

THE ORTHODOX ORACLE

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church
Greensboro, NC
April 2026

OUR VISION: FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Directory Pg 2
Fr. Sarantis' Message Pg 3-4
Holy Week Schedule Pg 5
Journey to Pascha/Pascha
Candles/Vespers Reading
Pg 6
10 Geek Easter Traditions
Pg 7
Donations Great Lent Pg 8
The Tradition of the Church
Pg 9
Sunday School & Youth
Corner Pg 10
Pascha Picnic/Bible Study
Pg 11
President's Message Pg 12
Stewardship Blessings Pg13
Philoptochos News Pg 14-15
Worship Life Pg 16
The Resurrection of Lazarus
Pg 17
Decorating the Epitaphios/
Drive Thru Food Festival
Pg 18
Effective Parish Assessment
Pg 19
Community News Pg 20-21
Church Office Note/
Hospital Visitation Pg 22
Oracle Sponsorship Pg 23



The Resurrection of Lazarus

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your passion, You did confirm the universal Resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, We cry out to You, O Vanquisher of death; Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!



On St Lazarus' Tomb, which is situated in the city of Kition, Cyprus, is having the inscription:

"Lazarus the four days dead and friend of Christ."

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

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Layout/Composition

Orthodox Oracle Deadline

The 22nd of each month

Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Wednesday, 12 noon

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2026 Parish Council:

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

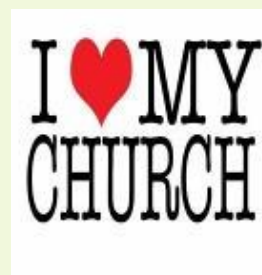
GOYA – Abeer Ma'ayeh, Liaison-Matthew Beckett

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 HOLY WEEK MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

**Beloved Faithful in Christ,
Christ is in our midst!**

As we near to embark on the sacred walk of **Holy Week**, it is my fervent prayer that with the Lord's grace, all of you continue to stay above all physically healthy, while increasing your spiritual Lenten exercises of prayer, fasting and alms giving. **Happy and blessed Holy Week! Happy and blessed Easter! (Kali Anastasis!)**

Holy Week for many Orthodox Christians, if not all Christians, is the longest walk of the liturgical year, however, it is so spiritually uplifting. No hindrances should stop us from celebrating and reliving our Orthodox faith, even if our church's doors are closed. Why? **Well, our homes are types of church when adorned with icons, hand censers and oil lamps.** Furthermore, remember that **our bodies are "the temples"** (Churches) where the Holy Spirit abides and keeps all of us calm in these stressful times; so, let us take our Holy Week's walk to uplift our spirits. Let us all now relive our Holy Week walk with passion.

On Palm Sunday, we begin the walk at the outskirts of Jerusalem, where together with the disciples we will **throw our "cloaks" over a colt** for Jesus to sit on, as He enters the city as a victorious King over death, (Lazarus story) while cheering Him waving our palm branches. Undoubtedly, everyone recognizes that this a strange scene, we all know that kings after a battle victories rode on great stallions, not donkeys. But Jesus chooses to be a living story, **a story of humility.** Amidst the Holy Week's walk, we will **walk on the hills of Gethsemane**, where the disciples fall asleep as Jesus prays in agony. The fully armed soldiers come to arrest The Prince of peace. Again, another strange scene! **Why would a peace maker be arrested?** We will then walk with Jesus to His mockery of a trial, full of lies and false accusations.

Perhaps we also walk away with Peter, who denies him three times. But hopefully, as Peter weeps tears of confession, **we too may weep with repentance**

tears, as we humbly recognize that we may also have denied Christ with our acts. Perhaps, we will walk on **Holy Thursday**, following Jesus as He carries His cross, **mourning along with the women.** And then we stop, **it's Good Friday.** Standing on our feet, we watch from afar, as Jesus, the Lord, the Champion King, hangs on the cross as He prays to God, the Father, and says: **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** Luke 23:34 A strange scene one may say, indeed!

But now what?

Will we accompany Jesus the rest of the way, to His Burial, **the Epitafios to bury our faults?** When our lives, or the lives of those around us, bring us to places of trial and suffering, will we walk with Jesus there?

Will we mirror Jesus to choose to embrace seeming humility by forgiving those who have hurt us in the past?

If we stop here and not convinced to follow Jesus to the end with **prayer, repentance and forgiveness**, then we may miss the victory of His Holy Resurrection, our prize, our own resurrection, to which we had raised our palm branches on Palm Sunday.

We will probably miss it, because perhaps we may not have included in our Holy Week's walk **the great feast of Lazarus' resurrection.** And if we missed it, then we did not have the opportunity to dwell on **the scene when Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus**, His best friend, who had died and laid four days in the tomb. Perhaps we missed the joyous words of our champion King that were cry out loudly: "... He called out in a loud voice, **"Lazarus, come out!"** The man who had been dead came out with his hands and feet bound in strips of linen, and his face wrapped in a cloth." John 11:43

Why is the Lazarus' Resurrection so important to us? It is because we are the today's Lazarus, whom Christ will raise from the dead. By the raising of Lazarus from the dead notice how Jesus caused

Continued on page 4

A PASTORAL HOLY WEEK MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Continued from page 3

Lazarus' resurrection. He said, "And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice. Lazarus, come forth."

Saint John Chrysostom comments on this, why did he not say, "In the name of My Father come forth"? Or "Father, raise him up"?

Christ omitted all these expressions to show by His actions His independent authority, His wisdom, to show not only by words, but by His deeds, power....

This is that of which He spoke, "The hour is coming, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John 5:28

My beloved, **It was Lazarus' resurrection (Icon on the front cover) that brought out the crowds on Palm Sunday.** Jesus had no illusions that raising Lazarus from the dead would convince everyone.

What about you? Has He convinced you?

It is my hope that your Holy Week's walk that you will follow may bring you and your family health, protection, love, understanding, repentance and wisdom that Lord Jesus is the King of Kings and the Son of God, Who loves all of us so much. Let us love Him with our hearts. Don't miss His Holy Resurrection! Follow Him habitually in church. Wishing all of you a blessed Pascha (Easter), *Kali Anastasis!*



**FROM OUR FARM —
→ TO YOUR DOOR**

SCAN ME



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HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

For the Faithful who are NOT ABLE to attend the services, ALL Holy Week services will be **STREAMED LIVE VIA YOUTUBE**

Dormition of the Theotokos Greensboro - YouTube

Saturday, April 4, Sunday of Lazarus

- ♦ Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Sunday, April 5, Palm Sunday

- ♦ Matins 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10:00am
- ♦ Bridegroom Service, 6:00pm

Monday, April 6, Holy Monday

- ♦ Bridegroom Service, 6:00pm

Tuesday, April 7, Holy Tuesday

- ♦ Bridegroom Service, 6:00pm

Wednesday, April 8, Holy Wednesday

- ♦ Holy Unction Service, 5:00pm

Thursday, April 9, Holy Thursday

- ♦ Liturgy of St. Basil, 9:30am;
- ♦ The Passion (12 Gospels), 6:00pm

Friday, April 10, Holy Friday

- ♦ Apokathelosis
(Descent from the Cross), 3:00pm;
- ♦ Lamentations, 6:00pm

Saturday, April 11, Holy Saturday

- ♦ Liturgy of St. Basil, 9:30am;
- ♦ Resurrection Service, 11:00pm

Sunday, April 12, *EASTER*, Holy Pascha

- ♦ Agape Service, 12:00pm

PLEASE NOTE: There was an error on the schedule in some of the Easter cards mailed. **The Agape Service on Easter is at 12pm.**



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 5th GREAT WEEK BEGINS		***** GREAT AND HOLY WEEK ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 10th		GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 12th NO FASTING!		***** BRIGHT WEEK HOLY PASCHAI (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



The Sunday School Program will be selling Pascha Candles every Sunday leading to Pascha, as well as during Holy Week.

\$10 per candle.

The candles will be available in the narthex and in the fellowship hall during coffee hour.

Please, see Madalina Body or Maureen Zeidan with any questions.

The Agape Vespers Gospel Reading

Do you read a foreign language?

Please consider the Agape Vespers Gospel reading (John 20:19-25) in a foreign language.

Please contact Father Sarantis or John McQueary to volunteer to read at the Agape Vespers to take place on Sunday, April 12 at 12:00pm.

(Note: language assignments will be awarded on a first come, first served basis)





Hellenic World

10 GREEK EASTER TRADITIONS

1 Fasting (Σαρακοστή)



Weeks of fasting before Easter – no meat, focusing on faith and discipline

3 Saying “Χριστός Ανέστη”



At midnight we say;
“Χριστός Ανέστη”
(Christ is Risen)



Response: “Αληθώς Ανέστη”
(Truly He is Risen)

4 Baking Tsoureki & Koulourakia

Traditional Greek Easter bread and biscuits made at home with love



7 Palm Sunday Crosses

Palm leaves are blessed and made into crosses



9 The Holy Light (Άγιο Φως)

The flame is passed from candle to candle – symbolizing the Resurrection



2 Godparents & Candles (Λαμπάδα)



Godparents give their godchildren a decorated candle for the Resurrection service



4 Baking Tsoureki & Koulourakia

Traditional Greek Easter bread and biscuits made at home with love



5 Red Eggs (Κόκκινα Αυγά)

Eggs dyed red to symbolize the blood of Christ and new life



6 Holy Week (Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα)

Church services every day leading up to Easter – deeply spiritual



8 The Midnight Resurrection Service

Church at midnight, candles lit, lights off → then “Χριστός Ανέστη”



10 Easter Sunday Feast

Lamb on the spit, family together,



DONATIONS for GREAT LENT & PASCHAL SEASON 2026

GREAT LENT:

Flowers for Icon of Theotokos on Fridays

- 1st Salutations - \$75
- 2nd Salutations - \$75
- 3rd Salutations - \$75
- 4th Salutations - \$75
- Akathist Hymn - \$100

Flowers for *Stavroproskineosis*
(3rd Sunday) - \$300

Bottles or Cases of Nama Wine

Incense for Great Lent - \$250

Flowers for Icon of Palm Sunday - \$75

Palms & Daphne for Palm Sunday - \$750

Fish for Palm Sunday Luncheon - \$750



HOLY WEEK:

Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom - \$75

Holy Unction: \$100 (3 items below)

—Extra Virgin Olive Oil

—Flour for Holy Unction (5 lbs.)

—Seven Candles for Holy Unction

Flowers for Icon of Mystical Supper - \$100

Flowers for Icon of Crucifixion - \$100

Candles for the Holy Cross & Epitafios – \$100

12 Candles for the Twelve Holy Gospels - \$100

Head Flowered Wreath (Holy Cross) Holy

Thursday - \$200

Flowered Wreaths (Holy Cross) Holy

Thursday for the arms and floor \$100
each

1 White Sheet for Body of Christ

Flowers for Decorating the Epitafios and

Epitafios Roses for the Faithful - \$2,000

Rose Water Holy Friday - \$50

Rose Petals for Holy Saturday Morning - \$100

Clergy Resurrection/Anastasi Candle – \$150

Flowers for Icons of the Resurrection - \$150
each (2)

GREAT & HOLY PASCHA:

Paschal Easter Lilies (20) for Anastasi – \$30ea

Please complete the information below and return entire form to the **Dormition of the Theotokos Church** office along with your payment.

Kindly make checks payable to Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church.

(Please print)

Item _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____

Donation Amount: \$_____ Check _____ Cash _____ Credit Card _____

Credit Card: Visa _____ MasterCard _____ American Express _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature (for Credit Card) _____

Payment can also be made on our website under “Give”.

Please designate in the ‘Memo’ line what you are purchasing. Thank you!

<https://give.tithe.ly/?formId=29d39a22-9b64-4170-bb48-a325aaa3b55a>

The Teachings (Tradition) of the Church

Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home by Anthony Coniaris (Excerpts from pages 148-151)

Before Going to Church on Good Friday

Before going to services on Good Friday, **it is good for parents to discuss and explain to their children the meaning of the beautiful services** in which they are called to participate. In order to assist parents in their explanation **we offer the following highlights.**

The Service of the Descent from the Cross

On the morning of Holy Friday the service of the Royal Hours is held consisting of Old Testament prophecies relating to the passion and crucifixion of Christ and their fulfillment in the New Testament.

The Vespers for Great and Holy Friday are celebrated in the afternoon. During this service the final events of the life of Christ are retold: **the trial, the sentencing, the scouring, the mocking, the crucifixion, the death, the descent from the cross, and the burial.**

As the Gospel account is read, The priest, representing **Joseph of Arimathea**, removes the Body of Christ from the cross, **wraps it in a shroud** and carries it into **the altar, representing the tomb.** Toward the end of this service the priest lifts a large, embroidered icon depicting Christ lying in the tomb, and carries it in a procession around the church. Finally he lays it in the specially decorated symbolic tomb in the center of the church. During the procession the following hymn is sung: The Noble Joseph, when he had taken down the most pure body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen, and anointing it with spices, placed it in a new tomb. **It is around the symbolic tomb of Jesus, beautifully decorated with flowers, that the evening service will take place.**

The Service of the Lamentation of Our Lord's Death

In John 19:25 we read, "...standing by the cross of Jesus were **his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.**" Mary the Theotokos stood by the cross and watched her Son die. **In the Lamentations that we sing on the evening of Great and Holy Friday, Mary expresses her feelings about her Son's death. Sharing these feelings we sing with her the Lamentations.** In most Orthodox Churches the

Lamentation hymns are printed for worshippers to follow. **Make it a point to meditate** prayerfully on these beautiful hymns during the service.

The Tradition of Passing under the Tomb

Some Orthodox Churches observe the custom of **having children pass under the symbolic tomb** of Christ on Good Friday. This act is a renewal of our baptismal commitment. When we are immersed in Baptism, we die with Christ. When we are raised out of the water, we are resurrected with Him. **Falling on our knees and crawling under** the tomb of Christ **is an act of humility** and commitment to Christ on the day when He shed His precious Blood for our salvation.

The Procession

Good Friday in the Orthodox Church commemorates not only the death and burial of Jesus **but also His descent into Hades** where He preached His Gospel to all those who had died before His coming. **In this descent Jesus Who is the Life encountered and destroyed death.** As the hymn says: *Thou hast come down to earth to save Adam and having not found him on earth, Thou hast descended, searching for him, even in Hades.* The solemn procession around the church on Good Friday with the embroidered icon of the entombed Christ is not only a funeral procession; it represents also the Son of God, the Immortal One, proceeding through the darkness of Hades pre-announcing the joy of the Resurrection. During this procession the choir sings the hymn, "Holy God...." The procession stops a number of times for the priest to address petitions to the Lord.

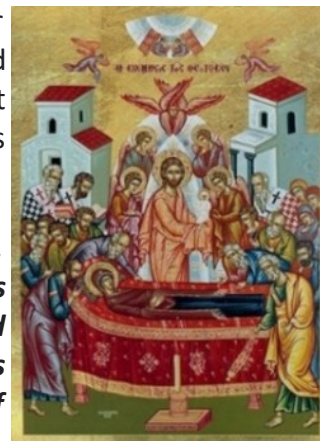
The Old Testament Prophecy (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

The theme of the Resurrection is picked up in the Old Testament reading from the Prophet Ezekiel. God speaks to the prophet who is looking into a huge valley filled with the dry bones of the dead. God announces to Ezekiel that the earth is not intended to be a universal grave yard. Not death but resurrection is the ultimate destiny of man. **The dry bones will hear the words of the Lord. The dead will live again. "Behold, my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of the graves...."**

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH CORNER

Christ is Risen! *Truly He Is Risen!* May God bless and keep you and your families this Paschal season as we celebrate Great and Holy Passover and Bright Week. We have some updates below and some recognition for our Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Parish Festival. Good luck to all of our winners as they participate in the District SJOF!

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (Paschal Homily of Saint John Chrysostom)



YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES

Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Parish Festival:

Congratulations to our Junior and Senior Division participants and their families. Below are the results from this year's parish level SJOF.

Senior Division

- ◆ First Place – Zoe Langley
- ◆ Second Place – Alexander Hartigan

Junior Division

- ◆ Tie for First Place - Susannah Rivers
- ◆ Tie for First Place - Reina Zeidan

Youth Church Beautification Project

Thank you to those who participated in pulling weeds, adding mulch, and planting flowers in our front beds in March. The blooms will look beautiful for Holy Week & Bright Week. We truly turned our parish into a garden!

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR APRIL

April 10, 2026 – Holy Friday

- Apokathelosis – Taking Down of Christ from the Cross.
- Service begins at 3PM

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR APRIL

April 12, 2026 – No Sunday School

- Great and Holy Passover Egg Hunt and Luncheon
 - * Egg Hunt for the Youth
 - * Pot Luck style Lunch after the egg hunt for families

April 19, 2026 – Sunday School

- Thomas the Believer Sunday - Gospel Reading : John 20:19-31

April 26, 2026 – Sunday School

- Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women - Gospel Reading: Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8
- **Artoklasia/5 Breads Service for our Myrrh-bearer Ministry**

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.



Pascha Picnic!



We are excited to announce the return of the Pascha Picnic, to be held immediately after the Agape Service on Sunday, April 12, 2026. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to come together as a church family to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ in fellowship and joy.

We will have lamb on the spit, and we kindly ask each family to bring a side dish to share with everyone.

If you would like to join, please sign up on the sheet located in the fellowship hall or contact Abeer Maayeh.

A suggested donation of \$10 per person or \$30 per family will be collected on the day of the picnic.

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.

God bless you!

We will begin our WEEKLY CLASSES on Wednesday, September 16th.

Please make a note of this.

2026 STEWARDS

Fr Sarantis & Pr. Norma
Loulakis
John & Katherine McQueary
Ali & Michelle Akbary
Jimmy & Miranda
Anagnostopoulos
John & Lindy Bakatsias
Sarah Bassett
Jacob & Shannon Bishara
Najwah Bishara
Kris & Erin Blindenbacher
Anthony & Anna 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
Victor & Caroline Handila
Violet Hanna
Eleni Triantis Harrison
James & Anastasia Hartigan
H. Marie Hudak
Andrew Irwin & Natalya
Shelkova
Sana Kattan
Terry Kokenes
Angelo & Elizabeth
Kontoulas
Gregory & Eleni Kuhn
Eugenia Macovei
Julia Macovei
Joanne Macropoulos

Chris & Maria Mandaleris
Elias & Maha Matar
Faris Matar
Vickie Matsakides
Lampros & Theodora
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
Cory & Nicki Smith
Mikhail & Ginah Soufia
Ralph & Heidi Stucki
James & Catherine Stuman
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,



As we come to the final days of Holy Week, I pray that each of you is finding strength and peace as we continue this sacred journey. These are the most solemn and meaningful days of our Church year, and I encourage all of us to remain present, both spiritually and physically, as we prepare to gather for the Resurrection Service and the joy that awaits us.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has already contributed to making Holy Week so beautiful and reverent. From the chanters and altar servers, to those who have decorated the church, served in the Narthex, and worked behind the scenes, your efforts help ensure that this time is honored as it should be.

It is also a joy to share how much our parish is growing. During Great Lent and Holy Week, we welcomed more than 20 new members into the Orthodox faith through Baptism and or Chrismation. This is a tremendous blessing and a sign of God's work among us. Let us continue to welcome and support these new members as they become part of our parish family.

I would also like to provide a few important updates. The parish hall flat roof, church flat roof, and fascia replacement project, which was approved at our Fall Parish Assembly, has now been successfully completed. Thank you for your support in making this necessary improvement possible. In addition, we are nearing completion of our security camera project. Soon, every exterior door of both the church and parish hall will be covered, helping us better ensure the safety and security of our community.

Looking ahead to Sunday, I warmly invite all of you to join us for our Pascha Picnic following the 12:00 PM Agape Vespers service on Pascha (Sunday the 12th). This is always a wonderful time of fellowship as we come together as a parish family. If you are able, please bring a dish to share. The church will provide lamb and pork for us to enjoy, as we celebrate the Feast of Feasts.

I also encourage everyone to attend our upcoming Parish Assembly on May 17, and to consider volunteering for our Drive-Thru Greek Festival on May 8-9. Your participation in these events is essential to the life and strength of our parish.

May God grant each of you strength as we complete this Holy Week and prepare our hearts for the great Feast to come.

Καλή Ανάσταση!

With love in Christ's service,

John McQueary
Parish Council President



STEWARDSHIP BLESSINGS

Develop a heart of generosity

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Acts 20:35

A friend who regularly volunteers to serve meals to the needy illustrates the truth behind Jesus' teaching. "It's so rewarding to help," she says, explaining that the time and hard work is worth it. "I think I get more out of it than they do."

When we give generously, it is often we who are blessed. But more than just enjoying a pleasant emotion, the act of giving truly blesses us by shaping our personalities and developing our character. That's a truth affirmed by research. (Check out "The Science of Generosity" white paper from the University of California at Berkeley, or The Science of Generosity Initiative at Notre Dame University!)

Generous people tend to be the kind of good folk we want as friends and neighbors. And they frequently are generous not only with their money but also their time, their love and their very selves. In other words, they are not merely generous, they are generous hearted.

Anyone can develop a generous heart, or a more generous heart. Begin by deepening your relationship with God by seeking guidance and wisdom in daily prayer. Then simply begin to pour yourself out for the sake of others, giving generously as a spiritual exercise and discipline. Here are four ideas that won't cost you a dime:

Give a smile. Smile at everyone you see. You may be surprised at how it changes your mood.

Give a nice thought. Say something nice to everyone – family and friends, co-workers, parishioners, store clerks, folks in an elevator.

Give a courtesy. Hold a door open for the person behind you; at the grocery, let someone with just one or two items go ahead of you; stop for pedestrians.

Give your time. Find ways to serve people face to face: tutor schoolchildren, serve community meals, visit your church's shut-ins, teach ESL, volunteer at a homeless shelter.

Jesus said it is more blessed to give than receive. When we give our time, talents and possessions, God blesses us by developing in us a generous heart.

God bless you and yours!

The Stewardship Team

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS 2026 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



The Ladies Philoptochos Society is the largest Christian women's philanthropic organization in the United States. Our ministry reaches out to help those in need. Fund raising projects enable our chapter to support such worthy causes as Mobile Meals, Shepherd's Wheels, Orthodox Mission Priests, Disaster Relief, Saint Basil's Academy, St. Stephen's Camp, St. Barbara's Medical Ministry, school supplies and Christmas for needy families. Scholarships within our parish, special parish needs, and various other emergency and philanthropic requests also receive our support.

A table is in the Fellowship Hall for interested prospective members to ask questions and/or learn more about our many ministries. Current members may also pay their 2026 Membership dues (\$35) during this period. Another way to join Philoptochos or renew your membership is to fill out the online Google form. All the details are in this form [👉 2026 Membership Form - Google Forms](#) - it only takes a few clicks to complete this form! You may then make your 2026 membership payment via paper check, cash or credit card any Sunday in the Fellowship Hall when our Treasurer, Regina Reece, or a Board Member, is set up to receive payments. Full Membership is open to women of the Greek Orthodox faith at least 18 years old. Associate Membership is available to any non-Greek Orthodox man or woman with a Greek Orthodox spouse, or to Greek Orthodox men. Associate members shall enjoy all the privileges of membership, except the right to vote or hold office.

This is a wonderful opportunity for new friendships and fellowship and the personal satisfaction of helping those in need. Our members are warm and friendly, caring and giving, and most energetic! Whether a homemaker and mother, working part time or full time, retired, or a student, the talents you have will enhance our organization. Our many projects and various circles allow individuals to volunteer as little or as much as their schedules permit. Your membership will assure that our ministry of being "a friend to the poor", will continue to thrive touching those in need. We extend a personal invitation to both men and women in our church community 18 years and older to join our philanthropic organization.



Dear Beloved Church Family,

Thank you so much to our energetic and gracious leaders of the Pastry Sale and Vendor Market, Nora and Elaine, and the many volunteers that helped with pastry cutting, packing, selling, warmly greeting guests, and setting up and breaking down the space. Thank you to those who helped publicize the event through Facebook, print media; and a **special thank you to Mary Ann Contogiannis** who spoke to radio hosts of WSJS early Friday morning. (Mary Ann made her bespoke *Baklava Cupcakes* that premiered at our sale). Our vendors were happy to be included in our market, and many are looking to return for December's event.

Pastry Sales and Markets *help us support our own parish, local and national nonprofit organizations, and Metropolis and National funding initiatives that support our faith through programs that reach children and adults.* Below you'll see a list of many of the organizations our chapter of Philoptochos helps fund.

HERE'S YOUR IMPACT:

Local / Chapter Support

Adult Center for Enrichment (Wellspring)
 Authora Care (Hospice)
 Autism Society of North Carolina
 Cone Health Heart and Vascular Fund
 Cone Health mammography Scholarship Fund
 OCMC – Support a Mission Priest
 Meals on Wheels – Senior Resources of Guilford
 Pilot Elementary School EC Classrooms
 Senior Wheels and Medical Transport – Senior Resources of Guilford
 Tunnel to Towers Foundation (national organization supporting First Responders and Veterans)
 Greensboro Urban Ministry
 Zoe for Life Pregnancy Ministry

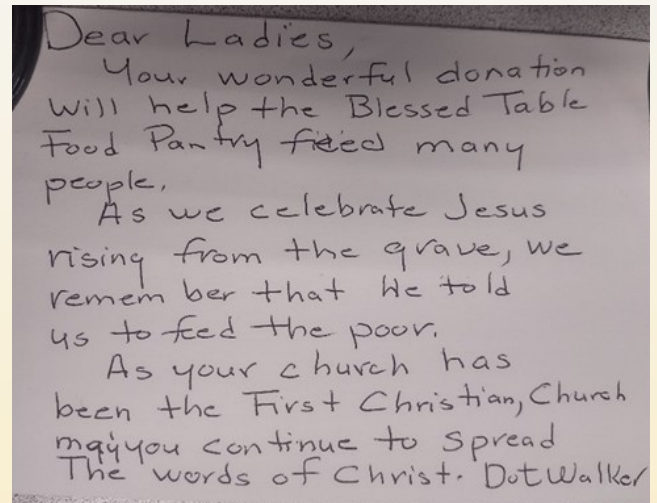
National

Hellenic College/Holy Cross
 Orthodox Prison Ministry Fund
 Children's Medical Fund
 Sisterhood of St. Basil Academy Fund
 Ecumenical Patriarchate Fund
 Support a Mission Priest Fund

Metropolis of Atlanta

St. Stephen's Camp
 Christ the Good Shepherd Special Needs Camp
 Clergy Education Fund

Attached is a special thank you note from **A Blessed Table** for the food donations last



quarter. Also attached is a photo from the **EC Classroom at Pilot Elementary** that you helped support. The teachers and students were so excited and appreciative of all of the items received. We're still collecting the regularly used items as well; you can still drop those off behind the curtain on the stage (shaving cream, Playdoh, slime, disinfecting wipes, baby wipes)

Plans have begun for our Graduation Sunday to be held on June 7th. We will be recognizing and honoring our parish graduating High School and College graduates in church, presenting the 2026 Philoptochos and Pete Harris Scholarships, and honoring all graduates with a special reception during Fellowship Hour. We are asking all graduates, high school, college, post graduate in the Class of 2026 or family members of graduates to please send their name, email address to Catherine Stuman (ccstuman@yahoo.com) as soon as possible so they may be contacted about this special day.

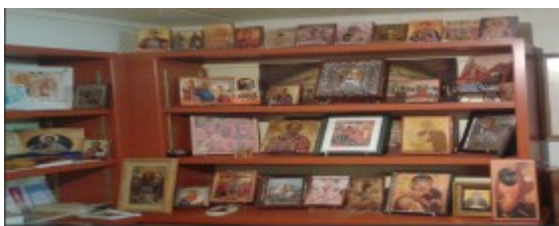
March 1-April 26: Philoptochos and Pete Harris Scholarship applications will be available in the Fellowship Hall beginning March 1st. Completed Scholarship applications with all other required information are to be returned no later than Sunday, April 26th at noon. Electronic applications

can be requested by contacting Gwen Varsamis at 336-601-6717 or email gwen.varsamis@gmail.com. High School seniors are eligible and are encouraged to apply for the Philoptochos Scholarship. The Pete Harris Scholarship application is available to any student accepted or currently enrolled in a vocational training program, a junior college, or college/university, or a post graduate student. Scholarships will be awarded on Sunday, June 7 when we celebrate Graduation Sunday and honor our Parish High School, College, and Post Graduate students in the Class of 2026!





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



WORSHIP LIFE / APRIL 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- Wednesday, April 1st Presanctified Liturgy—6pm
- Saturday, April 4th Saturday of Lazarus, Divine Liturgy—9:30am
- Sunday, April 5th Palm Sunday —Orthros 8:55am / Divine Liturgy 10:00-11:30+am
- Monday, April 6th Holy Monday, Bridegroom Service—6pm
- Tuesday, April 7th Holy Tuesday, Bridegroom Service—6pm
- Wednesday, April 8th Holy Wednesday, Holy Unction Service—5pm
- Thursday, April 9th Holy Thursday, Liturgy of St. Basil—9:30am / The Passion (12 Gospels) —6pm
- Friday, April 10th Holy Friday, Apokathelosis (Descent from the Cross)—3pm / Lamentations—6pm
- Saturday, April 11th Holy Saturday—Liturgy of St. Basil—9:30am / Resurrection Service —11pm
- Sunday, April 12th Easter-Holy Pascha, Agape Service —12pm / Pascha Picnic—1p
- Sunday, April 19th Thomas Sunday—Orthros 8:55am / Divine Liturgy 10:00-11:30+am
- Sunday, April 26th Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women—Orthros: 8:55am / Divine Liturgy 10:00-11:30+am

• ***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 April. Unless otherwise indicated, the Weekly Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00 am & most likely will finish by 10:30am+





The resurrection of Lazarus Celebrated the Saturday before Palm Sunday

The raising of Lazarus is a miracle of Jesus recounted only in the Gospel of John (11:1–44) in the NT in which **Jesus raises Lazarus of Bethany from the dead four days after his entombment**. The event is said to have taken place at Bethany – today the Palestinian town of **Al-Eizariya**, which translates to "**the place of Lazarus**".

The Church commemorates his feast on **Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday** when Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, triumphantly enters through the gates of Jerusalem on a donkey. The raising of Lazarus after four days in the tomb marks the center of the Gospel according to St John and, accordingly, it is a climactic point: **Jesus clearly shows by the raising of Lazarus that He is the Christ, the Messiah**.

Upon Christ's arrival to the tomb, Martha, the sister of Lazarus, reproached Him for not coming sooner to save Lazarus from his illness and eventual death - "if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

We are also told that Christ wept for Lazarus. This may be interpreted in two ways: Jesus' weeping for his beloved friend, as well as Jesus' weeping for the sinful state of humanity which has been led to death.

It is here that the Lord replied to Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall yet live. And whoever believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

The miracle of the raising of Lazarus is the culmination of John's "signs". It explains the crowds seeking Jesus on Palm Sunday and leads directly to the decision to kill Jesus.

It is notable that at John 11:11, after being told by his disciples to fear those who would kill him, Jesus states that Lazarus sleeps, and that He will go "wake him up". The disciples thought Jesus meant Lazarus was actually sleeping. However, Jesus speaks plainly and tells them that "Lazarus has died". This is to be clear that Lazarus has died in the flesh and is not sleeping or unconscious.

According to tradition, St Lazarus was compelled to seek refuge away from Jerusalem in Cyprus to avoid the anger of the High Priests who wanted to kill him and became the first bishop of Cyprus. The tomb of St Lazarus was found in Kittium with his relics inside, bearing the inscription "Lazarus, the Friend of Christ".



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TRADITION: Decorating the Epitaphios

Holy Week is an intense week of services, day and night. We live the Passion of our Lord and Savior, His trials, mockings, the Cross, His death, burial, and Resurrection.

On Good Friday, we commemorate the death and burial of Christ.

There are three services: **First**, the Royal Hours which are read on Friday morning, consisting mainly of readings from the Psalms and prophecies. **Immediately after this, it is the tradition for women and girls to prepare the funeral bier, known as the Kouvouklion.** They decorate this wooden structure with beautiful flowers as it will hold the Epitaphios. This is a large icon richly embroidered on a cloth that depicts Christ after he has been removed from the cross, accompanied by Panagia and others as told in the Gospel account. **The name, Epitaphios, literally means 'winding-sheet'.**

It is common for the troparion of the day to be embroidered around the edges of the icon: ***The Noble Joseph, taking down Thy most pure Body from the Tree, did wrap it in clean linen with sweet spices, and laid it in a new tomb. The Kouvouklion*** is placed in the middle of the solea in front of the Holy Doors. During the afternoon service, known as the ***Apokathelosis***, which commemorates Jesus' burial, the priest proceeds around the church holding the Epitaphios above his head and laying it down inside the Kouvouklion. He places the Gospel next to it and the faithful approach reverently one by one to bow down deeply and venerate both. A hymn on this day tells us: *Come, let us see our Life, lying in the tomb. He is there so that He may give life to those who lie in the graves.* Also, another: O Christ, who holds the whole world in Your hand, You accepted to be held in the sepulcher, so that You might rescue humanity, which was swallowed by Hades, and, as immortal God, give us life and immortality.



Mark your calendar for our annual
Spring Drive-Thru Food Sale this coming May 8 & 9.

We need your help to make this event a success!

Volunteers are needed for various roles on the days of the sale.

**Please sign up using the sheet located on the hall board or contact
 Ellen Scaturchio at 336.681.8416**

Your support will make a huge difference, and we appreciate your time and effort!

Thank you for helping us serve our community!



Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church

Effective Parish Assessment



Your Voice, Our Future: 10 Minutes to a Stronger Parish

As a member of our parish family, your voice matters. The Effective Parish Assessment is a short, confidential survey designed to help parish leadership understand how to improve parish life, identify priorities, and strengthen our health and effectiveness.

CONFIDENTIAL

Your responses are 100% anonymous so please share honestly.

QUICK & EASY

The assessment takes only 10–15 minutes.

DEFINE THE FUTURE

Your feedback helps parish leaders improve what matters most.

TAKE THE PARISH SURVEY TODAY



WHY PARTICIPATE?

- **Direct Impact**: Your unique experience provides insights that parish leadership cannot gain any other way to shape our future.
- **Strength in Numbers**: Every single confidential response increases the accuracy of our results, helping us build a healthier, stronger parish for tomorrow.

Scan the QR code to take the parish survey or go to
<https://www.effectiveparish.org/survey>

Thank you for taking the time to help our parish



COMMUNITY NEWS



Nikolaos Dimitrios Samaras

4.1.1934 — 2.27.2026

Our most beloved and precious baba, Nikolaos Dimitrios Samaras, 92, passed peaceful, at home on Friday, February 27, 2026, with his family by his side. He was born April 01, 1934, in a small village in Evrytania, Greece. As a young child, he moved with his family to Lamia, Greece, that was always home to him. He graduated high school in Lamia and served in the Greek Army. Upon completion of his military service, he earned a degree in Business Management Study, at The Emboriki Sxoli, Lamia, Greece.

He married Efrosini Tsoukalou, and they spent 67 glorious years together in love, faithfulness, laughter, happiness and partnership. They were inseparable. Together, they have three children, Dimitrios (Jimmy), of Winston-Salem, Vasiliki (Kiki) and husband Kyriakos (Kirk) Tarasidis, of Greensboro, Argiroula (Anjie) and husband

Miltiades Stergakos, of New York and three amazing grandchildren, Georgios Tarasidis, of Connecticut, Nikolaos Tarasidis, of Philadelphia, and Eleonora Stergakos, of New York.

They immigrated to the United States and were proud immigrants working hard to pursue their American dream. Together with his wife, Efrosini, they owned and operated Nick's Restaurant for 38 years. Nick and Frances, as they were lovingly known by their customers, worked side by side every day, opening on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day to serve hot meals to anyone in need.

After retirement, he enjoyed gardening with his wife, taking care of his three huge chestnut trees, his five fig trees and his beloved peach tree. In the fall, he collected his chestnuts and shared with his friends and neighbors.

His joy was spending time with his grandchildren. He was full of life and laughter. He loved sharing funny stories and jokes with everyone. His eyes were always sparkling and full of love. He was a man of great integrity and unconditional love. He never met a stranger and was loved by all who met him.

He was a faithful Greek Orthodox Christian, served in various capacities at his church, The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, where he loved being a part of the Church Services Committee, and greeted everyone with his incredible smile and funny wit at every service.

He served as President of The Velouchi Organization, a charitable organization, that helps the elderly, sick and needy in the Evrytanian region of Greece. The funeral service for Nikolaos was held on Wednesday March 4, at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 435 Keating Drive, Winston-Salem, NC. Burial will be at Forsyth Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 435 Keating Drive, Winston-Salem, NC in his memory.

Thank you to everyone for your prayers, love, cards, flowers, and memorial donations for our precious father.

Also, thank you to Father Sarantis for his love and prayers and for being a part of the funeral of our father.

**Kirk & Kiki Tarasidis
The Samaras family**



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 March: **Sunday School, Parish Council Father Sarantis, Presvytera Norma Loulakis & Anastasia & Yiannis Riso. THANK YOU!**

CHRISMATIONS/BAPTISMS: The servant of God, **Andrew Ellen**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Andrew, on **Sunday, February 22**. The Sponsor was Shadi Zeidan. May God grant him many years!

The servants of God, **Cole Burgess & Olivia Burgess**, were received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Baptism on **Saturday, March 7**. The Sponsors were Matthew Beckett & Nicki Smith. May God grant them many years!

The servant of God, **Benjamin Triplett**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Benjamin Christos, on **Saturday, March 21**. The Sponsor was Chris Mandaleris. May God grant him many years!

The servant of God, **Bryson Nguyen**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Athanasios, on **Saturday, April 4**. The Sponsor was Matthew Beckett. May God grant him many years!

The servant of God, **Daniel Santos**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Daniel, on **Saturday, April 4**. The Sponsor was Matthew Beckett. May God grant him many years!

The servant of God, **Sullivan Blake Whittle**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Joseph, on **Saturday, April 4**. The Sponsor was Matthew Beckett. May God grant him many years!

CONDOLENCES

The Church extends condolences to **Kiki & Kirk Tarasidis and family** upon the recent falling asleep of Kiki’s father, **Nikolaos Dimitrios Samaras** on February 27, 2026. **May his memory be eternal.** May the Lord comfort Kiki and her family during these difficult days.

The Church extends condolences to **the family of Afaf Khail Ganim** upon her recent falling asleep on March 19, 2026. The funeral was held on March 24, 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.

The Church extends condolences to **Evangelia Kalogiros and family** upon the recent falling asleep of her husband, **John Kalogiros** on March 22, 2026. The funeral was held on March 25, 2026 at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church. Burial is at Forest Lawn Cemetery. **May his memory be eternal.** May the Lord bring comfort to Evangelia and family during these difficult days.

The Church extends condolences to **Allison Covey and family** upon the recent falling asleep of her mother, **Marcia Ring** on March 20, 2026. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Friday, April 17, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, in Southport, NC. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations in her name to her favorite charity, St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital or the Cure Alzheimer’s Fund. **May her memory be eternal.** May the Lord comfort Allison and family during these difficult days.

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 & Thursday from 10am-2pm, Tuesday from 12pm—4pm & 4pm—6pm by appointment only for confessions 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!

SAVE THE DATES



Pascha Picnic

APRIL 12, 2026

Spring Drive-Thru Food Sale

MAY 8-9, 2026

Greensboro Greek Festival

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2026



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

- ◆ Monthly Issue
- ◆ 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."*