



The Herald

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

March 2016

Why We All Need Spiritual Direction

There is no one alive today who is not being formed spiritually all the time. The real issue is not whether we are being formed, but how: either toward God or away from God. Whether or not we are attending worship services regularly, in fellowship or serving others – the key is how we are being formed (or not formed) by Jesus Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, most studies of Christians across the board show that our behavior and lifestyle are not noticeably different from those who are not Christians.

If there was ever a period in the history of our Church when guidance and accountability were not really necessary, I would argue that it would have been the first generation of Christians after the Resurrection of Jesus. Small but dynamic communities sprang up in places like Corinth, Thessalonica, and Rome, as the letters of Paul the Apostle testify in our New Testament. Many sacrificed the most precious thing they had - their own life — to stay loyal to the Lord as martyrs in a world of easy and false compromises.

Yet what did these first believers do?

Far from taking the safe way out by practicing their faith in secret, the record shows the opposite: they risked family, job, property, and life to attend communal gatherings of worship, instruction and fellowship that were under the supervision of apostles, bishops and presbyters (priests). No one would have ever dreamed that he or she was self-taught or self-guided in the new way of life brought by

Christ. Everyone instinctively and naturally recognized the need for spiritual direction from those appointed to pastoral leadership.

In fact, this became a hallmark of the Orthodox way of life that is variously called “having a Spiritual Father” or “Spiritual Direction.” Oddly enough, this should really come as no surprise. Most professions in history involved living with and learning from an experienced mentor who would not just transmit the technical aspects of, say, plowing a field or selecting wood. He would also hand over the spirit of farming or carpentry, how to run a small business and deal with the public, all the while managing family and personal life. Even when the student “graduated” and went into business for himself, consultation and collaboration continued.

Do we have the same outlook today?

Here are a few aspects of spiritual formation for everyone who wants to mature in Christ:

1. Learning specific activities such as worship and prayer, meditation and study, silence, solitude, and confession;
2. Shaping our inner life – our conscience, feelings, thinking, memory, and willpower;
3. Allowing ourselves to be formed by the Holy Spirit through the life of the Church, and
4. Discerning God’s presence and activity in the events of everyday life.

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Foundational is a voluntary surrender of our desire to control (our ego) in order first to hear what Christ actually teaches and then to practice this in our daily life. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus specifically commissioned the apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Just as Jesus taught the apostles, so the apostles taught others, and the process has continued through the ages from generation to generation.

Still, we will only be able to do this by depending on grace: God's extraordinary free gift to us in Christ that we do not deserve and can never earn. The Lord knows this because, when he discovered that Peter, Chief of the Apostles, failed to stay alert, he stated, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Another way to say this is that, after Baptism, spiritual direction becomes crucial in order for us to continually put off the old self (which is dominated by self-centered thinking) in order to put on the new self (which is dominated by Christ-centered living).

As we permit ourselves to be shaped by God's Word through the life of the Orthodox Church, we are transformed from the inside out and are enabled to perceive the true meaning of what is happening in and around us, recognize the presence and movement of Christ among us, and gradually exhibit the fruits of the Holy Spirit that others recognize: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

One of our typical failings as adults in the Greek Orthodox Church today is precisely our laziness or indifference to seek and receive grace everywhere it is offered: in worship services and Sacraments; through prayer, fasting, and alms-giving; in the Bible, hymns, lives of Saints, and devotional resources; through fellowship, service and missions. Another serious issue is the increase of distraction: we have become so preoccupied with responsibilities and devices (television, computer, smart phones) that we have great difficulty learning how to listen to God speak in our hearts and lives.

I was required at Seminary to have a spiritual father. Thank God I was not left to my own devices! Older, wiser men showed me love, furthered my training in faith, and guided me through the labyrinth of life. I have no clue where I'd be today without them, but I have no doubt I am a much better person.

Jesus Christ died to give us life here and now as a miraculous appearing of the Kingdom of God breaking into the goodness and tragedy of our confusing world. He is determined to keep on shaping us more into his own likeness.

But this doesn't happen by accident. Or by our good intentions.

It can only happen with genuine, loving, and wise spiritual direction and guidance within the Church. We need someone outside our own small worlds to help us see the larger world of God's glorious calling. We are about to enter into the holiest period of the year - Great Lent – the perfect time to receive one of the extraordinary treasures of the Orthodox Christian way of life – spiritual direction. I want you to seize the opportunity!

- Fr. Harry

PASTORAL QUESTION & ANSWER

Question: When does the priest attend receptions for baptisms, weddings and memorials?

Answer: Whenever he is invited. Unless Fr. Harry (or for that matter, any other priest) receives such an invitation in advance (so that they can properly schedule it), he does not attend or cannot properly prepare. As long as his schedule permits, Fr. Harry welcomes such fellowship with everyone in the parish but respects the right to privacy.



Fr. Harry and Kerry at the refugee camp in Idoumeni with co-workers, members of "Agape," an ecumenical, philanthropic organization based in Thessaloniki

GUIDELINES FOR GREAT LENT

(begins March 14)

Let's take advantage of the various ways that the Church offers us – as persons, couples, and families – to observe this sacred season:

- Worship services (other than Sundays):
 - † Saturdays of Souls – the first 3 Saturdays in March (5 – here; 12 – at Annunciation; 12 – here), when we remember our departed loved ones and bring a bowl of kolyva (boiled wheat)
 - † Great Compline on Mondays at 7 pm
 - † Sacrament of Confession (w/o appointment) on Wednesdays at 4:45 pm, followed by Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at 5:45 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: use your own Bible.
- Devotional reading – we can read something inspirational and challenging, such as *Great Lent*, by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. This is a modern classic that explores the meaning of the entire season.
- Fasting:
 - † Spirit – reduce our dependence on entertainment (such as television, movies, athletic events, web surfing, gambling), and shopping for luxuries and non-necessities. Then we can use this time instead to attend worship, pray at home, read something devotional, or help someone in need. We can identify one bad habit and battle it (e.g., smoking, drinking, overworking, anger, laziness, pride, lust, carelessness) and build a good habit instead (e.g., compassion, self-control, sensitivity to loved ones).
 - † Food – let us reduce the amount we eat every day (e.g., smaller portions, fewer snacks), and simplify and lighten our diet. The traditional prescription is to eat vegetables, beans, fruit, nuts and grains, and to eliminate all meat and meat by-products (red & white meat, along with milk, cheese, butter & eggs) and boned fish. Olive oil and wine are allowed on weekends. If this seems too demanding or impractical, we can consider abstaining from meat but eating some dairy.

Bottom line: we are not really fasting unless we change our diet to challenge and inconvenience us. The purpose is greater self-control so that the Holy Spirit can liberate us from our compulsive drives and lighten ourselves physically in order to love God and others more fully. Note: pregnant or nursing mothers, children under the age of 7, and those who are already very weak due to sickness or old age are not required to fast.

- † Give alms: we are called to 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 a local charity such as Domus or Inspirica (formerly St. Luke's LifeWorks). With the money we save by not spending it on ourselves, we can support missionary work (such as the Orthodox Christian Mission Center – www.ocmc.org) or philanthropic outreach (such as the International Orthodox Christian Charities – www.iocc.org - or Emmaus House in Harlem).

Sacrament of Confession

Holy Confession is the most neglected and misunderstood Sacrament. What a tragedy and missed opportunity! An excellent article by best-selling author and theologian Jim Forest can help inform and inspire us, "Confession: the Healing Sacrament" (available at church and through our web site). Both Fr. Harry and Fr. George are available by appointment; as well, Fr. Harry will be available without an appointment on Wednesdays during Lent at 4:45 pm. Even if we are not burdened by something specific, receiving Confession is an annual spiritual check-up, an invaluable way to grow in Christ, draw nearer to one another, and is the best preparation by far for receiving Holy Communion. In addition, it affords the precise gift of Spiritual Direction (see lead article).

Special General Assembly

On Sunday, March 20, immediately after Liturgy in church we will conduct a limited (one-item) Special General Assembly in order to elect two members in good standing to represent our parish at the upcoming Direct Archdiocesan District Clergy-Laity Assembly on Saturday, April 2. They would join Fr. Harry and Jason Konidaris, Parish Council President, as voting members.

ADMINISTRATION

Parish Council

Thank you for the very warm welcome you have extended to our new members and officers. Your positive emails and comments make it that much more rewarding to serve you. At our last meeting we resolved as a group to provide the parish with intra-year financial updates. You deserve to be aware, as the year progresses, of how *we* are progressing. Are we sticking to budget? Are we finding efficiencies? Are we fulfilling the portion of our stated intent to put us on logical ground? To that end, expect an additional assembly presentation with detailed handouts after the second quarter, either June or September, to be determined. Please note a more prominent narthex sign-in for visitors and new parishioners. It reflects our genuine interest in reaching out to new faces not only at coffee, but also throughout the week via electronic mailings, invitations, and even this Herald. Stamford is a vibrant city with new families moving in. We want to extend ourselves to them. For Holy Week we would like to secure a Protopsalti (head chanter). At the same time, this Council is resolute about sticking to its 2016 budget. We are exploring creative ways to satisfy both needs. Contact: Jason Konidaris

Treasurer's Report

The 2015 year-end report should be ready for the next issue of the Herald as we are finishing up our internal reconciliation. The Council plans to present current-year 2016 figures to the parish more than one time per year. It is a healthy exercise and will go a long way toward clarity and understanding of what it takes to run a parish. Details relating to on-line contributions will be sent out shortly. We are grateful to George Nanos, Joe Samra, and Basil Vanech for their work on this project. Contact: Elias Lolis

Stewardship Report

We would like to thank our many stewards who regularly and joyfully provide their time, talents, and treasures to the Church of the Archangels. God has blessed us all with spiritual and material abundance. Sharing these gifts with the Church and others in need is a great way to grow in faith and center our lives on Jesus Christ and the Gospel. We would like to update you on one administrative item. We have recently received several requests from parishioners asking the Church to provide them with written acknowledgement of their financial contributions. This is a very appropriate suggestion and we are working to make this happen. Lastly, in late February, our Archangels Financial Services networking and fellowship group held

its first meeting – a dinner at a local restaurant. It was a great opportunity for members of our church working for financial services companies to compare notes about their careers and get to know each other better as individuals and fellow believers. We hope to have additional meetings in the future. If you have any questions about Stewardship or the financial services meeting group, please contact Tim Hartch at timhartch1@outlook.com.

Buildings & Grounds

Many thanks go out to Steve Sarigianis, our Pastoral Assistant. He has kept a watchful eye on our heating system for the church, church hall and first floor classrooms. His diligent monitoring has resulted in improved comfort levels. During the past month, we had the church's boiler and domestic hot water systems inspected. Some very minor improvements are in the making. At the Stamford Athletic Club, we have had the fairly new skylights (4) develop leaks. It was discovered they were damaged during shipping and will be replaced under warranty. Additionally, two of the newly installed light fixtures at the back of the gym have failed, which also are under warranty and will be replaced in early March. Lastly, somewhat of a chronic problem has been the hot water system that serves the center's showers and wash rooms. This has not resulted in membership concerns. We are soliciting bids and this matter will be corrected shortly. Contact: Peter Licopantis, Nick Aivalis or Gregg Demetros



Syrian children with inquisitive and longing looks



Tent of "Wardrobe Crew Eidomeni" where Fr Harry and Presvytera Kerry, with other volunteers, ministered to Syrian refugees and others at the border with FYROM (Macedonia) on Feb 11



Part of tent city in this small Greek village that had been overrun with refugees and migrants since last summer

Capital Campaign

Since the report last month, there have been four new pledges to the Capital Campaign totaling just under \$ 90,000, bringing the total pledged to date to approximately \$ 1,150,000 from 59 individuals/families. Cash received from pledges in the month since the last report has increased by \$47,150, bringing the total received to date from pledges to \$834,566.62. Total cash collected to date is \$868,896.62. This includes contributions toward the \$250,000 Matching Grant. We continue to provide the Anonymous Matching Grant Donor with quarterly updates and supporting material to substantiate our progress. Progress in that regard has been encouraging and I hope that we will reach the threshold by the June quarter. Payment of the grant will follow at some subsequent time as provided for in the Agreement.

Notwithstanding the encouraging progress to date, there is still a long way to go. We still need \$ 350,000 in new pledges spread over a three-year period to reach the preset hurdle allowing us to commence construction. And, after taking the matching grant into account, another \$450,000 in three-year pledges is needed to reach our final goal.

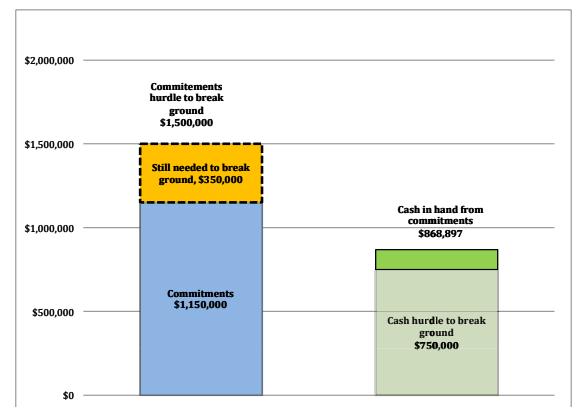
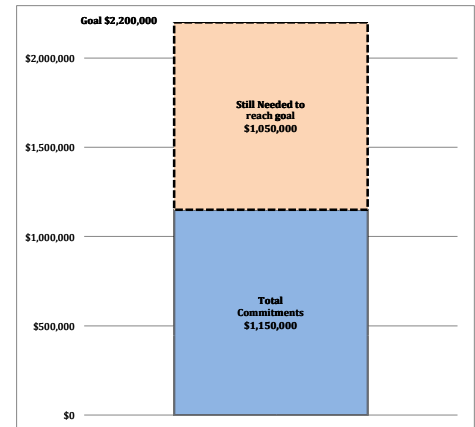
This week, a mailing including the brochure and a pledge card has been sent out to some two hundred members of the community who have not yet been contacted by members of our solicitation team. We ask those who receive it to consider the contents carefully and to make a meaningful pledge over three years in accordance with their resources and other obligations. And I urge the same to those of you who may have been contacted already by one of our solicitors, but have not yet sent in a pledge. The more pledges we have in hand, the sooner we will be able to start construction.

On Wednesday the 17th, I was invited as Chairman of the Committee to say a few words about the Campaign to the Seniors. The opportunity to speak with them and bring

them personally up to date was very much appreciated. I would be happy to visit with any other Church groups to discuss the Campaign, if they should be so inclined.

The Campaign is all about a project which was asked for by the Community, and which is designed both to upgrade and rationalize the office and communal spaces in the parish building. It is a project that will benefit everyone in the Church. It is a project that will bring us all closer together as a Community, working together to bring it to pass. If you have not already done so, please make as generous a pledge as you are able at your earliest convenience. Committee

members are available to answer your questions. Working all together, we shall make it happen. Contact: Elias Kulukundis



Master Planning Committee

The full committee met recently and settled several outstanding items. We reached consensus on interior ramp layout to accommodate the physical abilities of all our parishioners. We agreed on our storage needs and finalized floor-plan edits. We launched into budget reallocation – aligning estimated construction costs with our financial abilities. We tasked JGRA, our architectural firm, to proceed to formal drawings. Redniss & Mead has been tasked with land surveying and civil engineering necessary to prepare us for the next phase of our work – putting the project's construction component out to bid. Let's all do our part with the Capital Campaign to make these good works a reality. Contact: Jason Konidaris

MINISTRIES

Mardi Gras Dance Brings Wonderful Fellowship

Close to 200 adults and children came out to enjoy the festive Archangels Annual Mardi Gras Celebration at Bank Street Events in Stamford on Friday, Feb. 26th. Guests enjoyed mezedes, live DJ music, a delicious buffet dinner of Greek specialties and wonderful Greek pastries and other desserts. Many families enjoyed taking photos of themselves at the interactive photo booth wearing funny props and signs. These were flashed all night on a big screen adjacent to the dance floor to the delight of guests! Children of various ages enjoyed face painting, balloon animals, cotton candy and a magic show while adults enjoyed the company of family and friends and filled the dance floor to the sounds of Greek favorites. Many thanks to Chairpersons Steve and Margaret Fornaciari and to Nikki Glekas, owner of Bank Street Events and the very attentive hostess, for organizing this fabulous celebration – a wonderful way for all to enjoy fellowship before the start of the Lenten period. Congratulations to the winners of the raffle: First prize: Tommy Nanos; Second prize: Peter Nanos; Third prize: Johnny Konidaris and Fourth prize: Fay Pavlidis. A big thank you to our generous parishioners who donated the raffle prizes: Natalie Kulukundis (donated the \$250 Apple gift card), Peter Vorvis (donated a \$100 New Wave gift card) and Connie and Dimitri Begetis (donated the wine and stationery baskets). All proceeds from the raffle will benefit the church. We also thank the Archangels Greek School for funding the entertainment for the children. We hope to see everyone again next year at the Mardi Gras event!

Worship in Great Lent (March 14 – April 22)

• Each week:

- † Mondays – Great Compline 7-8 pm (psalms, prayers, & hymns)
- † Wednesdays – Sacrament of Confession 4:45 – 5:45 pm without appointment; Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 5:45 – 7 pm, followed by Lenten supper (7 – 7:30 pm) & Orthodoxy 101 Class (7:30 – 8:30 pm)
- † Fridays – Small Compline with Salutations to the Theotokos (Χαιρετισμοί) 7 – 8:15 pm

Sacrament of Confession offered throughout by mutual appointment with either Fr. George or Fr. Harry.



Parishioners enjoy fellowship at Mardi Gras 2016!



Clowns interact with children

Blessing of Homes and Businesses

The annual brief blessing service continues. 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. Please note that no honorarium is sought or needed, since this is part of Fr. Harry's normal responsibilities. To schedule an appointment contact either Jane in the office (203-348-4216) or Fr. Harry directly (frharry@archangelsgoc.org).

Adult Education

- On Aging – the final two presentations on Monday evenings at 7 pm are:
 - † Mar 7 – Ms. Maria Scaros Mercado, “Creative Aging: Redefining Yourself after 50”
 - † Mar 21 – Fr. Harry, “The Spirituality of Aging: Opportunities & Challenges”
- † Light refreshments are served; these are free and open to the public so bring a friend!
- Orthodoxy 101 – Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm (following Liturgy and Lenten Dinner). A new course taught by Fr. Harry to introduce the basics of the Christian way of life in the dynamic Tradition of the Orthodox Church; open to long time members who wish to learn, those who want to join the Orthodox Church, and seekers who simply want to know more about who we are. Basic texts: *Introducing the Orthodox Church*, and *Sacred Symbols that Speak*, both by Fr. Anthony Coniaris.

Annunciation and Greek Independence

Here are the area events surrounding these twin observances:

- Thursday, March 24 – Great Vespers 7 pm at Annunciation Church with area clergy and festive reception afterwards
- Friday, March 25
 - † Orthros 8:30 am, Liturgy 9:30 am at Annunciation Church
 - † Flag Raising Program 12 noon at Government Center
 - † Reception follows
- Tuesday, March 29 – Greek School program, followed by reception
- Sunday, April 10 – Annunciation/Greek Independence Day parade in New York City 1 pm

Head Chanter During Holy Week

Mr. Haralampos Kourgiantakis, Professor of Religion and Head Chanter (Protopsalti) 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 (at least \$750/person), as well as to supplement a stipend of (around \$1,500). They will stay at the home of Fr. Harry and Kerry.

Seniors

Our February Kali Parea Lunch was on February 17, due to inclement weather. Pam Koutroubis called the meeting to order and Father George opened the meeting with a prayer. Lunch was delicious. Congratulations to Kathy Moschos. Elian Kulukundis joined us and spoke about all. He was very informative. Elian also suggested that the group consider making a pledge within our means toward the capital campaign. No pledge is too small!

We were entertained by the Silver Tones. They brought us all back to memory lane. They were excellent! Thank you to Joan Bolanis for making all the arrangements. We are planning some upcoming trips for the spring, so bring your friends to join Kali Parea. Our next luncheon is March 10th. Looking forward to seeing all of you at this luncheon. We wish Bill Grosso a speedy recovery and hope to see him at our next meeting. If you have not paid your dues for 2016, please do so. Contacts: Peter Licopan-tis, or Pam Koutroubis.



Dr Evgenia Littrivis, Geriatrician and member of our parish, presents on "Palliative, Hospice Care and Advanced Directives" on Feb 22, the first of 4 part series on Aging

Ladies Philoptochos Society

At our February meeting, we voted to give \$2,000 to Father Harry to purchase some needed winter items for the refugees in a camp in Eidomeni, Greece. Father Harry reported that 1,400 hats, gloves, and scarves were purchased and donated. Aside from these purchases, 25 Euros were given to vetted people with nothing for train fare to Serbia for work and settlement. We could not give this much needed assistance without the help and support of our parish and we are deeply grateful to all who donate and support our mission. Philoptochos is gearing up for our Palm Sunday Bake Sale. Please order and prepay for the delicious breads made by nuns in Pennsylvania. Please consider joining one of our baking groups (baking schedule to be announced soon), or donating baked goods from home, or contributing money for ingredients. We are most

appreciative of any help you can offer. Our annual Mother's Day Luncheon will be held on May 14th at the Norwalk Inn. This is a fun and relaxing event for women and their families. Please save the date. It's also time to put unwanted household items aside for our biannual tag sale to be held June 3rd and 4th. Philoptochos always welcomes new members! Contact Marion Vanson at marion-vanson@yahoo.com

Church School

The Church School Program successfully completed its first project for Philanthropy Sunday, our new monthly whole-school service learning activity. Students from ages 2-16 designed personalized placemats for Meals on Wheels Association of America, a national organization that delivers meals to those in need in the local community. Our students engaged in a brief lesson on compassion and philanthropic service and then worked on their service projects. Upon completion of each placemat, each student individually selected and inscribed a verse from 1 Corinthians 13 on their project. Each placemat will be laminated and delivered alongside a meal to a local community member in need. Our next Philanthropy Sunday will be on Sunday, March 20, 2016. We welcome ideas for service projects at the local, national, or international level. Our Church School program will be working this month on an exhibit of student work in preparation for the dual celebration of the Great Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day alongside the Greek School. Lastly, please save the date! Our 2nd Annual Vacation Bible Camp will be held the week of August 1st-5th. Camp registration will launch this month and an e-registration form will be emailed shortly. Wishing everyone a blessed Lent! . Kali Sarakosti! We look forward to sharing this observance alongside your children every Sunday. Contact: Evelyn Biliadis (ebiliadis@aol.com)



Church School students proudly display the placemats they drew for a Meals on Wheels community service project.

Oratorical Festival

Parents of students in grades 7-12, have you and your child(ren) discussed the Oratorical festival yet? Please see emails for information, as well as the packets available in the church hall. We have had a generous donation of \$200 toward prizes for our finalists. We are hoping that someone can match it, in order to offer up to \$100 to every Junior and Senior division finalist.

On March 6th, we will hold a writing workshop to help encourage students in the process! March 20th is slotted as our parish festival date after liturgy. Please attend and support the brave efforts of our students! This is a unique and special program, and we hope this year to represent our community proudly with our own finalists advancing to the district festival that we will host on April 16th. Questions or comments? Contact: Anastasia Valassis, avalassis@gmail.com

Greek School

March madness has begun for the Greek School. On March 14th, Great Lent begins with a service and reception at Annunciation Church in Stamford. On March 25, 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. The annual Greek Independence Day/Annunciation Performance will be on Tuesday, March 29, at 4:00 pm. There will be a short performance, followed by a pot luck brunch. The Greek Independence Day Parade in NYC is April 10 at 1:45pm, from 64th street to 79th street. Next PTO Meeting is March 8, 5:30 p.m. Contact: PTO Board Rebecca Kelesidis Rebecca@Kelesidis.com

GOYA

February was a lighter month for the GOYA. On Sunday, February 7th we held our monthly meeting in the hall (not in the library as is typical) on account of the large number of teens and parents attending; our GOYA ministry is growing! The teens and parents came together at the end of the meeting for a sobering and much needed discussion about suicide, led by Father Harry. It was a sensitive and raw topic for the group as the week before a junior from Stamford took his own life. His suicide shook up the whole community and many of our teens were affected. Father Harry and I are working to create a small pamphlet on suicide that will be distributed to our parents and teens. Contact: Steve Sarigianis at sjsarge@gmail.com

Keep in mind the upcoming events for March 2016:

- **Sunday, Mar. 6th ~ Monthly Meeting** in the Library.
- **Monday, Mar. 14th ~ Clean Monday Retreat** from 6-8pm at Annunciation; open youth and adults of all ages.
- **Sunday, Mar. 20th ~ Oratorical Festival** in the church after Liturgy; this is the local level competition for youth just from our community.
- **Saturday, Mar. 26th ~ Movie Outing** with Annunciation GOYA to see "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2".

***Registration for **Camp Saint Paul** opens on **March 7th!** To apply, please visit: <http://www.campsaintpaul.org>

Family Movie Night

On **Saturday, March 5th at 5:30pm in the church hall**, we will be hosting our next *Family Movie Night*, open to all ages! The critically acclaimed 2010 movie "Despicable Me" will be screened. Join us for an enjoyable evening of family fun that will include a free pizza dinner (for goodwill offering), the feature presentation, and a meaningful discussion to conclude. Hope to see you there.



Hope/Joy

Children, parents, grandparents and friends of Hope & Joy went to Atria senior living facility on Saturday, February 13th for our "Valentine Visit." We made festive Valentine's Day cards with and for the residents. Afterwards, many children performed an act of their choosing for the group, including a piano performance, several songs, and poems. Following the visit, many of us met for lunch at Cosi restaurant. The seniors were overwhelmed with the happiness of spending such quality time with the youth as evidenced by the tears of joy in their eyes. This opportunity for the children to interact with people of a different gen-

eration was a positive and uplifting experience for all present. We sincerely thank everyone who participated. If you are not on our e-mail list and would like to participate in our ministry, please contact us at cnanos@optonline.net or 203-249-7403. Chris and Luisa Nanos



Hope & Joy group pauses for a picture while making Valentine's Day cards with the residents of Atria senior living facility.



Maria Paschalidis performs a song for the seniors.

Little Angels

Little Angels continues to do what it can to embrace the youngest members of our community. Please bring in baby gifts like clothes, toys and books, as well as hand-made cards or crafts for older children to our Little Angels classroom (#5). Items must all be new. We package these and offer them as gifts for baby blessings in the church.

On Saturday, April 9th from 10 am-12 pm, we will have a Family Fitness Day at the Stamford Athletic Club Gym across the parking lot! We need adults- dads particularly- to run different activities for the children, such as relay races and simple ball games. We will offer snacks and refreshments at the conclusion of our activities. Please RSVP for the event if possible and let us know if you can help! Contact: Anastasia Valassis, avalassis@gmail.com

Athletics

Sadly, the season is over for the Senior men's basketball team. After finishing the regular season with a 7-4 record (going 6-1 in their final 7 games), the team lost in the first round of the playoffs this past Sunday in a very close game. A special word of thanks is to be given to John Skoparantzios for his time and dedication to coaching this season; finishing with a 7-5 record in his first year is laudable. The future looks good for the Senior men.

The JV and Varsity girls' volleyball teams have now finished regular season play. Their records are 5-1, and 4-4, respectively. Good luck to our girls as they move on the playoffs!

Young Adults

On Thursday, February 18th at John the Baker restaurant, seven young adults came together for a GOYA Reunion. As advertised, it was a laid back evening that brought together old friends who rekindled their spirits. A very positive energy could be felt all evening as we shared warm memories of past events and retold entertaining stories from the days in GOYA. Those in attendance realized how much fun we were (and still are!). Gradually the discussion shifted towards that which we could do as a new entity within the church. These young adults shared their common desire to gather often, enjoy fellowship, and participate in something meaningful. In other words, their hopes are to grow a ministry for young adults. This Reunion was a good start for what we hope to be a lively and active Young Adult ministry.

Along these lines, a *potluck dinner* is being scheduled during Great Lent; more info to come.

IOCC

Father Harry and Presbyteria Kerry recently returned from a trip to Greece where they spent a day providing assistance to refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries who are living in a camp near the border between Greece and FYROM. As they saw firsthand, these refugees are in need of real help now. One of the main organizations providing such assistance is the International Orthodox Christian Charities. The IOCC is one of the only organizations operating on the ground within Syria. It has recently begun providing life-saving and other critical surgeries in several Syrian cities where the local hospitals are no longer operating. The IOCC is also providing medical care and other assistance to refugees in multiple nearby countries including Jordan, Lebanon, and Greece. You can help by making a financial gift at

www.iocc.org or mailing a check to IOCC, P.O. Box 17398, Baltimore, MD 21297. We are also exploring the possibility of assisting a refugee family coming to this country. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact Tim Hartch at timhartch1@outlook.com.

Stamford Athletic Club @ the Greek Cultural Center

Thanks again to all who came after services on Sunday, February 7, to SAC. If you are not a member yet, please know you can come over any time to take a tour during our normal business hours. SAC continues to expand. Membership is up as our referral program, where a current member gets a FREE month for a successful referral, has been highly successful and continues to run. We will begin to open our doors at 7am on Saturdays starting March 12. Several area cricket teams now use the batting cages, as well as Legion baseball and Stamford Little League. A highly successful area program, High Rise basketball, will begin in April. A high energy group class, Tabata, will begin on Thursday evenings. Our swim program, Take Me to The Water, already has established a great foundation after only a few weeks. Look for many more updates and continue to provide SAC with your feedback. Contact Jeff Kaminski (GM) or Jason Konidaris (Parish Council)

Pilgrimage to Cuba

Last week, 28 of us returned from an informative pilgrimage to Cuba. Formally atheist, Cuba is now the home of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. This beautiful Byzantine structure is located next to the Plaza de San Francisco in Old Havana. In 2004, His All Holiness Bartolomeo traveled to Cuba for the consecration of the church. At that time, Fidel Castro donated to the parish the land on which the church was built. Among tropical plantings in the church courtyard is a colorful, tiled baptismal font that has been used for the baptism of over 2,500 Orthodox Christians. Metropolitan Athenagoras of Central America, Cuba and the Caribbean, came to join us those few days and to educate us about his good works of spreading the message of the Orthodox Church throughout this area of the world. On Sunday, we attended the Divine Liturgy, led by the humble and eloquent Father Athenagoras, a Colombian convert to Orthodoxy, who learned the faith and language at a seminary in Greece. The liturgy, no different than that which we experience here at Archangels, was conducted in Spanish and Greek with full parish participation. After service, we socialized in the courtyard with locally made sweets and coffee. Our

gifts of medications, vitamins, etc., were quietly left at the church to be distributed to the parishioners. It has been an eye-opening experience to learn of the thousands of faithful who are embracing Orthodoxy in this once almost exclusively Roman Catholic region. Our prayers were left

with Archbishop Athenagoras, Father Athenagoras and the two other Cuban Orthodox priests, Fathers Nicholas and Ioannis, to continue their ministry for the faithful of Cuba. Contact: Vicki Kyriakos



St Nicholas Church, Havana, Cuba



PARISH NEWS

Wedding

February 28 – Theodore Tsagaris & Alana Cunningham; sponsor was Chris Tsagaris.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

AHEPA

Our middle name is “Educational”, and these are the educational opportunities we make available: (1) AHEPA Yankee District #7 Scholarships: For College and Graduate School Students. High school seniors are NOT eligible. Must be member of AHEPA Family or child of a member. Administered and funded by the District. Application deadline: April 15. <http://www.ahepad7.org/>. (2) The AHEPA National Scholarship program: For high school seniors, college and post-graduate students who are looking to become tomorrow’s leaders. Must be member of AHEPA Family or child of a member. Administered and funded by the AHEPA National Educational Foundation. Application deadline: March 31. (3) AHEPA Athletic Awards: Five athletic/scholastic awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000; 1 for college students, 3 for high school students, 1 unspecified. Administered nationally by the AHEPA Department of Athletics. Application deadline: May 1. (4) AHEPA Yankee District #7 Hellenic History Tournament: For high school students who win the tournament based on their superior knowledge of the history of the Hellenes. Administered by the District and local student participation is funded (sponsored) by the local

chapter. Additional information: Registration deadline: June 30, Tournament November 12. (5) AHEPAcademy: Attention Greek-American High School Juniors! Apply for the opportunity to be one of a small group of students selected from all over the country to participate in an interactive leadership and networking seminar to be held on the campus of George Mason University outside Washington, DC, usually the last week of June or July. Administered nationally. This is an educational opportunity, not a scholarship, but a chapter may sponsor local students who are accepted to the national program. Early action application deadline: March 1; Extended application deadline: April 1. <http://www.ahepacademy.com> (6) AHEPA Journey to Greece: A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to earn college credit while learning about ancient and modern Greece. AHEPA and the Webster University have joined forces to offer an unforgettable experience to young people. This is an educational opportunity, not a scholarship. A chapter may consider sponsoring a local student for part of the fee. Application deadline: March 31. <http://ahepa.org/Journey-to-Greece/JTG.htm>

Contact: Nicholas Nikas 203-554-5570
niketes@yahoo.com

CHURCH OF THE ARCHANGELS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Capital Campaign Committee:

Elias N. Kulukundis, Chairman. Jason Konidaris, Vice Chairman. Father Harry Pappas. Mary Badoyannis, Peter Cholakis, William Grosso, Timothy Hartch, James W. Kambas, George Khouri, Peter Licopantis, Penny Nanos, Chris A. Nanos, Chris P. Nanos, George Paparis, Thomas Passios, Gigi Perimenis, Katie Perimenis, Jane Dragonas Perkins, R. J. Vassiliou, Basil N. Vanech

The Capital Campaign:

The goal is to raise \$2,200,000 over a three-year period from 2014 to 2017, now extended to 2018. The purpose of the Campaign is to fund upgrading and renewal of the church campus and ministry with specific emphasis on the Church Hall and offices, and minor cosmetic improvements in the Church itself, bringing our campus into the 21st Century. In addition, the amount includes the sum of \$150,000 to fund the salary and benefits of an Administrative Assistant for the Church for three years, after which the Church will take over funding that cost from stewardship. There are no plans to utilize any of these funds for repairs or improvements to the Greek Cultural Center.

The Data (as of February 20, 2016):

Total Commitments\$1,150,000
Total Commitments Paid\$ 868,897
Total Number of Multi-Year Commitments57
Total Number of Single Year Commitments16
Total Number of Other Commitments12

The Matching Grant:

A Matching Grant of \$250,000 was offered by an anonymous donor, to be matched by cash contributions received after September 20, 2015 when our Campaign went public. As of February 10th, 29 donations have been received toward the matching grant. Any donations intended for this purpose must have the logo "Matching Grant" in the Memo space on the check, or mention the Matching Grant in any communication accompanying the donation in order to qualify.

The Requirements:

The General Assembly of May 4, 2015 set the following hurdles to be reached before the commencement of construction:

Total Commitments Hurdle\$1,500,000
(67% of the stated target goal of \$2,200,000)

Cash in Hand Hurdle\$ 726,000
(33% of the stated target goal of \$2,200,000)

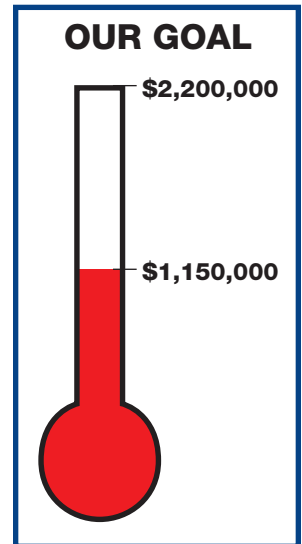
The Cash in Hand hurdle has already been reached. The Commitments hurdle is still \$350,000 shy of target.

Donors should ideally spread pledges over a three-year period. For new pledges, that would be between 2016 and 2018. Pledges may be accompanied by an initial donation toward the first year's pledge, though remitting the entire first year's pledge amount can be done later in the course of 2016 if preferred.

The Expenses:

The Campaign's expenses to date include: assistance from the Archdiocese Development Office, architectural work on preliminary plans, and production of solicitation materials. These are in addition to \$50,415 for salary & benefits for Basil Vanech, hired in September of 2014 as parish Administrative Assistant. The Campaign's responsibility for reimbursing the Church for Mr. Vanech terminates on October 1, 2017.

Inasmuch as funds are likely to be required on a regular basis once construction commences, the General Assembly gave the Campaign Committee the right to go to a bank and discount any unpaid pledge amounts in order to have funds available to meet expenses. Preliminary plans for the remodeling of the Church Hall and offices are on display in the Hall.



The Contributors (as of February 20, 2016):

PLEDGES

Anonymous (3)
Evangeline Adams
Michael and Jena Anthony
George and Katina Antipas
Angelo and Dena Aravides
George Badoyannis
Demetri and Constance Begetis
Sophie Caloutas
Nitsa Chagaris
Peter Cholakis and Teresa Cassidy
Glenn and Angie Colarossi
Savet Constan ne
Nicholas Daifotis
Matthew and Maria De Vito

Peter Gabriel and Mary Badoyannis
Stephen and Tina Georgeou
William Grosso
Rita Haralambidis
Timothy and Sophia Hartch
Brian Irizarry and Gigi Perimenis
James and Sylvia Kambas
Chris and Elaine Kanos
George Khouri
Arthur and Elaine Kiratsous
Annie Konidaris
Jason and Janie Konidaris
Nick and Pauline Kounevelis
Pam Koutroubis
Elias N. Kulukundis

Stewart and Kim Leonard
Peter and Yolanda Licopantis
J. Andrew McEntire Family Charitable Fund
Rita Mehos
Dr. Alan and Marietta Morelli
Chris A. and Luisa Nanos
George and Any Nanos
Paul and Debbie Nanos
Penny Nanos
Peter C. Nanos
Nicholas Nikas
George and Cindy Paparis
Father Harry and Presbytera Pappas
Kimon and Julie Passios
Tom and Nike Passios

John Pasvankias
George and Jane Perkins
Katie Perimenis
Maria Poulos
Lee and Maria Sampanis
Diane and Ted Sierpina
Agesilaos and Molly Sotire
Sotiris and Nicoletta Soulios
Evan and Roula Stergiannis
Basil and Terry Vanech
John and Medina Vasily
Argyris and Ann Vassiliou
Jane Vorvis
Nicholas and Kyriaki Yoranidis

NON-PLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS

Ladies Philoptochos Society, Church of the Archangels
Mary Louise Bennett
Steve Katsetos
Miles and Joan Kulukundis
Natalie Kulukundis
Michelle Marmarinos
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Minetos
Penny Nanos
Phil and Frederika Nikolis
Nestor Sgouros
Dennis and Marion Vanson
Helene and Manoucher Yektai
Ladies Philoptochos Society, Church of the Archangels

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

James W. and Margaret Cocolis
Sharon Fornaciari
George and Larissa Gentekos
Christos and Demetra Halkias
Willian and Mary Janocha
Margot Kalaizes
Annie Konidaris
Elias N. Kulukundis