



The Herald

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

March 2014

Springtime of the Spirit

I'm tired of winter. Period. This year reminds me of some of the more severe winters we had in Minnesota where we raised our children. But I have to admit that this has made me even more excited about spring.

Recently, Kerry and I visited some of her relatives in Melbourne, Florida. What a joy not just to visit family whom we do not see very often, but to feel the warmth of the sun! It was a foretaste of what is in store for us beleaguered folks here up north.

But while the official season of Spring will not arrive until Thursday, March 20, there is a much more important Spring that starts on Monday, March 3: "Great Lent." "Lent" is derived from an old English word that means "spring." You might say it is the Christian season par excellence of spiritual renewal. The drudgery of life's many kinds of winter is coming to an end; the brightness of spring beckons.

However, there is one huge different between nature and spirit: none of us will be able to avoid warming temperatures and blooming flowers. On the other hand, we have the power to neglect or deny what the Spirit wants to do with us during Lent.

We can, if we choose, make no changes to the way we pray (or don't pray), to our diet (keep eating meat & dairy, take second helpings, snack whenever we want), to the way we worship (maybe on Sundays, but never on weekdays), to the way we serve others in need (why bother with people who are hungry, thirsty, sick, lonely, homeless or in prison?). Of course, we will reap what we sow – keeping our life on a mindless "cruise control" that requires no effort and perpetuates drifting on the surface of life.

At the same time, for anyone who truly wants to allow Christ to live more fully in us personally and as a parish, we can consciously and deliberately choose

to let the Springtime of the Spirit impact us from inside out:

If prayer is "spiritual breathing," we can learn to pray more deeply and reverently by learning from the wonderful Lenten worship of the Church and various treasure of prayer;

If our mouth is the gateway to self-discipline, we can learn to check our desire to gossip, open our heart to listen more, reduce the amount of food and drink that we habitually take in, lighten our diet through fasting to exercise greater self-control over unchecked urges, and lighten our body for Christ to use;

If our mind is absorbed with work, household responsibilities, the latest news, and financial concerns, we can create room for spiritual reading that nourishes our soul and open up vistas we didn't even know existed;

If we are driven to distraction by all the devices to which we are increasingly attached – television, computer, internet, smart phone – we can begin to detach ourselves by curtailing entertainment, turning off the TV, closing the computer or putting the I-phone away for awhile.

If we are dedicated to helping family and friends, we can learn to serve someone in need who is not connected to us at all, and thereby serve Christ himself (surprisingly!) in the person of the "least among us."

This is just a start. There is more, much more. The depths of heart and mind are so much richer than we realize. Just the kind of thing that Jesus delights in touching.

Especially during the Springtime of the Spirit.

Happy Lent!

— Fr. Harry

GUIDELINES FOR GREAT LENT

Take advantage of the various ways that the Church offers us – as persons, couples, and families – to observe this sacred season that starts on March 3:

■ **Worship services (other than Sundays):**

- Forgiveness Service – at the end of Liturgy the day before Lent starts
- Saturdays of Souls – final Liturgy is Mar 8, when remember our departed loved ones and bring a bowl of kolyva (boiled wheat)
- Great Compline on Mondays at 7 pm
- Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays at 5:45 pm, followed by a Lenten meal at 7 pm (freewill donation), and Bible Study from 7:30 – 8:30 pm
- Compline with Salutations to the Theotokos on Fridays at 7 pm.

■ **Bible reading:** subscribe on-line for the daily passages from the Archdiocese (<http://www.goarch.org/listserv/>), on Facebook (http://apps.facebook.com/daily_readings) or iGoogle (<http://tinyurl.com/goarchigoogle>). Of course, you could always do it the old fashioned way: open your own Bible. I recommend that everyone pray one Psalm a day in addition to these daily readings. Consider personal prayer and Bible reading as a sacred appointment with God and put it in your planner! The Lord has a lot to say to us, above all through the Scriptures and the life of the Church.

■ **Devotional reading – stretch your mind by reading something inspirational and challenging – such as:**

- *Great Lent*, by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann; a modern classic that explores the meaning of the entire season; by the popular Orthodox theologian who engaged church & society
- *Finding Sanctuary*, by Abbot Christopher Jamison, an inspiring and practical reflection upon stressful, modern life in the world that derives from the timeless lessons of St. Benedict
- *Wounded by Love*, the life and teachings of the Elder Porphyrios of Greece (died 1991), as told in a simple manner by himself; recently canonized, he is considered by some as the greatest Saint of the 20th century.

■ **Fasting:**

- **Spirit** – reduce your dependence on entertainment (such as television, movies, athletic events, web surfing, gambling), and shopping for luxuries and non-necessities. Use this freed up time to attend worship, pray at home, read something devotional, or help someone in need. Identify one bad habit and battle it through self-denial (e.g., smoking, drinking, greed, overworking, anger, laziness, pride, lust, carelessness). Build a good habit instead (e.g., prayer, silence, meditation).
- **Food** – reduce the amount you eat every day (e.g., smaller portions, fewer snacks), and simplify and lighten your diet. The traditional prescription is to eliminate all meat and meat by-products (red & white meat, along with animal by-products — milk, cheese, butter, eggs), boned fish, along with olive oil and alcoholic beverages (except on weekends). If this seems too demanding or impractical (e.g., you are the only one in the family who wants to fast strictly; others do not or cannot), consider abstaining from all meat but eating some dairy. Bottom line: we are not really fasting unless it challenges us and requires effort that is not convenient. The purpose is greater self-control so that the Holy Spirit can liberate us from our compulsive drives to eat and drink in order to love God and others more genuinely. Note that pregnant or nursing mothers, children under the age of 7, and those weakened by sickness or old age are not required to fast.
- **Give alms:** *become personally involved* in at least one practical, hands on ministry that serves the poor and needy – such as volunteering at Stamford Hospital, visiting a shut-in or someone in a Nursing Home, helping a neighbor with an errand, providing a meal, spending time with someone who is lonely, working at Inspirica (formerly St. Luke's LifeWorks). With the money you save from spending on yourself, you could support missionary work (such as the Orthodox Christian Mission Center – www.ocmc.org) or philanthropic outreach (such as Emmaus House in Harlem, or the International Orthodox Christian Charities – www.iocc.org).

Confession & Communion

Without a doubt, Holy Confession is the most neglected and misunderstood Sacrament. Many dismiss it as unnecessary or irrelevant. Most have never been. There are various ways to learn the truth, however: ask a priest; read the small booklet "If We Confess Our Sins" in our parish bookstore; talk to someone who has experienced it; investigate it on-line through the Orthodox version of Wikipedia (<http://orthodoxwiki.org/Confession>). Both Fr. Harry and Fr. George are available by appointment; as well,

Fr. Harry will be available Wednesdays during Lent at 5 pm to hear Confessions without an appointment. The clergy have been trained and assigned by God to watch over the spiritual well being of everyone the parish, parallel to what doctors are trained to do with our physical well being. Even if we are not burdened by something specific, receiving Confession is an annual spiritual check-up, and invaluable way to grow in Christ, draw nearer to one another, and is the best preparation for Communion.

ADMINISTRATION

Parish Council

At the Feb meeting, Fr. Harry exhorted us to remember that our primary responsibility is to grow in Christ, by faith through grace. As parish leaders, we have a extra responsibility to participate in the worship services during Great Lent, not only for our own spiritual benefit but also to set a good example to everyone else. Lent is the time of year for us all to refocus our spiritual commitment. The Building Committee oversaw the replacement of a window in the rear of the nave. This much need capital improvement could only happen through the generosity of the Foundation Fund. Stephen Lessard has been hired for



**Steven Lessard,
part-time handyman**

several hours per week as a handyman. This helps compensate for the reduced hours worked by our existing sexton, Petrit Cocoli, who has found full time work elsewhere. ***Welcome aboard Steven!*** As a follow up to the Rick Caro report on the

Greek Cultural Center (SAC), a subcommittee was formed to review the issues raised by the report and to continue to seek and implement opportunities to improve the operation and to help fulfill its mission to serve the parish; the subcommittee will be chaired by Jim Otis. Contact: George Paparis

Treasurer

The year end report should be ready for the next issue of the Herald, as our account, Dennis Vanson, completes figures with the help of Nestor Sgouros and Jane. Contact: George Khouri

Stewardship

So many people have volunteered to help the Church in the past year, There are many to thank for their efforts. However, the numbers probably fit the "20/80" rule: there is a general tendency for 20% of the people do most of the work, and for 80% to do little. Let's strive to get more people involved this year. The tasks will be easier and everyone will enjoy themselves. With Lent upon us this is a good time for change in a positive direction. We have received 131 pledge cards so far, promising \$243,738.00. Thank you! George Khouri

2014 Additional Stewards

Jameela Androulidakis
Mr & Mrs Michael Anthony
Mr & Mrs Aristotle Bitzonis
Helen Chochos
Harry Condos
Paula Condos
Mr & Mrs Joseph DeBartolo

Stanley Demakos
Diana George
Angelica Haralambides
Mr & Mrs William Jones
Mr & Mrs Paul Jordanopoulos
Mr & Mrs Louis Kakalettris
Dr Anna Karidas

Sofia Karidas
Toni Kokoros
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Kounavelis
Mary Ladewig
Maria Lambrinakos
Mr & Mrs Perry Mihaleas
Peter Mihaleas
Mr & Mrs Theodore Nanos

Katherine Perimenis
Mary Poulos
Mr & Mrs Louis Sioles
Mr & Mrs Michael Winn
Mr & Mrs Paul Winn, Jr.
Mr & Mrs Gregory Wojick
Mr & Mrs Harry Zavos
Mr & Mrs Peter Zavras

Maintenance Committee

A mock-up of the windows to be replaced (58) was installed this past week. The sample window is at the rear of the church (last window) on the right side. At the time of this installation, all the windows were measured to confirm all sizes. The installation was also an exercise to determine what labor would be required to remove the existing windows, as well as what labor is required to install the windows. We do not have a final price on the cost of the windows nor the rip-out and installation. We obviously will have a

great deal of negotiating at hand. The window installation should take place late spring. We are securing bids to replace the roof over the pool, as well as getting bids to replace a unit that is on the roof for heating and air conditioning that serves the Stamford Athletic Club's lobby and two workout areas. On a smaller note, we are in the process of replacing the door at the back of the pool that leads to the locker rooms. Plumbing repairs were made in the kitchen at the church hall. Contact: Gregg Demetros or Peter Licopantis

MINISTRIES

Adult Catechism

Bible Study schedule this month on Wednesday after Lenten meal:

March 5 – the Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 20-22)

March 12 – Jacob and his two wives, Rachel & Leah (Genesis 29-31)

March 19 – Jacob wrestles with God; Jacob & Esau (Genesis 32-33)

March 26 – Rape of Dinah; Jacob at Bethel (Genesis 34-36)

Seniors

At our Wed, Mar 12 luncheon meeting Fr. Harry will show and discuss his trip to the Holy Land in Israel last summer. In keeping with Lent, the food at our luncheon will be eggplant parmigiana/spaghetti and salad.

At our Feb meeting we were unable to show the movie "Captain Corellis' Mandolin" due to a technical problem with the projector. Hopefully we will be able to show it at a later meeting. Plans are underway to see the humorous musical "GYPSY" at the Kwe-skin theater followed by dinner at a restaurant to be announced. Contact: George Hasapis

Ladies Philoptochos Society

Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 4 at 7 p.m. All ladies of the parish are invited to join Philoptochos. Our membership drive is underway. Cost is \$35 or \$25 for Seniors. A team of Philoptochos members organized the monthly cooking project for the boys

living in the Passages shelter operated by Domus Kids, a Stamford-based nonprofit agency. We prepared a turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy and vegetables and provided desserts. Thanks to all the ladies who shopped, cooked and delivered the meal. Domus Kids was very appreciative. This cooking project will take place every month. If you are interested in organizing or participating in a cooking session or donating a portion of the meal, please contact Diane Sierpina at Sierpina@yahoo.com. Planning is already underway for the Palm Sunday bread and bake sale fundraiser set for April 13. The schedule for baking some of the pastries will be announced in the April issue of the Herald and on the Philoptochos bulletin board outside the church hall. We encourage everyone to order your breads early! The pre-payment order forms are available on the Philoptochos bulletin board. Thanks to all for your support of Philoptochos and its mission to help the sick, needy, elderly and veterans. Contact: Marion Vanson

Ladies Philoptochos Society
Philoptochos Palm Sunday
Annual Tsourekí
and Bake Sale

ORDER EARLY!

Contact: Maryanne Kardaris at 203-322-6285



New Window replacement inside — on right. Compare with original on left: window colors in new window were original; raw wood will be stained and finished to match original. In church, this new window is located at the right rear of the nave.

Church School

Church School children from Pre-K through 6th grade continue to make great progress with Emily Skoutelas, who teaches them Liturgical Responses and Hymns each month. They will sing along with the choir during Liturgy on Graduation Sunday on May 18. The next music class will take place during Church School on Sun, Mar 16. Further, the Church School will join with the Greek School in the Clean Monday program on Mon, Mar 3, at 6 pm at Annunciation church – for worship, brief teaching, and a pot-luck meal (bring your favorite Lenten dish to share). We will also celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation in conjunction with Greek Independence Day at a special program on Sun Mar 30, followed by a catered Lenten meal. The children have been painting their own Icon of the Annunciation, Goyans will read the scriptures that tell of the Annunciation, and Father Harry will speak about the meaning of Annunciation. Please show your support by attending both the Clean Monday program and the Annunciation/Independence Day program! Contact: Evelyn Biliass Lolis or Dorie Poulos

Greek School

On Mon, Mar 3, Kathari Deftera (Clean Monday), the First Day of Great Lent, we will meet at the Annunciation Church to worship together at 6 pm, hear a short explanation of the meaning of Lent, and then share in a pot-luck Lenten Meal. Please bring your favorite Lenten recipe to share! On Sat, Mar 8, everyone is invited to a Family day “Daily Life in Ancient Greece” from 1-4 pm at the Bellarmine Museum of Art (Fairfield University; www.fairfield.edu/museum). The interactive day is free and open to the public, but please RSVP with Kiki Bellos as soon as possible (kikibellos@optonline.net). On Mar 25 we will unite and sing the Greek National Anthem as the flag is being raised at the Government Center. Children are encouraged to come dressed in traditional Greek costumes. Lastly, our annual Annunciation/Greek Independence Day Program, together with Church School, will be on Sunday, March 30th following the Liturgy. A catered Lenten luncheon will follow — adults: \$30; children 12-18: \$10; children under 12: free. Assorted raffle prizes. Please RSVP with the church office or email rebecca@kelesidis.com if questions. Next PTO Meeting is Mar 11 at 5:30 p.m. Contact Rebecca Kelesidis

GOYA

March is a busy month for GOYAns:

- Sun, Mar 2, we are running the concession stand during the championship games hosted by our parish at SAC. Volunteers are needed.
- Mon, Mar 3, GOYAns and their families will attend the joint Clean Monday program at Annunciation church at 6 pm. bring a favorite Lenten dish to share at the pot luck dinner that follows worship and education.
- Fri, Mar 7, GOYAns are participating in a lock-in that will begin with the Salutations service at 7 pm. The overnight stay in the church provides not only for fellowship among the GOYAns, but an opportunity to reflect on life. Fr. Harry will lead an interactive sessions for teens and adults on “Why are we here?”
- Sat, Mar 29 is the annual district GOYA scavenger hunt in NYC. RSVP’s must be sent in ASAP. Please inform an advisor if you plan to attend.

Thank you to Katie Charcalis and Marina Miranthopoulos for delivering our “Bears from the Heart” to the Ronald McDonald House in NYC last month. GOYA welcomes teens in 7th to 12th grade. Contact: Bill Giantomidis at billgiant1@yahoo.com or Diane Skoparantzios at 203-550-6824.

Camp St. Paul

Registration for Camp St. Paul begins Monday, March 3, 6 am for all JOY (grades 3-6) and GOYA (grades 7-12) children. Four 1-week sessions will be offered during the month of July. Please note that some sessions fill up quickly. 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, memorable experiences, growing in faith, and deepening relationships in a joyful and safe environment. Past counselors from our parish include Alex Fornaciari, Hannah Pappas and Zach Fornaciari; past campers include Elizabeth & Stephen Stanton, Nicole Pease, Katie Charcalis, Dena Glekas, Ilda & Elia Cocoli, Amalia Skoparantzios, and James Pease. For further information or to register, go to the web site www.campsaintpaul.org. Contact: District Youth Office (212-774-0267)

Ionian Village

Registration is now open for the following 2014 programs of Ionian Village, the Summer Camping Ministry of our Archdiocese in Greece that was founded under the inspired vision and leadership of Fr. George 43 years ago:

“Summer Travel Camp”: two 20-day sessions (June 23-July 12 or July 20-August 8) for youth who have completed grades 8-12. Based at the Ionian Village in Bartholomeo, side trips include ancient Olympia, Zakynthos, Patras, Kefallonia, Kalavrita, Athens, Kerkyra, & Aegina.

“Spiritual Odyssey” for young adults, ages 19-28: a tour of Cyprus and Athens (June 1-11).

Visit the website for further information or to register: www.ionianvillage.org Contact: Fr. Evagoras Constantinides at the Ionian Village Office (ionianvillage@goarch.org or 212-570-3536).

Hope/Joy

Hope & Joy, (for pre-school children through 6th grade) is looking ahead to its next event, which will be held in April. As many of you already know, our church community donates food weekly to the Lower Fairfield County Food Bank. During Lent in April, we are planning a trip to the Food Bank facility in Stamford where children and parents will be invited to take a tour and see firsthand where our food goes after it is placed in the collection bins around our church. This is scheduled for Holy Wednesday, April 16th, time to be determined. As an ongoing community service project, let's continue to encourage our children to contribute to those less fortunate on a regular basis. If you know anyone with children who are age appropriate for Hope & Joy and not already receiving e-mails from our group, please contact Chris and Luisa Nanos at cnanos@optonline.net or 203-609-0749.

IOCC

Contact: Tim Hartch



New Window replacement outside — on left. Compare with original on right: color on left was original; material now is weather-resistant veneer.

Little Angels

Contact Anastasia Valassis (avalassis@gmail.com, 203.594.1309) if you are interested in joining us; we are developing an email list to communicate about our meetings and other pertinent topics.

Stamford Athletic Club

In response to on-going concerns and as reported in an earlier edition of the *Herald*, the Parish Council retained Rick Caro, a health club veteran of 40 years, to review the operation, finances, salaries, programming and physical plant. *A complete copy of his report is available for anyone to read in Jane's office.* Please note, however, that Mr Caro did **not** take into account that SAC is a ministry of our parish, with substantial Christian priorities that govern how we regard the entire operation and manage the facility. Here is some important background information:

- The 40,000 square foot facility was built in the early 1970's as a Cultural Center.
- By the early 1990's it was clear that the Center was not self-sustainable.
- Fr. George & the Parish Council hired Glenn Colarossi, a health care professional with years of experience, to transform the Center into Stamford Athletic Club, open to the public and serving the ministry needs of our parish which desired then, and still desires, a facility for youth athletics, physical exercise, fellowship, festival, and food preparation.

With this in mind, here is a brief summary of his findings:

- The appearance and feel is not particularly inviting, since the building was originally designed for a very different purpose, and only much later converted into a health club that had to squeeze equipment into less than ideal spaces, make do with very limited parking, accommodate the worship and ministry schedule of the parish, and operate under various financial constraints that have made improvements more difficult in recent years as the physical plant deteriorates;
- A serious commitment must be made to get SAC into a position of long-term viability. It is spending inadequate amount of dollars for marketing compared to industry norms. Cost cutting has been achieved. Increasing revenue is the only way forward, but this requires capital.



Nick Aivalis, chair of Buildings & Grounds, on a "Cherry-Picker" inspecting roof and widows (week of Feb 16)

The staff has been reduced and is stretched to its limits, with some wearing many "hats" and unable to succeed in all functions. The key four senior people have so many responsibilities and oversee so many functions that SAC is hurt if even one would call in for a sick day or take a vacation. Glenn Colarossi is really a General Manager and probably the equivalent of another 2-3 department heads. None are over-paid given their functions. Compensation for the remaining positions is barely adequate.

Finally, we welcome your comments and suggestions about how we can constructively increase ministry at the Center, increase membership from our own parish, and, in general, make any and all improvements to the operation that are within our financial means and our spiritual priorities. Stamford Athletic Club at the Greek Cultural Center is an extraordinary gift and heritage of our parish for 40 years. Let's pray and work together to continue this for years and decades to come. Contact: Jim Otis (PC Liaison) or Fr. Harry

Lenten Retreat

New Skete Monastery is offering a one-day retreat, "Your Faith has made You Whole" on Sat, Mar 15, from 8 am – 6 pm at their Chapel in Cambridge, NY. Included are: worship, meals, discussion groups, and spiritual direction. \$35/person. Registration required: <https://newskete.justsurvey.me/4e455b544154> Contact: Karen Gladstone 518-677-3928, x 214 or karengladstone@newskete.org

Pilgrimage to Greece

Cloud Tours is pricing out various options for group tour led by Fr. Harry to holy sites in Greece – Mt. Athos, Monastery of the Annunciation in Ormylia, Thessalonica, and possibly Meteora. Since this is limited due to accommodations at certain monasteries, please convey your desire as soon as possible. Reservations are first come, first served. Prospective dates for a 10-day pilgrimage include: after Pentecost (June 8) in the month of June; July 15-25; or Aug 16-26. Contact: Fr. Harry

PARISH NEWS

Baptism

February 8 – Thomas Kepler Winn, son of Michael John and Molly Rice Winn; sponsor was Paul Winn, Jr.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

Foundation Fund

The Foundation has been working closely with the Long Term Planning Committee, the Building and Grounds Committee, and the Parish Council on the implementation of the major repairs that the Foundation agreed to undertake on behalf of the Community eighteen months ago. Some smaller repairs have already been dealt with. The three biggest projects: replacement of the roof over the pool area in the Center, repair of leaks in the Church roof and replacement of the windows in the Church, are now nearly ready to go. Bids have been received for repair of the pool roof. The preferred bid will be submitted for approval to the Parish Council and the Foundation and, once approved, it is hoped work can begin there in the early Spring.

This past week, a sample window was installed in the Church. No problems were encountered and the window is there for all to see. It appears to have been viewed positively by those who have seen it. The Parish Council is awaiting a formal contract proposal and, when approved, a substantial deposit will be lodged with the suppliers prior to commencement of the manufacturing process. This is hoped to take about two months. Installation by a separate contractor expert in such matters will follow, most likely in May or early June, but definitely after Easter. Installation is expected to take about two weeks. Naturally, there is plenty of room for delays to occur in this timetable, though we hope they will be minimal.

You will undoubtedly have noticed a cherry picker parked behind the Church. This was used by the window suppliers to check measurements on all the windows and by the installation contractors to inspect the

roof of the Church and determine what repairs and improvements are required to correct leaks and improve the drainage from the roof during storms. It is hoped that this work will be done concurrent with or immediately following the installation of the windows. All these repairs are not part of the forthcoming capital campaign but are being funded entirely by the Foundation. The Members of the Foundation Board appreciate very much Father Harry's kind remarks following the liturgy on Sunday, Feb 23, and in his e-mail message to the parish. The Board is happy to be able to help implement some of the changes and improvements necessary throughout the community and to see them actually happening. Contact: Elias Kulukundis

MARCH 30TH
Mark your Calendar!
**Annunciation/
Greek Independence Day
Program**

by the Greek School & Church School

Adults: \$30; Children 12-18: \$10
Assorted raffle prizes.

Greek School & Church School Children
under 12 eat for free!

RSVP: Church office with Jane
at 203-348-4216
or email Rebecca Kelesidis
at Rebecca@Kelesidis.com