



Intentional Hospitality

Great Lent, 2020

Great Lent is a golden opportunity to grow in practices of hospitality on several different levels:

1. Personal – who among us can claim that we are so at home with ourselves that we are fully satisfied with who we are, what we have done, and who we are becoming? I certainly am not and am convinced that God is not done with me yet. I'm grateful that I have more time to grow in faith, hope, love, and knowledge of Christ and the powerful revolution that he has inaugurated. Indeed, I treasure learning from even the most common experience, like driving along a familiar route and noticing a tree, building or landmark for the very first time! Or speaking with someone I've known for a long time but discovering something new, such as recently with an aunt of mine back in my hometown of St. Louis. Lent is a perfect time for working on personal devotions. While my own include prayer, Scripture and meditation, this year I plan to focus on journaling: not just writing down (i.e., typing on my computer) what has happened on a given day or period of time, but allowing me to reflect: What has been most life-giving and why? What has been most difficult or painful? How has God been at work in the blurry details of my own life? And fasting – the deliberate change in our eating habits – is so helpful in facing up to our – usually mindless – consumption of food and drink in order to lighten our body and free up our spirit to further God's work around us.
2. Family – recently our daughter, Hannah, moved into her own apartment. It was a natural move that has changed our home environment. Back to being “empty nesters”! No matter what our stage of life – raising kids, single adult, married with no children, or retired and “busier than ever” – we can seize the opportunity to set aside a little time and effort to share traditional Christian practices with one another. It can be as simple as deciding to read something devotional instead of watching television or surfing the net. Indeed, spiritual reading is an essential component of growing in faith.

And one way we can do this – with another person in our home or through audio recordings if we are alone – is reading aloud so that we can actually hear the words that are spoken and allow them to resonate in our minds and hearts. Another practice is to pray together once a week, such as on Saturday evening to prepare for Sunday Liturgy.

3. Community – our church is a collection of persons and families who have been united in Christ and called out of the world for the exalted and exclusive purposes of God's eternal plan of salvation for the human race and all creation. Why not set aside and make the effort to attend one weekday worship service? Why not join a study group such as on Wednesday evenings? Why not commit to a service project through Philoptochos, Men's Koinonia, or GOYA? Almsgiving – or works of mercy to those in need – motivates us to serve others by offering food, a warm heart and listening ear, or just running an errand.

We are all creatures of habit. Great Lent is profoundly focused on change, as uncomfortable as that may be for most of us! What are we willing to do differently to allow Christ to live more fully in and through us as persons, families, and a community of faith? He is so eager to find out what it's like to be inside us and collaborate with our totally unique personality and circumstances. We may be unaware of the extraordinary power that God has blessed us with – to seek to cooperate with grace and surrender to love – which is quite different from the default mode of keeping busy with our own all-too-typical routines.

What a precious gift the Church's Tradition hands us on a silver platter! Here is Great Lent, the springtime of renewal and change that contains the deep wisdom, tried & true practices, and plenty of flexibility for us to find something that fits our personal, family and community life as we walk together toward Holy Week!

– Fr. Harry

PASTORAL QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: What is the status of our search for a head chanter (protopsalti)?

A: After weeks of communicating with an accomplished young man in Greece, who had been recommended to us by Fr. Panteleimon Papadopoulos, the conversation came to an end due to unresolvable differences. We had hoped to bring him over for a short visit, but this is no longer possible.

Nevertheless, this was a good learning experience. I will continue to persevere – as I have done for 9 years since Christos Stratigakis fell asleep in the Lord – to search in our local area, through our Seminary, around the country, and abroad to find someone with the proper qualifications and willingness to work with our parish. May the Lord grant us our desire!

PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council

The Parish Council met on February 18th and discussed a number of important topics including preparations for Lent, the need to continue building our Church of the Archangels Stewardship program, potential options for the 2020 Church Festival, and the formation of a new House Committee to oversee the cleaning and decoration of the Church, hall, kitchen, and other facilities. With respect to the 2020 Church Festival, the Parish Council has decided to invite all parishioners interested in volunteering at next year's Festival to a meeting on Saturday March 7th at 11 am. The purpose of the meeting is to get everyone's feedback on potential changes to the Festival format. Please attend if you have an interest in assisting with the 2020 Festival. The new House Committee will be led by Annie Konidaris, Cassie MacFarlane, and Penny Nanos. The 2020 budget approved at the February 2nd general assembly included additional funds for cleaning and maintaining our beautifully renovated facility. The Parish Council welcomes feedback from all parishioners. If you have questions or suggestions please contact our Parish Council President, Tim Hartch, at timhartch1@outlook.com.

Treasurer's Report

The 2020 Operating Budget for the church proper was approved unanimously at the February 2, 2020 General Assembly. In addition, the report of the 2018 Audit Committee was approved. The Council has reviewed the report's recommendations and is in the process of implementing some of the items. The Parish Council is grateful to all who stayed after Liturgy. This month we will be working on finalizing the 2019 year-end figures. Contact: Elias Lolis, elolis@aol.com

Master Planning

We plan to remove and replace our corridor carpeting in early April (at no expense to Archangels). A subcontractor inadvertently tracked roof tar across it toward the very end of renovation and has reimbursed us for the cost of initial cleanings and replacement. Our committee has decided to replace the carpeting with "LVT" – a resilient, cleanable flooring that has qualities resembling carpet including slight texture and a soft look to

it. It will be more practical and should serve us well for years to come. The work will take place a week before Palm Sunday on April 6th and 7th when our preschool is on Spring Break. We continue to work on adjustments to our HVAC BMS (building management system) to optimize our heating and cooling usage and cost. Expect attractive exterior landscaping additions when the weather warms up! Contact: jason.konidaris@yale.edu



Tim Hartch, PC President, addresses the General Assembly (Feb. 2)



Parish Council meeting (Jan. 14)

MINISTRIES

Clean Monday @ Annunciation

1230 Newfield Avenue, Stamford

6pm - Compline in the Church

6:30pm - Break-out sessions for adults & children

7-8pm – Pot-Luck Lenten Dinner in the Hall

A Joint annual Ministry of Archangels & Annunciation Churches

Sponsored by Greek School, Church School,
Youth Ministries & Adult Education

Please bring a lenten food item for the dinner.

Guidelines for a Great Lent & Holy Week (March 2 – April 18)

Here are the enduring ways that the Church offers us – as persons, couples, and families – to observe this sacred season:

- Worship services each week:

§ Mondays - Great Compline at 6 or either 7pm; Sacrament of Confession 8pm

§ Wednesdays - Sacrament of Confession 4:45pm, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at 5:45pm

§ Fridays - Compline with Salutations to the Theotokos 7pm; Sacrament of Confession 8pm

- 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 with a printed Bible! The free Bible app recommended for smart phones is “YouBible;” with very good versions on English (ESV) and in modern Greek (TGV) that feature digital voice that reads the text aloud.

- Devotional reading – we can read something inspirational and challenging, such as the perennial classic by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, or the books mentioned above. In addition, our enhanced weekly bulletin now features short articles that will be especially relevant to this time of year.

- Fasting:

§ Spirit – 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). We can 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 some

of the time instead to attend worship, pray at home, read something devotional, and help someone in need.

§ Food – we can reduce the amount we eat every day (e.g., smaller portions, fewer snacks), to simplify and lighten our diet. The traditional prescription is to eat a vegan diet of 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. But if this seems too demanding or impractical, we can consider abstaining from meat and eating some dairy. Bottom line: we are not really fasting unless we change our diet in a way that challenges and inconveniences us! The purpose is greater self-control so that the Holy Spirit can liberate us from our compulsive drives and lighten ourselves physically 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. At the same time, many seniors in good health can 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, Pacific House or Inspirica, or participating in a “Soup Run” to feed the homeless in New York City. 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 philanthropy (such as the International Orthodox Christian Charities – www.iocc.org).

Sacred Baking: Prosforo

Saturday, March 21 • 10am – 2pm

Presenters: Fr. Harry & Presvytera Kerry

The Art & Spirituality of Making Bread for the Liturgy

For Novice & Veteran Bakers

Please bring your own flour, yeast,
and seal (if you have one)

Call 203-348-4216 or email office@archangelsgoc.org

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, April 12

Annual Palm Sunday Bread & Bake Sale

Baked goods and volunteers greatly appreciated!

Contact: Marion Vanson

Sacrament of Confession

This is easily the most neglected, misunderstood, and dismissed Sacrament! 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). Fr. Harry is available without an appointment after Monday Compline and Friday Salutations, before Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy; or by appointment. 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.

Annunciation & Greek Independence Day – March 25

- Tuesday, March 24 – Great Vespers 7 pm @ Annunciation Church with area clergy and reception afterwards in the gym
- Wednesday, March 25
 - § Orthros 8:30 am
 - § Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
 - § Flag Raising Program around 12 pm @ Government Center, with various public officials
 - § Festal Reception sponsored by our parish (details forthcoming)
- Annunciation/Greek Independence Day Parade in New York City – Sunday, March 29
 - § Further details forthcoming

Adult Education

- Joint Clean Monday Program (March 2) @ Annunciation – see box
- Parish Lenten Project (March 21) – hands-on activity to make Prosforo (Altar Bread) for Liturgy, with instruction from

Presvytera Kerry and Fr. Harry that includes the spirituality of baking and Lenten practices. RSVP in advance with Antonia through the office: 203-348-4216 or office@archangelsgoc.org.

- Bible Study on the Book of Revelation on Wednesday during Lent at 7:30 pm, following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and dinner.
- Men’s Koinonia – will devote its March meeting to a service project to the homeless and poor, either in New York City (through “Soup Run”) or here in Stamford.
- Lenten Retreat @ New Skete Monastery on Sat, Mar 21, 9:30am – 5pm. 2 Presentations will explore the impact of Social Media on our lives and our innate desire for genuine connection with God and each other. Cost: \$40/person covers food and materials. For more information and to register by March 10: <https://newsquete.org/lenten-retreat>

Prayer of the Month

The classic prayer of Great Lent is from St. Ephraim of Syria (a deacon, poet, hymn writer and theologian 306-373 A.D.). It is prescribed by the Church to be said at least once a day, with a prostration after each stanza:

Κύριε καὶ Δέσποτα τῆς ζωῆς μου, πνεῦμα ἀργίας, περιεργίας, φιλαρχίας, καὶ ἀργολογίας, μὴ μοι δῶς. (μετάνοια)

Πνεῦμα δὲ σωφροσύνης, ταπεινοφροσύνης, ὑπομονῆς, καὶ ἀγάπης χάρισαί μοι τῷ σῶ δούλῳ. (μετάνοια)

Ναὶ, Κύριε Βασιλεῦ, δώρησαί μοι τοῦ ὄραν τὰ ἐμὰ πταίσματα, καὶ μὴ κατακρίνειν τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, ὅτι εὐλογητὸς εἶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν. (μετάνοια)

O Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of laziness, sinful curiosity, lust for power, or idle talk. (prostration)

But give rather to me, your servant, a spirit of self-control, humility, patience, and love. (prostration)

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother or sister, for you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen. (prostration)

A prostration involves the following:

- From a standing position, make the sign of the cross
- Lean forward, bend the knees to the floor, and touch knees and hands on the floor, followed by gently touching the forehead
- Resume standing position.

Such a practice allows us to pray physically (not just mentally) and express more completely our submission to Christ who loves us.



Kali Parea Seniors celebrating January birthdays

Kali Parea Seniors

Kali Parea Seniors watched the movie *My Life in Ruins* with Nia Vardalis and we had many laughs! The next luncheon is on March 12, at 12:00 noon. We invite all our seniors to come and join us. Please call Pamela, 203-554-0042 if you have any questions or to make a reservation.

Kali Sarakosti. Contact: Pamela Koutroubis, pamelak@2145@gmail.com

Ladies Philoptochos Society

Please join us for our meeting on March 3rd at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Hall. Cindy Mixcus, a Philoptochos board member and a VP at Wells Fargo Bank, will be our guest speaker. Cindy will be discussing and taking questions about how best to manage your finances and investments. At this important meeting, we will solidify plans for our Easter activities. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the tray Philoptochos members passed in January to support St. Basil's Academy. Members will be passing a tray on March 22nd to benefit Holy Cross Seminary. At our last meeting, members donated a beautiful, handmade knitted shawl to a senior member of our parish and a handmade knitted scarf and hat to another family with a child who has a medical condition.

Save several dates for upcoming events! The annual Palm Sunday Bread and Bake Sale will take place on Sunday, April 12th and is being chaired again by Marion Vanson. We need many volunteers to bake, package the pastries on April 11th and manage the sale on Palm Sunday. Please let Marion or any Philoptochos member know if you can help. Philoptochos also will be hosting coffee hour on April 5th in memory of the 3rd anniversary of Jane Vorvis' passing. Refreshments are welcome. Also, the annual Mother's Day luncheon will take place on

Mother's Day Luncheon

Sunday, May 2

Madonia Restaurant

1297 Long Ridge Rd., Stamford

Contact: Cindy Mixcus



May 2nd at Madonia Restaurant. This is always a fun afternoon of fellowship! We look forward to seeing you at the March 3rd meeting. New members are always welcome. Please remember to contribute your dues as this helps our chapter and our regional and national Philoptochos grantmaking obligations. Contact: Eugenia Zavras, president, etz124@yahoo.com

Church School

Families please join us in embarking on the Lenten Season together by attending the Clean Monday Retreat at our sister parish on Monday, March 2nd. Our Church School will be spending a large part of the month of March focusing on curricular activities that support reflection, prayer, fast, and almsgiving. We will be hosting an exhibit of student work in conjunction with the celebration of the Great Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day on Sunday, March 29th. This display will include projects highlighting the Great Feast of the Annunciation from grades PreK-2 and narrations from our older students. The Lenten journey is such an intimate and special time. Thank you, in advance, for letting us share in it with your children. A blessed Lent to all! Contact: Dr. Evelyn Biliias Lolis (ebiliias@aol.com).



Mardi Gras celebration in the new church hall (Feb. 22)



Dr. Anna Karidas speaking with the preschool children about proper dental care (Feb. 21)



Pamela Koutroubis, president of Kali Parea, offered the children treats for Valentine's Day at the senior luncheon (Feb. 13)



The preschool children enjoying outdoor play (Feb. 19)

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

All students in grades 7-12 are invited to participate in the annual Oratorical Festival! Are you a capable writer? Do you want to practice public speaking? Would you like an opportunity to meditate on our faith and share your ideas and knowledge? Then this is the perfect ministry for you! Students in grades 5 and up are being introduced to Oratorical Festival topics in Sunday School classes. Some are even holding mini Festivals with their classmates as practice. We encourage these students to take it further, and to complete and edit their speeches in order to share them with a larger group! For more information about topics, resources, and the Festival generally, check out: www.goarch.org/-/st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival. If your child is considering participation, please reach out to Anastasia Valassis, avalassis@gmail.com. Students must have a speech prepared before Sunday, March 22nd.

Our parish is also honored this year to host the 2nd level of competition, the District level Oratorical Festival, on Saturday, March 28th at 10 am. We will be joined by area churches who will send speakers to compete. This is a beautiful program to witness. Please stop in to hear the fervent faith of our young people! Students curious about the Oratorical Festival should come to the District Festival to see it in action!

GOYA

February was a busy month for GOYA. We took advantage of a day off for President's Day to gather at Bowlmor for two hours of bowling and lunch with Fr Harry. Some of us also attended the Mardi Gras festivities in the fellowship hall where select GOYAns helped to serve dinner while others judged the costume competition. To top off the month, we danced the night away at the Annunciation GOYA dance.

Please consider donating to our annual Toy Drive for the Pediatric Unit of the Stamford Hospital. We want to fill their Toy Closet which is where the children go to get a toy when they are staying in the hospital. New toys (for up to 12 years old and \$25 or less) can be dropped off in the blue bin in front of Antonia's office. Questions? GOYA Advisor Contacts: Maria Otis and Rebecca Kelesidis



Children of Hope & Joy create Valentine's Day cards with the senior residents at Atria Stamford (Feb. 8)



Father Harry joins Hope & Joy for the annual Valentine's Day workshop (Feb. 8)



Hope/Joy Valentine Service @ Atria (Feb. 8)



Little Angels Mom's Night Out. From left to right: Amy Nanos, Rachel Jones, Georgia Man, Vasso Spanos, Megan Pasvankias (Feb. 13)

Hope/Joy

On Saturday, February 8th, the children of Hope and Joy with their parents and Debbie Nanos joined Father Harry & the senior residents at the Atria Stamford for the annual Valentine's Day cards workshop. They were warmly greeted by Atria's staff member, Mavel Jones. The children brought smiles to the faces of the residents as they designed creative, pop-up Valentine's Day cards. We thank Andrea Urban, the Engage Life director of Atria for also making this event possible. Contact: Ruth Diamond, cornellrh@yahoo.com

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

Moms from Little Angels enjoyed fellowship and fun at Mom's Night Out on Thursday, February 13th at Ten Twenty Post in Darien. We had a great evening with new and old friends! Thank you everyone who came!

Mother's Day Coffee Hour Craft

Families, it's not too early to mark your calendar for this Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10th! During coffee hour following liturgy, the children will be preparing a very special gift for their mother (or grandmother, nuna, or other special person!). A reminder with details will be sent via email closer to the date.

Contact: Vasso Spanos (bkarachris@gmail.com) or Rachel Jones (racheljones.cpa@gmail.com)



Greek School practicing for Program in March 29 (Feb. 26)

Athletics

Our Volleyball team started the season very well with 2 big wins vs Waterbury and New Rochelle. Our Youth basketball team made the playoffs and their semifinal game is Sunday March 1st at 1:30 in Waterbury. The JV team finished 1st with a 7-1 record and their semifinal game is this Saturday 5:15 also in Waterbury. The Varsity team had a heartbreaker in their first playoff game and lost to Danbury 54-57 this week. Our Senior team won the semifinal game last week and they are playing on Sunday March 1st 2:30 in Waterbury for the championship.

Contact: John Skoparantzios, atozjohn@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.

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

One of the benefits of greater fasting – from heavier foods, eating out, entertainment – is conserving our money and material assets to benefit those in greater need. An easy way to do this through the pan-Orthodox world relief agency of IOCC is online: <https://iocc.org/ways-to-give>. You will find a variety of worthwhile and responsible projects that they engage domestically or abroad. Contact: Fr. Harry



GOYANS and Father Harry enjoy a bowling outing (Feb. 17)



Clergy meeting @ Fordham to discuss the blog "Public Orthodoxy" (Feb. 12)



Clergy Peer Group & wives meet with Fr David Garretson (center left) to learn about Broadway & his career in the non-actors Union (Feb. 25)



Clergy lay wreath at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier, Arlington National Cemetery (Feb. 4)



Fr Sergius Halverson, St Vladimir's Seminary Professor, speaks on Preaching in the Orthodox Tradition @ Clergy Retreat (Feb. 3)



Clergy offer Memorial Prayers for over 600 Orthodox Christians buried at Arlington National Cemetery (Feb. 4)



Opening Keynote of Archdiocesan Conference on Marriage in Houston TX (Jan. 23)

PARISH NEWS

40-Day Churching

- Cameron Christopher Lessard on Feb 23 – 1st child of Christopher Lessard & Emily Chambers

Funerals

- Helen Aloupis on January 7
- George Adamis on January 11
- LuCee Canelias on February 1
- Freda Bitzonis on February 7
- Katina Tsirantonakis on February 18
- Melissa Childakos on March 1



Clergy visit St Sophia Cathedral in DC during District Retreat (Feb. 4)



Clergy Peer Group @ hit musical "Come From Away" (Feb. 25)