



Homeward Bound

As we hope to emerge soon from a brutal winter, the spring-time of faith (the old English word Lent means spring) has already arrived before Mother Nature's version. Great Lent is here, but how much attention we will give to it? How will we prepare in our own homes for our true Home in Christ that is reached through Easter, the "Feast of Feasts" (Pascha), the most important event in our Church year?

True leadership is a gift from God to be used for the benefit of all. In the home, parents are called to be the leaders of faith, not just providers of material goods, opportunities for general education, or coordinators of relatives and friends. *Since faith is a conscious, deliberate acceptance of God's profound claim through Christ on our entire life, adults are called to grow in spiritual knowledge through faith formation in order to continually move from the compelling attraction of many competing loyalties in this world toward the one loyalty that matters: the Kingdom of God.*

Lent is a wake-up call to each of us to more deliberately and intentionally attend to our own spiritual well being and to the spiritual life of our families. As your pastor, I can coordinate parish programs and offer teaching and inspiration. However, what you do in your homes is up to you. *Parents & grandparents are the primary educators of faith for their children. The more you take to heart Jesus Christ and life in the Holy Spirit, the more you will pass this along to your children (even if they are adults now) or grandchildren.*

Here are some suggestions I recommend you to consider as a complement to what I wrote in the last issue of *The Herald*:

- Make Lent visible by writing on the family calendar, in notes, or the placement of strategic pictures & icons (don't just talk about it); e.g., a big sign in the kitchen that says, "Spring is Here!" (that will get the family's attention)
- Speak about Lent during dinner time in age-appropriate ways – keep it lively and fresh with prayer before (and even after) meals, sharing some spiritual insight from the daily Bible readings or other source
- Pray together as a family once a week or more in front of an icon, using the short "Rule of Prayer for Lent" as a guide (available at church)
- Commit to attending one worship service on weekdays in addition to Sunday morning (if you only come on Sundays, you will miss just about everything that is specific to Lent). If you have never attended a weekday Lenten service, begin

by attending one Pre-Sanctified and one Salutations service this Lent.

- Step out and come to the Sacrament of Confession; I know how unusual this may sound, but cleaning house is not just good for our homes, it's even more important for our hearts and sets a powerful example for children of all ages to see
- Reduce entertainment for a set time to devote to spiritual learning through a Bible story, devotional reading, or a YouTube video, by turning off the television, restricting video games and computer use; Lent is a time for changing family routines away from "business as usual" in order to create time to be with Christ
- Decide on a family "work of mercy" project, preferably once a week — visitation to the sick, elderly, lonely, or poor; volunteering at a food bank or a soup kitchen; making and sending toiletry or school kits to IOCC, etc. One thing every family can do each Sunday is to bring non-perishable food items to church for the food bank
- Fast – make a meaningful change to curb our appetites and grow in greater self-control of compulsive habits: reduce the amount we eat (e.g., smaller portions, reduce or eliminate snacks), lighten the food we consume to free the spirit (e.g., avoid meat that is so much harder to digest), simplify grocery shopping to include more whole foods, vegetables, fruits, and beans (but avoid expensive foods in order to pass along the savings to the poor)
- Make a retreat of some kind before Holy Week – visit a monastery, go on a nature walk, attend a special Church event in our area (such as our own Family Lenten Retreat)
- Put a coin jar in the kitchen, where everyone is invited to contribute regularly during lent; then, as a family decide where the money will be contributed—a favorite charity, a needy family, etc.

I remember very well how we struggled to make deliberate changes like these when our three children were growing up. Sometimes we succeeded, sometimes we failed, but, looking backwards, there is no doubt that these holy rhythms and practices helped us all grow in faith, love, truth, and knowledge.

And these may just turn out to warm our hearts and homes at the right time! Happy springtime journey to Holy Week!

— Fr. Harry

Family Lenten Retreat

**Saturday, March 7
9:30 am – 2:30 pm**

Leader: Melissa Tsongranis

Associate Director, Archdiocesan Center for Family Care
Family Friendly Worship, Fellowship, Interactive Sessions

Coffee Reception; Worship; Presentations;
Break-out sessions for Adults, Teens, Kids

Childcare for Toddlers; Lunch; Take Home Exercise

Suggested Donation: \$15/person, \$30/person

Contact Church Office for Reservations 203-348-4216

Easter Bread Sale

**Please order your Easter Tsoureki
by Wednesday, March 25
9:30 am – 2:30 pm**

\$15 each

Order Forms are on Philoptochos bulletin board

Prepayment much appreciated

Orders may be picked up
Saturday April 4th or Palm Sunday

PARISH COUNCIL

TREASURER

Year end results were reported in the last Herald. The next report will be the first quarter results ready some time in April or early May. Contact: George Khouri

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Report-We had a very successful and enjoyable Mardi Gras chaired by Steve and Margaret Fornaciari. Thanks to anyone who volunteered. Stewardship pledges received to date are \$143,000 almost 40% of the annual target. Remember that we are usually short of cash in the summer so make your donations as evenly throughout the year as possible. Please come to a Wine & Appetizer Reception on Saturday, March 21, at 6 pm to welcome recent new members. Contact: George Khouri

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has very little to report at this time. We are anticipating completion of the window installation for the Church's dome within the next two weeks. The frigid weather and snow has played havoc with our roadways and parking areas. A proposal is forthcoming to make the necessary repairs. Nick Aivalis has completed an architectural drawing for the newly designed Message Center for the Stamford Athletic Club. We are waiting to get approvals from the city to obtain a building permit so we can go forward. Glenn Colarossi will keep us informed when the Message Center will be available. Contact: Peter Licopantis, Nick Aivalis or Gregg Demetros

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

A dozen members of the Capital Campaign Committee met with Jerry Minetos in the Church on the evening of Feb. 5th for a teaching session. Mr. Minetos discussed with the Committee his experiences in managing capital campaigns and, in a Power-Point presentation, outlined procedures for successful fundraising. Following the presentation, he involved the Committee members in a role-playing exercise that helped them understand the ideal technique and ways to approach potential donors. Those present were very enthusiastic with the meeting. Contact: Elias N. Kulukundis

MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Committee made its architect selection and recommendation to the Parish Council recently. This followed three months of due diligence with just fewer than a dozen architectural firms under consideration. The Parish Council voted unanimously to approve James G. Rogers Architects (JGRA) as our architect of record. JGRA is a small/midsize firm offering the full range of architectural services. The firm is based in South Norwalk and comes to us via excellent references. JGRA's work focuses on volunteer-governed entities, such as independent schools, community centers, country clubs, and sports facilities. JGRA showed the greatest understanding of our project at hand and was willing to accommodate our negotiated fee requests. The firm has begun work on architectural renderings in order to present architectural concepts to the broader parish. These concepts will be shaped by the feedback received from parishioners over the last 24 months of master planning. Questions? Contact Jason Konidaris

MINISTRIES

MARDI GRAS DANCE A GREAT SUCCESS!

The Mardi Gras Dinner-Dance was a huge success, with more than 100 adults and children enjoying the music, food and fellowship. Many ministries were represented! Entertainment was provided by the Grecian Nights, who had everyone up on their feet. We would like to thank Soula Rizos and her terrific team, who did all the cooking and hours of preparation. The food was spectacular. Thank you to all who helped and who attended, making this a wonderful family event. Best, Steve and Margaret Fornaciari, co-chairs.

WORSHIP IN GREAT LENT

(February 23 – April 3)

Each week:

- Mondays – Great Compline 7-8 pm (psalms, prayers, & hymns)
- Wednesdays – Confession 5 – 5:45 pm without appointment; Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 5:45 – 7 pm (very different from Liturgy on Sundays), followed by Lenten supper & Adult catechism
- Fridays – Small Compline with Salutations to the Theotokos (Χαιρετισμοί) 7-8:15 pm (beautiful series of hymns)
- Sacrament of Confession offered throughout by mutual appointment with either Fr. George or Fr. Harry.

ADULT EDUCATION

- Wednesdays during Great Lent, following Liturgy & Lenten supper:
 - ~ March 4 – Dr. Kareem Adeeb, Imam and President of the Board of the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut, will present on Islam in light of events in the Middle East; Fr. Andrew Awad, pastor of Saints Peter & Andrew Coptic Church, will be on hand as a Christian from Egypt;
 - ~ March 11, 18, 25 – topics are TBA, based upon interest from the group.
- Lenten Family Retreat – on Saturday, March 7 (see details in flyer or box)
- Christians in the Middle East Today – Fr. Andrew Awad will be our special guest at Liturgy on either Sunday, March 8 or 15, and offer a guest sermon on the plight of Christians and other minorities in the world today
- Town Hall Meeting with U.S. Senator Chris Murphy on Sunday, March 8, at 1:30 pm. Senator Murphy wishes to discuss publicly current events in Greece and issues of concern to the Greek Orthodox Church (such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate). Light lunch will be offered at 1 pm to accommodate those who wish to stay after Coffee Hour. Open to all area parishes, organizations and interested persons. Jointly sponsored by AHEPA, the Archons, Annunciation Church and our Church.

SAVE THE DATE

Mother's Day Luncheon

Saturday, May 16th, Noon

All Ladies Invited!

Sponsored by Ladies Philoptochos Society

See Bulletin Board for More Information

- Marriage Classes – Fr. Harry will present on Love, Sexuality, & Marriage on Sunday, March 15, and then on the Wedding Service & Raising a Family on Sunday March 22. Both classes start at 2:30 pm
- Youth Ministry Mini-Retreat on Saturday, March 21, 9 am. Fr. Harry will lead a second teaching session for leaders in Pre-school, Church & Greek Schools, GOYA, HOPE/JOY, Little Angels, Altar Boys, and Athletics. Then, at 11 am, they will join senior staff from SAC to brainstorm about ways to increase youth ministry offerings at our Greek Cultural Center.

ANNUNCIATION & GREEK INDEPENDENCE

Here are the area events surrounding these twin observances:

- Sunday, March 22 – Greek School & Church School joint program after Liturgy, followed by pot-luck luncheon
- Tuesday, March 24 – Great Vespers 7 pm at Annunciation Church with area clergy and festive reception
- Wednesday, March 25
 - ~ Orthros 8:30 am, Liturgy 9:30 am at Annunciation Church
 - ~ Flag Raising 12 noon at Government Center
 - ~ Reception follows at Annunciation Church
- Sunday, March 29 – Annunciation/Greek Independence Day parade in New York City 1:30 pm



Dancing to the music during Mardi Gras (Feb 20)

CHANTER DURING HOLY WEEK

Mr. Haralampos Kourgiantakis, Professor of Religion and Head Chanter on the island of Kerkyra (Corfu), has again accepted an invitation of our Parish Council to come with his wife, Christofora, to lead chanting during Holy Week. Donations are welcome to offset the costs of their plane tickets (a total of only \$1,550 this year, almost ½ the price of last year), as well as to supplement an approved stipend of \$1,000. They will stay at the home of Fr. Harry and Kerry.

SENIORS

Our guest speaker at our February meeting was Judge Gerald Fox III who informed us of the importance of having a will and naming an executor and a trustee to distribute funds per your written directions. He explained taxing limits imposed by the state and federal governments with reference to one's estate, as well as the importance of a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) document and how it may be followed. There were many questions asked by the group. On February 15, we went to the Kveskin Theater in Stamford and saw the musical "Man of La Mancha." It was an outstanding performance that was very enjoyable. On Friday, March 6, Nicholas Nikas will present a "Greek Cultural Program" for Stamford Seniors at Government Center at 11am. Orchestra leader George Kent of Yonkers, NY, will accompany him with music. And a Greek lunch at a nominal price will be served. In celebration of Holy Week, Father Harry will be our honored speaker at our Wednesday, March 11 luncheon meeting. Contact: George Hasapis at 203-966-2534



Adults & kids on the dance floor

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

Philoptochos is preparing for the Palm Sunday Bake Sale, which funds our contribution to our church and Greek relief, among other charities. Please consider donating baked goods or cash for ingredients. A schedule of baking days will be published and all help is much appreciated. This is a good opportunity for people of all ages to learn how to make Greek cookies while enjoying fellowship. In February, we gave money from our Memorial Fund to help a disabled young girl go to a learning camp, help a young mother of three who speaks Greek only deal with financial burden due to the sudden death of her husband, and help with Orthodox burial expenses for an indigent man. We are blessed by the contributions to our Memorial Fund that made these grants possible. Because of Holy Week, our April meeting will be held on March 31. Please join us.

Elections for new board members and officers are coming up in May. Contact Maryanne Kardaris if interested. Please consider offering your talents by becoming part of our dynamic organization. Contact Marion Vanson at 914-234-9420.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Faculty, parents, and children of the Church School program, along other ministry families and parishioners, enjoyed the festivities of our annual Mardi Gras dance held on February 20. Likewise, families from both Stamford church parishes joined together for the annual Clean Monday program hosted by our Greek and Church schools. Our program would like to strongly encourage families to attend our parish's Family Retreat on March 7. The Church School Staff will meet on Sunday, March 15 during Coffee Hour. We are preparing for two other events this month: (1) the cross-ministry observance and celebration of the Great Feast of the Annunciation & Greek Independence Day on Sunday, March 22; and (2) The Oratorical Festival (Gr. 7-12) on Sunday, March 29. Emily Skoutelas will lead our students in Music Ministry on Sunday, March 1 (a rescheduling of prior inclement weather cancellation). Please observe weekly parish-wide email updates/summaries from Anastasia Valassis for more information on our parish Oratorical Festival, and from Fr. Harry as well a Children's Holy Week Retreat (date to be determined). A Blessed Lent to all! Let us journey together in reflection, worship, fellowship, and almsgiving as we move towards the Great and Holy Pascha. Kali Sarakosti! Contact: Evelyn Bilias Lolis (ebilias@aol.com)

GREEK SCHOOL

The annual Greek Independence Day/Annunciation Performance will be on Sunday, March 22nd immediately following the Divine Liturgy. There will be a short performance, followed by a pot-luck brunch. On March 25th, the Greek Community of Stamford unites and sings 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, the Greek Independence Day Parade in NYC is March 29; if you are interested in attending, please email rebecca@kelesidis.com. Easter Lambadhes (candles) will be sold in the Church Hall. Next PTO Meeting is March 11th at 5:30 p.m. Contact: Rebecca Kelesidis Rebecca@Kelesidis.com

GOYA

GOYA meeting Sunday, March 1, during Coffee Hour to discuss Great Lent, Family Retreat on March 7, and Project Mexico in July. We will also discuss the District Scavenger Hunt on March 14, 9:45 am at American Museum of Natural History: our GOYA will provide \$30 toward each ticket of \$60; the fee includes an award luncheon at the Central Park Boathouse Restaurant. Let advisors Bill Giantomidis at billgiant1@yahoo.com or Diane Skoparantzios at 203-550-6824 know if you plan on attending.



HOPE & JOY children make Valentine's Day cards with residents at Atria Senior Living (Feb 7).

HOPE/JOY

On Saturday, February 7, Hope & Joy members celebrated Valentine's Day a week early with a visit to the Atria senior living facility next to the Stamford Athletic Club. Our group created and exchanged Valentine's Day cards with many of the residents who joined us in their Activities Room. It was wonderful to see the children respectfully and meaningfully interact with the seniors, who were so thrilled to spend time with them. After card making and sharing, a couple of the children performed songs for the group. Following the visit, some participants enjoyed lunch together downtown at Cosi. Hope & Joy is for children from pre-school through 6th grade. It is designed to help young people learn more about their Orthodox faith, get to know their church friends better, and grow together in positive and spiritual ways. For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact Chris and Luisa Nanos at cnanos@optonline.net or 203-609-0749.

LITTLE ANGELS

Our group has been in a winter hibernation recently, and we are ready to emerge from it with renewed energy! We will hold another mothers' coffee and planning meeting Friday, March 13th at 8 pm at Starbuck's on High Ridge Road to discuss our spring activities. An email to our members will be sent out in the next week canvassing interest in a Saturday afternoon family bowling event at Bowlmor in Norwalk in the coming weeks. We will reserve lanes once we anticipate who would like to attend. We are also currently negotiating a yoga class with an instructor from the SAC for a Saturday morning later this month or in early April. Likewise, we will be solidifying dates based on the interest of our group. If you are interested in attending either a bowling or yoga event with your young child(ren), please contact Anastasia Valassis as soon as possible at avalassis@gmail.com, or 1.516.582.0830.



Fr. Harry escorts Helen Demetros from the dance floor at the Mardi Gras Festival (Feb 20)



Enjoying the Mardi Gras Festival (Feb 20)

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Our Church School has introduced the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival to grades 7-12 students this past month, discussing Junior and Senior Division topics and offering advice on how to begin composing a speech. Students have appeared engaged and interested. We ask parents of Church School students in these grades to discuss the Oratorical Festival with their children and to encourage the completion of a written speech. The Oratorical Festival is a beautiful opportunity offered every year within our Archdiocese to allow our students to speak openly to an audience about their Orthodox faith. The Festival often falls during our Lenten period, itself an opportune time to focus our children on a life in Christ. We have extended our proposed parish festival date to Sunday, March 29th, to allow students more time to consider participating in the festival and delivering a speech. Please let Church School teachers, Father Harry, or Anastasia Valassis know if a student would like to deliver their speech. We welcome the voices of our young people to descend on us from their very own pulpit! For more information about the SJCOF, visit: www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/religious/sjcof. Contact: Anastasia Valassis, avalassis@gmail.com, 1.516.582.0830.

IOCC

Stay tuned for an event in later Lent or Holy Week that brings us together in service to relieve the suffering of people around the world. Contact our IOCC representative, Tim Hartch, at timhartch1@outlook.com, or visit www.iocc.org.



Grecian Knights performing at the Mardi Gras Festival (Feb 20)

PARISH NEWS

HONORS

Congratulations to Jim Otis who was honored at the 2014 Stamford Volunteer Recognition Day as the Outstanding Established Senior Individual. Jim, a bioengineer, was selected for the many hours he has dedicated at the Academy of

Information Technology & Engineering (AITE), a high school in Stamford, to help develop the Biomedical and Engineering Programs for the benefit of the students.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

AHEPA

On Friday, March 6 at 11am, there will be a brief presentation on Greece to the City of Stamford Seniors at the Government Center. On Sunday, March 8, at 1pm, US Senator Chris Murphy will visit us in the Church Hall, and AHEPA will be one of the organizations welcoming him. Food will be available in advance

of the meeting. We urge all of you to attend this important event. Also, please attend the March 25th flag-raising ceremony at the Government Center and the March 29 parade in New York City. Contact Nicholas Nikas at 203-554-5570 or email him at niketes@yahoo.com

WALKING TO HOLY WEEK

A Lenten Retreat for the Whole Family, featuring
Mrs. Melissa Tsongranis

Associate Director
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Center for Family Care

Saturday, March 7, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Schedule:

- 9:30 am - Coffee Reception
- 10:00 am - 3rd Hour Worship
- 10:20 am - Family Gathering: *Walking Together in Christ*
- 11:00 am - 1st Presentation to Adults with
Break out groups for GOYA, JOY & HOPE
- 12:30 pm - Lunch (provided)
- 1:00 pm - 2nd Presentation to Adults with
Break out groups for GOYA, JOY & HOPE
- 2:30 pm - Family Gathering: *Conclusion, Take Home Exercises,
& Prayer*

Childcare available for toddlers (call for cost & reservation)

Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangels
1527 Bedford Street, Stamford, CT 06905-4713

Contact Fr. Harry for more info (hpappas@svots.edu)
RSVP with Jane Vorvis to register (203) 348-4216

Suggested Donation: \$15/person, \$30/family