

GOOD NEWS

Voice: (585) 244.3377

May 2021

From the Desk of
Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos

Parish Registry, Progress Report
Upcoming Church Services and Events

Youth Ministry and Organizations News

From Fr. Angelo:

The Faith Entrusted to Us

In the 2020 census of the status of Eastern Orthodox Churches in America there was found a dramatic change in the Orthodox Church participation, mainly a decline of 14% in regular church attendance and 17% loss in members. While the Orthodox Church has struggled with members leaving the church in favor of Protestant or Non-Denominational churches, now the largest growing segment are people who do not identify with any denomination and prefer to practice a modern-age spirituality that does not obligate one to adhere to the “rules” and “form” of organized worship. Organized religion becomes a threat to individualism and freedom to interpret Scripture from a feelings-based perspective.

What is not understood here is that without the rule or discipline of an *organized religion*, the decisions people make about God are then based on personal feeling without an attachment to sound science (in the case of religion – theology). This relativism about Truth, meaning that my truth can be different from yours, eliminates the need to discover and uphold the single Truth. This is not insignificant as arriving at the wrong conclusion about who God is and what His Son did for His creation puts our eternal existence into jeopardy. ***Correct thinking about God is critical.***

No one would allow themselves or a family member to undergo an operation by a doctor who “feels” that he knows what is wrong. Nor would someone jump off a building because he feels that the truth of gravity is relative to how one understands it.

This inability to correctly and logically think about God makes us raise the same questions which still plagued the Early Christians. Without proper training and discipline of “correct thinking” about God early Christians began to fall into heresy.

Out of endless love and mercy and for the salvation of His creation, God gave us the gift of Holy Scripture – the very Word of God as spoken through His chosen prophets and His Son, our Lord. In the form of the Old Testament, we share this Word of God with the Jewish and Muslim faiths. However, it is important to understand what is “*correct thinking about God*”. For Christians it is certainly the belief and acceptance of Holy Scripture as God-inspired Truth.

St. John the Evangelist was among the first to battle these heresies in a discreet and theological manner. St. John’s Gospel is regarded by the Orthodox and Catholic Church as the *Theological Gospel* and as such is a fountain of knowledge regarding The One God who exists in one essence as the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. His Gospel formed the basis for not only other theologians such as Saints Gregory, Basil, and John Climacus to combat flawed thinking, but also was the foundation for the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils.

To help teach us how to *think correctly* about God, the Orthodox Church offers us the Holy Fathers of the Church and in particular four people who are the only ones to be honored with the title of *Theologian*:

St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory the Theologian, St Basil the Great, and St. John the Evangelist. Each of these saints, along with many others celebrated by the Church, have devoted their entire lives to understanding God's Word not just through human reason but also by spiritual illumination, both of which are essential to correctly think about God.

Another often neglected area where the Orthodox Church has preserved her teaching tradition as well as presenting the absolute Truth of God is in our hymns which have been chanted in the Orthodox Church since the time of the Byzantine Empire. Hymns are sung or chanted at every Orthodox service to guide us to correct thinking about God and the Trinity...and the Orthros (Matins) service was and continues to be the historic "Sunday School" for Orthodox Christians. Examples include,

On Monday of the Holy Spirit the service is filled with hymns of theology about the Holy Spirit such as, The Holy Spirit hath always been, is and ever shall be, having neither beginning nor end, but always one and together with the Father and the Son; life and giver of life, light and bestower of light, goodness itself and source of goodness, through whom the Father is known and the Son glorified, and by all is known: one power, one order, one worship of the Holy Trinity.

This hymn from the Akathist service that speaks about the Theotokos

The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory: for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, hast held in thy womb the God of all and hast given birth to an eternal Son, who rewards with salvation all who sing thy praises.

And this hymn from the Bridegroom services during Holy Week which speaks about Christ as the Bridegroom and the importance of being watchful.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom he shall find watching, unworthy however, is he whom he shall find slothful. Thus beware, O my soul, be not overcome by sleep, lest thou be given over to death and find the door of the Kingdom shut against thee. But arouse thyself and cry aloud: Holy, holy, holy art thou, O God, through the protection of the holy Angels, save us.

Without the Church's tradition of teachers, saints, hymns, and of course Holy Scripture, the Christian faith is reduced to an interesting lesson in history or even more tragic a myth which can take its place with the Greek gods, Norse legends and Paganism; fun, interesting, but not practical.

While still bathed in the Holy Light we received at the Resurrection service, which completed Holy Week, may we work to receive the divine lessons through correct thinking about our faith that the Church has entrusted to us.



Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!
Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζωὴν χαρισάμενος.

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.¹

¹GOA official English translation

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PARISH REGISTRY

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Baptisms:

Ava Chrysanthi Tsemperidis – Parents Alexander Tsemperidis and Vanessa Gaenzler

Memoriam: May their memory be eternal

Theodore “Ted” Mourelatos – Interned January 19, 2021

Elpiniki Stathopoulos – Interned January 20, 2021

Slagan John Kacurovski – Interned March 8, 2021

Nancy Haralambopoulos – Interned March 15, 2021



Church Services and Events:

3 May – Office closed

4 May – Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM

6 May – Orthodoxy Questions and Answers, YouTube, 7:00 PM

9 May – Mother’s Day

11 May – Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM

13 May – Orthodoxy Questions and Answers, YouTube, 7:00 PM

15 May – Good News submission deadline

17 May – Tax Day

18 May – Adult Education, Zoom, 7:00 PM

20 May – Orthodoxy Questions and Answers, YouTube, 7:00 PM

23 May - Spring General Assembly Meeting, after Liturgy, 11:30 AM

24 May - Alternate Spring General Assembly Meeting, 6:00 PM

25 May - Adult Education, Zoom 7:00 PM

26 May – Joint Paraklisis, Annunciation, 6:00 PM

27 May – Orthodoxy Questions and Answers, YouTube, 7:00 PM

31 May – Memorial Day, Office closed.



AGOC Financial Summary

The 2020 calendar year started with great promise with the Community Center renovations nearly complete and Festival plans under way – and then we became all too familiar with the pandemic, masks, and never-ending restrictions.

We will review the details on our 2020 financial performance during our upcoming General Assembly but in the interim I have provided a few highlights below.

2020 Total Revenue	\$ 453,740
Net Income	\$ 16,694
2020 Building Fund Donations	\$ 89,360

Thankfully, the total revenue of \$453,740 for 2020 included \$249,121 in Stewardship donations as well as \$33,000 in Golf Tournament proceeds. This offset tray and candle receipts as well as any revenue we expected from the Greek Festival. Also, we received \$20,215 in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan proceeds in May of 2020. This amount is not reflected in our total revenue for 2020 but will be recognized as revenue in 2021 when the loan is forgiven.

Parishioners were also generous with building fund donations which allowed us to complete the Community Center renovations as well as the driveway and various landscape projects.

Stewardship contributions for the first three months of 2021 – January 1, 2021 thru March 30, 2021 – are up roughly \$7,600 or 9.0% over the same period last year. Thank you to all parishioners who have contributed to date. The \$91,521 collected represents 35% of our goal of \$260,000 with nine (9) months to go!

Candle receipts for 2021 are up 38% over the same period in 2020 as parishioners became more comfortable attending Church. One added expense we have incurred in 2021 was \$7,264 to make necessary repairs to our boiler system. We have entered into a Preventive Maintenance contract with an experienced vendor to maintain all HVAC, Boiler systems and refrigeration equipment. This will allow us to lower maintenance costs as we can better predict problems before they become severe and costly.

Overall, we are starting 2021 with ample reserves and generous contributions to date. Current regulations are dampening any enthusiasm for a Greek Festival in 2021 but with continued support and perhaps another Golf Tournament and Friday Fish Fry type program (Souvlaki's to go!) we will continue to move our Community forward successfully through 2021!

Please send any questions to our church administrator (Lena) at the Church office – office@agocroc.org.

AGENDA – SPRING General Assembly 2021

On Sunday, May 23, 2021, immediately following the Divine Liturgy service we will be having the **Spring General Assembly meeting. Due to the current COVID restrictions the GA will be held in church and also livestreamed. We will be able to take questions via chat from the livestream.**

Please see the Agenda below and we look forward to seeing you there and ask that you encourage your friends and family to attend.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Call to Order | PC President |
| 2. Opening Prayer | Fr. Angelo |
| 3. Approval of previous General Assembly Minutes | Meeting Chairperson |
| 4. Treasurer Report and Stewardship | Eric Vangellow |
| 5. Ministry and Organization Reports | |
| a. Fund Raising Events | |
| • Fish Fry | Jim Stathopoulos/Eric Vangellow |
| • Greek Festival | |
| b. Communications Ministry | |
| b. Religious Education | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p>In the interest of time and to allow ample time for a full and open discussion all ministry updates will be provided at the General Assembly meeting.</p> </div> |
| c. Philoptochos | |
| d. Choir/Chant | |
| e. GOYA | |
| f. Greek School | |
| g. Seniors Group | |
| h. Cultural Groups | |
| 6. Call for Questions | |
| 7. General Maintenance and Upkeep | |
| 8. Old Business | |
| 9. New Business | |
| 10. Call for Adjournment | GA Chairman |
| 11. Closing Prayer | Fr. Angelo |



GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTCHOS SOCIETY, INC
 GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA



March 2021

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Blessed Lent!

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.”
John 1:5

As we enter this holy time of reflection, penance, and prayer, we are reminded that **almsgiving is an important part of our Lenten Journey**. To fulfill this important part of our preparation towards the celebration of Christ’s Holy Resurrection, we have **an opportunity, and a blessing, to participate in a special philanthropic project** – the completion of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center in New York City.

This is a **landmark project** for our Archdiocese, and one that we must see through to completion. As Orthodox Christians, it is our obligation to come together, putting aside our differences and criticisms, and see that this Church is completed. Let us not forget that **we were the only ones who lost a house of worship in the attacks of September 11, 2001**. This Church will stand in remembrance of all those who perished in 9-11, and it will be a place for prayer, comfort, and peace. We also have the unique opportunity for this Shrine to become a beacon of our faith and to **show the world the beauty and fullness of Orthodoxy**.

How can you help? It’s simple! **Send your \$20 donation directly to the Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos, c/o Debbie George, 37618 Cherry Hill, Farmington Hills, MI 48331, who will forward the collective donations to our National Philoptochos office**. We are asking every Philoptochos member in the United States to participate in this \$20 challenge. **We can make an impact and be a part of History!**

Join us in supporting Saint Nicholas Church and National Shrine. New York and Port Authority Officials estimate that **this will be the most visited Church in the United States**. This is truly a priceless opportunity for all of us, for our faith, for the Greek Orthodox Church.

We want to count you as one of those who accepted this \$20 challenge as part of your personal Lenten Journey.

Thank you for your continued love and support!

With Love in Christ,

Jennifer Constantin, President, Direct Archdiocesan District
 Athena Kalyvas, President, Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos
 Stella Pichas, Metropolis of Denver Philoptochos
 Irene Politis, President, Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos
 Theone Dickos, President, Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos
 Despina Zarokosta Sarantopoulou, President, Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos



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*From the National Philoptochos Department of Social Services
 April 8, 2021*

COVID-19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE - FEMA

Website: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

Last updated April 5, 2021

FEMA: The mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency is to help people before, during and after disasters. Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA will provide financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. At FEMA, our mission is to help people before, during and after disasters. We are dedicated to helping ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the virus. We are working with stakeholder groups to get their input on ways we can best provide this assistance, and to enlist their help with outreach to families and communities. FEMA will begin to implement COVID-19 funeral assistance in April. Additional guidance is being finalized and will be released to potential applicants and community partners as soon as possible. In the meantime, people who have COVID-19 funeral expenses are encouraged to keep and gather documentation.

FEMA will begin accepting applications for Funeral Assistance on Monday, April 12, 2021 through our dedicated call center. More information will be available soon.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for funeral assistance, you must meet these conditions:

- The death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- The death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19.
- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020.
- There is no requirement for the deceased person to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien.

For more information and eligibility requirements, access their website at:

<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economis/funeral-assistance>



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Check payable to: Philoptochos Society

Thank you for your continued support

PHILOPTOCHOS

PHILANTHROPY AT WORK

Wish list supplies for DayStar for Kids:
Thanks Maria LoVerde and all those who
supported the Philoptochos Bake Sale!!



Dear Philoptochos Members:

It's that time of year again where we review our records and prepare our membership list.



Annual dues are \$30 for those under the age of 65
and \$25 for those members over 65

Please make your check payable to the
Philoptochos Society
and mail it to our membership chairperson:

**Maria Economides
23 Blue Pine Circle
Penfield, NY 14526**

*If you have any questions regarding your membership,
please contact Maria at 671-4034*

We appreciate your continued support of our philanthropic programs

PHILOPTOCHOS ELECTIONS

Philoptochos Elections will be held
on Sunday, May 16, 2021 right after
Liturgy in the Church.

You must attend in person.

All CDC rules and church guidelines
will be followed.



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OF DETROIT WEBSITE

Applicants must be related to a Philoptochos member



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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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 these 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, 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 Stefanos 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 .

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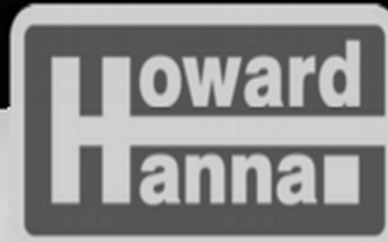
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In order to help defray costs of printing and mailing and to increase awareness among our community of the broad range of experience and services available from our parishioners, we are inviting both parishioners and any vendors to our church to consider 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 _____

<p>ADVERTISING OPTIONS:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full Page.....\$500/yr</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Half Page.....\$300/yr</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Business Card\$150/yr</p>	<p>NOTES:</p> <p>Newsletter is printed 11 months per year as June/July is a combined newsletter</p> <p>For best quality, artwork should be high resolution jpeg files or similar</p> <p>Emailed ads must be 600 dpi or greater PDF</p> <p>Please include or email artwork</p>
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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH of the ANNUNCIATION

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PARISH INFORMATION

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Voice: (585) 244-3377

Web: AnnunciationRochester.org | RochesterGreekFestival.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/annunciationrochester

Office and scheduling requests: office@agocroc.org

Stewardship and finance related questions:
finance@agocroc.org

CLERGY:

Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos, Presiding Priest

Email: agocny@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Secretary: Lena L. Livecchi

Email: Office@agocroc.org

Submit Good News Articles to: goodnews@agocroc.org

2021 PARISH COUNCIL

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