



GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
 YORK, PENNSYLVANIA  
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# THE LADDER

JANUARY 2024



## STS. ATHANASIOS & CYRIL, PATR. OF ALEXANDRIA JANUARY 18TH



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 #ΚαλωσορίσατεΣτο  
 ΣπίτιΣας



METROPOLIS OF  
PITTSBURGH

## GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

2500 Pine Grove Road, York, Pennsylvania 17403

Phone: 717-741-4200 E-mail: [annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com)

Fax: 717-747-0468 Website: [www.agocy.org](http://www.agocy.org)

Fr. Andrew's cell: (717) 448-8732

Office Hours: Mon-Fri—9:00 am-2:00 pm, please call ahead to confirm

Father Andrew's Office Hours: M—out of office; T-F—10:00 am-6:00 pm

Father Andrew's e-mail: [fr.andreas@comcast.net](mailto:fr.andreas@comcast.net)

# THE LADDER

Monthly newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation.

*Submissions for consideration are due on the 15th of each month. Send to [annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com)*

## GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Rev. Deacon Thomas Shelley

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*Ladder Editor:* Georgia Georgakopoulos  
*Sunday Bulletin:* Fr. Andrew Tsikitas

#### Schedule of Worship Hours

##### Sunday Services (and Weekdays)

8:30 AM Orthros

9:45 AM Divine Liturgy

##### Sunday Church School

In person, after Holy Communion

#### Schedule of Church Events

Pastoral Visitations: By request

Home & Business Blessings: By request

#### Departments, Ministries and Committees

Church Choir                              Oratorical Festival Committee  
GOYA                                         Grounds & Maintenance  
HOPE & JOY                                Tech & Security Committee  
Sunday School                              Stewardship Committee  
Philoptochos                                Scholarship Committee  
Senior Citizens                             Food Festival Committee  
Social Committee

*Anyone interested in serving on any of these organizations or committees, please contact the Church Office.*

*Thank you!*

## FR. ANDREW'S MESSAGE

My beloved brethren in Christ,

A new year is beginning, and with that we all have a new set of aspirations and hopes for our lives in 2024, and I am no exception. As I look at this new year, I am praying on and looking for some inspiration, both from the Holy Spirit and from all of you, as to how to help our community move forward. Seeking out ways to bring about both renewal and growth for our community, I am looking at ways in which we can expand our liturgical/prayer life, our community consciousness, our overall understanding of the faith. Basically, ways in which we can grow as a community of faith, and leave an indelible mark on the greater York community.

Like all "New Year's resolutions," however, we need to implement them with resolve and commitment, so they don't fizzle out a few weeks into 2024. We've all been there, saying things like "I am going to be more active this year," or "This is the year that I will make advances in my career," or "I am going to lose 25 pounds," or all of those other goals that we tend to set when a new year begins. Unfortunately, the statistics show that only about 8% of people are successful in achieving their resolutions. In order to achieve our goals for ourselves and this community, it will take a lot of faith, humility, commitment, patience and perseverance so that we can achieve those goals. We should also make every effort that the goals we set, and the means by which we strive to achieve them are always in line with the teachings of our faith, so that we do not find ourselves working against God, which never works out well.

For some Scriptural inspiration along our way, let us take a few verses from the book of Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:6) "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." (Proverbs 16:3) "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:21)

Wishing you all a blessed 2024, I remain Your humble and unworthy servant in Christ,

† *Andrew*

## ON THE COVER ...

In the half-century after the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicea in 325, if there was one man whom the Arians feared and hated more intensely than any other, as being able to lay bare the whole error of their teaching, and to marshal, even from exile or hiding, the beleaguered forces of the Orthodox, it was Saint Athanasios the Great. This blazing lamp of Orthodoxy, which imperial power and heretics' plots could not quench when he shone upon the lampstand, nor find when he was hid by the people and monks of Egypt, was born in Alexandria about the year 296. He received an excellent training in Greek letters and especially in the sacred Scriptures, of which he shows an exceptional knowledge in his writings. Even as a young man he had a remarkable depth of theological understanding; he was only about twenty years old when he wrote his treatise "On the Incarnation." Saint Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria, brought him up in piety, ordained him his deacon, and after deposing Arius for his blasphemy against the Divinity of the Son of God, took Athanasios to the First Council in Nicea in 325. Saint Athanasios was to spend the remainder of his life laboring in defense of this Holy Council. In 326, before his death, Alexander appointed Athanasios his successor.

In 325, Arius had been condemned by the Council of Nicea; yet through his hypocritical confession of Orthodox belief, Saint Constantine the Great was persuaded by Arius's supporters that he should be received back into the communion of the Church. But Athanasios, knowing well the perverseness of his mind, and the disease of heresy lurking in his heart, refused communion with Arius. The heresiarch's followers then began framing false charges against Athanasios. Finally Saint Constantine the Great, misled by grave charges of the Saint's misconduct (which were completely false), had him exiled to Tiberius (Treves) in Gaul in 336. When Saint Constantine was succeeded by his three sons Constantine II, Constans, and Constantius, in 337, Saint Athanasios returned to Alexandria in triumph. But his enemies found an ally in Constantius, Emperor of the East, and he spent a second exile in Rome. It was ended when Constans prevailed with threats upon his brother Constantius to restore Athanasios (see also Nov. 6). For ten years Saint Athanasios strengthened Orthodoxy throughout Egypt, visiting the whole country and encouraging all: clergy, monastics, and lay folk, being loved by all as a

father. After Constans's death in 350, Constantius became sole Emperor, and Athanasios was again in danger. On the evening of February 8, 356, General Syrianus with more than five thousand soldiers surrounded the church in which Athanasios was serving, and broke open the doors. Athanasios's clergy begged him to leave, but the good shepherd commanded that all the flock should withdraw first; and only when he was assured of their safety, he also, protected by divine grace, passed through the midst of the soldiers and disappeared into the deserts of Egypt, where for some six years he eluded the soldiers and spies sent after him.

When Julian the Apostate succeeded Constantius in 361, Athanasios returned again, but only for a few months. Because Athanasios had converted many pagans, and the priests of the idols in Egypt wrote to Julian that if Athanasios remained, idolatry would perish in Egypt, the heathen Emperor ordered not Athanasios's exile, but his death. Athanasios took a ship up the Nile. When he learned that his imperial pursuers were following him, he had his men turn back, and as his boat passed that of his pursuers, they asked him if he had seen Athanasios. "He is not far," he answered. After returning to Alexandria for a while, he fled again to the Thebaid until Julian's death in 363. Saint Athanasios suffered his fifth and last exile under Valens in 365, which only lasted four months because Valens, fearing a sedition among the Egyptians for their beloved Archbishop, revoked his edict in February, 366.

The great Athanasios passed the remaining seven years of his life in peace. Of his fifty-seven years as Patriarch, he had spent some seventeen in exiles. Shining from the height of his throne like a radiant evening star, and enlightening the Orthodox with the brilliance of his words for yet a little while, this much-suffering champion inclined toward the sunset of his life, and in the year 373 took his rest from his lengthy sufferings, but not before another luminary of the truth -- Basil the Great -- had risen in the East, being consecrated Archbishop of Caesarea in 370. Besides all of his other achievements, Saint Athanasios wrote the life of Saint Anthony the Great, with whom he spent time in his youth; ordained Saint Frumentius first Bishop of Ethiopia; and in his Paschal Encyclical for the year 367 set forth the books of the Old and New Testaments accepted by the Church as canonical. Saint Gregory the Theologian, in his "Oration On the Great Athanasios", said that he was "Angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind; ... rebuking with the tenderness of a father, praising with the dignity of a ruler ... Everything was harmonious, as an air upon a single lyre, and in the same key; his life, his teaching, his struggles, his dangers, his return, and his conduct after his return ... he treated so mildly and gently those who had injured him, that even they themselves, if I may say so, did not find his restoration distasteful."

Saint Cyril was also from Alexandria, born about the year 376. He was the nephew of Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who also instructed the Saint in his youth. Having first spent much time with the monks in Nitria, he later became the successor to his uncle's throne in 412. In 429, when Cyril heard tidings of the teachings of the new Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, he began attempting through private letters to bring Nestorius to renounce his heretical teaching about the Incarnation. When the heresiarch did not repent, Saint Cyril, together with Pope Celestine of Rome, led the Orthodox opposition to his error. Saint Cyril presided over the Third Ecumenical Council of the 200 Holy Fathers in the year 431, who gathered in Ephesus under Saint Theodosius the Younger. At this Council, by his most wise words, he put to shame and convicted the impious doctrine of Nestorius, who, although he was in town, refused to appear before Cyril. Saint Cyril, besides overthrowing the error of Nestorius, has left to the Church full commentaries on the Gospels of Luke and John. Having shepherded the Church of Christ for thirty-two years, he reposed in 444.

## THE VOICE OF OUR FAITH

### A THEOPHANY CLEANSING—DCN. THOMAS SHELLEY

As I write this on the evening closing Feast of St. Lucy, the Martyr of Syracuse (December 13) the earliest sunsets of the year have passed. By the time these words are read the 12 Days will be closing amid ever-later sunsets rapidly approaching, then passing 5 PM.

The lengthening evenings are appropriate preparations for the second-greatest Feast of the Church Year: The Theophany (Epiphany) of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. Another preparation—as subtle as slowly delaying sunset—was heard in the final verses of the magnificent Idomelon from the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour of the Royal Hours of the Nativity:

+ We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ  
+ Show us also Thy divine Theophany.

Similarly, the Theophany has already been hinted through Iconography. In most Icons of the Nativity, toward the bottom right corner one can find nursemaids preparing bath water or actually bathing the Infant Jesus. While the darkness of the cave will soon be replaced by the darkness of the River Jordan we are already given a preview of what is to come.

The Theophany is the revelation of Jesus as one of the Trinity: The Father proclaims Him as His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove comes to rest on Him. But what a strange place for such revelation! Jesus, born without sin and living without sin, had no need to receive, from the hand of the Forerunner, a “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”.

Yet out of His love for mankind He was willing to subject Himself to something which He neither needed or deserved....a preview of another and greater kind.

St. Ambrose wrote that Christ’s voluntary submission to baptism was to serve as an example:

*“So that no one might escape the bath of grace, He, Christ, did not flee from the bath of repentance. So that no one may be called free from sins, He, Christ came to cure sins. If, for us, Christ was washed--moreover, if He washed us in His body---how much more must we wash ourselves from our own faults....*

*Alone He was immersed into the water, but He raised up all! Alone He descended, but in order that we all might rise again! Alone He took upon Himself the sin of all, but in order that in Him the sin of all might be cleansed!”*

As we close the most festive part of the Nativity journey by partaking of the blessed waters and welcome those cleansing waters into our homes, let us begin to contemplate how the Baptismal life challenges us to be immersed in the Paschal mystery of Him Who, though He knew no sin, became as a sinner standing amidst sinners at the River Jordan.

Christ is Revealed--in the Jordan by John! May He also be revealed in and through us.

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## EPIPHANY—FR. THOMAS HOPKO

The sixth of January is the feast of the Epiphany. Originally it was the one Christian feast of the “shining forth” of God to the world in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth. It included the celebration of Christ’s birth, the adoration of the Wisemen, and all of the childhood events of Christ such as His circumcision and presentation to the temple as well as His baptism by John in the Jordan. There seems to be little doubt that this feast, like Easter and Pentecost, was understood as the fulfillment of a previous Jewish festival, in this case the Feast of Lights.

Epiphany means shining forth or manifestation. The feast is often called, as it is in the Orthodox service books, Theophany, which means the shining forth and manifestation of God. The emphasis in the present day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.



Thus, in the baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus identifies Himself with sinners as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1.29), the “Beloved” of the Father whose messianic task it is to redeem men from their sins (Lk 3.21, Mk 1.35). And he is revealed as well as One of the Divine Trinity, testified to by the voice of the Father, and by the Spirit in the form of a dove. This is the central epiphany glorified in the main hymns of the feast:

*When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, calling Thee his Beloved Son. And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of his Word. O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee (Troparion).*

*Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy Light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light Unapproachable! (Kontakion).*

The services of Epiphany are set up exactly as those of Christmas, although historically it was most certainly Christmas which was made to imitate Epiphany since it was established later. Once again the Royal Hours and the Liturgy of Saint Basil are celebrated together with Vespers on the eve of the feast; and the Vigil is made up of Great Compline and Matins.

The prophecies of Epiphany repeat the God is with us from Isaiah and stress the foretelling of the Messiah as well as the

coming of His forerunner, John the Baptist:

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His path straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Is 40.3–5; Lk 3.4–6).*

The main feature of the feast of the Epiphany is the Great Blessing of Water. It is prescribed to follow both the Divine Liturgy of the eve of the feast and the Divine Liturgy of the day itself. It begins with the singing of special hymns and the censing of the water which has been placed in the center of the church building. Surrounded by candles and flowers, this water stands for the beautiful world of God's original creation and ultimate glorification by Christ in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes this service of blessing is done out of doors at a place where the water is flowing naturally.

*The voice of the Lord cries over the waters, saying: Come all ye, receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, even Christ who is made manifest.*

*Today the nature of water is sanctified. Jordan is divided in two, and turns back the stream of its waters, beholding the Master being baptized.*

*As a man Thou didst come to that river, O Christ our King, and dost hasten O Good One, to receive the baptism of a servant at the hands of the Forerunner [John], because of our sins, O Lover of Man (Hymns of the Great Blessing of Waters).*

After the epistle (1 Cor 1.10–14) and the gospel reading (Mk 1.9–11) the special great litany is chanted invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit upon the water and upon those who will partake of it. It ends with the great prayer of the cosmic glorification of God in which Christ is called upon to sanctify the water, and all men and all creation, by the manifestation of his saving and sanctifying divine presence by the indwelling of the Holy and Good and Life-creating Spirit.

As the troparion of the feast is sung, the celebrant immerses the Cross into the water three times and then proceeds to sprinkle the water in the four directions of the world. He then blesses the people and their homes with the sanctified water which stands for the salvation of all men and all creation which Christ has effected by his "epiphany" in the flesh for the life of the world.

Sometimes people think that the blessing of water and the practice of drinking it and sprinkling it over everyone and everything is a "paganism" which has falsely entered the Christian Church. We know, however, that this ritual was practiced by the People of God in the Old Testament, and that in the Christian Church it has a very special and important significance.

It is the faith of Christians that since the Son of God has taken human flesh and has been immersed in the streams of the Jordan, all matter is sanctified and made pure in Him, purged of its death-dealing qualities inherited from the devil and the wickedness of men. In the Lord's epiphany all creation becomes good again, indeed "very good," the way that God Himself made it and proclaimed it to be in the beginning when "the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen 1.2) and when the "Breath of Life" was breathing in man and in everything that God made (Gen 1.30; 2.7).

The world and everything in it is indeed "very good" (Gen 1.31) and when it becomes polluted, corrupted and dead, God saves it once more by effecting the "new creation" in Christ, his divine Son and our Lord by the grace of the Holy Spirit (Gal 6.15). This is what is celebrated on Epiphany, particularly in the Great Blessing of Water. The consecration of the waters on this feast places the entire world—through its "prime element" of watering the perspective of the cosmic creation, sanctification, and glorification of the Kingdom of God in Christ and the Spirit. It tells us that man and the world were indeed created and saved in order to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3.19), the "fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1.22). It tells us that Christ, in Who in "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily," is and shall be truly "all, and in all" (Col 2.9, 3.11). It tells us as well that the "new heavens and the new earth" which God has promised through His prophets and apostles (Is 66.2; 2 Peter 3.13; Rev 21.1) are truly "with us" already now in the mystery of Christ and His Church.

Thus, the sanctification and sprinkling of the Epiphany water is no pagan ritual. It is the expression of the most central fact of the Christian vision of man, his life and his world. It is the liturgical testimony that the vocation and destiny of creation is to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3.19).

## GREAT HOLY WATER, Q&A—PEMPTOUSIA.COM

### **Is there a difference between the Great Holy Water from the service on the Eve of Theophany and that from the day of the feast?**

The Great Blessing of the Water which is performed on the eve of Theophany and on the day of the feast itself is exactly the same. Some people wrongly believe the service held on the eve is the 'Lesser Blessing' and that held on the feast itself is the 'Greater'. In both instances, the Great Blessing of the Waters is performed.



The 'Lesser Blessing' is performed on the first day of every month, and also, exceptionally, when believers request it, for a variety of reasons (blessing houses, shops, institutes, the foundations of buildings and so on). The Great Blessing is performed only twice a year (on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January), in church.

### **Can Great Holy Water be kept at home and be drunk in times of sickness, to ward off the evil eye and any other Satanic action?**

The answer is 'Yes'. It is provided by the holy text of the service of the Great Blessing of the Waters, which states: 'that all who are sprinkled with or consume it (the sanctified water) may have it for the healing of the passions, the blessing of homes, and every appropriate benefit' and especially 'for the destruction of demons, a shield against opposing forces', (cf. the corresponding prayer against the evil eye: 'removing and expelling every diabolical action, every Satanic attack and every assault... and the evil eye of wicked people').

### **What is the relationship between fasting and Great Holy Water?**

Historically, the Great Blessing of the Waters began as follows. In the early Church the eve of Theophany, like the eve of Easter and Pentecost was the time when the baptism of catechumens, the new Christians, took place. The blessing of the water and the baptism took place at the midnight service. Saint John Chrysostom tells us it then became the custom for Christians to take some of the sanctified water to drink or to carry back to their homes as a blessing to be kept for the whole year: 'This is why, at midnight on the feast, when all have been doused with water, they take the water to their home, where they keep it for the whole year (*Discourse on the holy baptism of the Savior*, PG 49, 366). Later, however, at a time of liturgical decline, the service of the Blessing of the Waters was separated from that of Baptism, although it retained many of its features. The custom survived of taking the holy water home 'to bless houses', as the prayer of sanctification puts it in the service of the Great Blessing.

Another early development was the observance of a fast before the feast of Theophany, for two reasons. The first of these was that the great feasts of Christmas and Theophany were united in the ancient Church and celebrated on 6 January as Theophany or Epiphany (a practice still observed to this day in the Church of Armenia). It was John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century) who divided the feasts and ordained that Christmas be celebrated on 25 December and the Baptism and manifestation of the Holy Trinity on 6 January. There was a fast before every feast of the Lord for the spiritual and bodily cleansing of the faithful. We should remember that fasting has within it an element of mourning over sins. So when the feasts were split, the associated fast became linked to Christmas. This is why the Church has declared a one-day fast on the eve of Theophany, as preparation for the feast, rather than multiple days, since we are in the period of the Twelve Days.

Another ancient custom was that those who were to be baptized would fast, as did the godparents, relatives and other Christians who fasted 'on behalf of the baptized'. So it was a small step for the drinking of the holy water to be linked in the minds of Christians with fasting, though there is, in fact, no causal relationship between them at all.

In today's terms and conditions, we can say that those who regularly partake of the holy sacraments and observe the fasts of the Church, including that of January 5, are already in a position to drink the Great Holy Water on 5 and 6 January. Otherwise, they should observe a fast in accordance with whatever instructions they are given by their spiritual guide.

Finally, those who, in exceptional circumstances such as sickness, danger and so on, drink the Great Holy Water which they have kept in their home, having first fasted or not, should not fall short on spiritual fasting, but should avoid 'everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God' (2 Cor. 7, 1).

## Η ΚΛΙΜΑΞ

### ΜΗΝΗΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΡ. ΑΝΔΡΕΑ ...

Αγαπημένοι μου αδελφοί εν Χριστώ,

Ένα νέο έτος ξεκινά, και μαζί με αυτό έχουμε όλοι ένα νέο σύνολο φιλοδοξιών και ελπίδων για τη ζωή μας το 2024, μαζί σας σε αυτά είμαι και εγώ. Καθώς κοιτάζω αυτό το νέο έτος, προσεύχομαι και αναζητώ κάποια έμπνευση, τόσο από το Άγιο Πνεύμα όσο και από όλους εσάς, για το πώς να βοηθήσω την κοινότητά μας να προχωρήσει. Αναζητώντας τρόπους για να επιφέρουμε τόσο την ανανέωση όσο και την ανάπτυξη για την κοινότητά μας, εξετάζω τρόπους με τους οποίους μπορούμε να επεκτείνουμε τη λατρευτική μας ζωή και την κοινή προσευχή μας, την κοινοτική μας συνείδηση, τη συνολική μας κατανόηση της πίστης. Βασικά, τρόποι με τους οποίους μπορούμε να αναπτυχθούμε ως κοινότητα πίστης και να αφήσουμε ένα ανεξίτηλο σημάδι στην ευρύτερη κοινότητα του Υόρκ.

Όπως όλες τις «Πρωτοχρονιάτικες υποσχέσεις», ωστόσο, πρέπει να τα εφαρμόσουμε με αποφασιστικότητα και δέσμευση, ώστε να μην εξαφανιστούν λίγες εβδομάδες μετά την αρχή του 2024. Όλοι μας το έχουμε κάνει στο παρελθόν, λέγοντας πράγματα όπως «Θα ασκηθώ περισσότερο φέτος» ή «Αυτή είναι η χρονιά που θα σημειώσω πρόοδο στην καριέρα μου» ή «θα χάσω 10 κιλά» ή όλους αυτούς τους άλλους στόχους που τείνουμε να θέτουμε όταν ξεκινά μια νέα χρονιά. Δυστυχώς, οι στατιστικές δείχνουν ότι μόνο το 8% περίπου των ανθρώπων είναι επιτυχείς στην επίτευξη των επιλύσεών τους. Προκειμένου να επιτύχουμε τους στόχους μας για τον εαυτό μας και αυτήν την κοινότητα, θα χρειαστεί πολλή πίστη, ταπεινότητα, δέσμευση, υπομονή και επιμονή ώστε να μπορέσουμε να επιτύχουμε αυτούς τους στόχους. Πρέπει επίσης να καταβάλουμε κάθε δυνατή προσπάθεια ώστε οι στόχοι που θέτουμε και τα μέσα με τα οποία αγωνιζόμαστε να τους πετύχουμε να είναι πάντα σύμφωνα με τις διδασκαλίες της πίστης μας, ώστε να μην βρεθούμε να εργαζόμαστε ενάντια στον Θεό, κάτι που ποτέ δεν βγαίνει σε καλό.

Για λίγη έμπνευση από την Αγία Γραφή, ας πάρουμε μερικούς στίχους από το βιβλίο των Παροιμιών: «ΐσθι πεποιθώς έν όλη τή καρδιά επί Θεῷ επί δέ σή σοφία μη έπαίρου· έν πάσαις όδοις σου γνώριζε αυτήν, ίνα όρθοτομή τās όδούς σου, ό δέ πούς σου μη προσκόψη.» (Παροιμίαί 3:5-6) «Τα έργα σου στον Κύριο εμπιστέψου τα και οι σκοποί σου θα εκπληρωθούν.» (Παροιμίαί 16:3) «πολλοί λογισμοί έν καρδιά άνδρός, ή δέ βουλή του Κυρίου εις τόν αιῶνα μένει.» (Παροιμίαί 19:21)

Σας εύχομαι ένα ευλογημένο 2024, και παραμένω ο ταπεινός σας διάκονος εν Χριστώ,

† **Ανδρέας**

### ΑΓ. ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ & ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΣ – 18 ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ

Ο Μέγας Αθανάσιος γεννήθηκε το 295 μ.Χ. από φτωχούς αλλά ενάρετους γονείς, γεγονός που του στέρησε τη δυνατότητα για ανώτερες σπουδές. Όμως ο πανάγαθος Θεός τον προίκισε με πλούσια πνευματικά προσόντα. Λαμβάνει τη στοιχειώδη εκπαίδευση και στη συνέχεια μελετά μόνος του για να φθάσει σε υψηλότατα επίπεδα γνώσης και σοφίας.

Από πολύ νέος έδειξε την κλίση του προς την Εκκλησία. 25 ετών χειροτονείται διάκονος από τον πατριάρχη Αλεξανδρείας Αλέξανδρο, τον οποίο ακολουθεί στην Α' Οικουμενική Σύνοδο το 325 μ.Χ., στη Νίκαια της Βιθυνίας. Αναδεικνύεται πρωτεργάτης στην καταδίκη της αιρετικής διδασκαλίας του Αρείου.

Το 328 μ.Χ. και σε ηλικία 33 ετών εκλέγεται πανηγυρικά πατριάρχη Αλεξανδρείας.





Από τη θέση αυτή αντιμετωπίζει ένα φοβερό πόλεμο εκ μέρους των αιρετικών οπαδών του Αρείου. Όμως ο άγιος, χάρις στην μεγάλη πνευματικότητά του και τη ζέουσα πίστη στο Θεό, κατορθώνει να βγει νικητής απ' όλες αυτές τις δοκιμασίες ακόμη και από τις πέντε εξορίες που του επιβλήθηκαν, καθώς ο αυτοκράτορας Κωνσταντίνος ο Β' ήταν οπαδός του Αρειανισμού. Εκοιμήθη εν ειρήνη το 373 μ.Χ.

Ο Άγιος Κύριλλος έζησε επί βασιλείας Θεοδοσίου του Μικρού και γεννήθηκε στην Αλεξάνδρεια το 370 μ.Χ. από εύπορους γονείς της ελληνικής κοινωνίας της πόλεως. Ανεψιός του αρχιεπισκόπου Αλεξανδρείας Θεοφίλου ο Κύριλλος, έλαβε μεγάλη θεολογική μόρφωση, ώστε έγινε κατόπιν διάδοχος του θείου του, στον αρχιεπισκοπικό θρόνο Αλεξανδρείας.

Όταν έγινε η Γ' Οικουμενική Σύνοδος το 431 μ.Χ. στην Έφεσο, ο Κύριλλος υπήρξε πρόεδρος αυτής και συνετέλεσε να γκρεμιστούν οι κακοδοξίες του δυσεβούς Νεστορίου, για το πρόσωπο της υπεραγιάς Δεσποίνης ημών Θεοτόκου.

Με πολλά πνευματικά κατορθώματα στο ενεργητικό του, ο Κύριλλος παρέδωσε ειρηνικά το πνεύμα του στον Κύριο την 27η Ιουνίου του 444 μ.Χ., αφού πατριάρχευσε για 32 περίπου χρόνια. Δικαίως ο Άγιος Αναστάσιος ο Σιναΐτης τον προσονόμασε «σφραγίδα των Πατέρων».

Η Εκκλησία θέλησε να αδελφώσει την μνήμη των δύο Μεγάλων Πατέρων αυτής και Αρχιεπισκόπων Αλεξανδρείας, του Μεγάλου Αθανασίου, πρωταγωνιστή κατά του Αρειανισμού, και του Αγίου Κυρίλλου, πρωταγωνιστή κατά του Νεστοριανισμού και όρισε το συνορτασμό τους στις 18 Ιανουαρίου.

## ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ – ΡΕΜΠΤΟΥΣΙΑ.GR

Ο Χριστός, όταν ήταν περίπου τριάντα χρονών, πριν βγει στη δημόσια ζωή Του και θέλοντας να εκπληρώσει όλες τις εντολές του Μωσαϊκού Νόμου (που Αυτός βέβαια είχε δώσει στους ανθρώπους), πήγε στον Ιορδάνη ποταμό να βαπτισθεί.

Εκεί βρισκόταν ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Πρόδρομος και Βαπτιστής, που τον είχε στείλει ο Θεός να κηρύττει: «Μετανοείτε, γιατί πλησίασε η Βασιλεία των Ουρανών» και εννοούσε πλησίασε ο καιρός να 'ρθει ο Χριστός, που έφερνε έναν καινούριο τρόπο ζωής και υποσχόταν την αιωνιότητα σε όποιον Τον ακολουθούσε.

Σ' αυτόν λοιπόν ήρθε ο Χριστός από τη Γαλιλαία για να βαπτισθεί. Όχι γιατί είχε αμαρτίες, αφού ήταν αναμάρτητος, αλλά για να τηρήσει σε όλα τον Νόμο του Θεού και να δώσει παράδειγμα σε μας. Κυρίως όμως μας παρέδωσε το νέο, πνευματικό βάπτισμα, που μας γεννάει πολίτες στη Βασιλεία του Θεού, καθαρούς από κάθε αμαρτία, και πρωτίστως από το προπατορικό αμάρτημα – είναι η αληθινή μας γέννηση (γι' αυτό οι χριστιανοί εκτός από τα γενέθλια τους θα έπρεπε να γιορτάζουν και την ημέρα της Βάπτισής τους).

Όταν ήρθε ο Χριστός στον Ιορδάνη ποταμό, ο Άγιος Ιωάννης Τον εμπόδιζε κι έλεγε: «Εγώ έχω ανάγκη να βαπτισθώ από Σένα κι Εσύ έρχεσαι σε μένα;» Ο Ιησούς επέμενε πως έτσι πρέπει να γίνει, για να εκτελεστεί κάθε εντολή. Τότε ο Ιωάννης υποχώρησε και δεν Του έφερε αντίρρηση. Όταν ο Ιησούς βαπτίσθηκε, ανέβηκε αμέσως από το νερό, ενώ τα νερά του Ιορδάνη στράφηκαν προς τα πίσω και άνοιξαν οι Ουρανοί. Ο Ιωάννης μαρτυρεί ότι είδε το Άγιο Πνεύμα του Θεού να κατεβαίνει σαν περιστέρι και να έρχεται πάνω στον Ιησού και ακούστηκε φωνή από τους ουρανοί που έλεγε: «Αυτός είναι ο Υιός μου ο αγαπητός, στον οποίο ευαρεστούμαι».

Έτσι έχουμε εδώ τη φανέρωση της Αγίας Τριάδας, δηλαδή Θεοφάνεια: Τη φωνή του Θεού – Πατέρα που ακούγεται, τον Υιό – Θεάνθρωπο Χριστό στον ποταμό και το Άγιο Πνεύμα με τη μορφή περιστεριού. Τη γιορτή αυτή τη λέμε και Φώτα όπως και το βάπτισμα το λέμε και φώτισμα.

Τα παλιά χρόνια, όταν βαπτίζονταν κυρίως σε μεγάλη ηλικία, πολλοί κατηχούμενοι βαπτίζονταν κατά τη γιορτή αυτή (όπως και σε κάποιες άλλες μεγάλες γιορτές, Πάσχα και Πεντηκοστή, γίνονταν ομαδικές βαπτίσεις). Από το νερό που αγιαζόταν πρώτα, προκειμένου να γίνουν οι βαπτίσεις, συνήθιζαν να παίρνουν οι πιστοί για ευλογία, για να πιουν ή να ραντίσουν τα σπίτια, τα κτήματα και τα ζώα τους. Έτσι επικράτησε να γίνεται ο Μέγας Αγιασμός ανήμερα αλλά για πρακτικούς λόγους και την παραμονή της γιορτής (που είναι ακριβώς ο ίδιος

Αγιασμός). Η νηστεία της παραμονής δεν είναι για τον Αγιασμό, αλλά για τη μεγάλη δεσποτική γιορτή των Θεοφανείων, αφού δεν προηγείται καμιά άλλη νηστήσιμη μέρα, λόγω της κατάλυσης του εορταστικού Δωδεκαημέρου.

Από τότε έμεινε και η συνήθεια να παίρνουμε Αγιασμό, να ραντίζουμε παντού και να πίνουμε (τον Μέγα Αγιασμό τον πίνουμε μετά τη Θεία Κοινωνία και πριν πάρουμε Αντίδωρο). Καλά είναι να μη φυλάγουμε στα σπίτια, αλλά όποτε χρειαστεί να απευθυνόμαστε στους ιερείς που κρατούν στους ναούς. Ο Μέγας Αγιασμός είναι ένα συνεχές θαύμα μέσα στην Εκκλησία, αφού αυτό το αγιασμένο νερό δεν παθαίνει τίποτα ολόκληρο τον χρόνο ή και τον επόμενο, τον μεθεπόμενο κ.ο.κ.

Ο Αγιασμός των υδάτων γίνεται σε κάθε ενορία με τη δύναμη του Σταυρού, ώστε να αγιασθεί όλη η φύση των υδάτων, οι θάλασσες, οι λίμνες, τα ποτάμια και να καθαρισθούν από κάθε δαιμονική ενέργεια.

Τα Θεοφάνεια ή Φώτα τα γιορτάζουμε στις 6 Ιανουαρίου – και για εννέα συνεχείς ημέρες – ενώ την επομένη, στις 7 Ιανουαρίου, γιορτάζουμε τη «Σύναξη του Αγίου Προφήτου Προδρόμου και Βαπτιστού Ιωάννου», δηλαδή του προσώπου που έπαιξε τον κύριο ρόλο στη Βάπτιση του Κυρίου.



## HOUSE BLESSINGS, 2024/ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΙ 2024

If you would like to have your homes blessed during this Epiphany season, please contact Fr. Andrew directly to set up a date and time. He can be reached via **phone/text—717-448-8732** or **e-mail—fr.andreas@comcast.net**. Please leave him a message if he does not answer right away, and he will get back to you. Have a blessed Epiphany season!

+++++

Εάν θέλετε αγιασμό στα σπίτια σας κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της περιόδου των Θεοφανείων, επικοινωνήστε με τον π. Ανδρέα απευθείας για να ορίσετε μια ημερομηνία και ώρα. Μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί του μέσω **τηλεφώνου/ μηνύματος—717-448-8732** ή **e-mail—fr.andreas@comcast.net**. Αφήστε του ένα μήνυμα εάν δεν απαντήσει αμέσως και θα επικοινωνήσει μαζί σας.

Να έχετε ευλογημένα Θεοφάνια!

***\* Icons for January Feast Days \****

***Available for flower donations towards decorating- \$50 each***

***\* Εικόνες για τις γιορτές Ιανουαρίου \****

***διατίθενται για δωρεές λουλουδιών για διακόσμηση - \$50 η κάθε εικόνα***

***\*Monday, Jan 1st - St. Basil the Great***

***Δευτέρα, 1 Ιανουαρίου - Άγιος Βασίλειος***

***\*Friday & Sat, Jan 5th-6th - Eve of Theophany & Holy Theophany***

***Παρασκευή & Σάββατο, 5-6 Ιανουαρίου - Παραμονή Θεοφανίων & Αγίων Θεοφανείων***

***\*Sunday, Jan 7th - Synaxis of John the Baptist***

***Κυριακή, 7 Ιανουαρίου - Αγ. Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου***

***\*Wednesday, Jan 17th - Anthony the Great***

***Τετάρτη, 17 Ιανουαρίου - Μέγας Αντώνιος***

***\*Thursday, Jan 18th - Sts. Athanasios & Cyril - **DONATED*****

***Πέμπτη, 18 Ιανουαρίου - Αγ. Αθανασίου & Κύριλλου - **ΔΩΡΙΣΜΕΝΗ*****

***\*Thursdays, Jan 25th - Gregory the Theologian***

***Πέμπτη, 25 Ιανουαρίου - Γρηγόριος ο Θεολόγος***

***\*Tuesday, Jan 30th - Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs***

***Τρίτη, 30 Ιανουαρίου - Σύναξη των Τριών Ιεραρχών***

***\*Please contact the church office at 717-741-4200***

***or email: [annunciationyorkra@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkra@gmail.com)***

***If you are interested in donating towards an icon***

***\*Επικοινωνήστε με το γραφείο της εκκλησίας στο 717-741-4200***

***ή email: [annunciationyorkra@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkra@gmail.com)***

***Εάν ενδιαφέρεστε να κάνετε δωρεά προς μια εικόνα***

# January 2024

| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Mon                                                                                                                                                                                              | Tue                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Wed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Thu                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Fri                                                                                                                                  | Sat                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>1</b> <br><b>Feast Day Of St. Basil</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Divine Liturgy<br><b>Office Closed</b> | <b>2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>5</b><br><b>Eve of Theophany</b><br><b>Royal Hours</b><br>8:00am<br><b>Vesperal Divine Liturgy w/Blessing of Waters</b><br>6:30pm | <b>6</b> <br><b>Holy Theophany</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Liturgy w/ Great Agiasmos |
| <b>7</b> <br><b>St. John the Baptist</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Liturgy<br><b>Vasilopita Cutting and Parish Council Oath of Office</b> | <b>8</b>                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>9</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>10</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-6:30pm<br><br><b>Greek Dance</b><br>5:30pm-6:30pm<br>6:30pm-7:30pm                                                                                                                                                            | <b>11</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>12</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>13</b>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>14</b><br><b>Sunday after Theophany</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Divine Liturgy<br><b>Philoptochos Meeting after Divine Liturgy</b>                                                                                    | <b>15</b><br><b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>                                                                                                                                                   | <b>16</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm<br><br><b>Introduction to the Orth. Christian Faith</b><br>6:30-8:00 pm                                                                                                     | <b>17</b> <br><b>St. Anthony the Great</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Div. Liturgy<br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-6:30pm<br><b>Greek Dance</b><br>5:30pm-6:30pm<br>6:30pm-7:30pm | <b>18</b> <br><b>Sts. Athanasios &amp; Cyril</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Div. Liturgy<br><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm | <b>19</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>20</b>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>21</b><br><b>12th Sunday of Luke</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Divine Liturgy                                                                                                                                           | <b>22</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>23</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>24</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-6:30pm<br><br><b>Greek Dance</b><br>5:30pm-6:30pm<br>6:30pm-7:30pm                                                                                                                                                            | <b>25</b> <br><b>St. Gregory the Theologian</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Div. Liturgy<br><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm  | <b>26</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>27</b>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>28</b><br><b>15th Sunday of Luke</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Divine Liturgy                                                                                                                                           | <b>29</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>30</b> <br><b>Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs</b><br>8:30 am Orthros<br>9:45 am Div. Liturgy<br><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-7pm | <b>31</b><br><b>Greek School</b><br>5pm-6:30pm<br><br><b>Greek Dance</b><br>5:30pm-6:30pm<br>6:30pm-7:30pm                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                               |

# Ιανουάριος 2024

| Κυρ                                                                                                                                                                                        | Δευ                                                                                                                                                                               | Τρι                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Τετ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Πεμ                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Παρ                                                                                                                     | Σαβ                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>1</b> <br><b>Αγίου Βασιλείου</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτ.<br><b>Γραφείο Κλειστό</b> | <b>2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>5</b><br><b>Παραμονή των Θεοφανίων Βασιλικές Ωρες</b><br>8:00 πμ<br><b>Εσπερινή Λειτουργία με Αγιασμό</b><br>6:30 μμ | <b>6</b> <br><b>Αγ. Θεοφάνεια</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτουργ.<br><b>Μέγας Αγιασμός</b> |
| <b>7</b> <br><b>Αγ. Ιωάννου του Προδρομίου</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτ.<br>Κοπή της Βασιλόπιτας | <b>8</b>                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>9</b><br><b>Ελληνικό Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ                                                                                                                                                          | <b>10</b><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-6:30μμ<br><br><b>Ελληνικός Χορός</b><br>5:30μμ-6:30μμ<br>6:30μμ-7:30μμ                                                                                                                                                        | <b>11</b><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>12</b>                                                                                                               | <b>13</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>14</b><br><b>Κυριακή μετά τὰ Φωτα</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτ.<br><br><b>Φιλόπτωχος Συνάντηση μετά τη Θεία Λειτουργία</b>                                                     | <b>15</b><br><b>Ημέρα Μάρτιν Λούθερ Κινγκ Τζούνιορ</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>16</b><br><b>Ελληνικό Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ                                                                                                                                                         | <b>17</b> <br><b>Αγ. Αντωνίου του Μέγα</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτουργ.<br><b>Ελληνικό Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-6:30μμ<br><b>Ελληνικός Χορός</b><br>5:30μμ-6:30μμ<br>6:30μμ-7:30μμ | <b>18</b> <br><b>Αγ. Αθανασίου και Κυρίλλου</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτουργ.<br><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b>        | <b>19</b>                                                                                                               | <b>20</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>21</b><br><b>Κυριακή ΙΒ' Λουκά</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτ.                                                                                                                   | <b>22</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>23</b><br><b>Ελληνικό Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ                                                                                                                                                         | <b>24</b><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-6:30μμ<br><br><b>Ελληνικός Χορός</b><br>5:30μμ-6:30μμ<br>6:30μμ-7:30μμ                                                                                                                                                        | <b>25</b> <br><b>Αγ. Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτουργ.<br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ | <b>26</b>                                                                                                               | <b>27</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>28</b><br><b>Κυριακή ΙΕ' Λουκά</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτ.                                                                                                                   | <b>29</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>30</b> <br><b>Των Τριών Ιεραρχών</b><br>8:30 πμ Όρθρος<br>9:45 πμ Λειτουργ.<br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-7μμ | <b>31</b><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ Σχολείο</b><br>5μμ-6:30μμ<br><br><b>ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ Χορός</b><br>5:30μμ-6:30μμ<br>6:30μμ-7:30μμ                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                      |

*Thank you to everyone who attended the St. Nick Pancake Breakfast and who donated to the Locks for Love Charity. \$600 was raised for this worthy cause!*

*Ευχαριστούμε όλους όσους παραβρέθηκαν στο πρωινό του Αγίου Νικολάου*





## TAX FORM REQUEST - ΑΙΤΗΣΗ ΦΟΡΟΛΟΓΙΚΟΥ ΕΝΤΥΠΟΥ

To cut down on printing and postage of unwanted documents, please contact the church office by phone at 717-741-4200 or email ([annunciationyorkkra@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkkra@gmail.com)) if you would like an end of year statement for tax purposes. We can forward one to you via email or mail.



Για να περιορίσετε την εκτύπωση και την ταχυδρομική αποστολή ανεπιθύμητων εγγράφων, επικοινωνήστε με το γραφείο της Εκκλησίας τηλεφωνικά στο 717-741-4200 ή email ([annunciationyorkkra@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationyorkkra@gmail.com)) εάν θέλετε μια δήλωση τέλους έτους για φορολογικούς σκοπούς. Μπορούμε να προωθήσουμε ένα σε εσάς μέσω email ή μέσω ταχυδρομείου.



## VASILOPITA CUTTING

# *Community Vasilopita Cutting*

## *Κοπή Βασιλόπιτας*



*Sunday, January 7, 2024*

*Please join us in celebrating the New Year by bringing a vasilopita to share with our community during coffee hour.*



*Ελάτε να γιορτάσουμε την Πρωτοχρονιά φέρνοντας μια βασιλόπιτα να τη μοιραστούμε με την κοινότητα την ώρα του καφέ.*

**Present:** Father Andrew Tsikitas, Lola Lamnatos, George Karanicolas, Kelly Sheasley, Maria Skouras, Dr. Nick Agapis, Tom Livaiditis, Pete Harmantzis, Chris Barakos, Zach Harmantzis.

**Absent:** Mike Keriazis

### **1. Prayer and Father's Opening Remarks**

-The meeting began at 7:00 with a prayer by Father Andrew. He reports that he has had a good attendance in the catechism gathering, both from within the community and outside. Getting ready for the holiday season. The "stars" were picked up today and will be available for our members to provide donations.

**2. Approval of Minutes for October 10, 2023** - Motion by George K. to approve, 2 nd by Zach H. Minutes approved.

### **3. President's Report**

-Lola reported that the Greek school put on a great program for October 28 th . Also noted that many new people have been visiting our church and that we should all welcome them and invite them to coffee hour after church services.

**4. Treasurer's Report** -The account balances were shared by Kelly. All food festival invoices have been paid.

### **5. Grounds & Maintenance**

-The roof is scheduled to be installed any day now.

-The heating system will be looked at again tomorrow, Bortner has been working on it. The issues started after someone altered the valves, which caused a malfunction. One of the parents of Greek school students, who is an engineer, offered to help with the issue in any way he can. Will also ask Bortner to quote us on adding forced heat to the church section of the building.

-McCabe's provided us with the lowest estimate for plowing for the season. Motion by George K. to accept, 2nd by Nick A. Motion passed.

-The landscapers will continue to handle the fall clean up/leaf removal.

-Received a quote from Blausser Security for the alarm system for \$6,300 and \$22,800 for the fire alarm system. To try to get another quote, we are currently waiting on one from Vector Security.

-The light outside of the lobby entrance keeps going out, to get an electrician to check it and possibly change the soffit and to also check the timer.

### **6. Food Festival Update**

-Many people signed up for the food festival mailing.

-We will soon start ordering paper goods for the next festival as prices continue to fluctuate and we are trying to get the best deals.

### **7. Stewardship Committee & Social Committee Update**

-We still need to form a stewardship committee and a social committee. We have some events coming up that will need to be handled by a social committee. We also have an event being planned for younger children for the Christmas holiday. We need more people to help with events and we need to make sure everyone who is using the church is a paid steward. Anyone who wants to schedule must go through the church office, Kelly S., or Lola L. Also discussed that anyone participating in church groups or activities must be a paid member.

**8. Tech & Security Update** -Pete will contact Gettle about an issue with the key fob logs. No other tech issues were noted.

**9. Old Business** - Nothing to discuss.

### **10. New Business**

-Philoptochos wants us to consider giving them some money to get them through the year, specifically asking for \$3,000. All agreed to provide them with this amount.

-Some of the parents of Greek school want to form a PTO. They also want to plan a Christmas program on a Saturday for the families of the Greek school students.

-Discussed some past due payments on burial plots and decided that all plots must be paid in full by the end of the year or they will be forfeited if they are unused. Going forward, plots must be paid in full upon purchase.

-End of year tax statements will be provided by the church secretary upon request.

**The meeting ended at 8:30 pm with a prayer by Father Andrew.**

Dr & Mrs Steven Agapis  
M/M Jesse Benefiel  
M/M Dimitri Daglaris  
M/M Phillip Kapsalis  
Ms Iriini Karambas  
Ms Vasiliki Marros  
Ms Maria K Skouras  
M/M Nathan Walker

These are the people who have paid towards Stewardship for 2024. Thank you for your generosity and support of our community.  
*“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.  
Enter into the joy of your lord.” - Matthew 25:21*



GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF  
THE ANNUNCIATION

2500 Pine Grove Road  
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Βοηθήστε μας να περιορίσουμε τη χρήση χαρτιού, τα ταχυδρομικά έξοδα και τα έξοδα φωτοαντιγραφικού, επιλέγοντας να λαμβάνετε ηλεκτρονικά τη «Κλίμακα» και άλλες ενοριακές αποστολές και αλληλογραφία. Επικοινωνήστε με το Γραφείο της Εκκλησίας και δώστε μας μια διεύθυνση ηλεκτρονικού ταχυδρομείου στην οποία μπορούμε να στείλουμε αυτά τα αντικείμενα. Ευχαριστούμε.



*February 16th, 17th, 18th, 2024*

*FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 11AM-8PM*

*SUNDAY: 11AM-7PM*

*Facebook.com/YorkGreekFoodFestival*

