



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
I greet you in the love of Christ in this 2,024th Year of Our Lord.

In the next several Mosaics, we will be getting to know our church better by looking at the biblical sayings etched in various places of our building, both inside and outside.

And if my count is correct, there is one outside (which we will discuss here), three in the narthex, and one in the nave.

So, looking at the west side of our building from Wolf Road, one sees the image above.

This saying, "Where there is no vision the people perish," is from the Book of Proverbs 29:18. And the verse which directly follows it interprets this for us: "But blessed is he who keeps the law."

Therefore, **the vision which a person is to have, that which he should be looking at, is the holy law of God.** For by studying God's word and by keeping and living it, one is both happy and blessed, and avoids the pitfalls of sin.

**But what is God's law?** Is it the Ten Commandments? Certainly, but it is much more vast.

Indeed, for us Christians, **it is every word which Jesus Christ uttered.**

It is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). It is when He says: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you" (Luke 6:37).

It is Christ saying: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Even as I have loved you, so should you love one another" (John 13:34).

It is the command to constantly turn away from evil and turn towards Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is here" (Matthew 4:17).

It is the command to "take, eat, this is My Body; drink of this, this is My Blood" (Matthew 26:26). Jesus often commanded, "Follow Me."

And before His ascension into heaven, He commanded us to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19), thus bringing the joyful and life-saving message of God's salvation into all the world.

And so, beloved, we must study God's law, we must read the Holy Scriptures, so that our vision might be set on God's life-giving law.

**And then let us keep His law and live it, embody it, so as not to perish, but rather receive the joy of Christ and be blessed in Him.**

With love in Christ,  
Fr. George



# THE STORY OF THE VASILOPITA

from Vasilopita.com

## THE TRADITION

One of the more beautiful and inspirational traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church is the annual family celebration of the Vasilopita. This original event happened in Cappadocia of Caesarea in the last half of the fourth century.

**The Greek word Vasilopita is directly translated as “Sweet Bread of Basil”.** When the Vasilopita is prepared, a coin is baked into it. Sweet flavoring is added to the bread which symbolizes the sweetness and joy of life everlasting. It also symbolizes the hope that the New Year will be filled with the sweetness of life, liberty, health, and happiness for all who participate in the Vasilopita Observance.

When the observance begins, usually on New Year’s Day, the bread is traditionally cut by the senior member of the family, and the individual who receives the portion of the Pita which contains the coin is considered Blessed for the New Year.

Each portion of the Vasilopita are distributed as follows: **The first portion is cut in remembrance of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The second is for the Holy Mother of our Lord, The Virgin Mary. The third is for St. Basil the Great, the other portions are cut for the members of the family beginning with the eldest.** Portions may also be cut for the Church, the house, the traveler, the visitor and the poor.

## THE HISTORY

This age old tradition commenced in the fourth century, when Saint Basil the Great, who was a bishop, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his Diocese. He wanted to preserve their dignity, so as not to look like charity, he commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he arranged to place gold coins. Thus the families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves, were pleasantly surprised to find the coins.

## THE MAN

St. Basil was one of the greatest Fathers of the Christian Church and appeared on the spiritual horizon of the Orthodox Faith. He was Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia (Asia Minor).

He was born four years after the First Ecumenical Council held in the year 325 A.D. Saint Basil was one of the three Cappadocian Fathers of the Church (the others were Gregory of Nazianzus, his best friend, and his brother, Gregory of Nyssa).

Saint Basil was the first person in human history to establish an orphanage for little children. He also founded the first Christian hospital. His fame as a Holy Man spread like wildfire throughout the Byzantine world. He was considered one of the wisest and most compassionate clergymen in the entire history of the Church. His Feast Day is observed on January 1, the beginning of the New Year and the Epiphany season. The Church, therefore, in respect for his many contributions to the Church and to mankind, combined the joy and happiness of the New Year with the glory of the birth of Christ, and the Epiphany into what is known in the Orthodox Church as the



Whoever finds the coin is hailed as “luckiest” for the coming year

**Parish Vasilopita Celebration** – The annual Holy Apostles Vasilopita Celebration will take place on **Sunday, January 7** after the Liturgy in the multi-purpose room.

**Metropolis Vasilopita Celebration** – The Metropolis Philoptochos Vasilopita Celebration will take place on **Sunday, January 14** at Holy Taxiarchi & St. Haralambos in Niles at 6:00 pm.

## VASILOPITA RECIPE

1 cup butter	1 cup milk
2 ½ cups sugar	1 cup almonds, crushed
7 eggs, separated	1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon almond extract	1 tablespoon orange zest
3 teaspoons pure vanilla extract	1 bag of whole blanched almonds
3 cups flour	
3 teaspoons baking powder	

### DIRECTIONS:

Cream butter and sugar for 10 minutes, add egg yolks and flavorings. Add remaining ingredients, except egg whites. Beat egg whites until stiff in a separate bowl. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Blend well. Grease baking pan (round 14” pan). Pour in batter and tuck coin (thinly wrapped in aluminum foil) into batter, then hand lay whole blanched almonds around perimeter of surface. (You can also spell out the current year in the middle of cake). Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

*Note: For a smaller cake, prepare half of recipe, and bake in a 10” round greased baking pan for about 30 minutes.*

## METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



**Celebrating the Holiday Season! Clergy, Presvyteres and parishioners of Holy Apostles attended the Metropolis of Chicago Community Christmas Celebration at The Carlisle in Lombard on Sunday, December 3.**

### Holy Apostles Choir performs Christmas Concert at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

**T**wenty-six members of the Holy Apostles senior choir, along with the Holy Cross Youth Choir performed a 90 minute Christmas concert in Justice, IL Saturday December 16.

This **first of its kind event brought together two music ministries from neighboring parishes to share the spirit of the holiday season.** Directors Nick Paloumpis and Denise Ten Hoven had been working together for weeks in preparation of this inaugural event.

The concert featured several soloists, including Fr. John Kalomas, Lori Theodore, Eleni Geanon; Jim Tollios and cellist James Lekas were featured in the Christmas song Carol of the Magi. Among the highlights of the concert; Fr. Kalomas recited the Nativity story from the Gospel of Luke.

The Youth Choir sang The 12 Days of Christmas with congregation participation and the Holy Apostles choir concluded the concert with the Hallelujah Chorus.

Maria Bolchert and Cathy Anderson were the accompanists for both choirs. Many members of our Holy Apostles parish attended.



## HOUSE BLESSINGS

Fr. George and Fr. Nicholas are looking forward to blessing your homes during the holy season of Theophany in 2024.

If you would like to have your home (or business) blessed, please call the church office to set up your visitation (708) 562-2744.

*May God bless you this New Year!*



*Christmas!*







## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NOVEMBER 2023 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: VAL DRANIAS

The November 16 Parish Council Meeting was called to order at 7:36 pm: by Vice-president Jim Maragos due to Norm Pomrening's absence. Father George Dokos gave the opening prayer and Jim Maragos recited the Mission Statement.

**Approval of Minutes:** Val Dranias – Nick Kirkeles moved to approve the October, 2023 Parish Council Minutes, Terry Chiganos seconded. Unanimously approved.

**Correspondence:** Val Dranias – Thank you from Gladys Adams for the flowers for her husband Ted's funeral. Notification from the Metropolis that our total commitment allocation for 2024 is \$111,731.

**Ecclesiastical Report:** Father George – Father presented a reading on the beginning of the Nativity Fast and the celebration of the feast of the Apostle Philip. The excerpt was from Father Hopko's work.

#### MINISTRY REPORTS:

**Building and Grounds:** Chris Pepke

Update of active projects:

- a. The new wallpaper and painting is taking place in the MPR.
- b. Landscape – on track with the designer
- c. Meeting tomorrow on the parking lot; a parishioner tripped in the parking lot last week; moving forward.
- d. General Maintenance is continuous

**Telos progress update** – Chris Pepke

- a. Purchased 5 high-top tables
- b. \$3000 was received for the TELOS mentorship program

**Treasurer's Report:** Steve Milak – Steve gave an overview how parish council members can better understand the financial reports and check the math to ensure the church's finances are in a good state. Process changes are being implemented so that the PC receives last month's report and the current month's report for easy comparison of income and expenses.

**Ushering report:** George Chechopoulos – Steph Chiganos is facilitating ushers coming from YAL and TELOS

**Stewardship report:** Val Dranias delivered Sandy Pihos' report – Our 650 YTD pledges are 2% LESS than the 660 we had received by the end of October 2022. We have achieved 87% of our 2023 Stewardship Goal to receive pledges from 750 families. Our \$775K pledged is 4% MORE than the \$744K we had received by the end of October 2022. We have achieved 68% of our 2023 Stewardship Goal to fund our entire operating budget of \$1,139K through pledges. Our \$709K collected is 4% MORE than the \$680K we had received by the end of October 2022. Our median pledge is \$600, EQUAL TO the \$600 YTD October 2022 median pledge. Our average pledge of \$1,192 is 6% MORE than the \$1,127 YTD October 2022 average pledge.

**Missions:** Peter Bell

- a. Review of Project Mexico to continue. Looking at doing the trip either annually or biennially.
- b. Project Hope is doing well.
- c. BEDS has worked out. Checking if there's a roll for us in the future; checking new logistics
- d. Feed6 is January 20, 2024. Goal for this year is 150,000 meals and next year. This will give Holy Apostles 1 million meals.
- e. Collaborating with Philoptochos, Missions and Stewardship on a Nativity Project. Peter Bell moved to authorize \$300 from the Missions budget to be used for the Nativity Project. Lena Theotikos seconded. Unanimous approval.
- f. Missions was approached by Eleni and Ted Karamatsos for a donation for their Kenya Mission. No recommendation from the Missions committee. They have a 501.3C/Missions of Love and Hope. Peter Bell moved and Steve Milak seconded the motion that we donate \$250 to Missions of Love and Hope for Ted and Eleni's mission to Kenya. Yes-6, No-3. Motion passes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**The Basile show:** Val Dranias – Val reported that the Hinsdale Community House canceled our 2/24 date because of their adult drama group wanting that date. If we can't find anything else, we will host it in the MPR. Patty Pappas and Emilia Linardakis volunteered to help find a new venue.

**Chapel Hill cemetery plots:** Patty Pappas – we have 46 of 200 plots left to sell. Chapel Hill Gardens is under new management and we have received a lackluster response to our requests to clear the plots of brush, etc.. A meeting has finally been set up in early December to try and get the remaining plots in a marketable condition.

**Foundation update:** Jim Maragos – Parish Assembly approved its formation. Georgia Demaris of the Metropolis recommended some wordsmithing. The Archdiocese requires that as to the Foundation's dissolution, the money goes to the Archdiocese. Also, that all members of the Board of Directors must be Greek Orthodox.

**Performance Appraisals, Welcome Packets, 1-9 forms:** Emilia Linardakis – Performance reviews need to be completed. Lou and Lena will reach out.

**Welcoming pamphlets:** Emilia Linardakis – HARC will donate a small amount of pamphlets to get us started.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Bereavement notices:** Nick Kirkeles – Nick asked if there is a policy as to funeral announcements. Father George and Father Nicholas stated that indeed there is a policy which is longstanding that bereavement notices are only sent out for funerals being held at Holy Apostles, because there could be bereavement notices sent every day otherwise. Some Parish Council members felt that if a steward or a member of their immediate family passes away that the notice should be sent out.

Next Meeting: December 21, 2023. Closing Prayer: Father Nicholas. Adjournment : Jim Maragos - George Chechopoulos moved to adjourn and Val Dranias seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

**HOLIDAY FOOD COLLECTION - THANK YOU!**

The Hillside Food Pantry (HFP), operating out of Immanuel Lutheran Church to the north of us, has been the recipient of our HOPE bags and Holiday Food Collection items for the past year.

They **extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to the Holy Apostles Parish for the bags and holiday sides collected.** Jayne Siou, director of the Food Pantry, has repeatedly expressed gratitude to our congregation for the food we are providing. She feels blessed by our support and their pastor has been amazed by the generosity of our parish.

The Hillside Food Pantry has regular, registered food pantry recipients, but also offers a monthly "drive-up" food pantry which supplies food for anyone that needs help. **The Thanksgiving Distribution this year had cars lined up at 7:30am for an 11am distribution.** They had to start an hour early because both of their parking lots were full to the street, including their long driveways. **They ran out of food by 11:10am and saw a record 169 families!**

The HFP organized a second distribution the week of Thanksgiving to help those turned away at the first distribution. The HFP planned two Christmas Distributions instead of one.

**METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES HOLIDAY SHOPPE**

**The Parish and Philoptochos collected and donated a total of \$5,000,** which were used to purchase gift cards, winter gear (hats & gloves) and toys which were delivered to Metropolitan Family Services for families to "shop" – free of charge – for Christmas presents.

THANK YOU to all who donated and volunteered/shopped for this wonderful cause!

**Philoptochos General Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 20th | Details coming in weekly emails & bulletins.**

It's NEVER too late to join Philoptochos! We welcome new and returning members. For more information or to request a volunteer form, please contact Membership Chair Kathy Obmascik at [iwrite4u@comcast.net](mailto:iwrite4u@comcast.net). Membership fees can be paid online at [www.tinyurl.com/haphiloptochos](http://www.tinyurl.com/haphiloptochos).



◀ scan to join

# Philoptochos Christmas Party



▲ Hostesses for the Philoptochos Christmas Party above from left were: Patty Pappas, Litsa Lekatsos, Karen Anagnos, Helen Kasimos, Georgia Kass, Effie Stojka and Tina Kourafas (not pictured Elaine Papanton).

On December 12, 2023 **over 100 ladies of Philoptochos** enjoyed a wonderful festive evening filled with music, food and friendship!

Thank you, again, to our wonderful hostesses for such a wonderful evening!

The Hinsdale Central High School Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Serge Pensik, performed Christmas music during dinner and guests donated winter hats, gloves & scarves which were distributed to the People's Resource Center.





## "BLANKETS OF LOVE" BLANKET MAKING DAY

**Saturday, February 3, 2024 | 10 AM | Multi-Purpose Room**

The Philoptochos' annual Blankets of Love collection typically takes place during February. This year, however, we have decided to **make fleece lap blankets for each of the "Pillars and Rocks" seniors visits that we make for Valentine's Day.**

Philoptochos will hold a **Blanket Making Day on Saturday, February 3rd in the multipurpose room starting at 10:00 am to accomplish this goal.** There are **approximately 60 seniors that will receive a visit and a goody bag from Philoptochos** right before Valentine's Day. We are looking for about 25 volunteers to help us on this day.

The **blankets are easy to make and require no sewing!** Philoptochos will purchase fleece, prepare it and provide a short tutorial the morning of the event. A Sign-Up Genius will go live in January for those who wish to participate. Sharp scissors are needed. We can provide some, but please bring your own if you have them.

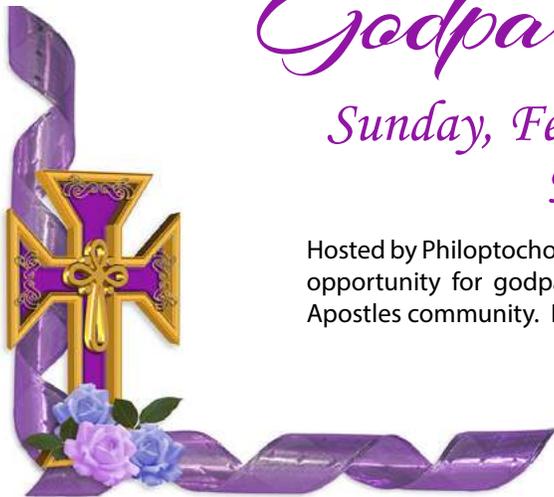
Philoptochos will still hold a collection the entire month of February and any monetary or blanket donations we receive in February will go to a social organization(s) yet to be determined.

If you wish to support this project with a monetary contribution, please send a cash or check donation to the church office payable to "Holy Apostles Philoptochos" indicating "Blankets of Love" in the memo line or on-line via the link in the Weekly News.

For more information, please contact Faye Adams at [geofaye.adams@gmail.com](mailto:geofaye.adams@gmail.com) or Maria Patt at [mdpatt59@comcast.net](mailto:mdpatt59@comcast.net).

## Godparents Luncheon

*Sunday, February 4 | Following Liturgy  
Multi-Purpose Room*



Hosted by Philoptochos and co-chairs Marianna Bannos & Deanne Chiganos, this is a wonderful opportunity for godparents, godchildren, friends and family to share a meal as one Holy Apostles community. Details to come in the January weekly emails and bulletins.

**Please RSVP by Monday, January 29th:**

Marianna Bannos - [Marianna.bannos@gmail.com](mailto:Marianna.bannos@gmail.com)

[www.tinyurl.com/haphiloptochos](http://www.tinyurl.com/haphiloptochos)



◀ scan to RSVP

OCCA Chicago Presents A Pan-Orthodox

## Sanctity of Life Prayer Service

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Sunday, January 28

6:00 PM

Guest Speaker:

Fr. Nicholas Jonas

Pastor, St. George Greek Orthodox Church  
Dekalb, IL

Fr. Nicholas is a long-time and inspirational leader of OCCA efforts respecting the Sanctity of Life.

*There will be a reception and fellowship following the service.*

# BASILE

## GREEK COMEDY SHOW

benefitting  
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2024**

**Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church**

**2501 Wolf Road | Westchester**

**Doors open: 7 PM    Show Begins: 8 PM**

**Tickets: \$65**

**Students (14 & over - PG-13) & Seniors (65 & over): \$55**

**Pastries and coffee served during intermission**

**AFTER PARTY featuring DJ George Markopulos**

*We're bringing "Everyone's Favorite Greek" to town for a fun and entertaining fundraiser for Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church.*

*Basile's comedy has been enjoyed by millions around the world with his unique blend of material, improvisation and characters. His PG-13 show is Greek themed and spoken in both Greek and English.*

**GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!**

**Ticket sales start 1/7/24 following Divine Liturgy or online:**



← scan to purchase tickets or visit <http://tinyurl.com/basilefundraiser>

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

JANUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	<b>2</b> NO GREEK SCHOOL 7:00 pm GOYA Social Mtg 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board Mtg	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> NO GREEK SCHOOL 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 6:00 pm YAL	<b>5</b> EVE OF THEOPHANY 9:00 am Royal Hours of Theophany 6:00 pm Vespersal Divine Liturgy	<b>6</b> THEOPHANY 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers
<b>7</b> FEAST DAY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST VASILOPITA 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> GREEK SCHOOL VASILOPITA CUTTING 10:00 am Clergy Syndesmos Mtg 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY 7:00 pm Neighborhood Bible Study - Elmhurst	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Vespers Pot Luck
<b>14</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Mtg	<b>17</b> FEAST DAY OF ST. ANTHONY 8:00 AM Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm GOYA	<b>18</b> FEAST DAY OF ST. ATHANASIOS 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:30 pm Parish Council Mtg	<b>19</b> 7:00 pm Small Paraklesis	<b>20</b> 8:30 am FEED 6 5:00 pm Vespers 7:00 pm YAL Mtg
<b>21</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> FEAST DAY OF ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm Greek School Staff Mtg	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:00 am Choir Federation Board Meeting 5:00 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Trivia Night
<b>28</b> GOYA FUNDRAISER 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Sanctity of Life Service	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> FEAST DAY OF THE THREE HIERARCHS 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 4:30 pm Greek School	<b>31</b>			

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
2501 S. Wolf Road  
Westchester, IL 60154  
(708) 562-2754

Address Service Requested

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## MEMORIALS

Known at time of publication:

Thomas Alexander	George Adams
Presvytera Christina Blathras	Lambrine Adams
George Christopher	Louis Adams
Esther Christopher	Antigone Kafkes
Jean Demas	Gregory Kafkes
James Fotopoulos	Thomas Kafkes
Costantinos Gatsacos	Marika Mitsos
Theodora (Dorothy) Gatsacos	Mary Poulos
Anastasia Georgiou	Peter Poulos
Anastasia Kangles	William Simios
Constantine Kangles	Diane Van Zandt
Nicholas Kangles	Louis Van Zandt
Deanne Mavrick	
Elizabeth Moxon	
Panayiotis Sahlas	
Peter Sigalos	
Angelo Tasoulis	
Constantinos Tasoulis	
Georgia Tasoulis	
Christ Velis	
Vasiliki Velis	

## FUNERALS

Known at time of publication:

Thomas Angelos  
Kimberly Argires  
Alexandra Friar

## BAPTISMS

Michelle Pac  
*Sponsor:* Nicole Keller

Leonidas, son of Anthony & Nikese Garbis  
*Sponsor:* Alex & Helen Boutsikakis

## WEDDINGS

George Chiampas & Michelle Pac  
Alyssa Failla & Tim Orlowski

## BIRTHDAYS

Agape Chakonas	John Polihronidis	Alyssa Chow	Evangelia Analitis	John Kasimos
Ellyn Magas	Konstantine Sparagis	John Panopoulos	George Tsantilis	Ann Paziotopoulos
Sofie Magas	Leonidas Yant	William Alex	Katerina Pitsilos	Evanthia Panopoulos
Chloe Andrews	Debbie Makris	Alexander Analitis	Niko Pitsilos	George Alex
Jeremy Glavanovits	Nikki Tyburk	Peter Bell	Faye Adams	Connie Kass
Andrew Langas	Elle Maragos	Alex Pavlidis	Theodore Chiganos	Thomas Pepke
Ariana Mandelaris	Antigone Cardaras	Konstantinos Spyropoulos	Alexandra Hayden	Amalia Schref
Richard Rahn	Vasilici Gomez	Gregory Stolis	Mary Maragos	Maximos Forero
Alexandra Pierce	Christiana Lekkas	Michael Tolen	Anna Toloken	Joseph Patt, Jr.
Jan Tondelli	Audrey Parrott	Billy Christy	Andrew Armstrong	Michael Fattore
Jonathan Demopoulos	Sophia Forero	Konstantine Kinnas	George Theophilos	
Luke Liarakos	Bryan O'Shaughnessy	Vanessa Lekkas	George Vlagos	