

December, 2020

From the Desk of Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos Parish Registry, Progress Report Upcoming Church Services and Events Youth Ministry and Organizations News

From the Desk of Fr. Angelo

What is Christmas?

Christ is born, Glory Him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him. Christ is on earth, Exalt Him. O all the earth, sing unto the Lord, and sing praises in gladness, O ye people, for He has been glorified.

The first Ode of the Katavasia of Christmas



We once again celebrate Christmas, that is, the important and reverent festival of love and compassion of God. Within the brilliance of this joyful feast, Our Lord Jesus, the humble infant in the manger, carries the light-bearing essence of our lives.

The Son and the Word of God, out of infinite love, become man. He was obedient to the pre-existent plan of God the Father for the salvation of the world. He accepted to be clothed with the flesh of our humanity. He who through His abundance, enriches the universe became poor so He could enrich us with His divinity. He took on human flesh to save the icon of God that each of us are and restore to us the immortality we once had.

But what is the essential meaning of the Feast of Christmas? Christmas calls us to live in communion with God, with the all-holy Person of Christ so that we may feel in our hearts our Mother, which is His Church and is the cradle of His holy Body. We celebrate Christmas when each of us experience the unique generational customs and practices of our individual ethnicities under a single unified Orthodox faith, life, and sense of piety.

Christmas offers us the hope and love of Christ, the fullness of Christian life, the anticipation of peace and redemption from the darkness of sin. Christ is born to reveal once again the true meaning of life and the dignity of our human personhood and to give us His assurance of the salvation promised to every person.

Each of us need to hear plainly the message of the Angel who announces the great tidings of joy. Christ is born for our salvation, a true and total salvation! His salvation does not require our sacrifice to receive His Grace, but He sacrifices Himself for the life of the whole world so that humanity may live. And He who offers us this kind of sacrifice demonstrates the authenticity of the salvation offered.

Let us therefore keep this true Paschal light of Christ's hope radiant in our hearts and let us not allow any desperation or crisis from extinguishing this light of God from our lives. Let us also take to heart the needs of our brothers and sisters as our needs, and sacrifice ourselves for those less fortunate, the helpless, the immigrants, the sick, those with dire needs and those imprisoned, whether unjustly or justly. For each of them could be Christ Himself in mortal "clothing" and appearance.

The real message then of Christmas is as St. Athanasios wrote in his treatise "On the Incarnation"

"God became Man ($\varepsilon v \alpha v \theta \rho \omega \pi \eta \sigma \varepsilon v$) so that we could be made like God ($\theta \varepsilon \sigma \pi \sigma \eta \theta \omega \mu \varepsilon v$)."

This statement was not meant to breach the absolute ontological distinction between God and his creation but as he wrote earlier in the same treatise, "For as the Lord, putting on the body, became man, so we men are deified by the Word as being taken to Him through His flesh."

December, 2020

GOOD NEWS

With this message we recognize that the true Christmas is Christ. Our hope is that all of us will journey on the road to salvation together with Christ, to experience the holiness of the feast and through His Grace grant us theosis.

Τι Σημαίνει Εορτή των Χριστουγέννων?

Άγγελος Ασημινάκης

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε! Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἀπαντήσατε! Χριστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὑψώθητε. Ἄσατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ, καὶ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ, ἀνυμνήσατε λαοί, ὅτι δεδόξασται.

Η πρώτη ωδή από τες Καταβασίες Χριστουγέννων

Γιορτάζει ξανά τα Χριστούγεννα, δηλαδή την ημέρα την σπουδαία και πανσεβάσμια Εορτή της αγάπης, και φιλανθρωπίας του Θεού. Ανάμεσα στις λάμψεις της χαρμόσυνης εορτής ο Κύριος Ιησούς, το ταπεινό Βρέφος της φάτνης, αποτελεί την όντως λάμψη της ζωής μας.

Ο Υιός και Λόγος του Θεού από άπειρη αγάπη έγινε άνθρωπος. Υπήκουσε στο προαιώνιο σχέδιο του Θεού Πατρός για την σωτηρία του κόσμου. Καταδέχθηκε να ενδυθεί την υλικότητα του δικού μας σώματος. Εκείνος πού πλουτίζει τα σύμπαντα έγινε φτωχός, για να πλουτίσουμε εμείς με την Θεότητά Του. Έλαβε σάρκα ανθρώπου, για να σώσει την εικόνα Του και να απαθανατίσει την σάρκα μας.

Τι σημαίνει όμως ουσιαστικά η Εορτή των Χριστουγέννων; Χριστούγεννα σημαίνει να ζούμε την θεοκοινωνία με το Πανάχραντο Πρόσωπο του Χριστού, να αισθανόμαστε Μητέρα μας την Εκκλησία Του, πού είναι ἡ φάτνη της Αγίας Σαρκώσεώς Του. Χριστούγεννα εορτάζουμε όταν βιώνουμε τις χριστουγεννιάτικες παραδόσεις, τα ήθη, τα έθιμα του ορθοδόξου Γένους μας, πού είναι απαύγασμα της πίστεως, της ζωής, του ευσεβούς λαού μας.

Τα Χριστούγεννα μας παρέχουν ελπίδα, αγάπη Χριστού, περίσσεια ζωής, προσδοκία ειρήνης και απολυτρώσεως. Ο Χριστός γεννάται, για να ανακαλύψουμε ξανά το νόημα της ζωής, την αξία του ανθρώπινου προσώπου για να έχει προοπτική και δυνατότητα σωτηρίας ο κάθε άνθρωπος.

Πρέπει να ακούσουμε καθαρά το μήνυμα του Αγγέλου που ευαγγελίζεται σε μας χαρά μεγάλη. Γεννήθηκε για μας σήμερα Σωτήρας. Αληθινός Σωτήρας. Και είναι Σωτήρας, γιατί δεν θυσιάζει εμάς για να απολαμβάνει Εκείνος. Θυσιάζει τον Εαυτό Του, για να ζήσει ο κόσμος, για να ζήσει ο άνθρωπος. Και αυτή η θυσία δείχνει πόσο αληθινός είναι ο Σωτήρας.

Ας κρατήσουμε αναμμένη την ελπίδα και το αληθινών φως του Πασχας στις καρδιές μας και ας μην αφήσουμε καμία κρίση να εξορίσει τον Θεό από την ζωή μας. Ας νοιώσουμε την ανάγκη του διπλανού μας ως δική μας ανάγκη, κάνοντας βίωμα την θυσία προς τον άλλο, τον οποιονδήποτε άλλο: τον ανήμπορο, τον μετανάστη, τον ασθενή, τον εμπερίστατο, τον κοινωνικά αποκλεισμένο, αυτόν που θα μπορούσε να είναι Εκείνος, με άλλα ρούχα, με άλλη μορφή.

Το πραγματικό μήνυμα των Χριστουγέννων είναι πως έγραψε Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος, ότι «[Ό Θεός] γαρ ενανθρωπήσεν, ινα ημεις θεοποιηθωμεν.»

Με αυτό το μήνυμα κάνουμε πραγματικά Χριστούγεννα, Χριστούγεννα με Χριστό. Ευχόμαστε οτι τα Χριστουγέννα να σημάνει την συμπόρευσή μας στόν δρόμο της σωτηρίας, του αγιασμού και της κατά Χάριν θεώσεως μας.





GOOD NEWS



Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos, Presbyter 962 East Ave. Rochester, NY 1`4607 585-244-3377 agocny@gmail.com

November 11, 2020

Dear Annunciation Parishioners,

This letter serves to provide you with information that the parish council and I feel is important with regards to our finances. In addition, it is an appeal to help us triumph over the situation that COVID has placed our parish by helping close our potential year-end deficit. Firstly, thank you to everyone who has completed their 2020 Stewardship contributions and especially to those who have sent in additional monies to help. Secondly, we ask that those who have not yet completed their 2020 Stewardship to consider doing so over the next 6 weeks and where possible, increase your pledge, by whatever amount, to help close our potential year-end deficit.

Concerning our income and expenses, as you can imagine, the COVID situation has affected us in two major areas; stewardship and tray/candle collections. Average yearly stewardship is between \$240,000-\$250,000 and as of October 31st we have collected \$197,877. Normally, we see a rise in stewardship towards the last few months of the year and assuming that continues this year we expect stewardship to increase. Our biggest challenge, however, is the severe reduction in tray/candle collections, especially during Lent and Holy Week and the loss of revenue for the cancellation of our Greek Festival. Based on previous year's data, we had projected tray/candle collections to be roughly \$45,000 and Greek Festival revenue to be between \$60,000-\$80,000, however, due to the COVID shutdown were only able to collect about \$25,000.

With regards to church expenses, we have made every attempt to cut expenses where possible such as cutting back the secretary's hours during the summer, turning off A/C in the hall and church, decreasing the cleaning schedule, etc. Even with this we expect to close 2020 with expenses totaling \$407,000, (which is about \$50,000 less than 2019). When we add all other income sources for this year together with our current stewardship, we are left with a current deficit of \$65,000. (\$20,000 +\$45,000)

Thankfully, we had an extremely successful Golf Outing in September which netted \$25,000 so that reduces our end of year deficit to (\$65,000 - \$25,000) = \$40,000.

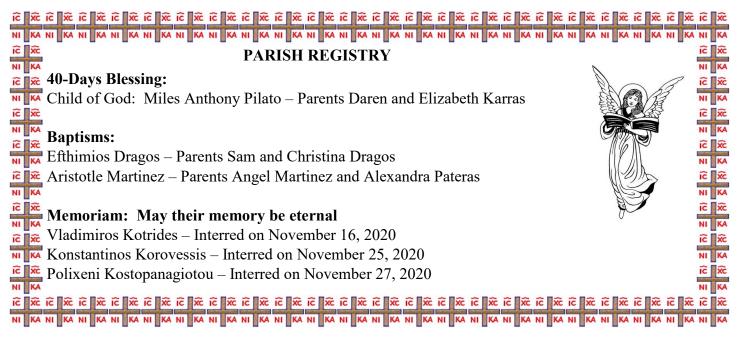
As we mentioned in the beginning of this letter, we are appealing to our entire church community to help us bridge this deficit gap. Stewardship is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves and participate in the good works this parish is doing to glorify God. We are certainly grateful to your current expression of your commitment. Please send your stewardship contribution to the Church office or consider an online donation through our website at www.annunciationrochester.org.

Angelo E. Maggos

Parish Priest Fr. Angelo E. Maggos Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Rochester, NY

Eric Vangellow

Eric Vangellow Treasurer, Parish Council Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Rochester, NY



Events and Church Services:

14 December - PC Meeting 7:00 pm

15 December – Good News submission deadline

+15 December - Divine Liturgy - St. Eleftherios, 10:00 AM

- 15 December Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 17 December Orthodoxy Questions & Answers, YouTube, 7:00 PM
- 22 December Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 24 December Christmas Eve Office Closed
- 25 December Christmas Day Office Closed

+ 24 December - Christmas eve Vespers 6:00 pm

+ 25 December - Christmas morning Liturgy 10:00 am

- 28 December thru 2 January Father compassionate leave
- 1 January New Year's Day Office closed

2021

- 4 January PC meeting, 7:00 PM
- 5 January Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 7 January Orthodoxy Questions & Answers, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 12 January Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 14 January Orthodoxy Questions & Answers, Zoom, 7:00 PM
- 15 January Good News Submission



A Call to Finish Strong on Stewardship

As most of you know, the impact of COVID has hit our parish severely, as it has to other Orthodox parishes around the country. For those that attended our in-person and live-streamed Fall General Assembly, you saw that impact firsthand on the Financial Report that was presented. Our biggest challenge has been the loss of revenue from tray/candle collections and the cancellation of our Greek Festival. For further details see the church website under the "ABOUT "tab, "OUR PARISH" and scroll to the bottom to views the *General Assembly Budget*.

I and the Parish Council sincerely thank everyone who has completed their 2020 Stewardship contributions and especially to those who have sent in additional monies to help. However, to those who have not yet completed their 2020 Stewardship, we ask that you consider doing so over the next 6 weeks and where possible, increase your pledge, by whatever amount, to help close our potential yearend deficit.

Fall General Assembly

On Sunday, November 15th we held our Fall 2020 General Assembly meeting following the Divine Liturgy. In an effort to make this meeting as accessible as possible during this time, in addition to inperson attendance, we also live-streamed the GA in a format that allowed all parishioners not only to hear the proceeding but to have the ability to ask questions regarding the information presented. The attendance numbers indicated that this live stream format was popular and appreciated. One of the major items was the presentation of the proposed budget for 2021. For further details see the church website under the "ABOUT "tab, "OUR PARISH" and scroll to the bottom to views the *General Assembly Budget*.

Baklava Sale

Unfortunately, circumstances with the pandemic have forced us to cancel both the Philoptochos Bake sale and the Taste of Greece MiniFestival we had planned. However, the ladies did bake the baklava so we will be selling all the baklava with the proceeds split between Philotptochos and the church. The baklava is being sold at 8pcs for \$15. I know many people were eager to help at both events, but we are hopeful for first and second quarter of 2021 to repeat these events. Please call the church during office hours to place your order. All pickups will be done at the church weekly during business hours.



YouTube Channel

Due to the continued hard work of our Communication staff, we have achieved a significant milestone of over 2000 subscribers on YouTube which is an incredible testament to the effectiveness of our media platforms.

Thursday Evenings *Orthodoxy Questions and Answers* has become a regular feature and has gained a significant following to those seeking the Orthodox Faith and to those of our parishioners who have become separated from church life.

For a presentation on our *YouTube Statistics* see the church website under the "ABOUT "tab, "OUR PARISH" and scroll to the bottom under *YouTube Statistics*.

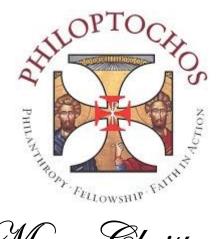
Our Virtual Sunday School has also taken off in a big way and has become popular with both kids and adults. These weekly videos are between 7-9 minutes in length and offer me, as the parish priest, the opportunity to connect with our children during this pandemic. ...and are really fun to watch. We have recorded over 17 videos, the latest of which are presented every Sunday after Liturgy. You can find all 17 videos recorded so far on our website under the "Media" tab, then click on "Virtual Sunday School". This Christmas we are excited about the filming of a 4-part Mini-Series on The Meaning of Christmas – Fact or Fiction.

Community Outreach this Christmas

As we do each year we have partnered with other Rochester churches and organizations to offer help to those in need during this winter season. This holiday season we are partnering with Daystar Kids and St Francis Cabrini Catholic Church and collecting the following donations.

- 1. Our church has partnered with and raised money for the Rochester based Daystar Kids program for several years and are grateful for the vital work they do for children with special healthcare needs. This season they have prepared a wish list for critically needed supplies. Their wish list is included in this newsletter.
- 2. Fr. Bob Werth, pastor at St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church in Rochester and I have been friends for the 2 1/2 years I have been here in Rochester and in that time have worked closely together on several outreach projects. This year our parishes are combining to provide supermarket gift cards (Wegmans, Topps, etc.) to several in-need families our parishes have identified.

I am encouraging all of us, in the spirit of the Christmas season, to please support one or more of these programs and provide those in need with the comfort and foodstuffs so vital during these difficult times. You can drop-off the supplies or the gift cards off at the church office or give them to me after Sunday Liturgy and we will deliver them to either Daystar or Fr Bob.



Merry Christmas

Annunciation Family Happy and Healthy New Year in 2021!

Thank you for your continued

Support The Ladies of Philoptochos



Vasilopita Coins are available for your 2021 Vasilopita! \$25.00

Don't wait, get yours now!

Contact Niki Chamberlain at niki.chamberlain13@gmail.com phone: 585-747-6319 or call the Church Office 585-244-3377



WISH LIST

Thank you for supporting Daystar Kids! Current items on our wish list include:

- · Clorox or Lysol Wipes
- . Dish Soap
- · Dishwasher Soap Pods
- "Free and Clear" Laundry Detergent
- · Plastic Cutlery
- Paper plates
- . Paper Napkins
- Gift Cards: Target, Wegmans, Walmart, & Amazon
- Glad Reinforced Strength 13-Gallon Kitchen Bags

- 16-oz spray bottles, commercial grade with dilution ratio markings
- Keurig Coffee Pods (Breakfast Blend)
- Pampers Sensitive Baby Wipes
- . Post-Its Pop-Up Sticky Notes
- Puffs Plus Tissues w/ Lotion
- . iPad

For more information or to schedule a delivery of items, please contact Daystar at (585) 385-6287 or info@daystarkids.org

CHURCH OPERATION PROCEDURES DURING COVID – FACT SHEET

The following represent a set of guidelines for us to following to reopen our church and maintain conformance to current State and Metropolis guidelines. This Fact Sheet highlights the most critical aspects of church operation while COVID precautions remain in place. FOR COMPLETE DETAILS ON OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES PLEASE REFER TO THE FULL CHURCH OPERATIONAL POLICY THAT IS POSTED ON OUR CHURCH WEBSTIE at annunciationrochester.org.

All requirements presented here are considered mandatory for each parishioner working, visiting or worshipping here at Annunciation.

1. GENERAL CHURCH ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

- State and Metropolis guidelines require us to record the names and phone numbers of each attendee at every
 service in the event that a subsequent infection requires tracing.
- Currently we are maintaining a 25% occupancy rate which for our church is 125 persons. This is currently the Metropolis mandate. As church attendance increases, we will adapt some type of reservation process to ensure we maintain this occupancy rate.
- All on-site Religious Education (Sunday School) and Greek School are suspended until further notice.

2. POLICY DURING ANY SERVICES

- Before entering church, the temperature of each person will be taken by a designated person. If the temperature
 is above 100.4°, they will politely be asked to return to their home.
- All monetary offers for donations will only be accepted at the Narthex in the tray.
- Please restrict your movement during the time services are being conducted and masks are required any time you
 are not seated.

3. DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- Communicants must line up row by row to be released by a Narthex attendant. You must remain six feet apart as
 designated by social distancing X's that have been placed in the church.
- Masks may only be removed momentarily to receive Holy Communion.
- The red communion cloths will not be used. In its place, a napkin will be handed to the parishioner for their
 personal use, which will be discarded after receiving Holy Communion in a provided receptacle.
- · The communion spoon will be sanitized in boiling water after EACH use by the communicant.
- Antidoron will be distributed in plastic bags at the end of the service.

4. AFTER SERVICES

- Clergy will wear a mask during distribution of Holy Communion and mask and gloves when distributing antidoron
 and will not offer their hands for reverence.
- There will be no shaking of hands or hugs.
- Sunday Coffee Fellowship hours are suspended until further notice.

CHURCH SANCTUARY, ALTAR AND NARTHEX AREAS WILL BE CLEANED AND SANITIZED BETWEEN EACH SERVICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CDC GUIDELINES, ESPECIALLY OBJECTS THAT ARE ROUTINELY TOUCHED, LIKE DOOR HANDLES OR PEWS.

Annunciation Policies

MEMORIAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTION POLICY

All monies received during a funeral or memorial service that are made out to the church, that is, checks marked with "Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church" or cash with the envelope marked with "Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church" will be used for purposes in support of church operation.

These could include support of recognized church ministries, sacramental articles purchased for the church proper or for ongoing campaigns such as Hall Renovation or other capita improvements.

If it is desired that these monies are to be used for other wishes that the family may have the family must ensure that they announce that theses checks or cash be designated as such.

All monies received for funerals are tracked, and family members will receive a listing of those who donated and a total amount of the donation, typically within 40-60 days following the date of the funeral. In addition, for all monies received designated "*Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church*," donors will receive a letter thanking them for their donation to the church in memory of the deceased.

POLICY FOR DOCUMENT PREPARATION:

There is a required processing charge of \$40 per document. This charge covers research, preparation and routing of documents such as Certificate of Residency, Certificate of Freedom to Marry, Reissued Marriage Certificate, Reissued Baptism Certificate and Certificate of Death. Additional documents are \$20.00 per document.

WEDDINGS:

We have wedding candles in the office for purchase which is required at the time of the ceremony. The donation for the plain one is \$30.00. \$100 would be for the decorated ones. Lena has them in the office. Also, available are four sets of Stefanas while they last. The donation for each of these is \$100 a pair.

BAPTISMS:

We also have baptismal candles, \$30 for the large plain candle and \$7 each for the two (2) smaller plain candles. If you are interested in purchasing decorated candles, the larger one is \$50, the two (2) smaller ones are \$25 for the set.

MEMORIALS:

Coffee Hour scheduling for family memorials is the responsibility of the Philoptochos unless other arrangements have been made by the family sponsoring the Memorial. The family which is sponsoring the Memorial is asked to :

- 1. Contact the Parish Secretary to arrange scheduling for Coffee Hour that day. The Secretary will contact the Philoptochos President.
- 2. Arrange for or pay for Coffee Hour food items that are in excess of the standard menu (coffee, drinks, and simple snacks).
- 3. Coordinate the preparation and delivery of Koliva (if used). The Philoptochos or Church office can provide information on persons who can prepare Koliva. The standard rate for the preparation of koliva is \$150.

GOOD NEWS



When you support the Friends of the Metropolis campaign, you are part of a greater outreach that proclaims with one universal voice that God is truly our hope and our rock of salvation. Because of your devotion to the Friends program, ministries and programs are implemented on a Metropolis-wide basis which strengthen and enhance our faith and our joint ministry of service. I would like to invite you to join forces with the faithful throughout the Metropolis of Detroit in support of the ministries which are part of the Office of the Metropolitan.

Thanking you for your kind and generous response, I remain, with paternal blessings and prayers,

+NICHOLAS

Metropolitan of Detroit

MORE INFO AT: WWW.DETROIT.GOARCH.ORG/FRIENDS

GENERAL SUPPORT

Fully fund the general expenses of the Metropolis office, including programs and travels.

OUTREACH/MISSIONS

Create opportunities to introduce our faith to society. Participate in inter-Christian and interfaith activities. Provide quick responses to national and international disasters.

EDUCATION

Enhance various scholarship opportunities, adult education programs, and support Metropolis students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

HELLENISM

Develop programs for Hellenic Cultural Outreach, including language, history, and arts.

CLERGY/PARISH SUPPORT

Develop and provide instructional seminars and services for clergy and parishes.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Support the youth & young adult ministries, including our summer camps, as well as the activities of a full-time Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

LEADERSHIP

Organize Clergy-Laity Conferences, Oratorical Festivals, Youth Worker and Religious Education Training, and Adult Education Seminars.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Continued website development, hospitality to visiting dignitaries, charity and philanthropy.

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2020 ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

In order to help defray costs of printing and mailing and to increase awareness among our community of the broad range of experience and services available from our parishioners, we are inviting both parishioners and any vendors to our church to consider advertising in our monthly newsletter. Just complete the form below and mail, email or drop off to the church office. For email use office@agocroc.org

Name	Phone		
Address	City Zip		
Contact	Email		
ADVERTISING OPTIONS:	NOTES:		
□ Full Page\$500/yr	Newsletter is printed 11 months per year as June/July is a combined newsletter		
□ Half Page\$300/yr	For best quality, artwork should be high resolution jpeg files or similar		
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Make every day an endless stream of grateful memories that live up to all the hopes and dreams those who have passed wish for our lives.

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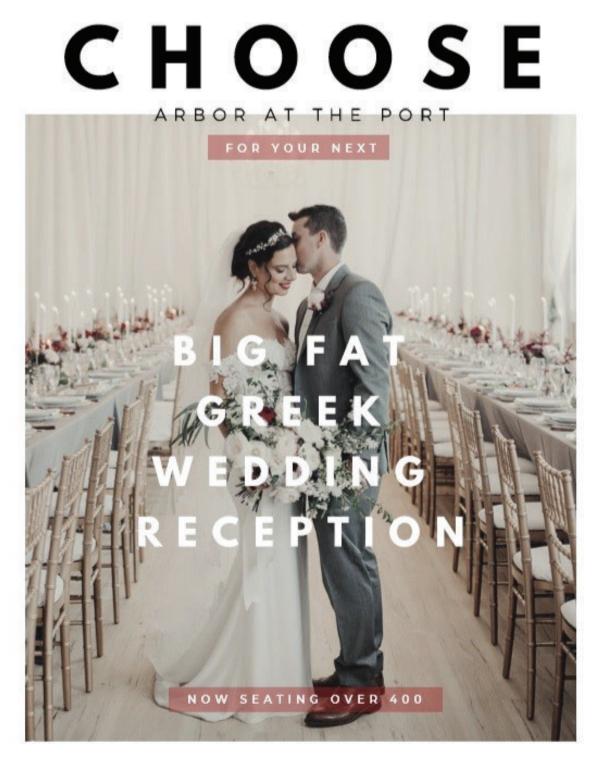
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