



from Fr. Nicholas

Showing Up

ast year football fans watched an exciting Super Bowl, with the Kansas City Chiefs defeating the Philadelphia Eagles after trailing by ten points at halftime.

"Everybody just calm down and do your jobs. Don't worry about anything else. Just do your job and it will all work out," Coach Andy Reid encouraged at half time.

He constantly reminded the players to stick to the game plan. They did their jobs and stunned the Philadelphia Eagles with a thrilling 38-35 comeback win!

Some of us feel that being transformed and growing in the likeness of Christ takes extraordinary effort. Simply doing our jobs and showing up is the first step.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me" the Prophet Jeremiah said, "when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you" (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

The prophet tried to warn the people about what was coming. But they would not change their self-centered ways. God's chosen people had no need for God



Chair Val Dranias welcomes Basile to Holy Apostles

The Gift of Laughter

Saturday, February 24 was a night of fun and wonder. Over 200 people entered a totally transformed multipurpose room to attend the *Basile the Comedian* comedy show and to Greek dancing during the after party.

It was a laugh-filled evening of fun. **The fundraiser** brought in \$12,575 for our parish.

Val Dranias and her committee of Parish Council ladies: Emilia Linardakis, Patty Pappas, Sandy Pihos

and Lena Theotikos put together a wonderful event.

They would like to thank their donors for their generous donations and support and the audience for attending.



(continued, pg. 3)

The Veneration of the Holy Cross

Introduction

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

Historical Background

The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely parallel to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (September 14) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

As the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam's gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal.

Orthodox Christian Commemoration of the Sunday of the Holy Cross

The Sunday of the Holy Cross is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening. The

hymns of the Triodion for this day are added to the usual prayers and hymns of the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ.

At the conclusion of the Matins (the traditional practice in association with a vigil) or of the Divine Liturgy, a special service is held. The Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by basil or daffodils and is taken in solemn procession through the church to the chanting of the Thrice Holy Hymn.

The tray is placed on a table before the people, and the hymn of the Feast of the Cross is chanted. As the priest venerates the Cross, the priest then the people chant, "We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and Your holy Resurrection we glorify." At the conclusion of the service, the people come and venerate the cross and receive the flowers or basil from the priest.

Taken from goarch.org





PROFESSIONAL CLOTHING DRIVE

May 11 - 26 | Multi-Purpose Room

hiloptochos will be **collecting new or gently used clothing May** 11-26 for Poised For Success. Poised For Success® is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving the Chicagoland area. Their mission is to provide, at no charge, beautiful interview and business appropriate clothing to women who are on assistance and in the job market.

POISED FOR
SUCCESS®
A path toward self-sufficiency

In addition to providing beautiful clothing, their volunteers assist cli-

ents in building self-esteem and some soft interview skills, as well as referrals to other local service organizations providing job-skills training and job placement.

They are currently **looking for/accepting Spring/Summer clothing ONLY (Linen, light fabrics, blazers, etc).** All items must be clean and in like new condition. There will be a rack set up in the multipurpose room for all donations. Thank you for your support of this wonderful charity.

Showing Up (continued)

in their lives and they worshipped everything but God. These people had no time for God.

Our Lord promises us a future and hope. His peace is available to all of us. But he wants us to do something. We cannot sit back, do nothing and wait for Him to work in our lives.

Active verbs like call, go, pray, seek, search and find are utilized by Jeremiah. Do these things wholeheartedly!

Showing up makes us available to God. Being available, active listening, praying, searching, and seeking the Lord will bring us closer to Him. Actively showing up is essential!

"Desire and effort must come from you. God will provide the power and result," St. Paisios shared. Simply show up even if you don't feel like it. During this Lenten period, we have many more opportunities to show up.

Lenten services are offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. A quiet sadness permeates the Services. They are lengthier and, with very little movement, may even feel monotonous.

Beautiful, subtle readings and chants alternate yet nothing seems to happen. But there is much contemplation and action inside us.

Slowly we begin to understand and feel the sadness is bright. A mysterious action takes place inside us. We arrive at the place where noises, running around and craziness of life have no power over us. Everything that seemed so important and dominated our minds disappears.

We start to feel liberated and light. A deep happiness filled with light, peace and joy fills us. We deeply experience God's presence. These beautiful services help us transition from our normal to a quieter state of soul and mind.

When we attend church services and make ourselves available to God, He works and transforms us. The Lord can bring us a peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) but we have to show up.

"Do not fight to expel the darkness from the chamber of your soul," St. Porphyrios encourages, "open a tiny aperture for Light to enter and darkness will disappear."

With love in Christ,

+Fr. Nicholas



THE HOLY APOSTLES CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

TUESDAY, APRIL 9
1:00 PM
PHILOPTOCHOS ROOM

Everyone Invited! Join Us for Discussion and Coffee

Linda Kunicki, CMP will be our discussion leader.

Linda has worked for Bright-Star Care of Chicago and La Grange for over 11 years and other senior based activities for over 20 years. She is President of the Case Management Society of America – Chicago Chapter. Linda brings many years of expertise in various services that can assist people of all ages. She will talk about some caregiver tips for those dealing with dementia or Alzheimner's.

Please contact Kathy Steffenson at gksteff@gmail.com or Val Dranias at valdranias@aol.com with any questions. We hope that you will join us!

Easter Egg Wrapping



Multi-Purpose Room

Drop-Off: By Holy Thursday (May 2)

Wrapping: Holy Friday Morning (following Royal Hours)

Philoptochos is once again asking parishioners to donate red eggs so that they may be wrapped in tulle for distribution at our Easter services.

Please bring boiled, unrefrigerated red eggs to the multi-purpose room by Holy Thursday (May 2). The eggs will be wrapped in tulle after the Royal Hours service on Holy Friday morning. All parishioners are welcome to help wrap.

Onion Skin Dye Recipe

Ingredients:

5 cups water Skins from 12 yellow onions 2 tablespoons white vinegar 12 large eggs olive oil

Directions:

Combine water, onion skins and vinegar in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover pot and simmer for 30 minutes. Make sure skins are submerged. Remove from heat and cool dye to room temperature, at least 30 minutes. Remove skins from dye and discard. Place eggs in the dye and bring to a boil; cook for 15 minutes. Remove pot from heat and leave eggs in the dye until a deep red color is reached (about 30 minutes more). Transfer eggs to a wire rack to cool. Rub oilve oil onto each egg to make them shiny. Store in refrigerator.

Decorated Easter Candles



Sales

After Liturgy in Multi-Purpose Room April 7, 14, 21 and 28

After Holy Unction Services, Holy Wednesday, May 1

Decorated Easter candles will be available to purchase after Sunday Liturgies on April 7, 14, 21 and 28 and following Holy Unction services on Holy Wednesday, May 1.

The candles are \$15 each and make beautiful gifts for godchildren.

If you would like to decorate or sell candles, please contact as Angela Karras Neboyskey at arkarras@gmail.com or 773.719.2619.



Looking for Donations

It is with great anticipation that the Philoptochos fashion show committee begins its planning for the Luncheon Fashion Show, An Enchanted Afternoon, to be held on Saturday, October 19, 2024.

The raffle and auction committee invites all to donate a prize or monetary donation to contribute to the awe-inspiring raffle and auction, which generates funds for the worthy beneficiaries.

This year's beneficiaries are Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley and CrossRoad Institute.

Prizes most coveted over the years are handbags, jewelry, and electronics. To make a contribution, please contact Val Dranias at valdranias@aol.com, Emily Rehn at platovalentine@hotmail.com, or Cynthia Stathopoulos at cstath11@comcast.net.

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

APRIL 2024

Sim	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Œ	Sat
	t t	4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Mtg 7:00 pm Neighborhood Bible Study - Elmhurst 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting	four / Liturgy Sanctified by GOYA	erhood - bostle Bible School	renture arsal utations bkos mmuning ts	6 4:00 pm Open Confession 5:00 pm Vespers
7 Celebration of Books Philoptochos Easter Bake Sale Ordering & Candle Sale Sunday of the Holy Cross 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour 11:30 am GOYA Board Mtg 12:00 pm GOYA Luminaria Sale 6:00 pm Solemn Vespers @ St. Athanasios/Aurora 8:00 pm Presentation	8 7:00 pm Great Compline	10:00 am Clergy Syndesmos Meeting 1:00 pm Caregivers Support Meeting 4:30 pm Greek School	5:30 pm 9th Hour / Fre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Pre-Sanctified Dinner Hosted by Adult Bible Study	11 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:30 pm ECM Meeting	7:00 pm Salutations to The Theotokos 8:00 pm Communing With the Saints 8:15 pm Choir Rehearsal	13 9:00 am Feed My Starving Children 4:00 pm Open Confession 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Vesper Pot Luck Dinner
Bake Sale Bake Sale ale Ilimacus y naria Sale	15 7:00 pm Great Compline 8:00 pm Lenten Service Project	16 4:30 pm Greek School	5:30 pm 9th Hour / Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Pre-Sanctified Dinner Hosted by Jr. GOYA/JOY	6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 1:00 pm Adult Bible Sdy 4:30 pm Greek School 7:30 pm Parish Council Mtg	4:30 pm Adventure Theater Rehearsal 7:00 pm Akathist to The Theotokos 8:15 pm Choir Rehearsal	20 4:00 pm Open Confession 5:00 pm Vespers
andle ypt Sale i in		4:30 pm Greek School 6:00 pm Jr. GOYA/ GOYA Palm Folding	5:30 pm 9th Hour / Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Pre-Sanctified Dinner Hosted by Philoptochos	10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm Greek School Staff Meeting	26 5:30 pm 9th Hour / 6 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am Spring Planting 11:00 am Jr. GOYA Palm Folding & Lunch 11:00 am Philoptochos Easter Drive-by Bake Sale 4:00 pm Open Confession 5:00 pm Vespers
28 Palm Sunday Philoptochos Easter Candle Sale 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour 7:00 pm Bridegroom Service	29 Holy Monday 9:00 am Pre- Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Bridegroom Service	30 Holy Tuesday 9:00 am Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm Bridegroom Service w/ Metropolitan Nathanael 8:15 pm Choir Rehearsal				



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FEBRUARY 2024 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: VAL DRANIAS

Norm Pomrening called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm. Father Dokos led the opening prayer. Norm Pomrening recited the Mission Statement: Val Dranias presented the amended minutes of the January 18 minutes—the minutes were amended to read: The Parish Council removed the clergy from discussions of employee salaries. This is the response of the Metropolis to their being asked to leave. Unanimously approved.

Val Dranias presented the correspondence - a note from Peter and Maria Lagios wishing us well with Feed6, thank you from the St. lakovos Retreat Center for our \$5000 donation, a statement of contribution from The Outreach Program (Feed6) for our contribution of \$17,687, thank you from the OCCA for donations made at the Sanctity of Life service.

Ecclesiastical Report: Father George showed a video presentation by Father Theodore Dorrance on Change. Pt. 1 Being true to who we are as Orthodox Christians. Constant Repentance – as a parish and personally. The PC needs to lead by example. We need to move from an inward looking community to a missional parish. There should be a shift in priorities. Parish leaders both PC and Ministry, should attend the March 2 family retreat to learn more about this.

Ministries

Building & Grounds: Chris Pepke presented the Landscape Bids Review/Approval - we have received 3 bids which are all over budget. They all mentioned that this was the best church landscape design that they've ever seen. Budget was \$60,000 including the landscape design (the landscape alone is coming in at \$60,000). Some can be phased in. Looking at \$100,000 to \$120,000 without donations. Utilities – 1. Gas Billing Update - we have a flat rate contract with Hudson Energy that is costing us more than if we just went with Nicor. 2. Electric Billing Update – Similar situation to the gas. It's being investigated, 3. Dumpster Contract-Waste Management is up 20%. Lakeshore Recycling would save us \$3000 per year. Close to pulling the trigger on this contract. IV">IV" in Classrooms - Zoe wants to install 2 TV's in the classrooms and wants to split the cost of the installation since both Greek School and Sunday School will use them. Zoe got both TV's through a grant. Security Wiring/Installation of Intercom System – completed. Capital Projects on Pause Due to Metro Center RFP. Update of Maintenance Items Completed – all in compliance. To install a video camera for all 3 offices.

Finance: Steve Milak reported that there is a Total of \$1,284,000 in the Operating and Capital Accounts combined. We are \$100,000 to the positive at this time. There was a 2% increase due to Feed6 and Stewardship is up.

Technology: Steve Milak reported that the Wi-Fi Install in the 3 offices is completed and some other maintenance has been done. Steve is working on a \$10,000 grant and also working with the Hellenic Foundation on a grant. Lou needs some improvement in his office like another monitor, etc. Steve Milak made a motion to spend up to \$600 to improve Lou's workspace, Sandy Pihos seconded. Unanimously approved.

Stewardship & Welcoming: Sandy Pihos stated that as of January 31, 2024 our pledges are up. Pledges collected up, median pledge is \$800 and our average pledge is \$1428. Wednesday, February 28 – Lenten Potluck Dinner and recipe exchange.

March 30 is our first 5th Saturday Serve of the year. Katy is waiting for a response from the York Resource Center as to their needs. Sometime over Lent there will be a joint service project with Philoptochos and Missions to benefit BEDS PLUS in La Grange.

The Saturday Vesper potlucks continue to draw about 20 people. There were approximately 70 people in attendance at Trivia Night and we raised \$800 for the Westchester Food Pantry.

Ushering: George Chechopoulos – looking to assign a PC member to the large candle sales during Holy Week.

Greek School: Lena Theotikos stated that it's time to name our Greek School.

Missions: 1. Father Nicholas shared a book about the Divine Liturgy which has been translated into Korean with our donations. There is an acknowledgement to Holy Apostles on the title page. 2. Hoppe & Brandow Donations – Peter Bell moved and Steve Milak seconded, to renew the annual support for OCMC missionaries Nathan and Gabriel Hoppe at

\$1000/month and for OCMC missionary Jesse Brandow at \$500/month, which was accounted for in the 2024 budget passed by the people at the Parish Assembly in October of 2023. Unanimously approved. 3.Mac Luncheon Beneficiary – Peter Bell moved and Emilia Linardakis seconded, that the proceeds of the Macaronatha luncheon go to the Albanian Orthodox Church as directed by the Hoppes. Unanimously approved.

Young Adults: Chris Pepke informed us that YAL and Telos will be hosting a coffee hour. There will be a YAL event with Sts. Peter and Paul; looking to hold one event a month.

Old Business:

Foundation Update: Patty Pappas: They have been negotiating with the general counsel of the GOA. They are down to 1 or 2 points. Compromise reached that the Foundation can accept donations of real estate but cannot have proceeds from the sale of parish owned real estate. GOA attorney compromise – 2 independent directors, 4 HA directors, 3 ex officio members (priest, PC president, PC treasurer) GOA wants the ex-officio members to vote. We see a conflict of interest in this. Final Big Issue – removal of a board of director member. GOA wants the Metropolitan to remove a director at will. We want a more democratic way of removing a director.

Comedian Update: Val Dranias stated that tickets are selling. Hoping to have over 200 in attendance. Committees ready for baking and set up. Hope to clear between \$8000 to \$10,000 for the church.

Cemetery Plot Update: Patty Pappas - 44 plots (over half) have been swapped. Doing it legally through quick claim deeds. Looking to create a pamphlet for marketing and a set of Internal Rules.

Mac Luncheon Update: Sandy Pihos and Emilia Linardakis chairing. Nick Kirkeles will be out of town. Norm asked Mark Vourlos to head the kitchen. It will have a St. Patrick's Day theme. PC members – all hands on deck for set up and for serving, etc the day of. There are 3 ways to make reservations – online, after church on Sundays and calling Sandy.

Metropolis Center Update: Norm Pomrening & Chris Pepke

Chris and Norm presented 2 options for the possibility of the Metropolis Center here at Holy Apostles. Discussion ensued. Should we move forward with the RFP? The Metropolis has \$3.2 million to contribute but the costs would be a minimum of \$10 million. Questions about the cost plus the loss of parking on our site. Peter Bell moved and Patty Pappas seconded to continue to explore this proposal and submit to the Metropolis. Yes-4 No-5 Motion failed.

Holy Apostles Anniversary Celebration: Norm Pomrening – looking to up to 500 in attendance. Month it should occur? Looking at a cost neutral luncheon to allow more parishioners to attend.

Parishioner Directory: Norm Pomrening still exploring the possibility.

New Business:

YAL Conference Donation: Chris Pepke moved and Lena Theotikos seconded to donate \$1000 to YAL for the purchase of non-alcoholic beverages for the Conference. Unanimously approved.

Parish Assembly Prep: Norm Pomrening stated the Parish Assembly will be Sunday, April 14. Info will be sent out early to shorten the length of the meeting.

Digital Candle Payment: Chris Pepke: George Chechopoulos will meet with Presvytera Michelle to learn how to do it. PC members will then be trained on how to use it.

Communications: Sandy Pihos brought forth concerns about our internal communications. Who is to follow through on decisions made by the PC and how are they to be notified? It is a problem. We also need the emergency phone number added to the voicemail that we discussed months ago. Also, Alexa needs a phone line where messages can be left for her. Why hasn't a Zoom account been purchased for the church? That was also voted on months ago.

Donation to Father Steve Bithos' family: Father Nicholas moved to donate \$1000 to Presvytera Pearl Ann Bithos in memory of Father Steve. Emilia Linarakis seconded. Unanimously approved.

Key Dates: Basile Comedy – 2/24; Parish Retreat – 3/2; Greek School Dinner Dance – 3/16; Mac Luncheon – 3/17; Next Meeting: 3/21; Ministry Leaders Retreat – 4/6; Parish Assembly – 4/14; HA Oratorical Festival – 4/14; Metropolis Oratorical Festival at HA – 5/11.

Closing Prayer: Father Georgiou. Adjourn: Norm Pomrening at 10:10 pm

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 2501 S. Wolf Road Westchester, IL 60154 (708) 562-2744

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Sacraments listed are those known at time of publication

MEMORIALS

Benita Kosiara **Gus Lekatsos** Irene Lekatsos **Thomas Marlas**

John Mathews Francine Poulos

Sotirios (Sam) Magdalinos

Vasiliki Ntovas **Poulos Family Demetrios Siasios** Vanias Family

FUNERALS

James Siasios Constance Skalkos Frances Katsuleas **Catherine Patsavas** Francine Poulos

BAPTISMS

Anisa, Zheni, Sophia and Giovanni Tzeka Callum, son of Connor and Gia Peckhart Sponsor: Isabella Kirsch

Thalia, daughter of John & Maria Klovens Sponsors: Morgan Klovens & Georgianne Papacostas

BIRTHDAYS

Violet Kantas Dean Athas Francesca Halikias Magdalene Halikias Isabella Triantafel Mrs. Connie Koustenis Eliana Tsantilis **Constantine Verros** Timothy Yonke **Ernest Nassos** James Panton George Kafkes Mr. David Schneider **Christopher Pepke** Zoe Lozano Constantine Slone Diana Anos Desi Kastran Stephanie Leider Renie Wonais

Justin Glavanovits Blanche Friar **Ioannis Georgopoulos** Lydia Howard Leia Pappas Sophia Simios John Antonelli James Bobis Ariana Ebbole **Nicole Katzioris** Nicholas Maragos James Errera Olympia Papadourakis Anastasia Vlagos **Anastasios Mouroukas** Luca Pelafas Anastasia Polihronidis Madeline O'Toole Luke Pavlidis **Bruce Peterson**

Alexandra Pomrening Georgia Chulos Nikolas Theotikos Joanne Volakakis Steven Savas **Jackson Theodoropoulos** Costa Gatsacos Spero Kouchis Patty McKay Chrissa Minginas Linda Yonke Maria Archos Alaina Kafkes Anna Kinnas Xristina Rahn James Clohessy Penelope Egerter Louis Halkias George Nicholaou

Audrey Schref

Leah Brinkmeyer **George Theotikos Christos Angelos** Maria Patt **Emmeline Clark** Johnny Pierce Katherine Brinkmeyer Alexandra Zakos Mario Lozano John Schafer Arianna Cussick William Heckman Tessa Tondelli Michael Boemo Kara Dillon Katherine Georginis **Grace Govostis**

James Koustenis

Alyssa Petropoulos

Peter Kyriazis

James Demopoulos Kailyn Zurales Giavanna Delabadia Nicholas Magas **Ann Stamatopoulos**