



from Fr. Nicholas

Overcoming Spiritual Despondency

At times, we have all dragged ourselves to church with weary hearts. Prayer feels heavy, the church seems distant, and nothing seems to matter.

This condition, known as despondency or *acedia* (ακηδία), is a weariness of the soul that draws us away from God.

Though it can resemble depression or burnout, it is more than that—a spiritual illness that paralyzes the soul, breeds apathy, and tempts us to abandon our spiritual efforts.

Spiritual despondency can show itself in many ways: avoiding prayer and Scripture because “it doesn’t help,” feeling numb or disconnected during services, restlessness, and distraction, escaping into endless entertainment, or questioning the value of continuing in the Christian life.

St. John Climacus calls it “**the paralysis of the soul, a slackness of the soul, a negligence of the ascetical struggle**” (*Ladder of Divine Ascent*).

(continued, pg. 3)



Operation Classroom

Philoptochos’ Operation Classroom members were busy working on two projects this summer.

First, they purchased hygiene products, socks, and laundry detergent to donate to an area high school to support their comfort closet. The closet is where students can get items they don’t have at home but need so they can then focus more on their academics.

The second project was at another elementary and middle school in the area. Members purchased school supplies and distributed them at the school’s back to school celebration. They also purchased hygiene products and clothing to restock the comfort closet they established there last year.

The Operation Classroom committee appreciates the support of all

who purchased baked goods from the Easter bake sale. All proceeds from the sale fund projects like these.

Dear Emily & Women of Operation Classroom,
On behalf of our school community, I want to extend our heartfelt thank you for your generous donation of hygiene products and socks.

Your support ensures that students who might not have the means will still have access to these essential items.

Because of you, we can remove small but significant barriers that impact students’ daily comfort and confidence.

Having these supplies available will help them focus on what truly matters — learning and growing.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership in supporting our students’ well-being.

Thank you for making a meaningful difference.

Ayesha Truman, M.A., Ed.
Student Support Coordinator
Hinsdale South High School

September 8 – Nativity of the Theotokos

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on September 8 each year. The Feast commemorates the birth of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The birth and early life of the Virgin Mary is not recorded in the Gospels or other books of the New Testament, however this information can be found in a work dating from the second century known as the Book of James or Protevangelion.

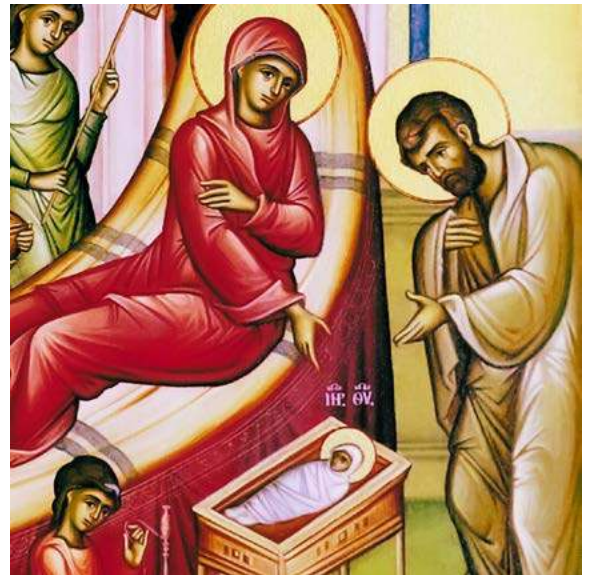
According to the story found in this book, Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, were childless for many years. They remained faithful to God, but their prayers for a child were unanswered.

One day, when Joachim came to the temple to make an offering, he was turned away by the High Priest who chastised him for his lack of children. To hide his shame, Joachim retreated to the hill country to live among the shepherds and their flocks.

As Joachim was praying, his wife Anna was praying at the same time at their house in Jerusalem. **An angel appeared to both of them and announced that Anna would have a child whose name would be known throughout the world. Anna promised to offer her child as a gift to the Lord.** Joachim returned home, and in due time Anna bore a daughter, Mary.

The icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos presents to us the central figures of Saints Joachim and Anna, Mary's parents, and the Mother of our Lord as an infant.

Saint Anna is in the middle of the icon with her right hand extended toward her daughter. Likewise, Saint Joachim, Mary's father, is gazing upon the young child with his right hand extended toward her. The icon and the feast acknowledge a transition from barrenness to life. This was but another foreshadowing of what would be offered through Christ, the transformation from death to eternal life.



FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

**NEXT VOLUNTEER DAY:
SAT. 11/15
2 - 3:45 PM**



Holy Apostles Philoptochos and parishioners packed nourishing meal packs consisting of rice, soy, vitamins and veggies at Feed My Starving Children on August 9 at the Aurora location.

Their efforts, in combination with other volunteers during their session, will **provide 82 children with a daily meal for one year.** The destination of these meals is not yet known but meals packed in April were sent to Haiti and Liberia.

Philoptochos will again volunteer there on Saturday, November 15, from 2-3:45. More information will be available closer to the packing date.

Overcoming Spiritual Despondency *(continued)*

Even the saints were not immune. St. Olympia the Deaconess, in the fourth century, wrote to her spiritual father, St. John Chrysostom, asking for guidance in her struggle with despondency.

He advised her to read spiritually uplifting material—**“a medicine sufficient for us, if we want it to be”** (*Letter 17*)—promising she would discover **“its great healing power and benefit.”**

When the Three Holy Youths were thrown into the fiery furnace (*Daniel 3*), they praised and thanked God. **Gratitude, St. John Chrysostom teaches, can make “the cloud of despair vanish.”**

The apostles themselves endured persecution and fear, clinging to Christ’s words: **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness”** (*2 Corinthians 12:9*).

God may not remove our trials immediately. St. Paul, even as he bore his “thorn in the flesh,” reminded believers that God is **“able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”** (*Ephesians 3:20*).

Trust that the Lord will give the soul what it truly needs. Replace discouraging thoughts with ones that are pure and uplifting. St. John calls despondent thoughts “dust” from our soul’s wounds — dust that, if not brushed away, can cloud our spiritual sight.

“Remember your death,” the saint counsels, for it places earthly life in perspective. Our trials are but “dust and smoke” compared with eternity.

St. John urged Olympia to see her struggles as investments in the treasures of heaven. **Those who stand on the rock of faith are like a rock against the waves; the waves may strike but make us stronger.**

Another way to fight despondency is to battle it for the sake of another. St. John wrote, **“If you wish to fill us with great joy, show us that you have chased away the burden of despondency and are filled with calm.”**

Turning outward to help others reminds us that our brother or sister “is our life.”

Abba Moses offered another piece of wisdom: **“Stay in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.”**

Keep praying the simple but profound Jesus Prayer: **“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”**

Continue small acts of love and worship—lighting a candle, making the sign of the cross, helping a neighbor. Confession exposes the hidden roots of despondency, while godly companionship reminds us, we are never alone.

Remember David the Psalmist’s words: **“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit”** (*Psalms 34:18*).

+ Fr. Nicholas

**HOLY APOSTLES
DIRECTORY &
CONTACT UPDATE**

Holy Apostles is updating their contact database and simultaneously making a directory book. We ask all parishioners to fill out the form linked below to update their contact information for our database, then may choose whether or not to be included in the directory.
More details linked below.

**ALL
PARISHIONERS
FILL OUT THE
FORM LINKED
BELOW**




bit.ly/HAContactUpdate



**YOUTH
REGISTRATION**

**One Form to Register
For All Youth
Activities!**



**Don't Delay!
Register Today!**



2025 Project HOPE

Senior Visit Initiative

Pilsen Community/Chicago

The Metropolis Project HOPE Team has been encouraging parishes to visit and engage with low-income senior citizens. The request was for **each parish to fill 50 HOPE bags and to also provide a team of 10 individuals to pass out the food bags and interact with the seniors.**

We conducted our first visit last April. It was a truly rewarding experience and the seniors were extremely grateful for their bags of food. The next visit is Friday, September 19th.

Here is a general idea of how the day will go:

- A bus will pick our volunteer team up at 10:15am for arrival at 11:15am at the Pilsen Satellite Center 2021 S. Morgan St., Chicago, IL 60608
- Carts will be available to load the 50 HOPE bags for transport into the center
- Opening statement from either a Pilsen Satellite Center or a HOPE representative
- Senior activity (bingo, craft) from 11:30 am -12:30 pm
- Bag distribution by the volunteer team
- Bus return to Holy Apostles – arrival around 2 pm

Food for the bags will be purchased and then our GOYANS will pack the bags on September 9th. We have decided to fill the bags with the following items:

- Pasta/Rice/Lentils/Cereal
- Canned Tuna/Canned Beans/Canned Corn/Soup (low sodium)
- Fruit Jams/Peanut Butter/Pasta Sauce/Granola Bars/Pudding Snacks

If there are any parishioners that can provide a means for us to purchase any of the above items for the bags at cost or wholesale, this would be most appreciated. Please contact Faye Adams at geofaye.adams@gmail.com, Nicole Kubesh at nkubesh73@gmail.com, or Maria Pat at mdpatt59@comcast.net.

Father George has once again graciously agreed to lead the volunteer team on this visit. We are looking for parishioners to complete our volunteer team of 10. **Please consider being a part of this team.**

Thank you for your support!

NEXT VISIT:
Friday, Sept. 19

**NEXT GOYA
PACKING :**
Tues., Sept. 9



*Enjoying the
August Potluck
Dinner!*



*Join us September 6
after Vespers*



BIRTHDAY BAGS FOR WESTCHESTER FOOD PANTRY



On August 12 following Paraklesis there was a joint service project hosted by Missions, Philoptochos and Parish Family to assemble 30 colorful Birthday Bags for the Westchester Food Panty.

These festive, bright bags were filled with all the goodies for a birthday bash: boxed cake mix and frosting, birthday candles, birthday paper plates and napkins and birthday decorations.

Thanks to all who participated and provided birthday smiles to those who received these fun birthday bags!





PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JULY17 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: PATTY PAPPAS; EDITED: VAL DRANIAS

The meeting was called to order by President James Maragos at 7:34 PM. Opening Prayer was offered by Father Georgiou. The Mission Statement was read aloud by Mike Thiakos.

Approval of June 19, 2025 Parish Council Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Patty Pappas and seconded by Bill Leider. The motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence - Report by Patty Pappas

Thank you letters were received from Fanari Camp, expressing gratitude for the donation of items from their Amazon Wishlist; Metropolitan Nathanael, acknowledging and appreciating the parish's hospitality during his pastoral visit to celebrate Vespers. A letter from Metropolitan Nathanael informed us that the Buildings, Projects, and Architecture Committee has approved the Lighting Project Designer, as outlined in the correspondence. A donation request letter was received from the Westchester Food Pantry.

Ecclesiastical Report – Father Georgiou led a reading and discussion on The Autopsy of a Deceased Church by Thom Rainer.

Ministry Reports

Finance – George Antonopoulos: Operating and Capital account totals as of June 30, 2025 equaled \$1.48 million, up from \$1.29 million at the beginning of 2025. Year to date revenue is ahead of budget due to donations and reduced expenses. We expect the cash position to reduce due to a pledge slowdown. Sales tax exemption form: we have the necessary information and are ready to proceed with completion of the application form. Greek School funds run through the operating account; its PTO funds are also housed within the church account.

Stewardship – Sandra Pihos provided a report on stewardship pledges:

STEWARDSHIP REPORT			
Metric	June 2025 TYD	June 2024 YTD	% Change
Number of Pledges	566	593	-5%
Total Pledged	\$761,192	\$756,356	+1%
Amount Collected	\$625,070	\$636,455	-2%
Median Pledge	\$600	\$600	0%
Average Pledge	\$1,345	\$1,275	+5%

We are experiencing a summer slowdown in pledges. Pledges in June 2025 are down 5% compared to June 2024. Reminders have been sent to 200 past parishioners who have not yet pledged this year.

Building & Grounds – Report by Chris Pepke:

Project Updates: Mechanical enclosure and monument sign: designs are 90% complete. Front office remodel: design is 60% complete. Final designs to be reviewed before contractor outreach. Front door: remaining parts just received and will be installed.

Fundraising for Capital Projects: \$3.5 million is needed for capital projects over the next 10 years. Major projects include parking lot replacement; removal and replacement of defective brickwork throughout the interior and exterior of the church.

Technology - No formal report submitted.

Ushering - No formal report submitted.

Old Business

Chapel Hill Cemetery Plots – Report by Patty Pappas: Since last month's meeting, two more plots have been sold. There have been 10 plot sales since 12/23, resulting in \$45,000 of income.

Eight plots have been purchased by parishioners but they have not yet selected the plots from our available inventory. There is a brand new office manager at Chapel Hill, Madison Underwood. We will work to establish a good relationship with her. In order

for Chapel Hill to generate the quitclaim deeds for each plot (to legally transfer title to the new owners), we need to provide them with paid receipts. Lou has been sending those to Chapel Hill as the payments are made. Many of the recent sales have yet to be finalized with execution of the quitclaim deeds. We will continue working with Chapel Hill to complete these final steps for each transaction.

Youth Worker Protection Training – Report by Patty Pappas

There are several individuals listed in the Metropolis database who no longer are youth workers at Holy Apostles. We are cross checking with the youth related ministries before they are removed permanently from the registration database. With the new school year approaching, Lou will re-send a letter in the month of August to the ministry leaders with registration/training instructions for any new youth volunteers. There are two individuals that are new youth workers and must register. The ministry leaders have been informed about the 'no contact' rule until youth workers are fully compliant.

Greek School - Report by Nicole Ostendorf: Currently, 50 students are registered for the Greek School, with total enrollment projected to reach 90 by the fall. A new teacher is to be hired on a trial basis for the upcoming school year.

Golf Outing Preliminary Report - Report by James Maragos: 88 golfers attended the Golf Outing, with 12 additional joining for the dinner. Gross Income: \$38,698; Expenses: \$18,698; Net Profit: \$19,692 (not final); Successful event with good weather and turnout.

New Business

Bylaws Committee - Report by James Maragos and Sandra Pihos

A Bylaws Committee is being formed to discuss and review possible amendments to our Bylaws pertaining to: Flexible Fall Parish Assembly date; Staggered terms for Parish Council members; Procedure to cancel monthly meeting if necessary. Terry Chiganos to chair the committee. Parish Council approval of any proposed amendments is needed prior to presentation to the Parish Assembly.

Finance Committee - The Finance Committee will begin its work on the 2026 budget in August, with monthly meetings thereafter. The first meeting date is targeted for August 25th. George Antonopoulos, Parish Council Treasurer, is to chair the committee.

Fundraising for Building & Grounds Projects - Report by Sandra Pihos and Chris Pepke. See the Building & Grounds Report under Ministry Reports for further information.

Parish Directory - Report by Sandra Pihos: The Parish Family Ministry is currently leading two key projects: updating parishioner contact information in the church database; producing a new parish directory. A questionnaire has been distributed through church communication channels to gather the most up-to-date information from parishioners.

The ministry is actively exploring resources for the production of the new parish directory. The goal is to complete both projects within one year.

Parish Ministries / Ministry Fair - Report by Sandra Pihos: The Ministry Fair is scheduled for Sunday, September 7th, in the Multi Purpose Room following the Divine Liturgy. Katy Fisher is coordinating the room setup for the event. Additional assistance from Parish Council members will be needed. Each ministry will have a designated space to showcase information and materials. The ministries will also be responsible for hosting the coffee hour on the day of the Fair.

Project Hope - Missions and Philoptochos - report by Peter Bell: In September, Philoptochos and the Missions Ministry will collaborate to assemble gift bags for the Pilsen adult center as part of Project Hope. A motion was made by Peter Bell to allocate up to \$600 from the Missions discretionary budget to cover the cost of the gift bags for Project Hope. The motion was seconded by Sandra Pihos and passed by a majority vote.

Next Regular Meeting - Thursday, August 21, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Key Upcoming Dates - Wednesday, August 14 - Vespers Trip to Assumption Cathedral; Sunday, September 7 – Ministry Fair (following the Divine Liturgy); Wednesday–Thursday, November 5–6 – Metropolis of Chicago Clergy-Laity Conference

Closing Prayer offered by Father Georgiou.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Patty Pappas and seconded by George Antonopoulos. The motion passed unanimously. President James Maragos officially adjourned the meeting at 8:51 PM.

NEED A HELPING HAND?



Philoptochos is here for you, our Holy Apostles sisters, brothers, families, and parish.

We want you to know that Philoptochos is available to help you with some of life's challenges that may arise.

Please reach out to Fr. George (frgeorge@holyapostleschurch.com) or Fr. Nicholas (frnicholas@holyapostleschurch.com) if you need financial help with food, utility bills, or other essential household expenses.

All requests for assistance are held in strict confidence.

The love and support of Holy Apostles and our Philoptochos Chapter are here to assist you.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

A Holy Apostles Ministry



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

**Tuesday, September 9
1 PM
Philoptochos Room**

Special Presentation on

CAREGIVERS BURNOUT

by our own Stella Hondros

Stella is a life and leadership coach, energy specialist and mentor. She has held leadership and mentorship roles for over two decades and has acquired expertise in growth mindset development, transition strategy and energy management.

Please Join Us For Discussion & Coffee!

Please contact Kathy Steffenson at gksteff@gmail.com or Val Dranias at valdranias@aol.com with any questions.

We hope that you will join us.

You are invited to the
Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society

Annual Membership Night

Tuesday, September 23 at 6:30 pm

Modern Plate | 119 N. York Street, Elmhurst

Light dinner will be served & cash bar available

Free parking @ Schiller Parking Deck — Schiller St. & Commerce Ave.
(opposite Modern Plate's back entrance)

R.S.V.P by 9/16

Call/Email:
Aleka Ernst
alekaernst@aol.com
630. 561.1660

Scan QR:




Online:

<https://www.tinyurl.com/haphilo2501>

Please join our Philoptochos Chapter to continue our mission





Empowered Elegance

A Celebration of Women


Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society
Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Drury Lane
100 Drury Lane
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Luncheon Reservations

Online



tinyurl.com/hafs2025

In-Person

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church
Saturday, September 6th from 9:00 am to 10:00 am
or Sundays, September 7th through October 5th
Following Divine Liturgy
Floor plan for table selection is available only in-person
with a purchase of at least 8 tickets

Proceeds to Benefit
The Hippocratic Cancer Research Foundation

Luxe RAFFLE

Buy a \$20 raffle ticket to be entered to
win TWO luxurious items from

Louis Vuitton



Step into luxury with our exclusive Luxe Raffle prizes – a stunning Louis Vuitton Boulogne PM handbag and Romy Card holder duo that blends elegance, function and timeless style. *Total Retail Value \$3,555.*

A portion of the proceeds from this raffle will benefit
The Hippocratic Cancer Research Foundation & The FAITH Endowment

Purchase event and raffle tickets here



We would like to thank the Guzaitis Dental Group for their generous sponsorship of these prizes.



Louis Vuitton prizes are not eligible for returns or exchanges. Winner need not be present



Become a Charter Member of the Holy Apostles Foundation

The Holy Apostles Foundation is up and running! Make a donation in this first year of operation and become a Charter Member of the Foundation.

By establishing the Foundation, Holy Apostles will be able to accept donation, gifts and bequests and invest those funds for future use. Stewardship donations are used in the current year.

Foundation donations will be invested and the investment proceeds will be used for future programs and projects as identified by the Parish Council.

There are multiple ways to make Foundation donations including cash, RMDs (Required Minimum Distributions) from IRAs, bequests, stock donations, life insurance and/or by designating the Holy Apostles Foundation in your estate plans. You can donate via check or credit card [HERE](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZADA/campaign/C-15NNX?access=tile_direct) (https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZADA/campaign/C-15NNX?access=tile_direct).

The Foundation's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is pending. For a complete list of donation options, visit the Foundation section of the Holy Apostles website [HERE](#).

Donate here ►



Learn more ►



SUNDAY SCHOOL



FIRST DAY OF
SUNDAY SCHOOL:
SEPT. 7

*Train up a child in the way he
should go: and when he is old,
he will not depart from it*
~ Proverbs 22:6

☛ **MAKE SURE YOU'RE REGISTERED** ☛



REGISTER HERE ►

<https://form.jotform.com/holy.apostles.westchester.il/youth-registration2025>

HOLY APOSTLES MINISTRY FAIR

After Divine Liturgy, join us in the
Multi-Purpose Room
for Fellowship Hour and to learn about all the
ministries Holy Apostles has to offer.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 2025

SEPTEMBER 2025

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Ecclesiastical New Year Office Closed - Labor Day 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	2 4:30 pm Greek School Meet & Greet/Agiasmos (MPR) 7:00 pm Parish Council Bylaws Committee Meeting	3	4 4:30 pm Greek School (First Day)	5 7:00 pm Small Paraklesis	6 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Vespers Potluck Dinner
7 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Ministry Fair Coffee Hour	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	9 1:00 pm Caregivers Support Meeting 4:30 pm Greek School 6:30 pm GOYA BBQ	10 10:00 am TOTS	11 4:30 pm Greek School	12	13 7:00 pm Vespers at Holy Cross
14 Feast Day of the Elevation of the Cross 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour 12:00 pm Healthcare Ministry Presentation	15	16 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY 6:30 pm Philoptochos General Meeting (Offsite)	17 Feast Day of St Sophia & Daughters 6:00 pm Evening Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm Jr GOYA Meeting	18 4:30 pm Greek School 5:30 pm Neolea Dance Troupe 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	19 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Project Hope - Pilsen Visit 7:00 pm Small Paraklesis	20 Feast Day of St. Eustathios 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers
21 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour	22	23 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Meeting	24 10:00 am TOTS 7:00 pm Parish Family Ministry Meeting	25 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm Greek School Staff Meeting	26 Feast Day of St. John the Theologian 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	27 9:00 am GOYA/Jr GOYA Car Wash 5:00 pm Vespers
28 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour	29	30 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting				

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

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U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

BELLWOOD, IL
PERMIT #157

Sacraments listed are those known at time of publication

MEMORIALS

AUGUST

Louis Andros
William Chrisos
Petros Lostarakos
Eleni Lostarakos
Mary Lostarakos
Theodore Lostarakos
Angelo Lostarakos
Peter Magdalinos
Maria Magdalinos
Sam (Sotirios) Magdalinos
Athanasia Maillis
Nicholas Mason
Artemis Mason
Naguib Mekhel
George Papadakis
Demetra Papadakis
Panorea "Penny" Ruston
Steve Stanos
Kathryn Stanos
Alexander Toures

SEPTEMBER

Michael Pihos
Ioanna Burtzos
Dena Kentes

FUNERALS

Sophie Acitelli
Steven Lekas

BAPTISMS

Parker, daughter of Joseph and Alexandra Domenico
Sponsor: Antonia Lampros

Trent, son of Franklin & Stephanie Peterson
Sponsor: Ryan Peterson

Constantine Jack, Son of Jacqueline & Matt Wonais
Sponsor: John & Christina Wonais

WEDDINGS

Jeffrey Hank & Sarah McCue
Sponsor: Evan Hank

Zoe Vainikos & Nicholas Diment
Sponsors: Eleni Langas & Kate Diment

Mary Margaret Kouchis & Craig Martin
Sponsor: Will Dimas & Elesa Poteres

Noah Ernst & Hailey Rubisch
Sponsor: Luke Ernst