

THE ORTHODOX ORACLE

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church
Greensboro, NC
May-June 2026

OUR VISION: FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen! – Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

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**"Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!"
(Orthodox Pascha (Easter) Hymn)**

When You, the Redeemer of all, were placed in a new Tomb for us all, Hades, the respecter of none, crouched when he saw You. The bars were broken, the gates were shattered, the graves were opened, and the dead arose. Then Adam, gratefully rejoicing, cried out to You: "Glory to Your condescension, O Merciful God."

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Office Hours:

Mon – Fri 9:00am – 1:00pm

Sunday Church Worship

8:55am Orthros

10:05am Divine Liturgy

Weekly Services 9:00 – 10:30am

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John McQueary – President

Shadi Zeidan – Vice-President

Madalina Body – Treasurer

MaryAnn Contogiannis – Asst.

Treasurer

Brandon Covey – Secretary

Members:

Ted Angeles, Pete Graham,

Abeer Maayeh, Julia Macovei,

Martin Ross, Shane Rivers, Ellen

Scaturchio

Dormition Church Website

www.dormition.nc.goarch.org

Metropolis of Atlanta Website

atlmopolis.org

Archdiocese Website

www.goarch.org

ORGANIZATION & MINISTRIES CONTACTS

AHEPA – Demetri Dascalakis

Altar Servers Ministry – Matthew Beckett

Bible Study Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis

Music Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis, Michelle Gilliam

Camp - Stephen's Summer Camp

St. Stephen's Summer Camp - Greek Orthodox Metropolis of

Atlanta - Atlanta, GA (atlmopolis.org)

Cantors/Music – Michelle Gilliam (Rhonda)

Dance Group (s) – Barbara Vaughan, Mary Ann

Contogiannis, Emily Mihelich, Erin Blindenbacher

Daughters of Penelope – Su Peterson

Orthodox Fellowship (50+) – Maria Cropper

Greensboro Urban Ministry – Ian Chavez

Greek Festival - Shadi Zeidan

Narthex Ministry - Terry Kokenes & Shane Rivers

Myrrh-bearers Ministry – Brittany Beckett

Youth Ministry – Matthew Beckett (Director)

Church Beautification - Chris Mandaleris

Philoptochos – Nicki Smith, President

GOYA – Abeer Ma'ayeh, Liaison-Matthew Beckett

Youth Director - Matthew Beckett

Stewardship – Pete Graham

Sunday School – Madalina Body

Website Ministry - Martin Ross



Ministry Prayer

Heavenly Father!

We praise You for Your church. For the way You place us to work together to spread the Gospel love of Jesus Christ. The calling to pour out Your love on others is humbling and fulfilling. Your plan is perfect, and we are all a part of it. Thank You for the church we serve in. We know it's no accident that You have placed us here: even in moments of boredom or fatigue, we know that when we seek to hear Your voice above all others, we will find reassurance and encouragement. Amen!

A PASTORAL Paschal MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

My beloved spiritual Family of Dormition of the Theotokos. I greet all of you and yours with an abundant joy and with the **Spirit of His Holy and Radiant Resurrection! Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti O Kyrios!** Christ is Risen! He is truly Risen! Peace be to all of you!

My-Beloved:

I am exceedingly buoyant that all of us who re-lived the Lord's Passions throughout the entire packed Holy Week's services can attest that we had an uplifting spiritual experience, which brought us much hope to continue with our lives in a new positive and hopeful way **and without fear!**

When the myrrh-bearing women went to the tomb to apply spices on Christ's Body (as it was the custom), an Angel of the Lord standing at the tomb, in brilliant white, announces to them: **"Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here - but is risen"** (Lk 24:5-6). The Evangelist Matthew tells us that the women hurried away from the tomb, **afraid yet filled with joy.**

It is since then, that Orthodox Christians on the day of Pascha and 40 days that follow, greet one another with unique spiritual joy: Christ is Risen! The greeting confirms that Jesus is alive, and our person will have the same fate - we will be resurrected at the appointed time, and then our raised bodies will be perfect. **Free from** defects, weaknesses, illness, **or fear** causing us no difficulty and needing no care on our part. All these truths fill us with untold spiritual satisfaction, **courage**, mental resilience, and power, **which knows no fear**, in preaching the name of Jesus and our personal experience we have of our Orthodox Faith. That's what the resurrection does. **It takes our fear**, our worry, our hurt, our sadness...and it puts it all into perspective. The fact that Jesus is risen from the dead, that he was victorious over death and sin, is reason to celebrate. It's that fact that gives us joy despite our circumstances and through whatever we may face. What happened on that first Easter day still brings us joy and it still changes lives today.

On that first Easter day the myrrh-bearing women were able to overcome their fear! The Evangelist Matthew tells us: **"So they left the tomb quickly with fear and boundless joy** and ran to tell his disciples. Abruptly Jesus met them and said,

'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, **'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me'**" (Matthew 28:8-10).

The fear of the myrrh-bearing women had turned to joy and hope. Their newfound courage & strength transformed them into witnesses and messengers of the Resurrection. **Their testimony** allowed the

Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

(Matthew 25:8-10)

Good News of the Word of God to spread and the number of faithful to increase, so much so that today over 2.5 billion people around the world are followers of Christ, that is, more than one-third of the world's population.

Today, **fear has the potential to silence the voice** of the people of the world. Like the myrrh-bearing women, let us find courage to overcome our fear. Let us continue to speak **with one-voice and one-heart**, speaking on behalf of the oppressed and the poor. Let us speak truth in solidarity and with conviction that war is wrong, and that **righteousness** and peace is the only path forward; let us all be the myrrh-bearing women of today. And like them, let us break free from any **fear that holds us back, and let us go tell others**, boldly and with courage, of the joy of the Gospel message, of God's love and mercy in the world, so that they too may experience joy and hope in their lives.

Although attendance during the Holy Week services was significantly much greater than last year's attendance (I was exceedingly glad), many faithful still stayed away from the church services. It is my hope that all you who missed the Holy Week services will join us soon on Sunday's Divine services as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus every Sunday (and every day that we have church services). I know you will be filled with joy no matter what your circumstances, no matter what you face. **Let us also, out of gratitude to Christ, our God, and request next year Holy Friday off from our respective employers and our children to not attend school classes, so we may be present at the services.**

Continued on page 4

A PASTORAL Paschal MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Continued from page 3

**Other faiths do, therefore, we must do as well!
Why not us?**

I pray that Christ's Resurrection's radiant grace and love fills your heart, and that of your family and friends, and brings happiness and peace to all people! Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

God bless you!



IMPOTANT NOTE:

STARTING WITH THIS ISSUE, THE ORTHODOX ORACLE WILL BE ON A BI-MONTHLY ORDER AS SUCH:

August & September

October & November

December & January

February & March

April & May

June & July



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DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

800 Westridge Road Greensboro NC 27410-4504 Tel: 336.292.8013

Web: dormition.nc.goarch.org Email: office@ dormition.nc.goarch.org

Father Sarantis Loulakis, Protopresbyter

April 30, 2026

INVITATION PARISH ASSEMBLY

Beloved Faithful and Members of Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church. Christ is risen!

As we all know it is imperative, as the By-Laws of our church community state, that we call two annual Parish Assemblies every year for the good of our community.

It is with much joy then **to invite all of you to our FIRST annual 2026 Parish Assembly on Sunday, May 17, 2026, immediately following the Divine Liturgy** at our fellowship hall. The agenda of this assembly is shown below for your records.

It is also imperative that as Members of the community to attend the Parish Assembly as our Christian DUTY and OBLIGATION calls, for our benefit, to be informed and in addition to offer our knowledge for the betterment of our community. ***Let us attend!***

Parish Assembly Agenda Sunday, May 17th, 2026

1. Call to order & Establish quorum
2. Opening prayer
3. Father Sarantis message
4. Approve minutes from Fall 2025
5. President's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Ministry reports
 - a. Stewardship
 - b. Youth
 - c. Festival
 - d. Beautification
 - e. Philoptochos
 - f. Facility Maintenance
8. Old business
 - a. 2024 Audit
9. New business
 - a. Review of new building plans and establishment of a capital campaign to fund construction
 - b. Safety and security updates
10. Motion to adjourn
11. Closing prayer

Rev. Fr Sarantis P. Loulakis

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis, Protopresbyter

John McQueary, President, P.C.



THANK YOU

From Ellen Scaturchio, Chairperson for our Greensboro Greek Food Festival:

Firstly, I want to give many thanks to **Shadi Zeidan** for his expertise and kindness he offered me as I ran my first event "for God".

Secondly, I also give any so much gratitude to **Demetri & Joy Dascalakis** for their expertise, as they made all of our kitchen needs look so effortless!! Many thanks to the dynamic duo!

Lastly, but not in no way, the least, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to all of my **wonderful volunteers** who gave their time and heart, for one or even two days, and made me so grateful and blessed to have a exemplary and dedicated team!!! We made this event a true success for our beloved Church with our incredible teamwork!

In addition, we surpassed our last year's profit by incredible leaps and bounds!!

+May God continue to bless us all as we pursue His will for our Church and our lives and seek His Truth daily.

With my heartfelt love and appreciation, Ellen Scaturchio

May the Lord's Holy Resurrection grace through the intercessions of Most Holy Theotokos radiate His Love and peace in you and yours hearts!



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BIBLE STUDY

YOUR ATTENTION CATECHUMENS & BIBLE STUDY PARTICIPANTS:

You deserve a break!
Thank you for your devotion and commitment!

We will resume our studies again with our **SUMMER SESSION (Bi-Monthly / 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month)** starting on the first Wednesday in June 3rd through Wednesday, September 2nd.

We will study The 11 Resurrection Holy Gospel readings being read during the Sunday Matins service.

We will begin our WEEKLY CLASSES on Wednesday, September 16th.
Please make a note of this.

A heartfelt thank you from Philoptochos to all who participated in the Mothers Day Food Drive. We collected 82.5 pounds of food. We accept food donations all year long. The food donations are distributed to different organizations in the community who have verified distribution points in the city. Thank you for supporting this very important and much needed Philoptochos Ministry.



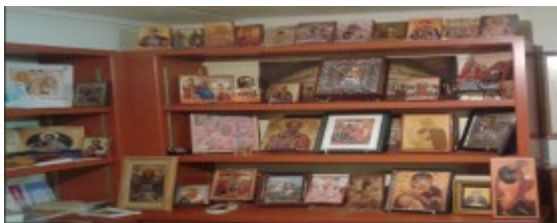
Sunday, May 10, 2026

From all of us at
Dormition of the
Theotokos, we would like
to wish with gratitude
and love to ALL our
precious moms a blessed
Mother's Day!



BOOKSTORE

Open on Sundays - **COME & SEE!** in the Fellowship Hallway



WORSHIP LIFE MAY-JUNE 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sunday, May 3</u> • <u>Sunday, May 10</u> • <u>Sunday, May 17</u> • <u>Thursday, May 21</u> • <u>Sunday, May 24</u> • <u>Sunday, May 31</u> • <u>Wednesday, June 3</u> • <u>Sunday, June 7</u> • <u>Thursday, June 11</u> • <u>Sunday, June 14th</u> • <u>Wednesday, June 17</u> • <u>Sunday, June 21</u> • <u>Wednesday, June 24</u> • <u>Sunday, June 28</u> • <u>Tuesday, June 30</u> | <p>Sunday of the Paralytic — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>Sunday of the Samaritan Woman — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am</p> <p>Sunday of the Blind Man — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>Holy Ascension and Constantine & Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles
Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 9:30 – 10:30 am+</p> <p>Fathers of the 1st Council — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am</p> <p>Pentecost — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am</p> <p>Bible Study — 6:30pm in Church / Matins Resurrection Holy Gospel Reading #2.</p> <p>The Sunday of All Saints — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>Bartholomew the Apostle — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 9:30+</p> <p>2nd Sunday of Matthew — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>Bible Study — 6:30pm in Church / Matins Resurrection Holy Gospel Reading #3</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Matthew — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>Nativity of Forerunner John the Baptist — Orthros: 8:55 am / Divine Liturgy: 9:30+ am</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Matthew — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+</p> <p>SS Peter and Paul, (June 29) and the Feast of 12 Holy Apostles
*Will be celebrated on Tuesday June 30.</p> |
|--|---|

• ***The above schedule and times supersede any other schedule.***

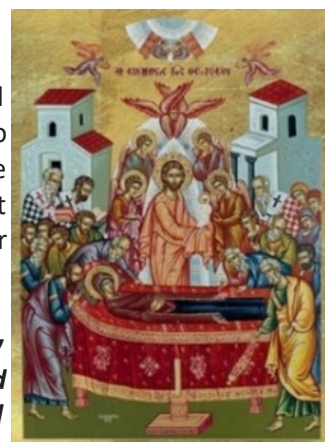


Weekday Liturgies . . .
In addition to the regular Sunday services please make note of the following weekday services for the month of May & June. Unless otherwise indicated, the Weekly Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00 am & most likely will finish by 10:30am+



SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH CORNER

Christ is Risen! *Truly He Is Risen!* As the Sunday School year comes to a close, we will have several moments coming to celebrate our students and their teachers who helped make the 2025/26 year such a success for our parish. We could not have the ministries that we do for our youth without the parents who faithfully serve Christ through their attendance, volunteer hours, and prayers. Thank you all again for serving Christ and our parish this year.



“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.... He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. (Saint Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians)

YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES

Northeast District Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical

Parish Festival: Congratulations to Zoe Langley, Alexander Hartigan, Susannah Rivers, & Reina Zeidan who participated in the NE District Oratorical Festival in Knoxville, TN this year. We are extremely proud of your efforts to honor Christ, your parish, and your families with your speeches.

Lazarus Saturday Pancake Breakfast: A special thank you to everyone who helped this year to provide food, time, clean-up, and support for our pancake breakfast, palm cross folding, and serving; especially our future Greek Festival chefs Joseph and Michael.



Holy Week Services: This Holy Week, we saw a tremendous turnout from our Acolyte and Myrrh-bearer ministry participants. It was beautiful to see so many of our youth serving Christ and our

community during these services. A special thank you to those of you who supported these ministries this year.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR MAY & JUNE

- May 3, 2026 – Sunday School
- May 10, 2026 – Sunday School
- May 17, 2026 – Sunday School
- May 24, 2026 – Sunday School
- May 31, 2026 – **No Sunday School**

June 7, 2026 – Graduation & Moving Up Sunday.

Please mark your calendars.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

ACOLYTES: We have spots available to serve. Please contact Father Sarantis or Matthew Beckett if your son is interested.

Myrrh-bearers: We are in need of girls to participate in our Myrrh-bearers Ministry. Please contact Father, Brittany Beckett, or Matthew Beckett to serve in this ministry.



2026 STEWARDS

Fr Sarantis & Pr. Norma
Loulakis
John & Katherine McQueary
Ali & Michelle Akbary
Jimmy & Miranda
Anagnostopoulos
John & Lindy Bakatsias
Sarah Bassett
Xalli Bezares
Jacob & Shannon Bishara
Najwah Bishara
Kris & Erin Blindenbacher
Anthony & Anna Bowen
Garrett & Kara Bowen
Cole Burgess & Olivia
Hutchinson
Austin & Jessica Call
Brad Caplanides
Carl & Maria Colozzi
Brandon & Allison Covey
James & Maria Cropper
Hamp & Lula Culler
Demetri & Joy Dascalakis
Austin & Laura Davis
Donald & Helena DeRegnier
Mike Dolianitis
Noelle Foteini Drollas
Andrew & Lexi Ellen
Aphrodite & Alexandra Faza
Elizabeth Gardner & Josh
Pardue
Brier & Elaine Gay
Pete Graham
Scott & Christa Graham
Hailey Hall
Victor & Caroline Handila
Violet Hanna
Eleni Triantis Harrison
James & Anastasia Hartigan
Steve & Elizabeth
Hollingsworth
H. Marie Hudak
Andrew Irwin & Natalya
Shelkova
Sana Kattan
Ira & Robin Knight
Terry Kokenes
Angelo & Elizabeth Kontoulas
Gregory & Eleni Kuhn
Eugenia Macovei
Julia Macovei

Joanne Macropoulos
Chris & Maria Mandalieris
Elias & Maha Matar
Faris Matar
Vickie Matsakides
Lampros Megremis
Marc & Lula Melisko
Halvor & Cecilia Melom
Eddie & Maria Merrell
Sam & Emily Mihelich
Christian & Camelia Moraru
Hodgist Mosley & Alexandria
Levette
James & Panayota Mott
Nick & Hollis Oberlies
Peter Pappas
Willard & Mary Parnell
Michael & Nina Pasick
Vasiliki Patterson
Peter & Phyllis Poulos
Maria Pradetto
Regina Reese
Shane & Katie Rivers
Minerva Ross
Ardele Sakellaris
Ellen Scaturchio
Roger & Celia Sims
Jimmy & Linda Sipsis
Cory & Nicki Smith
Mikhail & Ginah Soufia
Ralph & Heidi Stucki
James & Catherine Stuman
Eskandar & Donya Surena
Kirk & Kiki Tarasidis
Jim & Hedy Thevaos
Arthur Toompas
Zack & Sheila Touloupas
Ellen Trastelis & Spencer
Wright
Theodore Triantis
Benjamin & Emily Triplett
Voula Boutis Tselides
David Valavanis
Yianni & Effie Varitimidis
Kimmon & Gwen Varsamis
Philip Vavalides
Marshall & Patricia Yandle
Shadi and Maureen Zeidan
Nora Zirps

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My fellow Faithful Parishioners,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

As we continue to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection during this blessed Paschal season and head towards the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, I pray that the light of Christ fills your homes and hearts with peace, hope, and renewed strength.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who volunteered and worked so hard to make our recent Drive-Through Greek Festival such a success. I want to especially thank Ellen Scaturchio, Demetri and Joy Dascalakis, and Shadi Zeidan for leading the event.

For everyone who worked hard to help with cooking, organizing, serving, cleaning up, and welcoming our guests, your efforts demonstrated the generosity and dedication that make our parish such a special community. I was especially encouraged by how many of our newly illumined parishioners jumped right in and gave so much of their time. Events like these are only possible because of the many faithful stewards who give their time and talents in service to the Church.

I also want to encourage all parishioners to continue honoring your stewardship pledges. Your faithful support allows our parish to maintain its ministries, care for our facilities, and continue growing as a spiritual home for both current and future generations. Every pledge, regardless of the amount, plays an important role in the life of our parish. If you have not already submitted a pledge card for this year, please do so as soon as possible.

Please make plans to attend our upcoming Parish Assembly on May 17. During the assembly, we will discuss our proposed new building plans and the future capital campaign that will help make these important projects possible. As our parish continues to grow, this is an exciting opportunity for us to prayerfully consider the future needs of our community and how we can continue building for generations to come. Your participation and input are important, and I hope many of you will join us for this important discussion.

Thank you again for your continued dedication, generosity, and love for our parish family. It is truly a blessing to serve alongside all of you.

With love in the Risen Christ,

John McQueary
Parish Council President



STEWARDSHIP BLESSINGS

What Are Your Gifts For?

Beloved Stewards of our beloved Church of Dormition of the Theotokos!

And His [God's] gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelist, some pastors, and some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. Eph. 4:11-12 RSV

St. Paul clearly teaches that the gifts that God gives us are for the "ministry, for the building of the body of Christ." Many think that the blessings (gifts) are for our comfort!

Our purpose in life, the time God gives us, *is to seek eternal salvation*, continual relationship with God, to act and become "gods". The gifts He gives us is so that we may lead others to salvation, to build the body [Church] of Christ both, (a) in numbers and (b) in maturity. As the above passage states, we all given different gifts. Many times, Orthodox Christians are afraid or don't know how to use those gifts.

Christ gave the Great Commission to the first church, the Apostles, when He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Every Eleventh Sunday at the Matins service and at every baptism, this Jesus' command is proclaimed to the faithful who are in attendance, the sponsors, parents and all who are present at the sacrament of baptism as a reminder of our purpose in life.

Do we observe His commandment? Are we shy to talk about our faith to others?

Sadly, many shy away from spreading the word, leaving it up to the priest. "*It is the priest's job not mine!*" It is indeed the priests' duty and obligation, but also (especially) parents, Godparents, and all faithful calling to evangelize everyone in our presence; to use time - all of our time - in the service of God giving witness and light to our neighbor, leading them to His Holy Church.

Friends, our gifts are precious, our time is precious, let us use it to serve our Lord as He commanded us and bring others to salvation. Let us begin to minister to those in need and build the body of Christ (Church). Almsgiving, *eleemosyni* in Greek, means mercy, pity, charity, to show one's compassion. Do we take the time to help our neighbor, show compassion and be charitable? Giving alms is not just about money, it is about taking the time to care about your neighbor, being a steward of the gift of time God has given you.

At the feast of Pentecost, Sunday, May 31st, let us all prayerfully *re-visit* our God-giving talents given to us at our baptism and ask ourselves, are we using our talents to bring people to God, His church? Did you bring at least one person to Christ this day, or this week, or this month or even this year? If not, why Not? If Yes, may the Lord bless you with more! And let us prayerfully complete the Stewardship Pledge sent to you late in January and return it to the church office with your heart's offering. **May the Lord bless you with His abundance blessings! Happy and Blessed Pentecost!**

The Stewardship Team

A MESSAGE FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Beloved,

Just a kind reminder.

Have you return in your 2026 Stewardship Pledge to the church office yet?

It is important for *your neighbor* and most important to you!

Kindly make it as part of your Pascha giving!

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen!

Rise Up & Build 2026 Stewardship Campaign



Dormition of The Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church



A COMMUNITY-WIDE
50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BRUNCH
HONORING
FATHER SARANTIS & PRESVYTERA NORMA
SUNDAY, JULY 12TH, 2026
FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY
MARK THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDARS...
MORE INFORMATION FORTHCOMING



Greek Independence Day Parade
April 26, 2026
Boston, MA

Our Seminarian, Michael James!

Congratulations!!!

What does it mean that the Ecumenical Patriarch is ‘first among equals’?



Many Orthodox Christians are aware that the Ecumenical Patriarch is “first among equals,” but all too many would find it difficult to explain what this actually means. This common designation is rooted in the Orthodox understanding of the nature of the Church, as well as of its unity and authority — an understanding that originated with the Holy Apostles themselves and is faithfully reflected in the Church to this day.

We say that the Ecumenical Patriarch is *equal* to the other bishops because he himself is a bishop, a successor to the Apostles in the service and government of the Church. His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch is equal to the other bishops in possessing those spiritual gifts (*charisms*) and sacred responsibilities that are unique to the episcopate: the ability to ordain other bishops, priests and deacons, and the responsibility to oversee the area under his jurisdiction, and to ensure that the Gospel is faithfully proclaimed there.

At the same time, the Ecumenical Patriarch is *first* among these bishops. His full title is “Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch.” Bishops of large cities often have responsibility for the areas around those cities, and are given the title of Archbishop. Those who have the responsibility to oversee vast regions, encompassing entire nations or even larger expanses, are known as Patriarchs. In the early centuries of the Church, there emerged five Patriarchs, in Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Others, notably the Patriarch of Moscow, arose later in the life of the Church. After the Great Schism between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople in 1054, the Church of Constantinople became the First See (area of a bishop’s jurisdiction) of the Orthodox Church.

The foundational canonical order of the Church, based on the Ecumenical Councils, grants to the Church of Constantinople the sacred responsibility to adjudicate disagreements between Churches. This responsibility stems from Canon 9 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which was held in Chalcedon in 451: “If a bishop or cleric has a disagreement with the metropolitan of the province, let him appeal to the Exarch of the Metropolis, or to the throne of the Imperial City of Constantinople, and let him be tried there.”

This is the fullest indication of what it means for the Ecumenical Patriarch to be “first among equals.” As bishops, all members of the episcopate are equal, but if there are disagreements among bishops or between Churches, the Church of Constantinople has the sacred responsibility to settle them.

Emanating from this authority to deal with disagreements among bishops, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has the sole authority to convene the Holy Synod, as it is made up of bishops from around the world and is intended to settle issues that may be in dispute. The Ecumenical Patriarch, because he has this universal authority encompassing the entire Church (hence the title “Ecumenical Patriarch,” which originated in the sixth century), also has the responsibility to grant autocephaly (independence) to regions that were previously part of other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

In modern times, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has granted autocephaly to the Churches of Serbia (1920), Romania (1925), Bulgaria (1961), Georgia (1990), Greece (1850), Poland (1924), Albania (1937), and the Czech Lands and Slovakia (1998). Most recently, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew granted autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine in January 2019.

The Ecumenical Patriarch has granted autocephaly to the Church of Russia *twice*. The first time was in 1589,

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What does it mean that the Ecumenical Patriarch is ‘first among equals’?

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when the Patriarchate of Moscow was first established, over a thousand years after the Council of Chalcedon granted to the Church of Constantinople the responsibility to resolve ecclesiastical disputes. The Russian Czar Peter the Great abolished the Moscow Patriarchate in 1721. Nearly two centuries later, the Ecumenical Patriarchate once again granted autocephaly to the Church of Russia as the Patriarchate of Moscow was reestablished in 1917.

It is important to understand, however, that these special responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate do not establish the Ecumenical Patriarch as an “Orthodox Pope.” There is and can be no “Orthodox Pope;” the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch within the Orthodox Church is immensely different from the Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of the authority of the Pope of Rome.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that “the Roman Church possesses a pre-eminence of ordinary power over every other Church, and that this jurisdictional power of the Roman Pontiff is both episcopal and immediate.” (First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, 3.2) This means that in the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope of Rome has direct authority over every other bishop, and jurisdiction over every other bishop, as well as all the faithful.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, by contrast, does not have immediate or jurisdictional authority over Patriarchs and bishops who are not within his canonical territory. He has no authority that the other Patriarchs and bishops do not have except the responsibility to act as a court of appeal and settle disputes between the Churches.

The Roman Catholic Church also holds that the Pope is infallible, that is, protected by God from error, when he states that something is a part of the Christian Faith, that all the faithful must believe. The Ecumenical Patriarch does not claim infallibility; as Orthodox Christians, we believe that Almighty God protects His Holy Church from error within the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils only.

And so when the Orthodox Church teaches that the Ecumenical Patriarch is “first among equals,” it is recognizing that he is one among many brother bishops, not a super-bishop whose authority transcends those of them all. This Orthodox view of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and of the episcopacy in general, is faithful to the canonical order of the Church in the first millennium, before the schism with the Church of Rome.

Above all, we join His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in unceasing prayer for a transformative resolution of differences and the definitive restoration in Christ of unity in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith.



Sunday, June 21, 2026

**From all of us at
Dormition of the Theotokos
we would like to wish with
gratitude and love to ALL Dads
a blessed Father's Day!**



Christos Anesti!! Thank you to Kiki Tarasidis and everyone who helped decorate our church for Great and Holy Pascha, as always, it was truly beautiful!

We'd like to welcome our new Philoptochos members:

Ted Angeles	Sarah Bassett	Ian Chavez-Husch	Nataliia Ivchyk	Philip Vavalides
Amani Novak	Lula Melisko	Michael Miller	Ellen Wright	

Philoptochos welcomes new members year-round! **Membership for the calendar year is \$35.** Membership supports National, Metropolis and Local initiatives. **Reach out Regina Reese to fill out the info form at redajo99@gmail.com.**

Upcoming Events:

May 8th & 9th Drive Through Food Festival - Please sign up to volunteer for the Church Drive Through Food Festival! Volunteers are needed Friday (set up/prep) and Saturday (day of) May 8/9. Sign-ups are in the fellowship hall.

May 10th Mother's Day- "She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants." (Proverbs 31:15 (NIV): 15) In honor of mothers, and mother figures, we will have a one-day canned and non-perishable food drive on Sunday, May 10th. Please bring all goods to the Narthex.

A little fact about our food pantry ministry. Philoptochos initiated a food pantry in the late 1990's under the Presidency of Toulia Chininis. We have continued to coordinate this ministry since then, collecting, contributing, encouraging our parishioners to donate and then boxing and delivering to the neediest food pantries in our area throughout the year.

Additional Food Bank contributions will be donated to A Simple Gesture. Please consider donating canned and non-perishable goods.

ATTENTION CLASS of 2026 HIGH SCHOOL or COLLEGE GRADUATES or parents or friends of graduates in our parish. Please contact Catherine Stuman by email ccstuman@yahoo.com or by phone/text 336-392-4264 by May 3rd, so that we may know you are graduating. Our Philoptochos Chapter is planning to honor and recognize all our graduating seniors this year on Graduation Sunday, June 7th.



Our Sr. OPA Dancers were out in the community sharing our culture! OPA! They performed at Lindley Elementary's International Festival and afterwards at Mythos restaurant debuting their new costumes on 4/23/26.



Questions & Answers

How do we keep the joy of the Resurrection?

The Feast of Pascha (Easter), the glorious Resurrection of Christ, is the pinnacle of the Orthodox Christian calendar and life. We celebrate it with triumphant hymns, processions and feasting, proclaiming, “Χριστὸς Ανέστη!” - “Christ is Risen!” for forty days after Pascha until the Ascension of Christ into the Heavens.

Unfortunately, as the days pass, the initial joy of the Resurrection may fade in our lives, and **we find ourselves returning once again to the struggles, difficulties and burdens** of everyday life.

How then do we keep the joy of the Resurrection alive in our hearts throughout the year? For us as Orthodox Christians, the **Resurrection of Christ is not simply a historical event**; it is an ever-present and ongoing reality. **Every Sunday**, the Church gathers to celebrate Divine Liturgy, **the “Little Pascha”**, reminding us that we live in the light of Christ’s victory over death. We are no longer slaves to sin and death but redeemed and invited into eternal life (Romans 6:22). **Keeping the joy of the Resurrection means carrying the awareness of Christ’s victory with us daily.**

Our connection to the joy of the Resurrection is strengthened through prayer and participation in the life of the Church, in particular the Sacraments. **The Divine Liturgy immerses us in the presence of the Risen Christ, and through the Eucharist, we receive His Body and Blood.** Personal prayer, whether through the Jesus Prayer (‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner’), the Psalms, or other prayers written by Saints, keeps our hearts focused on Christ. The more we commune with Christ, the more His joy fills us.

Reading the Scriptures is also key to keeping this joy. The Gospels recount the numerous encounters of the risen Christ with His disciples. St Paul exhorts us to live as those who have been raised with Christ (Colossians 3:1). By regularly reading Scripture, we keep the truth of the Resurrection in our minds and hearts, allowing it to transform us and to heal us.

Gratitude also opens our hearts to the joy of Christ. When we acknowledge God’s mercy and love in our lives, we naturally experience joy. Even in the most difficult circumstances and trials, we can rejoice in the knowledge that Christ has conquered death and sin. As St Paul writes, nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38). Purposefully pausing to thank God throughout the day helps us cultivate this joy.

Ultimately, **Christ’s Resurrection calls us to love and serve others**, sharing the joy we have received. Deliberate acts of kindness, forgiveness and generosity are vital to the new life we have in Christ. The more we give of ourselves in love, the more we experience the joy of the Resurrection.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the joy of the Resurrection is not meant to be fleeting, but a lasting reality. By living in the light of Christ’s Resurrection, staying grounded in prayer and communion, Scripture reading, gratitude, and acts of love, we keep this joy alive in ourselves. Let us then carry Christ’s light and joy into the world each day.

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen! Amen





COMMUNITY NEWS



Stewardship Year begins on January 1st and concludes on December 31st. We ask that you do not delay to complete the card and return it to the church office to join the **"Dormition of the Theotokos' Stewardship Ministry for 2026"** so that we can grow and become a stronger Church and minister to the people of God. The Church needs the support of its members year-round. Please consider giving as a way of showing your support and love to the Church. As you already know It costs thousands of dollars a month to operate the Church with the monthly utility and maintenance bills and salaries. **Please consider giving as much as your heart tells you to give – a little more than last year. You do not need to make your payment all at once. You can give quarterly, monthly, or weekly,** which makes it very easy and affordable. Electronic payment has also been set up for those who would like to use it. Thank you!

THANK YOU! Thank you to all for sponsoring Coffee Hours in the month of April: Parish Council, The Maayeh Family, The Rivers Family, and The Ganim Family. **THANK YOU!**

CHRISMATIONS/BAPTISMS: The servant of God, **Lilyan Schmitz**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation on **Saturday, April 11, 2026**. The Sponsor was Mary Ann Contogiannis. May God grant her many years!

The servant of God, **Elizabeth Dawson**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Baptism on **Saturday, April 25**. The Sponsor was **Mary Alyson Ammons**. **May God grant her many years!**

WEDDINGS: We are pleased to announce the marriage of **Cole & Olivia Burgess** on **April 19, 2026**. We congratulate them on their accomplishments individually and as a couple! **Na zisete!**

CONDOLENCES

The Church extends condolences to the family of **Theodora "Dorothy" Megremis** upon her recent falling asleep on April 10, 2026. The funeral was held on April 14, 2026 at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church. Burial is at Forest Lawn Cemetery. **May her memory be eternal.** May the Lord comfort her family during these difficult days.

*A very special Thank You! to everyone who made donations for Great
Lent & Paschal Season 2026!*



THANK YOU

Cecelia Antahades
Sarah Bassett
Kris & Erin Blindenbacher
Madalina Body
Anthony & Anna Bowen
Garrett & Kara Bowen
Brad Caplanides
Mary Ann Contogiannis
Hamp & Lula Culler
Soteria Dascalakis
Austin & Laura Davis
Noelle Foteini Drollas
Brier & Elaine Gay
Eudokia Gikas
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Maher & Niveen Hanna
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Joanne Macropoulos
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Lampros Megremis
Marc & Lula Melisko
Eddie & Maria Merrell
Mike Morfessis & Lilyan Schmitz
James & Panayota Mott
Will & Mary Parnell

Su Peterson
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Shane & Katie Rivers
Ardele Sakellaris
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Jim & Catherine Stuman
Kirk & Kiki Tarasidis
Jim & Hedy Thevaos
Arthur Toompas
Ted Triantis
Voula Tselides
Brad & Paula VanLaningham
David Valavanis
Kimmon & Gwen Varsamis
Philip Vavalides

PASTORAL CARE: IT IS SUNDAY

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! (Ps. 118: 24). With these prophetic words the Psalmist welcomes the Day of the Lord. Every day is made by the Lord, and each day we should be glad and give Him thanks. **He is the Giver of time**, of daylight, of everything on earth, and of our lives. He made everything for us and our joy, **but one day of the week is His day. That is Sunday, the Day of the Lord.**

Every Sunday is a commemoration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Resurrection, as Saint Paul says, is the essence of our faith (I Cor.15:4). It is the hope for our own resurrection (I Peter 1:3). We rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord and are glad for it, for it is indeed, together with the creation, God's greatest gift to us. In addition to the Resurrection of the Lord, **on Sundays we remember the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and on His Church** (see Acts, chapter 2). The physical Church — as a body of faithful people — **was established on Pentecost Sunday**, after the preaching of the Apostles (Acts 2:41). The Revelation which St. John received on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10) suggests that **the Second Coming of our Lord will also take place on Sunday. Keeping Sunday holy is one of the tenants of our faith.** We are known as Christians because we keep Sunday as our holy day. Therefore, dear Christian, if you understand the importance and the meaning of Sunday for your faith, for your church, and for your salvation, then I am sure your conscience will ask you this inevitable question: ***It is Sunday morning. What do you plan to do with the Day of the Lord? Are you going to use His day to talk — to have a chat — with the Lord?*** Will you plan to take time and pray this day? **The best way to pray is together with God's children in His house.** In the Church our God makes Himself available to us. He listens to our petitions, answers our requests, and rejoices in our faith, our thanksgiving, and love for Him. *The Lord is in his holy temple*, says the Psalmist, *the Lord is on his heavenly throne* (Ps. 12: 4).

Are you going to visit with the Lord on His Day, and worship Him in His church? Are you just going to choose to ignore Him, or, even worse, not even remember Him at all? Do you think you have better things to do: cutting the grass, perhaps, or fixing the house, or sleeping away your salvation? Let's remember, we have seven days given to us by Him in which we can do all these other things. Why would we steal His day away from Him?

Are you going to partake of a meal with Him? The meal is provided by Him, and it is Himself. When we partake of this meal, Holy Communion, we partake of Christ Himself. There is no excuse to refuse Him and the invitation to the banquet which He gives at the Divine Liturgy every Sunday in honor of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In one of the parables told by our Lord (Matthew 22:1-14) we hear that a King issued an invitation to attend a wedding banquet, but many refused to come. **The King (who represents God in the parable)** became very angry with those who refused His invitation to the banquet: *"The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city"* (Matthew 22: 7). If we do not respect Sundays, God's Day, by refusing His invitation to honor His Son, should we then wonder and ask why our cities are destroyed by fire, by floods, and by earthquakes?

Let us not make light of the Lord's Day, for by doing so we make light of our God who gives us life, health, wealth, and everything we have. Let's not take Sundays for granted, for by doing so, we in fact take for granted as well as risk our own salvation and our everlasting life. The acceptable answer to our Sunday morning question can be only one: *Since today is Sunday, I plan to give this day to my Lord and God. I will sing praises to Him in His church. I will ask Him, in my close talk with Him, to have mercy on me, on my family, on my church, on my country, and on the whole world.*

NOTE: A printed Orthodox Oracle of the month can be found in the Narthex throughout the month.

If you wish to have a copy sent to you, we ask that you call the church office and we will send you one in the mail. Thank you for being a Steward of Dormition of the Theotokos church!



Church Office Note.....

You may visit or call the office **Monday—Friday from 9:00am—1:00pm.**

Fr. Sarantis is in the office Monday by appointment only, Tuesday—Thursday from 10am-3pm, and Tuesday from 3pm—6pm by appointment only for confessions, extending the office hours. You may also schedule a pastoral appointment with him at any time at home or at the office at your convenience.

Although on Fridays Fr. Sarantis is not in the office one may freely and at any time during the week communicate DIRECTLY with him via phone at (516) 526-1475, text or email at patersarantis@yahoo.com.

All calls & texts not answered before 7pm will be answered as soon as possible on the same day. All calls and texts after 7pm will be screened and they will be answered according to their urgency, so there may be time to respond to the day's emails. Emails are checked 3 times a day (morning, noon and after 7pm) and they will be answered accordingly in the order they have been received within 24 hours. We thank you for understanding!

IMPORTANT: For ALL emergencies ALWAYS CALL, do not text or email. GOD BLESS YOU!

SAVE THE DATE

GREENSBORO GREEK FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 25, 26, 27



HOSPITAL VISITATION POLICY

If you would like Fr. Sarantis to visit you in the hospital, please call him or have a family member call. Fr. Sarantis will not go unless he is asked by the family. This is in compliance with both HIPAA and patient privacy.

ORTHODOX ORACLE SPONSORS ...

Now that the ORTHODOX ORACLE has expanded to 20 pages, it provides a good opportunity for one to sponsor an ad for your business, friend's business or simply honoring a family member. Please seek out one of the Parish Council Members for assistance to become a sponsor or call the church office.

We thank our sponsors and we hope that you support them!

SPONSOR Introductory OFFERINGS

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- ◆ Supporter
- ◆ Half page
- ◆ Full page
- ◆ Inside Cover



Attention Organizations:

- In order to sustain proper emailing dates the *Cutoff Day* to submit your article for your organization is the **22nd** of the month. Printing and emailing the Orthodox Oracle is on or about the **28th** of the month.
- Email is the default contact type, but listings can be changed by text or phone if preferred. Email any changes to the Church Office at office@dormition.nc.goarch.org. It is the organization's responsibility to inform Jackie of any updates to your listing.

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NARTHEX and Welcome MINISTRY meets soon. Be part of it!

What *YOU* Can Do to Help Visitors Feel Welcome

Have you noticed new faces? We've had many visitors stop by lately. Some are Orthodox and visiting from other Parishes, some are returning to Orthodoxy after a long time away, and some are coming to check out Orthodoxy for the very first time. No matter how they come to us, let's make sure we say Hello!



"Welcome! I don't believe we've met yet. My name is (your name)" is a great start. Offer to walk with them to the Coffee Social. A personal connection goes far!

*"To be a welcoming community sharing
Christ's love through faith and service."*