



from Fr. Nicholas

### St. Sophia's Parenting Example

Saint Sophia, and her daughters will be remembered on September 17. She was a devout Christian living in 2nd century Rome.

As her name implies, she lived wisely, exemplifying wisdom which is "pure, then peaceful, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Faith, Hope, and Love are the three Christian virtues that Sophia named her three daughters.

The girls paid close attention to the lessons offered by their mother, who taught them the books of the prophets and apostles as well as the Holy Scriptures.

They also engaged in domestic tasks, spiritual reading, and prayer while submitting themselves to their beloved mother's holy wisdom.

The family was imprisoned after the children's strong Christian faith was discovered by people all throughout Rome. As the girls approached the Roman Emperor Hadrian they were filled

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### Tribute to Barbara Pappas

By: Deacon Perry Hamalis, Ph.D.

On July 18, 2024 our beloved sister in Christ, Barbara Pappas, reposed in our Lord just five weeks after being diagnosed with a terminal illness, and on July 24, Barbara's funeral was prayed at Holy Apostles.

This is a heartbreaking loss not only for her biological family and close friends, but for all of us who have known her, loved her, and learned from her.

**There are a few "spiritual giants" whose contributions to the history, ethos, and ministry of our Holy Apostles community have been immense.**

George and Barbara Pappas are among those giants of our parish. From the time they joined Holy Apostles with their three daughters (Dheanna, Michele, and Laina) in

1977, George and Barbara have shared their blessed presence, prayers, and extraordinary talents with all of us and with countless others who have yearned to grow in Christ.

I have known Barbara and George and their family since I was 7 years old, and I've been greatly blessed to have had Barbara as my teacher in the Orthodox faith here at Holy Apostles from that point through to my adulthood.

Later, our spiritual relationship with the Pappas family was deepened when Laina (Pappas) and her husband Mike Krabbe generously became godparents to our daughter, Gia, and when my sister, Diki, and brother-in-law, John, became godparents to Michele (Pappas) and John Glavanovits's son, Joshua.

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## September 14 – The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

### Introduction

The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is celebrated each year on September 14. The Feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine.

### Background

In the twentieth year of his reign (326), the Emperor Constantine sent his mother Saint Helen to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and to find the site of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Cross. **Relying upon the oral tradition of the faithful, Saint Helen found the precious Cross together with the crosses of the two thieves crucified with our Lord. However, Helen had no way of determining which was the Cross of Christ.**

**With the healing of a dying woman who touched one of the crosses, Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem identified the True Cross of Christ.** Saint Helen and her court venerated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption.

The Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross with both hands so that all of the people gathered could see it. The crowd responded with "Lord have mercy".

**This became the occasion of the institution in all of the Churches of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, not only in memory of the event of the finding of the Cross, but also to celebrate how an instrument of shame was used to overcome death and bring salvation and eternal life.**

The Feast is an opportunity outside of the observances of Holy Week to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of this world. This Feast also gives the Church an opportunity to relish the full glory of the Cross as a source of light, hope and victory for Christ's people. It is also a time to celebrate the universality of the work of redemption accomplished through the Cross: the entire universe is seen through the light of the Cross, the new Tree of Life which provides nourishment for those who have been redeemed in Christ.



### Orthodox Christian Celebration of the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

This Feast of our Lord is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, which is conducted on the day of the feast and preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on the evening before the day of the feast.

**On the day of the Feast at the conclusion of the Matins or of the Divine Liturgy, a special service is held.** The Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by branches of basil and is taken in solemn procession through the church to the chanting of the Hymn of the Feast.

The tray is placed on a table, and the priest takes the Cross and offers petitions from each side of the table, the four directions of the compass. This represents the universal nature of the offering of Christ upon the Cross. As the people respond by chanting "Lord have mercy", the priest raises and lowers the cross, a commemoration of its finding and exaltation.

At the conclusion of the service, the people come and venerate the cross and receive the basil from the priest. **The basil is used and offered, as it was the fragrant flower growing where the Cross was found.**



## St. Sophia's Parenting Example *(continued)*

with joy and radiant faces exclaiming, "God Who dwells in heaven, our Father, Who takes care for our life and has mercy on our souls. His love we desire and we wish to be called His true children. Your threats do not frighten us."

Above all, these beautiful daughters yearned for the love of the Lord, which their mother had instilled in them. The authorities did everything to try to coerce these young girls (ages 12, 10 and 9) to deny Christ. They endured to the end joyfully proclaiming the Lord's name as they gave their lives for Him.

Faith, Hope, and Love were profoundly influenced by their mother's devoutness and selfless life of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. **They were obedient to Sophia because she loved them without conditions.**

Raising children requires a great deal of obedience. It is likened to a plant that grows well in fertile soil. Sister Magdalen's book "Children in the Church Today" observes that children should learn obedience from a young age as a natural part of life. They are much more moldable at the beginning of their lives.

**It will be more challenging for children to learn obedience later if they do not develop it during their early years.** Selfish adults that have been spoiled their entire life will find change difficult.

Children who always have their way or are allowed to develop tricks for getting what they want, (i.e. crying) cannot learn to love. Ultimately obedience is an expression of love and develops with maturity. **Doing what they are told is obedience for a child.**

**As they mature, obedience is expressed as preferring the will of another person out of love.** Teaching discipline and obedience should allow our children's personal development and character to show.

We are not trying to crush the child's will or "break" a child like we would a horse. **If we crush their will, we deprive the children of freedom. This freedom is necessary in the Christian struggle.**

Young children need to simply learn to do what they are told. Ultimately the goal is that they develop unselfishness and consideration for others.



**Parents can protect their child's soul by setting clear boundaries around the child's will. Reasons for prohibiting something should be explained. "Because I told you so" is not a good parental reason.**

Our children may need to be reminded of these boundaries in a loving and gentle way. One Christian parenting writer said that **rules without relationship equals rebellion. Creating open loving relationships with our children will foster obedience.**

Distrust and lack of confidence kills love. **Our children belong to God – not to us.** We should treat our children as unique

personalities in the spirit of love and freedom with boundaries.

The gift of freedom, according to the Church Fathers, is even more precious than the gift of love. **As we raise our children remember that we have an image and likeness of God right in front of us!**

We should remember this especially when punishing or encouraging our children. **Parents should follow Sophia's example by teaching obedience with love, patience, humbleness and gentleness. Humiliating, offending and provoking our children is harmful.**

As we mold and shape the will of our children, they are learning that they are not the centers of the world. This foundation will help them to live a peaceful life doing the will of God by obeying His commandments and putting others' needs in front of their own.

**As we teach our children to be good, gentle, forgiving, generous, and to love others, we instill virtues in their souls. This reveals the image of God within them.**

+ Fr. Nicholas

**Tribute to Barbara Pappas** *(continued)*

While it is impossible to recount George and Barbara's contributions in full—not only because of the length of the list, but also because so much of their Christian love has been given 'in secret'

(Matt 6:4), as we grieve and as we pray for Barbara's soul, we also glorify God and 'rejoice together' in thanksgiving for her labors and witness.

**We especially rejoice, honor, and give thanks for Barbara's collaboration with Father Bill Chiganos and tireless efforts to establish a lending library and a parish bookstore, which grew into HARC (Holy Apostles Resource Center).** For more than 30 years, Barbara directed our HARC ministry and inspired a team of volunteers who worked alongside her.

**In 1984, Barbara was instrumental in organizing the first "Celebration of Books,"** and she and George continued in this effort until their health prohibited it in recent years. **Barbara also organized and participated in prison ministry, regularly visited and prayed with the Veterans at Hines VA Hospital, and was a long-time contributor at Fanari Camp,** overseeing the "Arts and Crafts" sessions and facilitating Bible studies.

Most of all, however, **we glorify and thank God for giving us a true Christian teacher and mentor in Barbara.** Barbara began teaching Sunday School and leading "Wednesday night" Bible studies at Holy Apostles in the late 1970s, and her teaching continued through to this year, offering an online Bible study over "Zoom."

**Barbara's dedication to studying the Bible and meticulously interpreting it through the Holy Tradition—the writings of our saints—has profoundly shaped and inspired our community's members.** While she never considered herself a scholar, at the request of multiple bishops, she authored and published commentaries on First and Second Corinthians, a beautiful children's book *God's Bubbly, Gurgly, Overwhelming, Overflowing Love*, and her masterful introduction to Orthodox theology, *Are You Saved? The Orthodox Christian Process of Salvation*, which has been translated into 10 languages and has guided countless people to our Faith.

**As we honor, remember, and pray for Barbara, there are some vital lessons she continues to teach us.**

**First, Barbara was on a life-long and relentless search for religious Truth.** She was full of questions and did not accept lazy arguments or settle for mere opinions. In this sense, she was a "philosopher" – a lover of wisdom—and even more importantly, she encouraged all of us, her students, to not be afraid of questions... to not be afraid to probe the teachings of our Orthodox faith. Barbara's quest for Truth led her to examine different religions and different Christian denominations, as well as to immerse herself in anything written about the Orthodox Church. After she became personally convinced, as a young adult, that Orthodoxy holds the fullness of the Christian truth, Barbara kept copies of books about Orthodoxy in the trunk of her car, and she would travel to different Orthodox parishes to teach and lend these books to anyone with questions. This 'ministry out of the trunk of her car' was the seed that eventually became our parish Bookstore and Resource Center. But it all began with a love for and openness to questions. We can thus honor her by loving questions, encouraging our loved ones, especially children, to ask their questions about the faith, and by prayerfully searching for answers and asking for help from our teachers.

**Second, Barbara had a deep love for studying Scripture, and it was contagious!** She shared with me recently how grateful she was that Father Bill Chiganos, and subsequently Father Nicholas and Father George, trusted her and gave her the opportunity to lead Bible studies at Holy Apostles. Barbara brought her incisive mind and prayerful heart to her preparations of each Bible study series—reading all the patristic commentaries she could get her hands on, writing and sharing detailed outlines, and even preparing for questions she anticipated we might ask her!

**For decades, Barbara taught Bible study on Wednesday nights,** and one of her daughters shared with me that, when she was young, she and her sisters looked forward to Thursdays each week, because leading up to Wednesdays so much of Barbara's energy and attention centered on preparing for Bible study! Here we also get a glimpse of the sacrifices Dheanna, Michele, and Laina—and especially her George—all made to "share" Barbara with the Church.

As we prayed with Barbara and her family in their home during her illness, Barbara would recite the Church's prayers including entire Psalms by heart—Scripture is a language in which Barbara was fluent! So, to be sure, we can honor her by dedicating ourselves more fully to reading, and studying, and cultivating a love for Holy Scripture.

**Third, Barbara was a volunteer in the most authentic sense.** She volunteered within Church life not because

she expected praise or recognition, but out of love for God and her neighbor. She never asked for or accepted payment. She and George have taken to heart the words that Christ spoke to His disciples, "you received without payment, give without payment" (Matt 10:8). Any money that came in from the sale of her books was immediately put toward the cost of new translations, publications, and donations of the books to spiritually thirsty people around the world.

Through my relationship with the Church in Korea, I saw this firsthand, as well as the tremendous value of her writings for global Orthodox witness. And most recently, Barbara and George honored and supported a request from Metropolitan Soterios of Pisidia, of blessed memory, the former Metropolitan of Korea, to have Barbara's book,



"Are You Saved?" translated and published in Farsi, so that he could use it in missionary outreach to Iranians during his "retirement."

**Together, Barbara and George have volunteered tirelessly, outside the spotlight, serving the Church.** Moreover, Barbara inspired others to volunteer—especially in our HARC bookstore. She asked a lot of her volunteer team, but never asked others to do more than what she herself was doing.

One of the long-time volunteers in HARC shared with me recently that Barbara once asked her to take on a new responsibility that wasn't one of her strengths. So she responded by saying, "Barbara, I'm not really comfortable doing that." Barbara paused for a moment and said, "Well, then, stretch!"

**All of us can honor Barbara and deepen our relationship with God by...stretching, by not merely volunteering, but by stretching ourselves to give time, talent and treasure, with the Lord's help, to serve others through Church ministries.**

Finally, Barbara and her family have taught us how to endure, how to persevere in faith through suffering. Barbara had a very difficult childhood, but she transformed those

struggles into fuel for faith. While George and Barbara have cultivated a beautiful, loving marriage over nearly 60 years, they have also faced many, many tribulations. Their family seemed to be constantly under assault. Barbara was deeply impacted by the loss of her brother, Peter, and her sister, Joyce, and as she and George moved through life, hand in hand, one serious illness, or accident, seemed to follow after another for their immediate family members.

**When her illness began, I talked with Barbara about this dimension of her life, and she responded first by quoting 1 Cor 10:13, "God is faithful and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you will be able to endure it."**

She told me how much the Theotokos has helped her throughout her life. And then she said to me, "Deacon...**BETTER or BITTER. When trials and tribulations come, we have a choice—we can become BETTER, or we can become BITTER.**" Her words struck my heart as a "living word," like one that a holy mother of the Church would offer.

"Better, or Bitter" clearly, Barbara repeatedly chose, and worked, to become BETTER—to draw closer

to Christ, the Suffering Servant—through each crisis and assault by the Evil One. And we can honor her by doing the same—when illnesses, or trials, or suffering of any kind enters our life, we can choose to lean into our faith, to lean on Christ and His Church, to become BETTER, not BITTER.

**In her earthly life, Barbara did not seek power, or a seat of influence; she, instead, sat on the throne... of the Cross, in the lap of her Lord.** And we trust that, through her life-long choice "to cling to God, and to place in Him the hope of her salvation" God is embracing her now fully, within His Kingdom.

In his moving eulogy at the luncheon following Barbara's funeral, her grandson, Justin Glavanovits, ended with the words Christ spoke at the conclusion of the parable of the talents: "Well done good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matt 25:23).

**May her memory be eternal, may God welcome her into 'the joy of her Lord,' and may we continue to learn from the words and actions of our beloved teacher, Barbara.**





## About “Are You Saved?”

### From the Publisher

In less than 75 pages, Barbara Pappas introduces you what has been termed “one of North America’s best-kept secrets,”— the ancient Orthodox Christian faith and its living experience of salvation in Christ. Using timeless, solidly Orthodox theology, Barbara Pappas explains that salvation is not a one-time, once-and-for-all event. It is instead a process that, over the course of life, leads the practicing Christian into an ever-deepening awareness of adoption by God through His grace.

### From Barbara about “Are You Saved?”

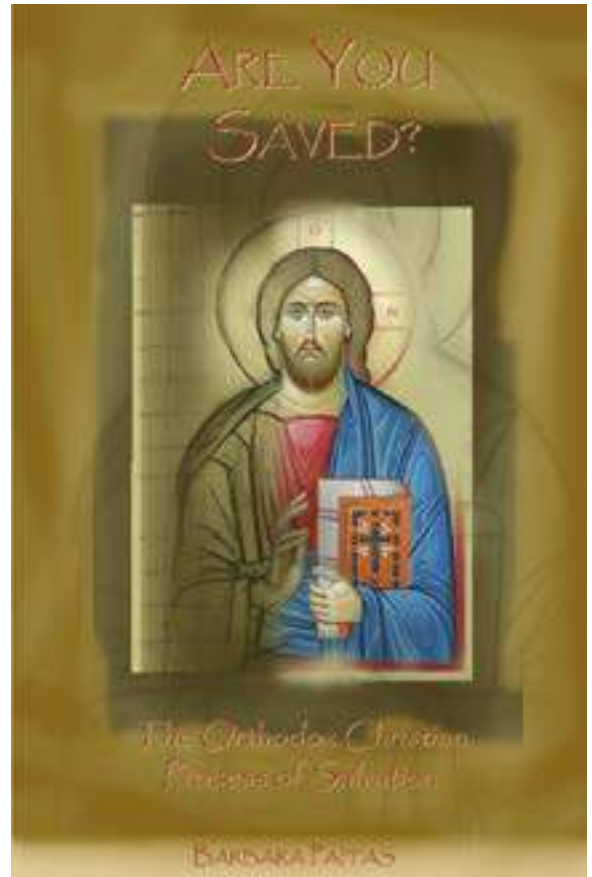
“Beginning at a very young age, various aspects of my life worked together to awaken in me the desire to find out what life is all about. Why are we born on this earth ... live a short time ... then die? There must be a grand purpose! My search for meaning led me to a study of the history of man and various philosophies and theologies.

“By the grace of God, I was eventually introduced to the early Church Fathers. I came to understand, as reason would dictate, that He does exist—of course—and that He has a Divine Plan for man, His ultimate creation. I also discovered that the Orthodox Church has struggled since the time of the Apostles to preserve the fullness of the truth about that Plan as it was revealed through the ages, reaching its culmination in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church is the life and teachings of Jesus Christ made present: Holy Scripture brought to life. It can transport a worshiper from the worries and complexities of everyday life to the wonders of Heaven, where the entire Body of Christ — the Church Triumphant (those who have gone beyond this world), the Church Militant (those still involved in the spiritual warfare of life on earth) and the Celestial Beings — gather together at the Table of the Lord. To those who come to her in living faith, the Church is a transmitter of the Divine Energies of God, toward growth in holiness in preparation for eternal life with Him. Her walls reflect the lives of some who have followed Jesus Christ, through the Church, to make that journey. They beckon all who will to do likewise.

“As they were to me before I began my quest, however, to many, Orthodoxy’s treasures seem to be hidden. Some cross her threshold now and then—or even regularly—without understanding that which she offers. Without that framework, it is easy to remain superficially involved in the ethereal beauty of the rituals of the Church without opening oneself to their intended transformation in the image of Christ, or even to walk away unmoved. Are You Saved? was written for them. It encourages a vibrant, life-long, active and interactive spiritual life in-Christ.

“Are You Saved? was also written for those who have basically no knowledge of the Orthodox Church and her unique apostolic theology. To them, the invitation: ‘Come...see the works of God’ (Ps 66:5).”





## OPERATION CLASSROOM INITIATIVE



**H**oly Apostles Philoptochos has been busy with Operation Classroom activities this year!

**In March** they established a comfort closet at Graves Elementary and Heritage Middle Schools in Summit, purchasing a storage cabinet and filling it with personal hygiene items and snacks for students in need.

**In June** the Operation Classroom “elves” purchased school supplies and backpacks for children in grades K-8. Along with the Stewardship and Missions ministries, Philoptochos hosted a backpack stuffing event. Members of the Holy Apostles community gathered to **fill 98 backpacks with stainless steel water bottles and school supplies** to help students start the new school year ready to learn.

**Backpacks were distributed in August** to students at their respective back to school events in Summit and to students at Anne M. Jeans School in Willowbrook and Burr Ridge Middle School.







## HA ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC



The Annual Holy Apostles Family Picnic took place on Sunday, July 28.

Over 400 parishioners attended and celebrated Holy Apostles' 65th birthday. A big thank you is owed to our chairperson, Elaine Katziotis, and her committee.

Over 65 volunteers made the day a success. A delicious lunch of souvlakia, burgers and hot dogs, salad, watermelon, etc. was enjoyed by our Holy Apostles families.

There were frappes, ice cream and birthday cake for dessert. The children enjoyed games and were able to win prizes for their efforts.

The Family Picnic remains the signature event of the summer!



Already Looking Forward to Next Summer!



## Summer Fellowship





## SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

By: Toni Milak, Sunday School Director

**S**unday School will begin on September 8, and we are looking forward to another great year! **The most important time of your child's learning on Sunday is actually the Divine Liturgy, so we ask you to begin the morning at 9:30 with your child in church.**

I will be greeting children by the candles from 9:30 until the conclusion of the Gospel, and awarding them stickers and prizes for arriving on time to Liturgy. We hope this incentive helps your family work toward the goal of arriving consistently at the beginning of the service.

**Sunday School teachers and children will take communion first, and then will head to their classrooms after a quick stop at the snack table.**

**Class will be in session until 11:35.** This should give parents time to complete the service, dismiss from church, get a cup of coffee, and enjoy a few minutes of the fellowship hour.

Children in 3rd grade and younger should be picked up from their classrooms unless you arrange otherwise with the teacher.



*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*

~ Proverbs 22:6

**New this year:** Our youngest classes (PreK through 3rd grade) will each get a rotating turn to sit in a reserved front-row pew with their teacher.

Sunday School families will receive the

schedule at the start of the school year. This is a really special opportunity for the children to see what happens during the liturgy from a great vantage point!

**Also new this year:** Our weekly PreK class will be limited to children who have turned 4 by September 1, 2024. Younger children will be invited to come with a parent to the TOTS room to enjoy some learning and playstations together. This will make the PreK classroom more manageable and conducive for learning, while also providing a wonderful opportunity for parents of preschoolers to meet one another.

**If you still need to register, please do so ASAP,** as there is lots to prepare for the first week of school! [<https://form.jot-form.com/242104403705140>]. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer in some capacity for our program, please email Toni at [sundayschooldirector@holypostleschurch.com](mailto:sundayschooldirector@holypostleschurch.com)



## BEREAVEMENT GROUP

**NEW  
MINISTRY**

The first meeting of our Bereavement Group will be on **September 18 at 1:00 pm.**

Our plan is to meet on the third Wednesday of the next six months. We hope and pray that this group will be a safe place for participants to hear and to be heard, to find solace and rest, a place where peace and love settle in your soul.

Please email Cleo Pappas at [cleop76@gmail.com](mailto:cleop76@gmail.com) to indicate your intent to take part in this journey.



## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JULY 18 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: VAL DRANIAS

Norm Pomrening called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm. Father Dokos led the opening prayer. The Mission Statement was recited by Norm Pomrening. Val Dranias moved to approve the minutes of the 6/13 PC meeting; Bill Leider seconded. Approved unanimously. Val Dranias presented the following Correspondence – a thank you note was received from our chanter, Helen Geanon, for the Holy Week bonus. A thank you from Metropolitan Nathanael for our hospitality on his recent visit, approval of our Landscape Project from the Metropolis and approval to move forward with our Foundation by the Archdiocese. There was a request for a donation to the Metropolis in the amount of \$10,183.96. Peter Bell moved to table discussion of a Metropolis donation to a subsequent meeting. Nick Kirkeles seconded. Unanimously approved.

**Ecclesiastical Report:** Father Dokos gave us a handout on St. Marina whose feast day it was today. He then talked about visiting the Serbian Orthodox Church in Punta Cana on his recent family vacation. The Serbian bishop of Chicago was present for the liturgy that day and 3 gold crosses were blessed outside the church and then hoisted up on the domes.

### Ministries

**Finance:** Steve Milak: Review – as of 6/30/24 there is \$1,399,623 in the Operating and Capital accounts. Budget Meeting Dates – looking at having a budget meeting on 9/5/24 at 7:00 pm. Hopefully approving the budget on 9/19 at the next PC meeting.

**Stewardship & Welcoming:** Sandy Pihos

STEWARDSHIP REPORT			
Metric	June 2023 TYD	June 2024 YTD	% Change
Number of Pledges	578	593	3%
Total Pledged	\$743,664	\$756,356	2%
Amount Collected	\$601,724	\$636,455	6%
Median Pledge	\$700	\$600	-14%
Average Pledge	\$1,287	\$1,275	-1%

**Building & Grounds:** Norm Pomrening: Landscape Project Update – about done except for a few punch list items. Question about leaks – they are brick related issues and will be addressed when the brick is repaired.

**Technology:** Steve Milak - no update – overhaul of security system with camera feeds going into the church.

**Ushering:** Norm Pomrening: Coverage for Vacancy needed in the upcoming months. Please let George know if you are available to cover.

**Greek School:** Lena Theotikos turned in the Greek School teacher contracts which Norm will forward on to Vanessa Clohessy for review.

**Missions:** Peter Bell – the Hoppes will be returning to Albania at the end of the month. Nathan will be giving the homily on Sunday.

### Old Business:

**Golf Outing Review:** Jim Maragos reported that the golf outing was very successful and that we made a profit of about \$20,000.

**Foundation Update:** Jim Maragos reported that the approval from the Archdiocese included the following make-up of the Foundation Board of Directors: the parish priest, the PC president, the PC treasurer, 4 directors from HA and 2 directors from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, The Foundation Committee will be meeting on August 8 to move forward and set up a committee to choose directors. They will advertise for volunteers in September and October and also look to have people begin donating to the Foundation'

**Altar Boy Robes:** Father Georgiou –waiting for the approval of the design from the Metropolis. We are ordering 20 robes for around \$10,000 plus shipping and customs. Sandy Pihos moved to spend up to \$12,000 for the purple altar boy robes. Lena Theotikos seconded. Unanimously approved.



**Anniversary Luncheon:** Sandy Pihos reported that everything is falling into place. Theme to be – Building on our Foundation. Working on prices for certain expenditures. Sponsorships will not be in an ad book. Format is still in the works.

**Picnic Update:** Norm Pomrening reported that as of today there are 175 registered. Email blast on Monday and in the Weekly News. Set up is on Saturday. Please come and help if you're available.

**Cemetery Plots:** Patty Pappas reported that Chapel Hill has given us an ultimatum to sign everything by 7/31. They want a complicated exchange with no explanation. Joan Berg is now handling the situation.

## **New Business:**

Norm Pomrening announced the Parish Assembly Date – 10/6/24.

**Parish Council Elections:** Norm Pomrening: Date – the UPR dictates the election window. Best date appears to be 12/8. Candidates – Norm asked who was not planning to run again. He asked that we start looking at candidates for the PC.

**Clergy Laity Recap:** Patty Pappas & Norm Pomrening: Theme: In Christ we are One. This theme emphasized the importance of each person coming together in our faith to embody the fullness of Christ. It is an affirmation of our unity as Orthodox Christians.

Major Takeaways: There was a great spirit of love and collaboration amongst the clergy and brothers and sisters of our faith. We have many faithful servants willing to contribute their time, talent and treasure. Our Church is vibrant and healthy, spiritually and also financially. However, there is room for growth and improvement.

## **SPECIFIC TOPICS/SESSIONS:**

**Financial:** The Archdiocese has been working to bring transparency to the financials of the church and to reduce the debts of the church. In the last four years, the audits of the Church finances have indicated continued and consistent financial health, resulting in no auditor comments for improvements in each of the last four years. Over the past six years (2018-2023), the Archdiocese has balanced its budgets with revenues exceeding expenses.

There was a motion for a proposed 5.9% increase in parish Total Commitment for 2025 and a 3.0% increase for 2026. The main reasons cited for this proposed increase in Total Commitment was the need to increase the wages of Archdiocesan employees due to inflation; property and liability insurance increases; and anticipated increased legal costs. This was met with a significant objection from both clergy and lay delegates. As a result, there was an emergency meeting held by the Archdiocesan Executive Committee and an amendment was made to reduce the increase in Total Commitment to 2.8% in each of 2025 and 2026. This motion was passed by the Clergy Laity.

The Pension Benefits Funding motion also passed, increasing the allocation for pension benefits funding by 2.3% in each of 2025 and 2026.

**Women's Role in the Church** - The Body of Christ is not whole without women. Females are leaving the church at a rate that is significantly greater than men. They do not see female leaders and role models in the church at the higher levels and because of that there is disenfranchisement. There was discussion to take small steps toward bringing more female leadership within the church. One area in specific would be to allow female diaconates. Discussion that canon law does not prohibit it, but rather it used to be in practice but fell out of practice. At the divine liturgy service of the Clergy Laity, there were both males and females serving in the altar area.

**Youth in the Church** - There is a great focus on maintaining vibrant youth and family ministries. The YAL conference overlapped with the Clergy Laity and the youth were included in the final day of workshops. Fostering the love of church also feeds our Holy Cross Hellenic College with the next generation of church leaders. We need strong leadership within the church to guide our youth, which is the focus of the next topic.

**Leadership within the Church** - There were many recommendations for both improving leadership and recruiting more leadership within the church. Improvement: There should be leadership education. Set aside two PC meetings per year to bring in experts to discuss special topics, such as financial maintenance of NFP organizations or stewardship matters. Recruitment: Upon election of a PC member, they should submit 2 names of potential replacement members. Those individuals can be recruited to serve on special committees or projects.

**Parish Planned Giving** - There was an official launch of a planned giving initiative. The Archdiocese is offering many resources to assist churches in formation of an endowment fund. The services they are offering include expert advice, formation assistance and marketing materials. They provided a poster, brochures and online resources to assist churches in this initiative.

**Religious Education** - This department is in charge of the St. John Oratorical Festival, the online web store called Orthodox Marketplace, and the publishing arm of the Archdiocese. They are working hard to prepare and publish resources and materials for every age group.

*(continued, pg. 10)*

**Parish Council Meeting** *(continued)*

**Outreach and Evangelism** - There was much discussion of how some churches are very focused upon bringing new members into the church, and building a sense of community inclusive to all people. This growth model should be applied to all of our churches. To increase stewardship you need to grow every year by 15%. This is because each year you lose approximately 10% of your stewardship. This workshop provided direction on best practices to ensure growth of your church.

All of these sessions were recorded and can be accessed online through the goarch.org website.

Norm provided information from Church Answers, a company that studies trends in churches all across the U.S. According to Church Answers in 2000 – the average church had 137 members; in 2020 – it had fallen to 65 members and in 2024 – it had fallen to 55 members. HA should be at 380 stewards based on those numbers. We're not doing great but better than most. Research shows the drop has plateaued – People are out looking for a spiritual home.

Nick Kirkeles moved that we acknowledge all that Barbara Pappas did for our church. Bill Leider seconded. Flowers will be sent and other acknowledgements will occur by email, in the Mosaic, a plaque at HARC, etc. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting: 8/8

Key Dates: Picnic – 7/28; 65th Anniversary Luncheon – Sunday, 12/29

Father Georgiou led the Closing Prayer. Norm Pomrening adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.



**FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN**

**NEXT VOLUNTEER DAY:  
SAT. 11/2  
9 - 10:45 AM**

**H**oly Apostles Philoptochos and parishioners volunteered at Feed My Starving Children in Aurora on August 10. They packed 22 boxes of specially formulated food (vitamins, vegetable mixture, soy and rice); their efforts will feed 14 children a daily meal for one year. The meals will be sent to needy children around the world, the final destination is not yet known. Meals packed by Holy Apostles in April were sent to Romania and Liberia.

The next opportunity to volunteer at FMSC with Philoptochos will be November 2, 2024, and more information will be available closer to the date.

Contact Emily Rehn at [platovalentine@hotmail.com](mailto:platovalentine@hotmail.com) or 708.369.9365 for more details.



**TO CARE FOR THOSE WHO ONCE CARED FOR US IS ONE OF LIFE'S HIGHEST HONORS.**

**CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP**

*A Holy Apostles Ministry*

**WE'RE BACK FROM OUR SUMMER HIATUS!**

**Tuesday, September 10**

**1 PM**

**Philoptochos Room**

***Please Join Us For Discussion & Coffee!***

Please contact Kathy Steffenson at [gksteff@gmail.com](mailto:gksteff@gmail.com) or Val Dranias at [valdranias@aol.com](mailto:valdranias@aol.com) with any questions.

*We hope that you will join us.*



# SAVE THE DATE



**HOLY APOSTLES CHURCH  
65TH ANNIVERSARY  
LUNCHEON**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29TH, 2024  
HILTON OAK BROOK HILLS RESORT**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO OUR HOLY APOSTLES FAMILY CELEBRATING  
THIS IMPORTANT MILESTONE TOGETHER**

**Holy Apostles Men's Ministry**

## **Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle**

**Meetings Held First and Third Tuesday  
of Every Month from 6:45 am - 8 am**

**Coffee & Light Breakfast Served**

**>> MEETINGS NOW ON TUESDAYS <<**

***"As Iron Sharpens Iron,  
So One Man Sharpens Another"***

**MORE INFO CALL  
DEMETRI MALAMIS (630) 776-9387**





*An Enchanted Afternoon*

Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society  
Annual Fashion Show & Luncheon

*Saturday, October 19, 2024*

*Drury Lane*

100 Drury Lane  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

**Tickets Available:**  
Table selection from the floor plan may only be done in person with the purchase of at least 8 tickets.  
**In Person:** Saturday, September 7 from 9 am to 10 am in Church Multi-Purpose Room and the following Sundays through October 6 after Divine Liturgy  
**Online:** Purchase through October 6 at [www.tinyurl.com/HAPhiloptochos1](http://www.tinyurl.com/HAPhiloptochos1) or scan QR Code

**Proceeds to benefit Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley, CrossRoad Institute, and other Philoptochos Endeavors**




You are invited to the  
Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society

**Annual Membership Night**

Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30 pm

Modern Plate | 119 N. York Street, Elmhurst

Please join Holy Apostles Philoptochos at our fall membership meeting to begin our exciting calendar year! Philoptochos is grateful to our members for their steadfast support and making it possible to fulfill our mission to help those in need.

Join us on Tuesday, September 17 at 6:30 pm at Modern Plate, 119 N. York Street, Elmhurst, IL. We will introduce you to the representatives of our two primary beneficiaries of our An Enchanted Afternoon Fashion Show & Luncheon in October. CrossRoad Institute and Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley will present their programs and the methods our funds will assist their endeavors.

We will also outline our activities/events for the upcoming year. Invitations will be sent out in late August. If you are not a member – what better time to join! - not on our mailing and would like further information, please **contact Kathy Obmascik, our membership chair, at [iwrite4u@comcast.net](mailto:iwrite4u@comcast.net).**



**SEPTEMBER 2024**

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1 Ecclesiastical New Year</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 4:30 pm Greek School Teacher Institute Day (No Students)	<b>4</b>	<b>5 First Day of Greek School</b> 4:30 pm Greek School	<b>6</b> 7:00 pm Small Paraklessis	<b>7</b> 9:00 am Fashion Show In-Person Reservations 10:00 am ECM Summit 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Vespers Potluck Dinner
<b>8 Feast Day of Nativity of the Mother of God</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Day - Sunday</b> School Ministry Fair 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am GOYA Brd Mtg	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 11:00 am OCCA Meeting 1:00 pm Caregivers Support Group 4:30 pm Greek School 6:30 pm GOYA BBQ	<b>11</b>	<b>12 Greek School Parent Volunteer Night</b> 1:00 pm Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm Neolea	<b>13</b>	<b>14 Feast Day of the Elevation of the Holy Cross</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am Jr. GOYA & GOYA Car Wash 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Vespers
<b>15</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>16</b>	<b>17 Feast Day of St. Sophia and Daughters</b> 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY 6:30 pm Philoptochos Annual Membership Night 7:15 pm ECM Cohort Mtg	<b>18</b> 1:00 pm Bereavement Group 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA	<b>19</b> 1:00 pm Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	<b>20 Feast Day of St. Eustathios</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm Small Paraklessis	<b>21</b> 10:00 am Parish Beautification & Planting 5:00 pm Vespers
<b>22</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA	<b>25</b> 10:00 am TOTS 7:00 pm Stewardship Ministry	<b>26 Feast Day of St. John the Theologian</b> 1:00 pm Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy 6:15 pm Greek Schl Staff Mtg 7:15 pm Discoveries in Orthodoxy: Of Water & Spirit	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 5:00 pm Vespers
<b>29</b> 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	<b>30</b>					

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
2501 S. Wolf Road  
Westchester, IL 60154  
(708) 562-2744

Address Service Requested

POSTMASTER: Please deliver by the 15th of September

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

BELLWOOD, IL  
PERMIT #157

*Sacraments listed are those known at time of publication*

## MEMORIALS

### AUGUST

George Andrews  
Demetra & George Stathopoulos  
Mary & Gus Stathis  
James Stathis  
Thomas Kachulis  
Georgia Veremis  
Andrew Veremis  
Barbara Pappas

### SEPTEMBER

Demetrios Verros  
Panagiotis Verros  
George Verros  
Angeliki Verros  
Prokopios Verros  
Toula Poulos  
Byron Collis

## FUNERALS

Barbara Pappas  
Theodore Christou

## BAPTISMS

Madeline Grace, daughter of Dan & Natalie Tauber  
*Sponsor: Michael Skizas*

## BIRTHDAYS

Christina Andre  
Olivia Bannos  
George Chechopoulos  
Margo Demopoulos  
Demetrios Fotopoulos  
Nicholas Callaghan  
Anathea Carrigan  
Mila Territo  
Nicole Kubesh  
Preston Reed  
Zaharoula Tollios  
Freya Wendland  
James Gaddis  
Mia Gaddis  
Gianna Bannos  
Alexia Clements  
Pauline Franks  
Ava Schref  
Demetra Manolis

Dimitri Meintanis  
Amalie Pyrros  
Melanie Welbourn  
Sofia Welbourn  
Sia Ekonomou  
Daniel McKay  
Anthoula Pomrening  
Peter Poteres  
Olivia Thiakos  
Eleni Chakonas  
Evangelia Cucuras  
Alexa Cussick  
Peter Demetis  
Samuel Failla  
James Petrakos  
Sophia Crabtree  
Reagan Martinez  
Katherine Daly  
Angeline Revak

Zoe Williams  
Stephanie Yang  
Teddy O'Toole  
Nicole Voelz  
Elaine Fotopoulos  
Brandon Miller  
Angela Vitogiannis  
Luke Christy  
Elizabeth Cotsilis  
Anastasia Arzoumanidis  
Joshua Glavanovits  
Alexandria Arendt  
Jocelyn Glover  
Gena Polihronidis  
Sophia Vlahos  
Demi Dastice  
Anastasia Moxon  
Stefania Rahn  
Miles Bogren

Leo Gershenzon  
Perry Bacogiannis  
Don Gallaway  
Jake Johnsen  
Katherine Karagiannis  
George Bacogiannis  
Theodore Guzaitis  
Zoe Trujillo  
Charles O'Donnell  
Giuliana Failla  
George Vlahos  
Zachary Wiseman  
George Zuales  
Achilles Berkman  
John Pappas  
Steven Pepke  
Annie Laughlin

**JOIN US! Discoveries in Orthodoxy: Of Water & Spirit**

September 26, October 3 & 24 and November 7

7:15 pm | Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church