



The Herald

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

OCTOBER 2019

Charting a Fresh Direction

At our Gala Luncheon on September 8, Archbishop Elpidophoros joyfully engaged children and adults through greetings and conversation. His smile, noticed by so many, made it that much easier to approach him, despite his lofty position as our new Chief Shepherd. For many of us, meeting any bishop can be rather intimidating. Not so with him. Indeed, over the lunch, he was very direct about his views on a variety of contemporary subjects, sometimes taking us by surprise. Further, while we clergy are just beginning to get to know him as our ecclesiastical superior, the Archbishop led the marvelous worship that day with prayerfulness and a collaborative spirit.

Then, all of us clergy gathered for a semi-annual meeting of our entire District on Oct 1 at Holy Trinity Church in New Rochelle. It was our very first encounter as an entire group. Following the Blessing of the Waters service, the Archbishop led off with brief, prepared remarks that commented more generally upon our Church in America. Then he sat down while we were invited to ask him any pressing questions on our minds as pastors. One senior priest was quite candid and set the tone by asking about Cremation, qualifications of Sponsors at Baptisms or Weddings, and other matters. The Archbishop was calm and direct in answering these in a fresh way that opened the floor to other practical and contemporary matters in the life of our parishes – declining attendance at worship generally, who is qualified to vote in general assemblies, how we deal with non-Orthodox Christians and even non-Christians at our Sacraments, who can be accepted to receive Holy Communion, the inconsistent ways that we apply canonical guidelines to the Sacraments, girls serving during worship (such as at Sunday Liturgy), and others.

Throughout, the Archbishop reflected a peaceful, thoughtful and engaging spirit that was at times sprinkled with humor at how we and our people actually behave. His underlying themes were:

- We are a Church of love rather than law
- Orthodoxy has a unique spirit among Christians throughout history by emphasizing discernment and healing
- We pastors are to reach out and welcome everyone, emphasizing inclusion as much as possible
- Each priest has experience, wisdom and appropriate authority to discern how to deal with sensitive matters, without relying on his advice in every single case

His fresh approach, honest responses, and overall spirit were striking. We clergy have not often had the opportunity, in formal assembly, to directly raise pressing pastoral issues. By no means did we cover everything: there was too many other matters on the day's agenda. But the openness was unmistakable. For many us, very refreshing as well.

Change often is uncomfortable, and not all change is inherently good. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann of blessed memory once commented: "The Orthodox Church changes in order to remain the same." Fr. Robert Arida, another Orthodox priest and theologian, last year used the title "Unchanging Gospel in a Changing Culture" for an article he wrote about other controversial, contemporary issues. Both faithful men were attempting to apply the timeless truth of Christ in a timely way for all of us here and now.

Evidently, Archbishop Elpidophoros intends to bring the wealth of life, education, experience and service in the Patriarchate of Constantinople to bear upon our Church in America. Such constitutes, whether we are all ready for it or not, a fresh new direction from the central and highest Office of our national body.

May the Lord bless and guide us in listening, contributing, applying, and living out the challenges in front of us as we follow the lead of our new Archbishop that wants to open the doors of our hearts and communities of faith!

– Fr. Harry

Pastoral Question & Answer

Question: Why do we have girls serving during the Liturgy and other churches do not? What are they allowed to do?

Answer: A few years ago, due to my own interest to offer girls a way to serve in worship parallel to boys who can serve in the Altar, I learned about a ministry called “Handmaidens” blessed by Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta for his own Cathedral. Since I’ve known Fr. Paul, the presiding priest, for many years, I contacted him to learn more. He was very willing to share how it started and where it stands now, including detailed documents that he sent me. Since this exists in a different diocese, I then wrote my own bishop, Archbishop Demetrios, to seek his blessing to initiative the same program here. He agreed, although he did not permit us to do everything that the girls were doing in

Atlanta. Many of my brother clergy have simply neither had the desire to inaugurate such a ministry, or do not think it would be well received where they serve. One size does not fit all. Unity, not uniformity: while we are Church of a faith that unites us, our practices can in fact differ in ways that preserve this unity. So, our handmaidens can assist in greeting worshippers as they enter, handing out the Sunday bulletin, taking care of candles, standing on the Solea for the Small & Great Entrance, helping pass the collection tray, and clean the church. They do not enter the Altar, as the boys do, and usually do not process with the Altar boys. Very recently, though, our new Archbishop Elpidophoros expressed openness to allowing the girls to increase their role and presence. So, I’ve written him to ask for his guidance in writing.

PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council

The Parish Council was excited to help host the visit of Archbishop Elpidophoros on September 8. Many thanks to everyone who made this a special and memorable day, including the event planning committee, altar boys and handmaidens, Nikki Glekas and team who prepared and served the luncheon, and the many others who helped our parish put our best foot forward for our new Archbishop.

The Parish Council also is excited to continue to welcome new members to our community who are volunteering their time and talents to help our church. One goal of our parish over the past several years has been to update and expand our online presence. We are blessed that one of our new members, Olya Clifton, has volunteered her photography skills to photograph numerous special events, including the Archbishop’s visit and the Greek Festival. Furthermore, Olya has agreed to take the lead on managing our Facebook page, so that we can continue to reach more people in our community and interact with current members in new and relevant ways. If you have a Facebook account, please go “like” our page – facebook.com/archangelsgoc.

In addition, we are pleased to welcome our new Chaplain Intern, Loveday Okafor, from St. Vladimir’s Seminary. Loveday will be interning with our parish this academic year, and we are excited to have his talents and experience serving our community. If you have not yet had a chance to meet Loveday, please make sure to introduce yourself and make him feel welcome.

There are so many ways that each of us can give to our church – while monetary stewardship is an important part of this, stewardship also encompasses each of us giving our time and talents. If you have a special skill, an idea or a passion that you’d like to share with the church community, please talk to a member of the Parish Council. We have many ministries in need of assistance and would love to match your talents with a need in our church community.

The Parish Council’s meeting on September 17 was busy with Greek Festival preparations, continued oversight of the work of the Greek Cultural Center Committee, and the approval of the hiring of a new Greek School teacher. The Parish Council will next meet on Tuesday, October 22 at 7:15 p.m. in the conference room of the new hall. We continue to welcome feedback from all members of the community, both at our monthly meetings and outside of such meetings. Please reach out to any of us if you have an issue that you would like to discuss. Contact: Georgia Man, georgiavman@gmail.com

Parish Council Elections – Sunday, December 8

Members in good standing in the Orthodox Church (18 years of age & older) may submit their name for election (either at a General Assembly or privately) if they meet the following criteria:

1. regular attendance at worship services, acceptable moral lifestyle, and up-to-date stewardship (a combination of time & talents, along with finances);
2. membership at our parish for at least one year prior to the election;
3. attendance at a Seminar conducted by area clergy – nearest ones are at
 - a. St. Barbara in Orange on Tue, Nov 12, 6:30-9 pm. 203-795-1347 or church@saintbarbara.org
 - b. Here at Archangels on Sat, Nov 16, 9 – 11:30 am. 203-348-4216 or office@archangelsgoc.org
 - c. Holy Trinity in Waterbury on Sat, Nov 23, 9 – 11:30 am. (203) 754-5189 or frnikolaos@holytrinitywaterbury.org
 - d. Holy Trinity in New Rochelle, NY on Sat, Dec 7, 9:30 am – 12 noon. (914) 235-6100 or FrAncil@aol.com
 - e. Note the following
 - i. the first 30 minutes involves refreshments; the 2-hour seminar follows

- ii. Plan to arrive on time or risk invalidation
 - iii. RSVP by email or phone in advance so that proper food, drink and materials can be prepared
4. signed documents – to abide by the Uniform Parish Regulations of the Archdiocese, along with Conflict Disclosure Statement, and attendance at a Seminar.

Four positions on the Parish Council will be elected to a 3-year term. The following current members' term is expiring this year: Aggie Sotire, George Papis, George Khouri & Theofilos Nikolis. For more info, contact Fr. Harry or Tim Hartch.

2019 Stewardship –

New Stewards: August 1 to September 30

Androulidakis, Jameela	Muniz, Athina and Angel
Badoyannis, George	Nanos, Chris and Christine
Cameron, Ian and Catherine	Nanos, George and Amy
Clifton, Helen	Nanos, Penelope
Demakos, Popie	Nanos, Peter
DeVito, Matthew and Maria	Oris, Michael and Joane
Diamond, Peter and Ruth	Otis, James and Marcine
Economidis, Mike and Eireeni	Papis, George
Fritz, Demi	Pappas, Hannah
Galuris, Pauline	Pappas, Rev. Fr. Harry and Kerry
Jackson, Michael and Elizabeth	Pasvankias, John and Megan
Johnson, David and Nicole Stamatelos	Poulos, Maria
Karakadas, John and Olga	Samra, Joseph and Rebecca
Karayianis, George and Alexandra	Sentementes, Pamela and Andrew
Khouri, George	Sentementes, Pericles
Kiratsous, Elaine and Arthur	Shepard, Maria and Ken
Kounavelis, Nick and Pauline	Shola, Micheline
Kulukundis, Elias N.	Sioles, Anna and Louis
Legato, Helen	Sotire, Agesilaos and Amalia
Leonard, Kim and Stew	Spanos, Penelope and James
Licopantis, Peter and Yolanda	Stergianis, Evans and Stavroula
Makrides, Demetrios and Agathi	Tsaprakis, Demetrios and Leda
Man, Jonathan and Georgia	Tsiralidis, Tom and Luz
Marcarello, James and Kyriaki	Tsyurmasto, Petr and Olga
Mehos, Rita	Tzoannopoulos, Eugenia and Igor Laba
Mihaleas, Perry and Kim	Vasil, Nadine

Master Planning

Master Planning is winding down its work after many months of construction and many years of planning. We are so very grateful to everyone in the community who helped bring our campus into the current century. May it outlast us all! We are currently administering a construction punch list of just under 100 line-items. Many were completed in September. Of the remaining items none are of great size or concern. Our contractor and architect continue to be very responsive and thorough in their work. We expect to tackle all final payments and all building training this month, after which we will turn the building over to the capable hands of our staff and our Building & Grounds Committee. Contact: jason.konidaris@yale.edu

Office Hours & Entry

Now that we are finally back in our own complex, here are weekly Office Hours:

- Monday, Tuesday & Thursday - 9am-4pm
- Wednesday & Friday - 9am-6:15pm (extended hours due to Greek School)
- Saturday & Sunday - closed

Whenever minor children are in the building, the front and rear lobby interior doors will be locked, requiring anyone to be let in through a release for security purposes. While clear sightlines exist for Antonia to see, from her desk, whoever wishes to enter, she and Fr. Harry are not always at their desk. A wireless buzzer will be installed soon so that both can hear from anywhere in the building. Note that the exterior doors of both front & rear lobby will always remain open. A new, wireless buzzer has also been installed at both entrances.

For all non-emergency needs, feel free to leave a voice message through the main office phone number when no one answers (203-348-4216) or contact:

- Fr. Harry - hpappas@svots.edu
- Antonia - office@archangelsgoc.org
- John Cocolis (Handyman) - (203) 536-2741 (cell)
- Laura - bookkeeper@archangelsgoc.org (financial matters)

For all emergencies after hours, contact Fr. Harry at home (203-504-2689)



Foyer ready for Sept 8 Luncheon



Renovated Front Church Complex



Hall set for Sept 8 Luncheon

MINISTRIES

Prayer of the Month

Following upon our Ministry Theme of Hospitality:

Lord, Jesus Christ, I welcome your presence in my heart, loved ones, and our church. May your Spirit and presence become more real since I trust you as our Savior and God. Inspire, guide, and correct my every thought, word, and deed to align with your holy will. Grant that every day I may more and more become an instrument of your amazing grace, unconditional love, and uncompromising truth for the sake of those around me as I contribute to the manifestation of your Kingdom breaking into this world. Amen.

Did You Know?

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35): these words of Jesus, cited by the Apostle Paul when advising the elders (presbyteroi) of Ephesus, are precious and dear to all Christians. Many of us even instinctively try to live this way even if we are honest to admit that there are times we fail to do so. At the same time, being in the position to give to someone else allows us to be in control. This reality – is it not true if we think about it more deeply? – may have led St. James, an ancient Desert Father, to teach “It is better to receive hospitality than to give it.” Why? Because when we are humble enough to receive hospitality from another – dinner at their home, a meaningful letter, or a thank you gift that may surprise us – we actually are giving the other person the gift of giving! And we accept our most fundamental role as human beings: new life in Christ is not something we achieve by our efforts or good intention, it is something we receive as the most precious gift from God’s grace that is poured out upon us and is far beyond anything we could do on our own! Why not learn how to accept the many different forms of hospitality this year that allow someone else to give something to us...



Father Harry and Father Poulos enjoy the celebration

Blessing of Animals

Our annual celebration, in the month when St. Francis of Assisi is commemorated (Oct 4), will take place on Sunday, Oct 20, at 2 pm in front of the Church. So, invite your neighbors and friends, and bring your pet dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, birds, etc, to this wonderful prayer service from the Orthodox Monastery of New Skete (in Cambridge, NY)! Contact: Fr. Harry

Weekday Worship

Here are weekday feast days this month

- Thu, Oct 18 - feast of St. Luke the Evangelist: Liturgy 9:30 am
- Tue, Oct 23 - feast of St. Iakovos (James): Liturgy 9:30 am
- Thu, Oct 26 - feast of St. Demetrios the Myrrh-streaming: Orthros 9 & Liturgy 9:30 am

Electronic Giving in Church

The Church is making giving easier on Sundays by accepting credit cards for candles and donations. Some Parishioners have asked that we offer this convenience, and a white credit card terminal is now located in the Narthex on top of the Pangari (candle stand on the right-hand side). Major credit cards are accepted so you won't have to make change. The terminal is located next to the cash slot and ushers are available to help you. Your feedback is always welcomed. Contact: Steven Georgeou, sgeorgeou@geocom-inc.com



Presvytera Christina joins Fr. George to celebrate his 98th Birthday with family and friends (Sept 29)

Fall Family Gym & Game Night

Saturday, October 26 at 5:30pm

Greek Cultural Center Gym

Board games, organized gym games,
coloring/craft supplies, foosball and more!

Dinner provided for a free-will donation

SAVE THE DATE

Turkey Bingo



Saturday, Nov. 23

Archbishop Elpidophoros Nameday (Saturday, Nov 2)

We are warmly invited to celebrate the name day of our new Archbishop:

- Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 9am @ Holy Trinity Cathedral (319 East 74th Street, NYC)

‡ Reception follows @ Cathedral Center (next door)

- Open House 5pm @ Cathedral Center

For those who live or work in New York, consider stopping by to greet him, receive his blessing, and enjoy some fellowship before returning home!

Adult Education

- Religious Education Symposium – “Holy Communion & the Sanctity of Sundays: ‘The Divine Liturgy is the way we know God, and the way God becomes known to us...’ (Elder Sophrony of Essex, England) on Sat, Oct 5, 10a-3p @ St. Nicholas Church (196-10 Northern Blvd, Flushing, NY; 718-357-4200). Designed for Church School Teachers, Ministry workers, and Parents of all parishes in our District. Speakers: Dr. George Demacopoulos, Fr. Paul Palesty, and Angeliki Constantine. Presentations, Panel Discussions, Breakout Session, and Lunch. RSVP to Fr. Demetrios Kazakis – demetrios.kazakis@gmail.com
- Youth Ministry Workshop – see Evelyn Biliadis’ reflections below (“Toward a New Tapestry...”).

✠ *Archangels Feast Day* ✠

Thursday, November 7

Great Vespers at 7 pm

With area Clergy & faithful

Reception offered by Philoptochos in our new hall

Friday, November 8

Orthros at 8:30 am

Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am

With reception afterwards in our new hall

- Bible Study – there are now 3 opportunities for small group reading and conversation about the Bible. No previous experience necessary, just a desire to learn and grow together. All take place in the Conference Room unless otherwise noted:

‡ Mondays – 7:15 Compline & 7:30 Study & Dialogue, with light refreshments. Topics TBA. Next meeting – Oct 7.

‡ Wednesdays – 4:30-6pm: daily readings from Gospel of Luke

‡ Last Wednesday of each month – 10-11:30am; Parables of Christ

Contact: Fr. Harry

- Men’s Koinonia – meets one evening each month in the Conference Room. Prospective date: Thu, Oct 24, 7pm. Format includes fellowship with light food & beverage, prayer, brief presentation and open discussion on a topic we choose. Contact: Fr. Harry
- Retreat @ New Skete Monastery – Sat, Oct 12, 8a-6p. Theme: “There is a crack in everything – that is how the Light gets in” – Getting in touch with the cracks of our own brokenness. Schedule - 8am worship; 9:30 presentations begin; time for silence & small group discussion; ends with Vigil at 5pm. \$40 registration is required by Oct 5 for materials, light breakfast and lunch. 3-hour drive due north of Stamford.
- Prayer Retreat – for children & adults. Friday, Oct 11, 5:15-6:15pm in the Hall. Fr. Harry will lead a practical workshop for kids and grown-ups: practicing silence & stillness, learning the Jesus Prayer, developing a rule of prayer to fit your life, encountering Christ through Scripture. This was a direct result of the Youth Ministry Workshop on Sep 21 that representatives of each youth ministry attended.



Father Harry interviewed by News 12 during GreekFest

GreekFest Observations

So much worked so well once again. In some cases, even better.

- Weather: despite some rain on Thursday that virtually shut down the Carnival rides, our indoor receipts were nearly as good as last year; the rest of the weekend was near perfect – moderate temperatures, clear skies and low humidity
- Food: once again our dinners in the gym and our gyros and souvlaki outside were extremely well received. One member, who would go around and ask patrons over two days what they thought, received 100% positive comments!
- Dessert: despite one fryer not always working well, Loukoumades were a big hit, and the Greek Pastries were highly sought after
- Drinks: the Bar was busy as ever, and Greek Coffee increased their sales with a new, automatic coffee maker
- Seating: outdoor activity continues to increase as gyros and souvlaki increase in popularity – many enjoyed extra tables and chairs; indoors we still had enough to accommodate everyone
- Music: the band was wonderful as usual, with our own Stamatia Balabanis as the lead vocalist
- Vendors: whether our own Imports, Photos & Bookstore, or outsiders with Jewelry, Gifts, Soaps etc, patrons were treated to variety in such a small space



Souvlaki Station (left to right): Steven Sarigianis, Mar & Bill Janocha, Matt DeVito, John Skoparantzios (chair), Peter Athanasiades & Fr. Harry



GreekFest prep (left to right): Eugenia Zavras, Diane Sierpina, Helen Chagaris, Mary Badoyiannis, Shannon Sierpina & Luz Tsiralides

- Carnival: cooperative and compassionate as ever, Fred creatively introduced a new ride out front that attracted attention and rearranged the parking lot as families with young children enjoyed themselves.
- Church Tours: small, diverse groups of people sought solace from the world, information about our faith heritage and our beautiful church, or had questions about the Bible and contemporary issues. Both Loveday and I met other Greek Orthodox, many Roman Catholics, Protestants of various traditions, Moslems, Hindus, even agnostics and atheists. Each encounter was rewarding, with many expressing their gratitude. We even picked up a new member!
- Spirit: there seemed to be great joy in working side-by-side, with many investing long hours over many days to anchor the Kitchen, Office (raffle & bookkeeping), Volunteer sign-ups, Souvlaki tent, Outdoor seating, Vendors, Take-out orders, Pastries & Loukoumades, Coffee & the Bar. Steve Fornaciari observed how few incidents there were of getting on each other's nerves.
- Break-down: largest crew of people to date were in the gym by 6:30pm Sunday to get to work after the Raffle winners were picked. In just over 2 hours, an enormous amount was put away

– Fr. Harry



Jonathan Man assists Fr. Harry to pick the winner



Fr. Harry joins Kiriaki Yoranidis and children on 1st day of Preschool (Sept 16)

Preschool

With genuine and heartfelt appreciation I wish to thank Jeanne Charcalis, Debbie Nanos, Agatha Makrides, and Rebecca Kelesidis for their willingness to come and spend many, many hours to help set up our beautiful brand new classroom. Your help truly made a huge difference in getting the classroom ready on time for opening day!! THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! A big thank you, too to John Cocolis for his help with all the items that needed installation! Furthermore, a special THANK YOU to Maria and Ken Shepard for donating the memorial funds for Stella Durdunas (Maria's mother) to our preschool in addition to their \$1,000 donation. Their generosity and consideration is immensely appreciated!

As our new secretary, Antonia, would say "OLI MAZI" we did it! It feels good to be "home"!

Kiriaki Yoranidis. Contact: knyrus@aol.com

Kali Parea Seniors

Our first Kali Parea meeting of our Senior Luncheon was held at our beautiful renovated Fellowship Hall. Our meeting was well attended. We had our usual catered luncheon, with soft drinks, coffee, wine and an array of delicious desserts provided by the membership. This meeting gave us the opportunity to get reacquainted and discuss the summer trips taken. We encourage new members, as we start a new season. Our gatherings include speakers, movies and trips to interesting places. Looking forward to see you on the second Thursday of each month. Contact: Pam Koutroubis, pamelak2145@gmail.com

Ladies Philoptochos Society

The first meeting of the new church year took place on Tuesday, Sept. 10th and many new members attended. We had a wonderful presentation by Eirini Metaxas, a women's life coach and founder of Me2Morph (www.me2morph.com). Eirini gave a heart-felt, inspiring presentation on the issues facing women today and the need for our voice and empowerment. A lively



The children made a beautiful thank you card to present to Mr. Dennis Koukourakis, who donated his time to building shelves in the new hall and Preschool classroom.

discussion ensued about the power and talents that women offer and the importance of seeking help and koinonia to take care of ourselves and be the best we can be. Members voted to approve donations to St. Michael's home for seniors, AmeriCares and the IOCC to support victims of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, and the priest's discretionary fund, which is used to confidentially help local persons who are homeless, poor or in great need. Chapter members also approved the purchase of a sponsorship sign to support GreekFest, our parish's major fundraiser, and a donation from the Memorial Fund to support a cancer victim with heavy financial needs. Thank you to all our members who baked or volunteered at GreekFest and helped to serve coffee after liturgy in September. Please join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 8th. This date was changed from Oct. 1st. We have decided to begin our fellowship and meeting at 6:30 p.m. to enable an earlier conclusion. We have much to discuss at the October meeting, including preparations for the church's feast day and Turkey Bingo, both in November. To donate gift cards, wine or other needed items or solicit gift certificates from local vendors for the Turkey Bingo raffle baskets, please contact Lara Paschalidis at larapaschalidis28@gmail.com. Looking forward to seeing more new members on October 10th!! There will be a surprise, hands-on service project to benefit seniors. Contact: Eugenia Zavras, President, etz124@yahoo.com.

Towards a New Tapestry of Youth Ministry: Reflections on Youth Ministry Workshop

Any youth ministry leader will tell you that we plan for our youth ministry activities with our full hearts present. We try to develop innovative programming opportunities for our children; we brainstorm service projects that will both entice them and help them grow in compassion and mercy for others. We plan social outings and events that tie the community together. We strategize ways to collaborate across ministries to reinforce our efforts collectively. This is what we do. Personally, I receive

great joy in curating lessons, events, and service opportunities in a way that targets the attention and delight of children.

Until. This.

Many of us attended the Fall 2019 Youth Ministry Leadership Workshop that was led by the Archdiocesan Director of Youth Ministries, Steven Christoforou last month. Little did we know that we were about to be met with the following sobering questions about youth ministry that would halt us in our tracks: What exactly is the impact of our YM efforts in retaining our children's identity in Christ and their commitment to our faith? Why is it that when our children come of age and leave the Parish (some well before the end of high school) statistics show that they not only leave their home Parish but, in many cases, also leave the life of Church? What are actually providing week after week? Enter: silence, uneasiness, and apprehension. Exit: blissful denial.

I have no reservation that every Church School lesson and every YM service-learning activity aims to develop in our children an identity in the Lord. This, in my mind, is without question. However, following this seminar, I couldn't help but think more critically about the fruit of our work—our spiritual end post. Are we teaching our children to be devoted Orthodox Christians? Or are we merely attempting to 'splatter' the canvas of every child's heart with a myriad of pretty Orthodox colors? Think about this for a moment. Are we creating programs, events, and a home life that only boasts hints of Orthodoxy? That is, a little splash of Orthodox this and smear of Orthodox that sprinkled here and there with the hope that over time it all binds together in a way that takes on some meaningful form?

If this is the case (and my intuition suggests that it is) then this is not intentional enough and we will fail them. We, as a community of faith need to ask ourselves, what is the bottom line? What is it, or shall we say, who is it, that we hope our children to become when they leave us to make their mark in the world? If the answer is an Orthodox Christian with a deep commitment to Christ then the most crucial question becomes-- how do we, as ministry workers, parents, and as a congregation at large work to transform this random splattering into a whole and dynamic living icon of our Lord in the heart of every child? How do we deepen our children's identity in Christ, lock it in, and turn it into an anchor for a life in the Church? How do we teach children to more deeply understand and connect to what is expected of them in our faith? Gratefully, there are tangible things we can do to retain our children in the life of the Church. However, we can't do this alone; we need the support of our Parish in order to succeed. We need to engage more intimately with one another and more intimately with our children as a community of faith. Our children need to feel safe enough to approach a trusted adult in the Parish, (an adult external to their immediate family and home) and share feelings of vulnerability and pose sensitive questions. Steven Christoforou referred to these individuals as "Orthodox mentors."



Children of Church School paint rocks for the Garden of Hope named in honor of Archbishop Elpidophoros on Philanthropy Sunday

Research states that having an Orthodox mentor (a trusted adult of faith who is outside of the immediate family unit) is one of the factors that can significantly assist with retaining children in the life of the Church. Have we been providing our children with relationships in which they feel connected to the Parish, seen by Parishioners, and heard by loving adults who surround them? Are we forging deep connections with the children of our Parish? And, more specifically, do we encourage our children to seek deeper relationships with adult mentors in our Church community?

The equation is simple: If we want to retain our youth, then we have to make it a priority to connect them meaningfully to the life of the Church as well as to loving individuals who faithfully serve in it. If we want our children to seek Christ when dealing with difficult and even sensitive issues, then we need to create emotional opportunities where they can find peace, comfort, and validation from adults of faith who care deeply for them.

So, our pledge for the upcoming ecclesiastic year is this: we plan to intentionally return to the basics-- the basics of our Orthodoxy-- and provide children and families with tangible and meaningful bite-sized morsels of our faith to practice and exercise. We need to love the Lord enough to fight solemnly not to let our children be deprived of a life in Him. Thus, the new end post needs to become one where our collective work creates a mosaic of a living Orthodox icon in the heart of every child, and not just an abstract splatter of Orthodox art. This is the new tapestry.

— Evelyn Biliadis, PhD

Supervisor of Church School & Chair of Greek School Board

Church School

The Church School Program continues to thrive with momentum as our classrooms are filled and students are engaged! There is lots of positive energy buzzing upstairs.

Our students painted and decorated "Kindness Rocks" last month and these rocks will soon be placed for display in our Garden of Hope that will be planted this month! We will be



GOYA Welcome Back Dinner with over adults & children (Sep 20)

holding our first Children's Prayer Retreat Friday, October 11th at 5:15pm-6:15pm in from on the beautiful bay window in our newly renovated fellowship hall. Students can feel free to bring Yoga mats and/or sleeping bags/cozy blankets to sit on as we learn to practice meditation (i.e., how to sit with Jesus), the Jesus prayer, and how to establish a rule of prayer for home. We will be hosting our first Music Ministry Sunday, October 13th. Wishing families a beautiful new month filled with wonder and beauty. Contact: Dr. Evelyn Biliás Lolis (ebiliás@aol.com)

GOYA

On Friday, September 20th the GOYAns and their families were reunited with each other at our Greek Cultural Center. They enjoyed great fellowship for a kick-off of the new ecclesiastical year including families from our sister Church of the Annunciation (over 65 attendees!). They were entertained by outdoor games, basketball games inside and the Greek Style Food Truck. See pictures below. Our first official meeting was Oct 6 following Liturgy in the Conference Room. Fr. Harry and Love-day Okafor assisted Maria & Rebecca in reflecting on the Youth Ministry Workshop and applying it to our teens; various events were discussed for the semester and year. Please note the following October event:

- Fri & Sat, Oct 25 & 26: Lock-In Retreat @ Cultural Center, 7pm (until 9 am Sat.)

Contact: Maria Otis (maria.otis@yahoo.com) or Rebecca Kelesidis (rebecca.kelesidis.com)

HOPE/JOY

The end of the summer season began with a special visit from the new Archbishop Elpidophoros on September 8th. Steve Sargianis also returned to assist Father Harry. Hope & Joy members served as altar boys & handmaidens during liturgy and blessing of the altar. Sunday school began on September 15th with our first philanthropy project of painting and decorating "kindness rocks" "for the future Garden of Hope" to honor our new Archbishop.

On September 14th, the Youth Ministries Director of the NYC Archdiocese, Steve Christoforou spoke to the ministry leaders about helping the youth find and keep their faith, even after high school. Steve is also the creator of the Bethebee.goarch.org video series. Chris Nanos and Ruth Diamond attended the workshop and engaging Q&A session. Steve spoke about the challenges of maintaining sacred spirituality in a modern secular world.

Youth events this month will include the New Canaan firehouse visit on Saturday, October 5th and Family fun / sports night on Saturday, October 26th.

Little Angels

Little Angels is the church ministry group representing young families including infants, toddlers and preschoolers (ages 0-5 years). Our purpose is to bring together parents and little ones for fun and fellowship, support, and to strengthen our faith and church family friendships.



Parents & children in Little Angels visits New Canaan Fire Station, with Chaplain Intern Loveday Okafor (Oct 5)



Firefighter Michael Jackson (parent in Little Angels) teaches fire safety (Oct 5)

New Canaan Fire Station Field Trip: On Saturday, October 5th, Little Angels visited the New Canaan fire station! Loveday Okafor led us in a prayer service, and Miss Diane read us a story about a firefighter and his dalmation. Then Little Angels' dad and firefighter, Michael Jackson, gave the children a fire safety lesson and we got to touch and explore the fire trucks! Thank you to the New Canaan Fire Department for hosting us and for the important work you do!

Gratitude Celebration: Come celebrate God's gifts and be thankful with us on Saturday, November 16th at 10am for our annual Gratitude Celebration! There will be a special thanksgiving craft and fun treats for the kids! Look for more details to come via email. Contact: Vasso Spanos (bkarachris@gmail.com) or Rachel Jones (racheljones.cpa@gmail.com)

Athletics

The Connecticut Eastern Orthodox Basketball and Volleyball Leagues [CEOBL & CEOVL] operate November to March every year. Practices for the joint Archangels-Annunciation teams have already begun but there is still plenty of time for new registrants! We have 4 basketball divisions and 1 volleyball this year:

- Youth (boys and girls 8-10).
- Junior Varsity (boys ages 11-13; girls ages 11- 14)
- Varsity (boys 14-18; girls 15-18)
- Senior Men (ages 18+)
- Girls Volleyball (ages -18)



The youth ministry workshop with youth ministry - Staff, Preschool, Church School, Greek School, Youth Advisors & Athletics – with Steven Christoforou, Archdiocesan Youth Director

Here are some of the benefits of playing in the church CEOBL & CEOVL:

- Fellowship and fun with other Greek Orthodox youth
- Develop basketball/volleyball and team-building skills
- Competitive but less stressful than town or school leagues
- Faith based program that embraces youth in the Church

Contact: John Skoparantzios (atoz@aol.com)

Greek Language Classes for Adults

The world is shrinking with globalization and the internet! Now is a great time for adults to learn modern Greek. We are blessed to have an excellent instructor in Dr. Eugenia Zavras, a biology Professor at Fairfield University and past teacher and director of the Greek School. For information and registration, contact her directly at 203-322-9561, or call church office 203-348-4216.

IOCC

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has expanded its Homefront program, equipping Orthodox parishes across the country to plan ahead and respond effectively when disasters arise. The Orthodox Homefront comprises parishes that have undertaken disaster preparedness planning so they can help avert disasters and effectively respond when disasters arise. Homefront parishes are equipped to open their doors to the larger community as distribution centers or shelters, for example; they might house teams of volunteers working nearby or meet other community needs in an emergency. Homefront training guides parishes through step-by-step preparation for and potential response to incidents that could disrupt an area or the parish's own activities. Lay leadership, in consultation with the clergy, plays a prominent role in preparation, and the Homefront connects parishes to a network of agencies involved in emergency management that includes IOCC itself. The training involves, among other activities, creating a parish preparedness plan, conducting risk assessments, evaluating vulnerabilities, and taking steps to reduce them. Over 50 parishes nationwide have completed the training so far. The Orthodox Homefront is part of IOCC's US Program, which since 2001 has provided more than \$60 million in aid and gifts in kind, plus over 55,000 volunteer hours of service, to survivors of disasters across the

United States. Parishes interested in learning more about the Homefront may contact IOCC's US field office (952.930.3286). To support IOCC's work with a financial gift, please contact IOCC online (iocc.org/donate) or by phone (877.803.4622). Contact: Fr. Harry

Pilgrimage to Italy: May 15-27, 2020

Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky, who led pilgrimages previously to Russia and the Holy Land, is offering one to Italy next spring. St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, CA, has space available for our members to join with them. Basic itinerary:

- Venice – St. Mark's Basilica: relics of St. Mark the Evangelist, magnificent Byzantine Church, mosaics, treasures from Constantinople taken by Crusaders in 1204; boat tour
- Ravenna – ancient 5th & 6th century churches & baptistries, such as St. Apollinaris
- Assisi – hometown of St. Francis of Assisi
- Rome – Vatican Museums, St. Peter's Basilica & many other Churches, Abbey Tre Fountain, Catacombs, Coliseum, Roman Forum, Piazza Navona, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, Liturgy @ Greek Orthodox Church of St. Theodore

• Naples – Archaeological Museum, Duomo, Ercolano

• Palermo – Martorana Church and Capella Palatina, Cathedral in Monreale

Cost: \$3,600/person based upon double occupancy + airfare; for single occupancy, add \$1,000/person. This includes tourist class hotels, air-conditioned coach bus, all transfers, tour guides, breakfast & 6 dinners, all entry fees for sites, boat tour in Venice, airfare from Naples to Palermo. Not included: overseas airfare (estimated around \$1,000). For further details, contact Fr. Harry

Exhibit: Houses of Worship in Stamford

"Holy Roots: The History of Stamford's Houses of Worship" opened Sept 22 at the Stamford History Center (1508 High Ridge Road). Elian Kulukundis organized mounds of documents and memorabilia reflecting the 91 years history of our church and contributed suitable items for this temporary display. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the many, diverse places of worship in Stamford!

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

AHEPA

History of the Greek Financial Crisis, Saturday, October 19th at 7pm - Stamford, CT

Join us for a free live multimedia presentation about the history of the Greek financial crisis by Dr. Angelo Athanasopoulos in the newly refurbished hall of the Church of the Archangels. The political, financial and social events from the 1980s to the present will be presented with projected text, video and charts. Learn about modern Greek history and understand the decisions, developments and outside factors that contributed to this latest Greek tragedy.

Dr. Athanasopoulos is a popular and energetic speaker specializing in the use of audiovisual aids to enrich his presentations. In the period from 2003 to 2009, he made 9 presentations to our

community about different aspects of modern Greek history before moving to Athens. He is now back in the US and we are thrilled to welcome him in our midst once more.

Date/Time: Saturday, October 19, 2019 7:00pm pizza 7:30pm presentation

Duration: Presentation 1 hour followed by Q&A period

Place: Greek Orthodox Church of the Archangels, 1527 Bedford St, Stamford, CT

Admission: Presentation free and open to all; Suggested voluntary donation for the pizza: \$10

Reservations: Please help us plan supplies better by reserving for pizza before Friday afternoon

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

