



The Herald

A Bulletin of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangels, Stamford, CT
June-July, 2012

COMMENCEMENT

This time of year, we normally think of commencement in connection with graduation rites at high schools, colleges, or universities. Our grandchildren and children have completed a course of study and earned a degree that verifies their efforts. We congratulate them for their accomplishments, and reward them with praise and gifts. At some point, someone – a commencement speaker, a teacher, or we ourselves – notes that while one particular program has finished, it really is just a springboard to something else in life. An ending becomes a beginning, and we are naturally excited and anxious for what comes next.

But school commencements serve not just as wonderful celebrations of academic achievement. They are a timely reminder of our life in Christ as we head into the summer lull.

Apparently, God is quite accomplished in Commencements of all types.

First, there is the beginning of everything that exists in our universe – planets & stars, sky & earth, water & land, animals & plants, you and me. One of the amazing things about this marvelous creation that we inhabit is the mere fact that *none of it is necessary at all*. God was not forced to create anything. Yet, out of unfathomable love, God chose to create everything in the *Original Commencement*: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...” (*Genesis 1*). Summer is a great time to re-connect with nature, not just to get together with family and friends on vacation. Next time you experience God’s creation, consider that none of it had to be at all; it exists only because of God’s love and power. Then give glory and thanksgiving to the Creator!

Second, even though our world is deeply and tragically scarred by sin, God has been quite busy for the last 2,000 years or so redeeming and re-creating everything and everyone through Jesus Christ in the *New Commencement*: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...” (*John 1*, patterned deliberately after *Genesis 1*). Yes, earthquakes still shatter Italy. Violence & destruction continue in Syria, Afghanistan, and Egypt. And our lives endure broken relationships, surrender to misdirected energies, and immature faith. But as bad as the world appears, there is a far more powerful force at work to heal, save, and renew. It is the person of Jesus our Lord, and the saving Gospel message in his name that is proclaimed by holy people living holy lives!

Third, for those who seek to learn and grow, every moment of every day becomes a *Life Commencement*. Did not Jesus once say, “Behold, I make all things new”? If that’s really the case, then why are not our lives beginning all over again each day in the newness of God’s grace, even while we repeat the same routines? A most remarkable example of this is the following: After 60 years of extraordinary spiritual labors as a monk, Abba Sisoës [Si’s-oh-eze] lay dying and spoke with great humility, “I do not think that I have even begun to repent.” (*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*). Contrary to what we might expect from a person widely acknowledged to be a living Saint during his own life in the 5th century, Sisoës stuns even his closest disciples by explaining that, as a very old man, *he does even think he has started being a true Christian*. We stumble on a Commencement that surprises us as well: no matter where we think we are on the road of life, in reality we are always at the beginning of learning who Christ is, turning toward him with our whole heart, and turning away from all that is not from genuine trust in his grace, truth, and love!

-- Fr. Harry

Pastoral Q & A

Question: What can we do to continue worshiping on Sundays during the summer when we become involved in work, recreation, or traveling out of town?

Answer: Naturally, attending the Divine Liturgy is the first priority every Sunday morning for everyone. However, if we are not able to attend, we can pray a service called the “Typicon” that includes Psalms, the Sunday Bible readings, prayers and petitions (copies will be available at church and posted on our parish web site). When traveling, we can locate an Orthodox church in the area we are visiting through a phone directory or the Internet. There is even a resource book in the office that lists thousands of Orthodox churches, monasteries, and chapels throughout North America. Next, when an Orthodox church is not available or too far away, we can find a church similar to ours (e.g., Catholic or Episcopalian) even though we would not receive Communion. Finally, though watching programs of worship or preaching (e.g., on television or through web casts on the internet) can certainly supplement our own prayer and worship with others in a congregation, this is never a substitute for attending Liturgy or praying the Typicon.

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PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council approved a \$1,075 charitable contribution to Hellenic College/Holy Cross, responding to an appeal for their 75th anniversary commemorative album. The proceeds are to fund programs and scholarships. The funding will come from an anticipated grant provided by the Church Foundation for charitable purposes. The Council approved an expenditure for up to \$38,000 to replace the hot water heater at the Stamford Athletic Club (SAC). The funding for this will be provided by the Foundation. Contact: George Papis

TREASURER

Revenues for the first quarter were \$291,206; expenses were \$136,359, resulting in a profit of \$154,847. We receive a very high volume of pledges in the first quarter. Profits in subsequent periods will be affected by lower pledge income. The profit gives us a cushion to weather the dip in cash flow during the summer months.

STEWARDSHIP

Sports teams have an MVP (most valuable player). Why can't the Church have an MVS (most valuable steward)? I believe we can and I nominate George Papis as a lifetime MVS. George sings in the choir and then rushes down to teach young adults about their religion. He is President of the Parish Council (not an easy task) and an active member of the stewardship committee. When you enjoy your lamb luncheon, remember it's George who prepared it. Any time someone is required to help at the Church, George is there. His humility is a lesson for all. He fasts religiously during Lent and attends more Lenten services than anyone I know. And George is a generous donor to the Church. He is a very special man and one who deserves our thanks and admiration. On the Treasurer's side, we have received 216 pledge cards with \$199,720 pledged. We thank you for your generosity. Contact: George Khouri

ADDITIONAL STEWARDS (as of May 31, 2012)

Mr Alexander Amarilios
Mrs Jameela Androulidakis
Mrs Eugenia Bakes
Mrs Aleyamma Cherian
Mrs Paula Condos
Dr & Mrs Jose Freire

Mr & Mrs George Hasapis
Mr & Mrs Matthew Lederman
Mr & Mrs Demetre Mentavlos
Mr & Mrs Ivan Radoslavov
Mr Vincent Rohloff
Mr & Mrs Louis Sioles

Mr & Mrs Soterios Soulios
Mr & Mrs John Vasily
Mr & Mrs Polizoes Vouthounis
Mr & Mrs Christopher Williams

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Buildings & Grounds Committee has been working on several larger projects for the Church and Center. The largest undertaking has been the installation of the new Heating and Air Conditions system for the church, offices, hall, and classrooms. The old system, which was well over 30 years old, has been completely removed and a new, modern state of the art, energy efficient system put in place. The new system will not only provide much better for us, but also will cut our energy costs drastically for years to come. At the same time, a new Heat and AC unit was added to the Center. This had been in disrepair for years and will now provide the needed cooling and heating function for SAC exercise areas on the second floor. We also have undertaken a new hot water system upgrade for SAC that will replace the leaking, outdated system. Again, not only will this provide us with a new hot water system, but also will help to cut significantly our energy costs on a monthly basis. Additionally, we have been working with the Nursery School and will be adding another layer of mulch for the Playground to make sure this area is safe for our youngsters. From a maintenance perspective, all of the lighting repairs for the exterior of the Church have been completed and are in place. This allows for safe and lighted pathways all around the exterior of our Church and Center. It is the goal of B&G to work closely with the Parish Council's Strategic Planning Committee as they continue their discussions on the overall "Master Plan" for the Church and Center. Contact: Gregg Demetros

MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Parish Council has formed a Master Planning Committee consisting of Jason Konidaris (chair), Nick Aivalis, Tim Hartch, Nick Kyriakos, Jane Dragonas Perkins, Aggie Sotire, and Fr. Harry. Their purpose is to provide a comprehensive long-range road map intended to guide the physical growth and development of our parish. As we near completion of immediate critical repairs to the physical complex, it is now time to create a comprehensive plan for the entire campus. Such a plan could include upgrades to our classrooms, kitchen remodel, more handicapped-accessible features (e.g., bathrooms, interior ramps), balcony improvement, narthex updating, improved lighting, physical flow of community spaces, and renovation of offices, hall, entrances and hallways. At its first meeting in May, the Committee resolved to interview outside architectural firms to engage in the process. The Committee and a selected architectural firm will review our existing physical space, interview all ministries of our Parish, and determine the future physical needs of our community. We will operate within logical demographic and financial assumptions to prayerfully investigate what God is calling our parish to be and do in the future. We will provide drawings/renderings to the community to fully explain what our money would buy us. We look forward to the energy and enthusiasm that such a renewal process can bring to our Parish. Contact: Jason Konidaris

MINISTRIES

ADULT EDUCATION

Both Dr. Richard Schneider, who gave an audio-visual presentation on Icons on May 4, and Fr. Maximos, who spoke about Mt. Athos and Orthodox Spirituality on May 21, were well received. Over 50 people attended the first event, and more than 175 attended the second. In particular, Fr. Maximos attracted guests from many other parishes in our area, an indication of the spiritual hunger for contact with a deeper walk of faith. A digital recording of Dr. Schneider will be available on the redesigned parish web site. There is no recording of Fr. Maximos' talk because he preferred it that way since he was speaking informally. While Adult Catechism is suspended for the summer, digital recordings of sermons, bible studies, and adult catechism classes this year will also gradually be available through the parish web site. Please be patient as we work with our Webmaster to get these on-line. Recommended summer reading: Kyriacos Markides, *The Mountain of Silence*, or *Gifts of the Desert*. These are both very well written books that explore the profound understanding of Christ and the Gospel through the Orthodox Tradition of monastic witness. Dr. Markides, a native Cypriot and long time Professor of Sociology at the University of Maine, has accepted an invitation to visit our parish the first week of November and lead a parish retreat.

GREEK FESTIVAL PLANNING COMMITTEE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Greek Festival Planning Committee, under the direction of Steve and Margaret Fornaciari, will meet monthly over the summer to put new, exciting programming and food ideas in place for the annual fall event scheduled for Sept.28 to 30. Dates for these meetings will be announced through the Church Community Builder email system. Volunteers from every ministry in our parish are needed. Please join us!! Vicki Kyriakos and Diane Sierpina will be coordinating volunteers. Please contact Vicki at vskdmd@aol.com or Diane at sierpina@yahoo.com to offer your help with set-up, serving, decorating, marketing, clean up or other roles. No amount of time volunteering is too little. A schedule of volunteer activities will be published in the August *Herald*. Our event will be more fun and profitable only with the creative and energetic input of all our parishioners. Your suggestions are always welcome. Thanks in advance - The Festival Planning Committee.

GREEK FESTIVAL

**Cash Donations Appreciated for:
Gas Grill, Signage, Decorations,
& Food Ingredients
Contact: Jane or the Fornaciaris**

GREEK FESTIVAL RAFFLE

**Biggest fundraiser for our church
Please purchase or sell tickets!**

SENIORS

Our May 9th meeting was once again very well attended. We had our usual catered lunch, which consisted of roast beef, mashed potatoes and a salad, which was enjoyed by all. Our ladies provided an array of cakes, cookies, pies and pastries. We had our traditional Birthday cake for those celebrating in May and had four lucky winners of our 50/50 raffle. Our guest speaker was Renee Kahn, representing The Stamford Historical Society. She holds a wealth of information on the inner workings of the City. Her two major topics were the demolition of the historical Sterling Farms Manor House. At a Planning Board Meeting on February 21st, the demolition was denied. Another major issued discussed was Stamford's last working boatyard. Building & Land Technology, a major property owner, did not renew the lease of the largest boat repair facility between the New York border and New Haven. Currently, the zoning board requires BLT to maintain a working boatyard on the site. This matter is yet to be resolved. It was very interesting and informative. Bill Grosso, on behalf of the nomination committee, reported that as of this date (May 9th), there were no interested seniors to replace the president, vice president and chairman of our activities program. The current incumbents' term will end on June 30th. Let's show some interest and enthusiasm to continue our wonderful Archangels Seniors Program. Our June 13th meeting will consist of the election of new officers, as well as a Social Hour before our luncheon. Also, we would love to have new members. So, please encourage any seniors from our church to join. We will be seeing the play "42nd Street" on June 24th, with dinner at the Royal Green. We have a few openings. Please contact Yolanda Licopantis for information. Contact: Peter Licopantis

PHILOPTOCHOS TAG SALE

Fri. June 22nd & Sat. June 23rd

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Volunteers Needed!

Donated Items Appreciated

No Adult Clothing, Books or Small Appliances

Contact: Lara at larasmith1@netzero.com

or Maryanne at mkardaris@aol.com

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

Date Change: The Philoptochos' Tag Sale will take place on Friday, June 22nd and Saturday, June 23rd from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers are needed from Sunday, June 17th until the tag sale to set prices on donated items, set up and work at the tag sale. Donated items can be brought to the church hall from Sunday June 17th to Wednesday, June 20th. Please contact Lara Paschalidis at larasmith1@netzero.com or Maryanne Kardaris at mkardaris@aol.com to volunteer and for more information. Flyers will be sent to parishioners outlining what items can be accepted for the tag sale. Adult clothing, books and small appliances will not be accepted. Where the profits of the tag sale will go will be decided by the membership at the next meeting, which takes place Tuesday, June 5th at 7 p.m. in the Church Hall. New members are always welcome. The June 5th meeting will be our last until September. At the May 1st meeting, a check for \$2,000 was given to Vice President Christine Chivily for the IOCC's Greek Relief Fund. This donation was approved at our April meeting. Marion Vanson reported that the Palm Sunday Bake and Bread Sale was a great success, earning a \$4,216 profit. Co-chairs Pauline Galuris and Donna Malitzis also reported that the Mothers' Day luncheon at the Norwalk Inn was well attended and a fun event for all. Thank you to all the parishioners who helped and supported these events. In light of the Philoptochos' existing profits, the members approved \$500 donations to four charities: Habitat for Humanity, St. Luke's family shelter, Wounded Warrior and Friends of Karen. The latter supports families who have a child with a life-threatening disease. A donation of \$500 also was approved from the Philoptochos' Memorial Fund to benefit a local teacher who lost her home and belongings in a recent fire. Our chapter is sending one delegate, Vicki Kyriakos, to the National Philoptochos Conference in early July, which takes place in Phoenix, Arizona. Contact: Diane Sierpina or Maryanne Kardaris.

CHURCH SCHOOL

On Sunday, June 10, we will hold closing ceremonies for Church School. All students are to attend Liturgy with their parents, and there will be no classes that day. In Church, after services are over, all students will be called up to receive a small gift from Father Harry. And now, some thanks all around: Thank you parents for bringing your children to Church; our teachers have really enjoyed having them in class. Thank you teachers for your dedication to making a difference in the spiritual lives of your students. Thanks to Emily Rakes for inspiring our children to learn to sing the Liturgy. Thanks to Jane for ALL her help and expertise on just about everything. And last but not least, thank you Father Harry and Presvytera Kerry for making this year both memorable and meaningful for us all. We look forward to seeing all your children in class again when we resume Church School classes in September! Contact: Jeanne Charcalis at jcharcalis@optonline.net or (203) 978-0645

GOYA

GOYA has brought home GOLD! The 34th annual GOYA Junior Olympics took place over Memorial Day weekend at Suffolk Community College on Long Island. Over 25 churches and 1,200 athletes participated in this District event. George Crist won Gold in the 800-meter race and Silver in the 1500 meter. Nick Morelli won Gold for table tennis, a new event this year for the Olympics. Our GOYAnS also participated in the basketball, softball and volleyball tournaments. We shared bleacher space with our sister church, the Annunciation, and athletes and parents alike had a wonderful day to spend time together and get to know one another a little better. Thank you to all the parents and parishioners who supported GOYA with either a donation, food, driving and/or coaching. This is one of those opportunities to strengthen our community bonds. We wish all of our parishioners a fantastic summer. Contact: Diane Skoparantzou or Margaret Fornaciari

GREEK SCHOOL

Mark your calendars!! Greek School Graduation is June 10th. All the children will receive their graduation certificates at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Immediately following, we will register for the 2012/2013 Year. Our school is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. The school consists of preschool ages to 8th grade. We welcome ALL new students and parents! NOTE: The enrollment and payment

deadline for the 2012/2013 Greek School year is August 1st; otherwise, late fees will be added. Please plan accordingly and register with the church office as soon as possible. Thanks to Alex Fornaciari for having a team-building session with our children at the End of the Year party. Thanks to EOS for catering our souvlakia! Kiria Nikki helped the children make their own souvlakia sandwiches. A special thanks to Diane Skoparantzou for her endless dedication and service to the Greek School. After 7 years as PTO president, she has decided to step down. The PTO has voted Rebecca Kelesidis as President, and Maria Otis and Melanie Jordanopoulos will remain as co-Treasurers. The Secretary position is open - Please contact the Board if you are interested in the position. Thanks to Kiria Georgia for teaching our lower school. After 5 years, she has decided to step down as well. Thanks to AHEPA for their very generous donation to the Greek School; we really appreciate it. Kalo Kalokairi - PTO Board (Diane, Maria, Rebecca, Melanie). Contact: Rebecca at Rebecca@Kelesidis.com

HOPE/JOY

Can you believe that summer is here? I hope you can join us for our end of year event on June 8th from 6-8 p.m. We will be having a Greek Dance Party. Nikki Glekas has volunteered to teach the children a dance or two. Pizza and Salad will be served. Dessert and drink donations are always appreciated. Please RSVP by June 4th. We will start up next year with our Annual Harvest Party in October, exact date to be determined. Any ideas that you have for an event for next year would be welcome and appreciated. Contact: Melanie Jordanopoulos at jordothegreek@hotmail.com or 203-505-3278.

IOCC

The IOCC was very grateful to have received the \$2,000 donation from the Archangels Ladies Philoptochos. The money was earmarked for relief efforts in Greece and will be used toward humanitarian efforts to aid the thousands suffering there during this difficult time. A special fundraiser to benefit the IOCC's humanitarian relief fund is planned for June 11th at the Oceana Restaurant in New York City. Admission is free; donations are welcome. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and fine scotch whiskey provided by Compass Box Whiskey Co. can be sampled. Register on line at www.IOCC.org/events. (Must be 18 or older to attend.) Contact: Nick or Christine Chivily

PARISH NEWS

BAPTISM

May 5 – Layla Stephanie Harden, daughter of Michael & Jennifer (Vorvis) Harden. Godparent: Nikolaos Kourtis.

WEDDING

May 26 – Dena Mixcus and Michael Burke. Sponsor: Stacey (Psichopaidas) Smith

CHRISMATION

Correction: to the *May Herald* – Matthew DeVito, husband of Maria DeVito and father to Sophia and Isabella, was chrismated into the Orthodox Church on Sunday, April 1, in Newport, RI.

GRADUATIONS

HIGH SCHOOL

John Crist from Fairfield Prep; will attend Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA

E. J. Couloucoundis from Darien; will attend the Juilliard School of Music in New York City

Jake Demetros from Stamford; will attend Indiana University at Bloomington, IN

Zach Fornaciari from Stamford; will attend Boston University in Boston, MA

Alexandra Glenges from Westhill; will attend Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, PA

Victoria Hynd from Stamford; will attend College of Charleston in Charleston, SC

Andrew Kyriakos from Greenwich; will attend St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO

Robert Miliarexis from Trinity Catholic; will attend McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, MN

Nicholas Morelli from Westhill; will attend Boston College in Newton, MA

Andreas (Andy) Michailidis from Westminster School (Simsbury, CT); will play hockey in MA next year

Panayiotis (Peter) Michailidis completed 2 years playing hockey with the Boston Junior Bruins, and now will attend Hamilton College in Clinton, NY

COLLEGE

Stephen (Stavros) Aivalis from the New York Institute of Technology in Manhattan with a Bachelor of Architecture. He received a Thesis Recognition Award of Architectural Excellence, and will join the firm of his father, Nick Aivalis Architects, LLC.

Alex Fornaciari from St. Michael's College in Vermont

Megan Demetros from the University of Connecticut

Lambros Theofanides from Penn State University

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

FOUNDATION FUND

The Board of the Church of the Archangels Foundation Inc. held its Annual Meeting on 17 May, 2012. Reports presented included a review of the preceding year, the Treasurer's Report, a review of repairs undertaken or in progress both at the Church and the Center, a report on the operation of the SAC by Glenn Colarossi, a review of funds available for distribution to the Church during 2012, and the presentation of the official accounts for 2011. It was noted that the principal of the Endowment Fund had declined during the year due both to the market and to funding needs for the Church. Making allowance for monies appropriated, committed but not yet distributed, the value of the Fund was approaching \$ 3 million. Members expressed concern that there was little scope for further emergency grants if the fund was to remain viable as an income-producing vehicle. George Papis presented a request from the Parish Council for the Fund to continue its subsidy of the SAC at \$ 3,500 per month until the end of June, 2013, a reduction of \$4,000 from current levels. This was approved unanimously. There was also extended discussion about essential projects under consideration by other committees that were not ready as yet to move forward. Dennis Vanson was reappointed as Accountant, and Jane Vorvis as Assistant Secretary. Jason Konidaris was re-elected to the Investment Committee. Jason Konidaris, Nick Aivalis, and James Kambas were elected Directors for a three-year term, and Officers were chosen: Elias N. Kulukundis as President, Jason Konidaris as Vice-President, Tom Passios as Treasurer, and Tim Hartch as Secretary. James Kambas retired as Vice President. His many years of service in that position are sincerely appreciated. Contact: Elias Kulukundis

AHEPA

Archbishop Demetrios proclaimed May 20 as AHEPA Sunday across the nation. We chose that day to announce the contributions made possible by the success of our April 27 fundraiser. We donated a total of \$12,000: \$3,000 to each of the two Greek schools of Stamford (Annunciation and Archangels) and \$6,000 to the

national AHEPA humanitarian relief effort for the people of Greece. This is the kind of activity that has made our chapter stand out as a defender of Hellenic education and philanthropy. Thanks again to all those who contributed. We sincerely hope that you are pleased with your association with us and want to continue your support in the years to come. Our June meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 13, in the hall of Annunciation Church. We will hold elections for chapter officers, namely President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Please join us to run for office and/or cast your vote. Contact: Nicholas Nikas,

May 21 – Fr. Maximos of the Monastery of the Rock of St. Simon on Mt. Athos



May 26 – GOYA Junior Olympics @ Suffolk Community College (Long Island)



Fans relaxing on sidelines of a Softball game



George Crist receives Gold medal-800 meter race



GOYA Softball Team, coached by John Skoparantz (3rd from left, back row)



John Crist hits a home run

April 27 AHEPA Dinner & Fundraiser



Nick Nikas honoring Fr. George for 50 years service