

Volume 26, Issue 2
March 2022

Inside this Issue

Spotlight on Parish Council	2
Focus on Our Community	2
Message from His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios	3
Praying for Ukraine	3
Festival of Faith	4
Godparent Sunday	4
Postcard from Fr. Andreas	5
Installation of Remote Access Door in sanctuary	5
Adult Religious Education	6-7
Memorial Sundays	8
House Blessings	
Community Brunch/ Baking Prospora	
Our Journey to Pascha begins	9
Veneration of the Holy Cross	9
Sunday of Orthodoxy	10
Annunciation of the Theotokos	11
Young at Heart	11
Philoptochos	12-13
Financial Matters	14
Youth Ministry	15
Saints of Our Faith	116



THE NEWS FROM ST. NEKTARIOS

RECEIVE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

By Fr. Andreas G. Houpos, Proistamenos

«Σοφία! Ὁρθοί! Φῶς
Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσι!»
“Wisdom! Arise!
The light of Christ
shines upon all!”

To those who have attended the service of the Presanctified Gifts throughout the Great Fast, this exclamation of the priest becomes a hallmark of the season. While on some occasions and in some places it is the case that the Presanctified are offered in the morning, mimicking the customary time of the Divine Liturgy. This is an evening service; it is the rite of Holy Communion grafted into Vespers. Therefore, properly speaking, these words of the priest are uttered as darkness descends, when the pinpoint of a single candle stands out much more brightly than it does in daylight. We are reminded of this in a more striking way when, just before midnight at the end of Holy Saturday, all the lights in the temple are extinguished, save the single flame of the vigil lamp of the holy table. And there again the priest, having lit his own candle from it, solemnly exits the sanctuary, though this time with the cry

“Come, receive the light from the never-setting Light, and glorify Christ, who is risen from the dead!”

It is in that moment that the words from the service of the Presanctified Gifts come into liturgical fulfillment: **the single light of the priest’s candle** is transferred to one and then to other candles, and their holders in turn run to others and light their candles, setting off a cascade of illumination that now sweeps through and fills the previously dark temple. The light of Christ shines upon all.

It is an impressive spectacle. But what does it mean? What does it mean for the light of Christ to illumine all? What does it mean to receive the light, much less to spread it?

First, it requires faith. Jesus told us himself: **“I am the light of the world”** (John 8:12a). If we trust Jesus who told us this, and if we trust that **if we follow him we “will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”** (12b), then we have already taken perhaps the most important step. However, for many, this is where things end. Perhaps looking to the words of St. Paul to the **church in Rome when he says, “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”** (10:9), we forget the words of the Lord himself **when he says, “not all who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 7:21a).

This is why our Orthodox Faith is so important, so necessary: **it shines “the light of life” on the narrow path into the Kingdom.**

In other words, intellectually assenting to belief in Jesus (or perhaps defaulting to him as part of my cultural inheritance) and believing in him with all my heart are two distinct states of being. The former might convince us of going through the motions of a Christian life, while the latter is actual life-in-Christ. Even if the former can masquerade as the latter, it will not withstand the eventual judgment when Christ returns—the light of Christ illumines everything, and will burn away what is false and superficial.

A heart that is open to Christ—that trusts in him, loves him, seeks after him, grieves when it saddens him, takes rest when it is relieved by him, laments its failures, hopes in **God’s love and mercy, and breaks** for the pain of the world—will fill with his light. And like those

candles at midnight, it will run here and there in the darkness of this world spreading that light; it becomes a luminary.

In the course of the Great Fast, we noted great luminaries of the Faith. All were ignited and blazed forth with the light of Christ. Yet we do not have to be a holy hierarch of the Church that presided at an Ecumenical Council. We do not have to have the theological acumen of a St. Gregory Palamas. We do not have to be desert-dwelling monks like a St. John of Sinai. We do not have the experience of the depths of depravity of a St. Mary of Egypt. Each of them accepted the light of Christ, and, like the priest turning to the congregation at the Presanctified service, turned to the world with that same radiant light. In other words, they opened themselves to Christ as they were and he made them who they became.

So, where are we? And what might **we become?** **“The light of Christ shines upon all.”** But not all receive it. Some receive it but allow it to be snuffed out. Others extinguish it willingly. But those who receive it receive the same light that allowed the Apostles and all the Saints **before and around us to “not walk in darkness”**. This is why our Orthodox Faith is so important, so necessary: **it shines “the light of life” on the narrow path into the Kingdom.** If we could take this light of Christ and submit it to a prism, its bands of color would be our correct confession of the Faith, our Orthodox way of life, our fasting, our prayer, our humility, our repentance, our love and honor of saints, our worship, our good deeds, and so on.

The light of Christ shines upon all, finding us where we are in this **moment. May this year’s encounter with our Lord’s Resurrection** brighten us and show us the path forward to and with him, in this gift of a life he has granted us. ❖

Spotlight on Parish Council



Appointments to Parish Council
Welcome

Mark Malatras, Frank Bartis and Dennis Kokenes

After the elections in November 2021, our parish council had three vacancies which have now been filled. Thank you to Mark Malatras, Frank Bartis and Dennis Kokenes offering their service and commitment as leaders of our parish.

The Parish Council consists of 11 members in good standing who have been elected by the congregation (or appointed by Council approval in the case of vacancies) to represent it in the governance of the parish. The Parish Council has what is called “fiduciary duty” for the life of the parish, meaning that its members take on a legal and ethical commitment to act in the best interest of the parish.

The Parish Council works closely with the clergy leadership of the parish in making a best effort to fulfill the mission of the Church in its local manifestation.

In the Church, this council isn't simply a legal requirement. While not ordained as “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1b), as are the clergy, the Parish Council (and the parish administrative staff) are set apart by their peers in Christ, with the blessing of the local bishop, as a contemporary manifestation of those elected and appointed to serve the community—in other words it is a true diakonia, or ministry, of the Church.

Please consider keeping your Parish Council representatives in your regular prayers, and also prayerfully consider whether Parish Council is a place you might be able to serve your parish in the future—we need faithful and talented people of all legal ages and backgrounds! ❖



Dennis Kokenes



Mark Malatras



Frank Bartis



FOCUS ON OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrations, Milestones, Comfort & Support

In our prayers

Aphroula John Pat KS Joe Kim Johanna Edward Tina Theona Helen & Richard DG
Chuck Handsel Mason Robin & Benny John & Elaine Jennifer & family Eleftheria Mary
Catherine Grant Jack Phyllis Melton family Tish Joanne Christina Stephen Gloria
Phil & Ronnie John & Michelle & family MP MSR Glen Cheryl & Brian Paul
John T. John D. Terry Dorothy Erma (Hermione) Phyllis John Connie Greg Burns

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 Jordan Krassimire Nicholas Michael Constantine Zack
Matthew Amanda Danielle Anton Jimmy Kevin

Congratulations and best wishes

To Brooke Bevis & Zachery Hair on their engagement

Births & Fortieth Day Blessings

To Emily & David Hanegraaff on the 40th day blessing of Grace's sister, Pax

To Anastasia and Andrei Sestacovschi on the birth and 40th day blessing of their daughter, Alice Joanna

To Nina and Joshua Dzyak on the birth & 40th day blessing of Roman's brother, Ezekial Leon "Zeke"

Chrismations

To Casey Mills on his chrismation

To Hendrick James Hanegraaff on his chrismation

Dara Sisterhen on her chrismation

Baptisms

To Angie & Michael Thomopoulos on the baptism of their daughter, Evie Simone

To Brooke Bevis on her baptism

To Zachery Hair on his baptism

To Esteban, Kayla, Ezra, Adelina, Lucas & Sophia Cavil on their baptisms

To Laura & Jake Roberts on the baptism of Sophia & Henry's brother Thomas James

MARRIAGES

To Angie & Michael Thomopoulos on their Orthodox wedding

With Sympathy on the Repose

of our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ

To the Kiritsis, Evangelatos, Andrews, Tsefrikas, Nickolopoulos, Poulos, Zogzas and Bakis families
on the repose of Irene Evangelatos

To the Mamalis family on the repose of Presbyteria Janet

The Shepiothina family on the repose of their mother and grandmother, Leonara Matusevich

To the family of Fr. Antonios Papatthanasiou on his repose

To the Karavokiros family on the repose of Theo's father, George in Ohio

To the Leventis family on the repose of Dianne's husband, George

To the Velonis family on the repose of Pauline's husband, George

In Appreciation

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

Thank you to all who allowed us to use your photos for this issue — Fr. Nektarios, Fr. Andreas, Kim Braswell, Caleb Clewell, John Cosmas, Helen Giles, Nadia Khoury, Elizabeth Kleto, Jim Keown

SPECIAL NOTICE

An old photograph was found in the Spiritual Life Center. If you are missing a black & white photo of a couple, please contact Kim Braswell at kclewell@stnektarios.org

There are also many items in the lost and found bin in the Spiritual Life Center and in the catechism hallway including a lovely dress, sweaters, umbrellas and a shoe.

Please contact Kim Braswell at 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

My beloved in the Lord,

I come to you bearing in my heart the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Whom we place our hope and trust in times of both joy and challenge. There are moments in life when our customary peace is temporarily set aside by unanticipated events. None of us are immune to these events and once they arise we must give them our complete attention

Some time ago, I experienced a minor accident, and though it is natural for human beings to continue to go about their daily lives after such events, I thought it a wise and safe decision to seek medical advice. In recent days, I have submitted myself to tests in order to receive an accurate assessment, and then to pursue the proper treatment which might follow. I am pleased to report that I am in good spirits, and that I continue to rest comfortably, on the advice of the doctors who have ministered to me.

As anyone can recognize, submitting to the scrutiny of medical examinations renews within us a keen sense of humility; however, I remain comforted by the counsel of Saint Porphyrios, **"God gives us His grace when we are humble."** Challenges, particularly to our health, are permitted by our Lord that we might be spiritually strengthened. Therefore, rather than

succumbing to snares of the evil one, such as allowing anxiety to prevail, or coming to unfounded conclusions before the facts are known, I draw a sense of peace and confidence from the Physician of our bodies **and souls. He truly is, "my mighty rock [and] my refuge," and upon Him, "rests my salvation."** (Psalm 62:7)

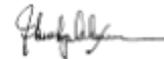
Therefore, what I desire most from my spiritual children at this present time, is prayer. Through the act of prayer, we are granted the most powerful tool to overcome and strengthen ourselves against any obstacles in this life. Now, and always, your support and your prayers to our Creator remind us, just as St. Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, that in everything we do, His grace is sufficient for us **as His power, "is made perfect in weakness."** (2 Corinthians 12:9)

In that spirit of humility, I continue to pray fervently for all the faithful of our God-protected Metropolis, and I look forward to resuming my pastoral duties shortly, with all my strength and effort. Seeking to abide by the advice of my physicians, I hope you understand this loving request to please refrain from offering calls, visits and gifts during this time, when it is especially important to focus on resting. Truly, because your prayers are at

this very moment understood, and felt, I treasure the caring intercessions offered by my spiritual sons and daughters, both the clergy, and all the laity of the Metropolis.

Trusting in His compassionate grace and benevolent will, I look forward to the next time we can stand together in devout prayer in the presence of our Savior Jesus Christ, offering glorification and praise for the abundant blessings He has given to us all. I remain,

With paternal blessings and with much love in our Lord,



+ ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta



Archbishop Elpidophoros visiting Metropolitan Alexios
Copyright © 2Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, All rights reserved.

Archbishop Elpidophoros Launches Ukraine Relief Fund



In response to the tragic humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, and the immediate aid needed there, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America announced a major fundraising effort today that will help those most affected by the Russian invasion.

The first action taken by Archbishop Elpidophoros this morning was to donate \$100,000 to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to support the efforts of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Archbishop Elpidophoros also announced the creation of the Ukrainian Relief Effort, which was established in collaboration with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).*

Together, the Archdiocese and IOCC aim to raise \$1 million for both immediate and long-term support of the Ukrainian people.

Please visit goarch.org/Ukraine to donate.

From the Salutations Service — Akathist Hymn
April 8, 2022

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

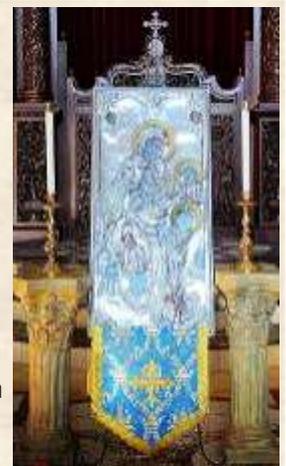
As news comes to us of the events unfolding in Ukraine, and that casualties of war are already being reported, the need for us to pray and act for peace is now more necessary.

I remind you once more that a number of our parishioners have either immigrated or descended from Ukraine or Russia. Regardless of our national or ethnic heritage, all faithful



Orthodox are united in Christ. Times like this can put that ultimate unity to the test. I therefore call upon us all to speak and act with sobriety and charity in all things—as both faith and custom compel us—especially with regard to current events.

In Christ,
Fr. Andreas



FESTIVAL OF FAITH AT THE DIAKONIA CENTER

The Metropolis of Atlanta presented its first Festival of Faith on February 25 and 26 at the beautiful Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, SC. Clergy and parishioners gathered to “Engage the Mind, Renew the Heart and Uplift the Spirit.” Participants were from many parishes, and together, began their spiritual journey leading into the Lenten season.

Gerry Clonaris who serves on the Metropolis Religious Education Ministry, chaired the event under the direction of His Grace Bishop Sebastian of Zelon. Members of the committee were from around the Metropolis and included Brian Clonaris and Evelyn Klund.

The session opened with a welcome from His Grace. The first Keynote Speaker, His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa spoke on “Raising Children in an Orthodox Environment.” The second Keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh offered his message on “Renewing You!.” The two-day session ended with the third Keynote Speaker, Hank Hanegraaff who inspired all on “The Unexpected Beauty of an Authentic Christian Life.”

Interspersed throughout the two days were four featured speakers: Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Dr. Philip and Georgia Mamalakis, and our own Fr. Andreas Houpos and Gerry Clonaris. While this was a packed schedule, there was time for worship in the Panayia Church, open discussion around the campfire, and personal enrichment.



Left to right: His Eminence Bishop Gregory of Nyssa, Fr. Andreas Houpos, Hank Hanegraaff

Extra thanks went out to Sam Kleto for his care in driving the bus from St. Nektarios and offering shuttle service around the center, and to Mike and Ritsa Neary assisting with the delicious food service.



We're already looking forward to FOF 2023! ❖

GODPARENT SUNDAY

Sunday, March 6th, was a special day for Godparents and their Godchildren to sit, worship, recite the Creed and commune together before the Great Fast. Godparents reaffirmed our vows and were reminded of the journey they started with their Godchildren. May God guide this journey and help us always to have the mind of Christ.

Prayer of Reaffirmation:

Blessed are You, O Lord Almighty, Source of all good things, Sun of Righteousness, Who sheds forth upon those who were in darkness the light of salvation, through the manifestation of Your Only Begotten Son, our God: and Who have given unto us, unworthy though we be, blessed purification through hallowed water, and divine sanctification, through life-creating Chrismation; Who have been graciously pleased to regenerate these Your servants

through the only One Baptism by water and the Spirit, granting unto them remission of sins, whether voluntary or involuntary, and granting also unto them the seal of the gift of Your Holy Spirit, and participation in the Holy Body and the precious Blood of Your Christ. Keep them in Your sanctification; reconfirm them in the Orthodox faith; deliver them from the Evil One and from his evil snares. And preserve them in purity and uprightness, through the saving fear of You. That they may please You in every one of their deeds and words, and may prove themselves to be children and heirs of Your heavenly Kingdom. For you are our God, the God of mercy and salvation, and unto You we ascribe glory; to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.



Some of our parishioners with their Godchildren on Godparent Sunday

A 'POSTCARD' FROM FR. ANDREAS DATED 3-20-22

Dear St. Nektarios Family,

I missed being with you all today for **Sunday's holy liturgy**, but I'm glad you had Fr. Nektarios there to minister to you.

In addition to my pastoral duties at St. Nektarios Church, and for a number of years, I have been blessed to be involved in **some of the efforts to strengthen our Church's** liturgical and musical presence in America.

The last few days, I've been in the Phoenix area with some very talented, gifted and—above all—faithful people to record a setting of the Divine Liturgy in English, for didactic purposes. The project is taking place at our sister parish, Assumption, in Scottsdale.

I've also had an opportunity to steal down to St. Anthony's Monastery. It is a place of pilgrimage and prayer, a true marvel and oasis in the Arizona desert. Please know that in my brief pilgrimage, I am remembering all of you in my prayers, especially those of you who have been going through a hard time lately—you know who you are.

Our recording project will take a couple more days, and then **it's back to Charlotte for me. God be with you. Please pray** for the successful completion of this important project and for my return trip, so **that we can continue to do our Lord's work together.**

In Christ,
Fr. Andreas



Fr. Andreas with Fr. Jacob Saylor



AUTOMATIC SANCTUARY DOOR OPENER INSTALLED

We have installed an automatic door opener switch on the smaller door to the right of the center doors.

You can just push the bottom shown here and the door will open automatically. We hope you will find this feature helpful to enter. If you have any questions, please let us know!



ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Fr. Andreas reviewing the art of liturgical reading with dedicated servants of the Lord.

Women's Bible Study

Psalms and the Life of Faith



While this study is an intensive one, it has been a blessed engagement with the Psalms and each other. Its fall term wrapped up on November 10th and the winter term wrapped up on February 23rd. Please check your missal and bulletin for future events.

Lent, Lunch & Learn

Many thanks to this year's speakers for our Lent, Lunch and Learn series, Fr. Jonathan Resmini of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Fr. Johnathan Cox of Holy Ascension in Mt. Pleasant, Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou of Transfiguration Church in Marietta GA and to Fr. Andreas Houpos and Fr. Nektarios Karantonis of St. Nektarios.



Left to right: Fr. Johnathan Cox & Fr. Jonathan Resmini



Pictured left: Zoom session with Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou of Transfiguration Church in Marietta Georgia

Special Talk with Fr. Maximos Conostas



Our men's and women's Bible Study groups came together on March 10th to hear from Fr. Maximos Conostas, the compiler and translator of *Psalms and the Life of Faith*, the text we've been using for our study of the Psalms this year. It was an illuminating, edifying, and uplifting session—a great way to wind down our study as the Fast got underway.

Discussion Session — Man of God



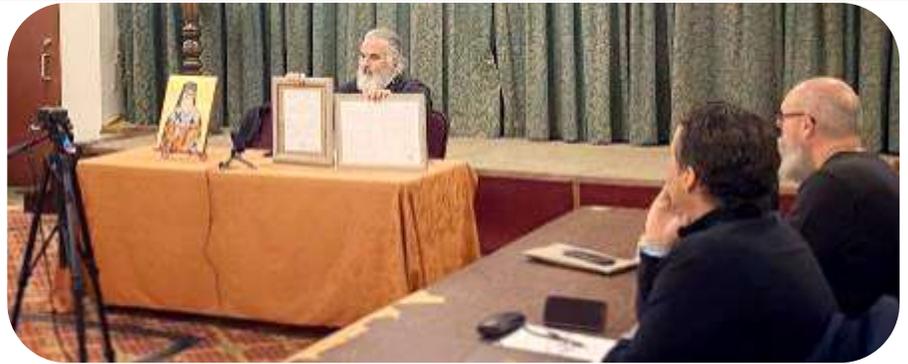
Fr. Andreas lead our session to discuss the movie "Man of God" with our parishioners following the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos. See page 7 for details on the movie event.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Man of God

On a beautifully chilly fall evening, we were being warmed by the introductory session of Fr. Paul's book study on the writings of St. Nektarios. God is wondrous in his saints! Fr. Paul began his study with Habitation of Holiness, a collection of writings from our own St. Nektarios—just in time for his feast!

On March 21st we gathered as a parish to see "Man of God" which depicted a portion of the life of St. Nektarios at several different theaters in Charlotte followed by a 9:30 p.m. vespers service. It a wonderful opportunity to witness on the big screen scenes from his life and his humble response to his life challenges.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a great blessing that a film was made about our patron saint, Nektarios. In this century that has passed since his earthly repose, this man of God has become one of the most beloved saints of our days. We are blessed to be stewards of a portion of his holy relics, and of his name as patron of our parish founded in the name of Jesus Christ.

The film had a ONE-DAY SINGLE SHOWING in the USA, on March 21, 2022 and again on March 28th.

We encouraged all of our parishioners to seek out and attend these screenings. Because it was a one-time showing, tickets went quickly. We did what we could as a parish to organize attendance. If purchasing tickets for yourself or your household poses a financial hardship, please do not hesitate to contact our church office.

Our parish held a follow-up event, on Wednesday, March 30th to gather and discuss the film. It will be a most excellent element of our Lenten journey together.

+Fr. Andreas

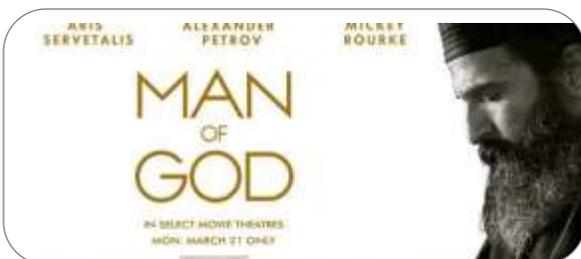
Parishioners on the bus headed to AMC Concord



Fr. Nektarios with parishioners at Stone Crest



Fr. Andreas and Presbyter Meredyth (seat 10) with parishioners at Cinnebarre at the Arboretum



MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

Saturday of Souls is a day set aside for the commemoration of the dead within the liturgical year of the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches. Saturday is a traditional day of prayer for the dead, because Christ lay dead in the Tomb on Saturday.

As we headed into the Great Fast (Lent), there were three consecutive Saturdays on which it has been customary to offer



Kollyva being prepared in our parish kitchen

memorial services:

— The commemoration of all those who **have reposed “with correct faith and with the hope of the resurrection of life eternal” (from the)**. This year: February 2

— The commemoration of holy ascetics, the Saturday before the Fast begins. This year: March 5

— The commemoration of a miracle wrought by St. Theodore the Recruit, concerning kollyva, on the first Saturday of the Fast. This year: March 1

While our parish was provided some kollyva (dish made of boiled wheatberries or rice and honey) on those Saturdays, the faithful were welcome to bring a small batch of their own to be blessed, which could be retrieved after the service.

May their memory be everlasting.+ ❖



HOUSE BLESSINGS

Each year we bless houses after Theophany, some new, some that have never been blessed and some that request an extra blessing. This is a wonderful time for clergy to connect even closer with our community.

As we sprinkle holy water from Theophany we pray: *O God, our Savior, who was pleased to enter under the roof of Zacchaeus, thereby bringing salvation to him and to all his household: Protect us who live in this house and who address our prayers and petitions to you. Keep us safe from all harm, bless our dwelling and preserve our lives. Amen.* ❖



Pictured here are a few of the many house blessings in 2022

COMMUNITY BRUNCH / BAKING PROSPHORA



Many thanks to the members of our Hospitality Ministry for February’s community brunch! Glory to God for what he has given us—the invitation to eternal life, and even earthly blessings and fellowship! What God is so great as ours?

Safwat, Vivian and Christie baking Prospora

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA BEGINS

“Experientially and theologically it is impossible for us to comprehend the spirit of Holy and Great Lent if we do not perceive it as a journey toward Pascha. The entire period of fasting preserves the ‘paschal perception’ of life. Gloomy asceticism is a perversion of the Christian experience; it is the ignorance of the imminent grace and future Kingdom; it is life ‘as if Christ never came,’ without expectation of the ‘resurrection of the dead’ and of ‘life in the age to come.’”

Glory to God! Forgiveness Vespers is always a much-needed moment in the life of the faithful. It seems that after this past year it was especially necessary. Many thanks to those who worked hard to provide for fellowship after Vespers, (see photo below) as an occasion to also raise funds for a future youth trip to the St. Photios Shrine. It was also a chance for our clergy to take some of our altar servers and a chanter out for a small treat before the fast, as a gesture of thanks for all their hard work to make our services beautiful.

Καλή Σαρακοστή σε όλους!
A blessed Lent to all! ❖



Pictured Left:

Our staff gathered together on Clean Monday, March 7th, a day of quiet contemplation, fasting, and putting things in order; then on Monday night for Great Compline and the first section of the Canon of St. Andrew.

VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

As each of the five Sundays of Lent has its own theme, the third Sunday focuses on the Cross of Christ. After the Matins service, the Cross is normally processed around the inside of the nave and then brought to rest in the middle of the Narthex for all to venerate. It encourages the faithful to continue on their Lenten Journey as the Cross is the sign of victory. ❖



“We venerate your Cross, O Master, and we glorify your holy Resurrection.”

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words:

"If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema."

Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. This is the holy deed that all we the Orthodox commemorate today, and we call this radiant and venerable day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, that is, the triumph of true doctrine over heresy. ❖

Copyright <http://www.goarch.org>



ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS

On the evening before the Feast of the Annunciation, Fr. Andreas and some of our parishioners joined our sister parish, Annunciation, in Winston-Salem for the festal Vespers. His Grace Sevastianos of Zela presided and the community offered a generous and gracious reception.



Frs. Andreas and Nektarios swapped places on the feast day. Fr. Nektarios went to join our brothers and sisters for the hierarchical liturgy in Winston-Salem while Fr. Andreas presided over the divine services here at St. Nektarios Church.



Here at home in addition to the Divine Liturgy, we offered an artoklasia, and a doxology in honor of Greek Independence Day, followed by a reception in honor of the feast. Glory to Jesus Christ who took on flesh for our salvation! ❖

YOUNG AT HEART

Smiles, songs, laughs, and eating. . . Young at Heart is back! The group celebrated Christmas this year with a Saturday luncheon. The committee dressed the tables in festive red and green. Augustine Kizis filled the room with Greek and Christmas music. Shrimp appetizers were passed by the servers. Danny Ziozios prepared a luncheon spread with a choice of salmon or stuffed chicken. Helen Bakos assumed her post to sell door prize tickets. The grand prize was a gourmet food basket. Roula Poulos dressed as Mrs. Santa Clause greeted each table. Greek carols were sung. A few daring people danced a Kalamatiano or two. Raffle prizes were awarded. Mike Neary and Steve Constantelos called out the winning numbers for lots of gift cards for dining out. Natalya and her mom won the grand gourmet basket.



As the end was approaching, everyone could enjoy ice cream sundaes and/or cake and/or cookies with their coffee.

Now it was time to see who would get to take home the live centerpiece plant on each table. Everyone paid close attention as Evelyn Klund read a passing game story. The prize ornament had to move to the left or right whenever the words were used in the story. There was lots of laughing as the ornament made its way left and right around the table to its final winner.



Mary Alexis is crowned our Valentine's Day Sweetheart at our February meeting.

On February 13th we met again for our Valentine's Day celebration. Mary Alexis was crowned our Sweetheart. We enjoyed stuffed bell peppers, mixed veggies, Greek potatoes and Galatabourico for dessert.

In March we had our Mardi Gras celebration in preparation for Lent. We enjoyed ravioli and veggies for dinner. We had a friendly game of bingo with prizes. A fun night was had by all.



Our March birthdays

PHILOPTOCHOS

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. Nektarios held its Membership Tea following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, February 20th.

May God continue to bless their work helping those in need.

1st Quarter LPS of St. Nektarios GOC Update:

The LPS Board kicked off the start of 2022 with a planning session to begin discussions to not only engage LPS members at large, but also to engage the St. Nektarios community through its many efforts supporting local, national and international charities. Our volunteerism takes on many forms, dosed with a lot of fun, to support those in need around us.

Beginning in January 2022, the LPS board met to discuss each board members duties, responsibilities and activities each member is mostly involved in during the year. This was to help us determine strategies of engagement to identify areas of volunteerism amongst our members and non-members who want to support our efforts. There are so many ways to plug in and support such as the baking and bake sale ministry, annual Christmas Brunch and Fashion show, Palm Sunday Luncheon, Bereavement Ministry, Blankets of Love, Holy Week Preparation, Communications and Promotion, Serving Charlotte - Local Philanthropies, just to name a few.

We started this initiative with our annual Membership Tea which was held on February 20th at noon on the SLC Porch. Well over 35 were in attendance and enjoyed lunch/refreshments provided by our LPS board members. We played fun games and had two prize winners, Fr. Nektarios won a potted plant and Kim Braswell won a beautiful arrangement created by Evelyn Klund. Our LPS board also provided refreshments for the entire community during the cake and coffee



Some of our ladies who attended the Membership Tea on February 20.



Our ladies preparing for the Membership Tea



Photo above: Our LPS brunch committee board members

Photos below: Tables of delicious food provided by our Ladies Philoptochos Board



Our prize winners, Fr. Nektarios Karantonis, left and Kim Sheree Braswell, right

hour after church as well. It was a wonderful time of fun and fellowship with a short meeting to discuss opportunities of involvement for this year amongst the members.

Also, this first quarter the LPS supported St. Basils, the Metropolis Clergy Education Fund with its second trays and in March passed a second tray to support the National Philoptochos Ukraine Relief Fund. It was a great opportunity for us to reach far beyond just our local area to support those in need.

On Tuesday, March 15th at 6:30 pm. we made sandwiches for the Feeding the Hungry Service Project. The sandwiches went to the Urban Ministry for St. Peters kitchen which is now called Roof Above. What an excellent way to support a local charity and have fun with your LPS members at the



Above clothing items donated by our members to support Baby Bundles NC - clothing newborns with love



Making snack bags with our Joy Hope kids for children in need

PHILOPTOCHOS

same time. Of course, non-members are welcome too!

The Atlanta Metropolis Philoptochos Virtual Spiritual Retreat was held on Saturday, March 19th. It was a blessing that our different chapters came together over Zoom.

We got our hands on some dough...on Thursday morning March 24th at 9:30 am to bake koulourakia! It was a lot of fun. Watch your missal and bulletin for future opportunities. This is a great way to learn how to make popular pastries!

Last year our parish, through our Philoptochos chapter, adopted Kuykendall Road, on which our campus is located. Twice a year, Philoptochos organizes a street cleanup. Thanks to those who took time out of their Saturday, March 26th to offer this act of stewardship—the little ones cleaned up our parking lot, while the adults walked the entire length of Kuykendall picking up trash. Stay tuned for the next round in a few months!❖



Making koulourakia



Above: Thank you notes received from Piney Grove Elementary students and administration for uniforms, books and media Center and classroom supplies



Above & right: Photos above from the Sandwich Making for Feed the Hungry Service project



Community Kuykendall Road Clean-up Crew



Thank you from Presbytera Maria

Dear Charlotte and Ladies of the St. Nektarios Philoptochos, During this Thanksgiving and Christmas season, I would like to **thank you for honoring Fr. Steve's retirement and your many generous gifts.** I am blessed and humbled to be a member of the Philoptochos. Over the years I have seen and continue to see the amazing work of our chapter and our Archdiocese.

This is the Philanthropic work that our Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the Philoptochos and all of us, the faithful. May God continue to bless all of you and our community.

Love in Christ,
Prebytera Maria

Financial Matters

Operating Fund

Stewardship Statistics As of April 8, 2022



Stewardship

Objectives: *Time to Re-Energize*

- Reach everyone in our Community with the message **God's mission requires our participation with Time, Talent, Treasure**
- Cultivate our Culture of Giving
- Budget goal \$861k
- Promote regular periodic giving over 12 Months

Strategies: *Time to Reconnect*

- Focus on Vision – God's commandments being accomplished in the life of His Church and its ministries.
- Implement the Plan to reconnect and re-energize our parishioners
- Expand Communication Channels
- Focus Communication by demographic groups
- Provide Stewardship & Financial Education

So You Know . . .

January to April 8, 2022 Operating Fund Income and Expenses

Stewardship Received	207,226
Other Income Received	\$ 42,383
Total Income	249,609
Total Expenses (paid & accrued)	\$ - 271,282
Net Income	\$ - 21,673
\$90,133 Average Monthly Expenses	

Regular Periodic Giving

Giving fuels our ministries.

Monthly offerings align with the ongoing funding of operations.

This ensures year-long adequate support of our ministries that provide worship, witness, fellowship and service.

Building for Generations

All In to Build the Ministry Center

PHASE ONE filled with blessings

- Your Generosity offered commitments out of love
- Paid off Church mortgage in Dec. 2021
- Over \$5.6 million in commitments received and 1/3 in cash coming in
- Over \$2.9 million in the Building fund
- Thank you to outpouring of time and talent from volunteers

PHASE TWO filled with anticipation and excitement.

Need additional \$3,558,000 commitments

Construction Documents & Permits Projected Timeline

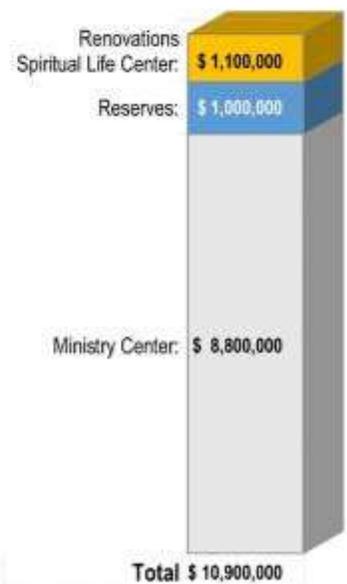
Mid-May	Design finalized
May 31	Packet submitted to the Metropolis for approval
July 30	Documents submitted to the Building Department
August 15	Secure Building Department review date for the documents to be reviewed by October 30
October 30	Request potential contractors submit bids by November 30
November 15	Receive permits from the Building Department; 150 days to start construction.

First Quarter 2023 Ground Breaking

Revenue Sources As of March 19, 2022



Project Costs As of May 2021



Youth Ministry

Thanks to all the kids and parents who came for our first reading session. It was only fitting to start with a story about our patron saint, Nektarios.

In our second session our little ones learned about the Annunciation, and our big ones learned about St. Gregory Palamas and hesychasm. (Photos at right)

Glory to God for these opportunities to be together and learn "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13)! ❖



Above: Joy Hope reading sessions



Above: Fr. Andreas & children on Sunday of Orthodoxy /Fr. Nektarios & Helen Giles with children on Joy Hope First Friday



Pictured above: Our Homeschoolers enjoying a day of learning outdoors



After this evening's service of the Presanctified Gifts we learned about St. Phanourios through Nicholas Vatsis' speech to our congregation for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Nicholas told us about how St. Phanourios, who himself was once lost to the memory of the Church, helps people recover lost things, people, and even their faith. Well done, Nicholas!



HOPE & JOY had a fun time with the Ladies of Philoptochos putting together snack kits for children in need. We also read the book 'Every Time I Do My Cross' by Presvytera Angela Alatzakis and talked about the many different times we make the sign of the cross.

Saint Pachomius the Great Martyr May 15



Saint Pachomius was born of pagan parents in the Upper Thebaid of Egypt. He was conscripted into the Roman army at an early age. While quartered with the other soldiers in the prison in Thebes, Pachomius was astonished at the kindness shown them by the local Christians, who relieved their distress by bringing them food and drink. Upon inquiring who they were, he believed in Christ and vowed that once delivered from the army, he would serve Him all the days of his life. Released from military service, about the year 313, he was baptized, and became a disciple of the hermit Palamon, under whose exacting guidance he increased in virtue and grace, and reached such a height of holiness that "because of the purity of his heart," says his biographer, "he was, as it were, seeing the invisible God as in a mirror." His renown spread far, and so many came to him to be his disciples that he founded nine monasteries in all, filled with many thousands of monks, to whom he gave a rule of life, which became the pattern for all communal monasticism after him. While Saint Anthony the Great is the father of hermits, Saint Pachomius is the founder of the cenobitic life in Egypt: because Pachomius had founded a way of monasticism accessible to so many, Anthony said that he "walks the way of the Apostles." Saint Pachomius fell asleep in the Lord before his contemporaries Anthony and Athanasius the Great, in the year 346. His name in Coptic, Pachom, means "eagle."

Apolitykion of Pachomius the Great

Plagal of the First Tone

Thou didst prove a chief pastor of the Chief Shepherd, Christ, guiding the flocks of monastics unto the heavenly fold, whence thou learnedest of the habit and the way of life that doth befit ascetic ranks; having taught this to thy monks, thou now dancest and rejoicest with them in heavenly dwellings, O great Pachomius, our Father and guide.

<http://www.goarch.org>

"Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA, used by permission. All rights reserved."

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

Clergy

Father Andreas Houpos, Proistamenos
Mobile: 980-333-9563
Email: fr.andreas@stnektarios.org
Father Nektarios Karantonis, Ephemerios
Mobile: 980-829-5215
Email: frkarantonis@stnektarios.org
Father Steve Dalber, Pastor Emeritus
Mobile: 704-451-6524
Email: frdalber@stnektarios.org
Father Paul Tsahakis, Presbyter
Mobile: (704) 608-1112
Email: frtsahakis@stnektarios.org

Parish Staff

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
Sexton - Jim Keown
Music Directors - Jeff Clewell,
Dina Marinakos-Oara

2022 Parish Council

President: Despina Gallis
Vice President: Mike Burgan
Treasurer: Elissa Bahanovich
Assist. Treasurer: Chris Mortis
Secretary: George Harris
Assist. Secretary: Joanne Kiser
Members: George Bacogeorge, Frank Bartis,
Dennis Kokenes, Mark Malatras, Aka Vashakidze

Philoptochos Board

President: Charlotte Nickolopoulos
1st Vice President: Madalina Lowen
2nd Vice President: Deidre Lepkowski
Recording Secretary: Sharon Koutroumpis
Corr. Secretary: Michaelina Franks
Treasurer: Evelyn Klund

Ass't. Treasurer: Dee Hatjioannou

Advisor: Niki Kleto

Members: Helen Bakos, Katherine Cestrone,
Phyllis Gianakopoulos, Renee Keretses and
Christine Malatras

(Email: philoptochos@stnektarios.org)

SUNDAYS AT SAINT NEKTARIOS

Worship

Matins 8:00 a.m. and
Divine Liturgy 9:15 a.m.
Fellowship Coffee:
Following Divine Liturgy

Prosphora

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

Coffee Hour

Please contact the church office if you
would like to host or co-host a Coffee
Hour on 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 financial 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: February 25, 2022
Published: March 22, 2022