



72 YEARS

JULY/AUGUST 2026

Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

Baltimore, MD



Koinonia

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A SUCCESSFUL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

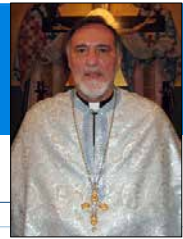


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MESSAGE FROM THE PROTOPRESBYTER

Message from **FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS**, PROTOPRESBYTER



COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND FACE REALITY

It is that time of the year again. The months of July and August are really Vacation time for everyone.

We are very fortunate here at St. Nicholas that we don't see much of a decline in church attendance during the summer months. Of course the church will be a bit more sporadic because kids are out of school, parents are planning their yearly vacations, its warm outside and many have planned even weekend travels to the beach. I have always said, whether you go to the beach, the mountains, or somewhere in between it is good to get away from the everyday struggles of life for a time being. Now the hardest part of the vacation is coming back home. And then reality sets in-back to work the next day and you eventually go back to the normal routine of everyday life.

I would like to ask a question to all our readers? Have you ever been on a mountain top or a high place where you see all of your surroundings? Where you see the sun rising and descending, and then you see the Ocean waves coming in and out. Words cannot describe the immense joy and satisfaction that one experiences during those private moments when you are with God and nature. That's how the disciples of the Lord Peter, James and John felt when they followed Christ to the Mountain of the Transfiguration. (Mt. Tabor) They were there with Jesus and they witnessed the light of His Transfiguration. They saw His face shine brighter than the Sun, and His clothes were as white as light. Just imagine during that time on the mountain the 3 disciples also had the honor and the opportunity to witness and see from their own eyes, Moses, and Elijah talking with Christ.

Can you imagine seeing what these men had seen and not being able to share it with anyone else. Peter couldn't even tell his brother Andrew, nor could he tell others about what they experienced. Let's say for a moment in time, that you were there on the mountain top and you saw this miracle happening in front of you. Having the

opportunity to see Moses, and Elijah talking with Christ and having a conversation. What would you do? How would you act? And if you were told that you were not permitted to say to anyone the experiences that you personally witnessed until the resurrection of Christ how would you be able to withstand the temptation of not expressing what you saw to anyone. That would be very hard to do. In our daily life we too find ourselves on a mountain top, or at a spiritual conference, or just being in Church glorifying God in the Divine Liturgy. We can experience the power of God in our own special way.

We are filled at times with spiritual excitement. And when this happens we want to share with others our experiences. Then we get confused as to why others can't feel the same spiritual excitement that we do, and then we come down from that mountain to face the reality of society. We must realize that everything is in Christ and with Christ. This is the mystery of the Church. Christ is revealed in that unity between His love and ourselves.

Let's not forget, not one person is the Church, but we together as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are the Church. In the Church we are united with our Lord, we share the joys and sorrows of each and everyone, to do everything for them just as Christ did for us. Participating in the life of the Church, the Eucharist, weekly gathering, the Divine Liturgy is not just a personal matter. The Priest cannot celebrate the Liturgy by himself; at least one other must be in attendance because Holy Communion is the development of Community. So we need each other, just like Peter, James, and John needed to see Christ Transfigured on the Mountain of Tabor and later after the resurrection of Christ they were able to share that miracle with the rest of the disciples and others.

Even we are the product of that miracle, because we have been told of that true story of the



ΚΑΤΕΒΕΙΤΕ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΒΟΥΝΟ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΤΙΜΕΤΩΠΕΙΣΤΕ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ

Νάμαστε και πάλι στο Καλοκαίρι. Οι μήνες Ιούλιος και Αύγουστος είναι πραγματικά εποχή διακοπών για όλους.

Είμαστε πολύ τυχεροί εδώ στον Άγιο Νικόλαο διότι δεν βλέπουμε μεγάλη μείωση στον εκκλησιασμό κατά τους καλοκαιρινούς μήνες. Φυσικά, η Εκκλησία θα είναι λίγο πιο σποραδική, επειδή τα παιδιά έχουν τελειώσει το σχολείο, οι γονείς σχεδιάζουν τις καλοκαιρινές διακοπές τους, έξω κάνει ζέστη και πολλοί προγραμματίζουν ακόμη να περνούν τα Σαββατοκύριακα ταξιδεύοντας σε παραθαλάσσιες περιοχές. Πάντα έλεγα, είτε πάτε στην παραλία, ή στο βουνό, ή κάπου ενδιάμεσα, είναι καλό να ξεφεύγουμε από τη καθημερινότητα και τον αγώνα της ζωής για λίγο.

Τώρα το πιο δύσκολο μέρος των διακοπών είναι η επιστροφή στο σπίτι. Τότε που επιστρέφει η πραγματικότητα - πίσω στη δουλειά την επόμενη μέρα, που τελικά μας οδηγεί στην κανονική ρουτίνα της καθημερινότητας. Θα ήθελα να θέσω ένα ερώτημα σε όλους τους αναγνώστες μας, Έχετε πάει ποτέ σε μια κορυφή βουνού ή κάπου ψηλά, που μπορείτε να δείτε τα πάντα γύρω σας; Όπου μπορείτε να δείτε την ανατολή του ηλίου και την δύση του, και στη συνέχεια να μπορείτε να δείτε τα κύματα του ωκεανού να παφλάζουν μέσα και έξω; Οι λέξεις δεν μπορούν να περιγράψουν την τεράστια χαρά και ικανοποίηση από τέτοιες εμπειρίες κατά τη διάρκεια αυτών των ιδιωτικών στιγμών όταν είσαι με τον Θεό και τη φύση. Έτσι αισθάνθηκαν οι μαθητές του Κυρίου ο Πέτρος, ο Ιάκωβος και ο Ιωάννης όταν ακολούθησαν το Χριστό στο όρος της Μεταμόρφωσης του Σωτήρος. (Όρος Θαβώρ). Ήταν εκεί με τον Ιησού και έγιναν αυτόπτες μάρτυρες του φωτός της Μεταμορφώσεώς Του. Είδαν το πρόσωπό του να λάμπει πιο φωτεινό και από τον Ήλιο, και τα ιμάτιά Του, ήταν τόσο άσπρα όπως το φως. Απλά φανταστείτε αυτή τη στιγμή, στο βουνό οι 3 μαθητές, είχαν την τιμή και την ευκαιρία να παρακολουθήσουν και να δούνε με τα ίδια τους τα μάτια, το Μωυσή και τον Ελισαίο να μιλούν με τον Χριστό. Μπορείτε να φανταστείτε να βλέπατε ό,τι είδαν αυτοί οι άνθρωποι και να μην είστε σε θέση να το μοιραστείτε με κάποιον άλλο. Ο Πέτρος δεν μπορούσε καν να το πει στον αδελφό του τον Ανδρέα, ούτε θα μπορούσε να πει στους άλλους το τι έβλεπαν. Ας πούμε για μια στιγμή, ότι εσείς βρεθήκατε εκεί πάνω στην κορυφή του βουνού και είδατε αυτό το θαύμα να συμβαίνει μπροστά σας. Είχατε την ευκαιρία να δείτε το Μωυσή και τον Ελισαίο να μιλούν με τον Χριστό και να κουβεντιάζουν. Τι θα κάνατε; Πώς θα ανατιδρούσατε; Και αν σας έλεγαν ότι δεν είχατε το δικαίωμα να πείτε σε κανέναν για τις εμπειρίες που προσωπικά και με τα ίδια σας τα μάτια

είδατε, μέχρι την Ανάσταση του Χριστού, πώς θα μπορούσατε να αντισταθείτε στον πειρασμό της και να μην εκφράσετε αυτό που είδατε σε κανέναν. Θάταν πολύ δύσκολο. Στη καθημερινή μας ζωή και εμείς πιάνουμε τους εαυτούς μας σε πνευματική ανάταση, στην κορυφή του βουνού, σε ένα πνευματικό συνέδριο, ή απλά όταν είμαστε στην Εκκλησία δοξάζοντας τον Θεό κατά τη Θεία Λειτουργία. Μπορούμε να βιώσουμε τη δύναμη του Θεού με το δικό μας ιδιαίτερο τρόπο. Κατά καιρούς είμαστε πλήρεις πνευματικού ενθουσιασμού. Και τότε, θέλουμε να μοιραστούμε την εμπειρία μας με τους άλλους. Και τότε θα αναριωτιόμαστε ως προς το γιατί οι άλλοι δεν μπορούν να αισθανθούν τον ίδιο πνευματικό ενθουσιασμό με εμάς, και τότε είναι που θα κατέβουμε από αυτό το βουνό για να αντιμετωπίσουμε την πραγματικότητα της κοινωνίας. Πρέπει να συνειδητοποιήσουμε ότι τα πάντα προέρχονται από τον Χριστό και με το Χριστό. Αυτό είναι το μυστήριο της Εκκλησίας. Ο Χριστός αποκαλύπτεται σε αυτή την ενότητα μεταξύ της αγάπης Του και σε εμάς. Ας μην ξεχνάμε, η εκκλησία δεν είναι ένα άτομο, αλλά όλοι εμείς μαζί ως αδελφοί και αδελφές εν Χριστώ είμαστε η Εκκλησία. Στην Εκκλησία είμαστε ενωμένοι με τον Κύριό μας, μοιραζόμαστε τις χαρές και τις λύπες του καθενός, κάνουμε τα πάντα γι' αυτούς, ακριβώς όπως έκανε ο Χριστός για μας. Συμμετέχουμε στη ζωή της Εκκλησίας, στη Θεία Ευχαριστία, στις εβδομαδιαίες συναθροίσεις, στη Θεία Λειτουργία, όλο αυτό δεν είναι μόνο προσωπική υπόθεση. Ο Ιερέας δεν μπορεί να τελέσει τη Λειτουργία από μόνος του, τουλάχιστον άλλος ένας πρέπει να είναι παρόν, γιατί η Θεία Κοινωνία είναι η δημιουργία της Κοινότητας. Έτσι, χρειαζόμαστε ο ένας τον άλλον, ακριβώς όπως ο Πέτρος, ο Ιάκωβος και ο Ιωάννης χρειάστηκε να δουν την Μεταμόρφωση του Χριστού στο όρος Θαβώρ και αργότερα, μετά την ανάσταση του Χριστού μπόρεσαν να μοιραστούν αυτό το θαύμα με τους υπόλοιπους μαθητές και με άλλους. Ακόμα είμαστε το προϊόν αυτού του θαύματος, γιατί μας μετέδωσαν αυτή την αληθινή ιστορία της Μεταμορφώσεως του Κυρίου και Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού. Σήμερα είμαστε οι αγγελιοφόροι του Λόγου του Θεού. Έτσι, εμείς οι ίδιοι δεσμεύουμε τον εαυτό μας ο ένας προς τον άλλο και ολόκληρη τη ζωή μας στο Χριστό και Θεό μας όπως αναφέρει η Θεία Λειτουργία. Η δέσμευση αυτή εκφράζεται μέσα από τη συμμετοχή μας στη ζωή της Εκκλησίας. Έτσι για όλους εκείνους που λένε ότι δεν χρειάζονται την Εκκλησία και ότι μπορούν να προσεύχονται στο σπίτι και να είναι εντάξει με το Θεό, είναι εντελώς λάθος.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROTOPRESBYTER



Message from **FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS**, PROTOPRESBYTER

Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Today we are the messengers of God's Word. So when we commit ourselves to one another and our whole life to Christ our God as the Divine Liturgy states.

This commitment is expressed through our participation in the life of the Church. So to those who say that they don't need the Church and that they can pray at home and be alright with God, they are completely wrong. Parish life has its mission, to keep practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian faith pure and undefiled. Worshipping together on Sunday morning or week day services provide a place for faithful to witness and participate in the Divine Liturgy and other services

Η Κοινοτική ζωή έχει την αποστολή της, να διατηρήσει την πρακτική πλευρά και την ορθόδοξη χριστιανική πίστη καθαρή και αμόλυντη. Εκκλησιαζόμενοι όλοι μαζί στη Κυριακάτικη Λειτουργία ή στη Λειτουργία μέσα στην εβδομάδα παρέχεται μια θέση στους πιστούς να παρακολουθήσουν και να συμμετάσχουν στη Θεία Λειτουργία και σε άλλες Ακολουθίες της Εκκλησίας, και να ενωνόμαστε με τον Χριστό. Αν θέλουμε να έχουμε την ίδια ιδιαίτερη εμπειρία κοντά στο Θεό πρέπει να είμαστε πιο κοντά σ' Αυτόν. Όταν οι μαθητές άκουσαν τον Θεό έπεσαν κατά γης. Θα πρέπει να φαντασθείτε τους μαθητές

of the Church, and be united through Christ. If we want to have the same intimate experience of being close to God we must be more attentive to Him. When the disciples heard God they fell prostrate on the ground.

We must keep in mind the disciples kneeling when the Lord was transfigured when we kneel during the Divine Liturgy. The disciples are filled with joy and astonishment at the sight of Jesus in His Glory. This is why the Church blesses the grapes on the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th). It is a reminder of the mystical garden of paradise. This is where man and woman first encountered God. (The Garden of Eden).

GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU AND HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER.

γονατιστούς όταν μεταμορφώθηκε ο Κύριος, γι αυτό γονατίζουμε κατά τη διάρκεια της Θείας Λειτουργίας. Οι μαθητές γεμάτοι χαρά και έκπληξη στη θέα του Ιησού στη Δόξα Του.

Αυτός είναι ο λόγος που η Εκκλησία ευλογεί τα σταφύλια κατά την Εορτή της Μεταμορφώσεως του Σωτήρος (6 Αυγούστου). Είναι μια υπενθύμιση του μυστικού κήπου του Παραδείσου. Εδώ είναι όπου ο άνδρας και γυναίκα συνάντησαν πρώτοι το Θεό. (Ο Κήπος της Εδέμ). Ο Θεός να σας ευλογεί όλους.

Σας εύχομαι καλό και ασφαλές καλοκαίρι.

PARAKLESIS TO THE VIRGIN MARY

Throughout our Church history, no woman has been more loved, more lauded and more cherished than the Blessed Virgin Mary. She herself foretold it: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." (Luke 1:48) In beautiful poetic-hymnography, which is characteristic of Byzantine Chant in the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Theotokos, the Mother of God is honored and esteemed for her unique role in the salvation of the human race. Through her, the Word of God became flesh and the Infinite became, as it were finite. Humanity took on divine presence and Divinity took on humanity. The Theotokos is the vehicle, par excellence of humility and obedience and thus a supreme example of redeemed mankind.

As the Mother of our Lord, she is our greatest ally and our most fervent intercessor, "for...the prayer of the righteous has great power in its effects." (James 5:16) During the Paraklesis Service, we ask the Most Holy Theotokos to save us just as those drowning reach out to those on dry land. Let us then seek with confidence the help and intercession of the

Mother of Light, Mary, the Mother of our Lord.

Let us also honor the Mother of our Lord, as many others before us have, by coming and participating in the Paraklesis Services, so that we can all praise the Mother of our Lord with Hymn and song.

**KOIMISIS — August 1-15
PRAYER FOR THE LIVING
LET US PRAY FOR GRACE, LIFE,
PEACE, HEALTH, SALVATION,
PROTECTION, FORGIVENESS
AND REMISSION OF THE SINS
OF THESE THY SERVANTS:**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Our Church,

We hope that you and your families are healthy and well.

In this final article of our church year, we would like to reflect on the brightest event of the year—our Festival!

The Success of Our Festival: A result of Love, Unity, and Service

With great joy and deep gratitude, we look back on the remarkable success of this year's Festival. It was a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, cooperation, and a living witness to the vibrant presence of our parish. Once again, it demonstrated what can be accomplished when people come together with faith, love, and a common purpose.

This success did not happen by chance. It is the result of the tireless efforts, selfless service, and dedication of our parishioners, who volunteered willingly and enthusiastically before, during, and after the Festival. In every corner of the event, everyone could see the love, unity, and spirit of cooperation that characterize our parish family.

Father Michael was present throughout the entire Festival, speaking with everyone and taking part in every moment. We THANK him sincerely for all his love, guidance, and service.

Above all, we recognize that everything we accomplished was made possible through the grace and blessings of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of our community. He guides us, strengthens us, and inspires us to work together for the good of the Church and our fellow human beings.

Especially inspiring was the presence of our youth, who participated with enthusiasm, energy, and responsibility. Their contribution demonstrated that the future of our Church is bright and full of hope. Equally important was the participation of the various associations and organizations within our community, whose active

support and involvement contributed greatly to the success of the Festival.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who generously gave their time, energy, and talents to make this wonderful event possible. Their dedication is a living example of Christian stewardship and love for the community.

Our sincere thanks also goes to the talented members of our church staff, who gave their very best to help achieve such a successful outcome.



A tremendous thank you goes to the Festival organizers of past years as well as those serving today.

Our gratitude is especially great for this year's Festival Captains, who skillfully guided the ship called "Festival" with outstanding leadership and dedication.

Spiro and Penny Alafassos, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

You gave your genuine love and devotion to our Church and led us to an exceptional and successful result. May God grant you abundant blessings, happiness, and fulfillment in your lives.

We pray that Saint Nicholas will bless all those who worked for and supported our Festival and continue to guide our steps, so that with the same unity, faith, and love, we may continue to accomplish works that glorify God and strengthen our parish family.

We wish you all a blessed summer filled with beautiful moments and cherished memories!

With respect and love,

*Stamatia Ieromonahos
President of the Parish Council
St. Nicholas Church of Baltimore*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Αγαπητοί ενορίτες και φίλοι της εκκλησίας μας.

Ευχόμαστε να είσαστε υγιείς με τις οικογένειες σας.

Στο τελευταίο άρθρο της εκκλησιαστικής χρονιάς μας θα αναφερθούμε στο φωτεινό γεγονός της χρονιάς, στο Φεστιβάλ μας!!!

Η Επιτυχία του Φεστιβάλ μας: Καρπός Αγάπης, Ενότητας και Προσφοράς!!!

Με ιδιαίτερη χαρά και βαθιά ευγνωμοσύνη αναλογιζόμαστε την εξαιρετική επιτυχία του φετινού μας Φεστιβάλ. Ήταν μια όμορφη ευκαιρία συνάντησης, συνεργασίας και μαρτυρίας της ζωντανής παρουσίας της ενορίας μας, αποδεικνύοντας για ακόμη μία φορά τι μπορεί να επιτευχθεί όταν οι άνθρωποι ενώνονται με πίστη, αγάπη και κοινό σκοπό.



Η επιτυχία αυτή δεν ήρθε τυχαία. Αποτελεί καρπό της ακούραστης προσπάθειας, της ανιδιοτελούς προσφοράς και της αφοσίωσης των ενοριτών μας, οι οποίοι εργάστηκαν εθελοντικά με προθυμία και ενθουσιασμό πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά το πέρας των εκδηλώσεων. Σε κάθε γωνιά του Φεστιβάλ ήταν εμφανής η αγάπη, το δέσιμο και το πνεύμα συνεργασίας που χαρακτηρίζουν την ενοριακή μας οικογένεια. Ο Πάτερ Μιχαήλ ήταν παρόν καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του Φεστιβάλ μιλώντας με όλους και παρακολουθώντας κάθε στιγμή. Τον Ευχαριστούμε για όλη του την αγάπη και την προσφορά.

Πάνω απ' όλα, αναγνωρίζουμε ότι όλα όσα πετύχαμε έγιναν με τη Χάρη και την ευλογία του Αγίου Νικολάου, Του Προστάτη της κοινότητας μας. Εκείνος μας καθοδηγεί, μας ενδυναμώνει και μας εμπνέει να εργαζόμαστε ενωμένοι για το καλό της Εκκλησίας και των συνανθρώπων μας.

Ιδιαίτερα συγκινητική ήταν η παρουσία της νεολαίας μας, η οποία συμμετείχε με ζήλο, ενέργεια και υπευθυνότητα. Η συμβολή των νέων απέδειξε ότι το μέλλον της Εκκλησίας μας είναι φωτεινό και γεμάτο ελπίδα. Εξίσου

σημαντική ήταν και η συμμετοχή των συλλόγων και των οργανώσεων της κοινότητάς μας, που με την ενεργή παρουσία και στήριξη τους συνέβαλαν καθοριστικά στην επιτυχία της διοργάνωσης.

Θα θέλαμε να εκφράσουμε τις θερμότερες ευχαριστίες μας σε όλους τους εθελοντές που αφιέρωσαν τον χρόνο, τις δυνάμεις και τα ταλέντα τους για την πραγματοποίηση αυτού του όμορφου έργου. Η προσφορά τους αποτελεί ζωντανό παράδειγμα χριστιανικής διακονίας και αγάπης προς την κοινότητα.

Θερμές ευχαριστίες σε όλους τους ταλαντούχους υπαλλήλους της εκκλησίας μας που έδωσαν τον καλύτερο εαυτό τους για έρθει το επιθυμητό αποτέλεσμα. Τεράστιο το ευχαριστώ στους οργανωτές του Φεστιβάλ τα προηγούμενα χρόνια και τα σημερινά.

Τεράστια η ευγνωμοσύνη Στους φετινούς μας καπετάνιους που οδήγησαν το πλοίο που λέγεται Φεστιβάλ με άριστη επιδεξιότητα!!!

Σπύρο και Πέννυ Αλαφασσός σας ευχαριστούμε από καρδιάς.

Δώσατε την αληθινή αγάπη σας για την εκκλησία μας και μας οδήγησατε σε ένα άριστο αποτέλεσμα επιτυχίας!!!

Ευλογία και ευτυχία στην ζωή σας. Ευχόμαστε ο Άγιος Νικόλαος να ευλογεί όλους όσοι εργάστηκαν και στήριξαν το Φεστιβάλ μας και να συνεχίσει να καθοδηγεί τα βήματά μας, ώστε με την ίδια ενότητα, πίστη και αγάπη να πραγματοποιούμε και στο μέλλον έργα που δοξάζουν τον Θεό και ενδυναμώνουν την ενοριακή μας οικογένεια.

Να περάσετε ένα ευλογημένο καλοκαίρι γεμάτο όμορφες στιγμές!!!

Με εκτίμηση και αγάπη,
Σταματία Ιερομόναχος
Πρόεδρος Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου
Αγίου Νικολάου Βαλτιμόρης

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

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CHURCH SECRETARY

ELENI KOSTALAS-LENTIS
FINANCIAL SECRETARY
AMALIA SYROPOULOS-KOSTRIVAS

PARISH COUNCIL

PRESIDENT – STAMATIA IEROMONAHOS
VICE PRESIDENT – JOHN KOROLOGOS
TREASURER – ASPASIA CHARALAMBOPOULOS
ASSISTANT TREASURER – GEORGE STAMOULIS
RECORDING SECRETARY – MARITA KAZOS

BOARD MEMBERS:

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YANA KARABELAS

PHAEDRA AVGERINOS
AIDES
TSAMBIKA AVGERINOS
ELIANA PARAGIOS
ANTIGONI DIAKANTONIS

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PRE-K - MARIA GOURGOULIATOU,
AGAPI MOSXONA MINADAKIS
KINDERGARTEN - MARIA GOURGOULIATOU,
AGAPI MOSXONA MINADAKIS
1ST GRADE - SEVI FROUMIS VLACHOU, YVVONI GALETAKI
2ND GRADE - SEVI FROUMIS VLACHOU, YVVONI GALETAKI
3RD & 4TH GRADE - PARASKEVI KOTSATOU ARGETAKI
5TH & 6TH GRADE - KELLY PEROS VASILIADES
AL ELLINOMATHEIA COORDINATOR -
PARASKEVI KOTSATOU ARGETAKI
A2, B1 ELLINOMATHEIA COORDINATOR -
KELLY PEROS VASILIADES
B2 ELLINOMATHEIA COORDINATOR -
PARASKEVI KOTSATOU ARGETAKI
TMHMA ENHLIKWN - YVVONI GALETAKI
VOITHOI ELLINOMATHEIAS - ELINA PAPADIMA
TSAPAKIDIS, DESPINA CHATZAKOU LARENTZOS

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YAL

FOULA PARAGIOS

IMPORTANT NOTICE - **KOINONIA DEADLINE**

Please submit your article(s) to the Koinonia staff by the deadline stated below:

ISSUE MONTH - SEPTEMBER 2026
SUBMISSIONS DUE - AUGUST 20th

Please email your article(s) to - ekostas@stnicholasmd.org

Articles are due no later than the 20th of each month. If they are received after the deadline they will be published in the following month's issue.

All articles must be proofread and color corrected prior to submission.

Thank you

July 26



Saint Paraskevi, who was from a certain village near Rome, was born to pious parents, Agatho and Politia. Since she was born on a Friday (in Greek, Paraskevi), she was given this name, which means “preparation” or “preparedness” (compare Matthew 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, and John 19:31, where ‘Friday’ is called “the day of the preparation”). From childhood she was instructed in the sacred letters and devoted herself to the study of the divine Scriptures, while leading a monastic life and guiding many to the Faith of Christ. During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, she was apprehended because she was a Christian and was urged to worship the idols, but she answered with the words of Jeremias: “Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth” (Jeremiah 10:11). Because of this she endured exceedingly painful torments, and was beheaded in the year 140. The faithful pray to her for the healing of eye ailments.

July 27



Saint Panteleimon, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him. Being proficient in the physician’s vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon (“in all things a lion”), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning “all-merciful.”

On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man’s soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian.

Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.

July 28



Saint Irene, who was from Cappadocia, flourished in the ninth century. Because of her great beauty and virtue, she was brought to Constantinople as a prospective bride for the young Emperor Michael (842-867); however, as Saint Joannicius the Great foretold, it was God’s will that she assume the monastic habit instead. She shone forth in great ascetical labours, and suffered many attacks from the demons; while yet a novice, she attained to the practice of Saint Arsenius the Great, of praying the whole night long with arms stretched out towards Heaven (see May 8). God showed forth great signs and wonders in her, and she became the Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou. She was granted the gift of clairvoyance and knew the thoughts of all that came to her. She appeared in a vision to the king and rebuked him for unjustly imprisoning a nobleman who had been falsely accused. Through a sailor from Patmos to whom he had appeared, Saint John the Evangelist sent her fragrant and wondrous apples from Paradise. She reposed at the age of 103, still retaining the youthful beauty of her countenance. After her repose, marvelous healings beyond number have been wrought by her to the present day.

Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

www.goarch.org



Reading

Our Lord had spoken to His disciples many times not only concerning His Passion, Cross, and Death, but also concerning the coming persecutions and afflictions that they themselves would endure. Since all these evils were near at hand, but the enjoyment of good things which they hoped to receive in their stead was yet to come, our Savior desired to give them full assurance, evidently and openly, concerning that glory which is prepared for those who endure to the end. Therefore, fulfilling that which He had promised shortly before, that “there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom” (Matt. 16:28), He took His three foremost disciples and ascended Mount Tabor, where He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the

sun, and His clothes became white as the light. Suddenly, together with this dread and marvelous effulgence of light, there appeared those pinnacles of the Prophets, Moses and Elias, who spoke with the Lord Jesus concerning His saving Passion which was about to take place. Standing before Him as reverent servants, they showed that He is the Lord of both the living and the dead, for Moses came forth from Hades, having died many centuries before, and Elias, as it were from heaven, whither he had been taken up while yet alive. After a little while a radiant cloud overshadowed them and out of the cloud they heard that same voice which had been heard at the Jordan at the Baptism of Christ, testifying to the Divinity of Jesus and saying: “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. 17: 5).

Such are the marvels, truly worthy of God, celebrated in this present feast, which is an image and prefiguring of the future state of the righteous, whose splendor the Lord spoke of, saying: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun” (Matt. 13:43). It is because of this that the Kontakion of this Feast is said daily (when there is not a great feast) in the Service of the Typica in perpetual commemoration of the glory that will be the lot of the Saints. According to tradition, the Lord’s Transfiguration came to pass forty days before His Crucifixion; this is why the Transfiguration is celebrated forty days before the Exaltation of the Cross.

Apolytikion of Holy Transfiguration

Grave Tone

You were transfigured on the Mount, Christ God revealing Your glory to Your disciples, insofar as they could comprehend. Illuminate us sinners also with Your everlasting light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos. Giver of light, glory to You.

Kontakion of Holy Transfiguration

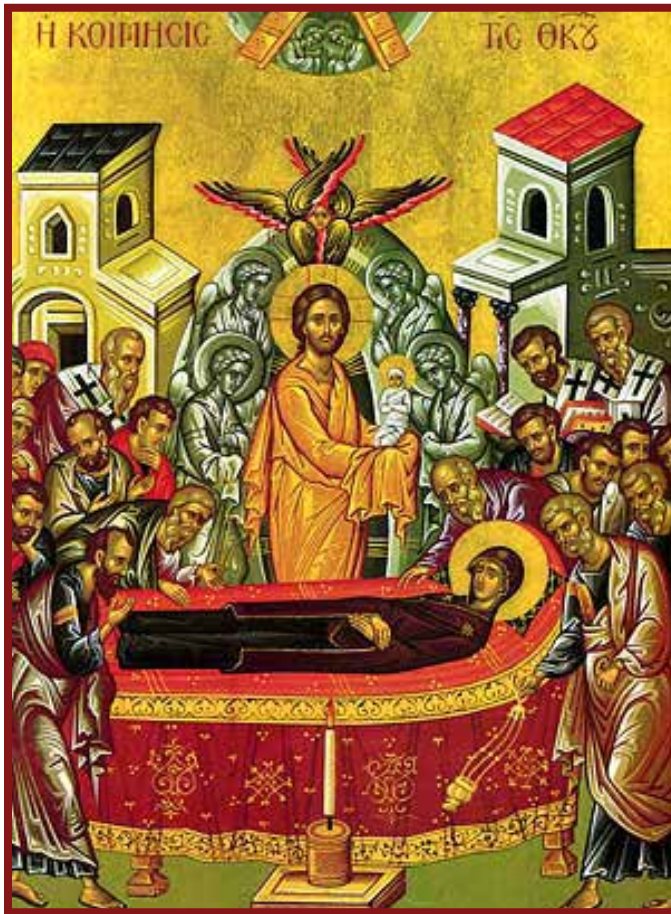
Grave Tone

You were transfigured upon the mount, O Christ our God, and Your disciples, in so far as they could bear, beheld Your glory. Thus, when they see You crucified, they may understand Your voluntary passion, and proclaim to the world that You are truly the effulgence of the Father.

Dormition of the Theotokos

Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

www.goarch.org



Along with the biblical reference in Acts 1:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed.

At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.

Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.

Icon of the Feast

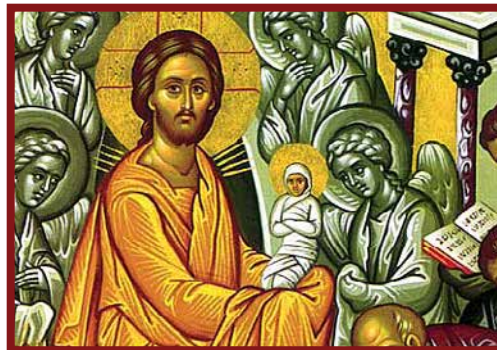
The Icon of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos shows her on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles. Christ is standing in the center (1.) looking at His mother. He is holding a small child clothed in white representing the soul of the Virgin Mary. With His golden garments, the angels above His head, and the mandorla surrounding Him, Christ is depicted in His divine glory.

Introduction

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in the Greek *kimisis*) or “falling-asleep” of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos.

Biblical Story

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” and to John, “Behold your mother!” (John 19:25-27). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the Theotokos in his own home.



1. Christ, appearing in His Glory, stands in the center of the icon cradling the soul of His Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

The posture of the Apostles direct attention toward the Theotokos (2.). On the right Saint Peter censures the body of the Theotokos. On the left Saint Paul (3.) bows low in honor of her.

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS - AUGUST 15



2. The Apostles bow their heads in reverence to the Theotokos as Saint Peter (right) censes her body (detail).

5. The Theotokos lies in the center of the icon surrounded by the Apostles and a candle in front of her bed (detail).



Together with the Apostles are several bishops (4.) and women. The bishops traditionally represented are James, the brother of the Lord, Timothy, Heirotheus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. They are shown wearing episcopal vestments. The women are members of the church in Jerusalem.

3. The Apostle Paul bows in honor of the Theotokos (detail).



4. Also in attendance to pray for the Theotokos were several Bishops (detail).

In front of the bed of the Theotokos is a candle (5.) that helps to form a central axis in the icon. Above the candle is the body of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Standing over His mother is Christ holding her most pure soul. Above Christ the gates of heaven stand open, ready to receive the Mother of God.

This great Feast of the Church and the icon celebrates a fundamental teaching of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the Theotokos, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come.

We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love.

Orthodox Christian Celebration of the Feast of the Dormition

The commemoration of the Dormition of the Theotokos and the preparation for the Feast begin on August 1 with a period of fasting. A strict fast is followed on most of the days (no meat, dairy, oil, or wine), with the exceptions of fish on the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) and the day of the Dormition. Oil and Wine are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays.

On the weekdays before the Feast, Paraklesis services are held in most parishes. These consist of the Great Paraklesis and the Small Paraklesis, both services of supplication and prayer for the intercessions of the Theotokos.

The Feast of the Dormition is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom which is conducted on the morning of the Feast and preceded by a Matins (Orthros) service. A Great Vespers is conducted on the evening before the day of the Feast. Scripture readings for the Feast of the Dormition are the following: At Vespers: Genesis 28:10-17; Ezekiel 43:27-44:4; Proverbs 9:1-11. At the Matins: Luke 1:39-49, 56. At the Divine Liturgy: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28.

CAMDEN YARDS - GREEK HERITAGE NIGHT

BY THE NATIONAL HERALD
JUN 12, 2026

Metropolitan Apostolos Throws the First Pitch at Camden Yards in Baltimore

BALTIMORE, MD – His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey had the honor of throwing out the first pitch for the Baltimore Orioles during Greek Night at Camden Yards on June 9.

Many faithful came from surrounding parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to represent Greek-American culture in Baltimore as the Orioles faced off against the Seattle Mariners. Prior to His Eminence's pitch, Fr. Michael Patrikos of St. Nicholas in Baltimore was awarded the Heavy Hitter award by the team for his efforts in organizing the event. His Eminence then threw the pitch to begin the game. On his way back through the stadium, His Eminence had a chance encounter with Orioles legend Cal Ripken, Jr., bringing even more excitement to the evening. Maria Pearce of the Apollonia Band sang the National Anthem as 'The Evzone Honor Guard of Baltimore' presented the flags.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VBS 2026... That's a Wrap!

Congratulations to everyone who participated in and supported this year's Vacation Bible School!

We extend our deepest gratitude to Phaedra Avgerinos, our Sunday School Co-Director, who beautifully coordinated this entire program alongside Fr. Michael Pastrikos. As Phaedra noted, it was truly wonderful to see such a tremendous response this year, and we already look forward to gathering again next summer.

We are also profoundly grateful to the generous donors who sponsored the daily meals over the past four days. Just as Phaedra acknowledged our donors and volunteers, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Rose Tsakalas too. Also, to the dedicated instructors who guided our children through their lessons and prayers: Fr. Michael, Foti Mavroulis, Tina Harris, Anastasia Diniotis, Antigoni Diakantonis, Tsambika Avgerinos, and Phaedra herself.

As Phaedra beautifully stated: "The students attended liturgy, took communion, played, socialized, made new friends, and most importantly connected as Orthodox Christians, learning about their faith, and grew stronger in it." This is truly the heart of what our Sunday School program is all about.

With the successful conclusion of VBS for this year, let us look forward to a rewarding and ongoing Sunday School program this coming September and for every year to come!
We thank all of you!!!



Κατηχητικό Σχολείο Καλοκαιριού (VBS) 2026... Μόλις Ολοκληρώθηκε!

Θερμά συγχαρητήρια σε όλους όσους βοήθησαν και συμμετείχαν στο φετινό VBS!

Εκφράζουμε τη βαθιά μας ευγνωμοσύνη στη Φαίδρα Αυγερινού, τη Συνδιευθύντρια του Κατηχητικού μας Σχολείου, η οποία συντόνισε υπέροχα αυτό το πρόγραμμα μαζί με τον π. Μιχαήλ Παστρικό. Όπως ανέφερε και η ίδια η Φαίδρα, ήταν πραγματικά αξιοθαύμαστο να βλέπουμε τη μεγάλη ανταπόκριση που είχε το πρόγραμμα φέτος, και ανυπομονούμε ήδη να ανταμώσουμε ξανά το επόμενο καλοκαίρι.

Είμαστε επίσης βαθύτατα ευγνώμονες στους γενναιόδωρους δωρητές που προσέφεραν για τα καθημερινά γεύματα κατά τη διάρκεια αυτών των τεσσάρων ημερών. Καθώς η Φαίδρα ευχαρίστησε όσους προσέφεραν δωρεές και εθελοντική εργασία, θα θέλαμε να εκφράσουμε τις ευχαριστίες μας στην κ. Ρόζη Τσακαλά (Mrs. Rose Tsakalas) καθώς και στους αφοσιωμένους δασκάλους που καθοδήγησαν τα παιδιά μας στα μαθήματα και τις προσευχές τους: τον π. Μιχαήλ, τον Φώτη Μαυρούλη, την Τίνα Χάρις, την Αναστασία Δινιάτη, την Αντιγόνη Διακαντώνη, την Τσαμπίκα Αυγερινού και την ίδια τη Φαίδρα.

Όπως δήλωσε χαρακτηριστικά η Φαίδρα: «Οι μαθητές παρακολούθησαν τη Θεία Λειτουργία, κοινωνήσαν, έπαιξαν, κοινωνικοποιήθηκαν, έκαναν νέους φίλους και, το πιο σημαντικό, συνδέθηκαν ως Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί, έμαθαν για την πίστη τους και δυνάμωσαν μέσα σε αυτήν». Αυτό ακριβώς είναι το νόημα του προγράμματος του Κατηχητικού μας Σχολείου.

Με τη λήξη του φετινού VBS, ως αποβλέπουμε με ενθουσιασμό σε ένα αποδοτικό και συνεχές πρόγραμμα Κατηχητικού Σχολείου από τον ερχόμενο Σεπτέμβριο, καθώς και για κάθε επόμενη χρονιά!
Σας ευχαριστούμε όλους!!!





Happy 250th Birthday America!

Patriot, Patriotism. What do these words mean to you? Do they not stir something within your soul? Is that warm feeling of love for country always within you but only surfaces as certain times as...when you hear and sing The Star-Spangled Banner?...when you witness parades honoring specific events?... when you recite The Pledge of Allegiance?...when you see lots of red, white, and blue bunting and American flags displayed throughout the community in advance of national holidays? (Greek Americans have a double sense of patriotism as they are taught to honor Greece the mother land of their forefathers both at home and at the Greek school classes they attend.)

As we take a glimpse of our 250 year history reflecting the highs and lows of our wonderful America, we see that we are bound together by a strong sense of love, respect, and honor for those who founded, governed, and fought for her; our relatively young fledgling country: the American Experiment.

Above all, our founding fathers incorporated the trust in God into the framework of our nation's documents because the freedom to worship God was the basis of the colonists' lives. The United States was founded on Judeo-Christian principles stating that our blessing, rights, and freedoms are granted by God the ultimate authority not by any individual or political party.

America's independence set the stage for the successful war in France for freedom and liberty as well as the overthrow of the more than 400 year Ottoman oppressor of Greece.

Prior to Independence Day July 4th 1776, many lives had been lost in the fight for liberty on many battle fields which are still commemorated today. Marylanders are steeped in American history as are the citizens of each of the original colonies.

During the War of 1812, also known as the the Second War of Independence many battles were fought in Maryland and Washington DC to preserve our country. Seeing Old Glory still waving at Fort McHenry on September 14, 1814, after continuous bombardment, inspired Francis Scott Key to pen our national anthem. Patriotism flourished in celebration!

Our nation gradually expanded in territory and life continued in relative peace until 1861 when the bloody Civil War erupted. Once again Maryland was entrenched with brother fighting against brother, both sides claiming to be fighting for love of country.

On the world scene, the USA was still considered a young naive country not of great importance. However, light was shed on America and she gained recognition in the early 20th Century after she entered WWI giving tremendous aid in manpower and artillery to win the war in Europe. Once again patriotism surfaced; red poppies which grew throughout the fields of France where soldiers died were now being worn in the US as well, symbolizing the sacrifice made by so many. Memorial Day was established as a national holiday in remembrance of the lost lives of servicemen.

The US was now viewed as an up and coming world power as industrialization brought continuous waves of immigrants to the expanding country and numerous new States were incorporated. Each new State gave reason to celebrate in America.

As word of living the American Dream spread throughout the globe the US was attracting workers to the manufacturing industries who desired to live a better life economically and become a part of their adopted country; as well as many brilliant creative minds who sought refuge from their restrictive countries of origin. This influx led to innumerable contributions in the fields of science, technology, literature, music, industry, medicine, transportation and beyond. The US was no longer considered a fledgling country!

Unfortunately, the beneficial times came to an abrupt end when the economy collapsed creating: The Great Depression, which in turn had the same negative effect throughout the nations of the entire world. The US plummeted to an unbelievable bottom, the American Dream was shattered.

Dangerous political times were once again occurring in European countries; America was thrust into WWII, the last war declared by Congress, on December 7, 1941. Victory would not have been accomplished

THOUGHTS FROM EVA LALLAS

without the enormous contributions of the US both on the war front of foreign lands where there was great loss of life and at home where every American worked toward the war effort.

When the victorious war ended American patriotism reached an all time high as parades welcoming home the soldiers and patriotic programs with displays of the Stars and Stripes were celebrated throughout the land; the economy flourished. America was now recognized as a (if not THE) main world power, the significant leader to be reckoned with.

In the absence of an immediate threat of military conflict patriotism subsided even during the years of the Korean War. Americans were busy working and living the American Dream. However, our involvement in Vietnam created a divided homeland very unlike the air of patriotism that followed the two world wars. Yes, with all her faults and bumps in the road, America continued to thrive and forge ahead embracing and offering countless opportunities and citizenship to all who longed to become a positive addition. For many years life continued peacefully uninterrupted enjoying the national holidays of Memorial Day, Veterans' Day, and Independence Day.

The US achieved numerous accomplishments and "Firsts" during the competitive Space Age which were cheered and celebrated. Pride in America swelled with every successful journey into Space. Each year 4th of July celebrations became more elaborate. Firework events as prescribed by our forefathers became larger in the communities of every State. Each good day of life was taken for granted until the United States was met with an unimaginable blow...

On September 11, 2001 the brutal attacks on our very soil at the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon, and near Shanksville, Pennsylvania murdering thousands during their workday shocked and shook America to her core; the US was hit hard. Peril and invasion reached the soul of every American. In disbelief and anger patriotism not only stirred but overwhelmed the heart of every American; not in the form of holiday parties but in unity to preserve our nation and our way of life. The roles of citizens enlisting in the Armed Forces increased sharply; greater appreciation and love for all first responder services was seen throughout the country beyond NYC. The spirit of brotherhood and caring for each other including the families of the survivors was occurring as everyone wanted to offer aid. Old Glory was sprouting everywhere: on lawns, buildings, roadsides, cars; people were sporting

American flag buttons and local communities were creating patriotic programs for neighbors to participate in unity. "We will never forget" was heard throughout the land. The US stood in unity against the enemy.

Of course America is not Utopia. She is still a young nation with problems to be solved, to grow and to heal. God has blessed her with citizens who have vowed to make "The American Experiment" succeed.

Today almost 25 years after that most dreadful threatening day, where do we stand as a nation? as individuals? Do we remember or must we be reminded? Is our love of country still there? Has it waned and wavered and been placed on the back burner? Must it be rekindled or is it burning brightly within us? Am I a patriot of the USA?

So let's revisit the author's original question: What do the words "Patriotism" and "Patriot" mean to you?

During recent months we have been seeing a huge resurgence of the red, white, and blue and Old Glory proudly waving as great preparations are underway in celebrating America's 250th Birthday. It remains to be seen for how long the nation's feeling of patriotism will last.

It is the prayer and hope of the author that the love of country will last another 250 years and beyond!

Happy 250th Birthday America!





1. Κατά φωνή καί το κορμί ! or Κατά φωνή καί ο γάιδaros !
When someone is mentioned in conversation, or is in thought and he appears or calls!
“Speak of the devil”



An in

4. Την νύχτα μή διαλέγης διαμάντι η. γυναίκα!

5. Τα παθήματα είναι μαθήματα!

American Sayings, Phrases, Idioms

1. A bird in hand is worth 2 in the bush!

2.Haste makes waste. Make in haste, repeat in leisure.

3. Sitting on the fence. Taking the middle of the road.

Hesitating, not taking a stand; indecisive.

4.A stitch in time saves nine.

5. “Break a leg”

A friendly wish for success, good luck often given to actors as they are about to go on stage.



SAINT NICHOLAS BILINGUAL EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

The Saint Nicholas Bilingual Early Education Center provides a safe, nurturing, home away from home learning center. We accept children from 6 weeks till 5 years of age. If you or anyone you know is interested, please call the Center at 410-633-5020 extension 4 or message us on Facebook.

Our teachers and students were busy in July. The Preschool teachers sure were keeping the preschool classroom busy with tons of fun and educational activities for them to engage in. They learned about countries around the world, Eric Carle and more! The children loved every minute of it!

We welcomed Soccer Shots to our center for the summer to teach us a bit about soccer and the kids had a ball! We also are enjoying our new and improved water day activities. The kids got to enjoy a slip and slide, splash pad, water balloons and also our sprinkler system!

This month the BEEC children will continue to enjoy summer break with Splash Day. We will also have a visit from the Ice Queens to celebrate our students who are moving up!

Το Δίγλωσσο Κέντρο Προσχολικής Αγωγής Αγίου Νικολάου παρέχει ένα ασφαλές, φροντιστικό, κέντρο μάθησης μακριά από το σπίτι. Δεχόμαστε παιδιά από 6 εβδομάδων έως 5 ετών. Εάν εσείς ή κάποιος που γνωρίζετε ενδιαφέρεται, καλέστε το Κέντρο στο 410-633-5020 εσωτερικό 4 ή στείλτε μας μήνυμα στο Facebook.

Οι δάσκαλοι και οι μαθητές μας ήταν απασχολημένοι τον Ιούλιο. Οι δάσκαλοι προσχολικής ηλικίας φρόντισαν να κρατήσουμε την τάξη προσχολικής ηλικίας απασχολημένη με άπειρες διασκεδαστικές και εκπαιδευτικές δραστηριότητες για να συμμετάσχουν. Έμαθαν για χώρες σε όλο τον κόσμο, τον Eric Carle και άλλους! Τα παιδιά λάτρεψαν κάθε λεπτό!

Καλωσορίσαμε το Soccer Shots στο κέντρο μας για το καλοκαίρι για να μας διδάξει λίγα πράγματα για το ποδόσφαιρο και τα παιδιά το διασκέδασαν! Απολαμβάνουμε επίσης τις νέες και βελτιωμένες δραστηριότητες μας για την ημέρα του νερού. Τα παιδιά είχαν την ευκαιρία να απολαύσουν μια τσουλήθρα, ένα στρώμα νερού, μπαλόνια νερού και επίσης το σύστημα ψεκαστήρων μας!

Αυτόν τον μήνα τα παιδιά του BEEC θα συνεχίσουν να απολαμβάνουν τις καλοκαιρινές διακοπές με την Ημέρα Splash. Θα έχουμε επίσης μια επίσκεψη από τις Βασίλισσες του Πάγου για να γιορτάσουμε τους μαθητές μας που προχωρούν!



CELEBRATING OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



**Evangelia
Cejpek**
Towson
University



**Christian
Haritidis**
Harford
Community College



**George
Kostrivas**
Sheffield Institute for
the Recording Arts
College



**Kosta
Kourtesis**
Harford
Community College



**Georgia
Stamoulis**
Loyola
University



*Best wishes for our High School graduates
as they begin college in the fall!*



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NATIONAL
CONFERENCE
'26**

JULY 1-5 2026

CLEVELAND, OH

*Join hundreds
of young adults for
a weekend full of
faith & fellowship!*

*Rise & Build:
Claim Your
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Questions? Email us at yal@goarch.org.



**CAMP GOOD
SHEPHERD 2026**



Virginia

July 5-11



Maryland

July 12-18



New Jersey

July 12-18

Registration Opens February 2026!

www.nj.goarch.org/camp-good-shepherd






**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Protocol No. 232/2026

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday

June 7, 2026 (The Sunday of All Saints)

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Presvyteres and Diakonisses, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

*... to those called to be saints, grace unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ
(Romans 1:7)*

My Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This year, on the Sunday of All Saints, we are also called to remember with great gratitude and appreciation the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres (NSP). This particular Sunday, honoring the hundreds of Presvyteres and Diakonisses of our Church, was chosen because it is the closest Holy Day to the feast of the Sisters of Lazaros, (June 4th). Together, Saints Mary and Martha manifest the active way of service (Martha) and the contemplative way of devotion (Mary).

The National Sisterhood of Presvyteres brings both of these aspects of Saints Mary and Martha together in a paradigm of service and ministry throughout the Parishes of the Sacred Archdiocese of America. Through their own good works and initiatives, our

Sisters in Christ of the NSP exemplify the aspiration for holiness to which we are all called by God.

Presvyteres and Diakonisses work tirelessly in our communities to enhance the atmosphere of grace and peace that are the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They model the vocation of self-sacrifice and generosity that is essential to the life of holiness: self-sacrifice, in that they so often put the family of the Church before their own, and generosity, because they share with freedom and grace their spouses, the Presbyters and Deacons who serve the Church.

Therefore, let us take this day, when we commemorate all the Saints of the Church, to express to our Presvyteres and Diakonisses our gratitude and appreciation. for their ministries of love and devotion. Many Years to all!

With Paternal Love in the Lord Jesus Christ,



+ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

The Parish Life Committee (PLC) will hold its first meeting of the new Ecclesiastical year on Thursday, August 27th at 7 p.m. in the Board Room. It is mandatory that all ministries and organizations of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and outside organizations which utilize the church building for meetings and events send a representative to attend and to present their upcoming 2026-2027 calendar of events. Also, no church ministry or church organization may place an event on the church's calendar without the approval of the Parish Life Committee or the Parish Council Directly. This includes day trips as well. If an organization misses a PLC meeting, then the organization must seek the approval of the Parish Council for the event. Events cannot be placed on the church's calendar without the approval of the PLC or the Parish Council.

Also, the Parish Council requests that meetings be held Mondays through Thursdays so to reduce the necessity of having the church open on Friday and Saturday evenings. Paid rentals, weddings, baptism and funerals are the exception. Again, the purpose of the PLC is to help coordinate the activities of all organizations so there will be no conflicts or overlapping of events.

Please check the church's website at www.stnicholasmd.org and view the calendar for any potential scheduling conflicts before requesting an event to be placed on the calendar. We look forward to seeing you at the first meeting.

The PLC Committee Members



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 232/2026

**Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για την Κυριακή της Ἐθνικῆς Ἀδελφότητος τῶν
Πρεσβυτέρων.**

7 Ἰουνίου 2026

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς
Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τὶς Πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τὶς Διακόνισσες, τοὺς
Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν
Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἀρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου,
τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Απογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς
Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὁργανώσεις καὶ
ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Αρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

*«... κλητοῖς ἁγίοις· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ» (Πρὸς Ρωμαίους 1:7).*

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἐφέτος, τὴν Κυριακὴ τῶν Ἀγίων Πάντων, καλούμαστε νὰ θυμηθοῦμε μὲ
μεγάλῃ χαρὰ καὶ εὐγνωμοσύνη τὴν Ἐθνικὴ Ἀδελφότητα Πρεσβυτέρων (NSP). Ἡ
συγκεκριμένη Κυριακὴ, ποὺ τιμᾷ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Πρεσβυτέρων καὶ Διακονισσῶν τῆς
Ἐκκλησίας μας, προσφέρει μία ξεχωριστὴ εὐκαιρία νὰ ἀναγνωρίσουμε τὴ διακονία
τους. Τοποθετεῖται ἀμέσως μετὰ τὴν πλησιέστερη Κυριακὴ στὴν ἑορτὴ τῶν ἁγίων
ἀδελφῶν τοῦ Λαζάρου (4 Ἰουνίου). Μαζί, οἱ ἁγίες Μαρία καὶ Μάρθα φανερώνουν τὴν
πρακτικὴ πλευρὰ τῆς διακονίας (Μάρθα) καὶ τὴ θεωρητικὴ τῆς πλευρὰ (Μαρία).

Ἡ Ἐθνικὴ Ἀδελφότητα Πρεσβυτερῶν συνδέει αὐτὲς τὶς δύο διαστάσεις τῶν ἁγίων Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθας μέσα στὴ ζωὴ καὶ τὸ ἔργο τῶν πρεσβυτερῶν μας. Μέσα ἀπὸ τὴ διακονία τους καὶ τὴν προσφορὰ τους στὶς ἐνορίες τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς, ἀποτελοῦν ζωντανὸ παράδειγμα τῆς κλήσεως ὅλων μας πρὸς τὴν ἀγιότητα.

Οἱ πρεσβυτέρες καὶ οἱ διακόνισσες ἐργάζονται ἀκούραστα στὶς κοινότητές μας γιὰ νὰ καλλιεργοῦν πνεῦμα χάριτος καὶ εἰρήνης. Ὅπως καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, ἀνταποκρίνονται καθημερινὰ στὴν κλήση τοῦ Χριστοῦ γιὰ ζωὴ θυσίας καὶ προσφορᾶς. Ἡ αὐταπάρνησή τους, ἡ διαρκὴς στήριξη τῶν οἰκογενειῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἡ γενναιοδωρία μὲ τὴν ὁποία μοιράζονται τὸ χρόνο, τὶς δυνάμεις καὶ τὰ χαρίσματά τους, ἐνισχύουν τὸ ἔργο τῶν συζύγων τους, τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν διακόνων, καὶ συμβάλλουν καθοριστικὰ στὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

Γιὰ αὐτὸν τὸ λόγο, καθὼς ὅλοι τιμοῦμε σήμερα τὶς ἁγίες, ἃς ἐκφράσουμε πρὸς τὶς πρεσβυτέρες καὶ τὶς διακόνισσες τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνη, τὴν ἀγάπη καὶ τὴν ἐκτίμησή μας γιὰ τὴν πολυτίμητη διακονία τους, ποὺ χαρακτηρίζεται ἀπὸ ἀφοσίωση, θυσία καὶ χριστιανικὴ ἀγάπη.

Πολλὰ καὶ εὐλογημένα ἔτη σὲ ὅλες τους!

Μετὰ πατρικῆς ἐν τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἀγάπης,



† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN APOSTOLOS OF NEW JERSEY'S MESSAGE FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY 2026 AND THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

My Beloved Reverend Clergy, and Faithful of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey,

On this blessed Fourth of July, as our nation commemorates the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, we lift our hearts in thanksgiving to Almighty God, “from whom every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17).

We thank the Lord for the precious gift of freedom, and especially for the liberty to worship Him in spirit and in truth. For two and a half centuries, this nation has offered countless generations the opportunity to live in hope, to serve their neighbor, and to practice their faith without fear. As Greek Orthodox Christians, we recognize these blessings as sacred gifts entrusted to us by God, calling us to faithful stewardship.

The Holy Scriptures remind us, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12). The future of every people is secured not merely by prosperity or strength, but by righteousness, humility, and trust in the living God. May we therefore never cease to pray for our country, for its leaders, for those who defend our freedoms, and for all who seek the common good, remembering the Apostle’s exhortation “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people... and for all who are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:1–2).

As we celebrate this historic milestone, let us renew our commitment to become “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), bearing witness to Christ through lives of faith, compassion, justice, and peace. May our homes, our parishes, and our communities reflect the love of God and become beacons of hope for generations yet to come.

May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless the United States of America, granting her peace, wisdom, and unity, and may He richly bless each of you and your families.

Happy Independence Day, and may God bless America!

Metropolitan Apostolos
†APOSTOLOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey

215 East Grove Street, Westfield, New Jersey 07090-1656
908-301-0500 · www.nj.goarch.org · metropolis@nj.goarch.org



COFFEE, FELLOWSHIP, AND A SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY THE HELLENIC HERITAGE MUSEUM OF MARYLAND

A warm thank you goes out to Harry Maistros, Director of the Hellenic Heritage Museum of Maryland, and its dedicated board members, as they celebrate **25 years** of documenting and preserving our rich culture. On Sunday, June 21st, they graciously presented one of the many oral histories from the museum's archives at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

These recorded histories preserve the invaluable memories of the Greek immigrants who settled in Baltimore, highlighting their initial struggles, their unwavering determination to build a better life for their families, and the triumphs and challenges they faced along the way. Through these archives, we are granted a beautiful glimpse into their lives.

In addition to preserving history, the museum actively hosts cultural events that celebrate our heritage. The focus on Sunday's presentation was none other than Xenophon (Xenon) Kohilas, whom many of you fondly remember as one of the owners of the legendary Ikaros Restaurant—a beloved Baltimore landmark recognized for 54 years for its delicious, authentic, and affordable Greek cuisine.

The Hellenic Heritage Museum of Maryland, Inc. is dedicated to documenting and preserving our rich culture, tracing the journey from the earliest Greek families on Maryland soil to the integration of their personal stories into the fabric of the broader American experience. The museum's vital mission is to collect, categorize, display, and preserve historical items and artifacts. This ensures that future generations of Greek-Americans will truly understand the history and sacrifices of their parents, pappoules, and yiayiades.

With this in mind, if you live in Maryland and possess family heirlooms passed down by your parents or grandparents—items they brought with them from Greece that might currently be sitting forgotten in a closet or drawer—Please do not keep them hidden! Consider donating them to the Hellenic Heritage Museum to help bring a new story to life for future generations.

The museum is continuously working toward establishing a permanent location to showcase all the treasures donated to date. In the meantime, selected artifacts are beautifully displayed at the Annunciation Orthodox Center (AOC), located directly across the street from the Cathedral. If you cannot visit the AOC in person, we encourage you to explore their archives online at hellenicheritagemd.org or visit their official Facebook page – Hellenic Heritage Museum of Maryland.

**ΚΑΦΕΣ, ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΑΝΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΙΑ ΕΙΔΙΚΗ
ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙΑΣ
ΤΟΥ ΜΕΡΙΛΑΝΤ**

Ένα θερμό «ευχαριστώ» εκφράζουμε στον Χάρη Μάιστρο, Διευθυντή του Ελληνικού Μουσείου Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς του Μέριλαντ, καθώς και στα αφοσιωμένα μέλη του διοικητικού συμβουλίου, με την ευκαιρία του εορτασμού των 25 χρόνων καταγραφής και διατήρησης του πλούσιου πολιτισμού μας. Την Κυριακή, 21 Ιουνίου, παρουσίασαν με ευγένεια μια από τις πολλές προφορικές ιστορίες από τα αρχεία του Μουσείου.

Αυτές οι καταγραφές διασώζουν τις αναμνήσεις των Ελλήνων μεταναστών που ήρθαν στη Βαλπιμόρη, αναδεικνύοντας τους αγώνες που αντιμετώπισαν στο ξεκίνημά τους, την αποφασιστικότητά τους να δημιουργήσουν μια καλύτερη ζωή για τους ίδιους και τις οικογένειές τους, καθώς και τις επιτυχίες και τις δοκιμασίες που έζησαν. Μέσα από αυτές τις συνεντεύξεις, παίρνουμε μια μικρή γεύση από τη ζωή τους.

Παράλληλα, το Μουσείο διοργανώνει πολιτιστικές εκδηλώσεις που σχετίζονται με την κληρονομιά μας. Το θέμα της παρουσίασης της Κυριακής ήταν από τον Ξενοφών (Ξένον) Κοχίλα, τον οποίο πολλοί από εσάς γνωρίζετε ως έναν από τους ιδιοκτήτες του εστιατορίου «Ικαρος» (Ikaros Restaurant)—ενός δημοφιλούς προορισμού που ξεχώρισε για 54 χρόνια για την πεντανόστιμη, αυθεντική και προσιτή ελληνική κουζίνα του.

Το Ελληνικό Μουσείο Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς του Μέριλαντ έχει ως σκοπό να καταγράψει και να διατηρήσει τον πολιτισμό μας – από την πρώτη εγκατάσταση ελληνικών οικογενειών στο έδαφος του Μέριλαντ μέχρι την ενσωμάτωση των προσωπικών τους ιστοριών στον ιστό της ευρύτερης αμερικανικής εμπειρίας.

Η αποστολή του Μουσείου είναι να συλλέγει, να κατηγοριοποιεί, να εκθέτει και να διατηρεί αντικείμενα ή κειμήλια που θα βοηθήσουν τις μελλοντικές γενιές των Ελληνοαμερικανών να κατανοήσουν την πρώιμη ιστορία των παππούδων, των γιαγιάδων ή ακόμα και των ίδιων των γονέων τους που μετανάστευσαν στην Αμερική.

Επομένως, εάν ζείτε εδώ στο Μέριλαντ και έχετε οποιοδήποτε αντικείμενο που σας κληροδότησαν οι γονείς ή οι παππούδες σας, το οποίο έφεραν μαζί τους από την Ελλάδα και βρίσκεται κλεισμένο σε κάποια ντουλάπα ή στο βάθος ενός συρταριού, μην το κρατάτε κρυμμένο! Σκεφτείτε το ενδεχόμενο να το δωρίσετε στο Ελληνικό Μουσείο Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς, βοηθώντας τους να προσθέσουν ένα νέο έκθεμα ή μια νέα ιστορία για τις επόμενες γενιές.

Το Μουσείο βρίσκεται σε συνεχή αναζήτηση μόνιμης στέγης για την ανάδειξη όλων των αντικειμένων που έχουν δωρηθεί μέχρι σήμερα. Προς το παρόν, ορισμένα από τα εκθέματα φιλοξενούνται στο Ορθόδοξο Κέντρο του Ευαγγελισμού (ΑΟΚ), απέναντι από τον Καθεδρικό Ναό του Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτόκου. Εάν δεν έχετε τη δυνατότητα να επισκεφθείτε το ΑΟΚ από κοντά, μπορείτε να τους επισκεφθείτε διαδικτυακά στη διεύθυνση: hellenicheritagemd.org ή να δείτε τη σελίδα τους στο Facebook – Hellenic Heritage Museum of Maryland.



CLEVELAND CLERGY-LAITY CONVENTION



John
WISHES TO THANK YOU



I EXTEND MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED ME THROUGHOUT MY MILITARY CAREER. YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT, GUIDANCE, AND CAMARADERIE HAVE BEEN THE BEDROCK OF MY SERVICE. TO MY BELOVED WIFE AND CHILDREN, I OFFER MY BIGGEST AND MOST HEARTFELT THANK YOU. YOUR UNWAVERING LOVE, ENDLESS PATIENCE, AND INCREDIBLE SACRIFICES HAVE BEEN MY GREATEST STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION. YOU ARE MY HEROES, AND I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE LIFE WE HAVE BUILT TOGETHER. THIS NEW CHAPTER IS FOR US.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME AT:
JVASILARAKIS@GMAIL.COM
410.340.7848

Lieutenant Commander
JOHN VASILARAKIS

LCDR John Vasilarakis, a native of Baltimore, Maryland, is a 2007 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and currently serves as the Logistics Capabilities Division Chief, Office of Shore Forces (COMDT CG-7413). His previous units include serving as a Deck Watch Officer on the CGC VIGOROUS, Logistics Officer at Sector Long Island Sound, FORCECOM Resource manager at Coast Guard Headquarters, White House Military Social Aide to President Obama, Enforcement Division Chief at Sector Long Island Sound, and Command Center Command Duty Officer and Operations Unit watch stander at Coast Guard Atlantic Area.

In his last assignment as Command Center Command Duty Officer and Operations unit at Coast Guard Atlantic Area, LCDR Vasilarakis directed, managed, and shared information with senior leadership for more than 650 cases with a diverse team of five Districts, 26 Sectors, 79 Cutters and 10 Deployable Specialized Forces units. He led Coast Guard operations for all 11 Coast Guard mission areas and prosecuted diverse worldwide distress alerts and liaised directly with international, DHS, and DOD counterparts.

In his current assignment as the Logistics Capabilities Division Chief of Shore Forces, LCDR Vasilarakis is responsible for identifying and filling capability gaps across the Shore Forces Enterprise. This includes Coast Guard Sectors, Marine Safety Units (MSU), Marine Safety Detachments (MSD), Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), Aids to Navigation Units and small boat Stations. In addition, he served as Logistics Section Chief for OPERATION VIGILANT CENTRY Command Task Unit Coastal Key West Florida, in response to a historic surge of migrants taking to the sea in unsafe vessels from multiple Caribbean countries. While there, he led a team of 20 personnel, supported 13 Cutters and 3 Stations, purchased 55K items to care for 300 Cuban and Haitian migrants, and established a lodging contracted with the Navy to transition members from economy lodging to military lodging, ultimately saving the Coast Guard approximately \$1.6M.

He is married to Lilia Vasilarakis and is the proud father of his son Niko (age 3 yrs) and daughter Lydia (age 10 months).



Retirement Ceremony
IN HONOR OF

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
JOHN VASILARAKIS**
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Semper Paratus

WORDS AND MUSIC BY CAPT FRANCIS VAN BOSKERCK, USCG

FIRST VERSE:

FROM AZTEC SHORE TO ARCTIC ZONE,
TO EUROPE AND FAR EAST,
THE FLAG IS CARRIED BY OUR SHIPS
IN TIMES OF WAR AND PEACE;
AND NEVER HAVE WE STRUCK IT YET
IN SPITE OF FOEMEN'S MIGHT,
WHO CHEERED OUR CREWS AND CHEERED AGAIN
FOR SHOWING HOW TO FIGHT.

CHORUS:

WE'RE ALWAYS READY FOR THE CALL,
WE PLACE OUR TRUST IN THEE,
THROUGH SURF AND STORM AND HOWLING GALE
HIGH SHALL OUR PURPOSE BE.
"SEMPER PARATUS" IS OUR GUIDE,
OUR FAME, OUR GLORY TOO,
TO FIGHT TO SAVE OR FIGHT AND DIE,
AYE! COAST GUARD WE ARE FOR YOU!



Presiding Official CAPT MATHEW FINE, USCG

CAPT Matt Fine, a native of Pasco, Washington, is a 2000 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and currently serves as the Chief, Office of Shore Forces (COMDT CG-74). His previous units include serving as a Deck Watch Officer on the CGC VALLANT, Commanding Officer of the CGC KITTIWAKE, Deputy Comptroller of ISC Portsmouth, Enforcement/Incident Management Division Chief at Sector Delaware Bay, Interagency Facilitator at the Global MOTR Coordination Center, Response Ashore Assignment Officer at the Office of Personnel Management, and Deputy Sector Commander at Sector Maryland-NCR.

In his last assignment as the Deputy Sector Commander at Sector Maryland-NCR, CAPT Fine led CG operational forces in the execution and coordination of all maritime safety, security, and environmental protection missions across Maryland and the National Capital Region. In addition, he served as the senior Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator at the Sector.

In his current assignment as the Chief of Shore Forces, CAPT Fine is responsible for identifying and filling capability gaps across the Shore Forces Enterprise. This includes Coast Guard Sectors, Marine Safety Units (MSU), Marine Safety Detachments (MSD), Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), Aids to Navigation Units and small boat Stations. In addition, he is a lead sponsor in developing the next generation replacements for the current VTS infrastructure and future Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) initiatives.

Captain Fine is a graduate of the Mason School of Business at the College of William and Mary, the US Naval War College and the Eisenhower School at National Defense University. He holds master's degrees in business administration, Homeland Security, and National Defense and Resource Strategy.

He is married to the former Elizabeth Maresca of Queens, New York and is the proud father of his sons Nick (age 20) and Nate (age 17).

Sequence of Events

ARRIVAL OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY

POSTING OF THE COLORS
PRESENTED BY THE CG YARD HONOR GUARD

NATIONAL ANTHEM
SUNG BY CDR AMANDA FAHRIG

INVOCATION

REMARKS BY MASTER OF CEREMONIES

REMARKS BY PRESIDING OFFICIAL

PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT AWARDS

GIFT PRESENTATIONS

REMARKS BY HONOREE

OLDE GLORY
READ BY LCDR JUSTINO MELENDEZ

THE WATCH
READ BY LCDR JUSTINO MELENDEZ

BENEDICTION

SEMPER PARATUS

DEPARTURE OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
TO BE HELD AT DRY DOCK

Master of Ceremonies LCDR PANTELIS VASILARAKIS, USCG

Lieutenant Commander Pantelis Vasilarakis is a career U.S. Coast Guard officer, professional mariner, and licensed captain with extensive navigation, law enforcement, search and rescue, and logistics experience. He currently leads a 40-person team at the Sector San Francisco Command Center, coordinating 24/7 response to water emergencies. His team is responsible for over 2,500 miles of shoreline and in 2025 they led the Coast Guard with 1167 search and rescue cases, saving/assisting 819 lives and \$22.4M in property.

LCDR Vasilarakis began his career as a Deck Watch Officer onboard USCGC MELLON (WMEC-717), navigating the ship through challenging operational areas such as the Bering Sea, Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, conducting drug/migrant interdiction, fisheries law enforcement and international relations missions as a certified Boarding Officer.

As a Command Duty Officer at Sector Puget Sound in Seattle WA, he strategically planned and led over 260 high-pressure, multi-mission cases across the Salish Sea, saving and assisting over 338 lives and \$7.7 million in property.

He previously served as the Executive Officer (XO) of Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST) Houston, where he led deployable teams performing a broad range of port security and harbor defense missions internationally. Under his leadership, MSST Houston earned the 2023 Master Chief Jack Downey Award for the unit that demonstrated outstanding mission performance, partnerships, community outreach, professional development and safety. LCDR Vasilarakis also served as the Deputy Logistics Officer for Sector San Francisco, where he oversaw engineering maintenance on facilities & vessels, weapons training, supply, administration, security & medical services for over 500 personnel. Most notably, he secured \$14 million in funding to construct a new home for CG Station Vallejo.

Lieutenant Commander Vasilarakis was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. He is a 2014 Graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, where he earned a Bachelor's of Science in Government and International Relations and was a 4-year varsity athlete on the Academy's football team. Additionally, he earned a Master's of Science in Business Analytics from the American Military University in 2019.

His personal awards include the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal, and two Special Operations Service medals among others.

Lieutenant Commander Vasilarakis is married to Lieutenant Alexandria Vasilarakis, and they recently welcomed their first child. He is one of four brothers and is a proud first-generation Greek immigrant. He enjoys biking, boating and sharing love of the outdoors with family and friends.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In Memory of Despina Baris

Irene Halkias

In Memory of Vasilios Dargakis

George Basil

Eva Lallas

George & Emily Hrisafinas

In Memory of Konstantinos & Flora Karais

George & Emily Hrisafinas

In Memory of Demetrios Koutsantonis

George & Emily Hrisafinas

In Memory of Toula Serdenes

George & Maria Georgas & Family

In Memory of Nikolaos Tsironis

George & Zoe Perdikakis

Evdokia Tsironis

In Honor of

Presbytera Toula Pastrikos' Birthday

Eva Lallas

In Honor of Fr. Michael and Presbytera Pastrikos' Anniversary

Eva Lallas



NOTICE:

All organizations must review their upcoming events with ELENI KOSTALAS-LENTIS (410-633-5020) who will add the event to the official church calendar on the bulletin board across from Father Michael's office.

Thank you for your cooperation.

HELP US GROW THROUGH E-GIVING



It's through your contributions that we're able to carry on important work both spiritually and in our community.

Electronic giving is a convenient, easy way to support Saint Nicholas.

By giving electronically, you can -

- Give anywhere, anytime from your computer, smartphone or tablet.
- Donate easily for special projects.
- Set up recurring offerings and pledges and never worry about bringing your checkbook or cash again.

Show your support and try one of our e-Giving options.

If you would like to give electronically, visit our website www.stnicholasmd.org or download the GivePlus mobile app.

Thank you for all you do to support our Saint Nicholas family!



DIAMONDS

Greetings everyone, A friendly note from The Diamonds wishing you a wonderful, relaxing, and exciting summer wherever your travels may take you!

And.....to remind you that our first meeting of the year will be on Tuesday, September 8 at 1:00 at our St.Nicholas Church. We're looking forward to having you join us for lunch and a very pleasant meeting.

St. Nicholas



Thank you to the volunteers who participated in the AHEPA Clean Up day!



FESTIVAL THANK YOU!

THANK YOU !!!

THANK... YOU!!
ΣΑΣ... ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΟΥΜΕ!!

Dear Beloved Parishioners and Friends of Saint Nicholas,

This past weekend, we experienced four beautiful days overflowing with blessings, love, and community spirit! The success of our Annual Greek Folk Festival was truly outstanding—not just in its execution, but in the profound warmth and mutual respect felt by everyone who attended – Thank You to all of you!

Before all else, we lift our hearts in deep gratitude to our Lord and to our patron saint, Saint Nicholas, for their abundant blessings upon our community during this spectacular event.

This incredible achievement belongs to our army of volunteers, young and old, our hard-working staff, and our joyful cooks and helpers who labored with smiles on their faces. Most importantly, our youth turned out in greater numbers than ever before. Seeing their vibrant presence gave us all so much hope, as they are the “new blood” who will carry our sacred community’s traditions into the future.

Our spiritual leader, Father Michael, was filled with endless joy, tirelessly moving through the crowds to connect with, bless, and speak to each and every one of you who attended and who volunteered to work.

Everything about the weekend was wonderful. The food was delicious, the pastries were sweet, the drinks were refreshing, and the music, dancing, and the marketplace vendors brought our heritage to life beautifully.

A massive, heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the preparations weeks before the festival, to those who provided generous donations, and to those who labored through these intense four days. May God’s grace keep each of you healthy and happy, for you have truly offered your time and your hearts to His church.

On a personal note, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my immediate team, who worked alongside me at the kitchen window—Lisa, Bona, and Penny—for their invaluable assistance.

To our chef, Spyros Q, the guys from Dimitris’ team, and every single person who stepped into the kitchen or into the outdoor tents to work with us: you were spectacular. To all the Station Captains who made sure their stations ran smoothly – Thank You!

Finally, we owe a HUGE DEBT OF GRATITUDE to the phenomenal Chairpersons of our Festival, our beloved Spiros and Penny Alafassos. We are incredibly blessed to have you. Your leadership resulted in an event that was magnificent by all standards, and your organizational skills were flawless. Well done, and congratulations on a spectacular festival!

*Thank you all, once again, from the very bottom of our hearts. With love and deep gratitude in Christ,
Stamatia Ieromonahos & the Parish Council, and
The Festival Committee
St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church of Baltimore*



FESTIVAL THANK YOU!

THANK YOU !!!

Αγαπημένοι μας ενορίτες και φίλοι της εκκλησίας μας
Του Πολιούχου Μας Αγίου Νικολάου

Κύλησαν τέσσερις μέρες γεμάτες ευλογία & αγάπη
!!!

Η επιτυχία του Ετήσιου Ελληνικού Λαϊκού Φεστιβάλ μας ήταν πραγματικά εξαιρετική—όχι μόνο στην οργάνωσή του, αλλά και στη βαθιά ζεστασιά και τον αμοιβαίο σεβασμό που ένωσαν όλοι όσοι παρευρέθηκαν - Σας ευχαριστούμε όλους!

Όλοι δουλεύαμε εθελοντές μικροί και μεγάλοι, εργατικό προσωπικό μάγειρες & βοηθοί μέσα στην καλή χαρά. Ευλογία Κυρίου θα το έλεγα. Η νεολαία μας πιο πολύ παρά ποτέ έδωσαν το παρόν και το ευχαριστηθήκαμε όλοι μας γιατί αυτό θέλουμε νέο αίμα να συνεχίζει την παράδοση της κοινότητάς μας.

Ο πάτερ Μιχάλης ενθουσιασμένος μιλούσε με όλους ακούραστα και με ατελείωτη χαρά.

Όλα ήταν υπέροχα & νοστιμότατα τα φαγητά μαγειρευτά & της ώρας, τα γλυκά, τα ποτά, η μουσική, τα χορευτικά, τα περίπτερα με τα τόσα όμορφα πράγματα.

ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΟΥΜΕ ξανά & ξανά όλους εσάς που βοηθήσατε για τις προετοιμασίες, για τις δωρεές, για την βοήθεια σας όλες αυτές τις ημέρες. ΟΛΟΥΣ μα όλους να σας έχει Η Χάρη Του υγιείς & ευτυχισμένους γιατί με την καρδιά σας προσφέρετε τον Χρόνο σας για την εκκλησία μας.

Ευχαριστώ την ομάδα μου που συνεργαστήκαμε στο παράθυρο της κουζίνας Λίζα, Μπόνα, Πέννυ για την πολύτιμη βοήθεια τους. Τον μάγειρα τον Σπύρο, τα παιδιά από τον γύρο (Dimitris team) & όλους όσους δούλεψαν στην κουζίνα μαζί μας αυτές τις μέρες & μας βοήθησαν/ Ιδιαίτέρως ΕΝΑ ΤΕΡΑΣΤΙΟ ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ στους υπεύθυνους του Φεστιβάλ μας στους αγαπημένους μας Σπύρος & Πέννυ Αλαφασός. Είμαστε ευγνώμονες και τυχεροί για την εξαιρετική δουλειά από όλες τις απόψεις. Άριστη συνεργασία Μπράβο σας Συγχαρητήρια!!!!

Σας ευχαριστούμε από καρδιάς!

Με αγάπη και βαθιά ευγνωμοσύνη εν Χριστώ,
Σταματία Ιερομονάχου & το Κοινοτικό Συμβούλιο,
και η Επιτροπή του Φεστιβάλ
Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία του Αγίου Νικολάου
της Βαλτιμόρης



Attending Church as a Family

by Angie Giallourakis, Resource Coordinator for the Center for Family Care

Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
www.goarch.org

It's Sunday morning and the alarm sounds. You are tired because you and your spouse arrived home late from a wedding last night. You roll over and hit the snooze button hoping for a few more minutes of rest, but the children are already up and watching a cartoon on the television.

You think, "Oh, no, now I am going to have to drag them away from the TV."

You start getting dressed and your son can't find one of his shoes. You think, "Why does this always happen on Sunday mornings?"

You hear a loud thud, and then the children are yelling and you think, "Oh, brother, it's going to be one of those days!"

Sadly, by the time you reach church, everyone is frazzled and angry. As you and your family walk into the narthex, you hear the Lord's Prayer and you feel embarrassed for being so late.

Going to church has become a challenge for your family. You never imagined that this would happen. It seems more often than not the above scenario—or a close variation of it—plays out each Sunday morning. How in the world can you avoid this?

As parents, we want our children to learn about and love God. For Orthodox Christians, an important part of this learning process is regular church attendance. When we incorporate consistent church participation into our lives, our children experience the faith and love of God through community worship and the Church's sacraments. This process is twofold: learning about God helps us love God, and loving God makes us want to know Him more.

Developing a loving relationship between your family and God should be a daily goal. Relationships can't be maintained, and certainly can't grow, with sporadic interactions. Here are some simple suggestions for weaving church life into your daily life at home:

Around the Table

Communication is vital to relationships. One of the best times to communicate as a family is around the dinner table. Start with a prayer of thanks and then take time to listen to each of your children as they share their day. It is amazing how much learning can take place as parents **listen** to their children. Here is also your opportunity to guide the conversation toward our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the saints of the day, and upcoming feast days. Talk about church services that you plan to attend with them. Remember, you don't have to bombard

them with details, especially if they are young, but provide enough information and a schedule so they know what to expect.

Preparation

Weekend schedules fill up quickly with errands, chores, homework, family and social events, sports, and all the other activities that make our family lives unique. By Sunday morning, we confront the leftovers—all the tasks still half-done, or not even started, before the work week begins again on Monday. We feel exhausted.

As much as possible, plan your weekend around church. Add church to the calendar first, then fill in the other tasks and events. Do laundry on Saturday instead of Sunday so that your church clothes are ready. When conflicts arise, stress the importance of attending church—to praise and thank

the Lord for all that is good, to worship as the Body of Christ, and to attend Sunday School. In this way, we offer God our first fruits rather than our leftovers.

Increase that Sense of Peace

Removing the distraction of television and other electronic devices while preparing for church will greatly increase your chances of on-time arrival. On Saturday, remind your children that on Sunday morning there will be no technology or screen time other than possibly playing Orthodox hymns (from a CD or from the Internet). Perhaps they know a few hymns that they themselves can sing while getting ready for church. Like the athlete who listens to music with a powerful beat to prepare for a competition, the young churchgoer may need some assistance to motivate his thoughts toward prayer and preparation for the Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion.

Fathers and mothers: Go and lead your child by the hand into the Church.

—St. John Chrysostom

The car keys and shoes may still go missing on Sunday morning, but by keeping a calm manner we can be role models of peace for our children. This sense of peace will ultimately create a deeper understanding of how and why we pray and commune with God. As children learn Godly peace and love in the home, they will appreciate the Godly peace and love found in the Church.



The Reality of Caring for the Priest

by Fr. Constantine L. Sitaras

(Reprinted from the *Orthodox Observer*, June, 2014)

At the conclusion of every Divine Liturgy the choir, the chanter and entire congregation prays for the well being of the “one who blesses us and sanctifies us with God’s grace, Lord keep him, in your care for many years.” In essence we pray for the health and care of our priests. Throughout the past years, the Church has understood this responsibility for her clergy with a very serious commitment towards making certain that the priest and his family will have health insurance, that the priest will have a reasonable pension in his older age, and insurances for life, disability and travel.

Forthcoming issues will present articles that explain these individual programs.

Caring for the priest and his family?

The Church must have this responsibility and the Church is each and every local parish, the metropolis and the Archdiocese.

How is this “care” made manifest?

It has been a process that began many years ago, almost from the new establishment of the Archdiocese in America. As the years progressed, the ministry of clergy care became more formalized to the point of various committees being established that have responsibility for the various programs.

What does the “care” comprise?

Of course, as mentioned medical coverage is a basic necessity for life today. Currently the health insurance program includes the clergy and some staff of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and other Orthodox Jurisdictions and functions as the Joint Orthodox Health Plan (The JOHP). In later editions there will be articles explaining the various aspects of the Orthodox Health Plan (which also includes dental coverage and prescription drugs) and also about the current change in America. The JOHP has a committee that governs it and has an advisor and an agent who are experts in the health insurance industry.

The Insurance Committee also has responsibility for all the insurances including health disability, life, business travel and spouse survival. In addition to health insurance there is life insurance and an accidental death and dismemberment, business travel accident insurance and spouse survival in case of the untimely death of a priest.

Also available to the priest and his family is the Confidential Assistance Program. This service is available to help address personal issues a priest or a member of his household might be facing. It is available by phone-

twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It also offers legal information, financial information and resources for work-life needs, such as finding a child or elder car in the vicinity of their home. This program is completely confidential. The “care” means a pension plan that will help support the priest in his later years. There are 983 clergy and lay staff of whom 353 are retired. Can you imagine the inequity of their lives if they were not able to sustain themselves in retirement? This would be a grave and serious injustice. Although not a lucrative amount, the priests are able to live. To administer the pension plan there are two committees, the Administration Committee and the Investment Committee. The Administration Committee has responsibility for the accurate and precise implementation of the pension plan keeping it current in meeting the needs of the clergy.

The Investment Committee has responsibility for the pension fund growth. Both committees are comprised of six voting members, three clergy and three experts. A later article in this publication will discuss in more detail the pension plan. It seems, perhaps, unusual to read an article about the temporal needs of clergy and their families but this is a reality that must be addressed.

Certainly, one might ask, how is all of this funded? This is a valid and important question. The communities of the Archdiocese through the stewardship offerings of their faithful parishioners make these programs a reality. Parishes help pay the health insurance premiums for each priest.

There is a monthly Clergy Benefits Obligation to fund the pension, disability, life insurance and other programs. Of course, each priest contributes to his personal pension.

It must be stated that it is not in the nature of the person becoming a priest to concern himself with the reality of his and his family’s earthly needs. With gratitude it must be said that each priest is truly thankful that the Church understands the reality of their needs and attempts to help them in their old age and through life.

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech.” (Psalm 109/110:4)

A priest forever and the Church will forever make certain that his temporal needs are addressed.

(Fr. Sitaras is a long-time member of the Clergy Benefits Committee. He serves as director of Saint Basil Academy and of The Center for Family Care.)

Save the Date

The Golden Jubilee for Father Michael L. Pastrikos

The 50th Anniversary of Father Michael's ordination into the Holy Priesthood.

We invite you to mark your calendars
for a historic milestone in the life of Fr. Michael.

50 Years a Priest - 19 years our Spiritual Leader and Advisor.

Since his ordination on December 4, 1976, Father Michael has served the Lord
with tireless love and spiritual grace.
Since 2007, he has served St. Nicholas Church.

Let us gather to celebrate his Golden Jubilee
And his commitment to our community.
To honor his five decades of faithful service, love, and unwavering dedication,

A Parish Luncheon Celebration

will be held on:

**Sunday, December 6, 2026
Greektown Square & Event Center**

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy

Please plan to join us as we honor
Father Michael's many years of
Service and Spiritual leadership.

More details to follow.



Save the Date

Το Χρυσό Ιωβηλαίο του Πρωτοπρεσβυτέρου
Μιχαήλ Α. Παστρικού

Την 50ή Επέτειο της χειροτονίας του Πατρός Μιχαήλ στην Αγία Ιερουσύνη.

Σας προσκαλούμε να σημειώσετε στο ημερολόγιό σας
για ένα ιστορικό σταθμό για τον Πατήρ Μιχαήλ

50 Έτη Ιερουσύνης — 19 Έτη ο Πνευματικός μας Πατέρας και Σύμβουλος.

Από τη χειροτονία του στις 4 Δεκεμβρίου 1976, ο Πατήρ Μιχαήλ υπηρετεί τον Κύριο
με ακούραστη αγάπη και πνευματική χάρη.

Από το 2007, διακονεί την Εκκλησία του Αγίου Νικολάου.

Ας συγκεντρωθούμε για να γιορτάσουμε το Χρυσό του Ιωβηλαίο και τη βαθιά του αφοσίωση στην κοινότητά
μας. Για να τιμήσουμε τις πέντε δεκαετίες πιστής διακονίας, αγάπης και ακλόνητης αφοσίωσης στον Κύριο
και στην κοινότητα του Αγίου Νικολάου.

Σας προσκαλούμε σε:

Ενοριακό Γεύμα την:
Κυριακή, 6 Δεκεμβρίου 2026
Greektown Square & Event Center

Αμέσως μετά τη Θεία Λειτουργία

Σας προσκαλούμε να τιμήσετε
με την παρουσία σας την πολυετή διακονία και
την πνευματική ηγεσία του Πατρός Μιχαήλ.

Θα ακολουθήσουν
περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες.



THE ORTHODOX STEWARD CHRIST THE SOURCE OF LIFE



**"...always be ready to give a defense
to everyone who asks you a reason
for the hope that is in you...."**
(1 Peter 3:15 NKJV).

Stewardship of our faith calls us to protect and strengthen the faith that lies within us. Taking time to learn about our Orthodox Christian Faith, praying to God for understanding and guidance, and worshiping with others as the Body of Christ – all these things protect and strengthen our faith.

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

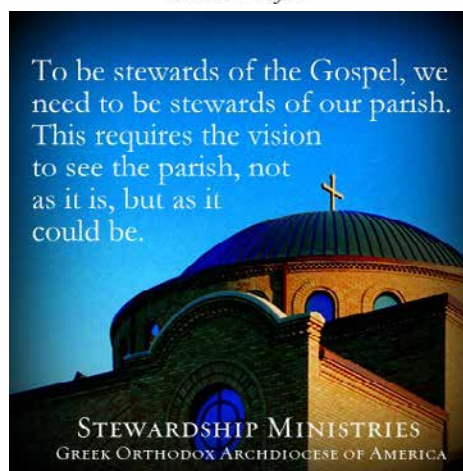
In our day, we are surrounded by "churches" and "spiritual guides", among other things. More often than not, the source of such discussions and entities lies only with oneself, or some self-seeking guru. Truthfully, that is true of all of us to one extent or another.

The true source of life, however, is in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the life-giver and lover of mankind. Those who have died in Christ and experienced the Resurrection of Holy Baptism look beyond self. Born anew in Christ God, we listen for His direction, for the Life that He gives. Our lives are now open to love as our Father in heaven loves us, He renews and regenerates us through His presence in the Holy Ministries, which change our way of thinking! Sharing what we experience in Him, we love those around us with His love!

The answers to the many confusing discussions and ideas, finally and ultimately is found in the ever-present God. It is ours to share as we are joined to one another in Resurrectional Joy!

*This faith and life are ours to share.
Jesus is the author and
perfector of faith.*

*In Him we celebrate life eternal.
In Him, and in Him alone,
we have life.*



Basil the Great says that just as a fever permanently remains in some bodies for a long time, but in others temporarily and only for a short while, so it is with the Holy Spirit, for He remains in some people permanently on account of the firmness of their good will, as it was for Eldad and Medad (concerning whom it is written in Numbers 11:26 that they always prophesied); while in others the Holy Spirit is found only temporarily and quickly departs on account of the instability of their will, as was the case for Saul and the seventy elders who only once prophesied and then lost the charisma of prophecy: "As in our bodies is health, or heat, or, generally, their variable conditions, so, very frequently is the Spirit in the soul; since He does not abide with those who, on account of the instability of their will, easily reject the grace which they have received. An instance of this is seen in Saul and the seventy elders of the children of Israel, except Eldad and Medad, with whom alone the Spirit appears to have remained, and, generally, any one similar to these in character."⁴

ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF BALTIMORE



A church that is **ALIVE**
needs the generous sacrificial support
of those who love it.

Only a dead church demands no sacrifice.

Join us
by
making
your
pledge to

GOD

today to
continue
HIS
Mission.



SAVE THE DATE

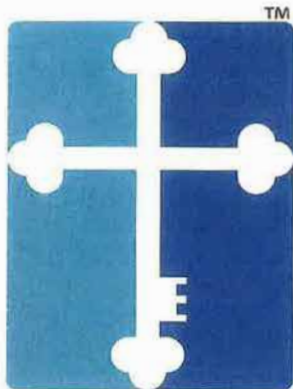
ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

RING IN
2027

NEW YEAR'S EVE
— with —
POWER ⚡ STATION
ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2026
LET'S CELEBRATE FAITH, FAMILY & FRIENDS
AS WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR TOGETHER!

★ *More details coming soon!* ★



Orthodox Christian
PRISON MINISTRY

**WHO
WE
ARE**

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry is the national prison ministry of the Orthodox Church in the US and an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops.



OUR MISSION

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry serves those who are incarcerated and their families, and provides resources, training, and support to our ministry partners so that lives are transformed and God is glorified.

WHAT WE DO

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT - Through our Correspondence Ministry, OCPM case managers maintain relationships with Orthodox and non-Orthodox prisoners over years and decades at a time.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN PRISON MINISTRY - We rigorously train Orthodox clergy and laity through a one-year academic program, in partnership with St. Tikhon's Seminary.

CHURCH PROGRAMS - We train, inspire, and partner with churches to establish parish-based prison ministries and implement OCPM's religious education and spiritual formation programs, like Early Christian History, Stories of Faith: The Parables of Jesus, and the PenPal Ministry.

STORYBOOK CONNECTIONS™ - Storybook Connections™ is an OCPM program that enables volunteers to enter a jail to record incarcerated parents reading a storybook for their child. The recording along with the book is then sent to the child, who now has a tangible connection to his or her parent.

YOUR 2025 IMPACT

- 722 people in prison who received spiritual support
- 228 new case files of people in prison opened
- 65,336 spiritual books, study courses, Bible studies, daily readings, and spiritual reflections sent
- 81 Orthodox parishes participated in an OCPM Church Program
- 357 prison facilities served by OCPM

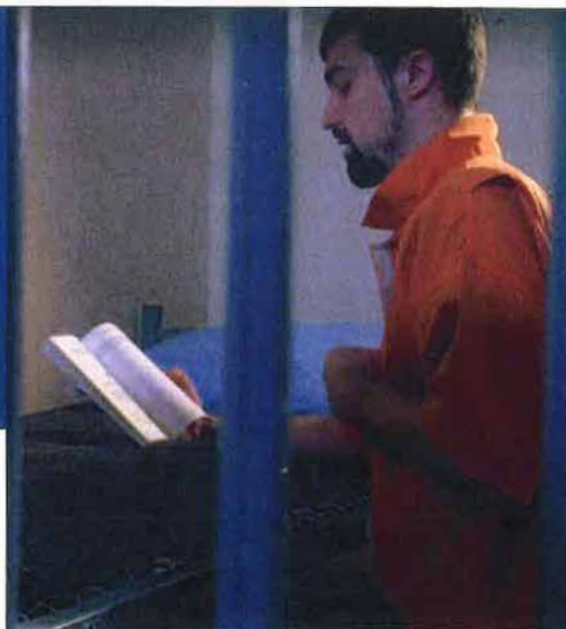
CONTACT US

276 5th Avenue, Ste. 704-3183
New York, NY 10001

(347) 868-6957

LEARN MORE

WWW.THEOCPM.ORG



The Great Feast of Pentecost

PENTECOST



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian kids. Copyright 2026 Alexandra Houck. Email is orthodoxchildrensword (at) gmail.com. Find it each week at orthodoxchildrensword.org.

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

Animals
Apostles
Comforter
Feastday
Holy Spirit
Ireland
Kevin
Peaceful
Pentecost
Promise

G G G R J O E A V T J Z B C I
K M P U C O P Z I R D S E O A
L Y O N T O N R P D P O R M U
B R M D S I I V W B E Q U F I
W C R T K P F R U W W B A O B
N H L Z S I O E R I F V D R E
U E A Y J K D N A L E R I T T
S K L G E Q F L O S H A Q E V
S O F V E Z G U D L T S N R U
H L I S X V O F V W X D L K I
Z N A P E N T E C O S T A H D
E S I M O R P C E E F L L Y S
W K U O I W C A C D C R N P S
Z V Q Q O N M E N K W K Q W R
U Y L E Q O A P C D V X B F S

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

The Bible reading today tells us that on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to all the disciples.

When the Holy Spirit came, it came like fire on them! In the icon, can you find the lines that show fire resting upon each disciple?



The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, May 31, 2026

Volume 14, Issue 22

God gives us directions!

Has anybody ever given you directions to get somewhere? Maybe you have heard your parents ask for directions if they were lost. Turn left at the first light, go under a bridge, and so on. We need directions to stay on the right way.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ promised His disciples that He would send them a helper from God the Father. His disciples knew that Jesus was going to leave them, and they wondered how they would keep going without Him! But Jesus promised them, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

Today, on the great feastday of Holy Pentecost, we remember how Jesus did keep His promise. He sent the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to them and to us! He sent them the Holy Spirit to guide them, and to give them direction. Did you know the Holy Spirit guides us too, and gives us direction? The Holy Spirit helps us know which way to go, how to do the right thing to follow the Lord.

How do we ask the Holy Spirit to show us the way? We can start everything by praying the wonderful prayer that starts "Heavenly King, Comforter." Then we ask the Holy Spirit to "come and dwell with us." We ask the Holy Spirit to be with us, guiding us always!



SAINT KEVIN

A SAINT AND MONK FROM IRELAND

Where do saints come from? You've heard of saints like St. Demetrios and St. Nektarios. Those ones lived in Greece. But saints come from all over the world, because God has good followers all over the world. In Ireland we have St. Patrick, St. Bridget, and St. Kevin (and lots more, too!).

On Wednesday, we remember Saint Kevin of Ireland. Saint Kevin was born 500 years after Christ was born—on the beautiful, green island of Ireland. He became a monk and a priest. He lived as a hermit, living all by himself in the wilderness—with only the wild animals for neighbors. He did this so he could spend most of his time praying to God. He wanted to stay as a hermit, but the Church needed Saint Kevin, so he left this life behind.

St. Kevin started a monastery in an area in Ireland called Glendalough. Many, many people wanted to learn from Saint Kevin, and they became monks at this monastery. If you visit Ireland someday, you can even see where the monastery was!



The little chapel of Saint Kevin, in Glendalough, Ireland today

If you like stories about animals, you should try to find out more about Saint Kevin. He loved animals, too! St. Kevin was very gentle, like many other saints who lived in the wilderness. The animals knew that and felt safe with him!



Saint Kevin

We remember St. Kevin on Wednesday, June 3rd (OC: June 16th).

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St. Nicholas eGiving Stewardship

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to think about



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- Easy set up
- One-time/recurring payment options
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- Complete donation
- THAT'S IT! Simple.

Thank you for your generosity!

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VANCO



MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE CARD ΚΑΡΤΑ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΣ

RISE AND BUILD

ΑΝΑΣΤΩΜΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗΣΩΜΕΝ

2026 SAINT NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH CONFIDENTIAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD 2026 ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ -ΚΑΡΤΑ ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΗΣ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΣ ΜΕΛΩΝ

In gratitude for God's blessings I/we make the following commitment to the ministries of St. Nicholas Church:
Σαν έκφραση ευγνωμοσύνης μου για τις ευλογίες που έχω λάβει από τον Θεό, δεσμεύομαι με την ακόλουθη οικονομική και εθελοντική μου προσφορά προς την Εκκλησία του Αγίου Νικολάου:

\$ _____ (Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Yearly)
\$ _____ (Εβδομαδιαίως / Μηνιαίως / Ανά Τρίμηνο / Ετησίως)

TOTAL ANNUAL PLEDGE FOR 2026 :\$ _____
Συνολικό ποσό προσφοράς για το 2026 :\$ _____

Come and See God work through your talents, skills, and experience, as well as your financial support.
Your offering to Christ and His Church can do as much as you empower it to do.

We give to Christ and His Church not according to our means but according to our love for Him.

Γίνετε μάρτυρες του έργου του Θεού! Δώστε από το ταλέντο με το οποίο σας έχει προικίσει, με τις ικανότητες, τις εμπειρίες, την οικονομική σας ευχέρεια. Η προσφορά μας στον Χριστό και την Εκκλησία Του ας βασιστεί στην αγάπη μας προς Αυτόν, όχι στην οικονομική μας δυνατότητα.

Planned Giving _____ Please send me information on making a planned gift to the Church.
Δωρεά που σχεδιάζω _____ Παρακαλώ στείλτε μου πληροφορίες σχετικά με τον τρόπο που μπορώ να δωρίσω.

Print Full Name/ Γράψτε με κεφαλαία γράμματα το επίθετό σας

Signature/ Υπογραφή

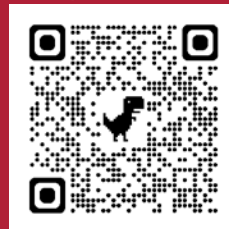
Date/ Ημερομηνία

Name / Όνομα	Date of Birth / Ημερομ. Γεννήσεως
Name of Spouse / Όνομα συζύγου	Date of Birth / Ημερομ. Γεννήσεως
Occupation / Επάγγελμα	
Occupation / Επάγγελμα (Spouse)	
Street Address / Ιλιεύθυνση	
City / πόλη	Zip Code / ταχ. τομέας
Home Phone / Σταθερό τηλέφωνο σπιτιού	
Mobile Phone / Κινητό τηλέφωνο	Mobile Phone / Κινητό τηλέφωνο (Spouse)
Email Address / Ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση	
Email Address of Spouse / Ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση συζύγου	
Communication Preferences / Προτιμήσεις επικοινωνίας	
☐ Mail / Ταχυδρομείο ☐ Email / Ηλεκτρονική ☐ Text / Μήνυμα	
Dependent Children's Names and Birthdates / Ονόματα παιδιών και ημερομηνία γεννήσεώς τους	

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If you would like to give electronically, visit our website www.stnicholasmd.org/give or download the GivePlus mobile app. If you have any questions, contact the church office at 410-633-5020.



ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ ΣΤΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΜΑΤΟ ΤΡΟΠΟ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΗΣ ΡΥΘΜΙΣΤΕ ΤΟ ΚΑΙ ... ΞΕΧΑΣΤΕ ΤΟ!

Δεν χρειάζεται να θυμάστε να στείλετε τη προσφορά σας. Ρυθμίστε την αυτόματη δωρεά και την εθελοντική σας προσφορά απευθείας από τον υπολογιστή σας ή το tablet σας που θα επαναλαμβάνεται ανελλιπώς κάθε εβδομάδα, μήνα, τρίμηνο ή έτος.

Εάν επιθυμείτε να στείλετε τη δωρεά σας ηλεκτρονικά, επισκεφθείτε την ιστοσελίδα μας www.stnicholasmd.org/give ή κατεβάστε την εφαρμογή GivePlus mobile. Εάν έχετε απορίες, επικοινωνήστε με το Γραφείο της Εκκλησίας στο τηλέφωνο 410-633-5020.



PRESCRIPTION OPTIONS

For those with diagnosed osteoporosis or very high fracture risk, physicians may recommend medications designed to slow bone loss or stimulate new bone formation. Common bisphosphonates such as alendronate or risedronate inhibit breakdown.

Other treatments include denosumab, a monoclonal antibody that reduces breakdown, and anabolic medications like teriparatide or abaloparatide that stimulate formation. In postmenopausal women, hormone therapy or selective estrogen receptor modulators may also help preserve bone density.

NUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTS

Adequate nutrition is essential to skeletal integrity. Calcium is the primary mineral component of bone, and most adults 50 and older require about 1,200 mg per day to support its maintenance. Vitamin D is equally important because it enhances calcium absorption and regulates remodeling.

Research highlights the importance of several additional nutrients. Vitamin K2 helps direct calcium into bone tissue and away from arteries, while magnesium supports bone matrix formation and enzymatic processes involved in mineral metabolism. Because of contraindication, those on anti-platelet and/or anti-coagulation medications should speak with their doctors before taking supplemental vitamin K.

PAINFUL PASSAGE

**HYDRATION, DIET CHANGES
HELP PREVENT KIDNEY STONES**

Kidney stones are pebble-like clumps that can form when minerals like calcium build up in the kidneys. Sizes range from grain of sand to marble, and as a stone starts to move through the urinary tract and obstruct the outflow of urine, the pain can be excruciating.

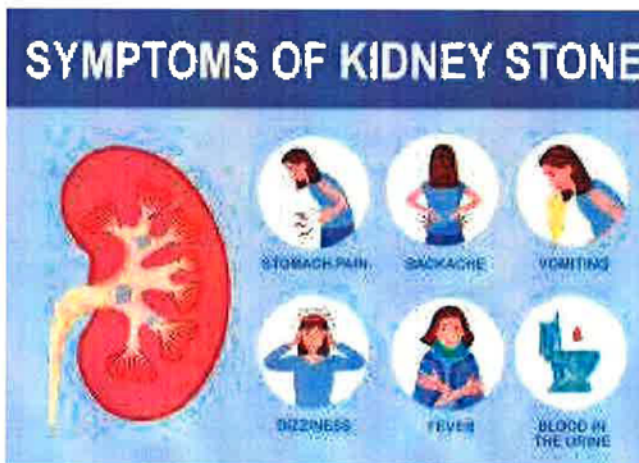
According to Nathaniel Polnaszek, a urologist at Baylor Scott & White Urology in Round Rock, Texas, kidney stones can form due to a number of factors:

dehydration (which concentrates the minerals in urine); a high intake of salt, sugar, animal protein and oxalic acid (naturally occurring compounds found in many fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains); medical conditions such as obesity, diabetes and gout; and excessive alcohol use, which can lead to dehydration.

One in every 10 Americans develops kidney stones. Alan Pao, a nephrologist with Stanford Health Care and VA Palo Alto Health Care, says the condition affects all ethnic groups and men about twice as often as women, although the number of cases among women is rising. They are most common between 40 and 60, but children's cases are rising as well. Family history is a risk factor.

Common symptoms include pain in the back, flank or lower abdomen, as well as blood in the urine, nausea or vomiting, and a frequent or urgent need to urinate, Polnaszek says. Diagnosis typically involves urine tests and imaging such as CT scans. A person may pass smaller stones without realizing it, but larger ones might require medications to relax the ureter or dissolve the stones, or even surgery.

To prevent kidney stones, Pao recommends staying well-hydrated, reducing sodium and animal protein intake, and talking to a doctor about diet. Blood and urine tests can assess a person's risk and help determine a custom treatment plan.



About 10% of adults and 50% of children who have had a kidney stone will have another, Polnaszek says. The risk is greater with some types of stones, as well as overall health and lifestyle. Long-term prevention often involves changes to diet, medications and close monitoring.

\$ A FOCUS ON FINANCES \$

WHERE “SOLO AGERS” CAN FIND HELP

Emergency contacts, living arrangements, financial matters and health-care decisions are among the most urgent concerns for America’s 22 million “solo agers,” who do not have adult children or other family members on whom they can depend to watch out for their well-being.

Solo agers will most often choose a sibling, niece or nephew, or a trusted friend or neighbor to make decisions on their behalf. Whoever you choose, be sure to talk to that person or people to make sure they are willing to assume the responsibility. In their absence,

SOLO AGERS Advocacy Initiative

Tips and Tools for Aging Well

you can hire an aging life care manager or other trained professional. These experts in geriatric care often have backgrounds in nursing or social work and can serve as your emergency contact, oversee your care and even act as your executor. They can also connect you with legal and financial professionals in your area to help manage your affairs. You can search online for an expert near you or visit your local council on aging.

If this is not financially feasible, you can create a basic estate plan, including a power of attorney, advance directive and will. To help prepare these documents, your best option is to hire an experienced estate-planning attorney. In some cases, they also may be able to act as your power of attorney or executor, or find a professional near you.

Other services can help with organizing and preparing bill payments. Alternatively, a daily money manager can help balance your checkbook and organize tax information.

It is a good idea to meet with a financial adviser to figure out what services and living arrangements you can afford and what steps you can take to ensure your financial resources last for your lifetime. You can also search online for a list of fee-only fiduciary financial planners near you.

HEALTHY BODY AND MIND

HOW TO INCREASE SKELETAL STRENGTH

Bone health is one of the most overlooked aspects of aging. Yet for adults 40 and older, maintaining strong bones is critical for mobility, independence and long-term health. Bone is living tissue that remodels throughout life. But starting generally after menopause in women and around 50 in men, the balance between bone formation and breakdown begins to shift. Without intervention, this gradual loss can lead to osteopenia and eventually osteoporosis.

About 10 million U.S. adults 50 and older have osteoporosis, of which 80% are women. And more than 40 million have low bone mass that puts them at increased risk for the disease.

Exercise For Bone Strengthening

The consequences of poor bone health can be severe. Fractures commonly occur in the hip, spine and wrist. Each year, hundreds of thousands of older Americans are hospitalized for hip fractures, which often leads to loss of independence, disability and even increased mortality risk.

Early screening is an essential preventive step. Experts recommend bone density testing for women 65 and older, and for younger individuals with risk factors such as early menopause, low body weight, family history of osteoporosis or long-term corticosteroid use. Intervention is critical since bone loss progresses gradually and often goes undetected. Fortunately, however, skeletal strength can be improved and preserved.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Daily habits are the foundation of skeletal health, with weight-bearing and resistance exercises among the most powerful tools. Activities such as walking, jogging, strength training and using resistance bands stimulate bone remodeling by placing mechanical stress on the skeleton, encouraging the building of stronger bone tissue. Maintaining muscle mass is also vital. Regular physical activity, combined with balance training like yoga or tai chi, can lower fall risk.

Dietary patterns play a role, too. A whole-food, plant-based diet rich in vegetables, fruits and healthy fats supports bone repair.



Exercise Your Brain!

JUNE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

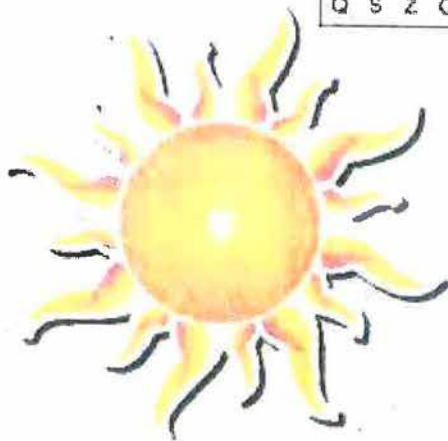


DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words
in the grid. Look
for them in all
directions including
backwards and
diagonally.

SUMMER FUN

X	J	B	Z	X	H	U	F	D	M	M	Z	N	F	I	K	Q	Q	F
R	H	C	J	W	Q	L	E	O	U	T	D	O	R	S	O	L		
X	G	I	J	N	O	L	E	M	R	E	T	A	W	X	N	A	Q	E
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L	R	C	K	S	A	N	A	W	M	S	Y	Q	V	O	O	X	J	Z
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B	X	P	S	Z	J	R	Y	E	E	S	L	A	D	N	A	S	J	R
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T	N	T	B	I	E	B	E	A	C	H	A	F	V	G	K	F	L	O
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C	B	A	C	X	H	C	A	A	C	W	U	G	V	E	N	U	J	H
P	P	Y	E	X	A	S	M	N	S	S	P	P	A	K	G	I	F	U
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O	N	I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	P	T	H	I	E	X	X	C	R
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AUGUST
BASEBALL
BEACH
CAMPING
FRISBEE
GAMES
GARDEN
GRASS
ICE CREAM
JULY



JUNE	SHORTS
OCEAN	SNORKEL
OUTDOORS	SUNSHINE
PARK	SWIM
PICNIC	THUNDER
PLAY	VACATION
SANDALS	WATERMELON



A BREAK IN YOUR DAY

How come everyone my age seems older than me?

I'm at the age where I can't keep up with all the things I hate.

A wise man remembers a woman's birthday but never her age.

I'm so old, I can remember when emojis were called hieroglyphics.

Regular naps will prevent old age, especially if taken while driving.

Ageing gracefully is the polite way of saying you're slowly looking worse.

You know you're old when dining out means catching the early bird special.

We were so poor growing up we could only listen to Simon or Garfunkel.

You know you're old when people call at 9 pm and ask, "Did I wake you?"

I believe in loyalty. So, when I got to a certain age, I decided to stick with it.

My wife's so vain, she'd rather pay full price than admit she's a senior citizen.

I'd like to say I'm ageing like fine wine, but in my case, it's more like a fine banana.

I like older women because they're used to life's disappointments, so they're ready for me.

When you're old, getting lucky is walking into a room and remembering exactly why you're there.

Old age is when your old classmates are so grey, wrinkled, and bald that they no longer recognize you.

If it's your birthday today, you should congratulate yourself. Especially if you're still able to



Any More Ideas?

remember it.

The older I get, the more cults make perfect sense. Do you know how hard it is to make friends as an adult?

You know you're getting old when you have more candles on your cake than friends at your birthday party.

The skill of the diplomat is the ability to tell someone to go to Hell in such a way that they'll look forward to the trip.

Old age is when you're faced with two temptations and you choose the one that will get you home by nine o'clock.

The best moment of a woman's life isn't giving birth, it's seeing an old adversary and realizing how fat and ugly she is now.

When you're young, you make a lot of noise just having fun. When you're old, you make even more noise just bending over.

I wanted to look distinguished in my old age, so I grew a beard. Turns out the statement I'm making is more like, "Discount, please, I'm a senior!"

When I was a boy, I had a disease that required me to eat dirt three times a day in order to survive. Fortunately, my older brother told me about it.



To subscribe to the St. Nicholas mailing list, please follow these steps:

- 1) Open your Email client and create a new message.
- 2) Enter stnicholasbaltimore@listserv.goarch.org as the To address. If this address does not work, you may need to use **STserv@stnicholasbaltimore@listserv.goarch.org**. Older list serve accounts were configured with the STserv address.
- 3) Enter **"subscribe"** *stnicholasbaltimore* in the body of your message where *stnicholasbaltimore* is the name of the list you are subscribing to.
- 4) Leave the subject of the message blank. If your mail program requires text in the subject field, enter random characters.
- 5) Send the email; you will receive a confirmation if you successfully subscribed.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR - JULY & AUGUST

WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY A HAPPY 4th OF JULY. BE SAFE DURING THE CELEBRATION!

SUNDAY, JULY 5 – 5th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

SUNDAY, JULY 12 – 6th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

SUNDAY, JULY 19 – Sunday of the Holy Fathers
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

TUESDAY, JULY 21 – Great Vesper Services at Sts. Mary Magdalene & Markella Church -
VESPERS – 6:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22 – Sts. Mary Magdalene & Markella of Chios
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am
(This service will be held at St. Nicholas church)

SUNDAY, JULY 26 – 8th Sunday of Matthew - St. Paraskevi of Rome
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

MONDAY, JULY 27 – St. Panteleimon the Great Martyr
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

TUESDAY, JULY 28 – St. Irene Chrysovalantou
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

AUGUST:

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1 – Paraklesis Service - 7:00 pm

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 – 9th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

MONDAY, AUGUST 3 - Paraklesis Service – 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5 - Paraklesis Service – 7:00 pm



LITURGICAL CALENDAR - JULY & AUGUST

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6 – Feast of the Holy Transfiguration
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7 – Paraklesis Service – 7:00 pm

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9 – 10th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

MONDAY, AUGUST 10 – Paraklesis Service – 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12 - Paraklesis Service – 7:00 pm

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14 – Great Vesper Service - Dormition of the Virgin Mary – 7:00 pm

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 – The Holy Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos
ORTHROS - 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

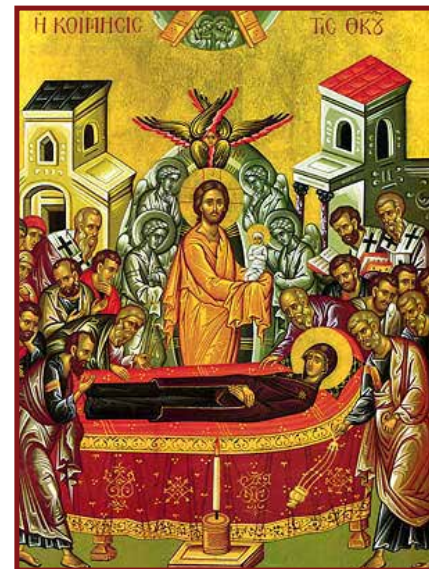
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 – 11th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 – 12th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27 – St. Fanourios
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29 – Beheading of John the Baptist
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:30 am

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30 – 13th Sunday of Matthew
ORTHROS – 8:30 am DIVINE LITURGY – 9:45 am



Dormition of the Theotokos

SPECIAL NOTE: From August 1st through the 15th a very Strict Fasting period is observed.
Also, August 29th is a very Strict Fast Day.