reflect your faith.

We often forget that all we have comes from Him. Without God’s blessings and enlightenment, we have nothing. When we give to the church, we give back to Him a portion of what He has given us. When we give generously, we participate in God’s work, strengthen our spiritual home, and deepen our trust that God will continue to provide for us. If you have been blessed abundantly, then we ask that you give abundantly. May we each rise up, offer our gifts, and help build the church together.

TOGETHER WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2025



1,440

MEALS COOKED FOR FAITH KITCHEN



2,000

FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER HOURS

16

PARTICIPANTS



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



49

WEEKS OF COFFEE HOUR

Hosted by five Groups and Many Families

52



WEEKS OF WORSHIP SERVICES

Time & Talent from Chanters, Acolytes, Readers, Ushers, Greeters, & Attendees



TRUNK OR TREAT HARVEST PARTY

\$60,000

OF PHILOPTOCHOS PHILANTHROPY

510



COZY BLANKETS, PILLOWS, SCARVES, HATS & MITTENS DONATED

\$6000

OF DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE PHILANTHROPY

including \$1000 for Cancer Research

23

WEEKS OF BIBLE STUDY



6

AGAPE LUNCHEONS FOR OUR SENIORS



100s

OF ATTENDEES FOR THE FEAST DAY OF SAINT ANDREW

400

TOYS COLLECTED FOR



1,300

POUNDS OF FOOD COLLECTED FOR INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

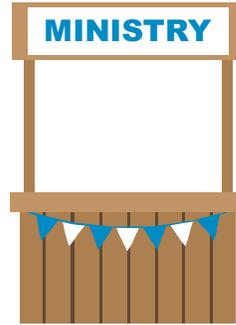


5 PART SERIES ON ORTHODOXY 101



75 CHILDREN
ENROLLED IN
SUNDAY SCHOOL

**NEW
PARKING LOT
SIGNS**



**MINISTRY FAIR
SUNDAY**



30
BACKPACKS
BLESSED

***NEW MINISTRY*
FAITH WORKS**

2

**SUCCESSFUL
GYRO SALES**



5

MOVIE NIGHTS

200

**LIGHT
FIXTURES
REPLACED
WITH LED
BULBS**



8

**COMMUNITY
HONOREES**



60

**MARCHERS IN GREEK
INDEPENDENCE DAY
PARADE**



**NEW
SUNDAY SCHOOL
CLASSROOM**

**NEW
NARTHEX
FLOOR TILES**

1

**O.C.M.F.
MISSIONARY
PRIEST
SPONSORED**



**ONGOING
BEAUTIFICATION OF
NAVE, SANCTUARY,
AND SOCIAL HALL**



Δώδεκα

**SESSIONS OF GREEK
LANGUAGE CLASSES
FOR ADULTS**

**NEW
HVAC MOTOR**



**CHILDREN
ENROLLED IN
GREEK SCHOOL**

IMAGINE WHAT ELSE IS POSSIBLE WHEN WE ROUND UP TO TITHING!

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I become a member of the parish?

Membership in the Orthodox Church begins at baptism (Chrismation for some) and continues throughout our life. We are united with Christ through the sacraments, or mysteries, of the Church and through our faithful offering of our entire selves to Jesus Christ. Our Archdiocese requires each parish to distinguish between voting members and non-voting members.

A voting member is finished with school, working in their career and turns in a signed stewardship commitment card, committing a portion of time, talent and treasure to the Church. The Archdiocese also requires the voting member to remain current through the year on their commitments. Keep in mind that true membership in the Body of Christ involves living according to His word and within His Church.

Why must I commit to give a specific amount?

Please keep in mind that your stewardship of money is kept in the strictest of confidence. However, we do compile the amounts anticipated to better plan our budget.

What if I cannot fulfill my stewardship commitment?

During the course of a year, circumstances change. Your stewardship is valued because it is made out of your love for God and His Church. Please do not be concerned if you are unable to meet your stewardship commitment – we are glad you are a part of this parish.

As we move toward becoming a percentage giving community, we are adopting a rounding up approach to giving.

We ask you to join the Parish Council and Stewardship Ministry who have pledged to give a percentage of their income.

Please join us in this commitment to achieve our parish vision.

To learn more about what this means, go to our web site or speak to a member of the parish council or the stewardship committee.

If you are not already a member of Saint Andrew, please consider a pledge starting out at 1% of your income.



**TO MAKE YOUR PLEDGE OF
TIME, TALENT & TREASURE
ELECTRONICALLY
PLEASE SCAN QR CODE
BELOW**



<https://standrewgonj.org/stewardship-form/>

**TO MAKE YOUR
MONATARY CONTRIBUTION
ELECTRONICALLY
PLEASE SCAN QR CODE
BELOW**



<https://abundant.co/standrew/give>

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

There is a special cup which holds the wine that becomes the blood of Christ. We call it the chalice, the cup of salvation. When we kneel during the liturgy, we pray with the priest that God the Holy Spirit may change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. This means that when we come to receive Holy Communion, Jesus comes to live in us.

What should we do to prepare to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus? We should pray. We should have love in our hearts for all people. We should ask forgiveness from God and from our parents, brothers, and sisters. Also from anyone we may have hurt. On the morning before going to the Divine Liturgy to receive Communion we do not eat or drink anything if our health allows, just as one would not spoil his appetite by eating before a special meal, so we sharpen our spiritual appetite for Christ through such fasting. But we must never allow an overemphasis on fasting to become a wall separating us from Christ Who wishes to come to us in every liturgy.

When we come before the priest for Holy Communion, our hands should not be in our pockets, but at our sides. We make the sign of the cross, tell the priest our baptismal name, hold the Communion cloth carefully under our chin, and open our mouth wide. We do not slurp from the spoon, nor should our teeth scrape on the spoon. After receiving Communion we wipe our lips carefully with the Communion cloth (*not on our hand or shirtsleeve*), make the sign of the cross, and hand the Communion cloth to the next person.

We are always careful that we do not allow Communion to fall from the communion



spoon or from our lips onto our clothing or to the floor. For this reason we move very slowly toward the chalice and the communion spoon, and we do not pull our head away quickly after receiving. We are careful not to bump the chalice or the hand of the priest. After receiving Communion, we do not chew gum (or spit), because when we dispose of our gum it may contain particles of Holy Communion.

Once we have received Communion, we must remember that we have become one with Christ and with all those who received Communion with us. The same Christ now lives in all of us. We are all living icons of Jesus. It is by loving one another that we love Jesus. After receiving Communion our bodies become holy chalices. God has come to live in us. His blood now flows through our veins.

Jesus wants to use our hands, which have now become His hands, to help those in need. When we receive Communion, we become members of Christ's Body, the Church. This means that Jesus has no eyes but our eyes, no feet but our feet to do His work in the world today. What kind, thoughtful act will you do for Jesus today?

Portions taken from *Let's Take a Walk Through Our Orthodox Church* and *Introducing the Orthodox Church*
by Anthony M. Coniaris / Light and Life Publishing www.light-n-life.com
Department of Outreach & Evangelism

TRUE LOVE

February is recognized as the month of love. It's a great time to reflect on what we mean when we often say "I love you" or that "God is love".

If I told you that I'm a member of a certain golf club, you'd recognize that I'm not playing soccer but golf. My membership identifies my activity. We identify ourselves as "Orthodox Christians" but how does that tell others what our activity is? Take a few moments and make a list of the things that identify you as Orthodox and Christian.

There's a wonderful encounter of the resurrected Jesus with Peter who has betrayed Him. Jesus asks Peter, "do you love me?" and Peter responds, "yes Lord, You know that I love you". But how does the Lord know that Peter loves Him? There are three actions; feed My sheep, tend My sheep, and feed My sheep. What is this telling us? Love is never some powerful emotion that makes you very happy; it's not about you. Today, our culture has shifted to the centrality of the individual. It's about my needs. Love is a way to get what I need. This is not Jesus' message to Peter. February is the month of love. It's a great time to reflect on what we mean when we often say "God is love"!

Suppose we ask God "do You love me"? What sort of reply would we hear? "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us, and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his



heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and assure our hearts before Him"(1 John 3:16-19).

"Let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

"No one has ever seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:12-13).

Clearly love is not one of the countless feelings that we confuse for love. For any Orthodox Christian it is clear that love is substantial in our actions. How we love our "neighbor" reveals how we love God. We can only love others if we love ourselves as well. Love is about you being present to someone. So, to love God, we first need God's love that transforms us out of ourselves in order to see the "other". How can we do this?

Love takes effort. Any loving relationship requires hard work and demands change. We have to de-center ourselves from our life. There is an "emptying", a call to get out of the way, to make room for something new. Love, while calling us out of ourselves, actually brings fulfillment. God tells us, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18).

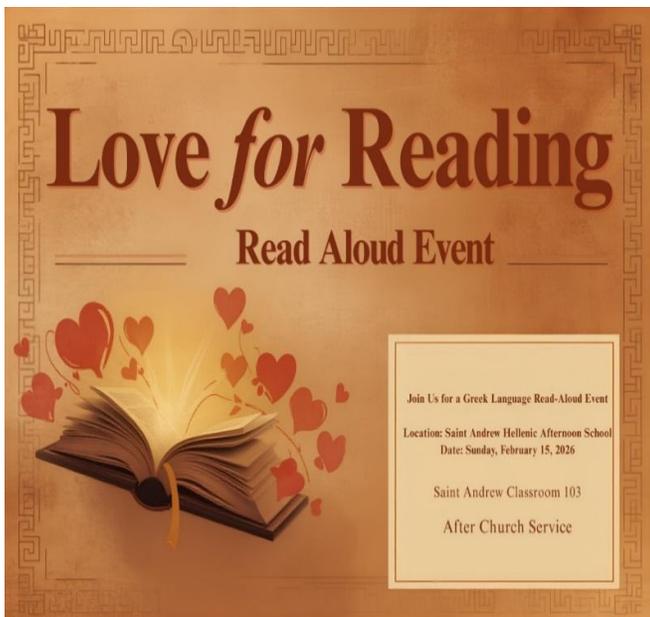
The Gospels are love stories, or love letters, from God. In Jesus is revealed God's love for each and every one of us. You might fail to see this story when you only see Jesus as an inspiring teacher or model of ethical perfection, but while these perspectives might produce respect, they do not produce love. You love Jesus when He becomes the new center of your life. You love Him when you engage Him with prayer, when you receive Him in the Eucharist, when you "feed my sheep"! Coming to Church without engaging Him is almost like sitting on the couch watching

something to pass the time. If Jesus doesn't excite and center you, the way someone you deeply love, then do you really love Him?

This month of love, engage Jesus with your "everything", the way you set yourself aside for someone you deeply love. If God is love for you, then give yourself to Him and be in His presence and be ever so thankful. Live your love for Him by making a difference in your world. Bring someone a smile!

Herbert F. Schuster

SAINT ANDREW HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL



Love for Reading Greek Language Read Aloud Event
Immerse in the magic of words and the beauty of the Greek language at this heartwarming community event! Love for Reading brings stories to life through expressive readings, laughter, and shared moments that celebrate culture, imagination, and connection.

Hosted by: Saint Andrew Hellenic Afternoon School

Date: **Sunday, February 15, 2026**

Time: After Church Service Location: Saint Andrew
Classroom 103

Ages: 6 to 12 years old

Discover the joy of storytelling, reconnect with Greek heritage, and be inspired by the power of language.

PARENTS' CORNER

By Alexandra Protopapas

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES FOR 2026

We are into the heart of winter! NEW YEAR'S EVE our church welcomed the New Year 2026 with many parishioners, family, and friends! Let's keep the love and fellowship going...

What to do with the children this time of the year, other than activities with snow? Valentine's Day is the holiday most people think about, but we have a lot to do around that theme! Also, we must learn about US history with President's Day, and even learn about the Chinese New Year, which falls on February 17th this year!

Let's begin with Valentine's Day. We can talk about February that is full of love and kindness. We can spread love to one another by doing something nice for members of the family, friends, and teachers. Make heart-shaped cookies, fruit skewers, craft cards, and talk about what kindness means with a "God Loves You" message. Helping a neighbor, going with your children to a food bank to donate something, or serving. This way, children learn that Valentine's Day is not just about one day, but about making these "kindness" activities a way of life! Those they deal with will appreciate their "kindness".

Community service ideas can be visiting a nursing home, making cards for first responders, or asking the ministries at St. Andrew if they can help with something. Philoptochos and Daughters of Penelope know of parishioners who are

homebound, and making a Happy February or Happy Valentine's card for them would be an "appreciative" gesture.

What about an activity for President's Day? Parents, you can make a timeline of presidents or research with your children and focus mostly on George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. George Washington's "Cherry Tree" story is about honesty, and there is a lot of information about Abe Lincoln's leadership and kindness. Chinese New Year is celebrated as a time for families to come together and honor ancestors, eat delicious food, decorate with red lanterns, give red envelopes with money, and wish each other good luck for the year. Chinese New Year is also known as "Lunar New Year" or Spring Festival, and it is a traditional holiday in other East Asian cultures. I have an idea! Order Chinese food on February 17th and celebrate Chinese New Year with the family.

Parents, the activities you do with your children and the time you spend with them every day, will make them curious to want to spend time with you more often. As they grow up, they pull away because they would rather play video games, talk on the phone, or sometimes just watch television alone. Yes, a family movie together is a good activity too!

Have a blessed February with your children, and you may even have new creative suggestions better than mine!

My Table Prayer Guide prayer this month is from:

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow – Nineteenth Century

(Daily prayer for the beginning of the day)

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day, reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all who come to me throughout the day with peace of soul and firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all is sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely without embittering or embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray Yourself in me. Amen.



I hope you all had a Joyous and Merry Christmas and have a Healthy and Happy New Year Day, 2026, and now have a Healthy and Happy February!

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).

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP AS A MINISTRY

Coffee hour/Fellowship is a ministry. It’s an extension of liturgy that goes back to the earliest days of the Church when the faithful would gather following the Eucharist for fellowship and to share a meal.

Outreach in the parish is not difficult. There is no silver bullet – no magic pill. It is a thousand little things we do that send a message of welcome to those that enter our doors.

Is your church friendly? It may not be as friendly as you think. We often hear the story of the person that visited a “friendly” parish only to find that the parishioners are only friendly to each other. Standing in the fellowship hall, coffee cup in hand, visitors are often ignored, left to feel invisible.

Our welcome efforts actually begin the moment people walk through our doors or even



when they drive into our parking lot. Visitors decide within five to ten minutes of their arrival whether they will come back. Our welcome efforts may be our most important ministry.

Greeters welcome visitors – whether outside the door or as they enter the church. A sincere

smile, handshake and greeting are what we offer as we place the Sunday bulletin in their hand. The bulletin can offer a welcome and an invitation to fellowship following liturgy. This welcome and invitation could be offered again during the announcements.

The greeters' ministry continues as they welcome, guide and accompany guests into coffee hour, making introductions. For both the first-time visitor and the person returning after a long absence, entering a fellowship hall filled with people we don't know or haven't seen for a long time is difficult. Greeters can say, "Let me take you in to coffee hour. We'll get a cup of coffee. I'll introduce you to a few people." This sounds like nothing, but it makes the coffee hour a ministry. It makes entering that room much less intimidating.

We look forward to fellowship after worship. It's our social time – a time to see friends and catch up with their news and to make plans for the week ahead. But we may need to re-think our parish welcome efforts when it comes to coffee hour. Parishioners should be encouraged to speak to someone new during fellowship and include them in conversation.

Remember – People don't want a friendly church. They want friends at church. When our people meet at church and get together outside of church, we have begun to create a community of friends. In a healthy fellowship ministry, people are making Orthodox Christian friends that are changing their lives.

As with any parish ministry, a hospitality ministry requires leadership and guidance. Parish leaders find out about the people they

lead. They make introductions and help them to find their place, both socially and in service to the community.

This ministry is not without pitfalls. There can be no "turf." No one person makes the coffee or controls the coffee hour every week. If one person "owns" the ministry, it can become stale. Leaders are stewards of their position, always asking, "Who can I get involved?" If possible, create a hospitality team or several teams. Make it a group effort as much as possible. Make it clear that it's a ministry. Communicate that "Your help is welcome here."

Give some thought to what you offer your guests. You are sending a message that "we are glad you're here." Preparing for coffee hour should not become a competition sport, but what you put out for guests sends a message. Consider them as guests in your spiritual home.

One New Testament Professor liked to tell his students that in the New Testament, bread is never just bread. We can also say that in the parish, coffee is never just coffee. It is hospitality and welcome. Many Orthodox Christians come from Southern European or Middle Eastern backgrounds where food equals hospitality. Putting food and drink in a visitor's hands is how we say "Welcome!" When you've shared coffee or food, you've begun to form a friendship.

We become the Body of Christ in the Divine Liturgy as we are connected through His Body and Blood. We continue to be the body of Christ when we gather in His name. The Holy Spirit is present if we truly see fellowship as a ministry.

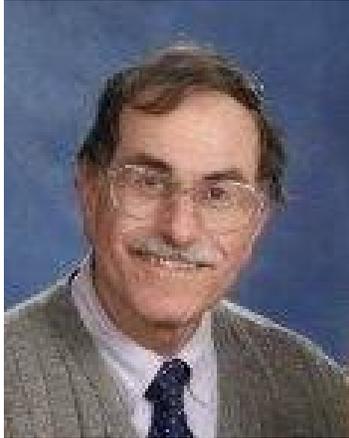
Fr Jim Kordaris serves the Archdiocese as Director of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism and as pastor of St George Church in Kingston, New York | GOA Outreach jkordaris@goarch.org

Who Are You.....???

Christ Haritos

As I compose this we are taking leave of the Christmas season. It seems odd to be writing about something concerning Lent. Yet by the time that you received this month's bulletin we will have begun the Triodion period in the Church. The second Sunday is dedicated to the reading of the parable about the prodigal son. No other parable has been discussed as much as this one. Even the Rolling Stones turned it into a song ('Beggar's Banquet').

One Sunday I heard this parable referred as the "bodice-ripper" of its time. The jury is out as far as I'm concerned on that comment but the phrase has never left my mind. The phraseology may not be applicable but the point was made. This was a powerful parable. If one places himself in the temple circa 32 A.D. one would have heard this as the parable begins." The younger of them said to his father, 'Father give me the share of the estate that will come to me' ". Twenty-one words, maybe not a "bodice-ripper" but definitely a show-stopper. Any side conversations, any wandering thoughts, any daydreaming would have immediately stopped! We weren't there but most assuredly Jesus had caught the Jews attention. If a pin dropped it would have been heard. The father has not died yet an inheritance is sought. That's the first problem and the second follows. The youngest, not the oldest, has made this request. In those days the eldest would have inherited everything. Is Jesus trying to upend Jewish social mores in another way? He's been associating with tax collectors and sinners. Another bastion appears to be being ready to breach. The Jews would have been all ears for whatever came next from Jesus.



The younger son's request is granted. One must not overlook the fact that this was not made humbly such as kneeling before the father or quietly asking. It is presented as a command "give me". He proceeds to depart not only his home but his land. He has rejected everything and is going to act in the most immoral manner. The money is spent, hard times come and, as a foreigner, no one comes

to his aid. It is here that the first step towards salvation is taken. Now the son is humbled, and in a form of confession, takes an honest, inward look at himself. Old habits (the good life) die hard so his first step is not repentance but a comparison to his father's servants. By the time he arrives near his home he has fully repented to the point that he states emphatically that he is not worthy to be his father's son.

Throughout my lifetime the youngest son has been presented as ourselves. We have sins and we must repent following the messages of Jesus and St. John the Baptist. Truly we should not seek to continue on a path away from God but steer towards the path He wants us to follow with determination. Parables are told as allegories that represent people. Perhaps we are looking at the wrong character in the story. How many of us have lived, or live, a lewd life? How many have squandered their living wage, whether on alcohol, drugs or gambling, to the detriment of their family? How many have completely turned their back on the Church and God?

The parable has another protagonist. If we reject being in the role of the younger son, then how do we fit in the role of the eldest. This one may come closer to home. Respect to our parents and spouse may be shown by us. Church attendance may be

irregular, but we find ourselves going there. The eldest son stayed with his father and worked tirelessly for him. Underneath jealousy, or unhappiness, lurks. It surfaces with the return of the prodigal. Actually it erupts- "you never gave me a goat that I may celebrate". This is where it hits closer to home. A few examples could be as follows. Why did the other person get the promotion? How come she draws a higher salary? How could I be cut from the team? Why don't I start instead of him? Why did my husband/wife/child do this when I forbade it specifically? You can fill in your own blanks. Actual sins may not have been committed but there is a lack of love. The father appeals to the son to look at the positive aspect of what has transpired. For us, two millennia later, we have the teachings of Jesus, the wisdom of the church and the guidance of Father John to show us the way.

In all my years of hearing sermons or lectures on this parable, I have only heard of this approach twice. What if we are the father/mother? The failure to look at this aspect may be a serious oversight. All the protagonists need to be investigated. The father, in the parable, is a role model. He shows love to both sons and does not favor one over the other. He is forgiving by overlooking the youngest transgressions. He is diplomatic in reconciling the eldest son to his brother. In our lives how often have we felt anger towards our children, maybe parents, but our love shines through. We may punish our children but we love them. The process may be repeated over and over. We may clench our teeth over what they've done and in the end we forgive them. We may oppose what they want but in the end grant it to them ("a ring on the hand" and "a fatted calf upon which to feast"). Parables are meant to be all-inclusive so for the younger people reading this, you should look at how it applies to your relationship with your parents.

Stating that the role of the father is meant for us may be a hard concept to accept. It should not be.

The most universal concept of God is that He is love. As St. Athanasios stated "God became man so that man could become God". Many of the Church fathers stated that we should strive to be like God. The primary step towards that end is to show love. It may be uneasy to think of us like the father, understanding who he represents in the parable, but would be adverse to accepting love, kindness, mercy and forgiveness in our lives.

Perhaps the answer is that we are bits and pieces of the three people in the story. This parable has transcended millennia. The church fathers, in their wisdom, chose this passage because its message(s) would be forever applicable. We should be willing to accept it. As you listen to the parable, and the ensuing sermon, keep it close to you. You should not leave it there in church. Following Jesus' teachings is not a part-time pursuit. God isn't expecting us to punch a clock in remembering him. We are not to rise on Sunday, go to church, attend liturgy then punch out and go home. The Gospel reading and the sermon are to be a path for the rest of the week and beyond. We should remember what we hear and apply it to our lives. Our lives entail seven days a week, 52 weeks per year, not just three hours on a Sunday morning.

There is one other thing that I'd like to convey concerning this parable. Bookending the Triothion are Zacheus Sunday and Judgement Sunday. This parable envelopes the themes that are presented on those Sundays. Zacheus repents over all that he has been defrauded from people. On Judgement Sunday we have hope and faith that our sins will be forgiven. In the parable the youngest repents and the father, in his judgement, forgives.

On Feb. 8 we'll hear this parable again. May it have a deeper meaning this year as you hear it. Keep from letting your thoughts wander. Then ponder..... 'Who am I?!!

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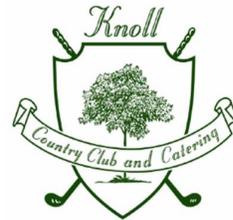


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ΓΙΑ ΤΟ 2026 POST FORM: ΠΡΟΣΘΕΣ ΗΜΙΝ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ)



SPIRITUAL DECALOGUE 2026

(Post Theme: "Increase Our Faith")

Η Δύναμη της Προσευχής: Αφιέρωσε λίγα λεπτά κάθε πρωί και βράδυ για να μιλήσεις στον Θεό. Η προσευχή δεν είναι μόνο αίτημα, αλλά μια ανάσα ψυχής και μια σύνδεση με το Θείο.

Η Ευγνωμοσύνη ως Τρόπος Ζωής: Μην εστιάζεις σε όσα σου λείπουν. Κάθε βράδυ, σκέψου τρία πράγματα για τα οποία είσαι ευγνώμων στην ημέρα που πέρασε.

Η Αγάπη στην Πράξη: Η πίστη χωρίς έργα είναι νεκρή. Προσπάθησε να κάνεις μια μικρή, ανώνυμη πράξη καλοσύνης κάθε μέρα, χωρίς να περιμένεις αντάλλαγμα.

Η Αξία της Συγχώρεσης: Μην κουβαλάς τα βάρη του παρελθόντος στο 2026. Συγχώρεσε όσους σε πλήγωσαν, όχι επειδή το αξίζουν εκείνοι, αλλά επειδή η δική σου ψυχή χρειάζεται ειρήνη.

Πνευματική Μελέτη: Βρες χρόνο να διαβάσεις ένα πνευματικό βιβλίο ή την Αγία Γραφή. Η γνώση τρέφει το πνεύμα και φωτίζει το νου.

Η Σιωπή και η Νηστεία: Μάθε να απολαμβάνεις τη σιωπή μακριά από τον θόρυβο της τεχνολογίας. Η νηστεία δεν αφορά μόνο τις τροφές, αλλά και την αποχή από κακούς λογισμούς και λόγια.

Η Υπομονή στις Δοκιμασίες: Δες τις δυσκολίες ως «σκαλοπάτια» πνευματικής ωρίμανσης. Τίποτα δεν συμβαίνει τυχαία και όλα μπορούν να αποβούν σε καλό αν τα αντιμετωπίσεις με πίστη.

Η Φροντίδα της Οικογένειας: Το σπίτι σου είναι μια «μικρή Εκκλησία». Δείξε υπομονή και αγάπη στους δικούς σου ανθρώπους, αποφεύγοντας τις εντάσεις και τους εγωισμούς.

Ταπεινοφροσύνη: Μην επιδιώκεις την προβολή και τον έπαινο των ανθρώπων. Η αληθινή αξία βρίσκεται στην ταπεινότητα της καρδιάς.

Εμπιστοσύνη στην Πρόνοια του Θεού: Ξεκίνα τη χρονιά λέγοντας: «Γεννηθήτω το θέλημά Σου». Άφησε τις ανησυχίες για το μέλλον στα χέρια Εκείνου που γνωρίζει τι είναι το καλύτερο για σένα.

«Ο χρόνος είναι το δώρο του Θεού προς εμάς για να γίνουμε καλύτεροι άνθρωποι.» Καλή χρονιά, ευλογημένη κ πλούσια σε πνευματικούς καρπούς.

The Power of Prayer: Dedicate a few minutes every morning and evening to speak to God. Prayer is not only a request, but a breath for the soul and a connection with the Divine.

Gratitude as a Way of Life: Do not focus on what you lack. Every night, think of three things you are grateful for from the day that has passed.

Love in Action: Faith without works is dead. Try to do one small, anonymous act of kindness every day without expecting anything in return.

The Value of Forgiveness: Do not carry the burdens of the past into 2026. Forgive those who hurt you—not because they deserve it, but because your soul needs peace.

Spiritual Study: Find time to read a spiritual book or the Holy Scriptures. Knowledge nourishes the spirit and enlightens the mind.

Silence and Fasting: Learn to enjoy silence away from the noise of technology. Fasting is not only about food, but also about abstaining from evil thoughts and words.

Patience in Trials: See difficulties as “steps” toward spiritual maturity. Nothing happens by chance, and everything can work for good if you face it with faith.

Care for the Family: Your home is a “small Church.” Show patience and love to your loved ones, avoiding tension and selfishness.

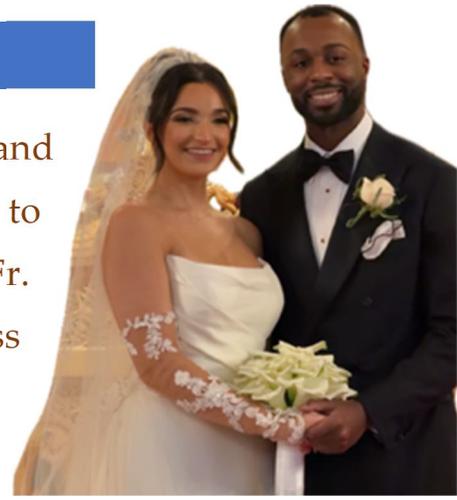
Humility: Do not seek recognition and praise from people. True worth lies in the humility of the heart.

Trust in God’s Providence: Begin the year by saying: “Thy will be done.” Leave your worries about the future in the hands of the One who knows what is best for you.

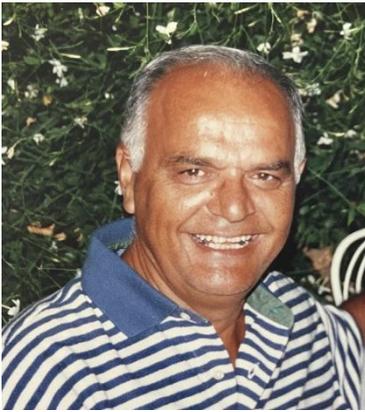
“Time is God’s gift to us so that we may become better people.” Happy New Year—blessed and rich in spiritual fruits!

WEDDING – ΓΑΜΟΣ

On Sunday January 25th, 2026 at 2:30pm **Tyler C. Murray** and **Hariklia** Papayianis were joined in Holy Matrimony according to the rites of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Officiated by Rev Fr. John Theodoion, Sponsor was Andoni Michaels, and the witness was Kyle Murray. We wish them all the blessings.



OBIT & FUNERAL SERVICE – ΝΕΚΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ & ΚΗΔΕΙΣΕΣ



Gus C. (Constanatinos) Pappas, 87, of Harding Township, NJ passed away at Morristown Medical Center. Born in Thisvi, Greece, Gus resided in Harding Township for the past 44 years.

Gus lived the “American Dream”. He was the proud owner of The Nautilus Diner in Madison, NJ for 60 years, before he retired in 1997 and passed the reigns to his sons, Chris & Peter Pappas. In his spare time, Gus loved to play Backgammon, cards, tennis; fishing in Melbourne Beach in the Winter; and visiting Agios Konstantins, Greece in the Summer. He was also a member of St. Andrew’s Greek Orthodox Church in Randolph, NJ.

Gus is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Christine; his devoted sons, Chris Pappas, and his wife, Davina, of Harding Township, and Peter Pappas, of Florida. He is also survived by his cherished grandchildren, Christina, Dean, George, and Eloise, as well as his adored great-grandchildren, Gussy and Stella. Gus was predeceased by his beloved daughter, Anna (2020), and his siblings, Harry, Socrates, Serapheim, and Nick.

Family and friends gathered on Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at Burroughs, Kohr & Dangler Funeral Home, 106 Main Street, Madison, NJ. A Funeral Service for the repose of Constantino’s Gus soul was held on Thursday, January 29, 2026 at 10:00am a Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church, Interment will followed at Fairview Cemetery, Westfield, NJ.

Helen P. Stamos, 93, a life-long resident of Dover, NJ, passed away peacefully on July 8, 2025. Helen was born on October 20, 1931, in Dover, NJ, to parents John and Fannie (nee Cutchis) Poulos (Vasilopoulos). Following her graduation from Dover High School in 1950, she went on to receive her BS in Elementary Education from Newark State Teachers College in 1954. After college, Helen began her career in the Dover Public Schools teaching Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades at the Belmont Avenue, North Dover Elementary and East Dover Elementary Schools until her retirement in the early 1980s. Helen was predeceased by her dear husband and best friend, Louie Stamos, who she married in 1954 and missed deeply since his passing in 2002, as well as her cherished young son, Loukas, in 1961. She was also predeceased by her older siblings Irene Barth, Chris Poulos, and Frank Poulos.



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 Basketball Tuesday @6:30-9pm

KNITTING & PILLOW Wednesdays *see schedule*

Hellenic Afternoon School Thursday 4:30pm

Greek Dancing Thursdays @6:30 pm

Greek Dancing GOYA Thursdays @7:15 pm

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

2/1 TRIODION BEGINS | STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY | GODPARENT'S SUNDAY | PHILOPTOCHOS FRENCH TOAST BRUNCH | THE THREE HIERARCHS HAS & RELED PROGRAM

2/1 @2PM WEDDING SERGHIU_BAYIOKOS (REHEARSAL 1-31 @4PM)

2/2 @7:30PMM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

2/4 @11AM KNITTING CROCHETING :NEXT 2/18

2/6 VALENTINE'S DANCE AT HOLMDEL @7-11PM

2/5 @7:30PM BIBLE STUDY ALSO ON 2/12 & /19

2/7 @9AM-4PM GYM OUTSIDE RENTAL

2/7 MARDI GRAS PTA

2/9 @7:30pm ORTHODOXY 101 next on 2/16

2/11 @6-8PM KNITTING CROCHETING: 3/10, 4/1, 5/20

2-13 & 2/16 Metropolis Music & Dance Festival in PA

2/14 SATURDAY OF SOULS also on 2/21 and 2/28

2/14 @9AM-4PM GYM OUTSIDE RENTAL

2/15 BESSIE'S RETIREMENT (*rescheduled from Jan 25*)

2/15 @2:30PM MIRONIS_DIAMANTIDIS WEDDING

2/21 @9AM-4PM GYM OUTSIDE RENTAL

2/22 GOYA S & S ARE DUE

2/23 Great Lent Begins

2/24 @7pm Philoptochos Meeting: 3/24, 4/28, 5/26 ..

2/26 @11:30am Agape Luncheon: 3/26, 4/23, 5/28, 6/11

2/27 @10:30am Lenten Bible Study: 3/6, 3/20 & 3/27

2/27 @7:30pm GOYA S & S Rehearsal

2/28 @12pm Baptism

2/28 Faith Kitchen PHILOPTOCHOS

2/28 @9AM-4PM GYM OUTSIDE RENTAL

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN MARCH : 3/1 PHILOPTOCHOS, 3/8 PTA, 3/15 DOP, 3/22 GOYA, 3/29 BAKALIKO

3/1 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

3/2 @7:30 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

3/4 @11AM KNITTING CROCHETING: 3/18

3/6 @10:30AM LENTEN BIBLE STUDY: 3/20, 3/27

3/5 @7PM HES GREEK LANGUAGE CLASS ADULTS _MAY 14

3/7 SIGHTS & SOUNDS 2026 @7:45AM -10:30PM
WESTFIELDNNJYC EVENTS

3/9 @7:30PM PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING: 3/16, 3/23

3/11 PAN-ORTHODOX PRE-SANCTIFIED ST ANDREW HOSTING

3/15 GYM OUTSIDE RENTAL 3/22 SUNDAY 25TH OF MARCH - HAS
Celebration

3/28 Faith Kitchen GOYA

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN APRIL : 4/5 All Organizations, 4/12 PASCHA, 4/19 PTA, 4/26 DOP

4/1 @11AM KNITTING CROCHETING: 4/15 & 4/29

4/4 SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

4/5 PALM SUNDAY - WESTERN EASTER

4/6 HOLY WEEK

4/12 HOLY & GREAT PASCHA

4/25 Faith Kitchen DOP/AHEPA

4/26 GID Parade in NYC @1pm

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN MAY: 5/3 Philoptochos, 5/10 PC, 5/17 PTA, 5/24 DOP, 5/31 GOYA

5/2 @10am Card Show Memorabilia inn Gym

5/2 @2:30pm Baptism

5/3 BIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFTER LITURGY

5/8 @6pm Annual TRICKY TRAY Philoptochos

5/13 @11AM KNITTING CROCHETING: 5/27

5/17 MEMORIAL AHEPA & DOP

5/17 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION GRADUATION, SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

5/21 @4:30PM HAS GRADUATION

5/23 Faith Kitchen PARISH COUNCIL

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS IN JUNE: 6/7 Festival , 6/14 Philoptochos, 6/21 DOP, 6/28 Summer schedule

JUNE 5●6●7 on Friday●Saturday●Sunday
BIG ● GREEK ● FESTIVAL

Reservations for Saint Andrew Community Center Gym, Social Hall or Classrooms must be made with Church Office.³⁵

DOP-Daughters of Penelope | HAS – Hellenic Afternoon School | PC -Parish Council | PH -Philoptochos | ReEd-Religious Education

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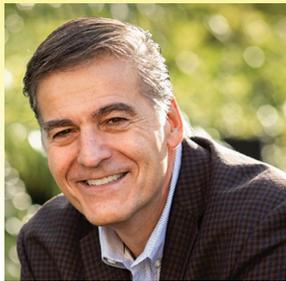
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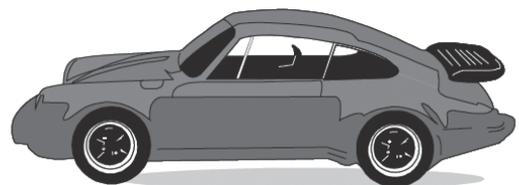
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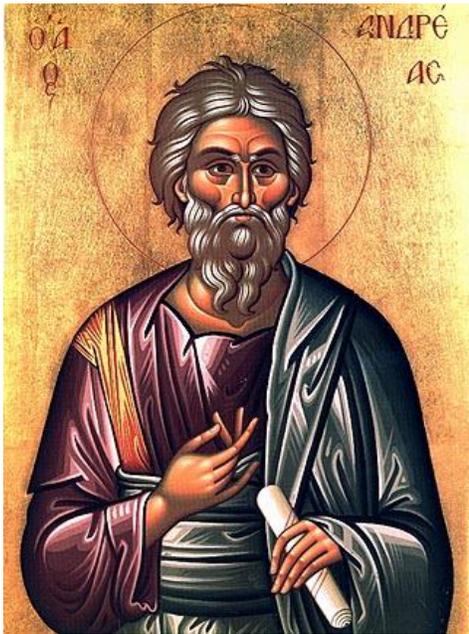
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You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World

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

Ὡς τῶν Ἀποστόλων πρωτόκλητος,
καὶ τοῦ κορυφαίου ἀυτάδελφος,
τὸν Δεσπότην τῶν ὅλων Ἀνδρέα κέτεူး,
εἰρήνην τῆ οἰκουμένη δωρήσασθαι,
καὶ τὰς ψυχαὶς ἡμῶν τὸ μέγα ἔλεο.

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.