**NEW SKETE**

**A BRIEF HISTORY**

Beginning … Spring 1966—twelve former members of a Byzantine Rite community of Franciscans left and established a separate monastic community. After a six-month stay in north-western Pennsylvania, at a lodge provided by the Benedictines, the Monks moved to the beautiful hills of upstate New York. Helped by neighboring farmers, they learned quickly how, with hard work, to provide food for the table—and gained the respect of the local community. To find the seclusion necessary for the contemplative life, the Monks soon moved once again to a nearby small mountain. Here they built their monastery where they continue to live, work and worship today.

Creating a living … The Monks supported themselves through donations, and by the work of their own hands, producing their own liturgical books, icons, and art work, and by raising livestock. Using the culinary talents of Brother Elias, they also developed their own smoked meats and cheeses, as well as gourmet sausages and cheese spreads, for their New Skete Farms catalogue.

New Skete Shepherds … Their love of their first German Shepherd dog, Kyr, led the Monks to look for additional well-bred German Shepherd dogs. They began doing their own reading and research and consulted with many well-known breeders, trainers, and veterinarians. Eventually, at the request of friends, the Monks began breeding these intelligent and beautiful animals, then raising and socializing the puppies.

The Nuns of New Skete … In 1969 a group of nuns left the order of Poor Clares and established the Nuns of New Skete several miles from the Monks. After building their monastery with help from the Monks, they worked to make slip covers vestments, and icons. New Skete Kitchens began in 1977, with the Nuns baking their own gourmet cheesecakes, fruitcakes, and other products.

The Companions of New Skete … A chapel community was formed by people from the area who attend church services at New Skete. In 1983 several couples formed the Companions of New Skete and built their communal dwelling, Emmaus House, near the Monks and worked with them, principally on their special-recipe dog biscuits for sale.

In February 1979 the New Skete communities were received into the Orthodox Church in America, which had first come to these shores through missionaries in Alaska in the late 1700’s.

Today … For almost 50 years, New Skete has dedicated itself to providing the best possible companion dogs. New Skete Shepherds as well as dogs of all breeds, need and benefit enormously from formal obedience training. With New Skete Training, the Monks offer a course that includes standard AKC obedience and incorporates the values of the monastic environment. These provide a foundation for a healthy relationship and bond between human and dog.

Based on their experience and expertise the Monks have written extensively on the relationships of dogs and people. They have also published liturgical books and music, as well as books on meditation and their monastic life.

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**NEW SKETE HIKING TRAIL**

Trails begin just below the Puppy Kennel on the outside curve of the paved road. The various trails are marked with three different colors. The main trail is a red blaze; alternative paths are marked with orange and a center trail is marked with yellow. The east route [lower route on map] has an orange loop back, which if taken makes about a 30 minute hike. The west route [top of map] has an orange loop extension, which is more difficult with a steep grade. Follow the red blazes for a less difficult trail. A north-south [center] yellow trail bisects the red loop. It cuts about 30 minutes off the full trail hike. FULL LOOP: 1.23 miles; allow about 1½ hours at a leisurely pace.

**Hike at your own risk!**

Wear appropriate shoes and clothing, use tick repellent spray and carry a hiking stick for safety.

If you go, please inform a staff member or one of the monks.

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**NEW SKETE MONASTERY**

**CAMBRIDGE, NY**

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**SELF-GUIDED TOUR**

**CHURCHES, GARDENS, BELL TOWER, HIKING TRAIL**

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**NEW SKETE MONASTERY**

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We hope you enjoy your time in the peace and beauty afforded by this monastery.

Please respect the sacredness of creation around you and value it, as we do, as part of the distinctive spiritual quality of the monastic environment.

If you would like to volunteer to help maintain the grounds or trail, please contact Karen Gladstone, Director of Advancement and Stewardship at 518-677-3928 ext. 214 or email karengladstone@newskete.org, or stop in at the gift shop and leave your contact information.
This larger church is dedicated to Christ, the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24, 30). It was designed and built by the Monks working with a local builder and was consecrated in 1983 by Metropolitan Theodosius, Archbishop of the Orthodox Church in America. Its light-filled openness and its U-shaped altar screen are inspired by the early churches of Constantinople. Inlaid in the Italian marble floor tiles, at the entrance to the nave, are pieces of mosaic from the basilica in Constantinople consecrated to Holy Wisdom and built in 576 A.D. by the Emperor Justinian.

On the right [east] wall of the wide narthex as you enter is the Golgotha shrine with a large icon of the crucifixion surrounded by Byzantine floral carvings, an oil lamp, and a table for candles. The central focus of the main church body is the large deisis depicted on the east apse wall. Here Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God, is shown enthroned on the cherubim (Ezekiel 1), flanked by the Theotokos and John the Baptist. Below it is the altar area with its square table and surrounded by its icon screen. High up on the nave dome ceiling is the large round icon of Our Lady of the Sign (Isaiah 7:14), the patronal icon of the Monks of New Skete. The altar dome has ancient symbols, inspired by Ezekiel and recorded by Irenaeus, Augustine & Jerome, of the four Gospels: Matthew as human/angel; Mark as lion; Luke as ox/calf; John as eagle. The cross is central to the Gospels.

Icons are mounted on the walls and ceilings; they are also placed on stands throughout the church flanked by carved walnut candle stands. The central lamp in the sanctuary signifies the divine presence. In the north [left] alcove is the Good Friday burial shroud picturing the body of Christ. On the ambo in the center of the nave are the celebrant’s seat and the lectern for the Holy Scriptures. Icons are mounted on the walls and ceilings; they are also placed on stands throughout the church flanked by carved walnut candle stands. The central lamp in the sanctuary signifies the divine presence. In the north [left] alcove is the Good Friday burial shroud picturing the body of Christ. On the ambo in the center of the nave are the celebrant’s seat and the lectern for the Holy Scriptures.

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