

THE ORTHODOX ORACLE

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church
Greensboro, NC
August-September 2026

OUR VISION: FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

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THE HOLY FEAST OF DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS – August 15

At the time of Her death, seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate of His Handmaiden" (Luke 1:46-48) and, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, *She bowed down to Him*, and the Lord bid Her enter into Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God."

On the occasion of celebrating the Holy Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, the name day of our beloved church, the President of PC, John McQueary, the entire Parish Council, the Ladies of Philoptochos, Sunday school, our Youth Council and myself wish to extend to all of you and yours a blessed community Feast of Dormition of the Theotokos. Many healthy and joyful years to all!
Hronia polla!

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

Theological Advisor/Editor-In-Chief

Jackie Uber

Layout/Composition

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Church Office Email Address

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

patersarantis@yahoo.com

Office Manager

office@dormition.nc.goarch.org

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 – Yianni Varitimidis

Altar Servers Ministry – Matthew Beckett

Bible Study Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis

Music Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis, Michelle Gilliam

Camp - Stephen's Summer Camp

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

Atlanta - Atlanta, GA (atlmopolis.org)

Cantors/Music – Michelle Gilliam (Rhonda)

Dance Group (s) – Barbara Vaughan, Mary Ann

Contogiannis, Emily Mihelich, Erin Blindenbacher

Daughters of Penelope – Su Peterson

Orthodox Fellowship (50+) – Maria Cropper

Greensboro Urban Ministry – Ian Chavez

Greek Festival - Shadi Zeidan

Narthex Ministry - Terry Kokenes & Shane Rivers

Myrrh-bearers Ministry – Brittany Beckett

Youth Ministry – Matthew Beckett (Director)

Church Beautification - Chris Mandaleris

Philoptochos – Nicki Smith, President

GOYA – Abeer Ma'ayeh, Liaison-Matthew Beckett

Youth Director - Matthew Beckett

Stewardship – Pete Graham

Sunday School – Madalina Body

Website Ministry - Martin Ross



Ministry Prayer

Heavenly Father!

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

A PASTORAL Paschal MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

The Feast of the Orthodox Summer Pascha (Easter)

My beloved Faithful and spiritual Family of Dormition of the Theotokos!

I greet you and yours with the most Holy Theotokos' intercessions to our Lord and Savior for health, happiness and prosperity to all. Christ is in our midst!

It's August and this means that we will be celebrating the feast of our beloved church of Dormition of the Theotokos. Happy and blessed Feast of Dormition of the Theotokos to all and yours! Many joyful and healthy years to all!

My beloved, as we will be gathering once again in the presence of the Lord and His Saints, in our beloved church, to celebrate the Feast of the **"falling asleep"** or the Dormition of Theotokos, a major feast-day of the Church, during the **15 days of August, we will have Paraclesis** (Supplication) **services, a Holy Unction Service, the Great Vespers and Divine Liturgy.** We are blessed that **His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos, our Hierarch, will honor** us once again with His presence on the eve and the day of the Feast and Sunday. It is indeed an immense honor when a Bishop visits a community. Therefore, we must also honor His Eminence with our presence and love.

Here in the United States, some of the Orthodox Church's major feast-days, like this one, easily fall through the cracks of our lives, because they so often occur in the middle of our busy workweek. Sadly, many American Orthodox Christians will rarely interrupt work schedules for religious observances as it is done in other countries, i.e., Greece, Slavic countries and others. In those countries, the faithful treat it just as people who will normally drop everything for the funeral of a beloved friend, most of these people took the day off from work out of respect for the Theotokos. Their lives come to a sobering halt to be in liturgy for this feast. But not only that it was like going to the funeral of a beloved friend, there was something more to this feast-day, for them something joyful as well...like what things that happens at Pascha (Easter). They celebrate it like a picnic type idea wherever there is a church that it is dedicated to the Theotokos. Much like that we will have again in our community as last year, a **panigyri** (an outdoor happy festivities, music, dance, food, and good fellowship) that I

hope no one will miss! **But, why?** Why would Christian make such a celebration out of a religious observance that commemorates the death of someone so beloved as the Theotokos?

Well, it begins with the Church's use of the expression, "falling asleep." Of course, the Church is offering us much more than just a nice empathy to make us feel better about the holy mother's death. There's powerful meaning behind this phrase, "falling asleep." Throughout the Vespers service (**I pray that you all attend Friday, August 14th, at 6:30pm**) the theme is that the Mother of Life has *passed over* into **the heavenly joy**, into *the divine gladness and unending delight* of the Kingdom of her Son. *So her physical death*, because of her Son's physical resurrection, becomes a point of great joy—merely a sleep—through which she awakens in the divine glory of her Son. Saint John of Damascus called it, "the deathless death." The hymns tell us that **at the funeral of the Theotokos, both the multitude of angels and all of those living on earth overflow with elation.** "Heaven is glad, and angelic hosts celebrate with joy; and the inhabitants of the earth are jubilant as they sing funeral anthems unto you as the Mother of Him who rules over the entire world."

At first glance, it's easy to understand why the angels would be so joyful. They now have the Mother of God in their midst...but why we, all of us, on earth would be so jubilant? **Shouldn't we be sad?** The Queen of Heaven is no longer physically in their midst. Of course **the icon of the feast shows our Lord's disciples gathered around the Theotokos in great mourning.** But the hymns tell us that when **she was assumed from the earth into heaven, our sadness is turned to joy.** **Why?** It's because, in this final event, as Christ escorts her to heaven, she continues uniting all the things on earth with the things in heaven. "And when they saw you were taken up from the earth into the heights, full of joy they cried aloud the salutation of Gabriel: Rejoice, O chariot of the Godhead; rejoice, the only woman who in childbirth united the things of earth with the things on high." All of this exemplifies the truth of Christ's resurrection...His victory over death for all the rest of us...a source of boundless joy!

Continued on page 4

A PASTORAL Paschal MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Continued from page 3

What an amazing paradox! **While this Feast is called the “Falling Asleep of the Theotokos,” in reality, it’s a celebration of her life and her victory over death.** It’s a celebration of her “Passover” from this life into life eternal. **It’s a celebration that confirms the promise of our own resurrection in Christ.** *Theotokos* (The One who gave birth to God) is a sign of God’s faithfulness to all of humanity...especially to those who faithfully follow her Son like she did. As He raises her from the dead, so also, He raises the rest of us. **This is why we can call it the Summer Pascha.** It’s indeed a Paschal event. The hymns of the feast affirm that the Virgin Mary experienced her own personal Pascha (Passover) by passing through death and rising to eternal life. Saint John of Damascus shines a light on this great mystery, saying, *“O how does the source of life pass through death to life? She dies according to the flesh, destroys death by death, and through corruption gains incorruption, and makes her*

death the source of resurrection.” Thus, being alive in heaven, as Queen and Mother of our Lord, we can now ask her intercessions to help us transform our own impending death into the same Passover victory over death.

My beloved, at the Divine Liturgy we hear at the end of the Dormition Gospel Reading that Mary’s blessedness ***belongs to all who “hear the word of God and keep it” (Luke 11:27-28).*** So, when it comes right down to it, participating in the Dormition feast services of the Theotokos is about preparing us for our own fate... death. Our Lady, the Mother of God shows us how we also should die...with “our souls magnifying the Lord and our Spirit rejoicing in God our Savior.”

May our Gracious Lord engift us all to experience His amazing virtue of the Theotokos. A blessed Summer Pascha. Amen!



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→ TO YOUR DOOR**

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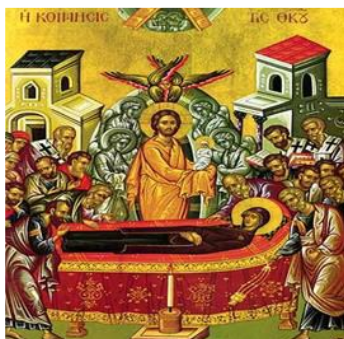
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Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church Greensboro, NC



In giving birth you remained a virgin, and in your Dormition you did not forsake this world, O Theotokos. For as the Mother of Life you have yourself passed into life, and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

-Apolytikion of the Feast

INVITATION

Join us for a time of worship and spiritual joy of the “**Summer Easter**”, as our community of Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church of Greensboro, NC, celebrates the Feast of our Patron Saint, **The Dormition of the Theotokos**.

His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta will be presiding both services, the Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy.



The Great Vespers that includes the **Artoclasia Service** along with chanting of **the Lamentations of the Theotokos** will be celebrated on **Friday, August 14, 2026, starting at 6:30 p.m.**

On **Saturday, August 15, 2026**, there will be **Divine Liturgy**, starting with **Orthros** at **8:45 a.m.**

A reception sponsored by the Ladies of the Philoptochos Sisterhood “St. Philothea” will follow at our community social hall at the conclusion of both services.

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

John McQueary, President of PC • Parish Council

• Ladies of Philoptochos “St. Philothea” • Our Youth and the entire community.





PANIGIRI *Celebration Luncheon*

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NC



CELEBRATING THE DORMITION TOGETHER

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE DORMITION OF
the Most Holy Theotokos

FAITH • FELLOWSHIP • FAMILY

We are honored to welcome
✦ HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SEVASTIANOS ✦
who will be with us for this special day!

SCAN HERE
TO PURCHASE
TICKETS



AUGUST 15, 2026

1 PM – 5 PM



TICKETS:
\$40 IN ADVANCE | **\$50** DAY OF
KIDS 12 AND UNDER ARE **FREE!**



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of Greece!



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and keep our traditions
alive!

ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS OUR
CAPITAL BUILDING CAMPAIGN

WHERE **FAITH** BRINGS US TOGETHER AND **FELLOWSHIP** KEEPS US TOGETHER.

[HTTP://WWW.DORMITION.NC.GOARCH.ORG](http://www.dormition.nc.goarch.org) AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026

2026 STEWARDS

Fr Sarantis & Pr. Norma Loulakis	Eugenia Macovei
John & Katherine McQueary	Julia Macovei
Ali & Michelle Akbary	Joanne Macropoulos
Cecelia Antahades	Katina Madison
Jimmy & Miranda	Chris & Maria Mandalieris
Anagnostopoulos	Elias & Maha Matar
John & Lindy Bakatsias	Faris Matar
Sarah Bassett	Vickie Matsakides
Xalli Bezares	Lampros Megremis
Jacob & Shannon Bishara	Marc & Lula Melisko
Najwah Bishara	Halvor & Cecilia Melom
Kris & Erin Blindenbacher	Eddie & Maria Merrell
Anthony & Anna Bowen	Sam & Emily Mihelich
Garrett & Kara Bowen	Christian & Camelia Moraru
Cole Burgess & Olivia	Mike Morfessis & Lilyan Schmitz
Hutchinson	Hodgist Mosley & Alexandria
Austin & Jessica Call	Levette
Brad Caplanides	James & Panayota Mott
Cameron Cline	Bryson Nguyen
Carl & Maria Colozzi	Nick & Hollis Oberlies
Brandon & Allison Covey	Peter Pappas
James & Maria Cropper	Willard & Mary Parnell
Hamp & Lula Culler	Michael & Nina Pasick
Demetri & Joy Dascalakis	Vasiliki Patterson
Soteria Dascalakis	Elaine Potts
Austin & Laura Davis	Peter & Phyllis Poulos
Donald & Helena DeRegnier	Maria Pradetto
Mike Dolianitis	Regina Reese
Noelle Foteini Drollas	Shane & Katie Rivers
Andrew & Lexi Ellen	Minerva Ross
Glen Farley & Jasmin Orlando	Ardele Sakellaris
Aphrodite & Alexandra Faza	Ellen Scaturchio
Elizabeth Gardner & Josh Pardue	Roger & Celia Sims
Brier & Elaine Gay	Jimmy & Linda Sipsis
Pete Graham	Cory & Nicki Smith
Scott & Christa Graham	Mikhail & Ginah Soufia
Hailey Hall	Ralph & Heidi Stucki
Victor & Caroline Handila	James & Catherine Stuman
Maher & Niveen Hanna	Eskandar & Donya Surena
Violet Hanna	Kirk & Kiki Tarasidis
Eleni Triantis Harrison	Jim & Hedy Thevaos
James & Anastasia Hartigan	Arthur Toompas
Diogenes & Cindy Hatzisavvas	Zack & Sheila Touloupas
Steve & Elizabeth Hollingsworth	Ellen Trastelis & Spencer Wright
H. Marie Hudak	Theodore Triantis
Andrew Irwin & Natalya	Benjamin & Emily Triplett
Shelkova	Voula Boutis Tselides
Michael James	David Valavanis
Sana Kattan	Yianni & Effie Varitimidis
Ira & Robin Knight	Kimmon & Gwen Varsamidis
Terry Kokenes	Philip Valavides
Angelo & Elizabeth Kontoulas	Marshall & Patricia Yandle
Gregory & Eleni Kuhn	Shadi and Maureen Zeidan
Morgan Long	Nora Zirps

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow faithful parishioners,

As we begin the blessed Dormition Fast, I pray that each of you and your families are enjoying a peaceful summer and that this sacred season provides an opportunity to grow closer to our Lord and to His Most Holy Mother. May this time of prayer, fasting, and preparation help us ready our hearts for the great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Our parish's name day is quickly approaching, and I encourage everyone to participate in as many of the celebrations as you are able. We are especially honored to welcome His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos, who will once again bless us with his presence during this joyous occasion. Our celebration will include:

- **Friday, August 14** – Great Vespers at **6:30 p.m.**, followed by a reception with His Eminence.
- **Saturday, August 15** – Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition, followed at 1 PM by our annual **Panigyri Celebration**. The Panigyri is a ticketed event.

I encourage every member of our parish to attend these services and festivities as your schedule permits. Our Panigyri is not only a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our parish family and our patronal feast, but it is also an important fundraiser for our building fund to help us build to meet our growth needs and expand the mission of our church. If you have not yet purchased your tickets, I hope you will consider doing so and invite your family and friends to join us.

Just as importantly, let us all extend warm Christian hospitality to His Eminence and to the many visitors who will be worshipping and celebrating with us. This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase what makes our parish a real community: a community rooted in faith, love, and genuine fellowship. A warm smile, a welcoming conversation, and a helping hand can leave a lasting impression on those who visit our church during this special weekend.

Ecclesiastical New Year is also quickly approaching (September 1st) and this is good time for us all to examine our relationship with Christ and His Church. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has completed a 2026 Stewardship Pledge Card and for your continued generosity in supporting our parish. Your faithful stewardship makes it possible for our church to carry out its ministries, maintain our facilities, and plan responsibly for the future.

As we move through the remainder of the year, I kindly ask that you fulfill your stewardship pledge as you originally submitted it, if you are able. If your financial circumstances have changed unexpectedly and you are no longer able to fulfill your commitment, please contact the church office so your pledge can be revised accordingly. Having accurate stewardship information is essential as the Parish Council prepares budgets and plans for the coming year.

Thank you for your continued love, prayers, and faithful support of our parish. I look forward to celebrating our Feast Day together and praying with all of you during this blessed Dormition season.

May God bless you and your families, and may the Most Holy Theotokos intercede for us all.

In Christ's service,

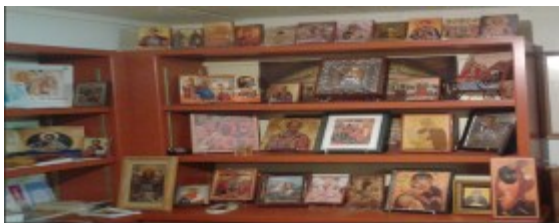
John McQueary
Parish Council President





BOOKSTORE

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



WORSHIP LIFE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- **Sunday, August 2** **9th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Wednesday, August 5** **Paraclesis Service 6pm – 7pm**
- **Thursday, August 6** **Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 9:30 – 10:30am+
- **Friday, August 7** **Paraclesis Service 6pm – 7pm**
- **Sunday, August 9** **10th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Wednesday, August 12** **Paraclesis Service 6pm – 7pm**
- **Friday, August 14** **Great Vespers / Feast of Dormition of the Theotokos 6:30pm – 8:00pm**
His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta presiding!
- **Saturday, August 15** **The Feast of Dormition of Theotokos** — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta presiding!
- **Saturday, August 15** **Our Feast Picnic** — 1pm – 5pm
- **Sunday, August 16** **11th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am – Div. Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Sunday, August 23** **12th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am – Div. Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Sunday, August 30** **13th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am – Div. Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Sunday, September 6** **14th Sunday of Matthew** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Tuesday, September 8** **The Nativity of Holy Theotokos** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 9:30+ am
- **Sunday, September 13** **Sunday Before the Holy Cross** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Monday, September 14** **The Elevation of Venerable and Life-Giving Cross** — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Sunday, September 20** **Sunday after the Holy Cross** — Orthros: 8:50 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am
- **Friday, September 26** **The Falling Asleep of St John, The Theologian** — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 9:30+ am. **NOTE: Celebrated on Sunday, September 27th**
- **Sunday, September 27** **1st Sunday of Luke** — Orthros: 8:55 am - Divine Liturgy: 10:00+ am

The above schedule and times supersede any other schedule.



Weekday Liturgies . . .

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



Questions & Answers

What Is the difference between a spiritual advisor and a psychologist?

A spiritual father who must practice his work based on the Orthodox Tradition clearly differs from a psychologist who works based on a human-centered view of the man and his life.

A psychologist wants to balance man psychologically. **A spiritual father aims** at leading man to deity.

Psychologists use the positions of the School they represent. **A spiritual father uses** the eternal word of God revealed to the Prophets, the Apostles and the saints.

A psychologist thinks that illness is due only to traumatic experiences of the past or so-called repressed memories. **A spiritual advisor knows well** that it is not just memories of the past and repulsive experiences stored in the subconscious, but that a part of the soul, the mind, which is the eye of the soul, suffers.

A psychologist uses the method of questioning and listening and tries to help people to realize their problem and helps them to mature psychologically.

A spiritual advisor, illuminated by the Grace of God, identifies the problem, which is the darkness of the mind and imaginations, and by the orthodox method, which is purification and illumination, tries to lead people into the theory of God.

A psychologist moves humanly with thoughts and ideas. A spiritual advisor moves in a **theanthropic (God/man)manner**. He uses the healing method, but also, through the Divine Mysteries, sends God's Grace to the heart of the patient.

Psychologists think everything is moving on a human level. **They do not know the existence of the devil and the energy** of the uncreated Grace of God.

A spiritual advisor knows the difference between God's Grace, the energy of the devil and the spiritual and physical sickness.

A psychologist reaches the point where the patients realize their problem and deal with it.

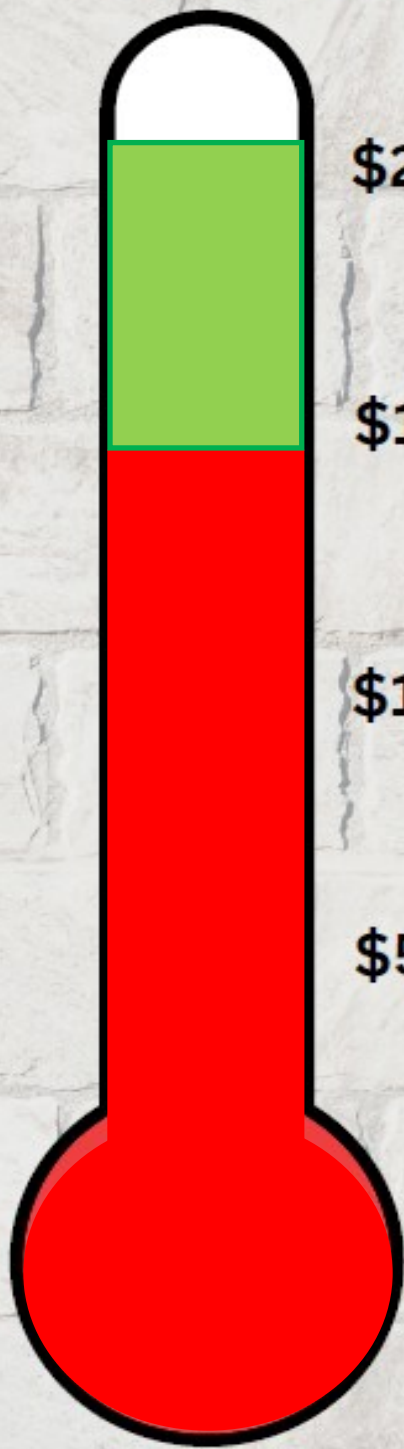
A spiritual father leads men to repentance, which consists of their total transformation. He does not lead them to the elimination of some experiences, but to the transformation of their passions.

I think one can find more points that show the huge difference between a psychologist and a spiritual advisor.

And it is a pity to have such a comprehensive teaching on human purification and cure in our Church, but to end up with the adoption and use of the psychological theories of Westerners, who seek to treat the Westerners who, of course, have got to that point for ignoring the tradition of Nepsis.

* From the book "Mental Illness and Health of Metropolitan of Nafpaktos and Agios Vlasios

Rise Up & Build 2026 Stewardship Campaign



STEWARDSHIP BLESSINGS

What Are Your Gifts For?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Stewardship Team

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

Class of 2026

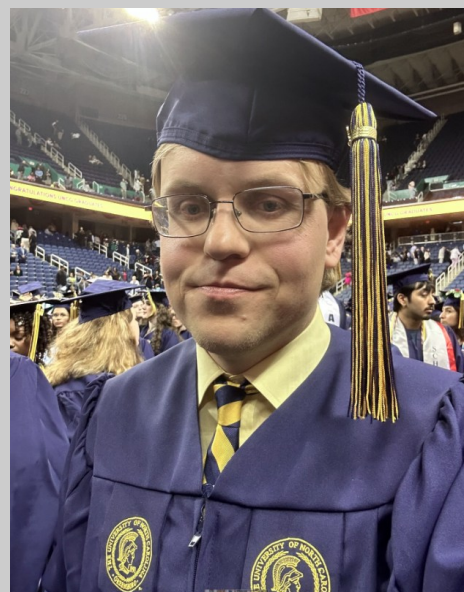


Duna Kassis is the daughter of Jareer and Abeer Maayeh Kassis. Duna graduated with high honors on May 8, 2026 from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, with a concentration in pre-law. In college, Duna was Student Body Vice President, a University Marshall, and a member of the Disciplinary Honors Program, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, and Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society.

Duna has attended church services faithfully and regularly at our beloved Dormition of the Theotokos Church during her college years. She also has helped teach the high school OPA dancers and the GOYA Sunday school. Duna is now preparing for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) while working. Duna looks forward to attending law school in the future. Congratulations Duna!

William Randall Kwapil is the son of Tom and Lori Kwapil. He began attending our beloved Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church in September of 2019 after attending our Greek Festival. He said he joined our parish family because of the close community where he felt closest to God. William was baptized in April 2022. His Godfather was the late Mark Tzouvelekas. William graduated May 8, 2026 from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

In college, William was a member of the History Club and the French Club. In addition, William worked at the Greensboro Historical Museum. Since graduating, William has continued working at the museum. He also will be doing a year of post Baccalaureate research at UNCG. William then plans to attend graduate school to pursue a Master of Arts degree or a PhD in History. Congratulations William!



Adrianne Varitimidis is the daughter of Yianni and Effie Varitimidis, and the granddaughter of Soteria Dascalakis. Adrianne graduated from Harvard University on May 28, 2026, with a Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies in the field of Museum Studies. Adrianne's academic journey reflects a deep commitment to the preservation and interpretation of history, art, and culture. Her graduate studies are complemented by meaningful professional experience at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., a research library and museum that serves as a "Home for the Humanities" and is known for its distinguished collections in Byzantine, Pre-Columbian, and Garden and Landscape studies. Adrianne's pursuit of graduate studies at Harvard is a testament to her belief in the value of education and the importance of lifelong learning, recognizing that the quest for knowledge is not merely a season of life but a calling to enrich not only ourselves but also our families, our communities, and our faith.

Adrianne works and lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband, Bobby Hodges. Our congratulations to Adrianne!



Upcoming Events

FEAST-DAY INFORMATION!

Every year the church celebrates The Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15. It is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the liturgical year, as well as our church's name day! We begin by decorating the **Kouvouklion in the morning on August 14th for the evening Dormition of the Theotokos Vesper Service**. All women in our parish are encouraged to come and participate. *Please see weekly bulletins or emails for times.*

What: Dormition of the Theotokos Great Vespers Service, Artoclasia Service and Lenten Reception

When: Friday, August 14th

We will have a Lenten Reception following the Great Vespers service on Friday, August 14th. Philoptochos members please bring a Lenten dessert to add to our table. With our many guests from surrounding parishes attending our service, we need your help to make this a lovely and welcoming reception. If you can assist with set up or clean up, please see Catherine Stuman.

What: Dormition of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy

When: Saturday, August 15th

SAINT FANOURIOS FEAST DAY & CAKE BLESSING!

What: Fanouropita cake blessing in honor of the Feast Day of Saint Fanourios (August 27)

When: Sunday, August 30th

We will have Fanouropita cakes to be blessed and distributed to parishioners as they leave the church. Fanourios comes from the Greek verb fanerono which means "I reveal". Saint Fanourios is the Saint for lost things. Prayers may ask him for help finding a lost object, reveal a new meaning in life, redirect them or reveal actions which should be taken, and to restore health.

All Philoptochos chapters throughout our Metropolis donate annually to the Fanouropita Fund. This fund benefits the youth in our Metropolis so that all who are interested will be able to attend youth activities held in the Atlanta Metropolis. The money will be distributed by the Metropolitan when help is requested by the parish priest. If you wish to donate to this fund, checks may be made out to Philoptochos with Fanouropita in the memo. Your kind donations will be accepted at the end of Sunday's Divine Liturgy.

A tray will be passed on behalf of the students of Holy Cross Seminary that will contribute to the **Hellenic College Holy Cross Scholarship Fund** on Sunday September 13th for the feast day of the Holy Cross On September 14th

Please check our weekly bulletins and emails for dates and times for pastry preparations for the festival and koulourakia baking dates.



*Thank
you*

Donation to Simple Gesture on June 3, 2026

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH CORNER

Christ is Risen! *Truly He Is Risen!* As we approach the Fast and Feast Day for our beloved parish, I hope all of our families and children have had a great summer and are ready to begin another Ecclesiastical Year and Sunday School Year. Details will be coming via email on registration and classes. We will have a full schedule of events around our Feast Day in August as well as a Registration period for the 26/27 Sunday School year.

"Oh! So impressive are your mysteries! You are known, O Pure one, as the throne of God Most High; and from earth to heaven, you were transported today. Your glory is grand and bright, with graces shining divine and resplendent light. O virgins, be lifted up into the heights with the Mother of God the King. "We salute you, Lady full of grace: O rejoice! For the Lord is with you and is granting to the world great mercy through you." (Stichologia For Great Vespers of the Dormition of the Theotokos)



YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES

Sunday School 26/27 School Year: – We will begin Sunday School Registration early in August. Please keep an eye out for email updates for dates and times. Father Sarantis and I will be looking at new materials and curriculum which the Archdiocese is providing for the GOA. Details and updates will be sent out with the registration packet for students and the new 26/27 school year.

Sunday School Teachers Needed: If you would be interested in volunteering as a new teacher for the 26/27 Sunday School year please contact Matthew Beckett and Father Sarantis.

Greek Dance Groups: Our Greek Dancers have begun practice for the upcoming Feast and Greek Festival. We have three Groups again this year; 1st-5th, 6th-8th, and GOYA. Teachers are listed below.

- GOYA – Barbara Vaughn
- 6th-8th Grade – Mary Ann Contogiannis
- 1st-5th – Emily Mihelich & Erin Blindenbacher

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

GOYA Youth Dinner: In August, after the Feast Day for the Dormition, we will be having a GOYA (8th-12th Grade) Pizza Dinner at Elizabeth's Pizza, next to the church. This will be a fun get together for these students before going back to school. Please check your email GOYA parents for updates on the date and time for this event.

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.



PASTORAL CARE: We all Need A Prayer

Coming Together for Paraklesis: We All Need Prayer

Many times we hear “It seems everybody needs prayer right now.” The world is in uncertain Others are preparing for surgeries, baptisms, weddings, graduations, beginning the job search process and making changes in their careers in an uncertain economy. Politics changes. New beginnings, hardships and joys are around us all of the time and they all require prayer. Sometimes we are carried off by the adrenaline rush that comes with preparation for these big, life-changing events. It is difficult to stop in the middle of all of this energy and find that quiet peaceful moment to pray. To pray for strength, guidance and mercy. To pray for healing and courage. To pray for patience and greater faith. With so many needs in our lives and in the lives of our families and friends, it is fortunate for us that **the Church calls us together during the first fourteen days of August to celebrate the Paraklesis service to the Mother of God.**

Paraklesis is the Greek word used for a service of a supplicatory canon. To supplicate or intercede, means to ask something on behalf of someone else. During the Supplicatory Canon **we are asking the Theotokos, or Mother of God, to intercede for us before God.**

The Theotokos, because she bore God in her womb and raised Him, is closer to Him than any other human being. **Although she is not divine herself**, she has such boldness before God, that when she pleads with Him on behalf of people or a cause, **He listens and saves.** We have no accounts of Christ saying to the Theotokos, “No. Let it be.” Instead, He went out of His way to do what she asked. His first miracle was performed at the wedding of Cana to address her concern that the hosts were running out of wine. There is also an account of a monastery where the monks had been lazy and disobedient. This monastery was about to be attacked by violent robbers. Although God was allowing this attack to take place, the Theotokos, who watched over the monastery, chose to warn the monks in a miraculous way. They were able to protect the monastery and themselves from the attack and then repented of their lack of vigilance and reestablished order, giving thanks to the Theotokos for saving them.

In these and numerous other examples, God has shown His Mother to be a merciful helper of all who ask her. This is why we can confidently pray, **“Most Holy Theotokos, save us!”** While the ultimate salvation of a man is in the hands of God, if it is the will of the Mother of God that this man should be saved, she will stand as a bold intercessor before God on his behalf.

Some have asked, “Why ask the Theotokos to save us if we can ask Christ Himself?” This is a valid

question, though it probably did not occur to earlier generations who were from cultures where the mother’s role was central and intimate. **The Church offers another question in response:** If there is a powerful son, whom you are afraid (however unnecessarily) to approach within his house, but his virtuous mother is there at the gate with open arms—would you ignore the mother? Would you not throw yourself at the mother’s feet and ask her to help you—to relay your message to the son, to help you to approach the son? Your request to the mother does not diminish the son’s power and authority. On the contrary, it reinforces his authority, for it is only because of her relationship with him that she is able to plead with him on behalf of those who come to her in their weakness.

The relationship between Mother and Son is reason enough to honor the *Panagia* (Most Holy). Additionally, it is helpful for us to remember that she was invited to bear Christ because her entire life was a pure and holy life—completely dedicated to God. Her parents prayerfully brought her into the world. They nurtured her in the teachings of the Law and the Prophets and sent her to live in the Temple. The Panagia never sinned of her own will, though, being human, she participated in the fallen nature of mankind. It is difficult to imagine never sinning of one’s own will. Instead, we who fall short of the glory of God, multiple times everyday, must practice the art of getting up again and again. Thankfully, we have the Theotokos to help us bear our struggles, anxieties and sorrows.

The Paraklesis is one of the most beautiful services of the Church. Many people have memorized the text and have these consoling words available to pray on any occasion: “Pure one, fill my heart, with a merriment, a happiness. Bestow on me your spotless joy. For you have given birth to Him who is the Cause of joy. Most Holy Theotokos, save us. Deliver all of us from the passions, Theotokos, most pure, for you bore the timeless Deliverer. And you bore the Peace, the Peace which has surpassed all thought.”

As we travel through the beautiful days of July and enjoy the activities and fellowship that come with summer, we can look forward to the wonderful period of preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, the feast to which our where we are given the opportunity to supplicate her each evening in the Paraklesis service. We all need prayer, and we all need help in drawing closer to Christ – let us run to the Panagia and ask for her intercessions!





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 May, June & July: Camelia & Christian Moraru, Elaine Potts & Nora Zirps, The Parish Council, Shadi & Maureen Zeidan, Sunday School & Philoptochos, Families with the last names starting with A & B, The Stewardship Committee, Lilyan Schmitz & Mike Morfessis, DOT-GOC Parishioners, Austin & Laura Davis, Brier & Elaine Gay, and Lula Melisko. **THANK YOU!**

CONDOLENCES

The Church extends condolences to the **Matar, Handal, Kattan, Zeidan, and Stephan families** upon the recent falling asleep of **Elias Saba Matar** on July 21, 2026. The funeral was held on July 24, 2026 at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church. Burial at Forest Lawn Cemetery. **May his memory be eternal.** May the Lord comfort **Elias’** family during these difficult days.

BIBLE STUDY

BIBLE STUDY SUMMER SESSION: August 5th & August 12th—We will study The 11 Resurrection Holy Gospel readings being read during the Sunday Matins service. We will begin our WEEKLY CLASSES on **Wednesday, September 9th**



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**MARK
YOUR CALENDAR!**

The 2026 Greensboro Greek Festival is September 25-27!

We are just a few months away from our annual parish-wide fundraiser, the beloved Greensboro Greek Festival. This event is a cornerstone of our community, and every helping hand truly makes a difference. Let your involvement be part of your stewardship to the Dormition of the Theotokos. We encourage everyone to be present, volunteer, sponsor, and share the festival with your friends, coworkers, and family.

Stay Connected

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/greensborogreekfestival?igsh=dmU4aHhjb2dndGw3>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/19tX9FANYc/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Volunteer Sign-Up

DO NOT WAIT — sign up today: <https://app.unison.io/schedules/QLz9hxBxzvHq83gEOVJ0u>

Thank You to Our Station Sponsors!

We extend our sincere appreciation to the following families and businesses for sponsoring festival stations:

- **Alpha Omega Financial, LLC (Scott & Pete Graham)** — Beer Station
 - **The Kattan and Hanna Families** — Loukoumades Station
 - **The Ross Family** — Coffee Station
 - **Kiki & Kirk Tarasidis** — Frappé Station
- **Anonymous and Ben & Emily Triplett** — Orthodox Bookstore Station

Available Festival Station Sponsorships

If you would like to sponsor a festival station, please review the available sponsorship opportunities below and contact Shadi Zeidan directly.

- **Wine Station** — \$1,500
- **Outside Food Station (can be sponsored by multiple families)** — \$15,000
- **Inside Food Station (can be sponsored by multiple families)** — \$15,000
 - **Pastry Station (can be sponsored by multiple families)** — \$15,000
 - **Kids Corner** — \$2,000

Donate Toward Specific Festival Food Items

If you prefer to donate toward specific items, here is what is needed:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount Needed</u>	<u>Price/Case</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Lamb Shank	18 cases	\$165	\$2,970
Pita Bread	50 cases	\$40	\$2,000
Gyro Meat	25 cases	\$125	\$3,125
Crinkle Fries	50 cases	\$40	\$2,000
Tzatziki Sauce	30 cases	\$40	\$1,200
Chicken ½	17 cases	\$125	\$2,125
Chicken Souvlaki	750 lbs	\$3.5/lb	\$2,625
Pastichio	80 pans	\$45	\$3,600

SPONSORED

SPONSORED

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

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



Church Office Note.....

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

Fr. Sarantis is in the office: Monday, works remotely, in office by appointment only, Tuesday—Thursday from 10:30am-3:30pm, and Tuesday from 3pm—6pm by appointment only for confessions, extending the office hours. You may also schedule a pastoral appointment with him at any time at home or at the office at your convenience.

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

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

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



IMPOTANT NOTE:

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

August & September

**** (September 15 is the deadline for the October/November Oracle) ****

October & November

December & January

February & March

April and May

June and July



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."*