

from Fr. Nicholas

Praying for our Departed Loved Ones

Why does the Orthodox Church offer Memorials?

"Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8). So, love for our departed loved ones compels us to pray for them! We hope and believe in our Lord's philanthropy, compassion, mercy, and loving kindness knowing that God desires that *"all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4).

We express our love through prayer and caring for our departed loved one's well-being. "A very special benefit" is derived by the souls whom we remember in prayer writes St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

Did you know that the names of our departed loved ones are remembered both before and during the Divine Liturgy?

As the priest prepares Holy Communion during the Matins service, he prays: "for all our brethren who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection to eternal life" and for each name submitted.

Later, immediately preceding the liturgy, we pray "for our Orthodox brethren who have gone before us, who have been laid to pious rest."

And, after we kneel and the Holy Gifts are consecrated, the names of the departed

(continued, pg. 3)



Kali Chronia!

The 2024 Holy Apostles Parish Family Vasilopita Cutting was hosted by the Philoptochos Society on Sunday, Jan. 7 in the multi-purpose room.

All ministries were invited to celebrate the New Year by Father George and receive a piece of the Vasilopita immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Letta Kochalis (Psalms Reading Group) was the lucky winner of the coin. Kali Chronia!





Epiphany



Thank you to co-chairs Anna Fattore & Cynthia Stathopoulos, all the wonderful chefs and volunteers for making the Christmas Breakfast on December 17 such a wonderful and memorable event for all the families!

And a special thank you to Santa for taking time out of his busy schedule to come visit our kids!



Praying for our Departed Loved Ones *(continued)*

are remembered as the priest prays: "and be mindful of all who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection to eternal life." This time following the awesome sacrifice offered on the Holy Altar is most beneficial notes St. Cyril.

These memorial prayers offer a "certain consolation" and "much profit and benefit" according to St. John Chrysostom. Names are commemorated as the priest and the entire church community pray with their arms raised to heaven. Invisible angels and archangels surround the community where the Son of God is present. All the saints are there, and our departed loved ones are remembered in this great company of believers.

Saint John writes "it is an honor to have your name commemorated at that time. When the King is seated upon His throne and someone requests something of Him, He may grant it. As long as the Immaculate mysteries, Christ the King, is upon the holy altar table, it is a great honor to be commemorated. Let us not tire of helping those we love who have departed for the other life."

Attending the Matins service and the entire Divine Liturgy is so important. This is the reason our Holy Apostles Church does not reserve a seat for families attending the memorial. We should be at church from the beginning.

Memorials are beneficial to believers who have departed repenting. They are also helpful for those who had the desire to

repent but not the opportunity. Praying for those who have departed unprepared for eternity is a sacred act pleasing to God.

According to the church fathers, after someone dies, they cannot repent because the door for confession and repentance is closed. Parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) reflect this. Only our present life gives us the opportunity to struggle and sanctify our soul.

So, why do we pray for loved ones who seem so far away from God? Saint John Damascus writes: "Those who have departed even with the slightest virtue but could not increase their virtue because of indolence, procrastination or timidity, the Lord will not forget."

It is our obligation as loving people to pray for and not judge them. Only God knows the secrets of a person's heart. Who knows what happened in their souls in the last moments of their lives or how God worked in their hearts?

Our Church prays out of love for all. These prayers confirm that all of us, living (church militant) and dead (church triumphant), belong to one spiritual Body of Christ, the Church.

We ask Christ, our compassionate, good, and gracious Lord of life and death, to provide His mercy for our brothers and sisters beyond the grave. **"If our beloved one departed, let us attempt to help them, as much as possible," St. John Chrysostom encourages, "with prayers and petitions to God."**

+Fr. Nicholas

The Saturday of Souls

In the Greek Orthodox Church, there is an important and long-standing tradition of praying for our departed sisters and brothers.

Saturday (except for Lazarus Saturday and Holy Saturday) is the day of the week that is traditionally reserved for those who have fallen asleep because our Lord's own salvific passing took place on Great and Holy Saturday.

While each Saturday provides an opportunity for the remembrance of those who have fallen asleep, **there are two main Saturdays every year known as 'Saturday of Souls,'** which are designated specifically for this purpose: the **Saturday before Meatfare Sunday, which is Saturday, March 9, 2024 this year, and the Saturday before Pentecost.**

It is important to highlight that many traditions in the Church started locally, and some have been adopted on a larger scale or even more formally by the Church.

This is demonstrated by the fact that in some regions or local Churches, the Saturday before the feast of Saint Demetrius (October 26) is celebrated as a Saturday of Souls, and more local Churches have been adopting this tradition.

Most Churches also observe two additional Saturdays of Souls: one on the Saturday before Cheesefare Sunday

(where we commemorate all the holy men and women who excelled in asceticism) and on the Saturday of the first week of Great Lent (where we celebrate the miracle of koliva by the Great Martyr and Saint Theodore the Tyro).

While these Saturdays are not always formally recognized in the Church calendar as Saturdays of Souls, they nonetheless embody long-standing traditions and are considered as particular Saturdays to pray for the reposed.

On the Saturday of Souls, Orthodox Christians commemorate those who have fallen asleep, beginning from Adam and Eve, all the way to the most recently departed souls. With reverence, we ask God to forgive all their transgressions and to grant them rest "in a place of green pasture." In addition to expressly commemorating the names of our loved ones, our prayers include more generally all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of the Resurrection of Christ.

May their memories be eternal!

This is Part 1 of an article authored by Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, PhD (Director, DRE) and published in DOXA, Orthodox Times, and Doxologia Infonews. The DRE expanded the original article to provide additional information for the purposes of religious education. The DRE is a ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Koliva (Sitari) – Greek Memorial Wheat Berries from Kalofagas.com

Ingredients

2 cups wheat berries (I like Bob's Red Mill brand)
3/4 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
3/4 cup blanched almonds, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup sesame seeds
1/2 cup golden raisins

1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
1 cups fine ground bread crumbs (unsalted) or crushed graham crackers or zwieback
1/2 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
1 cup powdered sugar

Directions

1. Place the wheat berries in a medium pot and fill with tap water. Allow the wheat berries to soak overnight.
2. Drain wheat berries, place them back in the pot and cover with water. Turn the heat to medium and once aboil, simmer for approx. an hour until tender (taste one).
3. Transfer to a strainer and then spread out on a tablecloth/pillow case covered countertop. Allow about 12 hours to dry.
4. Place the wheat berries in a large bowl and add the walnuts, almonds, sesame seeds, raisins, pomegranate and 1/4 of the bread crumbs and cinnamon, stir to combine.
5. Transfer to a bowl or a tray of your choice for presentation. Cut off a sheet of parchment or wax paper and place on top to press down and compact the mixture. Form a mound or flat surface, according to your tastes.
6. Top the surface with remaining breadcrumbs and once again place parchment paper on top and press down to smooth out.
7. Now top with powdered sugar layer, place parchment on and press down to smooth out.
8. Decorate with dried fruit, nuts or silver candies (sold at Greek bakeries). A cross should be included in your design. This step can be done the night before the memorial or the morning of. Do not cover or place in a fridge.
9. To serve at church, purchase small cups, paper bags or zip lock bags along with plastic spoons to give out in memory of your departed loved one.



NOTE: Got a pressure cooker or Insta-pot? Place the wheatberries in your pressure cooker/insta-pot with 3 to 1 water to wheatberries ratio. Seal according to mfg's instructions. Once seal has formed (pressure cooker begins to whistle), cook for 35 mins. Safely release steam, place cooked wheatberries in a colander to drain and cool.



VIDEO: Making Koliva Step-by-step



<https://youtu.be/C5wHTIYcJQQ?si=aXP8wE9KwZOUrOSx>



PHILOPTOCHOS GENERAL MEETING

Please join us to enjoy an offsite shopping experience and meeting

at

Meredith Jaye

in the Burr Ridge Village Center

545 Village Center Drive

Burr Ridge, Illinois on Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 7:00 pm

Meredith Jaye

is an ageless adventure of accessories, clothing, and home goods.

The store will be open exclusively to Philoptochos

and will feature wine and light appetizers.

We will combine this fun evening with a brief general meeting.

Members will receive an invite.

To RSVP contact Aleka Ernst at alekaernst@aol.com

no later than 2/16

Bring Your Friends!

Join Us

*For an
Evening*

*of
Shopping*

& Socializing



15 % of sales will be donated to Stuffed Love - providing hand-stitched heart pillows to families and children affected by congenital heart defects



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER 2023 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: VAL DRANIAS

Norm Pomrening called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm. Father George led the opening prayer and Norm recited the Mission Statement. Emilia Linardakis and Lena Theotikos were not in attendance.

The November 2023 minutes were unanimously approved. We had Christmas Cards and Thank You notes from: Jesse & Juanita Brandow, Alex Magdalinos on behalf of the St. John of Damascus League of Chanters, Mac Brady Assoc., OCMC and St. Iakovos Retreat Center; a letter from the Archdiocese outlining their Total Commitment Prepayment Program.

In his Ecclesiastical Report Father George presented an article by Fr. Jim Kordaris, Director of Stewardship and Evangelism for the Archdiocese on The Parish Council Is a Ministry. Father George used the article to remind us of our purpose.

The following reports were given:

Building & Grounds: Chris Pepke reported on the Landscape Project – we will look to approve the landscape design at the 1/18 meeting. Parking Lot - reaching out for bids; the project is still on track for this summer. The Welcome Sign was Installed. Fencing for the AC – Bushes we have now around AC need to be removed because leaves and debris get into units. Fence will need to be installed to adhere to building code. Looking at brick fencing for about \$25,000 or standard fencing at about \$7,000. Standard fencing will need to be replaced periodically. We will bid it both ways. Reminder that BPA approval is needed for anything over \$20,000. HVAC – broken valve - \$5,000 parts and labor; really need a new economizer -\$15,000 + \$5,000. Recommend spending the \$5,000 now.

Finance: Steve Milak reported that the books have been reconciled for November. As of November 30, 2023 our capital and operating accounts are at \$1,164,213.38.

Technology: Steve Milak reported that the WiFi Access Issue was fixed in the Educational Wing.

Stewardship & Welcoming:

Stewardship Data: Sandy Pihos reported our 660 YTD pledges are 2% less than the 674 we had received by the end of November 2022. We have achieved 88% of our 2023 Stewardship Goal to receive pledges from 750 families. Our \$781K pledged is 3% more than the \$756K we had received by the end of November 2022. We have achieved 69% of our 2023 Stewardship Goal to fund our entire operating budget of \$1,139K through pledges. Our \$728K collected is 3% more than the \$707K we had received by the end of November 2022. Our median pledge is \$600, equal to the \$600 YTD November 2022 median pledge. Our average pledge is \$1,183 is 5% more than the \$1,122 YTD November 2022 average pledge, and 24% more than the \$953 YTD November 2019 average pledge. Additionally, we've already received over \$225,000 of 2024 stewardship pledges from approximately 120 families.

Sandy also brought to our attention that the current Stewardship Pledge Cards do not include the % over last year's pledge as they did for 2023.

Measuring Change in Stewardship: Steve Milak – when do we know if we've reached the 21% increase that was recommended at the Parish Assembly?

Ushering: George Chechopoulos presented the New Ushering Schedule.

It was noted that the Usher Sign-Up can be found on the website under Fellowship Hour. It needs to stand alone and be easily accessed.

Greek School: Norm Pomrening stated that a Dinner Dance is planned for 3/16. Funds to benefit the Greek School.

Missions: Feed6: Norm Pomrening said we've confirmed 100,000 meals; 140 volunteers, need more; need \$35,000 to pay for the meals

Telos: Chris Pepke –stated that they are setting up a mentorship program for young professionals; Deacon Perry is creating a list of mentors; looking to have one scheduled event every quarter.

Old Business:

Chapel Hill Update: Patty Pappas informed us that a meeting was held with Chapel Hill. Patty moved that 24 plots of our plots to be exchanged as listed in a better location and no longer singles in the Garden of the Ascension. Val Dranias seconded. Unanimously approved. Preparing guidelines for the purchase of plots. Handout for interested parties.

Comedian Update: Val Dranias reported that E. Linardakis, P. Pappas and Val looked for another location. One was found but it fell through. The Basile Show will take place on 2/24 in the MPR and will be a fundraiser for the church. A cash bar, pastries and coffee will be served during intermission. A DJ after party will be held with Greek dancing. Tickets to go on sale on 1/7 and there will be a Playbill with sponsors included.

New Business:

Parish Assembly Agenda/Shrinking Duration: Chris Pepke – presented a way to have reports sent out digitally prior to the Parish Assembly to cut the time down of the meeting.

There is a parishioner interested in building a youth center.

Next Meeting: 1/18

Key Dates:

Feed6 – 1/20

Closing Prayer: Father Georgiou

Adjourn: Norm Pomrening at 8:51 to Executive Session.

JOIN US FOR

Holy Apostles

GREEK SCHOOL
DINNER DANCE

MARCH 16, 2024 AT 6 PM

GEORGIOS BANQUETS
8800 W. 159TH STREET | ORLAND PARK, IL

OPEN BAR | *DJ | KIDS ENTERTAINMENT
ADULTS \$100 | KIDS (12 & UNDER) \$30

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>

NOTE: If you purchased your tickets online, please pick them up after Divine Liturgy on Sundays or on the night of the show.

BECOME A SPONSOR! RESERVE YOUR SPACE IN OUR PLAYBILL!

It will be an evening of fun, laughter and entertainment as Basile, the renowned Greek-American comedian, will reflect on life growing up as a Greek American.

We expect an audience of 300 with Basile's show followed by a post-show party featuring Greek dancing and songs, with DJ George Markopulos providing the music.

Your generous support, either personally or through your company, can greatly benefit our community by participating in the evening's Playbill.

In addition to being acknowledged in the evening's Playbill, your sponsorship will also be recognized through additional digital distribution, reaching over 800 families within our community.

SPONSOR PACKAGES:

Platinum Sponsor: \$5,000
8 VIP seating tickets and up to 3 lines in Playbill

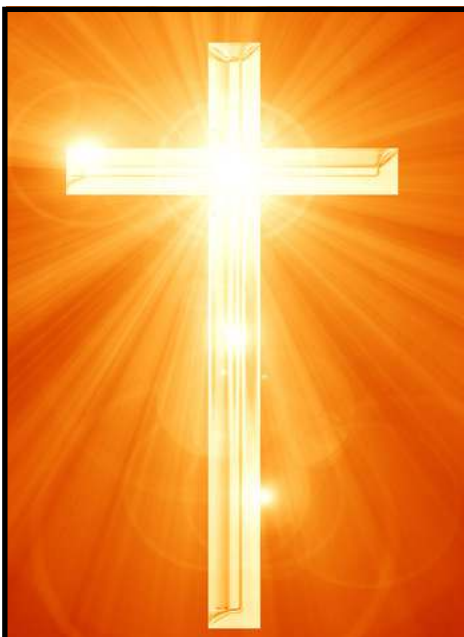
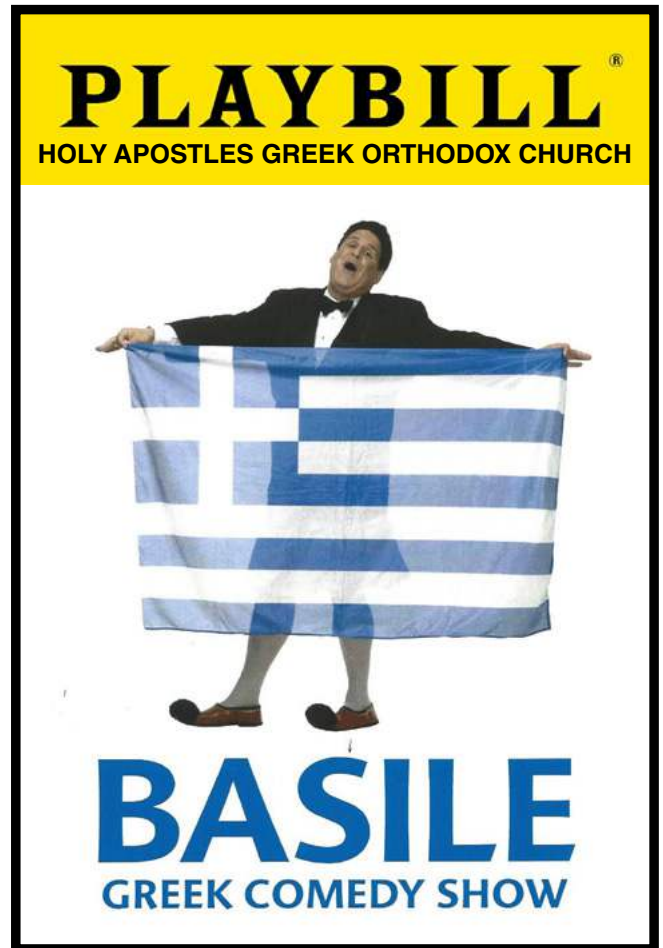
Gold Sponsor: \$2,500
4 VIP seating tickets and up to 3 lines in Playbill

Silver Sponsor: \$1,000
2 VIP Seating tickets and up to 3 lines in Playbill

DONORS :
Donations from \$500 - \$999 - Up to 2 lines in Playbill

PATRON:
Donations from \$25 - \$499 - 1 line in Playbill

To sponsor or make a donation BY FEBRUARY 7 call us at (708) 562-2744, scan the QR code or visit <https://form.jotform.com/240095648191157>



Transformed By Christ: Transforming Others

Retreat for All Ages at
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

**SATURDAY, MARCH 2
9 AM - 12 PM**

Learn to make disciples of all by bringing people to Christ both locally and globally



FEED THE CHILDREN



Thanks to all the volunteers on January 20 for our 8th Annual Feed6 Challenge!

Join our next Feed6 and help reach our goals!
\$35,000 in donatons = Our goal is \$52,000
304 volunteers = Our goal is 400 volunteers
100,000 meals = Our goal is 150,000 meals

807,000 Total Meals in 8 Years



Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

FEBRUARY 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| 4 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am GOYA Board Mtg 12:00 pm Godparent Luncheon | 5 | 6 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Meeting 7:00 pm Neighborhood Bible Study 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting | 7 | 8 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School | 9 | 10 FEAST DAY OF ST. HARALAMBOS 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Vesper Pot Luck Dinner |
| 11 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy | 12 6:30 pm Neolea Dance Troupe | 13 10:00 am Clergy Syndesmos Meeting 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY 7:30 pm League of Chanters Practice | 14 | 15 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting | 16 4:30 pm Adventure Theater Rehearsal 7:00 pm Small Paraklesis | 17 FEAST DAY OF ST. THEODORE OF TYRO 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Greek School Movie Night |
| 18 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy | 19 | 20 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Mtg 7:00 pm Philoptochos General Meeting | 21 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA | 22 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm Discoveries in Orthodoxy | 23 FEAST DAY OF ST. POLYCARP 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy | 24 5:00 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Basile Comedy Show |
| 25 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy/Children in the Loft | 26 6:30 pm Neolea Dance Troupe | 27 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY 7:30 pm League of Chanters Practice | 28 6:00 pm Pot Luck Dinner/Recipe Exchange 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal | 29 FEAST DAY OF ST. CASSIAN 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:00 pm Evening Divine Liturgy 6:15 pm Greek School Staff Mtg 7:00 pm Discoveries in Orthodoxy | | |

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Sacraments listed are those known at time of publication

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Michael Peterson
Konstantinos Skokos
Asimina Syregelas
Georgia Veremis
Joan Alexander
Kimberly Argires
Chrisy Banakis
Liberty Poteres
Konstandino (Dene) Stamas

FUNERALS

Joan Alexander
Charlotte Rantis

BAPTISMS

Grayson, son of Justin Marcinkowski &
Jacqueline Mavros
Sponsor: Alexandra Friedrichs

CHRISMATION

Dale Dionesotes
Sponsor: Anna Fattore

BIRTHDAYS

George Pentaris
Nicolette Wehrle
Atalia Adam
George Landorf
Georgia Panos
Nicholas Panos
Norman Pomrening
Luke Tondelli
Steve Fotos
Despina Patos
Markos Vatianou
George Adams
Charlotte Dallianis
Kristi Landorf
Anthony Andreakis
James Kritsas
Daniel McKay
John O'Toole
Christopher Pontikis
Eleni Spyropoulos
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Dimitri Ratay
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