As I write this, sixteen members of our parish are on pilgrimage to northern Greece. Our purpose is specific. While there are many historical and cultural treasures, we are focusing only on those that are Biblical and Ecclesial. That is, we are, on the one hand, walking in the footsteps of St. Paul, and, on the other hand, journeying through the history of the Church while visiting numerous monasteries to encounter holy people and places. Through such an experience, we seek to grow in faith, hope, and love of Jesus Christ along with the Saints who are heroes of bearing witness to him through the ages.

Such an endeavor is quite different from taking a conventional tour or going on vacation. Our days involve regular prayer. We pray before every meal, when we start our day, and throughout the day.

Our visits to the famous places where the Apostle Paul first preached the Gospel of Christ in Europe included ancient Neapolis (modern day Kavala), ancient Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. In each place we read from his letters in the New Testament, learned more from our professional guide, observed each location and learned about the history of the site, lit candles and venerated sacred icons. In Thessalonica, we also visited the site of the house of Jason, where Paul and his missionary companions stayed, and visited various famous churches where there are the relics of great Saints, such as the basilica of St. Demetrios, the Metropolitan Church of St. Gregory Palamas, the church of Aghia Sophia. Since we were there for the feast of St. George on April 23, we first went to the small church of St. Haralampos for Vespers & Orthros in the evening. This is a dependency (called “Metochion” in Greek) of Athomite Monastery of the Rock of St. Simon (called “Simonos Petras” or just “Simonopetra” in Greek), the community that I know best on Mt. Athos. Mt. Athos since I had been there three times previous, staying for 6 weeks once during my Seminary training. The worship was wonderful and afterward, the married priest, Fr. Athanasios, invited us to a reception at which we addressed us and we learned about this community and the holy Elder Aimilianos who led the revival of Simonopetra in 1974 when he came with 15 young monks from Meteora.

The high point of our tour has been three full days for the men on Mt. Athos since I had been there three times previous, staying for 6 weeks once during my Seminary training. The worship was wonderful and afterward, the married priest, Fr. Athanasios, invited us to a reception at which we addressed us and we learned about this community and the holy Elder Aimilianos who led the revival of Simonopetra in 1974 when he came with 15 young monks from Meteora.

Our visits to the famous places where the Apostle Paul first preached the Gospel of Christ in Europe included ancient Neapolis (modern day Kavala), ancient Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea. In each place we read from his letters in the New Testament, learned more from our professional guide, observed each location and learned about the history of the site, lit candles and venerated sacred icons. In Thessalonica, we also visited the site of the house of Jason, where Paul and his missionary companions stayed, and visited various famous churches where there are the relics of great Saints, such as the basilica of St. Demetrios, the Metropolitan Church of St. Gregory Palamas, the church of Aghia Sophia. Since we were there for the feast of St. George on April 23, we first went to the small church of St. Haralampos for Vespers & Orthros in the evening. This is a dependency (called “Metochion” in Greek) of Athomite Monastery of the Rock of St. Simon (called “Simonos Petras” or just “Simonopetra” in Greek), the community that I know best on Mt. Athos since I had been there three times previous, staying for 6 weeks once during my Seminary training. The worship was wonderful and afterward, the married priest, Fr. Athanasios, invited us to a reception at which we addressed us and we learned about this community and the holy Elder Aimilianos who led the revival of Simonopetra in 1974 when he came with 15 young monks from Meteora.

Today we visit several monasteries at Meteora, a renowned area in Trikala where, many centuries ago, monks first began living in caves and later built monasteries on the top of striking rock formations that were virtually inaccessible except by very steep ropes and ladders. Due to the influx of tourism since the 1960’s, only 5 monasteries are left, but thousands continue to pour in from all over the world to see such extraordinary geological formations and visit these communities that are now much more easily reachable by roads.

After this, we will conclude our pilgrimage on the island of Corfu (Kerkyra in Greek) where the highlight will be worship and a visit to the famous Church of St. Spyridon that houses the oldest, complete, incorrupt body of the this 4th century Saint who lived on Cyprus. Following his death, his body never decayed so that the skin, although dried and darkened over the centuries, is still intact and people continue to experience his miraculous presence and the power of his prayer. We will be joined there by the protopsalti who has been with us for Holy Week and Easter – Haralampos and his wife, Christophora – who live and work in Corfu City and are excited to be with us in their “backyard.”

I feel a bit like the Apostle and Evangelist John who ended his Gospel by writing that there is so much more to tell. This brief article does not even touch on the marvelous fellowship we have also enjoyed over meals, during our bus rides, at breaks during the day, walking around sites, and staying at hotels. There is no question that we are growing to know and care for one another. Each of us will have his or her own insights and recollections to share with family and friends. As your pastor, I will be more than happy to share our group experiences in ways that serve to build up our own community in faith, hope, and love of Christ.

In the meantime, Christ is truly risen: we have seen and experienced his dynamic presence and action!

— Fr. Harry
Christos Anesti. Many thanks to all of the parishioners who assisted and participated in Holy Week activities. Our participation not only enriches our faith and our lives, but also makes a big difference in the life of the parish. Our thanks goes out to the Building and Grounds Committee for completing the purchase and installation of the beautiful new windows in time for Holy Week. The Council approved an amount of $4,500 for the replacement of a condenser at the Stamford Athletic Club for the women’s locker room. Contact: George Paparis

Treasurer’s Report
Statements for the March quarter will be ready by the end of April or early May. Contact: George Khouri

Stewardship Report
The number of people who showed up to help on the Saturday of Lazarus was amazing. People of all ages came to help make the crosses, clean and wax the pews and polish all the brass. It was truly a productive and happy crowd. Stewardship continues to be alive and growing in our Church. We have received in cash $182,600 for pledges. Remember, our goal for pledges was $365,000. Thank you all for your generosity. Contact: George Khouri

Capital Campaign
The Capital Campaign Committee met at the Church with Jerry Minetos from the Archdiocese on the evening of March 16th. The Chairman gave the Committee an update on the current position of the Campaign. Mr. Minetos then spoke with the Committee about the different stages which the Campaign will take and suggested a timeline. He then conducted a training session with the Committee, outlining potential approaches for solicitation and conducting a role-playing segment. Members present felt the session was rewarding. Contact: Elias Kulukundis

Buildings & Grounds
On April 1st, we witnessed the final installation of the three dome windows. We are all very proud of this installation that will serve us all for decades to come. At the Stamford Athletic Club, the new heating and ventilating unit serving the ladies locker room, Father George’s office, and the director’s office has been completed and is functioning satisfactorily. As of this date, we have a number of pending installations and repairs that are under consideration. They are: 1. Replacement of the boiler serving the church, hall and first floor classrooms. 2. A proposal for repair/replacement of our roadways, drainage areas, and driveways. 3. The terracotta roof tiles and copper flashing on the north and south sides of the church have been damaged due to ice formation this past winter. The Building and Grounds Committee is researching a solution to this problem. 4. The acceptance of a maintenance agreement to serve the pool’s air handling unit and controls. We have been having uncontrollable humidity concerns in this area. 5. Also under consideration is to supplement the mechanical maintenance contract by accepting an agreement with the Trane Company to service the computerized digital control system serving the church, hall, and first floor classrooms. Contact: Peter Licopantis, Nick Aivalis or Gregg Demetros

Master Planning Committee
The Committee held its second of three initial design meetings with our architect. We spent our time on the following points: Reconfiguring our rear entrance/exit; increased office space beyond what was originally contemplated; kitchen layout with more serving frontage, a functional island, and proper storage; conference room square footage; hall storage; rest room layouts; nursery school and playground positioning; preservation of parking spaces. Members of the Committee continue to work on a marketing piece for parishioners that will nicely summarize the overall task at hand. We have gotten an early glimpse of graphic renderings of the assembly hall and foyer entrance. We will be excited to share them when they are more developed. Our next meeting will likely take place at the very end of April. Contact Jason Konidaris
Adult Education
Adult Catechism resumes on Monday, May 11, following Fr. Harry’s return from the Pilgrimage to Greece. Compline 7 pm, Class at 7:30 pm. Bring your own questions about the Christian faith and life!

Memorial Prayers at Cemeteries
Fr. Harry will visit Cemeteries on Memorial Day, May 25. Here is a tentative schedule:
9:00 am — St. John’s (Darien)
9:45 am — Woodland
11:00 am — Fairfield Memorial
12:30 pm — Queen of Peace
1:00 pm — Putnam (Greenwich)

Petals are prepared to be scattered by children during Good Friday evening services.

Dena Mentavlos repairs the Epitaphion cloth for Good Friday services.

Marge Rubirosa and Jennifer and Sylvia George help to prepare Palm crosses on Saturday of Lazarus.

Another group of church ladies prepare palm crosses for Palm Sunday.
Seniors

The monthly Senior luncheon was held on April 8th. Father Poulos led us in singing of Christos Anesti and prayers. Following a brief business meeting, we all enjoyed a sumptuous and delicious meal. We announced The Church of The Annunciation’s dinner dance, “Taverna,” for the benefit of their Ladies Philoptochos charities. Nick Nikas, who took time off from his busy schedule, showed the Seniors the movie, Captain Corelli’s Mandolin. He also reminded everyone to make reservations for AHEPA’s major fundraiser on Saturday May 2nd at the Norwalk Inn, where the Greek and Church teachers of both churches will be honored, and for the benefit of the building of the new St. Nicholas shrine at Ground Zero. Come join the fellowship of our Seniors. Due to illness and mortality, it is unfortunate that we have lost many of our loved members. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday May 13th. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Erik Kung, who will talk about neuropathy. Contact: Peter Paspalis

Ladies Philoptochos Society

Christos Anesti! Thank you to all the ladies who contributed baked goods and money to help make the annual Palm Sunday Bake and Bread sale such a great success. This is truly a team effort and much fellowship and sharing was enjoyed by everyone who helped. All ladies of the parish and their friends are invited to the Annual Mother’s Day luncheon on May 16th at the Norwalk Inn. Come for fellowship and to acknowledge your wonderful mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, aunts, sisters and daughters. Tickets are $40. Please put your reservations and checks into the box set up outside the Church office by Sunday, May 10th. Payment in advance is much appreciated and will help avoid people waiting at the door to pay on the day of the event. At the March 31st meeting, our chapter members approved a $500 donation to the college funds set up by the Metropolis of Boston on behalf of the children of the late Fr. Matthew Baker, who died tragically in a car accident two months ago. In addition, we approved a $200 donation to the
Back to School Shop that will provide new clothing to low-income kindergarten to fifth grade Stamford students in August. Philoptochos members passed a tray on Palm Sunday and on Good Friday to benefit our parish and cover some Easter expenses. Thanks to all for your contributions. Our next meeting is Tuesday, May 5th at 7 p.m. in the Church Hall. Elections for new officers will take place at this meeting. Please join us. The District Archdiocesan Biennial Conference to elect district officers will take place May 30th at Holy Trinity Church in New Rochelle. Contact: Marion Vanson at 914-234-9420.

Church School
Christos Anesti! The Church School ministry would like to deeply thank all faculty, parents, and students who assisted in making our two Holy Week retreats (Saturday of Lazarus and Good Friday) successful and rich in faith, worship, and learning. Pre-school children to adolescents gathered to learn and participate in Holy Week-themed activities and to assist in preparing our Church for Holy Week. We would also like to again congratulate Aphrodite Haralabides for representing our parish at the district-level St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, which was held on April 25th. We are so very proud of her! The Church School program will celebrate its commencement on Sunday, May 17th, with a brief ceremony at the end of Holy Liturgy where students will receive a small gift as a token of our appreciation for their commitment to our program. Parents, please note that you should have received a survey requesting your feedback about educational summer opportunities for faith and culture, including proposed programs for a Vacation Bible School and also a Greek School Enrichment camp. Please take a few minutes and provide us with your feedback about our existing programs, as well as these proposed additions. Your feedback is critical. Wishing families a successful end to the academic year and a safe and restorative summer! Contact: Evelyn Bilias Lolis (ebilias@aol.com)

GOYA
Several GOYAns attended the Lenten retreat and participated in the palm preparation for Palm Sunday. It proved to be a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. Memorial Day Weekend is the Annual GOYA Olympics in Long Island. GOYAns are asked to be prepared to discuss their interest in this event. The joint volleyball team of the Annunciation/Archangels will be participating. Please visit the website at www.goado.com for more info. Contacts: Bill Giantomidis at Billgiant1@yahoo.com or Diane Skoparantzos at 203-550-6824.

Mission Trip – Project Mexico
Again this year, George Hazlaris, Pastoral Assistant at Our Savior Church in Rye, will be leading a mission team to “Project Mexico” to build a home for the homeless, from July 7-13. Fr. Harry, who has been involved in this ministry since 1995 and is a past Board member, is encouraging GOYAns and parents to sign up. This is an ideal introduction to missionary work since everything is very well organized:

- Orthodox groups travel from all over the U.S. and Canada and work together, building wonderful relationships at this ministry that is located just 2 hours south of San Diego, CA;
- Teens and adults need no previous experience, since everyone learns how to saw wood, hammer nails, and construct a simple, two room house with one door and two windows, with stucco exterior walls and a concrete floor;
- Everyone stay as St. Innocent Orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico, a converted horse ranch that has housed 25 orphaned Mexican boys for the last 25 years; we get to meet them, play soccer and basketball, have dinner, and get to know a working farm with animals and plants.
- The staff at Project Mexico organizes all building materials, screens and preselects a homeless family, provide orientation to the group(s), and guides our building
• There is an opportunity for a meal at a Mexican restaurant, shopping at a local outdoor flea market, and, after we return to the U.S., time in San Diego before we return. Every participant raises money (from family & friends) to cover:
  • Round trip airfare from New York to San Diego (guestimate: $500)
  • Registration fee & building supplies ($600)
  • Van rental (about $150/person)
  • Personal spending money

Well over 1,000 teenagers and adult chaperones have made this mission trip over the last 25 years. Everyone receives so much from the experience: a widening of our vision of the way the world really lives, new friendships, new understanding about life, and a renewal of faith. Contact: Fr. Harry

**Greek School**

Christos Anesti! Another year is coming to a close. Mark your calendars - the last week of Greek School is May 12th. The End of the Year Party will take place on May 19th from 4 pm – 7 pm at Bank Street Events located at 65 Bank Street in Stamford. Dinner will be served with a small Moving up Ceremony beginning at 6pm. Register early for the 2015/2016 year and receive an early bird special discount. Parents, please note that you should have received a survey requesting your feedback about educational opportunities for faith and culture, including proposed programs for a Vacation Bible School and also a Greek School Enrichment camp. Please take a few minutes and provide us with your feedback about our existing programs, as well as these proposed additions. Kai tou hronou! Contact: Rebecca Kelesidis at Rebecca@Kelesidis.com

Hope/Joy

Christos Anesti from Hope & Joy! On Easter Sunday, children who attended the Agape Vespers service participated afterwards in an Easter Egg Hunt on the Church lawn. A special visit from the Easter Bunny delighted adults and children alike. She passed out gifts and took pictures with many of the parishioners present. Thank you, Easter Bunny! Up ahead, we are looking forward to the outdoor liturgy and picnic at Cove Island on June 14th. We are in the midst of planning activities for the children, such as wiffleball, soccer, kite flying, potato sack races, a beanbag toss game, and more! Hope to see all of you at this special event. For more information or to get on our mailing list, please contact Chris and Luisa Nanos at cnanos@optonline.net or 203-609-0749.

**IOCC**

The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) with its church partner, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA), continues to work on the ground in Syria assisting refugees struggling for survival. In February, for example, attackers burned homes and churches in Northeastern Syria and seized over 150 Christian men as hostages, prompting over 2,400 Christians living in the region to flee and seek refuge at Orthodox Christian Churches in the Syrian towns of Hasakah and Qamishli. IOCC representatives in both towns are now providing the refugees with food and clothing. The IOCC has 28 active offices in Syria and has provided relief to over 2.5 million Syrians since the civil war began in 2012. For additional information, see the IOCC website at www.iocc.org. Contact our IOCC representative, Tim Harch, at timharch1@outlook.com.

**FREE Parent-Child Swim Classes**

For ages 6-18 months

**Thursdays May 7, 14, 21**

9:15 – 10:00am

Stamford Athletic Club

RSVP 203-357-7555

Church children prepare school and hygiene kits for IOCC to distribute to refugees.
Little Angels
At the Saturday of Lazarus retreat on April 4th, Little Angels ran an Easter Egg painting station, occupying and delighting many of the younger children who attended the retreat with their parents. It was a big mess…and a lot of fun! Children were able to take their eggs and other artwork home. On Saturday, April 18th, Little Angels finally held its own yoga class geared toward toddlers and preschoolers. Yogi Mark from the Stamford Athletic Center guided the children in songs and games and encouraged mothers to breathe and relax. We hope to repeat the event in the future. This past month, we welcomed two small babies on their 40 day blessing, Ophelia Katsouras and Aria Antonopoulos. We are still receiving donations for gifts we put together for these babies. Clothing items, icons, handmade cards and crafts, as well as small baby toys are needed. Please let us know what you can give! Next month, we hope to plan a park picnic/playdate or a visit to one of our area Nature Centers. We also hope to dedicate a day to sprucing up our designated classroom (#5) in the back of the building. If you are not on our email list and would like information about our events, please contact Anastasia Valassis at 516.582.0830 or avalassis@gmail.com.

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival
On Sunday, March 29th, Aphrodite Haralabidis presented her Senior Level Oratorical Festival speech before our community. Aphrodite is an 11th grader attending the Academy of Information Technology and Engineering in Stamford. Her excellent speech was on the topic “Women apostles, martyrs, and saints have spread the Gospel and advanced the Church from the beginning of Christianity. Discuss the significance of their roles and examples for all Christians today.” Aphrodite is only the second Archangels student to write and present an Oratorical Festival speech. She also represented the Archangels at the District Level Oratorical Festival on April 25th at Annunciation Church. We are so proud of her! We are hoping that with Aphrodite’s example, other students will commit to participating in the Oratorical Festival next year. Parents of all students in Grades 7-12, please consider encouraging your children in this endeavor. Kudos to Ritta Haralabidis, who has now had both her daughters, Dina and Aphrodite, participate! Contact: Anastasia Valassis at avalassis@gmail.com

Pilgrimage to Greece
Fr. Harry & Presvytera Kerry are leading a Pilgrimage of 16 members to northern Greece from April 20 – May 4. The trip includes: Thessalonica (Church of St. Demetrios and area monasteries), Mt. Athos, Convent of Annunciation in Ormylia, Meteora, Philippi, and Corfu (Shrine of St. Spyridon). Following the pilgrimage they will visit relatives before retuning on May 9.

Wish List
Office Remodeling - $3,000 (for painting, carpeting, and electrical work). We are very grateful for more than $2,000 that has already been donated.
**Graduations**
Please submit names of all graduates from High School, Technical School, College, and Graduate School, along with degree earned, honors received, and future plans for more education or work. Contact: Jane Vorvis (203-348-4216) or Basil Vanech (basilnv@att.net).

**40-Day Churching**
April 19 – John Antonopoulos, son of Demetri & Aria Antonopoulos, a new family in our area.

**Baptisms**
April 18 – Emilia Anne Pasvankias, second child of Megan & John Pasvankias; Sponsors: Victoria Valentina Kozova & Constantine Pasvankias
April 26 – Keegan Patrick Jennings, third child of Jennifer & Christopher Jennings; Sponsor: Joan Bolanis

**Wedding**
April 18 – Daphne Stavropoulos & Robert Papp; Sponsor: Andreas Stavropoulos

---

**AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

**AHEPA**
The Stamford AHEPA Sesquiennial Dinner Dance and Fundraiser for the benefit of our Church and Greek schools and the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Shrine at Ground Zero will take place on Saturday, May 2nd at 6pm at the Norwalk Inn and Conference Center. It will include a generous appetizer buffet, prime rib dinner and live music by the Islanders, for $60 per person. At the event, we will honor our Greek school and Sunday school teachers to show our appreciation for their work in helping preserve our heritage. Our monthly chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, May 13th at 7:30 pm at the Church of the Annunciation. On Friday, May 15th, also at Annunciation Church, we will sponsor a presentation on “The History of the Greek Language” by George Syrimis, Lecturer and Program Coordinator of the Yale Hellenic Studies Program. Contact Nicholas Nikas 203-554-5570 niketes@yahoo.com

**Stamford Athletic Club – Greek Cultural Center**
We are proud to announce that for three years in a row, Stamford Athletic Club has been voted Best Fitness Center of Stamford by the Stamford Plus Magazine. We continue to serve the Stamford community with a clean, comfortable and high quality fitness environment and our members and Facebook fans have shown their appreciation with their votes! Latest improvements are repair of the humidity sensors in the pool area and a new HVAC unit to service the Ladies Locker Room. If you’d like a tour of the Club and may be interested in starting a fitness program or joining to enjoy our pool, sauna or steam rooms, please contact Glenn Colarossi, glenn@sacnews.com.

**Reminder — SAC is offering three FREE Parent-Child Swim lessons with Nancy Mourtides, Thursdays, May 7, 14 & 21st from 9:15-10 am.**
Contact Angela Colarossi, 203-357-7555 or Nancy Mourtides 203-847-1870. Contact: Glenn Colarossi

---

**Mother’s Day Luncheon**
Saturday, May 16 • 12:00 to 4:00 pm
Hosted by Archangels Ladies Philoptochos Society
Norwalk Inn & Conference Center • 99 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT • Tickets: $40
Please join us to celebrate mothers, daughters, grandmothers, godmothers, aunts, sisters, and girlfriends. All ladies are welcome!
For more information, contact Diane Sierpina at 203-554-6932 or sierpina@yahoo.com or Marion Vanson at marionvanson@yahoo.com
Please RSVP and provide payment by check or cash by Sunday, May 10 (Make checks payable to Ladies Philoptochos Society)

Name ____________________________ 2nd Name ____________________________
3rd Name ____________________________ 4th Name ____________________________
Email: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________
Amount Enclosed ($40 each) ____________ Choice of Meals: Salmon ____________ Prime Rib ____________