



# THE NEWS FROM ST. NEKTARIOS

## SATURDAY OF SOULS

By Fr. Andreas G. Houpos, Proistamenos

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### Inside this Issue

A Note from Fr. Nektarios	2
Focus on our Community	2
Message from His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios	3
Parish Council Affirmation of Office	3
Christmas Services	4
Zoe Ministry & Church Mouse	5
New Year's Day Service	6
Navigating through Covid-19 by Fr. Steve	7
Young at Heart	7
Feast of Theophany	8
Paraklesis & Confession	8
Meeting of our Lord in the Temple Vespers Service	9
Feast day of St. Symeon	9
Feast day of Sts. Cyrus & John, the Holy Unmercenaries	10
Missions & Philanthropy Ministry	10
Young at Heart	10
Philoptochos & Blood Drive	11
Financial Matters	12
Young Adult Ministry	13
St. Phoebe Ministry	13
Youth Ministry	14-15
Lost Photos Recovered	16



Saturday (Σάββατο, *Sabbato*) is the biblical day of rest, or the Sabbath. It is the day God rested from his creative work in the beginning (see Genesis 2), and the day designated to memorialize Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt (see Deuteronomy 5). It is also the day of the week God rested in the tomb and delivered us from the bondage of sin and death. Jesus Christ thus fulfilled the law and purpose of the Sabbath, moving the Church to emphasize the "Lord's Day" (Κυριακή, *Kyriakē*), Sunday, the day of resurrection.

While the Lord's Day has rightly taken precedence, the Church still observes the Christ-fulfilled Sabbath. Every Saturday is thematically dedicated to the dead—those at rest—but that theme is often suppressed if a saint or feast is celebrated that particular day. In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, however, there are two Saturdays in particular that are styled "Saturday of Souls" (Ψυχοσάββατο, *Psychosabbato*): the Saturday before Meatfare Sunday, and the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday. These days offer a special memorial for "all those who have ever reposed with correct faith and with the hope of the resurrection of life eternal" (from the Matins *synaxarion* reading of both days).

On these Saturdays the faithful bring the traditional boiled wheat offering, *kollyva* (κόλλυβα), to the church to be blessed and shared. This practice is tied to Jesus' well-known use of wheat as a metaphor for

death and resurrection: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Along with the *kollyva*, the faithful bring a list of names of reposed Orthodox Christians to be commemorated in that Saturday's memorial prayers.\*

*"... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).*

According to the *Typikon* (order of services) of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the memorial prayers on the Saturdays of Souls have their proper place in Vespers, Matins, and again prior to the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy. At one or all of these services, the names that have been submitted may be read silently or audibly, depending on the number of names submitted.

It should be noted that the custom has developed in which the two additional Saturdays following Meatfare Saturday are referred to as "Saturdays of Souls". However, this is incorrect, as they both have their own important commemorations, respectively: that of all ascetic saints (Cheesefare Saturday), and that of a miracle performed by St. Theodore the Recruit

(the first Saturday of the Fast). These Saturdays have no special commemoration for those who have fallen asleep, as do the Saturdays of Souls proper. Rather, they have become what might be called "overflow" days on which a normal memorial service is offered.

Finally, in light of the ongoing pandemic, this year our parish will be providing *kollyva* that will be individually portioned, then blessed and distributed to the faithful. However, parishioners are still welcome to bring a small batch of their own *kollyva* to be blessed, which they may then retrieve at the end of the service. Those who wish to provide names of deceased Orthodox Christians for the memorials may either submit them to the church office by e-mail no later than the Wednesday of that week, or bring a list to the service.

**\* TIP:** *When submitting names, only submit an individual's first name. The family name is not needed; you may write "Mary & family" or "Joseph & Mary and family/children", etc. — do not write "the Smith family", unless you do not know a family member's name. If commemorating a clergyman, "John, priest". Please submit a person's baptismal or chrismation name, not a nickname. Kindly remember to write legibly. Also, if you do not happen to hear the name of your loved one being read, do not be distressed! If you have turned in names, they are being read and God hears them! ❖*

**A Note from  
Fr. Nektarios Karantonis**

**I**t's been a hard year, a year where it's been difficult for Presvytera and the boys to be in church as often as they would like.



I had a special blessing for the second year in a row to have my son serving in the altar with me on his name day.



**Many years to all who celebrate this feast of the glorious forerunner and Baptist, John!**



Icon of St. John the Baptist on the Iconostasion at St. Nektarios written by the hand of Tom Clark

**FOCUS ON OUR COMMUNITY**

*Celebrations, Milestones, Comfort & Support*

**IN OUR PRAYERS**

John Antone Pat Baker Braswell family Joe Catsereilli Johanna Dresser Edward Tina Hord Eury DG Theona Gallis Helen & Richard Giles Chuck Haigler Marion Herndon Mason Hooker Robin & Benny Hunt John & Elaine Kosty Jennifer Kosty & family Elestheria Koutroumani Mary Longshore Catherine Manthos Jack McCullough Melton family Tish Merrill Joanne Mitros Christina Nixon Stephen Price Phil & Ronnie Ranieri Pittman & Rockholt families MP & MSR Glen Smithers Cheryl & Brian Sutherland Paul Tuttle

Our First Responders, those on the front lines during this Pandemic and those suffering from Covid-19 and other illnesses throughout the entire world

**FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY**

Helene Carras Thomas Clewell Buddy Craft Jordan James Dunn Krassimire Ivanov Nicholas Kachulis Michael Constantine Mentavlos Zack Millsaps Matthew Millsaps Amanda Moril Danielle Zervakos Nickolopoulos Anton Savin

**CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES**

To Kim & Nick Tzefos on the 40 day blessing of Rose's sister, Leah Nikoletta and mom  
To Abir & Ncoulas Saad on the 40 day blessing of their daughter, Seela-Grace and mom  
To Stephanie & Niko Petrogeorge on the baptism of their son, Alexios Nicholas  
To Lucy Hanegraaf & Drew Henderson on the baptism of their daughter, Noelle Elizabeth  
To Ioanna Kosti & Alexandros Bakalexis on the baptism of their son, Panagiotis Alexandros  
To Jenna & Gabriel Vaporis on the 40 day blessing of their twins, Theodore Aleydis Nomikos and Addison Palmer Dionisia  
Dr. Terry Sarantou on his selection to join the Order of St. Andrew as an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

**WITH SYMPATHY ON THE PASSING**

**OF OUR BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST**

To the Ganatsiou, Weber & Higgins families of the passing of Viola & Betsy's mother, Harriet Ganatsiou in Raleigh  
To the Lombardi family on the passing of Christina's mother, Electra  
To the Miller family on the passing of Cheryl's mother, Sarah Malcolm  
To the Antahades family on the passing of Michaelina's father, Leonidas  
To the Stojkovich family on the passing of Goran's brother, Mio  
To the Mandrapilias and Drexler families on the passing of their mother and grandmother, Toulia Kaperonis Mandrapilias  
To the Kroustalis family on the passing of their husband and father, Gregory George  
To the Bacogeorge and Schwartz families on the passing of their mother, Calliope "Clara" Fokakis Bacogeorge  
To the Kash family on the passing of their beloved father & grandfather, Philip Kash  
To the Parthenakis family on the passing of Anthe's husband, James George  
To Tatiana & Mariam Mukhammad on the passing of Tatiana's father, Vladimir Sukhopar

**IN APPRECIATION**

*Dear Friends! Thank you very much for the holy oil and water. God bless you all.  
Warm regards, Mary Genkos*

**Thanks to Diane Gilbert and Copycat for printing the Church Bulletin and Newsletter.**

**Please contact Kim Braswell at [kclewell@stnektarios.org](mailto:kclewell@stnektarios.org) with information we may share with the community or to add someone to the prayer list. Please contact the office to request a clergy visit.**

# MESSAGE FROM HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER

At the invitation of His Excellency Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, spiritual leaders from throughout the Metro Atlanta area were encouraged to record a video message for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere between January 18th and 25th), an ecumenical Christian observance marked by the World Council of Churches, of which the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Churches are members.



His Eminence shared his reflection on unity referencing the scriptural verse in which our Lord encourages His disciples to “Love one another, as I have loved you.” (John 15:12). His full message may be found at [vimeo.com/500991646](https://vimeo.com/500991646).

Information on the World Council of Churches may be found at [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org).

## PARISH COUNCIL — AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE ~ 1-3-21

We welcomed the members of our Parish Council to the Solea on Sunday, January 3rd for the annual Affirmation of Office. Placing their hand on the Holy Gospel, members recited:

*I do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogma, teaching, traditions, holy canons, discipline, worship, and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the Charter and Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and that I will fulfil faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council. So help me God.*

Following the service, they held their first meeting of the year to elect officers who are listed on this page. Please keep them in your daily prayers as they lead and serve our community to fulfill its Mission and Vision. ❖



### 2021 Parish Council

**President:** Charlie Hubbard

**Vice President:** Christina Bonderer

**Treasurer:** Despina Gallis

**Assist. Treasurer:** Aka Vashakidze

**Secretary:** Nadine Rosekrans

**Assist. Secretary:** Mike Burgan

**Members:** Elissa Bahanovich, George Bacogorge, Nadia Francis, Doug Sistare and Dimitri Triantafyllides

# CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY



The photos above are from our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Thanks to Kim Braswell for the Christmas Eve photos, John Cosmos for Christmas day and to Presbytera Lea Tsahakis for the photo of our Zoe Ministry Angels lining the aisle on Christmas Eve (pictured right). The angels represent the guardian angels of those little ones who have passed on through miscarriage, abortion, still birth or after. We usually remember these children on November 26th, the feast day of St. Stylianos, patron saint of children. This year we celebrated on the feast of the Holy Innocents on December 29th. (See page 5)

## LIFE AND FAMILY MINISTRY ~ ZOE MINISTRY REMEMBRANCE

The Zoe Ministry is one that is dear to my heart as many of you know. This is a ministry of Life and Family under the umbrella of Grief Support. Our Grief Support Ministry offers support to those who are suffering a loss—a death in the family, career or job loss, divorce, and neonatal loss through the Zoe Ministry.

St. Stylianos is the patron saint of children. His feast day is celebrated on November 26th. Each year on the Sunday following his feast day, we have a memorial service for lost infants. We prepare angel ornaments inscribed with the names of children lost through miscarriage, in childbirth or soon after birth. We ask the families of the children to come forward and stand on the Solea during the service. Afterward each family member takes an ornament to hang on the tree in the fellowship hall. Kollyva is distributed to all parishioners during our coffee hour.

Due to the circumstances of this year, we decided to line the center aisle with luminaries and hang the angel ornaments on them to light the pathway on Christmas Eve. Donations were made for each luminary in memory of these children and we worked together to benefit the Missions Ministry. Thank you to Graham Milich who helped me assemble some of these luminaries and to Evelyn Klund and Niki Kleto who created the bows on the end of each pew. We all worked together to bring this beautiful sight. (See photo pg. 4)

Fr. Andreas suggested we remember their lives on December 29th, and it seemed appropriate. Fr. Nektarios explained in his homily that the Church commemorates the 14,000 infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod in Bethlehem and on this day we brought to mind those who have lost children, especially through miscarriage or any other form of loss. We kept the luminaries in the sanctuary throughout the Christmas holidays to remember these blessed children and pray that God grant them rest among the saints.



Kim Sheree' Braswell

### Working in His Vineyard — Missions & Philanthropy Ministry

## *It Was the Day Before Christmas*

#### Church Mouse Kit-n-Kaboodle



#### Thrift Store

It was the week before Christmas 2020 and the volunteer board members working at the Church Mouse Resale Store, had to decide on the holiday work schedule for the store. Of course, the store would be closed on Christmas Day, which fell on a Friday. But what about Christmas Eve and the Saturday after Christmas Day? It was decided that the store should be open on those days even if on an abbreviated schedule. Business was terribly slow on Christmas Eve Day, slower than usual. But one middle aged lady came in around mid-day to browse. She brought a few toys she found over to the counter to set them aside and continued browsing. Over the next half hour or so she continued to bring things to the counter, occasionally making an inquiry to confirm the price of some items. When she completed her shopping spree, she had spent the \$100 she had with her. That money went really far at the discounted pricing offered at the store. She filled several bags with the toys and clothing she had picked out for her children.

After finishing her purchases, she made a comment to the store attendant, paraphrasing here; Thank you for being here (the store), open on Christmas Eve, and with such favorable pricing. ***“Now we can have a Christmas after all”.***

#### What our Customers Have to Say

The Church Mouse Resale Store asked regular customers to offer comments on the store for the chance to win a gift. Excerpts from some of the comments tell us:

- ◆ “This is my go to Thrift. Always clean and well organized. The COVID policy is right on par.” (Dayle)
- ◆ “What a great idea to have that rack outside at entrance...So glad the Church Mouse is in [the] neighborhood...(Nancy)
- ◆ “I love your store!...Your employees are so kind, helpful and caring and have a gift for making you feel very special and welcome...I pray that you will always stay open and never, never shut down.” (Leesa)

**Thank you St Nektarios Family. Your donations to the store do impact the lives of others.**

(Volunteers and donations still needed. Please contact Dee Drobonick, Joanne Kiser or Tim Klund for specific details.)

# NEW YEAR'S DAY VASILOPITA BLESSING

Our New Year's Day tradition at St. Nektarios includes the blessing and cutting of the Vasilopita (New Year's Day Bread) following Divine Liturgy on New Year's Day. Various members of our ministry departments participate in this annual event. Pictured are those who came forward to receive for their ministry, eagerly looking for the "lucky coin" and blessing.

Thank you to our Philoptochos ladies, Athena Dalber, Phyllis Gindlesberger, Pitsa Karres, Ritsa Neary, and Chrystala Paraskeva (pictured below) who baked the bread following the tradition from the 4th century. A band of pirates stole gold, etc. from the townspeople and St. Basil retrieved the items from the pirates. There was a dispute as to who owned what piece of property. In order to resolve the dispute, St. Basil commissioned women to bake bread in which the gold coins, jewelry, etc. were placed into the dough before baking. The legend says that as each person was given a slice of bread, his or her own items were received back in the piece of bread. This is considered a miracle to this day.

Fr. Andreas and Fr. Nektarios blessed the bread and distributed slices to the representative of each ministry department:

- Costa Vrettos – Archon of the Patriarchate
- Gerry Clonaris -- Archdiocesan Council Member
- Evelyn Klund -- Metropolis Council Member
- Doug Sistare (Parish Council)
- Tim Klund (Administrative Support Volunteers)
- Katherine Bartis (Adult Religious Education)
- Kathryn Mason (Bookstore)
- Sam Kleto (Endowment)
- Theodora Sexstone (Fund Development)
- Mike Neary (Hospitality)
- Teresa Jacob (Holy Unmercenaries Medical Society)
- Abir Saad (Life and Family)
- Nigel Mitchner (Liturgical)
- Christie Asimos (Missions and Philanthropy)
- Gus Gianakopoulos, Dina Marinakos, Jeff Clewell (Music)
- Silva Awaimrin (Outreach and Welcoming)
- Bess Vrettos (Philoptochos)
- Theo Karavokiros (Property Management)
- Faye Couchell (St. Hermione Home)
- Nicole Azar (St. Phoebe Ministry)
- Michaelina Antahades (Young Adult Ministries)
- Christala Paraskeva (Young at Heart)
- Helen Giles (Youth Ministries)

Our appreciation goes out to the hundreds of volunteers who serve in the various departments. While we were apart most of 2020, our ministries were working behind the scenes continuing our Lord's ministry through St. Nektarios.

Thank you to John Cosmas who took the photos and to everyone who participated on this special day. ❖



# NAVIGATING THROUGH COVID-19 BY FR. STEVE DALBER

The COVID 19 virus has created a worldwide crisis. Many believe that the virus was created for biological warfare. Others say that it came about through natural mutation from bats. And yet others say it was created by the Evil One to tyrannize the faithful. While not many deny its existence, some feel that whatever its source, it is being used by many for political gain. Citizens of this country have a tendency to distrust government and the agenda of politicians. The natural response is to resist, especially when government begins dictating to Churches what they **must** do. They feel that as Christians they must not submit to, but fight these regulations, insisting that they have the God given and constitutional right to worship without restrictions. They feel that by wearing a mask in church they are betraying God and their faith and refuse to wear a mask even if it means not attending services.

Recently I spoke to two individuals who feel this way. One has refused to attend, the other attends but feels harassed and not fully welcomed as if they were diseased.

My dear Saint Nektarios family, I would like to share some thoughts on this subject. First, it is unconstitutional for the government to dictate to the Church what it can and cannot do. Second, what we are doing is not because we are forced by a tyrannical

government. Third, the Orthodox Church is governed by a synod of bishops. This synod gathers in prayer in the presence of the Holy Spirit to make decisions for the wellbeing and order of the Church. We consider the decisions of the synod as canons (rules of order.) To maintain order and consistency in all canonical parishes, we do our best to conform to synodal directives. We cannot have every parish and/or individual do something different. This would be absolute chaos.

*We must defy our egos  
thereby taking the enemy's  
weapon away from him.  
We must attend services no  
matter what hoops  
we have to jump through.  
We must receive the Body  
and Blood of our Lord.*

Unfortunately, many question the decisions of the bishops. They don't understand that unity and worship are their goal; not submission to civil authority.

As Orthodox Christians and children of the Kingdom, we must look at what is happening through the lens of our faith. As I have said many times, where you see division you see the will of the Devil. Where you see unity you see the will of the Father. The great enemy of the Church rejoices in seeing us divided. His goal is to separate us

from the Eucharist. By overcoming all obstacles, including the wearing of masks, we are in **defiance** of the Devil. We are submitting to God's will by gathering in His name. Wearing masks, taking temperatures and maintaining distance is an act of **defiance**, not an act of submission to the forces outside of our faith. The Devil working through our ego wants us to see these things as an act of submission, thereby wanting us to resist. But by our resistance to attend worship, we are playing into his will.

My friends we must not allow our egos separate us from the Eucharist, God and each other. We must overcome every obstacle placed before us by man and by the Devil himself no matter what they are or what form they take. We must defy our egos thereby taking the enemy's weapon away from him. We must attend services no matter what hoops we have to jump through. We must receive the Body and Blood of our Lord.

I know many of you do not attend service because of preexisting conditions and concerns for your health. If this is the case, do not attend personally but watch on line. Call a priest to come by your home to administer the sacrament. But please don't neglect the greatest gift of our Lord's Body and Blood.

Stay safe and stay united to your Church family, the Body of Christ. ❖



## YOUNG AT HEART — FOR OUR 55 AND OLDER MEMBERS

On a cold day in December, the Young at Heart gathered together for a weekday Liturgy reserved for our members and other senior citizens of our parish. While social distancing and donning our masks, we took this opportunity to celebrate the birth of Our Lord and for fellowship, fun and a special craft. We created ribbons with our names on them which were hung on the fence outside the sanctuary as part of the project "Christmas on the Plaza". Thank you to Evelyn Klund, Kim Braswell and Graham Milich who helped create a heart-shaped display for us. ❖



# CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY ~ BLESSING OF THE WATERS



Theophany, celebrated on January 6, is the annual commemoration of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist. However, it is not simply an anniversary of this particular event. Rather, by the activity of the Holy Spirit—the same Holy Spirit that descended on Jesus in the Jordan River—we participate by grace in that same awesome event. The same Spirit is called down to bless the waters that flow today, and this holy water is shared with the contemporary Church militant.



But not only were the waters blessed when Jesus set foot in them all those years ago. No, something else is what gives the weight and significance—and indeed the name—to the feast of Theophany. It was the very appearance of God (*"theophania"*), the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



Thus, when priests go to bless the homes and businesses of the faithful with holy water, on one hand they bring the tangible blessing and grace of Christ's baptism. On the other, however, they bring a bold and public proclamation and affirmation of the Holy Trinity. As much as we love how this feast and its traditions refresh our bodies, our spirits, and our homes, let it also refresh our commitment to the saving dogma of the Holy Trinity.

**Fr. Andreas**



## TROPARIUM Hymn of the Feast

*As You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, then the worship of the Trinity became manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming You the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ God, who appeared and illumined the world, glory to You.*

## PARAKLESIS PRAYER SERVICE

Weekly on Thursdays at 4 p.m. we have been offering a Paraklesis service alternating to St. Nektarios, St. Panteleimon or St. Nikiphoros. During the service several Psalms are read, hymns chanted to the saint, and prayers for intercessions for those commemorated who are sick or suffering, those in captivity and in need of salvation. Names may be submitted to the office and will be included in the service. ❖



## FATHER CONFESSORS: FR. ANDREAS AND FR. PAUL



Congratulations to Fr. Andreas and to Fr. Paul. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios elevated both to Father Confessors on December 13, 2020.



See page 16 for a short article regarding the photos taken on that day.

## Thursday Confession

*For "if one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Corinthians 12:26). "Therefore, confess your sins to one another ... that you may be healed" (James 5:16).*

Repentance is renewal and reconciliation with Christ when sin has separated us from Him.



Starting Thursday, February 4th, we are offering confession following the Paraklesis service. Fr. Andreas, Fr. Paul and Fr. Steve are available by appointment for confession. Please call the office for an appointment. ❖

# THE MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE

## Waiting in Anticipation to See the Messiah

Our original intent was to offer an all-night vigil for the feast of the Meeting of the Lord. However, taking COVID precautions into consideration, it was decided that we would instead offer the typical order of Vespers on the eve of the feast, and Matins and the Divine Liturgy on the day of. Still, our chanters employed some of the psalms and more elaborate musical settings that would have been part of the vigil, which provided for beautiful and solemn services. Glory to God! ❖



## A Reflection of Peace and Holiness

I wanted to somehow share my personal experience of this night and the presence I felt as I walked into the service. I was overwhelmed with such a sense of peace and holiness that I wanted to save it somehow.

The lights were dimmed, candles flickered, angelic voices chanted and the smell of incense lingered. It was a moment of "heaven" that I craved to savor and carry with me.

Fr. Nektarios was able to eloquently capture the essence of this experience in a video he created that night. The format is in black and white and available on our St. Nektarios Facebook page, called "The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple" which is exactly what happened that night.

Kim Sheree' Braswell

*The streamed service may also be viewed on our YouTube channel*

## "Lord now let your servant depart in peace"

Luke 2:22-24

On the day we commemorated St. Symeon (February 3), who received Christ in his arms on his fortieth day, our temple was blessed to welcome these twins. May they see many years and the salvation that St. Symeon beheld! ❖



## THE FEAST OF SAINTS CYRUS & JOHN, THE HOLY UNMERCENARIES

On January 31, we celebrated the feast of Saints Cyrus and John, the Holy Unmercenarys. Our community has the great blessing of having relics of St. Cyrus. May these saints intercede for us all and may God grant healing to our world. Fr. Andreas, Fr. Nektarios, Dn. Stephen & the altar servers processed through the nave with the relics to honor this blessed saint of the Church. ❖



## WORKING IN HIS VINEYARD: *MISSIONS & PHILANTHROPY MINISTRY*

*“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:26*



Top photo courtesy of Fr. Paul Tsahakis  
Bottom photo courtesy of Bing online photos



### Responding to the Homeless Part 1 ~ Continuing Matthew 25's Ministry ~

Every week Fr. Paul Tsahakis with several faithful assistants visit Charlotte's Tent City providing bear minimum supplies for those residing there. This is now the reality for the people who were once two pay checks away from homelessness. Many have lost their jobs from the businesses which had to shut down or scaled back in their operations due to the pandemic.

This all began when the Salvation Army Center of Hope and Shelter Health Services closed their operations during the

early days of COVID-related closings. The women and children of the Center of Hope were relocated to various low budget hotels. Fr. Paul and Christina Hanegraaff maintained their connection to the residents and ultimately set up “clinic” services at the hotels every week. With the turn-over in the hotels, Fr. Paul ventured out to see how these people were filling the tent cities that stretch around Charlotte for miles. Thousands reside there. Their needs soon became obvious.

Through word of mouth, our parish family and extended community started to respond to help Fr. Paul. The Women's Bible Study provided over 56 backpacks of essentials for Christmas. Knitted stocking hats and homemade comforters started showing up. Holy Trinity parishioners participated in a clothing drive. The Panagia Prousiotissa Monastery in Troy is now a regular contributor to this effort. Our lobby donation center has been overwhelmed with items. Fr. Paul said both his car and Christina's car have been filled to capacity with donations several times over. The need is never ending. Fr. Paul identified many items needed immediately to get through the cold days still ahead of us: tents, sleeping bags, men's pants, men's clothes, men and women's sweat gear, women's leggings (small to XXXL), hygiene kits, comforters, shoes in good condition, new underwear, outer garments, protein bars, sources of light (solar powered preferred), heat wraps. Many times people are not looking for material items, but just want prayers. Bibles and prayer books are always welcomed.

***If you can help meet the need, just bring your items to the donation center in the Spiritual Life Center lobby.***

The good news today was that the Salvation Army Center of Hope is to reopen in April which will allow hundreds off the streets and into a safe environment with the security of food provided. Father Paul and Christina express their appreciation for all who have given. ❖

# LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

On December 24th, at the Christmas Eve Vesperal Liturgy service, we honored all of our Philoptochos members' health and well-being by lighting a candle for each of them. We pray that our sisters and brothers in Christ continue to stay safe and in good health.



2020 Summary — Through your generous membership contributions, we were able to fulfill our 2020 commitments in the amount of \$5,195, respond with financial support of \$550 to several National and Metropolis special appeals throughout the year, and support local organizations such as Loaves and Fishes and Urban Ministries with financial help and food items valued at \$1,500. Additional fundraising efforts allowed us to distribute over another \$7,000 to various beneficiaries. To close out

the year, we made end of the year donations of \$1,000 to Child of God Academy in Kenya and \$4,000 to Samaritan House, our Christmas beneficiary. **Thank you to our members and supporters for making a difference in the lives of others!**

**YOU ARE INVITED TO BECOME A MEMBER**

**THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!**

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.*

Ecclesiastes 4:9

LET OUR STRENGTH HELP POWER YOUR FAVORITE CHARITIES

Learn more or complete a membership form at [www.stnektarios.org/philoptochos](http://www.stnektarios.org/philoptochos)

We look forward to making 2021 equally as impactful to our members and community. Our theme for the year is, "There is Strength in Numbers!" We want to know how we can help charities that our members support.

*Niki Kleto, Philoptochos President*

## 87 Potential Lives Saved

St. Nektarios hosted an American Red Cross blood drive on Sunday, December 13th. We had a total of 32 donors, 8 first time donors, 29 units collected and 87 potential lives saved because of these donations. Thank you to all who participated in giving their life blood to others. Thank you to Niki Kleto for coordinating this life-saving event. Pictured here are some of our participant donors. ❖



# FINANCIAL MATTERS

## OPERATING FUND

### Preliminary Year End Results

- \$ 981,600 — Operating Income plus PPP loan of \$102,300 for a total of \$1,083,900.
- \$ 775,500 — Stewardship received
- \$ 114,000 — overpaid and non-pledged offerings included in the total stewardship above, exceeding unpaid pledges of \$89,000
- \$ (77,800) — Operating Shortfall covered by the PPP of \$102,300 providing a surplus of \$24,463

## OTHER FUNDS

### Preliminary Year End Results

#### Building

- \$ 362,000 — Building Fund Income received
- \$ 110,000 — Mortgage payments in 2020 to bring balance to \$ 585,844 by 12- 31-20.
- \$ 475,844 — Current balance of mortgage after January 2021 payment. Interest is paid monthly. The loan balance matures in February 2021.

#### Other

- \$ 421,500 — Dedicated Fund Income received
- \$ 36,900 — Iconography Income received

FULL FINANCIAL REPORTS  
WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE  
SPRING PARISH ASSEMBLY  
SET FOR MARCH 7, 2021

PLEASE LOOK FOR FUTURE MEETING  
ANNOUNCEMENTS.

### Watch Your Mail

2021 Stewardship Packets and auto-renewal notices will be mailed by mid February

Packets will also be available at the Information Center and at the lower level Office Reception Area

## ENDOWMENT



Please remember the  
St. Nektarios Endowment  
in your Estate Plans.

## 2021 Stewardship Ministry

*A Beacon of Christian  
Love*



Let us be transformed as we  
care for one another and serve  
our neighbors.

Let us be known as Christians by the love, deep concern and  
compassion we embody at St. Nektarios.

Let us place the needs of others before our own.

Let us "excel in the grace of giving."

Let us honor, worship and give thanks to God as we  
consider His blessing in our life.

## Your Stewardship Commitment

*Please . . .*

- Prayerfully consider your 2021 Stewardship to continue our Lord's ministry in Service to God and to one another.
- Know our offerings of all types are an act of worship; giving back to God His portion of His gifts to us. ***Every portion matters!***
- Accept the challenge to increase our generosity.
- Review in our upcoming Ministry Guide the opportunities to offer your time and talents in His Service to help others.

*"Let all that you do be done with*

*Love"* 1Cor 16:14

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY ~ Y. A. M.

In November at our virtual Friendsgiving Fr. Andreas, Fr. Nektarios and Kabee Kokenes talked to us about mindfulness, gratitude and thanksgiving. By intentionally practicing gratitude we notice the good things around us. A good habit is to write down 3 things you are thankful for every day (or use the Happyfeed app).

### We are thankful for:

1. *Our clergy and our speaker who shared so much knowledge and wisdom,*
2. *All of you who logged in and joined us and*
3. *Technology that allows us to be together for education and fellowship.*



On December 10th we hosted a virtual trivia night to benefit charity. Young adults joined the game and played for their parish while competing against other parishes. The winning team received \$100.00 toward the charity of their choice.

On January 14th we joined in prayer for protection from the Corona virus followed by a short discussion by Fr. Andreas on the traditions in the church and of course time for socializing and catching up with each other. ❖

## LITURGICAL MINISTRY ~ ST. PHOEBE MINISTRY

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Yeah, right. So 2020 wasn't the best of times. But the girls of the St. Phoebe Ministry didn't let that stop them from living out the true spirit of the holidays. After a long COVID hiatus and a couple of Zoom meetings, we had a plan!

Part one of our Christmas service project was to reach out to some of our parishioners who were most impacted by the stay-at-home order in effect at the time. Each girl was given two or three names and she picked out a Christmas card for each person on her list. Some of the girls opted to make handmade cards! After all the cards were ready, they brought them to the church office for mailing. The pics you see here were taken the night the St. Phoebe advisors got together to address all the envelopes for mailing.

Part two of our Christmas service project



was even more fun! We started an Adopt a Yiayia and Adopt a Papou program. We found out about two deserving people in our parish who needed a little extra love this year. The girls, and their moms, bought gifts for these two people according to their Christmas Wish Lists: socks, pajamas, gift cards, etc. And the recipients were so excited and so grateful.

Finally, we adopted a faithful, deserving St. Nektarios family. The girls had fun shopping for toys: Barbie clothes, Legos, Transformers,

etc. Of course, the best part for all of us was knowing that we were making a difference in the lives of people even though we don't know who they are.

And isn't that what it's all about?

"And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:40

Christina Bonderer

# YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Ministries had several opportunities to come together in person in December. All of our GOYAns, grades 6-12, enjoyed our traditional Christmas Party on Sunday, December 6 with outdoor games, an ugly sweater contest, and lots of fellowship. To celebrate our Seniors, we held a bonfire, dinner, and game night on December 27th. Holiday charades, corn hole, s'mores, and pizza were all on the menu, along with a special video presentation of GOYA memories. We were so thankful to be together to remember all the wonderful opportunities for fun, fellowship, worship, service, and witness we have had over the years.

Though we were not able to have Winter Youth Rally as we have in the past, Fr. Steven Klund involved all the churches in our Metropolis in the "WYR Perfect" event. As part of this event, churches challenged each other to create basketball trick shot videos to submit. Our senior boys' team, along with Fr. Nektarios, produced a video for submission. The team and Fr. Nektarios had as much fun making the video as we did watching it! If you'd like to see it, please be sure to follow the St. Nektarios Youth Facebook page and Instagram account.

We look forward to continuing small, in-person youth ministry activities and events following our Metropolis and state guidelines for health and safety. There is nothing better than being together! ❖



# GOYA

# YOUTH MINISTRY

## Eagle Scout Projects — Digging their Way to Improve Church Campus



Four of our Scouts beautified the property while earning their Eagle Scout Awards. Thank you to George Karavokiros, Saba Vashakidze, Graham Milich and Alec Giles for hours of planning and hard work to care for their Church home. Congratulations and Well Done!

A special thank you goes out to Tim Shelton for his assistance to the troop and to these boys and to achieve their goals. ❖



## Scout Sunday

The annual tradition continued on Sunday, February 7th to recognize the contributions of young people and our leaders to Scouting. Boys and leaders attended church in uniform as part of their Scout Sunday activities. Scouting is a journey of learning new things and discovering new talents, while having fun.



Our Leaders dedicate their time to mentor and guide our youth on this journey. Our youth are being prepared to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes. They are taught service to God and country. They gain experience in community involvement, leadership and personal accountability.

Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting, under the Assembly of Orthodox Canonical Bishops, works to have Scouting compliment and supplement the youth programs of our parishes.

## Scouting for Food

Our Scouts distributed hundreds of red door hangers in the neighborhoods around St. Nektarios, soliciting food donations. On Saturday, February 6th, the Scouts and their families and leaders collected hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items left at the doorsteps of our neighbors. Our parishioners joined in the drive, delivering enough bags and boxes of food to overwhelm our lobby in the Spiritual Life Center. The last task was for our troop to transport all donations to the Harris Teeter parking lot at the Arboretum to benefit Loaves and Fishes. Fr. Andreas on Scout Sunday blessed representative bags of food and prayed for the well-being of the local families in need who will benefit from this drive. Financial donations are still being accepted via [www.loavesandfishes.org](http://www.loavesandfishes.org). ❖



## LOST PHOTOS RECOVERED

In our last issue we expressed our joy for Fr. Andreas and Fr. Paul's elevation to Confessors. Sadly the photos were lost due to damage from the broken camera card. Through prayer and asking for the intercessions of St. Phanourios the photos were recovered. St. Phanourios is considered the saint to ask for intercession for lost objects. His only request is that if something that has been lost is found, that we bake a small cake called a "phanouropita" and bring to the church asking for the priest to pray for the souls of St. Phanourios' mother and sister and lost souls. My oldest daughter suggested that I make cupcakes for all the times I've asked for St. Phanourios' intercessions. May this be the year we all find what we truly need and that is . . . Christ's will for our lives.



Kim Sheree' Braswell



### OUR MISSION:

*St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to the continuation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's ministry of salvation through the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel; through Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and through loving service to God and to mankind.*

### OUR VISION:

*The community will provide a loving, caring and welcoming environment where all belong and grow in the faith through worship, service, witness, and fellowship.*

## DIRECTORY

**Church Office:** 704-708-4669

**Church Fax:** 704-846-6094

**Email:** office@stnektarios.org

**Website:** www.stnektarios.org

5108 Kuykendall Rd. Charlotte, NC 28270

**Father Andreas Houpos**, Proistamenos

Email: fr.andreas@stnektarios.org

**Father Nektarios Karantonis**, Ephemerios

Cell Phone: 980-829-5215

Email: frkarantonis@stnektarios.org

**Father Steve Dalber**, Pastor Emeritus

Cell Phone: 704-451-6524

Email: frdalber@stnektarios.org

**Father Paul Tshakis**, Presbyter

**Deacon Stephanos Potter**

### 2021 Parish Council

**President:** Charlie Hubbard

**Vice President:** Christina Bonderer

**Treasurer:** Despina Gallis

**Assist. Treasurer:** Aka Vashakidze

**Secretary:** Nadine Rosekrans

**Assist. Secretary:** Mike Burgan

**Members:** Elissa Bahanovich,

George Bacogeorge, Nadia Francis,

Doug Sistare and Dimitri Triantafyllides

### Parish Administrator

Evelyn Klund

### Administration Staff

Silva Awaimrin, Kim Braswell, Samara Clewell

Niki Kleto, and Sofia Nicolopoulos

### Director of Youth Ministries

Helen Giles

### Property Manager

Tim Shelton

### Music Directors

Jeff Clewell, Dina Marinakos-Oara

### Philoptochos Board

**President:** Niki Kleto

**Vice President:** Charlotte Nickolopoulos

**Recording Secretary:** Sharon Koutroumpis

**Corresponding Secretary:** (Vacant)

**Treasurer:** Madalina Lowen

**Ass't. Treasurer:** Evelyn Klund

**Members:** Michaelina Antahades

and Helen Bakos

(Email: philoptochos@stnektarios.org)

## SUNDAYS AT SAINT NEKTARIOS

### Worship

**Matins 8:15 a.m. and**

**Divine Liturgy 9:15 a.m.**

**Youth Catechism:**

Virtual classes began Sept. 20th

**Fellowship Coffee:**

Suspended during COVID-19 precautions

### Prosfora

Please contact the church office or Christie Asimos at 704-756-1512 if you would like to provide or sponsor Prosfora.

### Coffee Hour postponed

When we are able to resume Coffee Hour, please contact the church office if you would like to host or co-host one on a Sunday. Your Stewardship pays for the coffee hour refreshments provided by the Hospitality Ministry Team.

### Flowers

You may donate flowers in honor of a family member's feast day, in memory of a loved one or friend, on the occasion of a holiday, or simply as a gift to the community of St. Nektarios. To donate flower arrangements to be placed at the Iconostasis, St. Nektarios Shrine or in the Narthex for Sunday Services, please contact the church office to reserve a Sunday.

### Sacramental Wine & Pure Olive Oil

You may make a monetary gift to help defray the cost of the sacramental wine that is used for Holy Communion. Please note on the memo line of your check or on the envelope "Communion Wine". You may also donate a bottle or can of pure olive oil which is then blessed at the Shrine of St. Nektarios and is offered in the anointing kits. Please feel free to bring this with you to any of our services and give to an usher on duty. For additional information contact the church office.

### UPCOMING DEADLINE

#### Newsletter & Bulletin Due Dates:

Information Due: March 16, 2021

Published: March 23, 2021