

MOSAIC

Coming together, we form an icon of God's Kingdom

Vol. 8, No. 9

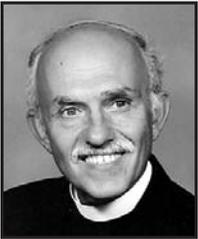
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL

January 2004

(708) 562-2744

www.holyapostleschurch.com

From Father Bill...



Never place a period where God has placed a comma

Would somebody please tell me where 2003 went? I blinked and it was March! Sneezed, and summer had arrived. I don't know about you, but the days just seem to be flying past and before you come to your conclusions, I know what some may be thinking: Father, that's a sign of growing older and I hope a little bit wiser. Perhaps that's why I'm sensitive right now to your time, especially at this season of the year. If you'll give me just another sixty seconds, I promise to be brief.

First, let me say how truly grateful Presvytera and I are for your partnership this year. By God's Grace, Holy Apostles has had a good year. We have maintained our health and the programs are functioning as expected. God's faithfulness was once again evident, as it has been for these past 44 1/2 years. You and many others were responsive to His promptings, and through your prayers and gifts, helped us make it to the end of the year. Lest I be like one of the nine lepers who forgot to turn around and say thank you, I want to make sure I do that right now.

May I ask permission to shift gears at this point and ask you to read with understanding the following: "It is our destiny to move out, to accept the challenge, to dare the unknown...If we are content to live in the past, we have no future. And today is the past." When I first read those words, penned by Louis I. Amour Frontier, they grabbed my attention. I was forced to look deep within and ask myself several searching questions:

Am I one who is willing to "move out"?
Have I begun merely "to live in the past"?
Is it clear to me that "today is the past"?

...See Fr. Bill on P. 6



Choir Director Bette Schieber leads the Junior Choir in Christmas favorites.

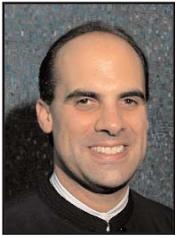
Young singers raise their voices in Christmas hymns

The Junior Choir under the direction Bette Schieber and Barbara Marlas has been singing during the Christmas and Easter seasons for twelve years. This year's theme was Noel. This year's performing group is made up of third, fourth, and fifth graders.



Arianna Lorusso, above, started the presentation with a reading. At left on cello, is Michael Schieber, Georgia Skoirchet on flute, and John Schieber on violin. Not pictured is Deanna Morelli on bells.

From Father Nicholas



New Beginnings

Is the New Year here already? It seems like time is passing us standing still. This is the time of the year when we get together with friends and loved ones. We celebrate and thank God for what we have accomplished over the last year as we plan the upcoming year. Did you know that the name January comes from the Roman god Janus? He is the god of beginnings and endings. Janus has two faces, one looking forward and the other looking backward. This is a wonderful time of the year that we are given to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. All of us want a new beginning in the New Year. Maybe we want to lose weight, stop smoking, break some bad habits, read some new books, finish school, or build new relationships. The good news is that we have a new beginning, not only at the beginning of the year but every day.

We all make mistakes. Maybe we say or do things that we later wish we could take back. We miss opportunities. Sometimes we make mistakes at work, hurt the people that we love or disappoint God. We like to start over and get another chance. We hope that the next time around, things will be better. It is exciting to start over. A new start brings different challenges, experiences and opportunities. Do you remember starting a new school year with new books, notebooks, folders, teachers and subjects? The future holds the hope for something better.

After many disappointments, we may give up or lose hope. We may find ourselves saying, "What's the point? I will make the same mistake again!" Next month, on February 26th, we celebrate the feast day of a woman that had probably lost all hope and made many mistakes in her life. Her name? St. Photini. She was the woman at the well who met Jesus. This saint was probably not very popular in her town. Photini was not married to the man with whom she was living. She already had five husbands. Five times she tried to start over. Five times she tried to build a new life. Before she came to that well that day, she had given up on marriage, happiness, and hope. For her, there was no turning back. No new start. No new beginning. She accepted her role as an outcast. Photini learned to live without hope. Unfortunately, she is not alone in reaching this point of hopelessness. After many disappointments, it can

...See Fr. Nicholas on P. 3



Gavel to Gavel



BY PETER POTERES... Parish Council Secretary

Regular Parish Council meeting Thursday, November 20

Finance

- ✦ The Financial Statement dated October 31, 2003 was reviewed. Among the costs for the month were the boiler, \$40,935, and the purchase of Bibles / Pamphlets / Books, \$9,785.75. For the year, the church has a deficit of \$101,699.88.

Stewardship

- ✦ George Mannos Jr. reported that as of October 31, 2003 the church has received 921 pledges (down 14 from 2002) totaling \$559,847.50 (down \$2,515.50 from 2002) for an average pledge of \$607.87 (up \$11.79 per pledge from 2002). Amount paid YTD is \$503,993.50 (down \$4,386 from 2002). George also reported that the Stewardship Education program has been implemented. The program's goal is to educate everyone on the real costs of operating the church.

Correspondence

- ✦ Peter Poteres read a letter from Jim Chicouris, Parish Council President, St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Mission Church in Pasco, WA thanking Holy Apostles for the \$500 donation.

Meditation

- ✦ Father Bill expressed the need to give thanks through our actions during this season of Thanksgiving. He spoke about the importance of November 21, the Entry of the Blessed Mother into the Temple.

Building and Grounds

- ✦ A motion was made to approve up to \$2,000 to fix the problem of water seepage in the basement. It was passed unanimously.
- ✦ George Alex reported that a permit from the Village of Westchester has been received to install the north/south entry canopies. 5 bids were received with the recommended bid being \$21,300. Jim Fotopoulos moved to vote on the canopies. It was approved by a majority. A lease renewal needs to be completed for the mail machine, with the possibility of changing to a different machine. A fold and stuff machine is recommended for \$100/month rental.

Ways and Means

- ✦ Sandy Fiascone reported that the date of the dance has been scheduled for Sunday, September 12, 2004 at Drury Lane in Oak Brook. A letter will be sent out next month to schedule a committee meeting in January.

Old Business

- ✦ A copy of the Parish Council phone list was handed out to be updated.
- ✦ Peter Tomaras reported that Presvytera Michelle made a presentation regarding the pre-school during the October meeting. The cost of an insurance rider for the pre-school would be \$8,000-\$10,000 for a \$1M rider. School tuition would cover the cost of the rider. Where the children would enter the building was discussed. The classrooms that would be used are the nursery and the pre-school room. The program would be self-sufficient financially. Questions were raised on how the children's presence would affect daily church operations. Don Alexander moved to vote on the pre-school. The motion did not pass.
- ✦ A new Greek School teacher has been in place since September. A vote to keep the teacher for this school year was passed unanimously.

New Business

- ✦ Peter Tomaras reported that a switch to bees wax candles would be a 400-500% cost increase. Father commented that the bees wax candles represent the cleanest and purest way for prayer with a fragrance that would fill the church. The additional cost to the church to use bees wax candles would be \$25,000 per year.
- ✦ George Alex stated he had a concern with building security. There have been numerous nights when multiple groups were having activities in the church. George suggested that the Parish Council should investigate having someone close and lock the church every night during the week before we have a problem.
- ✦ Father Bill and Father Nicholas were not present during the discussion concerning a possible pension program for the priests and long-term employees. The committee will report their findings at the February meeting.
- ✦ Peter Tomaras reported that the health insurance costs for church employees have increased from \$23,700 to \$30,000. He is investigating the issue further and will report the findings at the December meeting.
- ✦ Peter Tomaras reported that a consultant has been hired to investigate the purchase of a new, youth camp for the Metropolis.

Reasons I'm blessed and reasons I'm riled

BY GEORGE J. DEMETRALIS
(alias Mr. D.)

As we enter a new year, I'd like to share with you some reasons I feel especially blessed and reasons I'm particularly riled as I continue to serve the Holy Apostles family.

First, the blessings:

I'm blessed with the best students and friends one could ask for.

I have at least seven teenagers assisting me in Adventure Theater, the Lamplighters, and The Way, and there are many more waiting for their chance. I receive some of my greatest blessings when my young students become friends, and when I get my first ride after they get their drivers' licenses. Not only do my adult readers tirelessly help me do the extensive research and editing that go into preparing the lessons for the classes I teach, but they willingly and eagerly help me run the errands necessary for my work.

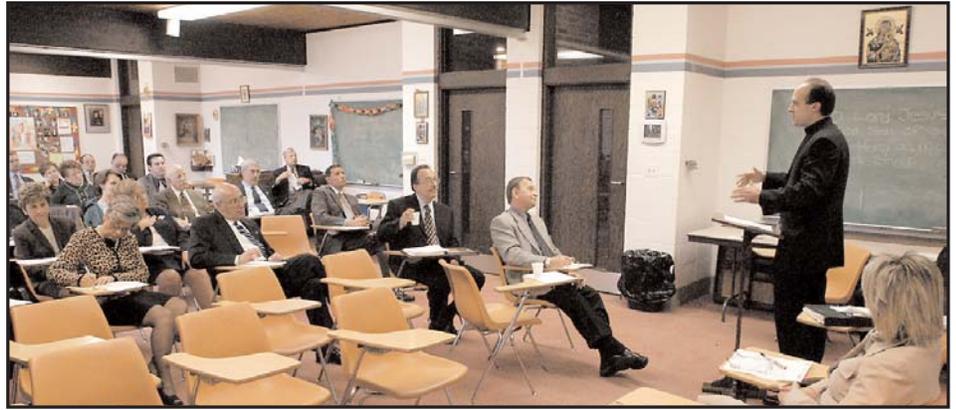
However, I am also riled. First, it's that goofy title I have, 'Lay Assistant.' What does it mean, anyway? I assist the laity, but to do what? Some parishes use the term 'Pastoral Assistant.' A little better, perhaps, but still ambiguous. How do they assist the pastor?

I prefer the title 'Religion Teacher,' because that's what I am. I teach the Orthodox Christian religion to students ranging in age from 6 to 102. There are biology, math, and English teachers. Why can't I just be known as a 'Religion Teacher?'

Finally (and this is for the parents of my younger students), attendance in our youth programs at Holy Apostles is too low. It's not too late to enroll your children in Adventure Theater, Lamplighters, Sunday School, The Way, and the other excellent activities this parish offers to young people.

More than ever before, youngsters are involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities, and that's fine. Will these activities answer the nagging moral questions of our time? Is Jesus Christ a real historical figure? What's so wrong with gay marriages or gay clergymen? Did God create the universe and everything in it, or did it just evolve over billions of years of trial and error? Like a dedicated member of the clergy, can a law enforcement officer, firefighter, physician, soldier, politician, business man or woman live a Christian life and make a difference in an increasingly secular and hedonistic society?

Every youth program in this church should be and can be twice and even three times its present size. Come on, parents, make it so.



At the General Assembly meeting on Sunday, December 7, Fr. Bill, Fr. Nicholas and members of the council presented their reports. Copies of the minutes are available in the church office.

Fr. Nicholas from P. 2

Making a new beginning can be scary but rewarding

happen to us. We may begin to feel that there just is not a new beginning for us.

Photini approached the well and saw a man (Jesus). He should not have spoken with her. She was a woman, and men typically did not speak to women especially if her husband or father was not present. Photini was a Samaritan, not a Jew. The Jews did not interact with the Samaritans. She was living with a man. No one would speak with her, not even the other women in town. Jesus says to her, "Give me a drink." He is offering her a new beginning! In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells her (and us): "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." This encounter with Christ changed Photini's life. She no longer saw herself as a hopeless outcast. The woman who walked to the well without a friend, hope, or a future met Christ and then ran back to town to tell everyone the good news. She invited the people to come and see the Messiah that she met personally. St. Photini came to the well for water and was transformed into a wellspring of Christian faith.

It is not easy to confront our failures, disappointments, or pain. Sometimes the thought of hoping again is scary. If we begin to hope, we could be disappointed. If we try to start over, we might fail. Regardless of how scary it may seem, the Lord invites us to make a new beginning. The new year brings new beginnings. It is never too late to start. Today is a new day. We are reminded in St. Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians: "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation."

Holy Apostles Olympic Glendi

Sunday, February 15

at the Diplomat West

Elmhurst, Illinois

Adults: \$40

Children: \$20

5:30 pm Cocktails

6:30 pm Dinner

Sponsored by
the Holy Apostles Greek School

RSVP Mary Syregelas

630-654-4099

and Nancy Stamatelos

The Fellowship Hour needs you!

The 2004 Coffee Hour sign-up board has been posted in the multi-purpose room. Please take a moment and sign up to host a coffee hour and do your share to keep this very enjoyable part of the Holy Apostles experience going. Ask another family to co-host with you! If you have any questions, call Chris or Cathy Zurales at 630-832-9584.

An iconographer in our midst

For years, Jane Fotopoulos thought iconography was only for those people who “dedicated their whole life to God and not for people like me who live in the world.” Her son, John, disagreed and badgered Jane, an art teacher by profession, for two years to commit her considerable artistic talents to glorify God. “Finally, he just wore me down, as children do,” Jane said. “I told him, ‘OK, find me a teacher.’ Two weeks later, he found me a teacher.” That was about 12 years ago, when she spent two weeks one summer near Latrobe, Pa., at an iconography class taught by Phillip Zimmerman. It was a life changing experience for her. “I thought, ‘OK, I’ll write an icon and then I’ll paint one of my other artworks,’” Jane recalled. “Believe it or not, I have not touched any of my other artwork since then. It’s just drawn me in so totally that I just don’t even look to the other. I think this nourishes my soul. If it didn’t, I wouldn’t keep doing it.”

Producing an icon is a great deal more involved than the mere artistic application of paint on wood. It starts with hours of preparing a section of hardwood, typically birch or oak, by first sanding it then troweling five layers of acrylic jesso to the surface. That effort is followed by applying a layer of muslin then five more coats of jesso. Finally, Jane sands the surface a final time.

On the day she applies the acrylic paint, Jane fasts. As she steps into her converted bedroom-studio, she prays, crosses the icon and kisses it. Then, as she applies the paint, she prays. While producing an icon, she immerses herself in solitude, allowing the phone to ring unanswered and blocking out all other distractions.

Writing an icon that measures 12 inches by 14 inches typically consumes 60 hours, excluding preparation of the board, Jane said. When she’s finished, she usually gives away her work. One of her largest pieces, measuring 24 inches by 36 inches, is brought out by Father Bill for Christmas morning services. He displays another one of her icons in his office.

Although she has stayed away from her conventional painting, Jane has expanded her repertoire recently, illustrating one religious children’s book for Presbytera Michelle and starting the illustrations for another.

Jane continues to study iconography, attending classes for a week or two every summer across the country. Over the years, she said, she has found widening interest from those of other faiths, including Catholics and Episcopalians, in writing icons. It is a very stylized art form, with rigid rules that include portraying light emanating from the icons’ body; making mouths small to convey silence; making large ears and eyes to communicate the power and importance of listening to God’s words and witnessing his presence.

Over the years, her sometimes busy life has made it difficult to pursue this art form. Jane estimates that she has made about 30 icons in 12 years. But she will continue to compose them. “We all want to move toward being Christ-like,” she said, “and this is another way I can keep my focus. This is a way for me to contribute to my faith. We learn a lot from the icons. They’re our visual teachers. I want to keep making them for as long as I can.”



One of Jane’s favorite icons is of the Visitation.

...Editor’s note: In Orthodoxy, icons are written, not painted.



The assembled cast of this year's Christmas Pageant sings *Joy to the World* after the Divine Liturgy.



Mr. D. leads everyone in a song before the Adventure Theater group takes to the stage for a performance.

Youth programs shine at Holy Apostles



Left to right, Hannah Milad, Demi Korpan, and Connie Savas sing a song wishing they were in Hawaii during a recent Adventure Theater production.

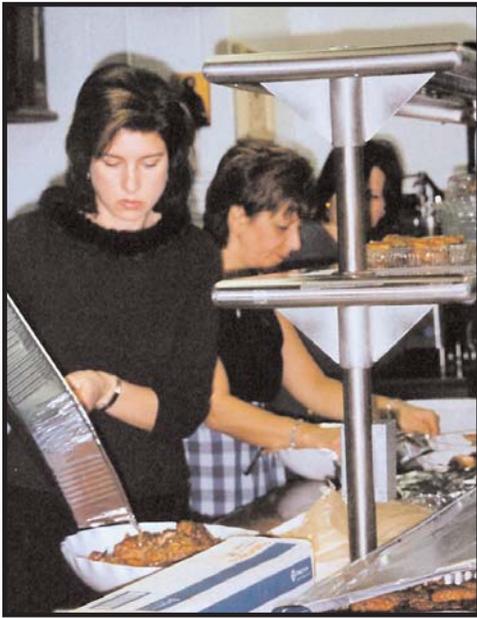


Participants learn about Jesus' birth and see the cave at the metropolis youth retreat.

Young GOYANS trim the Christmas tree in Fr. Nicholas' office.



Daniel and Patty McKay make Thanksgiving crafts at a TOTS program.



Philothonos members Chrisie Alex and Eleni Kouimelis prepare food for last year's Godparents Luncheon.

Mark your calendars... Exciting events are coming up!

Vasilopita celebration will be held on January 11 following Liturgy in the multi-purpose room.

Synaxis—On Saturday, January 17, Synaxis will have a dinner in the multi-purpose room after 5 pm vespers. Fr. Bill will conduct a tour of the church with special emphasis on the newer icons. The main course and side dishes will be catered. Appetizers and desserts will be appreciated by all attending couples. There will be a fee of between \$12 and \$16 per couple to pay for the catering. Please call Chris and Cathy Zurales at 630-832-9584 if you would like to attend.

Godparents' Luncheon will be held on February 1 following Liturgy in the multi-purpose room. Adults \$11 and

children ages 4-18 are \$6.00 and ages 3 and under are \$2.00. Reservations taken after The Liturgy on Sundays.

Celebration of Books will be held Sunday, March 7; Tuesday, March 9; and Thursday, March 11.

The Dinner Dance scheduled for Saturday, September 11, has been changed to Sunday, September 12. Committees are now being formed. Details will follow later.

GOYA SCHOLARSHIPS are available to high school seniors who will be entering college in the fall. Application forms can be picked up in the church office.

Fr. Bill From P. 1

Have a sustaining vision for 2004

Are the possibilities of the future as important to me as the accomplishments of the past?

How easy it is to become so preoccupied with maintaining the familiar realm of what is, that we fail to explore the unfamiliar territory of what might be! Sometimes during the Parish Council meetings we seem to forget our purpose, focusing only on what the church is rather than what it ought to become! All important tasks must be watched over and cared for; otherwise we weaken our cause and credibility. To become so consumed with the everyday demands of our calling that we lose interest in dreaming about and planning for the future cannot help but diminish our effectiveness. Without realizing it, we can become root bound, caretakers of a museum rather than visionary thinkers. Some have asked, "Father, what will happen to our communities in the future?" My response is if we continue to think of what confronts us in the future, we have no fear. A strong commitment on the part of our faithful will enable us to look ahead and use the past to build upon.

Recently, I read an account of the life of Gracie Allen, one of Hollywood's entertaining personalities. Gracie Allen was the life and comedic partner of George Burns. On their radio and television shows, Gracie played the role of a lovable airhead, whose misunderstandings made people laugh. For example, at the end of the show, if George would tell her, "Say good night, Gracie, she would say

"Good night, Gracie." However, in their real lives, Gracie was very much the brains and heart and soul of their partnership and their relationship. Before she died, Gracie left a love note for George, hoping to soften his pain and to give him the courage to continue in life. That note contained the words, "Never place a period where God has placed a comma... Love Gracie."

Even though for a time George felt that his life was completely empty and finished, it definitely was not. George Burns went on to play God in a couple of movies, and continued to live and entertain up to the age of one hundred. It is certainly appropriate that all of us remember these words as we bid farewell to another year and welcome 2004.

Month after month, we have talked about and focused on the importance of walking closer with the Lord. Keep in mind that God has so much for each of us to do in the future. First, we need to improve our walk with God. Broken relationships have to be mended. Remind our loved ones how much they are loved. Help to make the parish a more effective tool as we work toward our salvation. Cultivate a culture of joy, peace and love. Try to model the Kingdom of God. Thank God each day for new opportunities and the privileges you have been given to serve. Keep working on the process of life and "never place a period where God has placed a comma."

January Registry

Baptisms

Anastasia, daughter of
Stacy & Jeff Swierk
Sponsor: Tom Agres

James Alexander, son of
Vanessa & James Clohessy
Sponsors: Kiki & John Kolimbiris

Wedding

Natalie Nikolaou & Arturo Hollis
Sponsor: Dean Nikolaou

Mosaic Deadline

The deadline for the February Mosaic is Tuesday, January 6.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Happy New Year
From The Mosaic Staff

NEW YEAR'S DAY

FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL

10:00am Divine Liturgy

1

2

3

8:00am Orthros
9:15am Awaken To God
9:30am Divine Liturgy
Fellowship Hour

4

EVE OF EPIPHANY
6:00pm Divine Liturgy

5

HOLY EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy
4:30pm Greek School

6

FEAST DAY OF ST. JOHN
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy
1:00pm Seniors Social

7

4:30pm Greek School

8

4:30pm Adventure Theater

9

4:00pm Lamplighters
5:00pm Vespers

10

8:00am Orthros
9:15am Awaken To God
9:30am Divine Liturgy
Vasilopita Celebration
6:00pm Metropolis Vasilopita Celebration At St. Nicholas Church

11

5:15pm The Way

12

9:30am TOTS
4:30pm Greek School

13

1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group
7:30pm Catechism Instruction

14

4:30pm Greek School
7:30pm Parish Council Meeting

15

4:30pm Adventure Theater

16

FEAST DAY OF ST. ANTHONY
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy
5:00pm Vespers
Synaxis Social Following Vespers

17

FEAST DAY OF ST. ATHANASIOS
8:00am Orthros
9:15am Awaken To God
9:30am Divine Liturgy
Fellowship Hour
GOYA Ski Trip

18

GOYA Ski Trip

19

4:30pm Greek School

20

1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group
7:00pm Orthodox Bible Study
7:30pm Catechism Instruction
7:30pm Choir Practice

21

4:30pm Greek School

22

4:30pm Adventure Theater

23

4:00pm Lamplighters
5:00pm Vespers

24

FEAST DAY OF ST. GREGORY
8:00am Orthros
9:15am Awaken To God
9:30am Divine Liturgy
Fellowship Hour

25

5:15pm The Way

26

9:30am TOTS
4:30pm Greek School

27

1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group
7:00pm Orthodox Bible Study
7:30pm Catechism Instruction
7:30pm Choir Practice

28

4:30pm Greek School

29

FEAST DAY OF THE THREE HIERARCHS
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy
4:30pm Adventure Theater

30

5:00pm Vespers

31

Byzantine School Of Music meets every Wednesday at 7pm

Memorials

*Georgia Ladas
Nicholas Anos
Christina Karnezis
Betty Jane Tomaras
Thomas Kalyvas
George Maduros
Peter Counelis
Nicholas Gianakos
George Papazickos
Agaristi Papazickos
Christos Patsavos
James Konos
Gus Vlangos
Panagiota Vlangos
Dr. Louis G. Poulos
Harry Psimos*

Funerals

*Margaret Collas
Brian Katsaros*

Weekday Services

New Year's Day Feast Day of St. Basil

Thursday, January 1
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Eve of Epiphany

Monday, January 5
6:00 pm Divine Liturgy

Epiphany

Tuesday, January 6
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. John

Wednesday, January 7
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Weekday Services

Feast Day of St. Anthony

Saturday, January 17
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of Three Hierarchs

Friday, January 30
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Vespers

Saturday, January 17
Saturday, January 24
Saturday, January 31
5:00pm

Stewardship Reminder

Stewardship packets including information and a pledge card for 2004 have been distributed. Stewardship needs to be increased by 38.6% to sustain the operating costs of our parish. Each steward is asked to consider increasing his or her stewardship pledge. You must determine the amount in accordance with the benevolent blessing god has bestowed upon you. As a parish family, Holy Apostles is our responsibility.

Thank You

Many thanks to parishioner Stella Athanas for the beautiful Holy Apostles Christmas Card.

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church
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Westchester, IL 60154
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