



THE ORTHODOX ORACLE

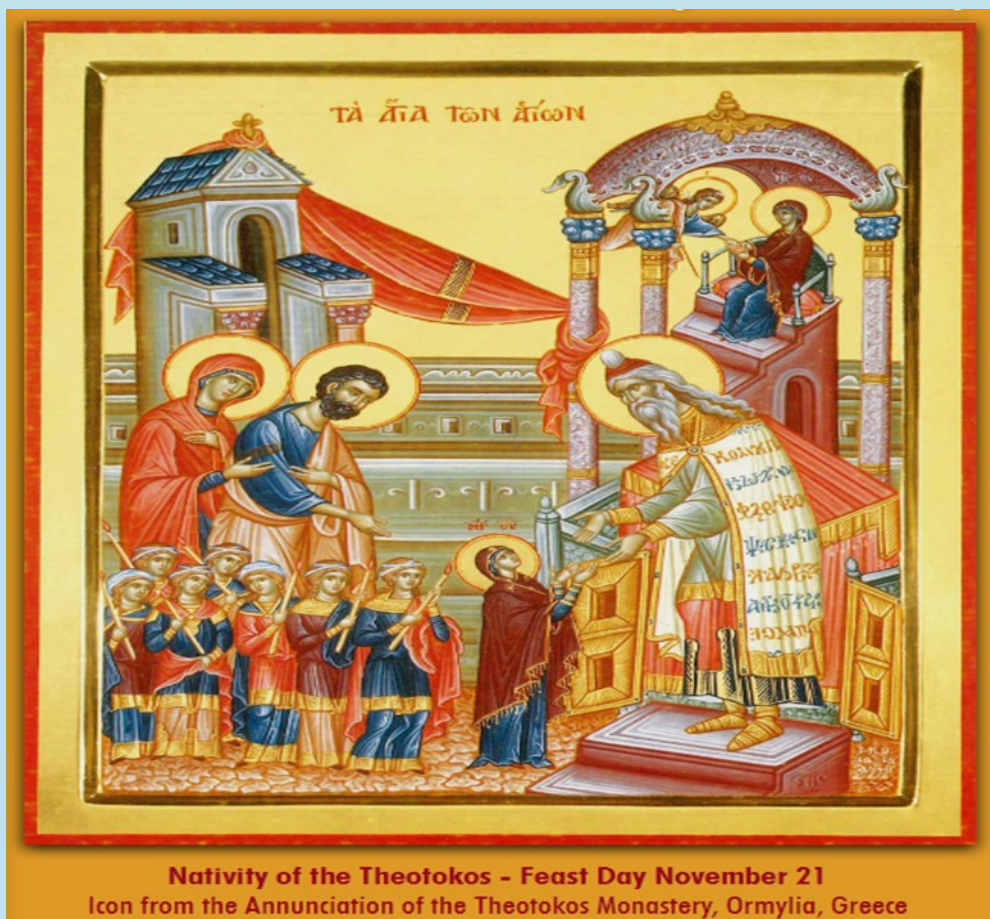
Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church
Greensboro, NC
NOVEMBER 2025

OUR VISION: FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

NOVEMBER 2025

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We praise Thee,
we bless Thee,
we worship Thee,
we glorify Thee,
we give thanks to
Thee for Thy
great glory!

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

Orthodox Oracle Staff

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Orthodox Oracle Deadline

The 22nd of each month

Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Wednesday, 12 noon

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2025 Parish Council:

John McQueary – President

Shadi Zeidan – Vice-President

Madalina Body – Treasurer

MaryAnn Contogiannis – Asst.

Treasurer

Brandon Covey – Secretary

Members:

Joy Daskalakis, James Cropper,

Mike Dolianitis, Pete Graham,

Michael James, Martin Ross,

Shane Rivers

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 – Shane Rivers

Greek Festival - Shadi Zeidan

Narthex Ministry - Terry Kokenes

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 SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

What Is So Orthodox at Thanksgiving?

My beloved spiritual **Family of Dormition of the Theotokos**. I greet all of you and yours with abundance of joy and with the intercessions and blessings of most **Holy Theotokos**, our Patron Saint. **Happy and blessed Thanksgiving to all!**

Yes, its November! In the Orthodox Liturgical Calendar we are called to celebrate the feasts of **St Elpidophoros** (Many years to Archbishop of America), **Archangel Michael**, **St Nektarios**, **Apostle Andrew**, the **Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple** and of course the civil holiday of **Thanksgiving**. All of them equally and worthy of their crowns as saints of our Lord. All of them have offered something to all of us so we may through their lives we may attain sainthood as well. ***The Lord is wonderful through His saints!***

Thanksgiving! There is no “feast” that seems more “American” than Thanksgiving. Many of us Orthodox also recognize this holiday in some sort of way. Usually we say that it is a day in which “**they**” remember that the Pilgrims landed in this country. Of course, the “they” that we use in such a sentence refers to any of the non-Orthodox Americans that we live with.

And yet, this is real chance for us – it may be one of the few “**American**” **things** that we can truly make Orthodox. We will never be able to totally interpret the secular things of America in an Orthodox way – such as hot dogs and beer, or football. But here on Thanksgiving Day is exactly where it should be done. This is so because if we think about and are especially aware of the words and feeling of **our Divine Liturgy**, there is **nothing more Orthodox than giving thanks or “thanksgiving.”**

It is, therefore, on Thanksgiving Day that we have a chance to help America look deeper into itself – by looking at this “typical” American holiday of Thanksgiving from an Orthodox point of view. We know that **to be Orthodox**, if we really know about Orthodoxy, **implies that “deeper look.”** But what is meant by looking deeper? To begin with, if we as Americans, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, fail to see the greater lesson of what “Thanksgiving” means, **if it is just the remembering of an historical event, it will remain only a memory and not something that we call a Holiday, or better**

yet, a Holy Day. This is so because just the memory is not enough. Memory may be helpful, but it does not guarantee holiness. **Why do we say Holy Day? When we answer this question, we will have taken that “deeper look.”**

Surely **those that landed in America understood why the day was “holy.”** They were not only celebrating their historic landing as holy, as we do today in this shallow way; they looked deeper and when they did, **they gave thanks together in a real communion with each other and with God for all the bountiful gifts with which they were blessed.**

Perhaps they understood, even better than we do, **what it means when we sing in our Liturgy: “for the abundance of the fruits of the earth and for peaceful times....”** That’s it! That’s the deeper look; men standing together before God in thankfulness. Men bound by common problems. Men bound by common goals.

Orthodoxy, therefore, has the great opportunity to be able to dissect the word “Thanksgiving,” to show this fullness. In fact, we are constantly showing what it really means at every Liturgy, for it is here that **thanksgiving is not only a memory, not only a day; it is a “state” or a “position” that we are in.**

What is that “state” which is holy? It is a standing together – no, it begins earlier – **it begins with the procession of each of us from the bed of our homes to the place where we will stand, to be together, even as those pilgrims were, to give thanks.** The height of this thanksgiving is when we offer up the gifts of bread and wine – **“Thine own of Thine own, we offer unto thee, in behalf of all and for all”** – while we are offered life in return from God.

Beloved Faithful and Friends,
Can we take America back to that original meaning, to that deeper look? The pilgrims had it, but we have preserved it! Perhaps now we can say “**we**” instead of “**they**” to show that **Thanksgiving is not only for non-Orthodox.** Certainly, it is at the Divine Liturgy where “**we**” should begin this Day of Thanksgiving. Is there less that we can do? A blessed and thankful Thanksgiving to all! With paternal and pastoral love in Christ! Amen!



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→ TO YOUR DOOR**



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produce—grown through regenerative
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OFF YOUR FIRST ORDER**

www.marymelfarm.com



**Philoptochos Potluck
Meal
in support of**

**Breast Cancer
Awareness Month**

October 19, 2025





DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

800 Westridge Road · Greensboro, NC 27410-4504

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis, Protopresbyter

October 15, 2025

INVITATION PARISH ASSEMBLY

Beloved Faithful and Members of Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church.

Christ is in our midst!

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 annual fall 2025 Parish Assembly on Sunday, November 9, 2025**, 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, November 9th, 2025

1. Call to order & Establish quorum
2. Opening prayer
3. Father Sarantis message
4. Approve minutes from **Spring 2025**
5. President's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Ministry reports
 - a. Stewardship
 - b. Youth
 - c. Festival
 - d. Beautification
 - e. Philoptochos
8. Old business
 - a. Ratification of **Parish Bylaws Revisions**
 - b. Facility Maintenance Report
9. New business
 - a. Roof replacement/repair
 - b. New building plans
 - i. Discussion of launching Capital Campaign for new Building Project
 - c. Nominating of Audit Committee
 - d. Parish Council Nominations
 - e. Open Discussion
10. Motion to adjourn
11. Closing prayer

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis, Protopresbyter

John McQueary, President, P.C.

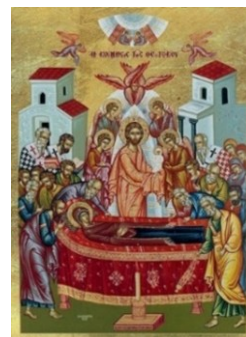
Phone: 336.292.8013

Web: www.dormition.nc.goarch.org E-mail: office@dormition.nc.goarch.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH CORNER

Christ is in our midst! *He is and ever shall be.* Good strength to all of our families as we enter the Winter Lenten period with the Nativity Fast on 11/15. It is my prayer that we all are blessed with good health and strength to attend as many of the Divine services as possible and to attend confession with our Spiritual Father so that we might meet our incarnate Lord well this Christmas.

Today is the prelude of God's pleasure and the proclamation of man's salvation. The Virgin is clearly made manifest in the temple of God and foretells Christ to all. Let us also cry out to her with mighty voice, "Hail, fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation." (Apolytikion of the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos to the Temple)



YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES

10/25 Youth Fall Festival – On Saturday 10/25, we celebrated the fall season with our first Fall Festival. We grilled out with hot dogs and s'mores. There was apple cider for children and seasonal craft beverages for adults. For the youth, we also had games, crafts, prizes, and candy. It was a great time and I want to say thank you to all of the parents who helped make this event a success for our youth.

NOVEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL 25/26 DATES

- November 2, 2025 – Sunday School
 - ◊ Sermonette Sunday for Youth
- November 9, 2025 - Sunday School
- November 16, 2025 – Sunday School
- November 23, 2025 – Sunday School
- November 30, 2025 – Sunday School

UPCOMING NOVEMBER YOUTH EVENTS

- Please check your email for dates and times
 - ◊ Family Vespers
 - *Wednesday 11/19
 - *Time: 5:45 – 6:30PM
 - *Bible Study 6:30 – 7:30
 - ◊ Movie On The Lawn
 - *Details to come. Please check your email for information.
 - ◊ Nativity Play
 - *Kick-off Meeting
 - *First Rehearsals

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.

Youth Choir: This year our youth choir will be run by Allison Covey. Please speak to Father, Allison, or Matthew Beckett with questions.



Questions & Answers

Why is Holy Tradition important and How Does it Relate to Scripture?

The foundation of the church and its practices is Christ and Holy Tradition, which refers to the teachings and practices of the early Christian Church were passed down through a combination of written and oral traditions. The early church did not have a universally recognized canon of New Testament books, **but the Apostles insisted that their followers hold true to the traditions they taught**, which is now known as Holy Tradition. It was several hundred years before there was a common collection of books used in the early churches that we now know as the New Testament.

In the growth of the early church the Apostles insisted that the followers hold true to the tradition they taught. "I commend you because you remember me in everything and **maintain the traditions** even as I have delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11:2). "So then, brethren, stand firm and **hold to the traditions** which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thess. 2:15). Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in **accord with the tradition** that you received from us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

The Orthodox Church has always **preserved the original teachings of the Apostles** through the continuity of its practices, liturgies, sacraments, and writings of the early Church Fathers, in addition to the New Testament. There is a serious error that is inherent in many churches that came from an innovation introduced by Martin Luther, Sola Scriptura or Scripture Alone. This is the belief that scripture alone is the final authority for Christian faith and practice. They will often challenge Orthodox Christians when we talk about our faith saying, *"Where do you find this in Scripture?"* **Their view of the church is limited to a book.** They rejected Holy Tradition that was not recorded in the books and letters of the New Testament. In a sense they whitewashed the richness and completeness of the faith established in the early Church. The Orthodox Church has maintained this full richness based on Holy Tradition. It gives us the completeness of the faith as the Apostles taught. Holy Tradition includes, in



addition to the New Testament, the results of the **Ecumenical Councils** defending the nature of Christ, the liturgies and sacramental practices practiced since the earliest days of the Church, hymns, iconography and writings of the early Church Fathers. **Nothing of Holy Tradition is contrary to Holy Scripture.** With it we have the fullness of Christian Faith based on continual practices of the Orthodox Church from the time of the Apostles.

The Bible is an important part of Holy Tradition, and the Gospels give us the story of Jesus which is the basis of our Trinitarian faith. The official Bible for the Church is the Greek Bible (1904 text of the Ecumenical Patriarchate), and the Orthodox Study Bible that uses the **New King James Version** is recommended for general reading. However, I don't suggest that you read it analytically as Protestants do, but rather prayerfully and with the help of the interpretations handed down through the Church Fathers. **It is recommended to read The New Testament as a story written by eyewitnesses without trying to determine doctrine, as doctrines included in the Creed.** Reading the Bible prayerfully every day and letting it speak to one's soul builds faith, which leads to receiving God's grace that is nourished by the sacramental life in the Church and ascetic practices like prayer and fasting. St. John Chrysostom, in his 2nd Homily on the Gospel of Matthew, encouraged believers to approach Scripture with a prayerful attitude, saying: *"If we wish to understand the meaning of Holy Scripture, we must pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us into all truth."*

(Continued on Page 8)



Thanksgiving Blessing Bags

Our Ladies Philoptochos Society will once again sponsor an outreach ministry where we
"Share our Blessings at Thanksgiving."

We will collect different food items each week beginning **Sunday, October 12th thru Sunday, November 9th** to build a "Blessing Bag". Each bag will provide enough food for a family of 5 to share a wonderful Thanksgiving meal. Philoptochos will donate a canned ham to go in each bag as well.

Below you will find the schedule for the collection requests. As a reminder, please purchase sizes or quantities that would feed a family of 5 and remember to check expiration dates as the bags will not be delivered until the end of November.

Previously collected but still accepting: Cranberry Sauce, Yams, Corn, Green Beans, Stuffing Mix & Cornbread Mix



***November 2nd: Instant Mashed Potatoes & Gravy (no glass)**

***November 9th: Fall Dessert of your choice (shelf stable)**



Collection bins will be located in the church hall.

After our collection ends, we will gather as a community on Sunday, November 16th to assemble our Blessing Bags. The bags will be distributed in our Greensboro community to help families in need this holiday season.

If you are unable to shop for these items, you may make a monetary donation to Philoptochos and we will shop on your behalf. Simply write "Thanksgiving" on the memo line.

We look forward to seeing our entire community take advantage of this opportunity to come together in order to serve those in need!

Questions & Answers

(Continued from Page 7)

Remember that the **New Testament was written by faithful men who were eyewitnesses and God inspired.** Analysis as you read may turn the story into something akin to studying a text book on philosophy where you seek to extrapolate hidden meanings or use logic to compose arguments and innovations. **If you come across something you don't understand or find hard to believe as you read, do not doubt, but instead assume that you are not yet ready to grasp the full meaning** or reality of that event. Overtime more and more will be revealed through your reading. If you choose to engage in a **Bible study group, it should be under the guidance of Orthodox clergy within the context of a local parish and with full respect of Holy Tradition.** It's important to be wary of other kinds of social oriented study groups. If for business reasons it's important to participate in such groups, be sure to take your

Orthodox Study Bible with you so you can share the interpretations provided by our Church Fathers. It's best to avoid such social oriented groups. If there are no Orthodox clergy available then choose a study group with careful discernment. Bible study should be primarily oriented to discussions about how to apply Scripture to our daily life and our full participation in the Holy Tradition of the Church. **Keep in mind that the Church is founded on Holy Tradition that is the living and dynamic transmission of the teachings and practices of the Church from generation to generation beginning with Apostolic times. Holy Tradition ensures the continuity, unity, and vitality of the Church's teachings, practices, and worship.**



Thank you to everyone who cheerfully showed up for church service and "pinked out" fellowship hour. Thank you for bringing food and desserts and for spreading education for Breast Cancer Awareness month. Thank you to all of you who continue to be a BIG help in the kitchen with clean up and organization. Our Philoptochos Ladies group supports the Cancer Screening Fund for Cone Philanthropy with the monetary donations collected yesterday. A check in the amount of \$300 will be sent to the fund which provides or offsets the cost for needed screenings for uninsured / underinsured members of the community.

Upcoming Philoptochos Events:

- **Sunday, November 2nd — Philoptochos General Meeting:** Plans for our upcoming November 15 Holiday Gift Market and Pastry sale and future events and projects will be discussed.
- **Sunday, November 2nd — Philoptochos** Chapters nationwide pass a special tray in memory of our organization's patron **Saints Cosmas and Damianos**, who were known to assist the poor and the afflicted. Because of this similar Christian dedication, the Philoptochos Society chose them as our patron saints. All contributions from this tray will benefit the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its philanthropic programs and charities
- **November 9th — Honoring of our Veterans.** Philoptochos will provide desserts for the Parish Assembly and lunch in honor of our Veterans. We thank the men and woman in our parish who have honorably served our country in the U.S. Armed Forces for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve to protect our freedom. **New and newly arrived parishioners who are serving or have served in any branch of the Armed Services, please call or text Catherine Stuman cell # 336-392-4264 or email ccstuman@yahoo.com so we may add you to our list of honorees on November 9th**
- **Thursday, November 13 - 10 am - 2 pm - cutting and cupping pastries, then 5 pm - 8 pm boxing pastries in fellowship hall.** If you can help prepare for the pastry sale on this date, please contact Nora at email nzirps@gmail.com or 336-339-8950 or Elaine Gay at elainepgay@icloud.com or 336-392-9287. Even if you only have a little time available, any assistance you can give will be welcomed!
- **Saturday, November 15th — Gift Market and Pastry Sale from 9am-6pm.** We will have delicious Greek pastries and unique gift items from our vendors! Please see the flier for more information. Philoptochos members, please note there are Sign Up lists in the Fellowship Hall where you may volunteer to help with pre-sale preparations and on the day of the sale. We need your support and help to make this a successful event.
- **Sharing our Blessings at Thanksgiving Ministry. All donations are needed by November 9th, and the assembly will be on November 16th.**
- **Saturday, January 31st from 9a-3p — Pre-Lenten Retreat with Father Barnabas Powell.** Please join us in the fellowship hall for a Pre-Lenten Retreat with Father Barnabas Powell, from Sts. Raphael, Nicholas and Irene Greek Orthodox Church, Cummings Georgia. The topic of the retreat is "Be Watchful - Be Sober: St. Paul's Wisdom for Spiritual Maturity". **Cost:** \$35 per person - *Please make checks payable to Philoptochos. Please drop off or mail in your checks to the church. While checks are preferred, if you need to pay via cash, please put it in a sealed envelope with your name on it and hand it to the Philoptochos Treasurer, Regina, OR to Jackie in the office.

Serving Our Local Community

November 16th — December 14th: Christmas Project for Children and Families in Need Food Bank Donations. Our Philoptochos Chapter will be assisting the Doris Henderson Newcomers School this holiday season by **collecting \$25 Walmart gift cards or monetary donations to purchase Walmart gift cards.** The school social worker, guidance counselor, and other staff members will then determine how to distribute these gift cards among the neediest families this holiday. During the week, you may bring gift cards to the church office to be placed in our Philoptochos mailbox or on Sundays, you may give them to Lula Culler or Catherine Stuman. Please include with each gift card the gift receipt or activation receipt that includes the card amount and activation information. We ask that gift cards NOT be mailed. If making a monetary donation, please make your check payable to Philoptochos with "Christmas Project" on the memo line. If you have any questions, please contact Catherine Stuman, cell # 336-392-4264, or email ccstuman@yahoo.com.



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

October 2, 2025

To the Reverend Clergy, the Parish Council Presidents, Philoptochos Sisters, and all the Faithful of the Metropolis of Atlanta:

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray that we all receive good strength in this new month and season! I am pleased to offer an update concerning the dinner in honor of our First Metropolitan, His Eminence Alexios, **on Friday, November 7, 2025 (at 6 PM at The Kartos Ballroom in the Thalia N. Carlos Hellenic Center of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Atlanta).**

Tickets are now available **here at atlm Metropolisevents.org at \$100 per person** (in addition to the previously announced sponsorships, which are listed below).

This evening will include heartfelt reflections from Metropolis coworkers, and alumni of our diverse youth ministries. Through dance performances, testimonials, and video messages, we will come together to pay tribute to Metropolitan Alexios as our Spiritual Father--and to support and complete the mission of His Eminence's beloved Panagia Chapel at the DRC.

Very soon, we will provide details on a unique opportunity for the faithful to offer their memories of their own experiences with His Eminence.

Until then, please visit **www.atlm Metropolisevents.org to purchase your \$100 ticket, and to consider supporting one of the following sponsorships:**

Patron: \$1,000 Silver: \$2,500 Gold: \$5,000 Benefactor: \$10,000
Grand Benefactor: \$25,000

I ask that all our Metropolis Clergy please share this message in your parish bulletins, and to speak about this special gathering from the pulpit-- and I pray that your Metropolis can count on the participation of all our faithful to honor the vision of our first Metropolitan.

In the love and service of our Lord,

+Metropolitan Sevastianos

+Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta

Special Appeal

Ephraim's Story

Ephraim McQueary is an extraordinary 11-year-old boy who has faced more challenges in his young life than most do in a lifetime. Diagnosed with autism and a rare genetic condition that affects his stomach and digestion, Ephraim's days are often marked by severe pain and discomfort. During flare-ups, his condition can leave him unable to eat normally, requiring him to receive vital nutrition through a G-tube. Yet through it all, he continues to show incredible courage, a desire to help others, and a joyful spirit that lights up every room he enters.

Despite his strength, the constant changes and medical hurdles have taken a toll on Ephraim's daily life. Simple activities that most children take for granted such as walking long distances, handling loud or crowded environments, or managing sudden sensory overload can become overwhelming or even impossible. **After careful evaluation, his doctors have recommended and prescribed a trained service dog to support him.** This service dog will not only help with his mobility during painful GI flare-ups but will also provide the grounding, comfort, and sensory regulation Ephraim needs to navigate the world more independently and confidently. *The cost of training and providing a specialized service dog is significant, and our family cannot do it alone.*

We are reaching out to our church community, friends, and anyone moved by Ephraim's story to help make this life-changing companion a reality for him. Every donation, no matter the size, brings us one step closer to giving Ephraim the comfort, safety, and independence he deserves. With your support, we can help him experience more days filled with laughter instead of pain and hope instead of uncertainty.

Thank you for helping us make a lasting difference in Ephraim's life. Together, we can give him the gift of a loyal friend and the freedom to live more fully each day.



The QR code goes directly to Ephraim's page at 4 Paws for Ability where you can give online. Checks should be made out to 4 Paws for Ability, with Ephraim McQueary in the memo line.

2025 STEWARDS

Fr Sarantis & Pr. Norma Loulakis
 John & Katherine McQueary
 Sophia Agapion
 Irene Agapion-Martinez
 George & Janette Ajlouny
 Theodore Angeles
 Cecelia Antahades
 Michelle & Fred Akbary
 Joseph & Stella Ambrosio
 Mubarak Angelo & Samira Elikoua
 Steve & Polly Anton
 John Bakatsias
 Brittany & Matthew Beckett
 Bob Benson
 Najwah Bishara
 Jack & Shannon Bishara
 Kris & Erin Blindenbacher
 Madalina Body
 Brad Caplanides
 Nikolaos & Stavroula Chantzianoniou
 Maria & Carl Colozzi
 Mary Ann Contogiannis
 Brandon & Allison Covey
 Maria & James Cropper
 Lula & Hamp Culler
 Demetri & Joy Dascalakis
 Soteria Dascalakis
 Austin & Laura Davis
 Charles DePoortere
 Nikolaos & Alexandra Diamandis
 Mike Dolianitis
 Andrew & Alexandra Ellen
 Aphrodite & Alexandra Faza
 Mary Fiouris
 Juliana Ganim
 Brier & Elaine Gay
 Clarke & Michelle Gilliam
 Pete Graham
 Scott & Christa Graham
 Victor & Caroline Handila
 Maher & Niveen Hanna
 Violet Hanna
 James & Anastasia Hartigan
 Gregory Hathcock
 Ike & Cindy Hatzisavvas
 Trevor & Olympia Hensley
 Marie Hudak
 Vasilios & Theodora Katsis
 Sana Kattan
 Ira & Robin Knight
 Terry Kokenes
 Mubarak & Marsa Koko
 Angelo & Elizabeth Kontoulas
 Bill & Ava Koronis
 Manoli Krinos
 Gregory & Eleni Kuhn
 Elena Listermann-Vierling
 Abeer Maayah & Jareer Kassis
 Anastasia & Liem Mach
 Eugenia Macovei
 Julia Ann Macovei
 Joanne Macropoulos
 Khaled & Louisa Makhloof
 Chris & Maria Mandalers
 Elias Matar

Vickie Matsakides
 Laura McLeod
 Lampros & Dorothy Megremis
 Marc & Lula Melisko
 Hal & Cecelia Melom
 Eddie & Maria Merrell
 Sam & Emily Mihelich
 Brenda Miller
 Michael Miller
 Christian & Camelia Moraru
 Mike Morfessis & Lilyan Schmitz
 James & Panyota Mott
 Samer & Rania Mushahwar
 Nicholas & Hollis Oberlies
 George & Susan Orfanedes
 Anastasia & Demetrios
 Papadopoulos
 Peter Pappas
 Will & Mary Parnell
 Michael & Courtney Paschal
 Michael & Nina Pasick
 Vasiliki Patterson
 Tom & Teresea Piner
 Elaine Potts
 Peter & Phyllis Poulos
 Maria Pradetto
 George & Jenny Ragsdale
 Regina Reese
 Shane & Katie Rivers
 Martin Ross
 Minerva Ross
 Barbara & Panagiotos Sabanis
 Ardele Sakellaris
 Ellen Scaturchio
 Demetra Schermerhorn
 Tom Schermerhorn & Theodora
 Vaporis
 Natalya Shelkova & Andrew Irwin
 Bernadette Shepherd
 Roger & Celia Sims
 Eduard Smakmnazarov
 Cory & Nectaria Smith
 Mikhail & Ginah Soufia
 Noah Sublett
 Christina & George Stanton
 Heidi & Ralph Stucki
 Catherine & Jim Stuman
 Eskandar & Donya Surena
 Kiki & Kirk Tarasidis
 Maria Thanos
 Arthur & June Toompas
 Zack & Sheila Touloupas
 Ellen Trastelis & Spencer Wright
 Eleni Triantis Harrison
 Theodore Triantis
 Voula Tselides
 David Valavanis
 Brad & Paula VanLaningham
 Yianni & Effie Varitimidis
 Kimmon & Gwen Varsamis
 Philip Vavalides
 John & Joana Xipolitas
 Marshall & Patricia Yandle
 Shadi and Maureen Zeidan
 Nora Zirps

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Faithful Parishioners,

As we enter the month of November, I offer my heartfelt thanks for the many ways you continue to serve and support our parish. This season invites us to reflect on the blessings we've received and the responsibilities we carry, as members of the Body of Christ.

One of the most important opportunities for us to come together as a parish family is through our **Parish Assembly**, and our next gathering will take place on **Saturday, November 9**. I strongly encourage **everyone** to attend. This is your opportunity to:

- Let your voice be heard
- Better understand the hard work your Parish Council is doing
- Engage in meaningful dialogue about our parish's future

We will be discussing critical updates, including stewardship, facility needs, and a new capital initiative. Your presence and input are vital to ensure that we move forward together, faithfully and transparently.

As the end of the year approaches, I ask each of you to please review your stewardship pledge for 2025. If you've fallen behind, now is the time to catch up. Meeting our annual budget depends on everyone's participation.

I also want to inform you of an urgent need facing our parish: our church roof and hall roof are in immediate need of replacement. This is a critical issue, and one that must be addressed promptly to protect the structure and sanctity of our sacred space. To meet this need, we are launching a special capital appeal dedicated specifically to funding the new roof. We will discuss the details, cost, timeline, and next steps at the November 9 Parish Assembly. I prayerfully ask each of you to consider making a one-time gift, as you are able, toward this vital project.

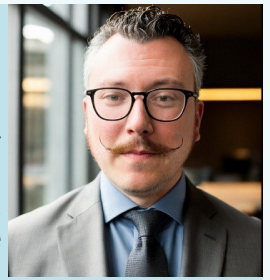
Saint John Chrysostom, whom we commemorate on November 13, reminds us of this deep spiritual truth:

"The rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much. For what he gives away remains his forever."

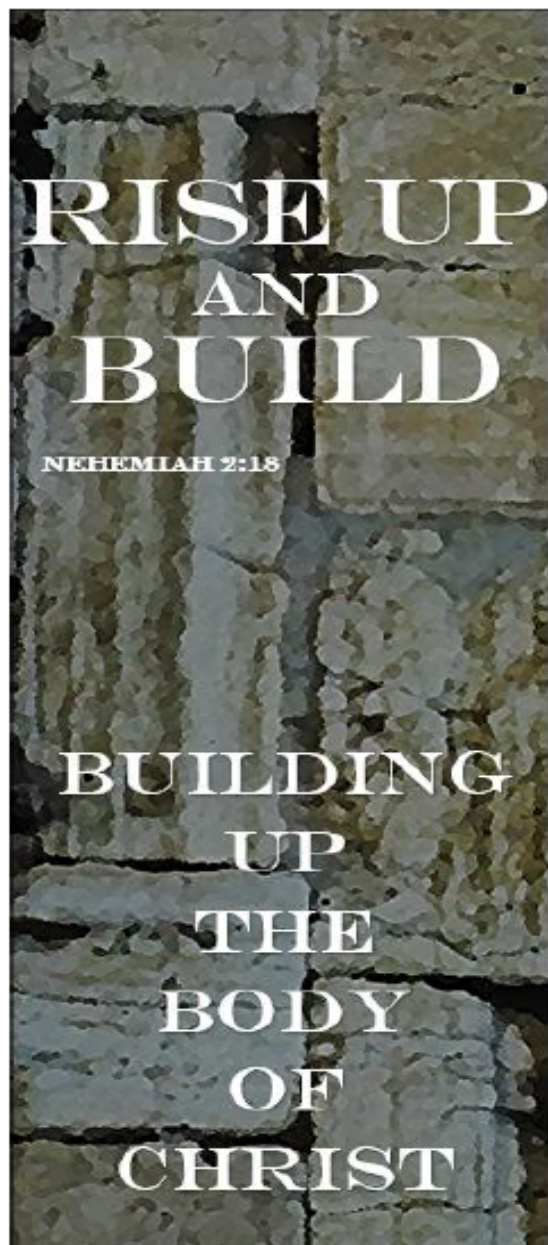
Thank you once again for being such a loving and generous parish family. May the intercessions of Saint John Chrysostom lead us to serve Christ and his Church with compassion and faith. And may the Lord bless each of you with peace and grace as we prepare our hearts for the Nativity season.

In Christ's love,

John McQueary
 President, Parish Council



2026 Stewardship Campaign



RISE UP AND BUILD: Building Up the Body of Christ

Next year's stewardship theme, "*Rise Up and Build: Building Up the Body of Christ*," is inspired by the words of Nehemiah (2:19). In the Book of Nehemiah, the people of God are called to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem—not only as a physical project, but as a renewal of faith, unity, and purpose. Their story reminds us that true building begins in the heart.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to this same work. Stewardship is not only about bricks and mortar; it is about strengthening the spiritual foundation of our lives and our parish. Through our faith, our prayers, our service, and our giving, we join together in building up the Body of Christ—here and now, in our own community.

This message holds special meaning for our parish as we look toward our own plans for building expansion. Just as Nehemiah rallied the people to rise and rebuild, we too are called to come together in faith—to dream, to give, and to build for the generations to come. With grateful hearts and willing hands, let us *rise up and build*, trusting that the same God who guided Nehemiah will guide and bless our work today.

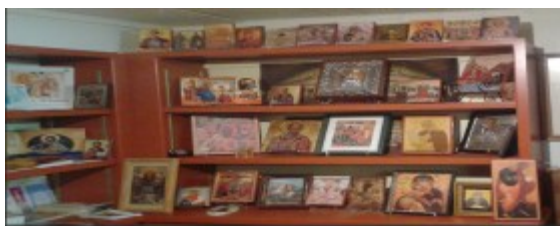
We invite all parishioners to learn more about our upcoming stewardship campaign and building plans at the **Parish Assembly on November 9th**. Together, let us take the next faithful step in building up the Body of Christ—both in spirit and in the life of our parish.

— *The Stewardship Committee*



BOOKSTORE

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



WORSHIP LIFE / NOVEMBER 2025 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- **Sunday, November 2** — 5th Sunday of Luke / Orthros: 8:50 am Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Wednesday, November 5** — *Paraclesis Service to the Holy Theotokos* 5:45 -6:30pm, Followed by Bible Study from 6:30 ~ 7:30
- **Sunday, November 9** — 7th Sunday of Luke / Orthros: 8:50 am Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Wednesday, November 12** — *Paraclesis Service to the Holy Theotokos* 5:45 -6:30pm Followed by a lesson ORTHODOXY 101 from 6:30 ~ 7:30
- **Thursday, November 13** — Feasts of St John Chrysostom and St Philip, The Apostle ~ Orthros 9am / Divine Liturgy 9:30 10:45am
- **Sunday, November 16** — 8th Sunday of Luke / Orthros: 8:50 am Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
The Feast of Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist
- **Wednesday, November 19** — *Paraclesis Service to the Holy Theotokos* 5:45 -6:30pm Followed by a lesson of Explanation of Divine Liturgy from 6:30 ~ 7:30
- **Friday, November 21** — The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple / Orthros 9am / Divine Liturgy 9-10:45am
- **Sunday, November 23** — 9th Sunday of Luke / Orthros: 8:50 am Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Wednesday, November 26** — **NO LESSON or Service**
- **Thursday, November 27** — Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving to all!
- **Sunday, November 30** — 10th Sunday of Luke / Orthros: 8:50 am Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am ~ The Feast of Andrew the First- Called Apostle.



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



DIVINE LITURGY

Why Do Some People Feel the Divine Liturgy is Boring?



It's understandable that individuals may have different experiences and feelings during the Divine Liturgy if they do not understand its purpose. **The Divine Liturgy is a sacred and traditional form of worship that has been passed down from Apostolic times to commune with God.**

The Divine Liturgy is a sacred ritual that involves the coming together of the Heavenly Kingdom and earthly life. It is not merely a performance or a formality. **It is a time when we can enter into the presence of the God, participate in the mystery of Christ's sacrifice, and receive the actual Body and Blood of Christ.** We do this each Liturgy to be cleansed, transformed, and strengthened in our ability to live as He commanded. If you find it boring it might be helpful to consider its purpose, to explore its content and identify the symbolism used. Every aspect of it has a spiritual meaning. Better understanding of the Divine Liturgy will help make it more spiritually beneficial. The Divine Liturgy encompasses a rich tapestry of traditions, rituals, prayers, readings and hymns that are always changing. **Each Liturgy offers a different experience that varies** based on the tone of music, the saints or feasts being celebrated, and the period of the liturgical year. This dynamic nature adds depth and variety to the Liturgy.

All senses are stimulated in the Divine Liturgy. The sense of hearing is stimulated by the beautiful music and the sounds of Scripture readings and prayers. The sense of smell is stimulated through the use of incense. The sense of taste is experienced in the taste of Holy Communion. The sense of touch is experienced when we venerate icons, when we kneel, or are blessed with holy water. The sense of sight is stimulated when we see the

beauty of the icons, the light of candles, the actions of the processions and the colorful vestments. There are eight tones of music used during the Divine Liturgy, along with melodies of various hymns that can greatly influence the overall atmosphere and emotional experience. Whether it's solemn chants, joyful hymns, or meditative melodies, the music aims to evoke a particular spiritual disposition, allowing individuals to connect with the sacred in diverse ways. Again remember the purpose, it is to connect with God. Moreover, **the celebration of various saints and feasts** throughout the liturgical year brings a unique focus and theme to the Liturgy. This enables us to reflect on different aspects of our faith, commemorate important events in Christian history, and learn from the lives of holy men and women who have exemplified virtues and spiritual journeys.

There is a different Scripture lesson at each Liturgy based on the Church Lectionary, both a Epistle reading and a Gospel reading and then a sermon for understanding. **Through these readings we learn about what God expects of us, teaching us how to become like Him for our salvation.**

Recognizing the purpose of the Divine Liturgy and its changing nature, we are invited to be receptive and attentive participants seeking communion with God. **Approaching the Liturgy with a clear purpose, an open heart filled with love of God,** feeling humbled by our struggle to live up to His teachings, and seeking to receive the spiritual nourishment, the Divine Liturgy provides an opportunity for personal transformation and growth, fostering a deeper connection with God. **Some people develop an irreverent habit of coming late to the service and some even come after the sacred**

(Continued on Page 16)

DIVINE LITURGY

Why Do Some People Feel the Divine Liturgy is Boring?

(Continued from Page 15)

Scripture readings. This should be avoided. It indicates a lack in understanding the purpose of the Liturgy and lack of reverence toward God. For Orthodox Christians attending a Divine Liturgy is not something we do to fulfill some kind of obligation. **It should be an intentional choice** to enter a sacred space with the purpose to commune with God. This choice should be made based on love of God and a sincere desire to commune with Him.

It is also important to properly prepare before attending the Liturgy. We are expected to be living an Orthodox way of life with a daily prayer routine, regular repentance, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, and helping others. We should settle all our grievances before attending, asking for forgiveness and forgiving the transgressions of others. There is also a fast required

beginning at midnight before a Liturgy where we have nothing to eat or drink. This enhances our desire, our sincerity, in anticipating a divine meal of His Body and Blood, an indescribable gift, that is offered in Holy Communion.

Remember that the Divine Liturgy, calls us to a deeper level of engagement and understanding, inviting us to commune with God, to grow in faith, humility, and love. **The Liturgy is not intended to entertain or provide instant gratification.** While it's natural to experience moments of restlessness or find certain aspects less engaging, approaching the Liturgy with the right purpose and understanding can open a receptive attitude leading to a more profound and transformative spiritual experience.

ON THE CHALLENGE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING



Let us not be resentful or faint-hearted when something unexpected happens to us, but allow Him, who knows all these things well, to test our soul in the fire for as long as He wants; for He does this in the interest and for the benefit of those being tested.

A physician is a physician not only when he bathes and feeds the sick man...but even when he cauterizes and cuts.

Knowing therefore that God is more tender-loving than all physicians, do not enquire too curiously about His therapy or ask Him for an explanation of it.

St. John Chrysostom
4th century

Scripture of the Month: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." (Matthew 6.33)

Pre-Lenten Retreat with Father Barnabas Powell

(From Sts. Raphael, Nicholas and Irene Greek Orthodox Church in Cummings, GA)



**Saturday, January 31st
9:00a–3:00p**

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek
Orthodox Church

Click below to Register: ↘

**[Registration - Pre-Lenten Retreat with
Father Barnabas Powell](#)**

**“Be watchful–Be Sober:
St. Paul’s Wisdom for Spiritual
Maturity.”**

Pre-Lenten Retreat with Fr Barnabas Powell

- Saturday, January 31st from 9a–3p
- Registration October 12 – December 7
- Cost – \$35 per adult

Registration Form

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IF ATTENDING THE RETREAT.

REGISTRATION COST IS **\$35 PER ADULT** PERSON, LUNCH INCLUDED.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO ‘PHILOPTOCHOS.’

REGISTRATION IS OCT. 12–Dec. 7

NAME(S):

BEST EMAIL ADDRESS FOR CONTACT:

☐ CHECK THIS BOX IF YOU NEED CHILDSITTING SERVICE FOR YOUR CHILD (CHILDREN)
AND LIST THE NAME(S) OF YOUR CHILD (CHILDREN):



Ladies Philoptochos **Gift Market & Pastry Sale**

Saturday, November 15, 2025
9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Dormition of the Theotokos
Greek Orthodox Church
800 Westridge Road
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SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

The Need for a Spiritual Guide

Most of us when we set out to adopt an Orthodox way of life, do not immediately come under the direct guidance of God. This is surely true in my case. But there are some who do. For example examine the life of St. Mary of Egypt, St. Paul of Thebes or St. Mark of Thrace. They were saved through one decisive dedication of themselves to God. But is not the normal path for most people.

Saint Theophan emphatically says,

Firm in that belief that only God converts, the penitent, in order to succeed, should without fail commit himself to a father and guide. This is necessary because we do not give ourselves totally to God...

A spiritual father is essential for us to find the true path. We are engaged in a journey that is much like a trip to a foreign land. In foreign territory we need someone to guide us. You wouldn't think of taking off into the wilderness without a guide. Neither should you think of engaging in a spiritual journey without a guide.

Saint Theophan says:

Inside the beginner is fog, as from the steaming of stench and decay from passions, unrighteous consequences and corrupted powers. Everyone has this fog in greater or lesser density, depending on his former corruption. How good and reliable is it to discriminate objects in his fog?... Only the experienced eye will be able to discern and explain what is going on.

I am continually amazed at how dumb I am in regards to my own spiritual journey. What I once thought was the absolute truth later becomes a gross error. One such case was my practice of the Jesus prayer. I had turned it into a technique, much like Buddhist meditation. I was convinced that I know what I was doing until I asked for guidance from my spiritual guide. At first I was hesitant but then I knew that I had to accept such guidance. Very soon I knew the error of my way. I would have never figured this out on my own due to my own prejudices and self-proclaimed expertise.

It is important when setting out on the Orthodox Way of Life to choose a guide and entrust yourself to them. Once you seek one you will find one. This is another spiritual truth.

Saint Theophan says,

Pray and the Lord will show you a guide. Entrust yourself to this guide, and the Lord will teach him how to lead you.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



The Dormition Men's Fellowship Group

is now hosting weekly book club discussions along with other events to help men grow not just in fellowship but spiritually as well.

Anyone interested in joining should reach out to: Shane Rivers, Shadi Zeidan, John McQueary or Martin Ross for more information.

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 will be in the office Monday and Thursday from 10am-2pm and Tuesday and Wednesday from 12—7:30pm 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 due to obvious reasons 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, which they are **ONLY** checked 3 times a day (morning, noon and after 7pm) and they will be answered accordingly in order within 24 hours. We thank you for understanding!

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

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.





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 2025"** 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 October: The McQueary Family, Barbara Sabanis, Eleni Kuhn, Presvytera Norma, Anastasia Loulakis, Kiki Tarasidis, The Ladies of Philoptochos, and The Irwin Family. **THANK YOU!**

CHRISMATIONS/BAPTISMS: The servant of God, **Juliana Jolie Ganim**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Juliani, on Thursday, October 16. The Sponsor was Abeer Ma'ayeh. May God grant her many years!

CONDOLENCES: The Church extends condolences to **Minerva, Maria & Martin Ross**, upon the recent falling asleep of their beloved spouse and father **Lawrence "Larry"** on October 13, 2025. A funeral service was held on October 21 at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church by Father Sarantis Loulakis. Burial followed at Lakeview Memorial Park. May his memory be eternal!

A Reminder: God's House/Our Responsibility! We have been offering the **"God's House/Our Responsibility"** message to the students of our Church School, but that lesson is not just for kids! Please remember that every corner of the building - in the Church or not - is a part of God's house. **And we are the good stewards God has blessed to take care of it. So remember:**

- **When you use it, leave it as you found it (or better!)**
- **If you create or see trash, pick it up and throw it away.**
- **Be gentle! Careful not to dent and knock things up.**
- **Treat the place better than you own...it's God's!**

So whether that means clean it up, put it away, put it back, lock it up, wipe it off, close it or throw it away, don't give away the honor of taking care of God's house to someone else: do it yourself! Leave it as you found it or better, because when we moved in we committed to keeping the entire place in "Like New" condition. Only you can help make that happen. Thank you, good and faithful stewards of Christ!



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Fully Human Reflection "Did you know you can talk to God about anything?"



DID YOU KNOW?

Department of Religious Education (DRE)



"Did you know you can talk to God about anything? You can talk to Him about hotel rooms, suites, efficiencies, Air BnBs, you can talk to God about vending machines, arcade machines, computers, or about cars, trucks, delivery trucks, motor homes, motorcycles. You can talk to Him about anything." ~Anonymous Friend and City Park Prophet

By Presvytera Melanie DiStefano

My family and I often encounter a young man walking in the park with a companion, and he usually stops us to remind us that we can talk to God about anything. I have a sense that he is neurodivergent. I also consider him to be a prophet - my meetings with him usually come precisely when I need them.

I have taken the liberty to expand our acquaintance's list of things we can talk to God about, directed to parents of children with atypical development, and anyone else who needs reminded.

Mothers, did you know you can talk to God about anything? You can talk to Him about how exhausted you are, or how petrified you feel for your child, or how it feels like He's abandoned your family during trying times, or about the ways you fail to love your child as he or she deserves, or about how you sometimes take out your frustrations and anxieties on your husband?

You can also talk to Him about your daughter's sweet laugh that makes your heart leap out of your chest, or the mischievous glint in your son's eyes when he has a novel idea, or the ingenious way your toddler without a limb is learning to scoot from point A to point B.

Fathers, did you know you can talk to God about anything? You can tell Him that you feel inadequate as a parent, that everyone expects you to be the strong one with all the answers, but in reality you are afraid and confused. You can tell Him if perhaps you are tempted to escape when things get stressful at home, and how you maybe feel left out and lonely?

You can also tell him how amazingly unique and funny your daughters' made-up songs are, and how proud you feel when your teen son faces bullying at school because of his differences with rare courage and dignity. Or how you wish you could redo reactions to unusual behaviors, or figure out meaningful ways to connect with your child.

Parents, did you know you can talk to God about anything? Sometimes, I need to be reminded of this truth. Perhaps some of you do too.

Send us your questions at: religioused@goarch.org

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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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!

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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."*