



The Herald

Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangels • 1527 Bedford St., Stamford, CT 06905 **December 2013**

Lucky 13

As we approach the end of 2013, it may be worthwhile for us to review the rather extraordinary year our parish has been through. Even if our society considers 13 a bad omen, I have to wonder whether this same number reflects many positive developments of our life together in Christ. Consider a brief listing of what happened (in no particular order of importance):

- We lost Rina Gross in March, our dedicated and gifted Choir Director of more than 40 years; together with the loss of Estelle Moulketis the year before, our Choir felt orphaned and not at all sure of how to continue. Nadine Vasil took leadership and, with practice, encouragement, and experience, the Choir has not only survived, but added new members and found new life;
- Our Master Planning Committee, chaired by Jason Konidaris, continued its quiet work to produce a Statement of Need that more than 150 people critiqued through Jerry Minetos, Archdiocesan Development Officer; the Town Hall Meeting in late October showed that our parish does indeed want to move forward with a comprehensive plan for renovation of buildings and grounds, staff and ministry;
- Foundation Fund Board, chaired by Elian Kulukundis, continued offering extraordinary financial support so that we could replace our 1958 boiler, clean the vents, install new A/C units, and make many other long-overdue refurbishments to our entire parish complex (like our new security alarm system);
- Hundreds of audio recorded Bible Studies and sermons were digitally re-mastered for better quality so that they can be publicly available through our parish web site;
- This very Herald took on a new, improved look with formatting, integrated photos, and multiple columns, courtesy of a professional company offering their services at a vastly reduced rate;
- We finalized and approved the first ever edition of parish By-Laws that regularizes our administrative procedures (such as at Parish Council Elections) and sets term limits to Parish Council members;
- 18 members made a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Constantinople, creating not only an opportunity for an unforgettable trip of faith, but a precious chance to deepen Christian community;
- We continued to develop the Greek Festival to allow greater fellowship and collaboration by members of our parish, while offering greater Stamford a safe, fun-filled and family oriented affair;
- Dina Haralambides was first ever young person to compete in St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival;
- We said good-bye to Agathi Makrides, who retired after more than 25 years as Greek School Supervisor, and hello to Kiki Bellos who succeeded beautifully to maintain continuity and offer new growth;
- More children than ever attended Camp St. Paul, the District Summer Camp program in Litchfield;
- We welcomed recent immigrants from Albania, Petrit and Adrianna Cocoli, to our staff to help as sexton and cleaning lady, respectively.
- Both Seniors & Philoptochos elected new leadership who have provided a smooth transition to continue these core ministries of fellowship as well as service to the poor, sick and needy;
- Driven by parental interest, we are planning our first Children's Christmas Program in many years.
- We held our first Parish Retreat on Sat, Nov 16, with Dr. Kyriacos Markides delivering two excellent presentations on his faith journey as an educated adult, best-selling writings, and his personal experiences with various holy persons and at holy places.

Mind you, I could go on, and you may notice something I've missed. Far from being exhaustive, I only have space to be representative. Following the Great American feast of Thanksgiving, I can only express my gratitude to all that God has done is our midst this year! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

— Fr. Harry

PASTORAL Q & A

Question: What is the best way to get ready for Christmas? This is such a busy time of year, with so much to do in addition to the usual stresses and strains of daily life.

Answer: This is precisely why the wisdom of the Church offers us a tried and true way of preparation that can counter the often overwhelming pressures of society. As Christians, we can choose deliberately to increase our involvement in:

Prayer – Prayer is not just “talking to God”; it is much more listening to God through worship services, education (like Bible Study), prayer at home and spiritual reading. Nothing can prevent us from identifying a brief period every day to turn off the television, cell phones, and computers, and stand or sit comfortably and quietly in the presence of Christ (facing an icon is a good focal point). Once restful, we can offer the Lord’s Prayer, use a Prayer book, and open a Bible to slowly and prayerfully read a Psalm and then passage from the New Testament. In between, we can take time to reflect on what God is saying through our reading about who he is, who we are, and what he wants from us. We can offer prayer for particular needs of loved ones, friends, our parish and world. Finally we can decide how to live what we hear from God in practical ways. Even during a busy day, we can offer the Jesus Prayer whenever we have a moment of recollection – “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.” Prayer is really the way we respond in faithful obedience to allow God to change us through Christ who loves us.

Fasting – God’s grace is more abundantly released when we choose to curb our habitual intake and activity by reducing our snacking, limiting our portions at meals, and simplifying our diet. The traditional fast is to abstain from meat and dairy

through December 11; then, from December 12, we fast just like Great Lent – no meat, fish, dairy, or alcoholic beverages. Even when invited to a party or a meal, we can, without drawing attention to ourselves, limit the amount we eat and drink. Everyone can fast spiritually by checking our desire to gossip about others, limiting our time on Facebook, and working at just listening and being present to each other. We can make the decision not to work overtime, reduce our time watching television, and curb dining out and movie going. Fasting is really about saying “No” to all that the world offers, in order to say “Yes” more deeply to the Lord.

Almsgiving – How can we offer ourselves to the homeless, hungry, poor, sick, disabled, elderly, lonely, and imprisoned? Through deeper prayer and genuine fasting, as we expand our inner life we also discover how our time and energy can be freed up in new ways to serve those in need. We can contact the office to get the names of shut-ins who would welcome a card, prayer or visit. We can bring non-perishable foodstuffs every Sunday for the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County. We can volunteer at a hospital or nursing home. We can take our children or grandchildren to the Food Bank or Inspirica to join in helping. We can make an offering through the IOCC to support those suffering major catastrophes in Syria or the Philippines. Almsgiving is really about works of mercy to those in need, in which we meet Christ in the person of the suffering, poor and sick: we receive as much from them as we give to them.

Through a deliberate and wise “change up” of our daily routines, we will not only be surprised how Christ can work through us, we will be beautifully prepared inwardly and as families to celebrate Christmas in the right spirit!



Worship Schedule for Christmas



Tuesday, December 24: Royal Hours – 9:00 am
Tuesday, December 24: Vespertal Liturgy – 5:00 pm
Christmas Carols – about 6:45 pm
Wednesday, December 25: Orthros – 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 am

Treasurer

The accountants are still preparing the September financials. Contact: George Khouri.

Stewardship

At Thanksgiving we reflect on all the gifts we have received during the year. There are many in the Church who have given of their time and talents. Without their help the Church wouldn't function as it does. We should be grateful for their gifts and for everything we have received throughout the year. Year to date we have received 252 pledge cards with a total amount of \$297,700 pledged for 2013. The new Stewardship campaign for 2014 has begun: a packet was mailed to everyone last week containing a cover letter, color pamphlet, brief overview, and commitment card. Everyone is asked to read the material, pray, reflect, complete the card and return it beginning Sunday, December 8, when we will host a complimentary Community Pancake Breakfast to celebrate Stewardship. Chef Phil Costas will again take charge of the cooking. Please join us! Contact: George Khouri

Master Planning

Our committee met to redefine and prioritize the work we would look to pursue as part of a project of renewal. Our available space and square footage for each ministry is now being considered. Defining square footage and use will help us to sensibly reach cost estimates for proposed projects. In the coming weeks, we will prepare the business case for each project - the theological and secular justification for each effort and the cost of pursuing it. We will present the overall business case to the Parish Council before bringing it to a future General Assembly for a vote. That vote should take place during the first quarter of 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Konidaris

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Currently, the Buildings and Grounds Committee is working on several large projects. We are finalizing bids for the SAC roof repair, which we hope to have in place and Parish Council-approved this month. We are also planning on having a final mock-up for the replacement windows for the Church. Once we have this, the Parish Council will approve and we will start the replacement project. This past month, the repair work for the walkway entering the hall was completed. This will insure that we have a safe pathway for the coming winter season. We have also replaced most of the light bulbs in the Church Hall with energy efficient bulbs. And we continue to look at ways to upgrade the fixtures in a cost-effective manner. As previously mentioned in the November update, we are working on fixing the safety lighting in the SAC. This should be all completed and up to code this month. Contact: Gregg Demetros

Parish Council Elections

Elections are Sun, Dec. 8, for about 1½ hours following the Liturgy (from 11:45 am – 1:15 pm). Absentee ballots must be returned by Friday, Dec. 6, to be valid. Eligible Voters: all baptized or chrismated members of the Orthodox Church who are 18 years or older, worship regularly, are currently stewards in good standing (if you have not yet made a financial offering this year, you may do so on Election Day), and have been members in our parish at least since Sept 8 of this year. We will elect 4 of the following 5 candidates: George Khouri, Christopher P. Nanos, Theofilos Nikolis, George Papis, and Aggie Sotire. Contact: the Board of Elections - Louie Blanco, George Perkins or Penny Nanos.

Additional 2013 Stewards

Dr & Mrs Arthur Adams

Louis Blanco

Mrs Mary Blanco

Mrs Penelope Caruso

Mr & Mrs Constantine Chalikis

Mr & Mrs George Gentekos

Mr & Mrs Demetrios Gianakopoulos

Mr & Mrs George Iatrou

Mr & Mrs Robert Kavanaugh

Mr & Mrs Nonda Katopodis

Niko Konidaris

Mr & Mrs Elias Lolis

Mr & Mrs Ken Shepard

Mr & Mrs John Young

Mr & Mrs Emmanuel Ziboulis

MINISTRIES

Bible Study

Bible Study will resume on Monday Dec. 9, with Compline at 7:15 pm and Bible Study at 7:30 pm. Readings are:

Dec. 9 – Summary of Genesis 1-11: the Origins of Creation & Humanity

Dec. 16 – Genesis 12-13: Abraham, Father of Believers

Then, we will break for Christmas through Theophany and resume sometime in January.
Contact: Fr. Harry

Seniors

At the Nov 11 luncheon, Dr. Marvin Schweitzer spoke on the importance of Naturopathic Medicine and how it was derived from ancient Greek medical men, especially Hippocrates. Dr. Schweitzer emphasized how food nutrient density (vegetables, fruit, beans, fish, whole grains, wild meat and fowl and a minimum of red meats), reducing stress, exercising, and proper medical prescription would keep one healthy. On Nov 13, we enjoyed the delightful and funny musical “Fiddler on the Roof” at the Stamford Kveskin Theater, followed by a delicious dinner at the Royal Green Restaurant at a cost of only \$52/person for both the play and dinner. Our Christmas Party - hors d’oeuvres, wine, soft drinks, special lunch, and a lot of goodies, will take place on Wed, Dec 11 and will feature the delightful and humorous entertainer, John Redgrave. There is no fee charged for the Christmas Party and all Seniors are invited and urged to attend. Contact: George Hasapis at 203-966-2534 or georgehasapis@icloud.com

Ladies Philoptochos Society

Philoptochos also hosted the Archangels Feast Day reception on Nov. 7. Thanks to Debbie and Penny Nanos for chairing this wonderful event and to Penny Spanos and Bessie Zavas for baking and contributing all the pastries and to everyone else who helped. The annual Turkey Bingo fundraiser for charity held on Nov. 23 was a huge success: the Church Hall was filled with parishioners of all ages! Thank you to all who joined us and supported this event. \$6,924 in profits will be shared among five charities – Homes

for the Troops, Family ReEntry, Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County, Alzheimer’s Association, and Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care of Fairfield County. Special thanks to Lara Paschalides and Maryanne Kardaris who were co-chairs. On Dec. 3, members attended the annual Christmas brunch in the Church Hall. Mollie Sotire was chairperson. Donation checks were presented to representatives of the five Bingo charities at this event. The Vasilopita and Kourambiedes Sale will take place from 9AM to 6PM on Dec 21 and after church on Dec. 22, with some selected times during the week of Dec 22 to be announced. Order forms will be available on the Philoptochos bulletin board and in the Church Hall. **Only breads that are prepaid will be freely available in church.** Orders will only be accepted by form or by calling Maryanne Kardaris at 203-322-6285. Contact: Marion Vanson

Food Drive

Philoptochos encourages everyone to bring non-perishable food every Sunday to one of 4 collections bins in the narthex, entry from back parking lot, and outside the offices – especially peanut butter & jelly; canned meats, vegetables & beans; condensed milk; cereal; rice & pasta. All proceeds go to the Lower Fairfield County Food Bank here in Stamford for distribution. Contact: Penny or Debbie Nanos.

Christmas Breads & Kourambiedes Sale

Ladies Philoptochos Society

December 21-22

Order Forms on Philoptochos Bulletin Board

Contact: Maryanne Kardaris

203- 322 6285 or mkardaris@aol.com

Church School

Church School children in Pre-K through Grade 6 will sing Christmas Carols with Emily Skoutelas in the Christmas Program on December 22nd. It will be a beautiful program with all Archangels Youth ministries participating. Together, we will begin the joyous celebration of Christmas! **We will hold the final Music Class and Christmas Program practice on Sunday, December 8th. Music Class will be held as usual during Church School, and the Christmas Program practice will be held in Church after the Community Breakfast. Practice will begin at approximately 12:30 pm and run for 30 minutes.** Please make every effort to have your children attend both the Music Class and Christmas Program practice on December 8th. We want both you and your children to enjoy their participation in the Christmas Program on December 22nd. Contact: Evelyn Biliias Lolis

Children's Christmas Program

Including

*Church School, Greek School,
GOYA, JOY & HOPE*

Following Liturgy on Sun., Dec. 22

Enjoy a Catered Lenten Luncheon
and a Visit From Santa

Everyone Welcome: RSVP with Jane
in the Office 203-348-4216

Please bring non-perishable food for
Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County

Greek School

Καλα Χριστουγεννα! Και Ευτυχισμενος ο καιν-
ουργιος χρονος! The Greek School children are
focusing on learning the Greek Kalanta this month
and coming home to spread the joy of Christmas.
Please come and see them participate in the Christ-
mas Celebration on Dec 22nd with all the youth
ministries. We are now accepting donations from any
local businesses that would like to be included in our
next Raffle. Next PTO Meeting is December 10th at
5:30 p.m. Contacts: Rebecca Kelesidis, Kiria Kiki
Bellos, and Evelyn Biliias Lolis



Preschool class listens as Fr. Harry explains the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple (Nov. 21)

GOYA

Several GOYAnS attended the “Sotiri” concert hosted by Our Savior church in Rye, NY, on Nov 16. We were also pleased to assist Philoptochos with set-up for the annual Turkey Bingo fundraiser on Nov 23. GOYA will also be serving coffee after Sunday Liturgy throughout December: for those GOYAnS who have not yet signed up, please contact one of the advisors below. With the generous assistance of the Glenges Family/Darien Flower Shop, we made beautiful Christmas Wreaths that are selling for \$20 every Sunday (almost ½ are already sold!). Also, together with JOY/HOPE, the annual Giving Tree will be put up in the parish Hall. Paper ornaments will be on the tree identifying the different children organizations in need. This year, GOYA will place snowmen ornaments for the Stamford-based Domus Kids organization, which services 1,000 Stamford children in crisis. Gifts need to be at church by Dec 18 unwrapped with the tag from the tree taped to them so that we can deliver them. On Sat, Dec 14, from 10 am – 12 noon, we will again help Inspirica, the Stamford agency servicing the homeless, to wrap donated gifts for needy Stamford families. We wish everyone a healthy and happy Christmas. GOYA welcomes teens in 7th to 12th grade. Contact: Bill Giantomidis at billgiant1@yahoo.com or Diane Skoparantzios at 203-550-6824.



GOYAns with Sotiri at his musical concert at Our Savior Church in Rye (Nov. 16)

Hope/Joy

Hope & Joy, (for pre-school children through 6th grade) is very excited about its next event to be held on Dec. 22. This year's Christmas celebration will be a multi-ministry effort, with the Church School, Greek School, GOYA, and Hope & Joy working together to create and host a beautiful Christmas program and celebration. The program itself will be performed in the Church immediately following Liturgy. This will be followed by a celebration in the Church Hall hosted by all the aforementioned ministries. The entire congregation is invited to attend. The party will feature delicious food and drink, a craft table for the children, and a special visit from Santa himself. Hope to see you all for the Christmas program in Church and at the celebration in the Church Hall. Contact: Chris and Luisa Nanos at cnanos@optonline.net or 203-609-0749 with any questions.

Youth Athletics

John Skoparantzos, Athletic Director, indicates that the Connecticut Eastern Orthodox Basketball League (CEOBL) is under way, with games scheduled for most Sunday afternoons, either home or away, through February. John is coach for the Youth Division (boys & girls 10 yrs & younger); he joins Gary Morgan to coach the Junior Varsity (boys 13 yrs & younger; girls 14 years & younger); and Dean Aivalis is coach for the Senior Men (19+ years). Youth and Junior Varsity have their first games on Sun, Dec. 8, in Hartford (2 pm and 3:05 pm). The Senior Men will defend their first ever League title from last year. The Girls Volleyball League will begin later. Coach Sofia Tsiralidis will begin practice on Thursday, December 12 at 7 pm. Contact: John Skoparantzos (atozjohn@aol.com), Dean Aivalis (onekosta@aol.com), or Sofia Tsiralidis (ttsirali@optonline.net).

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

Your contributions to IOCC are making a difference. IOCC responded to the crisis in the Philippines by distributing food packages through relief partners in Tacloban. Each package includes enough food to feed a family for one week, as well as water purification tablets to improve access to safe water. In Syria, IOCC is providing cash-for-work programs to help support more than 28,000 displaced Syrian men and women. One program provides employment to women at a Damascus school shelter who will be sewing uniforms for 1,000 displaced Syrian children living in public shelters. To make a gift, please visit www.iocc.org or call toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 17398, Baltimore, MD 21297. IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has delivered more than \$400 million in relief and development programs to families and communities in 50 countries. Contact: Christine or Nick Chivily

Stamford Athletic Club

Come by and join Stamford Athletic Club and beat the battle of the bulge during the holiday season!

Research has shown that, on average, Americans gain between 4-6 lbs. during the holiday season. Don't become a statistic – join today and fight the battle!

We have a wonderful selection of activities to choose from: swimming, aerobic classes (Zumba, Yoga, Step, etc.), racquetball, and a wide selection of exercise equipment. Also, we are now Stamford's exclusive health club that offers both badminton and table tennis. Please visit our website at www.stamfordathletic.com and "like" us on Facebook to get regular updates.

Also: we are selling Banners for display in the basketball court (3x4 ft. or 4x5 ft.) for a very affordable price. This will give public exposure to your business not only to SAC members, but also to Church ministries (like the Connecticut Eastern Orthodox Basketball League), and organizations that rent space from us (such as Stanwich School, Stamford Peace, and Stamford Little Leagues). We will be limiting the number, and we have sold two already. Contact: Glenn Colarossi to join SAC or for more information — 203-357-7555 or glenn@sacnews.com



Archangels Feast Day Vespers Reception (Nov 7)



Archangels Feast Day Vespers Reception with Bishop Sevastianos & area clergy (Nov 7)

District Concerts

Fri, Dec. 6, 7 pm – Faith & Culture Series @ Annunciation Church (302 West 91st Street, NYC), featuring Michael Harrison, composer, pianist & music theorist – “Everything in Good Measure: Ancient Greek Principles of Tuning & Their Relevance to Music.” Tickets: \$15 online through faithculture.brownpapertickets.com

Sat, Dec. 7, 7:30 pm – “Joyful Noise: A Festival of Psalms,” the Metropolitan Greek Chorale with Chamber Orchestra @ Annunciation Church (302 West 91st Street, NYC). \$20 or \$10 (students) at metgreekchorale.brownpapertickets.com. Info: 212-475-3394

Mon, Dec. 9, 7:30 pm – “From the Byzantine ‘Echos’ to the Ottoman ‘Makam’”, featuring Protopsaltis Eleftherios Eleftheriadis & Grammenos Karanos, the DUNYA ensemble, and the Children's Choir of William Spyropoulos School, @ Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall (365 5th Ave., NYC). Free and open to the public. Sponsored by the Axion Estin Foundation and the Graduate Music Programs of CUNY

Sat., Dec. 21, 7 pm – “Christmas Glory!” by the Hellenic Orthodox Community & Choir of the Bronx @ Zoodohos Peghe Church (35-73 Bruckner Blvd, Bronx, NY). Suggested Donation: \$15. Reception, raffle prizes, and holiday fun.

PARISH REGISTRY

Births

November 12 – Oliver Peter & Georgia Helen,
twin children of Michael & Jennifer Vorvis Harden

November 26 – Natasha & Thalia, 1st twin children
of Elias & Evelyn Biliadis

Baptisms

November 2 – Athanasia Valassis, 1st child of
Haralabos & Vasiliki Harisis Valassis; sponsors were
Steven & Athanasia Valassis

November 30 – Claire Kay DiLeo, daughter of
Gregory James & Alexis Marcarello DiLeo;
sponsor was William Marcarello.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

AHEPA

The 5th annual Hellenic History Tournament was
held on Nov. 16 at St Barbara Church in Orange.
Our two Stamford teams put up a brave fight, but
were eliminated in the first round. We thank them for
representing us and wish them success for next year.
The team that won first place was sponsored by the

New Rochelle chapter. Second place went to the team
from Newport, RI. Our monthly meeting will be at
7:30 pm on Wed, Dec. 11 at the Annunciation
Church. We will discuss our plans for programs for
next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to
All! Contact: Nicholas Nikas

ECUMENICAL

Neighbor's Link

Need an extra pair of hands for work around your
home? This ecumenical, non-profit organization
will help you find workers for many basic jobs.
Open Mon-Fri, 7:30 am – 8:00 pm. Location:
75 Selleck Street, Stamford. Stop by, call
203-675-8585, ext. 117, or email
Cecilia.Rios-Nino@NeighborsLinkStamford.org

“We Bring Light”

An Interfaith Service of Hope & Healing on the
one year anniversary of the tragedy at Sandy Hook
Elementary School on Sat., Dec. 14 @ Church of
Christ the Healer (20 Brookdale Rd at High Ridge,
Stamford). Reception to follow. Please register
at www.interfaithcountil.org. Sponsored by the
Interfaith Council of Southwestern CT.