Worship As Hospitality

Usually we don’t think about public worship as hospitality – Liturgy, Sacraments like a Baptism or Wedding, or even Funerals. We far more easily think about meals doing this – for family, friends, or customers. But is this really true? Consider the following:

• Every time we come to worship we are entering a “house of God”
• This means the Holy Trinity is our Host – the owner of all our property and possessions who is Present whenever we gather as a community of faith
• God welcomes us with open arms! No matter how we may feel (happy, sad, confused, bored…), how we are dressed (we dress appropriately for each other, not for God who accepts us without reservation), or even what we believe (God even loves atheists, agnostics and sceptics, not just the faithful).
• Thus, we are receivers, not givers! Even if we have worked hard, paid for, and maintain our facilities, they belong to Christ who helped create us with our parents, alone gives us our abilities and energies, and inspires us to believe and belong through his Holy Spirit.
• We are guests, and extremely privileged ones at that.
• The way that God welcomes us includes not just heat in winter and air conditioning in summer, but through a “temperature controlled” spiritual environment of prayer and song, reading and sermon, icon and incense that inspire, comfort and challenge us.
• The Divine Liturgy is the greatest invitation to share supper with Christ who is the host (cook) as well as the meal since, as the Great High Priest he willingly offers us his most precious Body and Blood at the Eucharist/Communion, originally celebrated during the evening dinner in a home (recall the “Last Supper”). Whoever goes to an important dinner and refuses to eat what is served?

But is this all? Is our connection in worship only with God? In fact, worship is about connecting with each other – as members of Christ’s Body (the Church) and the entire material creation (which Jesus claims):

• Ushers are assigned to monitor the entrances, greet us, distribute worship related material, and monitor collections
• We take our place in the Nave to join everyone else – side by side, facing the same direction
• We are called to actively participate in the sacred action even if we are silent: by listening attentively, praying fervently and watching carefully to see how Christ is present among us; Liturgy in Greek refers to God’s work among his chosen people.
• We exchange a greeting with those around us just before we recite the Nicene Creed. The celebrant exclaims, “Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess.” According to the ancient Tradition, we do this with a physical gesture: classically, we exchange the kiss of peace (a light kiss on the cheek) as the first person says “Christ is in our midst!” and the second person responds “He was, and is, and ever shall be!” For those who are not comfortable with the kiss, a simple handshake can suffice. How hospitable that we acknowledge others and share God’s love with them in a practical way since we are all guests in the House of Love. (Consider how we are so often affectionate with one another in our personal lives!)
• Our worship is very physical with words said and sung, colorful icons, incense, bread & wine, oil and water, physical bodies (both living and deceased, young and old) – so that we participate in the healing and sanctification of the entire natural creation – rivers & oceans, hills & mountains, clouds and air. You name it, we are so interconnected and Christ’s saving work is so expansive, that everything is drawn into an action of blessing.
• So often, right after worship, God’s hospitality continues in a reception as we fellowship with one another – Coffee Hour after Liturgy, Makaria after a Funeral, Banquets after a Wedding, Baptism Celebration – where Christ continues to provide for our primal needs of food, drink, fellowship and relaxation since these are essential to a life that flourishes and develops by grace.

Worship as Hospitality? How could it not be so! No one can out-give the Trinity as our Host: air to breath at no cost, fertile earth free of charge, biological life without our initiative, spiritual life that comes from above, and a community of faith and life that all result from the astonishing life and work of our Lord, Savior, and God, Jesus Christ!

– Fr. Harry
Parish Council

The installation of the new 2020 Parish Council took place during liturgy on Sunday January 12th. The Parish Council met briefly that same day and elected the following officers: Tim Hartch, President; Georgette Perimenis, Vice-President; Elias Lolis, Treasurer; Nick Moisides, Secretary; and Jim Marcarello, Assistant Treasurer. The Parish Council met again in person on Tuesday January 14th and watched a video prepared by the Archdiocese’s Center for Family Care on the unique challenges facing clergy and their families. The Parish Council also reviewed the Church’s preliminary 2019 financials and initial drafts of the 2020 budgets for both the Church and Greek Cultural Center. During a follow-up telephonic meeting on Tuesday January 21st, the Parish Council approved the 2020 budgets for the Church and Greek Cultural Center, which will both be presented to the parish at a General Assembly on Sunday, February 2nd.

Some of the Parish Council’s key themes/objectives for 2020 include (i) hospitality, (ii) a focus on youth and young adults, (iii) outreach to our growing shut-in population, (iv) outreach to our traditional Greek community, (v) spiritual growth, and (vi) stewardship. The Parish Council is currently studying how to modify the Church’s annual Festival for 2020. While our annual Festivals have been a great success from a Christian mission, community-building, and financial perspective, they have required an extraordinary amount of work by a relatively small group of people. Accordingly, the Parish Council is looking at ways to potentially modify the Festival format and recruit new leadership. The Parish Council welcomes feedback from parishioners on any matter. Please feel free to contact Tim Hartch at timhartch1@outlook.com. Alternatively, you can leave a message at the Church office and a Parish Council member will contact you promptly. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday February 18th at 7:30 pm.

Treasurer’s Report

We are currently working on finalizing the 2020 Operating Budget for the Church and the Greek Cultural Center that will be presented at the General Assembly on Sunday, February 2, 2020. In addition, we are finalizing 2019 financials. Chronia Polla to all! Contact: Elias Lolis, elolis@aol.com

General Assembly

Per the Uniform Parish Regulations of our Archdiocese, we will meet in a General Assembly after Liturgy on Sunday, January 26, to: hear a preliminary report of 2019 Operations; approve the 2020 Operating Budget; and elect at least 3 members to the Audit Committee to review 2010 Finances. Please plan to attend and spread the word. Contact: Elias Lolis, Treasurer

Stewardship

We would like to thank everyone who attended Stewardship Sunday on December 7 and who made a Stewardship financial gift for 2018. While we are still calculating the amounts received in December, 2018 appears to have been a record year for Stewardship giving at our Church. Looking forward, we want to encourage all parish members to make a 2019 Stewardship financial pledge and to identify ministries that you would like to participate in. Additional pledge cards are available at the usher stand or in the Church office. Committing in writing to making a financial gift and to being active in particular ministries is actually an important act of faith. We are all called to be followers of Christ and that means taking purposeful action. The 2019 Stewardship theme is “All things are possible to the one who believes.” Contact: Tim Hartch

2020 Stewardship – New Stewards: December 1, 2019 to January 19, 2020

Amanatides, Katie and Lambros
Antipas, Katie
Aravidis, Deena and Angelo
Arvanitis, Allison
Athanasides, Peter and Georgia
Badoyannis, George and Evangeline
Badoyannis, Mary and Peter Gabriel
Beauchair, Christina and John
Blanc, Mimika and Michael
Chochos, Helen
Chu, Elizabeth and Michael
Constantine, Elissavet
Demetros, Peter
Dennis, Helen
Floru, Michael
Fornaciari, Margaret and Stephen
Hartch, Timothy and Sophia
Hoffinan, Elaine
Jackson, Michael and Elizabeth
Jenis, Joanne and Larry Roberg
Jones, Bertha and William
Kailas, Sergio and Maria
Kakalitis, Paul
Kardaris, Maryanne
Kiratsous, Arthur and Elaine
Kordes, MaryLee
Kulukundis, Natalie
Lines, Angie and George
Lolis, Elias and Dr. Evelyn
Magliacano, Marc and Maria
Makrides, Agathi and Demetrios
Malitzis, Donna and Spyros
Man, Jonathan and Georgia
Maroulakis, Niki
Maskaleris, Christine
Massos, Ellie
Mehos, Rita
Mentavlos, Dena
Nanos, Christopher and Luisa
Oris, Joane and Michael
Panulas, Evanthia and John
Pappas, Fr. Harry and Kerry
Paspalis, Peter and Joan
Patsis, George and Panagiota
Perimenis, Georgette and Brian
Irazary
Poulos, Dean and Dorie
Poulos, Fr. George and Christine
Root, Susan
Scocimara, Manita and Eriberto
Soulios, Nikolaos and Janine
Spanos, Robert and Vasso
Speridakos, Demosthenes and Anthe
Stamatiadis, Helen
Stanton, Freda and James
Theofanidis, Elizabeth and Stylianos
Triantafyllos, George
Triantafyllos, Illia and Maria
Vasil, Nadine
Venetos, James and Natalie
Ventsias, Ann
Winn, Paul and Goldie

Buildings & Grounds

The B&G committee is in the process of reviewing the final proposal from our contractor to update our HVAC service agreement to also include all new equipment in the church hall. Once approved this will be important quarterly maintenance that will be performed on all mechanical equipment to ensure it is kept in working order for as long as possible. We also continue to support small punch list items as everything gets wrapped up in the hall. Contact: Peter Hantes, peter.hantes@gmail.com
Blessing of Homes & Businesses

The annual brief blessing service (about 10 minutes) of home & work begins on the Great Feast of Epiphany or Theophany (January 6) and will continue until March 1. All that is needed is a Bible, icon, candle, medium size bowl of water, and a list of the first names of family members (or co-workers), including the deceased. Note: a sprig of basil (or other green) is optional because Fr. Harry has a permanent sprinkler. Also: no honorarium is sought or needed, since this is part of his normal responsibilities. You may schedule an appointment either through the office (203-348-4216) or directly with Fr. Harry (hpappas@svots.edu). Note the following days and times he is currently available, and that this schedule is also available online through Sign-Up Genius:

Note that the schedule for February will be published later. February schedule available through Sign Up Genius

Weekday Worship

Orthros 9am, Liturgy 9:30am, Coffee Hour 10:30am
‡ Thursday, Jan 30 – Three Great Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian & John Chrysostom
‡ Monday, February 10 – St. Haralampos
‡ Saturday, February 22 – 1st Saturday of Souls
‡ Saturday, February 29 – 2nd Saturday of Souls

Adult Education

• Interfaith Bible Study: Our successful ecumenical series the past 4 years will focus on Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible and the ancient Greco-Roman world. Same format: 4 successive Thursday evenings 7:30 pm – see flyer on page 9 for schedule.

Co-sponsored by local Christian churches – 1st Presbyterian, St. Francis Episcopal, St. John’s Lutheran, Stamford Church of Christ & Archangels – along with 2 Jewish Synagogues – Temple Sinai & Temple Beth El – and the Moslem community of Stamford. For more information, contact: Fr. Harry 203-348-4216 or hpappas@svots.edu

• Bible Study
‡ Monday evening – we continue study of the Book of Revelation on Jan 13
‡ Wednesday morning – meets Jan 29, 10am (Parables of Christ)
‡ Wednesday afternoon – resumes weekly on Jan 8, 4:30pm (daily Scripture readings)

• The World of Byzantium– 8 week DVD lecture series by Professor Harl from the Great Courses series, sponsored by AHEPA, on Thursday evenings, beginning at 6:30pm (optional Pizza dinner), then lecture; contact Nick Nikas if you wish to come early for pizza - niketes@yahoo.com or (203) 554-5570.

Prayer of the Month

From the Great Blessing (or Santification) of the Waters at Theophany, here is a marvelous example of the way that our traditional prayers echo the long, winding story of salvation in the Bible:

Today Paradise has been opened to all and the Sun of Righteousness shines down upon us. Today the bitter water, as once with Moses and the people of Israel, is changed to sweetness by the coming of the Lord. Today we have been released from our ancient lamentation, and as the new Israel we have found salvation. Today we have been delivered from darkness and illuminated with the light of the knowledge of God. Today the blinding mist of the world is dispersed by the Epiphany of our God. Today the whole creation shines with light from on high. Today error is laid low and the coming of the master has made for us a way of salvation. Today things above keep feast with things below, and things below commune with things above. Today the triumphant assembly of the Orthodox keeps this holy festival with great joy. Today the master hastens towards baptism that he may lift us up to the heights. Today he that bows not, bows down to his own servant that he may set us free from bondage. Today we have purchased the Kingdom of Heaven: for the Lord’s Kingdom shall have no end. Today earth and sea share the joy of the world, and the world is filled with gladness.

Toy Donations Needed

For the Pediatrics Unit at Stamford Hospital

Bins for toys will be in front of Antonia’s office

GOYA will distribute them before Easter
**Did you know?**

January is one of the most significant months for celebrating glorified Saints in the Orthodox Church. Here is a list of these great heroes of faith, a brief explanation of their importance, and the date (in parenthesis) on which we honor their memory:

- **Basil the Great** – bishop, theologian, activist, philanthropist, renaissance man (1)
- **Seraphim of Sarov** – modern mystic of Russia in 19th century (2)
- **70 Apostles** – others who worked with the 12 apostles to evangelize and suffer for Christ (4)
- **Anthony the Great** – towering man of God, founder of Orthodox monasticism (17)
- **Athanasius & Cyril** – great theologians and bishops of Alexandria in Egypt (18)
- **Maximus the Confessor** – extraordinary theologian with stunning vision of salvation (21)
- **Gregory the Theologian** – mystic, poet, preacher of the Holy Trinity (25)
- **Ephraim the Syrian** – deacon, poet, mystic, philanthropist (28)
- **3 Great Hierarchs** – Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian & John Chrysostom (30)
- **Cyrus & John** – great men of prayer who healed many through medicine & prayer without receiving compensation (the “Unmercenary”) (31)

**Shut-in Visits**

Fr. Harry and several members of Philoptochos have already visited more than 60 shut-ins in order to share the love of Christ, prayer, and tsourekia (sweet bread) along with the new 2020 Church Calendar. He will continue to visit them after Epiphany for a home blessing. Contact the office: 203-348-4216 or office@archangelsgoc.org

**Kali Parea Seniors**

Our December Kali Parea meeting kicked off the start of the very festive Christmas season. The decorations were set and the seniors were ready to party. Father Harry presented the prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Father Harry reminded all to present their Stewardship cards if they have not. Additionally, Father Harry asked support of Steve & Theophani Sarigianis’ missionary commitments. December birthdays were celebrated. We started our luncheon with an assortment of appetizers. We were served roast pork, potatoes, salad, followed by an array of pastries, cakes, cookies, wine and soft drinks. Our raffle included many gift cards from our local restaurants, gift baskets and wine. A special thank you to Santa who made a special trip to our luncheon. He surprised the preschool children, as well as the Seniors. Our president Pam Koutroubis went all out to make this meeting of Kali Parea a memorable one. Contact: Pam Koutroubis, pamelak2145@gmail.com
Ladies Philoptochos Society

Thank you to everyone who supported the Vasilopita bread sale and all the Philoptochos events this year. We were able to provide much needed support to many local, national and international charities in 2019 because of the hard work and generosity of our members and the support from parishioners. We celebrated this year with a wonderful luncheon on Saturday, Dec. 7th, at which we enjoyed hearing from representatives of the five charities that benefit from the proceeds of the annual Turkey Bingo event held in November. The charities are Domus Kids (Invictus program), Filling in the Blanks, Ronald McDonald House of New Haven, the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County and Person to Person in Darien. Thank you to Marietta Morelli, Cindy Mixcus and their team and to all who contributed food and desserts for making this Christmas brunch such a great way to kick off the holiday season. At our meeting following brunch, members approved donations to the OCMC to support the missionary work of former Pastoral Assistant Steve Sarigianis and his wife, Theophani. We also voted to approve a donation to the Back to School project that provides clothing, coats, sneakers and school supplies to needy Stamford children every summer and a contribution to the Priest’s Discretionary Fund to help a local homeless family. Lara Paschalidis, chair of the Turkey Bingo, also shared information about the event and suggested that we create a bingo committee to begin planning this popular event starting in late summer. Philoptochos will be serving coffee every Sunday in January, including Jan. 5th’s Vasilopita reception. Please let Marietta, Lara or Eugenia know if you can serve one of those Sundays. There is no Philoptochos meeting in January. Our next meeting is Feb. 4th at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Hall. We wish everyone a healthy and joyous 2020. Let’s start the new year with enthusiasm and please bring more friends and family to join our chapter. We are grateful for our returning members and the many new members who joined us this year! Philoptochos provides great services to our parish, to the community and to society and welcomes your ideas and participation. Contact: Eugenia Zavras, etz124@yahoo.com

Food Bank Collection

There is now a 3rd collection bin in the corner of the Foyer neat the front entrance facing Bedford Street. Please use this since the 2 bins in the Narthex of church have overfilled! What a wonderful “problem” to have.

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.

Mom’s Night Out

Ladies, mark your calendars for mom’s night out! Join us on Thursday, February 13th at Ten Twenty Post in Darien at 7:30pm. We will enjoy dinner and fellowship with old and new friends. Please email Vasso or Rachel to RSVP. We look forward to seeing you! Contact: Vasso Spanos (bkarachris@gmail.com) or Rachel Jones (racheljones.cpa@gmail.com)
On Dec 14th, Hope & Joy and Little Angels hosted a delightful Christmas lunch party for the children at the Norwalk Inn owned by the Handrinos family. The craft circle consisted of making ornaments, writing letters to Santa and folding origami.

Father Harry led story hour with the classic tale ‘Shoemaker’s Dream’ based on “Where Love Is God Is” by Leo Tolstoy, expressing the message of God’s love and omniscient presence.

Famed magician Danny Diamond dazzled the young audience with his magic show and balloon twisting skills. Little Angels held a raffle for wonderful toys prizes.

The grand finale was a visit from Santa Claus who gave out gifts of gingerbread kits.

**HOPE/Joy**

The preschool children celebrate Yianna’s Name Day on January 7th on the Feast Day of St John the Baptist.

The preschool children are treated to Greek Carols by Dimitri and George on January 7th.

Fr. Harry teaching the preschool children about Jesus’ baptism (Jan. 14)
GOYA

On December 19th, 3 GOYAns, their advisors, 2 parishioners and Fr. Harry met at New Rochelle Holy Trinity Church to attend their monthly Manhattan Soup Run. Our Church donated and distributed over 6 bins of clothing! Thank you to all who donated items. The children walked around Penn Station with Despina Kartson and Fr. Harry giving out over 120 home cooked meals and sandwiches that were made by New Rochelle's parishioners. The children were amazed at how many people were in need and that they were able to help that evening. In addition, they visited a shelter and gave out toiletries that those in need were very thankful to receive. This month GOYA will start collecting toys for the Stamford Hospital Children's Department Toy Closet; please look for the bins by the Church Office to donate. The hospital prefers new, unwrapped toys or gift cards valued up to $25. The toy drive will run throughout Great Lent. In addition, dinner and skating at Mill River Park is on the calendar for Friday, January 24th. GOYA discount cards are still available for purchase. Please consider supporting our GOYAns! They can be purchased from any GOYAn, advisor, or the main office.

Questions? GOYA Advisor Contacts: Maria Otis and Rebecca Kelesidis

Athletics

The Connecticut Eastern Orthodox Basketball and Volleyball Leagues [CEOBL & CEOVL] are now in full swing. This year we have 5 Stamford United teams, open to youth ages 6-18: Farm (6-9), Youth (8-11), JV (12-14), and Varsity (15-18). Farm and Youth teams practice at Archangeles on Thursdays, 5:15 pm and 5:45 pm respectively. JV and Varsity practice at Annunciation 6 pm (through December). We also have girls volleyball practicing at Archangeles on Wednesdays 6 pm.

There is still time to sign up for our teams! Here are the benefits of playing in the church leagues:

• 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

For more info contact: Steve Sarigianis (steve@archangelsgoc.org) - or - John S. (atoz@aol.com) for more info.

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.

GOYA Discount Restaurant Cards

$20

Good for discounts at more than 20 area restaurants – good for 1 year
Available during coffee hour or in the office
International Orthodox Christian Charities

Want to help in places of the most need? Look no further than IOCC, the worldwide relief agency of all Orthodox Churches in America that has contributed over $60 million in aid and 40,000 hours of service for 25 years to more than 60 countries, including Greece, Albania, the Holy Land, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Romania, Russia, Georgia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Cameroorn, Iraq, Uganda, Haiti, and the United States itself. Because it is such a responsible organization (with less than 10% administrative costs so that more than 90% of all contributions go to those in need), just visit their website to learn more https://iocc.org/

If you wish, make an on-line donation very easily and securely, click: Support IOCC

Contact: Fr. Harry

“Wish List”

Our Allen Digital Computer Organ needs a new computer card reader and new memory. These parts plus labor will cost approximately $2,000. If you would like to donate toward these parts, please contact the church office or Dr. Thomas C. Moulketis, Organist.
Midwinter Theological Study

Thursdays - 7:30 PM

Theme: Apocalyptic Literature

Schedule

JANUARY 23 - STAMFORD CHURCH OF CHRIST
BRANDON PIERCE
"INTRO TO APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE"

JANUARY 30 - TEMPLE BETH-EL
RABBI JOSHUA HAMMERMAN
"DEAD SEA SCROLLS"

FEBRUARY 6 - FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
REV. DAVID VAN DYKE
"BOOK OF DANIEL"

FEBRUARY 13 - CHURCH OF THE ARCHANGELS
FR. HARRY PAPPAS
"BOOK OF REVELATION"

SNOW DAY - FEBRUARY 20

SPONSORED BY THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT

For more information please contact Mark Lingle:
marklinger.pastore@gmail.com or 203.570.6226
Greetings from your Stamford AHEPA Chapter 99! As we mentioned in November, the AHEPA Yankee District 7 Hellenic History Tournament was held on November 23 at St Barbara Church in Orange. The AHEPA Supreme President, George Horiates, honored us by attending the tournament and praising the students for participating. In addition, he met separately with the assembled AHEPA members and stressed the need to defend Hellenism in light of recent developments in the Mediterranean, and the importance of increasing our membership in support of that effort.

In continuing to carry our mission of promoting Hellenism and Education, we have embarked on a series of video screenings on 7 Thursdays in January and February, ending on February 27. This year our Hellenic History series is devoted to “The World of Byzantium.” You can see a summary of our past and planned screenings in the flyer made available by the church in the fellowship hall.

For additional information, please contact Nicholas Nikas, niketes@yahoo.com, 203-554-5570.

**AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

**AHEPA**

Births
Jonathan and Georgia Man welcomed their son, Constantine Liang-Cheng Man, on December 1st.

40 Day Churching
• January 26 – Constantine Liang-Cheng Man, 1st child of Jonathan & Georgia

Funerals
• January 7 – Eleni Aloupis
• January 11 – George Adamis
• February 1 – LuCee (Zachos) Canelias

**PARISH NEWS**

**Births**
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