



The Herald

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

January 2014

New Creation Resolution

It has become customary for Americans to make a New Year's resolution – a promise to do something positive in order to break out of a bad habit (like overeating or not exercising enough), or to try something different (like roller blading or hang gliding). These can be meaningful if they propel us toward improving our lives or they can just be a lot of hot air that express wishful thinking. In this latter case, I am reminded of the cartoon I saw years ago. It featured a middle-aged man with a bulging stomach, flabby arms, and plump face. He was day dreaming about weight-lifting, graphically depicted in a series of balloons in successive frames that showed him straining to lift a barbell. After his imaginary exercise was over, he breathed a sigh of relief, wiped his brow, and went back to eating more snacks.

Now, despite the fact that so many around the globe observe January 1 as the New Year, you might be surprised to learn that many cultures and religious traditions actually observe different dates for the New Year. Some examples include:

- March – Iran
- April – many in India
- September – the Orthodox Church, Copts in Egypt, and Jews
- December – the Roman Catholic & Protestant Churches

Newness is always attractive. I can remember as a child how much I looked forward to the start of the new school year – a fresh start, being in class, learning with other kids.

In that spirit, I'd like to encourage us to focus our ultimate intention on something a bit different: a *New Creation* Resolution. This would spring not from the convention of a calendar but the perma-

nence of what happened through the life of Christ: the climax of a healing process that began with our Hebrew ancestors and now escalates as a result of who Jesus was and what he did for us. This goes way beyond forgiveness of sins. It widens to embrace the restoration of all creation – humans, animals, plants and the environment, along with the solar system and the far reaches of the universe – toward a perfection made possible in Christ where everyone and everything unceasingly glorifies and praises God while ever doing God's will at every moment. Now here is something that applies to all cultures, nations, and even envelops all faith traditions.

It's astounding when we pause to consider the implications.

We Christians are actually members of a new human race that has been created all over again by grace through faith in the life of the Church. We are embodied signs of God's intention to repair and restore all that God has created, starting with ourselves.

And we are part of a stunning New Creation that, like heaven, has been progressively filling the universe with the Holy Spirit that breathes risen life for all who have the eyes to see and ears to hear.

So, in line with this New Creation, I would like to make, on behalf of our parish family, the following resolution in 2014: We will, each of us in our own unique way, turn away from the darkness that distracts us, and turn toward the light of grace so that we can more fully open our eyes and hearts to recognize this New Creation within and around us, and cooperate with grace to extend hope, mercy, justice, truth and love in ever more faithful and creative ways!

Happy New Creation!

— Fr. Harry

PASTORAL Q & A

Question: Why is it customary for houses and businesses to be blessed after Epiphany?

Answer: Because faithful Christians for many centuries have always wanted the Lord's blessing through focused prayer and the sprinkling of holy water. Epiphany (or Theophany) is the Great Feast on January 6 that commemorates the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan River. One significant consequence of this momentous event is that, when the Lord descends into the waters, he actually heals and sanctifies creation, changing the very nature of matter

to become life-giving and spirit-bearing (remember the New Creation!). As a result, we celebrate the unique service called the "Great Blessing of Water" at church. The clergy then visit the faithful where they live and work in order to lead them in prayer so that the Spirit of Christ can be manifest not just through people but in places like homes, offices, and businesses. This is a marvelous way of bringing the family together in sacred worship and to invite co-workers to join since holy water can be distributed to anyone who seeks God's blessing. It is also a wonderful way to being the new civil year!

Blessing of Homes & Businesses

The annual brief blessing service (about 10 minutes) of homes & businesses begins on the Great Feast of Epiphany (January 6). All that is needed is an icon, candle, sprig of basil (or other green), bowl of water, and a list of the first names of family members (or co-workers), including the deceased. Fr. Harry has maximum availability and flexibility between Jan 6 and Jan 27. Please note that no honorarium is sought or needed, since this is part of his normal responsibilities. To schedule an appointment contact either Jane in the office (203-348-4216) or Fr. Harry directly (hpappas@svots.edu).

Parish Council

The council voted to give Fr. Harry discretion in spending the remaining approximately \$1,000 provided by the Foundation for Mission & Philanthropy. The exact amount will be determined by Nestor Sgouros or Dennis Vanson, our accountants. The council voted to approve an expenditure not-to-exceed \$3,500 to replace the chemical feeder for a whirlpool at the Greek Cultural Center/SAC. The council voted to approve of the 2014 budget to be

presented to the parish at a General Assembly on Sunday, January 26. The budget will be mailed under separate cover on January 15. Contact: George Paparis

Treasurer

The Auditor's are working to finalize year end numbers. The 2014 budget has been prepared and approved by the Parish Council for General Assembly approval in January. The assessment by the Archdiocese was initially a staggering \$68,000 up from \$47,000 this year. It has since been reduced to \$57,750 still a steep increase.

Stewardship

Stewardship report on Stewardship Sunday, we had a good kick off to the 2014 campaign. A significant number of pledge cards were received. Phil Costas and his wife Liz donated their time and effort as well as the cost of the breakfast. The Church Hall was fully occupied, a testament to Phil's cooking.

Year to date we have received pledge cards indicating \$320,275. December is usually is a big month for contributions, so if you haven't given please do so.

Additional 2013 Stewards

Mr & Mrs Nick Aivalis
Mr & Mrs William Charcalis
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Daifotis
Mr & Mrs Theodore Helms
Mr & Mrs Stew Leonard, Jr

Mr & Mrs John J. Louizos
Mrs Christine Maskaleris
Mr & Mrs John Panulas
Brian Irizarry & Georgette Perimenis
Mr & Mrs Michael Poulos

Mr & Mrs John Rizos
Mr & Mrs John Vasily
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Yoranidis

MINISTRIES

Adult Catechism

Bible Study resumes on Monday, January 13, as we continue our study of Genesis that continues the foundational stories of creation, sin, and the life faith. Topics and dates:

- Jan. 13 – Genesis 12-14: Call of Abraham
- Jan. 20 – Genesis 15-17: Circumcision & Covenant
- Jan. 27 – Genesis 18-19: Hospitality; Sodom & Gomorrah

No prior knowledge of Scripture is necessary. All that is needed is an open heart and mind. Bring a friend since the class is open to anyone in our parish or outside it. Contact: Fr. Harry

Seniors

The Senior Christmas Party on Wed, Dec 11 was most enjoyable. In addition to the delicious hors d'oeuvres, wines, soft drinks, and pastitsio, music was provided by John Redgrave, who played his guitar for the singing of Christmas carols and religious hymns. Adding to our enjoyment was the surprise attendance of the Archangels pre-school class, who also sang Christmas carols. The first meeting of the new year will be on Wednesday,

January 8th. The featured speaker will be Dr. James C. Otis, who will discuss the design and development of Biomechanical Engineering in Orthopedics and injury, e.g., orthopedic implants and replacement of bone tumors as an alternative to amputation. Contact: George Hasapis at 203-966-2534

Ladies Philoptochos Society

The Ladies Philoptochos Society Board wishes you a most blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year. We are grateful for the help and support that Philoptochos members offered that enabled our chapter to donate generously to so many needy charities. Our Christmas brunch and short meeting was held on December 2nd. Mollie Sotire organized a beautiful event. We enjoyed delicious food, many prizes and warm fellowship. Lara Paschalides thanked all members for donating and helping to make this year's Turkey Bingo the great success that it was. The profit of \$7,000 was divided equally among five pre-selected charities. Representatives of the Alzheimer's Association, Food Bank, Family Reentry, and Visiting Nurse & Hospice spoke to us about their organizations and expressed deep gratitude for our generous donation. A representative from

S A V E T H E D A T E

MARDI GRAS
DINNER DANCE

Saturday, February 22, 2014



Homes for the Troops was unable to attend. After the presentations, our chapter voted to give \$750 each to assist disaster victims in the Philippines and Illinois. In addition, we voted \$500 to St Michael's Home and \$325 for much needed underwear and socks for the homeless at Pacific House men's shelter in Stamford. President Marion Vanson expressed gratitude for members whose hard work and generosity enabled our chapter to give over \$15,000 this year in assistance to a wide variety of organizations and people in need. This is truly a wonderful accomplishment. God continue to bless our organization. Contact: Marion Vanson

Church School

This year, the children of the Church School, along with those of Joy/Hope, Goya, and Greek School ministries, participated in a wonderful Christmas Pageant! With carols sung in English and Greek, and the Nativity Story told by costumed children, and readings from the Gospel, we were all reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. Many thanks go to our Music Teacher, Emily Skoutelas, for leading the children in song. Thank you also to all the children who participated, and to all the parents and teachers who made this a new Archangels Christmas tradition. Wishing a Blessed New Year to all! Contact: Jeanne Charcalis and Evelyn Biliias Lolis

Greek School

On Jan 19, Greek School will celebrate the Feast of the Three Hierarchs and Greek Letters. On this day, we congratulate students, teachers and parents for their successes throughout the year. The children will perform immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Next PTO Meeting is Jan 14 at 5:30 pm in the 2nd floor Conference Room. Contact: Rebecca Kelesidis at Rebecca@Kelesidis.com



Children enter the Church for the Christmas Program (Dec. 22)

GOYA

Thank you to all for your donations for the GOYA's Giving Tree. The ornaments benefited children in crisis from the Domus Kids organization. GOYA also challenged the Dec 14 storm to help wrap gifts donated by the community for 2,600 children at Inspirica, the Stamford agency that provides shelter and services for homeless families and others in need. Our Christmas wreath sale was also successful and we appreciate all those who supported GOYA through this fundraiser. Jan 11 is our paintball outing. Those interested in attending should contact Bill Giantomidis at 732-779-3696 or email him at billgiant1@yahoo.com. There will be a GOYA dance hosted by our sister church of the Annunciation on Fri, Jan 24. GOYA welcomes all teens 7th to 12th grade to join our chapter. Contact: Bill Giantomidis or Diane Skoparantzios

1st Annual Christmas Program

On Sun, Dec 22, our Church held its first Christmas Program in many years, a truly collaborative effort with multiple ministries working together to create a beautiful event. Immediately following liturgy, children from HOPE & JOY, GOYA, Church School, and Greek School all performed a series of traditional songs and readings to remember the events surrounding the birth of Jesus in front of the congregation. Then, everyone was invited into the Hall for a deliciously catered Lenten meal from Eos Greek Cuisine. In the hall, children enjoyed making a variety of holiday projects at the craft table. Santa Claus surprised the kids with a wonderful visit and handed out Nativity-themed presents. Our Church Christmas tree, which earlier this month was filled with ornaments containing wishes from Domus Kids organization in Stamford (children in crisis), stood with all wishes fulfilled. Nearly 100 children from Domus received gifts from our congregation. We were also able to supply many gift cards from Target and Stop & Shop to needy families in order to help them during this special time of year. Philoptochos happily provided desserts and fruit. On behalf of all ministries, we want to express a sincere thank you to all who supported these efforts. Special thanks go to Nikki Glekas who initiated, organized and coordinated the program, led the rehearsals, and prepared, with her husband Demetri, the wonderful Lenten meal. We wish everyone a happy New Year! Contact: Chris & Luisa Nanos and Nikki Glekas



Christmas Program



Christmas Program

Memorial Luncheon

The family of Thamie Nanos will offer a catered fish dinner on Sunday, January 19, on the occasion of her 40-day memorial, instead of Coffee Hour. This is free and open to the congregation, and the family would be most pleased for you to plan ahead and join them in fellowship to honor her memory. No reservation is necessary. This will coincide with the annual Greek Letters Program that will be offered by the Greek School. Contact: Jane Vorvis

Camp St. Paul Registration

Registration for Camp St. Paul begins Monday, March 3, for all JOY (grades 3-6) and GOYA (grades 7-12) children. Four 1-week sessions will be offered beginning June 30. Please note that some sessions fill up quickly on a first come, first served basis. Financial assistance is available for qualified children (contact Fr. Harry). The program, on the shore of Lake Bantam near Litchfield, CT, includes worship, fellowship, activities, education, meals, and tons of fun, memorable experiences, growing in faith, and deepening relationships. Past counselors from our parish include Alex & Zach Fornaciari, and Hannah Pappas; past campers include Stephen Stanton, James Pease, Dena Glekas, Amalia Skoparantzou, Katie Charcalis, Ilda & Elia Cocoli. For further information or to register, go to the web site www.campsaintpaul.org. Contact: District Youth Office (212-774-0267)



A visit from Santa Claus

Wish List

\$3,500 for whirlpool chemical feeder at Greek Cultural Center/Stamford Athletic Club. Contact: Jane Vorvis 203-348-4216

Learn Byzantine Chant

A 10-week continuing Education Course starting Monday, Jan 27 in classroom 307 of Metropolitan Leonty Education Building at St. Vladimir's Seminary (575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY; about 35 minute drive from our church).

Schedule:

- 6:45 pm-7:30 pm: Beginner/Refresher Class
- 7:30 pm-8:45 pm: Regular Class (beginners welcome)

Instructor is Eleftherios Eleftheriadis, Protopsaltis of St. Nicholas Shrine Church in Flushing, NY, who was here as guest head chanter at our Parish Name Day Vespers on Nov. 7. Both Demetri Makrides & George Paparis enjoyed their participation in this class last semester. Enhance your liturgical experience by joining in chanting the upcoming Lenten Services, as well as the Sunday Orthros and Divine Liturgy.

- Certificate awarded upon successful completion
- Resource materials available electronically for further study

- One-time registration/tuition fee of \$150 payable to Axion Estin Foundation (10 Mill Rd, New Rochelle, NY 10804)

- Participation in Lenten Services (optional)

Classes will be conducted in Greek with translation in English. Course materials include original music texts in Byzantine notation and the Greek language. Register by email: byzantine@svots.edu, or phone: 914-961-8313, x 317. Co-sponsored by St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and the Axion Estin Foundation.

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania

The annual "Orthodoxy in America" lecture at Fordham University will be given by Archbishop Anastasios, Primate of the Church of Albania, on Tue, Jan 28 (further details will be forthcoming). The Archbishop, a long time friend and close collaborator of Archbishop Demetrios, has long been a leading voice in the world: as long time professor of Missions and World Religions at the University of Athens, missionary in East Africa, published author of many books and writings, renowned speaker, committed participant in the ecumenical movement and interfaith dialogue, candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, and, most recently, visionary leader of the revival of the Orthodox Church in Albania since 1991 when it finally emerged from the most repressive Communist regime. Contact: Fr. Harry



Children having fun creating crafts for Christmas

Annual Schmemann Lecture

The 31st annual Lecture commemorating the late Fr. Alexander Schmemann will be presented by the Rev. Dr. John McGuckin “On the Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church,” on Fri, Jan 31, at 7 pm. Fr. John is Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine Christian History at Union Theology Seminary and Columbia University, author of 23 books, and renowned speaker. A reception will follow this free and open lecture to the public. Location: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY. Contact: Fr. Harry



Christmas Gift donations from Giving Tree, for needy-children of Domus



Congregation enjoying Lenten Lunch

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AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

AHEPA

Starting in January (date to be determined), we will sponsor a number of “Greek History Fridays” during which we will screen videotaped lectures on “The Greek and Persian Wars”, a Great Courses offering delivered by Dr. John R. Hale, Director of Liberal Studies at the University of Louisville. The course covers the most significant period in Ancient Greek history, from about 560 BC to 320 BC, and is a must see for all Hellenes and Philhellenes. Dr. Hale, a gifted scholar and wonderful storyteller, makes all the characters and battles come alive. Popcorn and soft drinks will be provided. All are welcome. Our next chapter meeting will be at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at the Church of the Archangels. Contact: Nicholas Nikas



Preschool children visit the Senior Christmas Party (Dec. 11)