



# The Herald

Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangels • 1527 Bedford St., Stamford, CT 06905 **December 2015**

## *Christ the Refugee*

*...an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. – Matthew 2:12-15*

It might surprise us, and perhaps even come as a shock, that an all-too-often-overlooked part of the Christmas story involves the Holy Family becoming refugees who hastily flee their ancestral homeland because of life-threatening circumstances. And at night, no less. Seems that when Jesus was born, the world then wasn't so hospitable, either.

That may be small comfort to millions of Syrians who have had to do the same in the last few years. How much would we like it if one-half of America (that's more than 150 million of us!) had to spend this holy season in a foreign country without full legal protection, uncertain when or if we could ever return, and struggling our way to learn a different language and adapt to a new culture?

I don't bring this up to ruin a good party. Lord knows that Christmas is a Great Feast after all, a time for joyful worship and exuberant celebration. But I wonder how authentic our observance will be without at least some understanding that, as odd as it may seem, the life of our Lord from the very beginning encounters the dark side of human life, not just the bright side.

The United Nations indicates that there are about 43 million refugees today: 15 million who have fled their country, and the rest who are displaced internally. Besides about one-half of Syria, huge numbers have fled Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, the Congo, Myanmar, Columbia and the Sudan, just to name the top countries of strife. These numbers are just the beginning of the story. Many conflicts are proving to be intractable, prolonging the time before stability returns as days turn to weeks, then months and years.

Certainly, when Joseph, Mary, and the infant Jesus fled to Egypt just to stay alive, they too had no idea how long they might be away. Sacred shrines of the Coptic Orthodox Church to this day preserve the memory of their involuntary sojourn. Only when Herod the Great died were they allowed to go home. But even then they could not return to Judea because of the unstable rule of

Herod's son Archelaus, so they resettled in the northern province of Galilee. So much for a warm welcome back.

Just as Christ dramatically identified himself with the poor, hungry, sick, imprisoned, and stranger in one of the most memorable stories he ever told (Matthew 25:31-46), so his identity with "the least" among us includes refugees. And nowhere in his teaching or way of life does he ever discriminate between gender, race, class or religion. We are as likely to discover him among Moslem refugees as well as among Christian ones. Their path was traveled by no one less than God's only Son himself. Evidently, Christ wanted to redeem the plight of refugees along with the rest of our man-made sufferings.

However governments choose to respond to this extraordinary crisis, we who claim to follow the Lord had better be prepared to take the risk to support and welcome refugees wherever and whenever they appear. Yes, we are prudent to be on our guard to protect innocent people from harm. But we who are privileged to inhabit a stable society with great material prosperity are responsible – and forewarned – to open heart and home not just to those less fortunate but to the One who once knew all too well what it is like to be a refugee.

Specific guidelines for tangibly helping refugees in Syria are included in the IOCC section below. May our spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and justice-seeking this month not just prepare us to encounter Christ at Christmas, but to meet him in the person of refugees!

*Fr. Harry*

*Note: This was the theme of the regional GOYA Retreat that our parish hosted on Sunday, Nov. 22 for 7 area churches. Teens and adults alike were challenged to acknowledge God's will for a distinctive response that springs from the life of Christ.*

## **W O R S H I P F O R C H R I S T M A S**

**Thursday, December 24: Royal Hours – 9:00 am**

**Thursday, December 24: Vespertal Liturgy – 5:00 pm; Christmas Carols – about 6:45 pm**

**Friday, December 25: Orthros - 9 am; Divine Liturgy - 10 am**

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## PARISH COUNCIL

### ***Parish Council***

Contact: George Paparis

### ***Treasurer's Report***

Total income for October was \$54,733 with a net loss of \$85,052. Much of this was impacted by \$70,715 of GreekFest expenses and only \$16,542 of GreekFest income. For 2015 Year-to-Date the total income was \$807,028 resulting in a net loss of \$50,000 after deducting Foundation income. Note that profit from GreekFest had to be recalculated from about \$46,000 to \$33,300 as additional cash expenses were discovered. Contact: George Khouri

### ***Stewardship Report***

The Church Hall was filled with donations for Turkey Bingo on Nov. 21, the biggest fund raiser for the Ladies Philoptochos that received a lot of help from GOYA and others. Please remember to donate turkeys to the New Covenant Center in Stamford (174 Richmond Hill Avenue; 203-964-8228) as they have a large demand to help those in need this holiday season. Financial Stewardship for October was \$10,865 and Year-to-Date \$303,600 toward a goal of \$365,000. We are on track but please be sure to make your stewardship donation before the end of the year! Contact: George Khouri

### ***Additional 2015 Stewards***

Mr & Mrs Dean Aivalis  
Mrs Mary Blanco  
Douglas Burchard

Dr & Mrs John Kazianis  
Pamela Koutroubis  
Mrs Barbara Varunes

### ***Buildings & Grounds***

During this period, all projects have been completed. Our primary concern at this time is the hot water system at the Stamford Athletic Club. Underway is a unit replacement for one of the tankless hot water units. This work is expected to be performed by month's end. We would like to provide a summary of the projects undertaken from January 1, 2011 through September 2015:

- Church, Hall, Classrooms: 7 projects at a cost of \$625,514  
Rebates: \$20,000
- Stamford Athletic Club: 7 projects at a cost of \$274,238.80  
Rebates: \$43,180.97
- TOTALS: 14 projects at a cost of \$894,752.80  
Rebates: \$63,180.97.

We look forward to the coming year with the beginning of our master plan. We all must give serious consideration to supporting our capital campaign within our means.

Contact: Peter Licopantis, Nick Aivalis or Gregg Demetros

### ***Capital Campaign***

The Capital Campaign Committee will be meeting on December 1st to review progress with the first stage of the solicitation process & plan the next round. In the meantime, a number of members of the community have submitted unsolicited pledges. The Committee is very appreciative of these voluntary free will offerings. A significant contribution has also been received from the Ladies' Philoptochos Society toward the cost of equipping the new kitchen. The Committee very much appreciates the generosity & support of the Philoptochos. The Committee is encouraged by the support & interest shown by members of the community so far. To date, we have collected around \$40,000 toward the matching grant, & have passed the \$1 million mark in total pledges & gifts. There is still a long way to go to reach our target, however, & we hope that all members of the community will join in generously with a pledge spread over three years when they are contacted. We would like to ask those parishioners who have already made pledges for 2015 but have not fulfilled them to look into this matter before the end of the year. & we would like to thank those who have already submitted their 2015 pledges for their consideration & generosity. A listing of pledges received to date & of other donors is included in this issue of the Herald. Contact: Elias Kulukundis

### ***Master Planning Committee***

The Committee had mixed results this past month. We are much clearer now on integrating our existing HVAC system with the proposed work. We have yet to approve a proposal from Redniss & Mead for site/civil engineering services to be utilized in the local I& use entitlement process & for subsequent use in bidding & construction. We were excited to hear from the Capital Campaign Committee that the anonymous matching grant of \$250,000 is starting to get traction. Please keep this momentum going! If you have not seen the marketing materials from the Capital Campaign Committee, please do so; they are great. Questions: Contact Jason Konidaris



Beige replacement roof tiles show extensive damage from last winter

***Capital Campaign  
Contributions as of  
November 20, 2015***

***Pledges***

Anonymous (2)  
Evangeline Adams  
Michael & Jena Anthony  
George & Katina Antipas  
Angelo & Dena Aravides  
Demetri & Constance Begetis  
Sophie Caloutas  
Nitsa Chagaris  
Peter Cholakakis & Teresa Cassidy  
Glenn & Angie Colarossi  
Nicholas Daifotis  
Matthew & Maria DeVito  
Stephen & Tina Georgeou  
William Grosso  
Rita Haralabidis  
Timothy & Sophia Hartch  
James & Sylvia Kambas  
Chris & Elaine Kanos  
George Khouri  
Annie Konidaris  
Jason & Janie Konidaris  
Elias N. Kulukundis

Stewart & Kim Leonard  
Peter & Yolanda Licopantis  
Rita Mehos  
Dr. Alan & Marietta Morelli  
Chris A. & Louisa Nanos  
Paul & Debbie Nanos  
Penny Nanos  
Peter C. Nanos  
Nicholas Nikas  
George & Cindy Papparis  
Fr. Harry & Kerry Pappas  
Kimon & Julie Passios  
Tom & Nike Passios  
John Pasvankias  
George & Jane Perkins  
Maria Poulos  
Lee & Maria Sampanis  
Diane & Ted Sierpina  
Agesilaos & Molly Sotire  
Sotiris & Nicoletta Soulios  
Evans & Roula Stergianis  
Basil & Terry Vanech  
John & Medina Vasily  
Jane Vorvis  
Nicholas & Kyriaki Yoranidis

***Non-Pledge Gifts***

Ladies Philoptochos Society  
Mary Louise Bennett  
Miles & Joan Kulukundis  
Natalie Kulukundis  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Minetos  
Penny Nanos  
Phil & Frederika Nikolis  
Nestor Sgouros  
Dennis & Marion Vanson  
Helene & Manoucher Yektai

***Memorial Contributions***

James W. & Margaret Cocolis  
Sharon Fornaciari  
George & Larissa Gentekos  
Christos & Demetra Halkias  
William & Mary Janocha  
Margot Kalaizes  
Annie Konidaris  
Elias N. Kulukundis  
John & Stacy Louizos  
Nicholas Nikas  
Timothy & Maria Scanlon  
Diane Sierpina

## Parish Council Elections

Elections are Sun, Dec. 13, for about 1½ hours following the Liturgy (approximately 11:45 am – 1:15 pm). Absentee ballots (available Sun, Dec. 6) must be returned by Fri, Dec. 11, 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), & have been members in our parish at least since Sept 13 of this year. We will elect 7 of the following 9 candidates. Any ballot containing less than 7 selected candidates will be declared invalid. Contact: Board of Elections - Louie Blanco, Roula Stergianis & Peter George.

## Meet the Candidates

### MARIA DEVITO



Maria is a devoted wife and mother. She has served as an English teacher in the Stamford Public Schools for nearly fifteen years. She is a tireless advocate for children. Maria holds a Master's degree in Teaching and a state endorsement in Intermediate Administration.

She has designed, lead, and helped implement training on mandates for teacher certification and evaluation, advisory for at-risk students, professional learning community practices, and ethics. She chairs the School Climate Sub-Committee of the Rippowam Middle School Data Team. Her family has owned the Norwalk Inn for thirty years. Maria's relationship to Archangels dates back to the early 1990s, when she first joined GOYA. An official steward since 2009, Maria has high interest in family engagement and in the future of our children. Her daughters participate actively in Church School and HOPE/JOY. Last year the girls also attended Greek School and Greek School Summer Camp. Maria offers a strong parent voice; she is committed to improving every family's access to our dynamic church community.

### JASON BASIL KONIDARIS



Jason is devoted to his children, Mia and John – teaching them Greek, coaching New Canaan soccer and basketball, and serving as a chief of the YMCA Guides & Princesses program. He and his wife Janie are involved in local and national charities focused on bettering the health and education of youth. Janie teaches

Sunday school at Archangels. Jason served or currently serves on: the associated faculty of Yale Medical School's Child Study Center, the board of trustees of King School, the advisory council of the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute, the board of directors of Pico Quantitative Trading. He is a contributing author to the *Handbook of Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders*. Jason is a private investor. He retired in 2011 as Global Head of Capital Markets for SAC Capital. He holds a B.A. in Economics from Yale University. I joined the Council in 2013 to understand how we operate as a parish and what we can do better. We need to keep going! I chair the Master Planning Committee to renew our buildings and ministries. I serve on the Capital Campaign Committee to fund our project. I have driven change at our Athletic Club in 2015 and plan to do more. I am

Vice President of the Archangels Endowment where I specifically oversee expenditures to direct money to our most needed repairs and capital improvements. Growing up I participated in the Archangels Sunday school, Greek school, altar, and C.E.O.B.L. basketball programs.

### PAMELA KOUTROUBIS



Pamela was born in Alevrou, Greece and came to the United States as a young child. She lived in Lynn, Massachusetts where she met and married her husband Demetrios, (Jimmy) in 1963. They settled in Norwalk where they raised three daughters and were self-employed in the restaurant business. Pamela was a life-

long member of St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Norwalk and served on the Parish council from 1993 to 2001. After Pamela's husband died in 1994, Pamela soon left the restaurant business and was employed by NIIP Project Office, Norwalk Community College, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation as an Administrative Office Manager. When Pamela moved to Stamford she became a member of the Church of the Archangels. Today, she is President of the Archangel's Senior Group, a member of the Archangel's Bible Study group, and a member of the Ladies Philoptochos. Pamela volunteers in numerous capacities, helping out at the church festival, and helping with the monthly Herald newsletter. I would be honored to have your support in seeking a position on the Parish Council.

### ELIAS LOLIS



Elias Lolis graduated from Manhattan College with a degree in Economics and Finance in 1996. He has worked in the insurance, technology, and financial services fields since the time of his collegiate studies. He is currently a Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) manager for General Electric (GE), where he has

been employed for the past eleven years. Elias was born and raised in the Upper West Side of Manhattan and resided there until the time of his marriage to Dr. Evelyn Biliias Lolis in July of 2004. The couple has two-year old twin daughters, Thalia and Natasha. Elias has been an active member of the Greek Orthodox Church since the time of his childhood, participating and serving the parishes of Holy Trinity Cathedral and St. George in NYC. Elias has been a devoted member of the

Church of the Archangels for the past 11 years, very actively participating in Liturgy and the life of the church. He is currently completing his three-year term on the Parish Council, has taught in the Church School (7th & 8th grades) for the past eight years alongside his wife, Evelyn, who is the Church School Supervisor, and has also served on the Greek School Committee for two years. Elias also actively contributes to many of the Parish fundraisers and events, often working behind the scenes to set up, clean up, and offer his help wherever it is best needed. Colleagues and close friends describe Elias as a man of tremendous humility, work ethic, and integrity. If re-elected, Elias would continue to offer his expertise in finance, organizational leadership, and technology to further advance existing Parish initiatives particularly through this lucrative period of change in the Parish. Elias also further plans to continue to engage and represent the voice of young families in the Church.

**JOHN J. LOUIZOS**



I am interested in continuing my service on the Parish Council during this important time in our ministry and with the kickoff of the capital campaign. I believe that my background and experience in law and government in addition to my contacts throughout the greater Stamford community will continue to benefit our

Church of the Archangels.

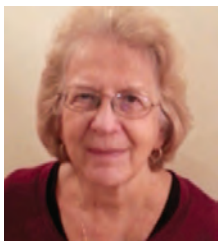
**GEORGE NANOS**



George Nanos is from Stamford and grew up in our Church. In 2011 he moved back to Stamford where he now lives with his wife, Amy, and children, Addison and George. The family attends church regularly as well as participates in Greek School, Hope and Joy, and Little Angels ministry programs. George is on

the Greek School Committee and recently participated in the planning of the Greek Festival. George studied Computer Science and Economics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and has a Bachelor of Science in Engineering. He has worked in financial technology for the past 14 years and is currently a Product Manager with the world's largest hedge fund in Westport, CT. George is interested in joining the parish council to help shape the future of the church.

**JANE DRAGONAS PERKINS**



Current Parish Activities: Church Member since 1989, Archangels Foundation Board of Directors, Archangels Foundation Nominating Committee, Capital Campaign, Marketing, Master Planning Committee, Annual Greek Festival Volunteer, Philoptohos Member, Past Parish Activities, Greek Orthodox

Cathedral of Boston, MA, Philoptohos Board of Directors,

Chairman, Vasilopita, Fashion Show, Teas, Fund Raising Raffle tickets. Background: Principal, Jane Dragonas International Closeout Consultants, Chairman of the Board, Lockwood Matthews Foundation, Inc., Past Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Lockwood Matthews Mansion Museum, Past President, Junior League of Stamford Norwalk. Married to George A. Perkins. Reason for Running: Devote my energy, organizational skills and faith for the betterment of our Church now and in the future.

**STEVEN A. VALASSIS**



The Church of the Archangels was an important part of my childhood and formative years. I grew up in this parish serving in the altar in my youth, holding leadership positions in GOYA, and going through our Sunday and Greek schools. Though I was away for many years during my education and training, I am

blessed to have returned to my home. As a father of two young children, the church has again become central to our lives. My wife has initiated new initiatives in our community, namely the Little Angels group and the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. I have been an active member of this new group for young families and children and I have assisted in the local and district Oratorical Festivals. Through my work as both an emergency medicine physician and administrator, I have honed skills in team building and conflict resolution that would benefit our parish council and church. This community was central to my life growing up and I am blessed to be raising my family here. It is my time to give back, and I hope to help reinvigorate our wonderful parish and pave the path to many great years ahead.

**ARGYRIS (RJ) VASSILIOU**



I have been a member of the Church of the Archangels since our family moved to Stamford in 1999. Along with my wife Ann, and two children, Nicholas and Alexandra, we are proud members of the community. We are thankful for the youth activities provided by the Nursery School, Sunday School and

GOYA. My involvement with our Church has been mainly on an Archdiocesan and national level. I have formerly served as a board member and treasurer of the St Michael's Home in Yonkers, NY and currently serve as an Executive Committee board member and Vice Chairman of the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund. In the past, I have also served on the Audit Committee for our parish. I look forward to serving on the Parish Council and hope to help lead our church during a period of renewal, as we expand our outreach to members (both young and old) who have been uninvolved in recent years.

## MINISTRIES

### *Nativity Fast Guidelines*

The fast for Christmas this year began on Nov. 15 and lasts 40 days, ending on Dec. 25, the Great Feast of the Nativity of Christ (Christmas). Because Christmas is so important, the Church invites us to prepare for meeting the Lord by increasing our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (acts of mercy to the poor, sick, and suffering).

For the *physical* fast, there are two stages: 1) from Nov. 15 to Dec. 11, we fast from meat and meat by-products and consume boned fish, beans, pasta, rice, vegetables, grains and fruits; then 2) from Dec. 12-24, we are urged to abstain boned fish as well. On weekdays, we are also asked to refrain from alcoholic beverages and olive oil. Such a vegetarian diet is actually quite healthy and nutritious, and cleanses our bodies of heavier foods and toxins. Along with restricting the *kinds* of foods we eat, the Church also recommends that we reduce the *amount* – by eating less often and by reducing (or even eliminating) snacks and dining out. The food and money we then save can be directly used to feed the poor, hungry, and refugees.

When we are guests of someone or attending a party, we can still observe the spirit of the fast by eating in moderation or selecting lighter foods, *without drawing attention to ourselves*.

As with all physical fasting in the Church, these guidelines are moderated (or even eliminated) for the sick, the elderly who are too weak, children under 7 years of age, and pregnant or nursing mothers. Children 7 and older are encouraged to fast by reducing the amount of meat that they eat, going without dairy on Wednesdays and Fridays, and reducing snacks. Parents can exercise wisdom in deciding what is best for each child, depending not only on age but temperament.

Further, the Church encourages us to modify other activities that, however good in themselves, often dominate us: to reduce our dependence on entertainment (e.g., watching television, going out to movies, listening to music, playing games on the computer), and to abstain from sexual relations with our spouse for a brief, agreed period of time. The purpose of all this is to grow in self-control and to free up time and energy for prayer, meditation, reading Scripture, observing silence, and serving others, especially the less fortunate.



Visit of Archbishop Demetrios on our Parish Feast Day (Nov 8)

However, everyone, regardless of age and temperament, can fast *spiritually* by reducing sin (e.g., gossip, laziness, indifference, greed, anger, lust, gluttony, jealousy, pride, apathy, judging others), and by coming to the Sacrament of Confession to receive the great gift of forgiveness.

Feel free to direct your questions and concerns to the clergy who are here to help you grow in faith, hope and love as we prepare to encounter our Lord anew this Christmas!

### *Adult Education*

- Adult education in the faith will resume on Monday Dec. 7, with Compline at 7:15 pm & Bible Study at 7:30 pm; we will break for Christmas through Theophany & resume sometime in January. Contact: Fr. Harry
- “Aspects of Aging” – be on the lookout for a series of 4 presentations on Monday evenings in late February through mid March, given by professionals (physicians, counselor, clergy); topics will include: Care for Elderly Parents; Healthy Aging; Memory Loss; and the Spirituality of Aging.

### *Seniors*

The Archangels Senior Luncheon was held on November 11th (Veterans Day). The meeting was brought to order by our new President Pam Koutroubis. The hall was decorated appropriately for the day & the festive season. The meeting was well attended. As always, we enjoyed the



Archbishop Demetrios addresses us during Feast Day luncheon, with Fr. George to his left and Fr. Nick Soteropoulos on the far left (Nov 8)

catered lunch & huge array of desserts. We were entertained by a DVD of “Basile” in his Boston performance of, “Growing up Greek in America”. It truly was hilarious. Many thanks to Steve Sarigianis for taking on the responsibility of showing the DVD performance. Our next luncheon will be held on December 9th, which will be our Christmas Social Celebration. As usual, a table of appetizers will be provided, with a variety of cheeses, wine etc. Our honored guest will be George Kent. Come & dance with George Kent! We will have a special raffle.”KALI PAREA” (which means “Good Company”). COME JOIN US ON THIS SPECIAL DAY. Contact Peter Licopantis or Pam Koutroubis



Adult Catechism celebrates Fr. Harry's elevation as Protopresbyter (Nov 9)

## *Ladies Philoptochos Society*

The ladies of the Philoptochos have much to be grateful for this Thanksgiving. We were able to donate \$500 to a local child battling cancer. We also gave \$500 dollars to the Marine League in honor of John Geas. This organization visits disabled veterans every month at Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, MD, offering them fellowship & distributing gift cards that enable them to buy things they need that are not provided by the hospital. Our own Branka Shekdar collected children's clothing with the help of Little Angels & sent them to an orphanage in her native Serbia, which is in desperate need. Philoptochos gave her \$150 dollars to help defray her mailing costs. Many thanks to Penny & Debbie Nanos, who baked & donated all the pastries & hosted the church's beautiful Name Day reception. We celebrated Philoptochos Sunday with a special coffee hour & displayed albums of Philoptochos pictures from many years back that Annie Konidaris carefully preserved in special albums. Marietta Morelli made a slide presentation of many of the pictures, which were shown to the delight of many on the big screen in the Church Hall with help from Steve Sarigianis & Basel Vanech. Once again the dynamic Lara Paschalides & Maryanne Kardaris organized our annual Turkey Bingo. Many, many hours are required to produce this event & we were blessed to have over 30 volunteers including members of GOYA & Father Harry to help. We are especially grateful to everyone who donated & solicited donations. This event could not happen without all this help. It was a beautiful family event with people sharing fellowship, fun, & excitement. We will post a list of the businesses in our area that donated to us on our bulletin board. We hope you will support & thank them. Preliminary figures indicate that our profit from Turkey Bingo was \$8,270, which will enable us to donate \$1,650 each to five charities previously selected by our chapter. We are taking orders until Monday December 14th for the Vasilopeta breads, after which sale will be on first come first serve basis. The cost remains \$15 each. Expected delivery is December 20th, weather permitting. Email will go out confirming delivery. Prepayment appreciated. Contact Marion Vanson at [mari-onvanson@yahoo.com](mailto:mari-onvanson@yahoo.com) or Maryanne Kardaris at 203-322-6285.

## *Ladies Philoptochos Christmas Brunch*

**Saturday, Dec. 5, 11 a.m.**

Church Hall ~ All Philoptochos Ladies Invited  
Mollie Sotire, Chairperson

## ***Church School***

The students & faculty of the Church School program, together with the students & faculty of the Greek School program, are preparing for a small Christmas Program to be held on Sunday, December 20, 2015 following Holy Liturgy in the church Solea. Please join us for this cross ministry celebration as we join in praise, joy, & great anticipation of our Lord's nativity. All are invited to a special fellowship hour following the performance in honoring our programs & schools. Contact: Evelyn Biliias Lolis ebiliias@aol.com.

## ***Greek School***

Open House was a success for all those who attended. The teachers reviewed the new leveling system & the curriculum for their classes. This month, the children are focusing on learning the Greek Kalanta & coming home to spread the joy of Christmas. Please come & see them participate in the joint Christmas Program on Sun, Dec. 20. We are now accepting donations from any local businesses that would like to be included in our March Raffle. Contact: Rebecca Kelesidis

## ***Children's Christmas Program***

Involving Church School, Greek School, GOYA, JOY & HOPE. Following Liturgy on Sun., Dec. 20. Special Coffee Hour. Everyone Welcome! RSVP with Jane in the Office 203-348-4216. Please bring non-perishable food for Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County.



Gym is full for the annual Turkey Bingo (Nov 21)



Maria and Illeas Paschalidis and a friend enjoy their time at the Turkey Bingo charity event.

## ***GOYA***

On Saturday Oct. 31st our GOYA joined with Annunciation's GOYA at *New Covenant Center (NCC)* soup kitchen in Stamford to serve those in need or want of a free hot meal. There was a strong sense of camaraderie between our youth, advisors, and NCC staff, and plenty of warm interactions with those they served. In offer themselves in service our youth increased in their heartfelt compassion towards fellow neighbors of all ages, races, and backgrounds, and they had a good time doing it.

On Saturday Nov. 14th four of our GOYAnS competed in the 7th annual *AHEPA Hellenic Challenge* history tournament at St Barbara Church in Orange, CT. Steven Stanton, the Haralambidis sisters Aphrodite and Dena formed team "Titans". While Zach Constantine and two boys from Annunciation church formed team "Wiltonians". We wish to congratulate each of them for participating in this challenging intellectual tournament! Special congratulations

# ***Children's Christmas Program***

*including*

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

**Following Liturgy on Sunday, Dec. 20**

Special Coffee Hour – Everyone Welcome!

RSVP with Jane in the office 203-348-4216

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



are in order for Zach and the Wiltonians for placing second overall! (Second place winnings were \$500 per person; there were a total of 16 teams.)

Twenty five beautifully crafted Christmas wreaths were prepared on Wednesday evening Nov. 18th by the GOY-Ans for the annual *Christmas Wreath Fundraiser*. The asking price is \$25 dollars per wreath. They are available for sale all throughout the Christmas season. Contact Diane or Bill if interested.

The annual Connecticut & Westchester County *GOYA Nativity Retreat* took place here at Archangels (SAC gym) on Sunday Nov. 22nd. Nearly 70 youth, 6 clergy, and over a dozen parents/advisors were in attendance. The theme was "Christ the Refugee," and was explored through keynote presentation (given by Fr. Harry) and multiple small discussion groups. It was a meaningful afternoon in which our youth grew their faith, made new friends, explored the issues of the refugee crisis and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Keep in mind the upcoming events for December:

- Sunday Dec. 6th ~ Monthly Meeting after Ministry Fair (12:15am) with a special discussion on the ISIS Paris Attacks.
- Saturday Dec. 27th ~ Five-Borough GOYA Dance at 6pm at Central Café in Astoria, NY.

***Christmas Wreath Fundraiser is ongoing! Buy yours today for \$25.*** Contact Bill Giatomidis or Diane Skoparantzou.



The GOY-Ans working hand-in-hand with parents and advisors crafted 25 beautiful Christmas wreaths to be sold as part of the annual fundraiser. Cost is only \$25.

## Vasilopeta Bread Sale

**Orders taken until Monday, December 14th**

\$15 each; Expected delivery December 20th

Prepayment appreciated

Contact [marionvanson@yahoo.com](mailto:marionvanson@yahoo.com)

Maryanne Kardaris 203-322-6285

### ***Youth Athletics***

The Connecticut Eastern Orthodox Basketball League (CEOBL) began this past Sunday November 29! We have fielded a Varsity division team and a Senior division team this year. A joint Annunciation-Stamford Youth division team is organized through our sister church. The Volleyball league will begin later this month.

We are still accepting new players for Basketball and Volleyball! Contact: John at [atozjohn@aol.com](mailto:atozjohn@aol.com) or 203-550-6894; Steve at 203-623-5896 or [steve@archangelsgoc.org](mailto:steve@archangelsgoc.org)

### **League Divisions and Qualifications:**

**Youth:** boys & girls 10 years old or younger as of 8/1/15.

**Junior Varsity:** boys 13 years or younger as of 8/1/15; girls 14 years or younger as of 8/1/15

**Varsity:** boys 14 years & older, along with girls 15 & older;

**Senior Men:** 19+ years.

**Girl's Volleyball:** girls 19 years or younger as of 8/1/15. Head coach – Sofia Tsiralidis ([ttsirali@optonline.net](mailto:ttsirali@optonline.net))

### ***Hope/Joy***

Hope & Joy & Little Angels Ministries will host a joint Children's Christmas Party on December 19th at 4:30 p.m. in the Church Hall. It will feature a performer, crafts, & a visitor from the North Pole who will have a special gift for each child! Dinner & dessert will be served. Please remember to bring non-perishable food items to our Christmas party & to church each week to support the Lower Fairfield County Food Bank. We look forward to celebrating Christmas with you & wish you a very happy & healthy New Year! If you have any questions or ideas that you'd like to share, please contact Chris & Luisa Nanos at 203-609-0749 or [cnanos@optonline.net](mailto:cnanos@optonline.net).



Fr. Peter Orfanakos and Steve Sarigianis lead a breakout discussion session with the oldest group of GOYAns at the Nativity Retreat. Our youth explored the connections between the Nativity story and the modern Syrian Refugee crisis.



Fr. Harry addresses the group of 70 teens that attended the annual GOYA Nativity retreat on Nov. 22nd held in SAC gym. The theme was "Christ the Refugee."

### *Little Angels*

Little Angels hosted a lovely, creative, & busy **Children's Thanksgiving Feast** on Saturday, November 7th! Thank you to our gracious helpers, Vasso Spanos, Ruth Diamond, & Megan Pasvankias! This month, we attended Presvytera Kerry's **Marriage Workshop**, deriving much personal benefit from her wisdom & guidance. We look forward to a follow up of this discussion with Presvytera as **Little Angels** reads *The Five Love Languages* by **Gary Chapman**. Place an order of the book through us or get it from your local library. We plan on an adult book group discussion tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 29th at 7 pm, to be held at the Valassis residence. We look forward to **Stewardship Sunday on December 6th**, in which Little Angels will showcase its ministry with literature, photos, &, of course, surprises for our young children! Let us know if you'd like to help with our display. Please mark your calendars for our **Annual Archangels Christmas Party** with Hope & Joy to be held at 4:30 pm on Saturday, December 19th in the Church Hall! There will be music, children's entertainment, dinner & dessert, holiday crafts, & a visit from Santa! You don't want to miss it! Please RSVP to Anastasia Valassis (avalassis@gmail.com) or to Chris & Luisa Nanos (cnanos@optonline.net). Lastly, are you officially a member yet? **Support our ministry** with an offering of \$20 for **dues**. Contact Vasso Spanos to make your donation! (bkarachris@gmail.com). Contact Anastasia Valassis at 516.582.0830 or avalassis@gmail.com.

### *International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)*

The influx of Syrian refugees into Greece has overwhelmed local authorities. IOCC is working in cooperation with (Greek partner organization) Apostoli to bring relief to refugees on the islands of Chios, Samos and Kos. Along with upgrading refugee center water and sanitation systems, IOCC is also distributing food, water, sleeping bags, infant kits, and hygiene kits. Here are two ways we can take concrete action:

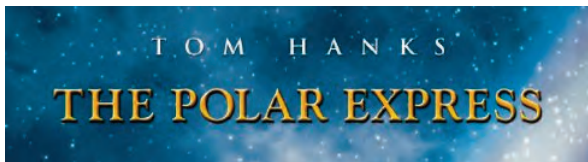
- Assemble various emergence kits (i.e. hygiene, school, baby, emergency clean up) at our parish to be distributed to those in need, including refugees landing in Greece and elsewhere in Europe. For more please visit <http://iocc.org/kits.aspx>
- Offer monetarily to the Give for Greece Challenge. To make a gift, please visit [iocc.org/GiveForGreece](http://iocc.org/GiveForGreece) 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
- Orthodox Peace Fellowship: The Orthodox Peace Fellowship (OPF) is a global, pan-Orthodox association that provides several resources on the topics of war, peace, justice, and poverty, among others. Utilize this resource especially for prayer and education. Check them out at, <http://incommunion.org>.



180 Clergy from around the country at Liturgy in San Diego during National Clergy Retreat (Nov 3-6)

### ***Holiday Family Movie Night***

On Friday December 11th at 5:30pm in the church hall, we will be hosting our next Family Movie Night, open to all ages! The 2004 holiday movie “Polar Express” with Tom Hanks will be screened. Join us for a social, festive evening, that includes a free pizza dinner (for goodwill donations), the feature presentation, and a meaning discussion following. Hope to see you there.



### ***Area Christmas Concerts***

- Sun, Dec. 6, 4 pm @ Annunciation Church (91st Street & West End Ave., NYC) – “There Were Angels” by the Metropolitan Greek Chorale, featuring music of Handel, Arvo Pärt, Ivan Moody, the Byzantine Cherubic Hymn, & Hovanness’ “Glory to God.” Tickets: \$25/general admission, \$15/students. Reception follows. 212-475-3394 or [www.metgreekchorale.org](http://www.metgreekchorale.org)
- Sat, Dec. 12, 6 pm @ St. George Cathedral in Hartford: Archdiocesan Byzantine Choir - “Christmas in Byzantium.” Tickets \$15/person. Reception follows performance. For more info: [www.stgeorgecathedral.org](http://www.stgeorgecathedral.org)
- Fri, Dec. 18, 7:30 pm – “Glorious Christmas,” featuring Vivaldi’s “Gloria” & selections from Greek Orthodox composers Anna Gallos, Demetrios Pappas & George Raptis @ Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York City. For tickets: [www.thecathedralnyc.org](http://www.thecathedralnyc.org) or 212-288-3215.

### ***Stamford Athletic Club***

Maintain your weight over the holidays! We all have heard that the average person gains 3-7lbs during the holidays...that can be trouble for a lot of us...so why not start working out at the center to keep the weight gain in check...you can swim, take group exercise classes (yoga, Step, Zumba, etc.) run on the treadmill, play racquetball, or lift weights...& relax in the sauna or steam room afterwards. Try to remember that the holiday season is about more than just food. Next time you go to a holiday party, take time to admire the decorations. If there is entertainment, be sure to enjoy it. Focus on visiting with friends & family whom you haven’t seen in a long time. That said, be honest & acknowledge that it would be unrealistic not to indulge in some holiday treats. The key is to do it mindfully, & in moderation. One way to indulge “with purpose” is to make sure you don’t show up to a party starving. You know you’re not supposed to go grocery shopping on an empty stomach. The same is true for parties. Many people make the mistake of “saving up their calories” for the party. But that plan backfires because when we’re ravenous, our self-control goes out the window & we consume way too many calories. Instead, consider eating a healthy snack before going to a party, such as yogurt mixed with high fiber cereal, or some hummus with veggies. Contact: Glenn Colarossi



His Eminence honored Fr. Harry with the title of “Protopresbyter”, tonsured Nicholas Otis a Reader, blessed Lucas Giantomidis, John Konidaris, and Christopher Otis to be Altar servers and blessed Chris Nanos to be Sexton on our Feast Day.

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## PARISH NEWS

### *Baptism*

November 14 – Thea Kazianis, 1st child of Drs. John Kazianis & Evgenia Litrivis. Sponsors: Andrew & Gia Jeas



Peter and Helen Demetros were honored for all their years of service to the church on Nov. 8th at the Feast Day Reception. From left to right back row: Fr. Poulos, Mrs. Kambas, Mrs. Licopantis & Mr. Licopantis. Front row: Mr. George Vlandis, Ms. Jane Vorvis, Mrs. Helen Demetros, Mr. Peter Demetros & Mrs. Effie Gianos.

### *Project Mexico Informational Meeting*

In the summer of 2016 our parish plans to participate in the ongoing missionary efforts of Project Mexico (PM), a pan-Orthodox institution operating in northwestern Mexico. This week long trip provides a golden opportunity for our youth and adults to engage cross-culturally with poor local families in building small, simple but secure homes for them from the ground up. This is a mission trip in which our eyes, minds, and hearts will be opened through labors of love. It is a powerful experience that hundreds of Orthodox youth and adults participate in week in and week out each summer, and one in which our group will also have during our trip. It is a week of growth and fun, where you work, eat, camp, and pray with hundreds of other Orthodox from all over the US.

We have several interested persons already, but we are looking for more! Have YOU ever considered taking a mission trip? This summer may be the right time. We will be holding an Informational Meeting for PM on Friday Dec. 18th at 7pm in the Library for all those who are interested and or are looking for more details. We will also hear first hand-accounts from those who have gone to Project Mexico already. Light refreshments will be served.



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## AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

### *AHEPA*

As mentioned last month, on November 14th, the AHEPA Yankee District #7 held its 7th Annual Hellenic History Tournament at St Barbara church in Orange, CT. We are grateful to Steve Sarigianis for volunteering to be one of the match moderators. Of the sixteen teams competing this year, two received prizes. The team from Watertown, MA, came in first after winning four rounds & 57 points. One of the two Stamford teams, the Wiltonian Hellenes (Alexander Koutsoukos, Peter Dantini, & Zach Muraskin), came in second after winning three rounds & 55 points. The final match was particularly exciting, as the two

teams kept tying each other after every question. The audience gasped as the regular 24 questions came to an end with the teams still tied. The match went into overtime with extra tie-breaking questions, & it was only at that point that Watertown won 15-13. Congratulations Wiltonians! We will not hold a December chapter meeting. We are getting ready for our annual showing of educational videos for 6 Fridays in January & February aimed at helping our community get through the toughest part of winter. Watch for the specifics in the January Herald. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Contact: Nicholas Nikas 203-554-5570 [niketes@yahoo.com](mailto:niketes@yahoo.com)