

GOOD NEWS

Voice: (585) 244.3377

May 2026

From Fr. Angelo

The Faith Entrusted to Us

As is evident in our own church of the Annunciation, the Orthodox Church in America, over the last several years has been experiencing noticeable surge in converts. This is a profound reversal from the 2020 census of the status of Eastern Orthodox Churches in America which reported a dramatic decline in the Orthodox Church participation; 14% decrease in regular church attendance and 17% loss in membership. Data from various sources, including the Institute of Orthodox Studies, indicates an **80% increase** in converts in 2022 compared to previous levels.

- A significant portion of new converts are **young, conservative single men and young families** attracted to the church's emphasis on tradition, discipline, both spiritual and physical.
- Net growth of Orthodox Christians in the U.S. remains steady at around 0.5% of the population (approximately 675,000 to 1 million) as new growth in converts is offsetting "cradle" Orthodox members who leave the faith.
- **Regional Trends:** Growth is particularly visible in the South and West, with parishes in dioceses such as Denver, Chicago and Atlanta seeing substantial increases.

Also interesting is that in the past the Orthodox Church received new members from Protestant or Non-Denominational churches, but now the largest growing segment are young adults who grew up not practicing any formal religion and do not identify with any denomination. In conversations with these young adults, they seem to have been influenced by an attitude that organized religion is a threat to individualism and interpretation of Scripture should come from a feelings-based perspective.

The fallacy that is not understood here is that in the absence of the rule or discipline of an *organized religion*, the decisions people make about God must be based on personal feeling without an attachment to sound science (in the case of religion – theology). This results in the modern idea of Relativism, that is, “*my truth, although different from yours, is equally valid.*” This “lazy” logic eliminates the need to discover and uphold a single Truth since “my feelings about what is true” is sufficient. This results in the resurrection of ancient heresies, all of which arrived at the wrong conclusion about who God is and what His Son did for His creation putting our eternal existence into jeopardy. ***Correct and logic-based 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 how to perform an operation. 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 plagued the Early Christians. Without proper training and the discipline of “correct thinking” about God, early Christians fell into heresy.

Out of endless love and mercy and for the salvation of His creation, God gave us the gift of Holy Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, as the very Word of God spoken through His chosen prophets in the Old Testament and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

But equally so God, through His Holy Spirit inspired people to combat these heresies. Thus Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul were the first to attack heretical thinking in a discreet, organized and theological manner. John’s Gospel and St. Paul’s Epistles however are regarded by the Orthodox and Catholic Church as the

Continued on page 2

central *Theological Treatises* and as such form the fountain of knowledge regarding the “One God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all...true God of true God, of one essence with the Father...and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who proceeds from the Father.”

To help teach us how to *think correctly* about God, the Orthodox Church offers us Holy Fathers such as Saints Gregory, Basil, and John Chrysostom, Symeon the New Theologian, and St. Gregory of Palamas all of whom, through a lifetime of prayer and study, used the Gospels and Epistles to form the basis of sound and logical theology to combat flawed thinking. And their arguments served as the foundation for the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils.

Each of these theologians, along with many other saints celebrated by the Church, have devoted their entire lives to understanding God’s Word not through “feelings” but through human reason and spiritual illumination, both of which are essential to correctly think about God.

Another often forgotten area where the Orthodox Church has preserved her tradition of 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. (Unfortunately this tradition has been lost in other Christian expressions) 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 of hymns of theology include,

On Monday of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has 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 has not known wedlock, has held in thy womb the God of all and has given birth to an eternal Son, who rewards with salvation all who sing Thy praises.

The central hymn from the **Bridegroom services** on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week which speaks about Christ as the Bridegroom and the importance of being watchful.

Behold, the Bridegroom comes 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.

And of course, the famous **Paschal hymn** of the Church which crystalizes the work of Jesus Christ;

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by [His] death, and on those in the tombs He has granted [eternal] life!

Failure to acknowledge an absolute Truth of who God is, through the organized discipline of Church tradition, obtained from Holy Scripture by the Church’s theologians, teachers, and saints reduces the Christian faith to one of many interesting lesson in history, or even more tragic, a myth holding as much authenticity as the Greek gods, Druid gods, or Norse legends. Something interesting, but not practical.

While still bathed in the Holy Light we received at the Resurrection service may we strive to treasure the divine lessons we received from the Church during Great Lent and Holy Week so that through correct thinking about our faith we may instill the correct Orthodox faith to our incoming converts. Also, more importantly, let us boldly defend the Absolute Truth of our Orthodox faith against those seeking to convince us of the heresy of Relativism.



REGISTRY



40 DAY BLESSINGS:

Child of God: Melania Halaris

Child of God: Georgios Dragos

Child of God: Philippos Elias Mihelogiannakis

Parents: Lauren & Ari Halaris

Parents: Sam & Christina Dragos

Parents: Dimitrios Mihelogiannakis
and Elli Anna Kotsailidi



BAPTISMS/CHRISMATIONS:

Child of God: William Peter Onderdonk
Onderdonk

Child of God: Jack James Soures

Child of God: John Milo

Child of God: Lucas Antoniou

Parents: Benjamin and Karina

Parents: John & Jordyn Soures

Parents: Nick & Hrysoula Milo

Parents: Christos & Daisy Antoniou



FUNERALS:

Venetia "Jeanette" E Lazary Interred Feb 20, 2026

Elizabeth S. Forgione Interred Feb 20, 2026

Eleni P. Giamos Interred Mar 7, 2026

George Zaromitidis Interred Mar 18, 2026

Helen Petro Interred Apr 20, 2026

George Psarros Interred Apr 21, 2026

Nicholas Marou Interred Apr 22, 2026



CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS:

4 May	Hellenic Cultural Society Meeting, Church Hall, 6:00 pm
9 May	Youth Movie Night, Lion King 6:00 pm
17 May	Spring General Assembly
17 May	Efxinos Pontos Society Bake Sale
17 May	Sunday School/Greek School Graduations
18 May	Alternate date for Spring General Assembly, 6:00 pm
+21 May	Holy Ascension, Orthros 9:00 am; Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
28 - 31 May	Greek Festival
+31 May	PENTECOST, Orthros 8:00 am, Divine Liturgy 9:00 am <u>NOTE TIME CHANGE</u>
+1 June	Monday of the Holy Spirit, Orthros and Divine Liturgy <u>at Holy Spirit, 9:00 am</u>
+6 June	Saturday of Souls Graveside Services
	- Webster Rural 9:00 am
	- White Haven 10:30 am
	- Mt. Hope 11:45 am
	- Grove Place/Chili 1:00 pm
	- Westside Cemetery/Scottsville 2:00 pm
	<i>For all other cemetery locations, please call the Church office to schedule a time and date.</i>
13 June	Youth Movie Night, The Little Mermaid (1989), 6:00 pm
+29 June	Sts. Peter and Paul, Orthros 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10:00 am



Upcoming Event! St. Timothy Camp - August 9th-15th, 2026. Oswegatchie requires a minimum commitment of 35 campers, ages 8-17. PLEASE contact the church office as the Oswegatchie is requiring a preliminary count. Refer to ad and link below:

St. Timothy Camp
at Oswegatchie Educational Center

[Home](#) [About](#) [Camper Forms and Info](#) [Registration](#) [Staff Application](#) [Contact](#)

2026 Registration for St. Timothy Camp is Open!

Welcome to St. Timothy Camp!

We are excited to see you back at
camp in 2026!

sttimothycamp.org

On-going Adult Orthodox study programs:

- Orthodox Christian Club every Monday 5:30 to 7:00 PM
- Orthodox Questions and Answers every Thursday, YouTube, 7:00 PM.
- Online Orthodox Catechism on our website under the EDUCATION tab.
- Greek Language program every Saturday 1:30-3:00 PM through May 16
- Greek Dance practice every Sunday, 4:00 PM until the Greek Festival.



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos, Presbyter
 962 East. Ave, Rochester, NY 14612
 585-244-3377 website: annunciationrochester.org

AGENDA – SPRING General Assembly 2026

On Sunday, 17 May 2026, following the Divine Liturgy service we will be having the *Spring General Assembly meeting*. *As in previous years, 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. Election of GA Chair | |
| 4. Election of GA secretary | |
| 5. Approval of previous General Assembly Minutes | Meeting Chairperson |
| 6. Treasurer Report and Stewardship | K. Balta/Eric Vangellow |
| 7. Old Business | |
| • Update on Elevator Update Capital Improvement efforts | |
| 8. New Business | |
| • Parking Lot Expansion | |
| 9. Ministry and Organization Reports | |
| a. Fund Raising Events | Eric Vangellow |
| • Greek Festival | |
| • Golf Outing | |
| • Hall Rental Update (Parishioner only) | |
| b. Youth Director Report | Demos Euclid |
| c. Communications Ministry | Demos Euclid |
| d. Religious Education | 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. |
| e. Philoptochos | |
| f. Choir/Chant | |
| g. GOYA | |
| h. Greek School | |
| i. Seniors Group | |
| j. Cultural Groups | |
| 10. Call for Questions | |
| 11. General Maintenance and Upkeep | |
| 12. Call for Adjournment | GA Chairman |
| 13. Closing Prayer | Fr. Angelo |

CHANT WORKSHOP



SPIRIT OF GALILEE INTERFAITH MEETING



PARISH ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Grade 6 and below



PARISH ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Grade 7 and up



District Oratorical Festival

On Sunday, 23 April our Annunciation parish hosted the 2026 NY Regional District SJC Oratorical Competition. The winners are Johnny Tonas in the Senior Division and Athanasia Tzogas, Nicoleta Dobrot & Damianos Tzogas, in the Junior Division.

Their speeches demonstrated a solid understanding of the difficult topics, and their presentations reflected the hard work that went into researching the topics, as well as delivering clear and concise presentations. Each of them will be advancing to the Metropolis Level Oratorical on Saturday, May 8-10, at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Carmel, IN.

Thanks also to our judges, Fr James Berends, Joshua Hale, and Devyn Riley, and timekeeper Pres. Teri Maggos.. Also, many thanks to our Oratorical Chairperson, Karina Onderdonk for her hard work and organization of this event.



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY - Procession of the Icons



SALUTATIONS AND AKATHIST HYMN

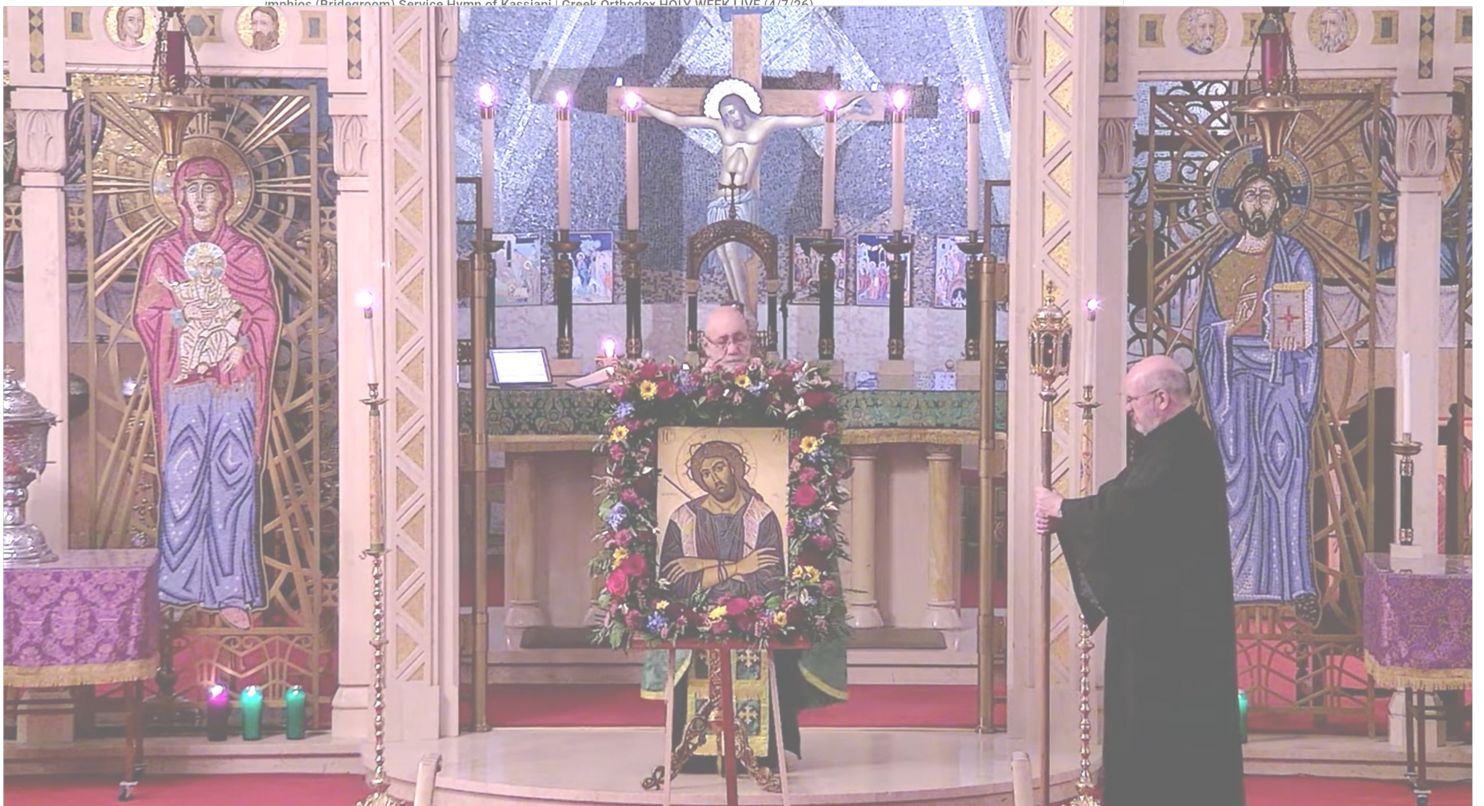


ANNUNCIATION VESPERS

March 24, 2026



BRIDEGROOM MATINS



HOLY UNCTION



HOLY THURSDAY - 12 GOSPELS



Holy Friday

Descent from the Cross and Children's retreat and choir



Holy Friday

Descent from the Cross and Children's retreat and choir



Holy Friday

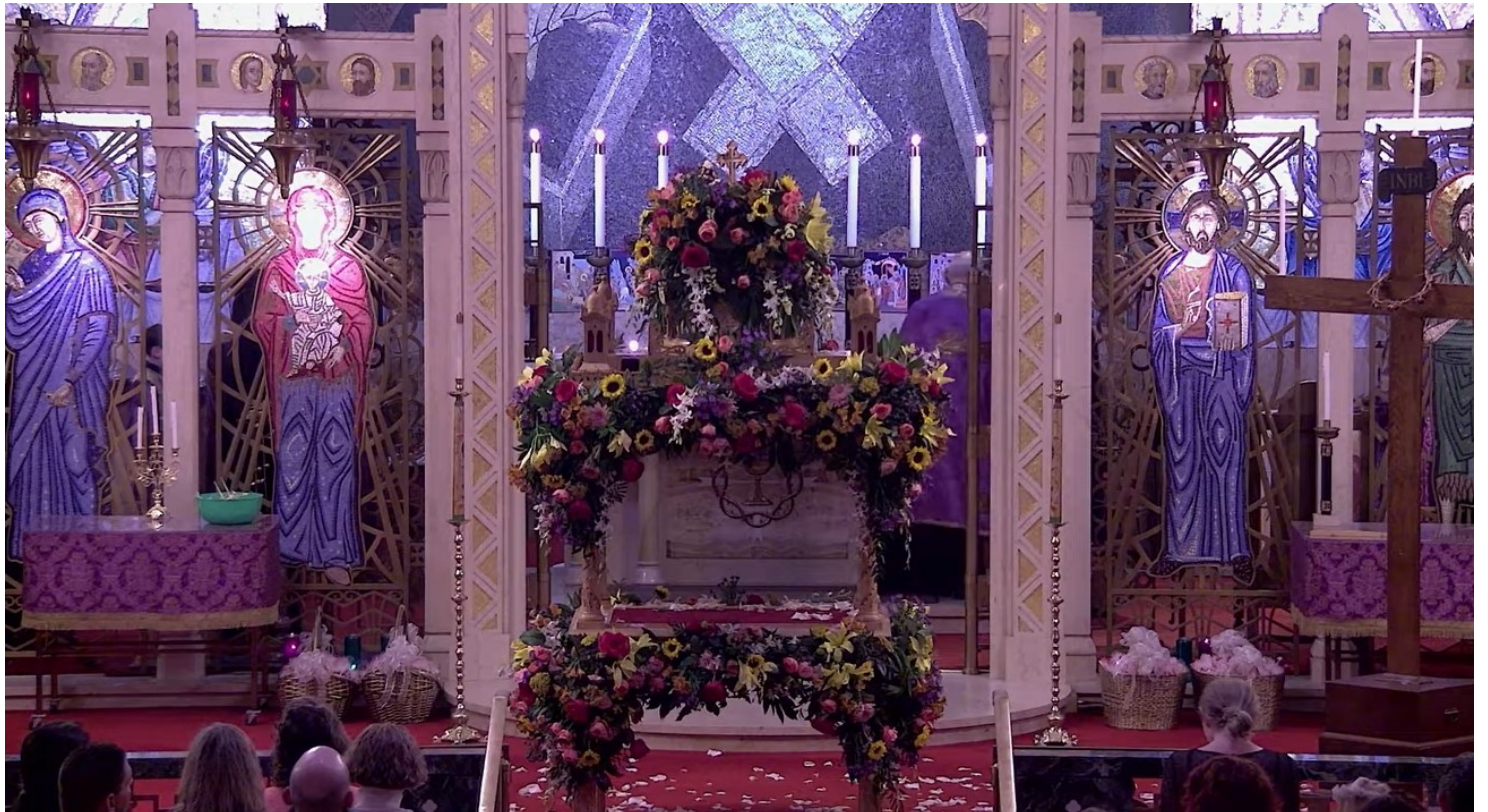
Descent from the Cross and Children's retreat and choir



Holy Friday Joyous Lamentations



Holy Friday Joyous Lamentations

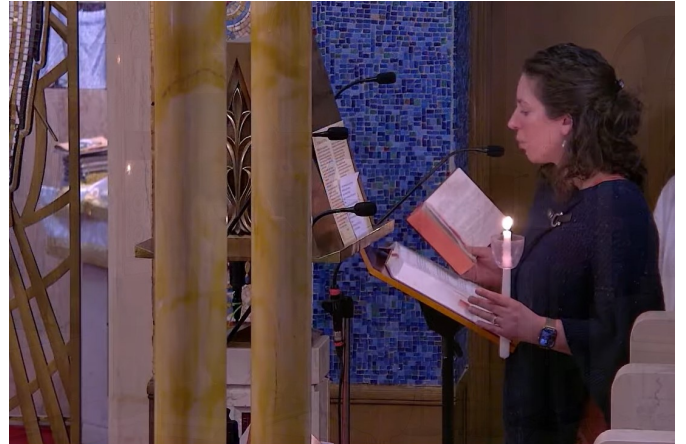
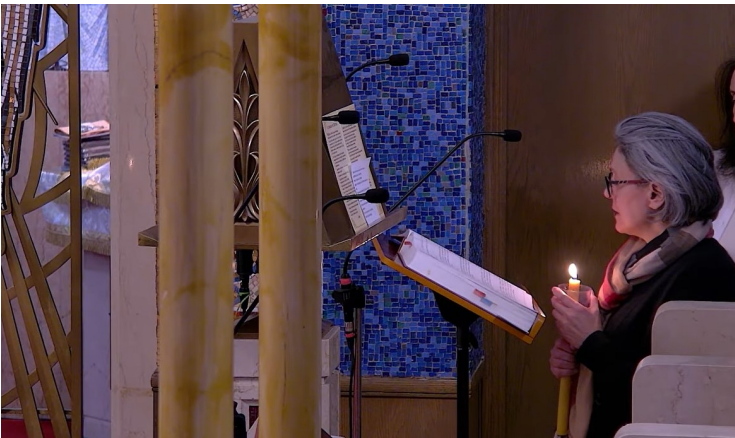


HOLY PASCHA - MIDNIGHT RESURRECTION SERVICE

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



Agape Sunday



Dear Greek School Families and Parishioners,

The children did such a wonderful job with their poems and dances during our March 25th celebration! Congratulations to all! We will be sharing our pictures and videos soon!



From the bottom of our hearts, we want to thank the following individuals who made this event possible, and contributed to our rich program!

This event wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our students and teachers:

K- Nia Pike & Athanasia Tzogas, 1- Diana Hristodoulou,

2- Danielle Marou, 3A-Lisa Tzogas, 3B- Kristi Motra, 4 - Kostas Matakos, 5 - Walter Bubie, 6 & 7- Nikki Ioannidis

Substitute Teachers: Julie Bausch & Zoe Theodorakakos

Our Music Director- Zoi Varahidis
Our Keyboards Support - Maria Mixalitsas
Our Dance teachers - Sam and Dean Kakarantzas, and Maya Pike

Sound by Demos Euclid
Video Recording by Vasilis Antoniou of Vasilis World Video

Photography by Spiros Kapatos of Forever Fotografia

Diana Hristodoulou led the coordination of this celebration with our parent committee. Additional thanks to the setup team led by Kostas Kapatos, Jimmy Karipidis, Nikos Savvidis, and Dave Dagget. Christina Velez for the beautiful decorations, and our parent volunteers helping with the food: Thalia Perikleous and Zoe Theodorakakos.

A look ahead:



May 16: Last day of Greek School classes.

May 17: Graduation and Promotion immediately following Divine Liturgy.

June 6: Seabreeze Picnic. If your child needs a new t-shirt, please fill out this form May 15th, 2026

<https://forms.gle/Ga9YZFL3MiMLA8S26>

As always, feel free to reach out with your questions at agreekschool@gmail.com

Thank you,
Elina Kokorotsis
Greek School Director



2026 ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP DIRECTORY

To increase awareness among our community of the broad range of experience and services available from our parishioners, we are encouraging both parishioners and any vendors to our church to advertise their business and/or family name in our monthly newsletter.

In order to help defray the costs of printing and mailing, this will be a Sponsorship Directory listing only. Advertising images will no longer be used in order to reduce the overall printing cost of the Newsletter. The Newsletter is printed each month during the year, except for one or two months that would be combined.

If you are interested in adding your business or family name to our Sponsorship Directory, the annual Sponsorship Fee is \$150.

Business or Family Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Contact: _____

Website: _____

Please make your checks payable to “Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church”.

GOOD NEWS SPONSORS

RESTAURANTS

Atlantic Family Restaurant
Arbor at the Port
Arbor Loft
Bay Front Restaurant
Bill's Long Pond Diner
Blue Ridge Grill
Dog Town
Eastridge Diner Steakhouse
Highland Park Diner
Jays Diner
Johnny D's Restaurant
Konstantinou's Restaurant
Log Cabin Restaurant & Catering
Mels Diner
Olympia Restaurant & Lounge
Park Place Restaurant
Parkside Diner and Miniature Golf
Riki Family Restaurant
The Distillery
The Nutcracker Family Restaurant
The Original Steve's Diner - 4 Locations
The Peppermill Restaurant
Town and Country Family Restaurant
Uncle Danny's Family Restaurant
Union Street Coffee House
Voula's Sweets
Yia Yia's Ice Cream Shoppe
Yianni's

PRODUCTS

AG Foodservice
Ajay Glass Co.
Alpha Ironworks
Goodman Glass and Mirror
Konstantinou's Liquor
Rain or Shine Tent Rental
Regional Distributors Inc
Rhino Trunk and Case
Ridge Coin & Jewelry
Rochester Auto Glass
Rochester Meat
Walworth Wine & Spirits

SERVICES

Akropolis Agency
Averdi
Better Relationships Counseling
Delta Advisory Group, Dimitrios Manou, CPA
EMS
First POS
Metropolitan Window Cleaning
Ontario Family Dentistry, Dr. Elias Konstantinou
Philoptochos
ReMax Plus
Roxanne Stavropoulos Realtor
Howard Hanna Real Estate Services
Vay-Schleich & Meeson, Funeral and Cremation
Chapels

ANNUNCIATION FAMILIES

Frank and Patty Cost
Mary Manou
Clayton, George and Dr. Joan Laura Nardone
Nassis Family
Jennefer & Perry Noun, Bill Noun
Have a wonderful fellowship

HALL RENTAL POLICY

The Parish Council has decided to allow hall access and rentals to **only** Parishioners & Church Ministries/Groups moving forward. All inquiries and bookings will be handled by the Church Secretary who can be contacted at office@agocroc.org or by calling 585-244-3377.

The fee to rent the Hall for a Parishioner in Good Standing is \$500 total. A signed agreement and payment of the above fee is required to reserve your event date. **Please note that the use of the Hall for recognized Church organizations or ministries is at no cost; however, they are still required to contact the Church Office and reserve the hall through proper channels in order to secure their date.**

All guests are expected to respect the following hall rules:

- All trash, décor, and any foodstuffs must be disposed of properly at the end of your event and brought outside
- No décor or other items can be adhered to any surfaces in the hall.
- Cooking in the kitchen is **prohibited** unless approved by Fr. Angelo/ Parish Council and a \$350 kitchen fee is paid in advance.
- The premises **must** be vacated no later than 10:00 pm.
- The premises must be left as it was found - any excess tables and chairs stowed away properly, new trash bags in bins, etc.

Hall Rentals for Parishioners & Church Groups/ Ministries include the following:

- Six (6) Hours of rental time (or as much needed as approved by Fr. Angelo)
- Access to tables & chairs
- Warming, storage & Ice use in the kitchen
- Access to coffee makers (coffee, creamer, sugar, cups, etc. not included)
- Hall cleaned prior to the event
- Trash bins & bags
- On site parking lot security

The six (6) hours of rental time does not count against setup time and the timing for this should be arranged with the Church Office. This rental **does not include** the following:

- Floorplan set up
- Linens for tables, glassware, flatware, and china
- Food service utensils, buffet equipment, etc.

Payments can be made via cash, check or via the online portal once you have signed your rental agreement. Please reach out to the Church Office with any questions! Thank you so much for your continued support.



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. The Stefanos are sold out - Lena does have catalogs for Stefanos in the Office if anyone is interested in shopping on-line.

BAPTISMS:

We also have baptismal candles, \$30 for the large plain candle. A decorated candle is \$50.00.

MEMORIALS:

The family which is sponsoring the Memorial is asked to:

1. Contact the Parish Secretary to arrange scheduling the memorial for that day.
2. Coordinate the preparation and delivery of Koliva (if used). The Church Office can provide information on persons who can prepare Koliva. The standard rate for the preparation of Koliva is \$150.
3. Provide Coffee Hour food items.



GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH of the ANNUNCIATION

962 EAST AVENUE
ROCHESTER, NY 14607

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rochester, N.Y.

PARISH INFORMATION

CONTACT US:

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:

Secretaries: Leslie Fitzsimmons and Jen Clark

Monday and Tuesday - 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Wednesday through Friday - 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Office Email: Office@agocroc.org

Voice: (585) 244-3377

2026 PARISH COUNCIL

President: Eric Vangellow

Vice President: Zach Graham

Secretary: Helen Eisenberg

Treasurer: Demitri Kolokouris

Asst. Treasurer: Karen Balta

Van Yannas

Ronald Wiegand

Taso Kolokouris