



from Fr. Nicholas

The Paraklesis

Prayer of the Summer Fast

As the Church enters the Dormition Fast (August 1–14), often referred to as the “Summer Fast,” we prepare to celebrate one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church: the Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Most Holy Theotokos (Panagia) on August 15.

This sacred season is a time of prayer, repentance, fasting, and spiritual renewal as we honor the Mother of God. Through her Dormition, we are reminded of the promise and hope of the Resurrection, which her falling asleep so beautifully proclaims.

At the center of this season is the Paraklesis, one of the most beloved services of the Orthodox Church.

The word Paraklesis means “supplication,” “comfort,” or “consolation.” **It is a prayer service in which we ask the Most Holy Theotokos to intercede before her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for us.**

Throughout the year, we Orthodox Christians turn to the Theotokos in times of illness, grief, uncertainty, temptation, and personal struggle. During the Dormition Fast, the Church invites us to make this



What a truly inspiring, spiritual and joy-filled experience representatives from our Holy Apostles Philoptochos board, Parish Council and church had at the 48th Biennial themed “Rise and Build” Clergy-Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Convention in Cleveland, OH the last week of June.



(continued, pg. 3)

Theotokos Holy Sash - August 31

Did you know that the Holy Relic of Panagia's Sash still exists and has its own feast day?

According to Holy Tradition, the Most Holy Theotokos called all the Holy Apostles to Jerusalem before her Dormition. As they were spread far and wide preaching the Gospel, each Apostle was brought on a cloud, except for Thomas, whose absence was by the providence of God.

The Theotokos had already been buried when the Apostle Thomas arrived three days later. **He saw her as she was being taken up into Heaven and called out to her; she gave him her Sash (Belt), which she had woven from camel hair.**

The Apostle Thomas still wanted to venerate her body and verify that she had been taken up to Heaven. **The Apostles opened her tomb and found that her body was gone.** This event confirmed her three-day resurrection and bodily ascension.

The Holy Sash was eventually taken from Jerusalem to Constantinople, where it healed the wife of Emperor Leo IV the Wise of an unclean spirit.

Later, it was placed in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople and given the Feast Day of August 31.

After being taken to Bulgaria, it was brought to Mount Athos by Prince Lazar I of Serbia and is **kept in Vatopedi Monastery to this day.** Pieces of Panagia's Sash are also housed in other locations, including in the female Monastery of Panagia Kato Xenia near Almyros, Volos, Greece.




**YOUTH
REGISTRATION**

Sign up all of your children for this year's youth ministries using this one simple form! Please sign up by August 31st to secure your children's spots.

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

ONE PLACE TO SIGN-UP FOR ALL YOUTH ACTIVITIES!

This single QR code is the place to sign-up and/or register for ALL youth ministries/activities:

Tots	Athletics
Joy	Jr. Olympics
Jr. GOYA	Christmas Pageant
GOYA	Altar Boys
Sunday School	Youth in the Loft.
Handmaidens	
Myrrh Bearers	
Vacation Bible School	



Scan QR code or visit: <https://holyapostles.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/70/responses/new>

sign-up ▲

The Paraklesis *(continued)*

prayer a daily part of our spiritual journey. Each weekday evening we will offer repeated opportunities to gather in prayer and seek the loving intercessions of our beloved Mother of God.

The hymns of the Paraklesis are deeply personal - speaking with honesty about human weakness and suffering, reminding us that we do not need to carry our burdens alone but prayerfully depend on Christ through the intercessions of His Mother.

We pray continually: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us." This ancient refrain does not replace Christ with the Theotokos - but is a plea that through her powerful prayers we may receive the salvation that comes from her Son alone.

St. John of Damascus presents the Theotokos as a bold and compassionate intercessor whose maternal closeness to Christ gives her unique access in prayer. Orthodox Christians worship only the Holy Trinity, but we ask the saints, especially the Panagia, to pray for us.

This Fast is unique because it combines the discipline of fasting with the comfort of the Church's most tender hymns. While fasting teaches us self-control and repentance, the Paraklesis reminds us that God's mercy is never far away.

The Mother of God is continually referred to as the refuge of the afflicted, the consolation of the sorrowful, the helper of the sick, and the steadfast hope of Christians.

The feast of the Dormition itself is a celebration of hope. Although the Theotokos truly experienced death, the Church proclaims that she was received into the fullness of life with her Son. Her Dormition is a witness to Christ's victory over death and a promise of the resurrection awaiting all who remain faithful to Him.

This Paraklesis prayer service teaches us an important spiritual lesson: genuine devotion to Panagia (our Mother) leads us more deeply to Jesus Christ.

At the wedding in Cana, her words were simple and enduring: "Do whatever He tells you" (*John 2:5*). The Theotokos never points to herself but always directs us to her Son, who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (*John 14:6*).

The Paraklesis teaches us to approach the Theotokos with the confidence of children seeking the prayers of their mother. She is our refuge in times of trial, our comfort in sorrow, and our example of unwavering faith and humble obedience.

During these holy days of fasting and prayer, may we follow her example, entrusting our lives to Christ and joining the Church in crying out: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us" - preserve us and intercede for us before your Son, who alone is our Savior and the Giver of life.

With love in Christ,

+Fr. Nicholas

Last Call: CHURCH DIRECTORY INCLUSION

It is not too late to be included in and receive a Church Directory. We undertake this project only every 5 years or so, so this is a chance that won't come again for a long time.



TO HAVE YOUR PICTURE IN THE DIRECTORY and RECEIVE A DIRECTORY:

There are no more opportunities to sit for a professional photo, but you can still submit your own photo. However, there is a \$15 fee which helps cover the cost of printing and production. The photograph must be at least 300 dpi and will be cropped to a ratio of 2x3 (portrait, not landscape).

To submit photo: <https://form.jotform.com/253295051237152>

DEADLINE:
9/15



submit photo ▲



TO ONLY HAVE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IN THE DIRECTORY:

You can choose to just have your contact information in our directory without a photo. The directory will be published only as a hard copy and distributed only to those with a photo in the directory. If you choose to just have your contact information published but would like to have a directory, watch for information forthcoming regarding cost and how to reserve a copy.

To include your contact information: <https://form.jotform.com/holyapostles.westchester.il/directory-2025>



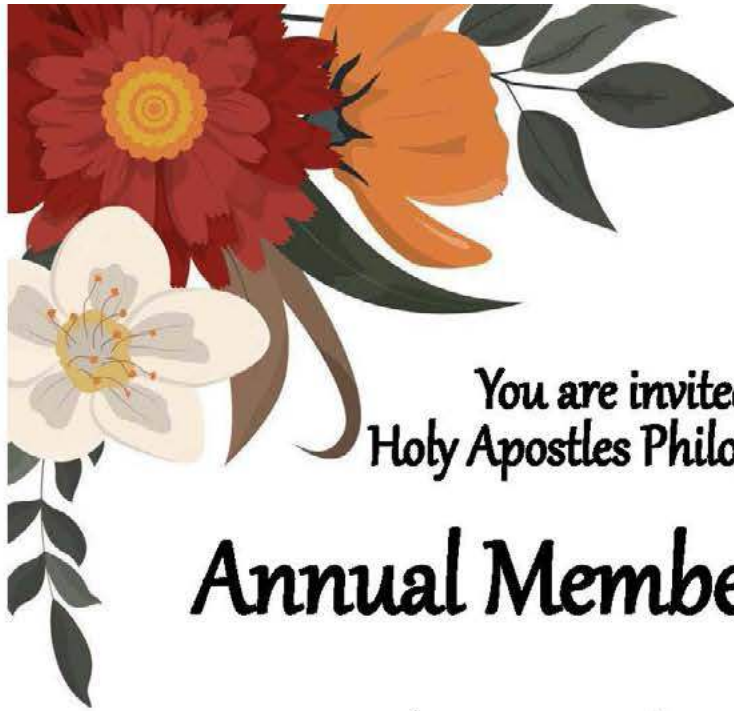
submit contact information ▲



MINISTRY PICTURES SUBMISSIONS:

A reminder to ministries to submit your pictures for inclusion by 9/15 per directions emailed to you from parishfamily@holyapostleschurch.com in July.

Have a question? Contact parishfamily@holyapostleschurch.com



You are invited to the
Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society

Annual Membership Night

Tuesday, September 22nd @ 6:30pm

The Purple Pig
15 Oakbrook Center, Oak Brook

Light dinner will be served/Cash bar available

RSVP by 9/15 to Aleka Ernst

philotreasurer@holyapostleschurch.com

or (630) 561-1660

"Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14

Please join our Philoptochos Chapter to continue
our mission – online/QR code/check

www.tinyurl.com/haphilo2501



The Holy Apostles Philoptochos Society Presents

— ★ —

Stars, Stripes & Style

— ★ —

Drury Lane
17W275 Butterfield Lane
Oakbrook Terrace

— ★ —

**SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 17, 2026**

— ★ —

Cocktails & Raffle Viewing: 11:00 am
Luncheon: Noon

Tickets: \$75

In person purchase:
8/29 from 12pm to 2pm
After Divine Liturgy starting 8/30

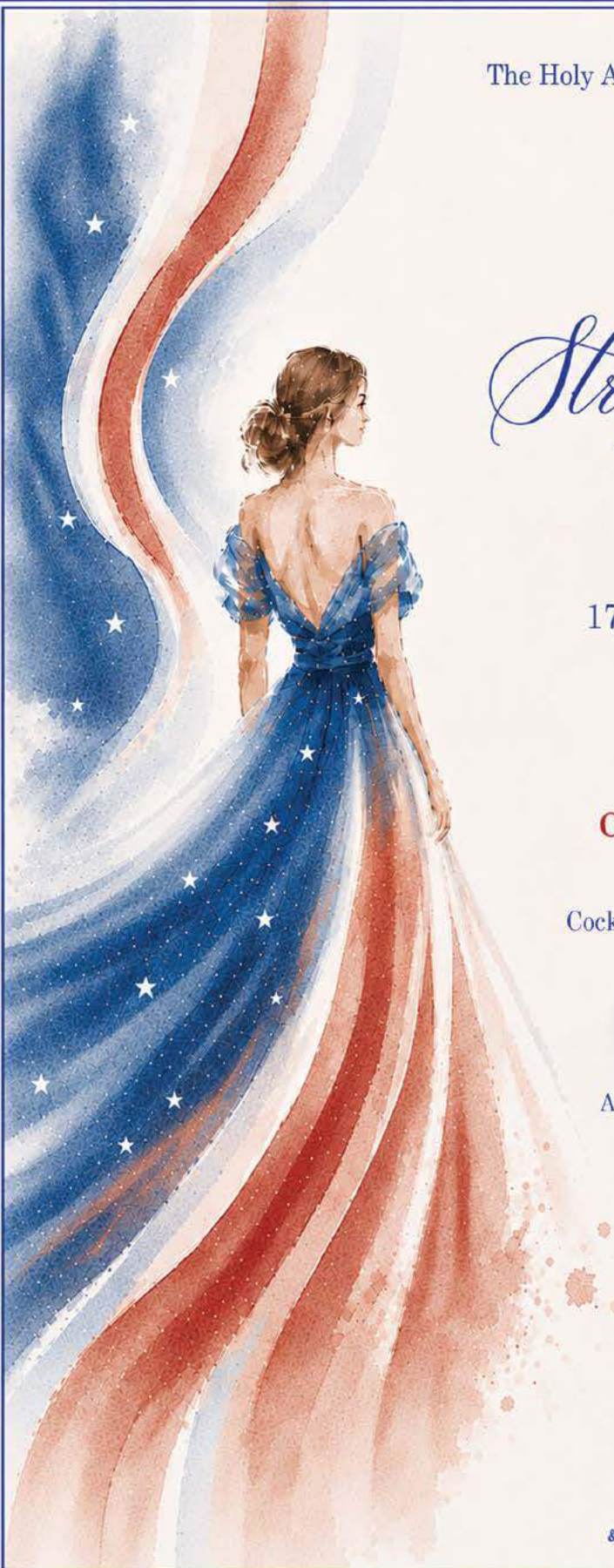
Online:
<https://qrco.de/bgu2Mm>



CO-CHAIRWOMEN

**VALERIE DRANIAS &
THANIA PANOPOULOS**

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
SAINT IAKOVOS RETREAT CENTER,
ONE MILLION DEGREES
& OTHER PHILOPTOCHOS ENDEAVORS





Fifth Saturday Serve Day

Join the Parish Family Ministry in a service project.

Our next project:
Sat, Aug 29
10:00 AM

We will be making kits for kids
and teens at
Lurie Children's Hospital
Outpatient Center in
Westchester

Open for all ages.
No supplies needed,
just come ready to work at the
Holy Apostles Multipurpose Room
Questions?
parishfamily@holyapostleschurch.com



SAVE THE DATE

Finding Peace and Strength in a Chaotic World

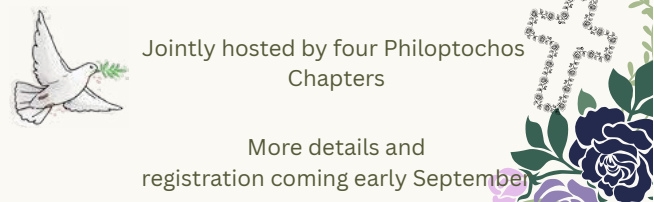
*A beautiful day of faith, fellowship, wisdom and
spiritual renewal for Orthodox women of all ages*

Keynote: Presvytera Jeannie Constantinou, PhD
Dr. Amelia Bartholomew
Anna Kallis, MDiv

Saturday November 14, 2026
8:30 am
St. John the Baptist Church
Des Plaines, Illinois

Jointly hosted by four Philoptochos
Chapters

More details and
registration coming early September



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

THE HOLY APOSTLES CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP



SUMMER BREAK

*We will not be meeting
in August.*

***Please Join Us on Tuesday, Sept. 9 | 1 PM | Philoptochos Room
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.



The family of Mary Jean Angelos, a lifelong, dedicated Philoptochos member (and former board member) is deeply honored that their mother's legacy and memory will live on through this whimsical mural painted on the playground shed at Prospect Elementary School in Clarendon Hills, a place where she touched so many lives as a teacher. The family enjoyed being a part of this special project during a family painting day with the artist, Kathryn Eli Art, who designed the mural.



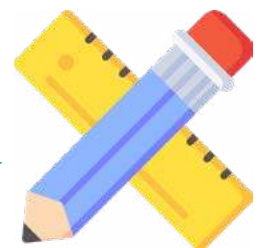
BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSING

Sunday, August 30

11 AM - Divine Liturgy

First Day of Sunday School

Sunday, September 13





PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

ACTING SECRETARY: STEVE MILAK; EDITED: VAL DRANIAS

Patty Pappas called the meeting to order. Father George Dokos led the opening prayer. Peter Bell moved to approve the **April, 2026 minutes**; George Antonopoulos seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence: Patty Pappas. A handwritten note was received from Eleni Geanon expressing gratitude for the monetary gift provided in appreciation of her service during the Easter services. A handwritten note was received from Presvytera Georgia Alikakos expressing gratitude for the opportunity and blessing of serving in the Holy Apostles Greek School. The Parish Council received the March billing summary from Hodges/Loizzi documenting the pro bono legal services provided by Vanessa Clohessy on behalf of the parish. A letter was received from Bishop Dionysios of Zenopolis, Chancellor of the Metropolis of Chicago, expressing gratitude for the parish's hospitality during the sacred occasion of his ordination to the episcopacy on March 28, 2026. Fr. George shared a video from Pastristix on the topic of Cynewulf's Ascension Poem.

Ministry Reports

Financial: George Antonopoulos

As of April 30, 2026, the parish maintained total cash reserves of \$1,729,725, consisting of \$1,143,368 in operating funds and \$586,357 in capital funds. Year-to-date net revenue totaled \$230,705, including \$200,429 from operating activities and \$30,276 from capital activities. Year-to-date expenditures totaled \$433,278, with \$431,588 attributed to operating expenses and \$1,690 to capital expenditures.

Stewardship: Steve Milak

Passed out a sheet asking for the Parish Council's input on the path forward for solutioning the church's massive capital deficit.

Building & Grounds: Norm Pomrening/Chris Pepke. Discussions on sidewalk and parking lot safety: Correct issues primarily affecting elderly and handicapped. Work: Level north sidewalk. Remove grass strip between sidewalk and existing lot. Install asphalt. Stripe, mark & signage for 3 new handicapped spots. Re-stripe and mark 8 existing north lot handicapped spots. Fix four big pot holes. Remove ADA pad in south lot that has been ripped up each year by snow plows and install asphalt.

Cost : \$6900 asphalt and striping etc.; \$1200 level sidewalk; \$500 sprinkler removal; \$400 signs & posts; \$900 10% contingency; **\$9900 total**

Funds: \$8215 pledged from 3 parishioners; \$1685 from our budget of \$5000 for sidewalk repair

Peter Bell moved and Steve Milak seconded to approve \$9900 for fixing the following projects: asphalt and striping, level sidewalk, sprinkler removal, signs & posts, 10% contingency. Motion passed by majority.

Other B&G updates

Building and Grounds Progress this month: Water filters replaced in three water fountains; Dishwasher repaired and functioning well; Ansul system inspected and serviced over ovens and certification sent in to authorities; Air conditioning repaired for nave (further evaluation needed for other possible issues); Repaired a water leak on the main water supply pipe in the boiler room; Basketball post/net and footing to begin installation on Tuesday May 26; pending weather and concrete dry time, the pole and net will be put up 72 hours later

Projects in the process: Front sign construction; Drawings for the office remodeling being finalized and will be presented to the parish council when finalized; Research smelly issue in front Women's bathroom; Hot water in the kitchen is under review; Still researching air conditioner/furnace situation for classrooms; Repair mis-sized water line from water heater; New lighting for kitchen; Remount handicap posts and signs on south side; George Chechopoulos will bring in a plumber to address the smell in the women's bathroom.

Ushering: Ted Dres. Discussed the possibility of using SignUp Genius and other methods to help mitigate.

Missions: Peter Bell/Norm Pomrening

Project Mexico: Three people have committed. \$7500 has been raised. Recommendation to reimburse the \$900 registration fee for each of the three participants; Recommendation to cover the expense of the rental van; No motion determined to be needed at the current time.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING *(continued)*

Feed6: Feed6 would like to have a commemorative plaque created to acknowledge the 1 millionth meal packed at Holy Apostles; No objection from the Council

Hellenic Academy: Nicole Ostendorf

This past Tuesday was the graduation ceremony. Fotini Karalis, preschool teacher for many years, has resigned. Principal Zoe Koul-tourides has some resumes and is in the interview process for her replacement. Preschool class is already full for the upcoming school year; 44 students are registered for the new school year

Old Business

Parish Directory: Lou Kafkes

Next week is currently promoted as the last weekend for pictures; 100 total sittings for photographs and about 25 pictures submitted thus far; Committee is hoping to increase the number and will do further reach out to the community; Additional people are signed up for pictures on May 30.

Youth Worker Protection/Sexual Harassment Training: Patty Pappas (by written report)

Written report submitted; Junior Olympics coaches are required to be compliant; three were taken off the list due to not being in compliance with training.

Safety Committee: Steve Milak/Mike Parafink

In the process of acquiring bids and submitting them to consults; one more to go for lighting. UEID number acquired from SAM; Mike Parafink is working on the application process to setup an administrator for the grant process

Bylaws Committee: Terry Chiganos

Shared that the amended bylaws were approved at the Parish Assembly; Discussed signing requirements for submission at the Metropolis level and then on to the Archdiocese in New York.

Technology Committee: Steve Milak

Technology grant should arrive by the end of June; Livestream team may look at upgrading software and/or laptop due to system issues

New Business

Picnic/Graduation Sunday: Mike Thiakos

Shared the plan for the picnic and general guidance on recruiting volunteers. Discussed some logistics on various cooking duties, etc. Discussed question on additional seating, whether it may be necessary or not based on last year's observations.

Open House: Patty Pappas

Nicholas Wendland will be chairing the open house, scheduled for 10am -1pm on June 27th. Welcome Committee will do tours and bookstore will be open. Coloring pages and other kids' activities will be available. Banner will be placed outside to advertise. Alexa will be making a flyer. Advertising will be done on social media. Alexa has made a SignUp Genius to recruit volunteers. Many volunteers will be required and went over some various positions needed to be filled. Slide show for the multi-purpose room

5K Run/Walk: Lou Kafkes

Saturday, June 22 will be the day of the run/walk. Carolyn Atkins has volunteered to help run the race; she has race organization experience. Supplies have been acquired for the race with an attempt to make the race more "upscale" than the past. Question on insurance - Yes, the Village of Westchester has been added as a rider to the policy since they help provide safety coverage

Holy Apostles Campaign Study Agreement: Patty Pappas

Received the phase 1 contract from the Winkler Group. Committee sent back contract revisions, which the Winkler Group accepted; Thank you to Attorney Joan Berg for her review of the Phase 1 contract. June 1st is the kick-off meeting with the consultants and the fundraisers. June 1st, July 1st, and August 1st - \$15,000 payments on each of these days per the contract; \$30,000 has been donated to cover the cost for the consultancy contract costs for phase 1.

Key Dates to Remember: Saturday, May 23: Metropolis Junior Olympics; Sunday, May 24: Ministries Artoklasia; Sunday, May 31: Holy Apostles Family Picnic and Graduation Sunday; June 8-12: Holy Apostles Vacation Bible School; Wednesday June 10: Feast Day Vespers for His Eminence's Name Day & Reception at Holy Apostles; Thursday, June 18: Parish Council Meeting; Saturday June 20: Holy Apostles 5K Run/Walk; Saturday, June 27: Holy Apostles Open House; Monday, June 29: Vespers & Celebration for Holy Apostles Feast Day; Tuesday, June 30: Holy Apostles Feast Day & Celebration; Monday, July 13: Holy Apostles Golf Outing; July 16-22: Holy Apostles Team at Project Mexico

Closing Prayer: Father Nicholas. Adjournment: Patty Pappas. Steve Milak moved and George Antonopoulos seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW ONLINE SYSTEM COMING: PUSHPAY

PushPay is our new electronic payment, online directory and communications platform: **Electronic giving will now be processed through Pushpay for both one-time and recurring payments.**

The online directory includes **individual profiles** so parishioners can receive communications, register for events, and manage their contributions.

****If you currently make recurring payments: you should have received an email to switch your payments over to the PushPay system. Reminder emails will be sent. Please contact the church office if you require assistance with this.****

****All parishioners will receive a login request from holyapostles@ccbchurch.com with a link to login. You can see your profile, update your information and confirm your privacy settings.**

If you have any questions, please reach out to the office: office@holyapostleschurch.com.**

- ✓ **Electronic payment: One Time**
- ✓ **Electronic payment: Recurring**
- ✓ **Individual Profiles for:**
 - » **Receiving Communications**
 - » **Event Registration**
 - » **Contribution Management**

SAVE THE DATE! Jr. GOYA & GOYA FALL RETREAT

FROM NETS TO NATIONS

WHEN? OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 1

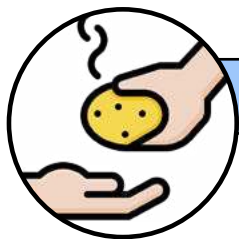
WHERE? ST. IAKOVOS RETREAT CENTER WISCONSIN

GET READY FOR:

- FAITH • FRIENDS
- FUN • ADVENTURE

FROM FOLLOWERS TO WORLD CHANGERS. CHRIST CALLED THEM. YOU ARE NEXT.

GROW IN FAITH. **LIVE THE MISSION.**



FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Holy Apostles Philoptochos invites parishioners to participate in a Lenten service project at Feed My Starving Children in Aurora on Saturday, August 8, from 9-10:45 am.

NEXT VOLUNTEER DAY:
SAT. 8/8
9 - 10:45 AM

We will pack specially formulated meals to be sent to children in need. All ages, 5 and up, are welcome to volunteer. There are some seated jobs available labeling food bags, too. This is a great way to earn service hours.

Contact Emily Rehn at platovalentine@hotmail.com or 708.369.9365 for more details.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Dormition Fast Begins 8:30 am Westchester Food Pantry Volunteer Day 5:00 pm Vespers
2 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour	3 7:00 pm Paraklesis	4 7:00 pm Paraklesis	5 7:00 pm Vespers	6 Feast Day of the Transfiguration 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm Paraklesis	7 7:00 pm Paraklesis	8 9:00 am Feed My Starving Children 5:00 pm Vespers
9 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour	10 7:00 pm Paraklesis 8:00 pm Service Project	11 7:00 pm Paraklesis	12 7:00 pm Paraklesis	13 7:00 pm Paraklesis	14 6:00 pm Bus to Assumption for Great Vespers	15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers
16 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour 12:30 pm Baptism	17	18 7:00 pm Neighborhood Bible Study - LaGrange	19 1:00 pm Bereavement Group Meeting	20 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting	21	22 11:00 am Baptism 5:00 pm Vespers
23 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Fellowship Hour	24	25 7:00 pm Women's Book Club	26	27 6:45 am Brotherhood of St Peter the Apostle 5:30 pm Sunday School Teacher Kickoff Dinner	28	29 Feast Day of Beheading of St. John the Baptist 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am 5th Saturday Serve Day 12:00 pm Fashion Show In- Person Reservations 5:00 pm Vespers
30 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:00 am Back-to-School Blessing 11:30 am Fellowship Hour 12:30 pm Baptism	31					

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 August

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

BELLWOOD, IL
PERMIT #157

Sacraments listed are those known at time of publication

MEMORIALS

JUNE/JULY (unknown prior to last issue publication)

George & Barbara Pappas
Vasiliki (Betty) Kass
John Mathews
Hercules (Ray) Vlangos
Andy Psihas
Catherine Turlas
Dolores (Dorothea) Chipain
Ted, Marya and Stacia Patrinos
Katherine, John and Pericles Lewis
Constantine, Annette and Terry Katsulis
Elaine and Lucia Cardullias
Stefania Xristina Rahn
Peter and Angie Fikaris
Edward McHugh
William Chrisos

AUGUST

Peter Pappas
Michael Cotsilis
Michael Dorner

FUNERALS

Peter Toullos
Peter Pappas
Presvytera Effie Chiganos

BAPTISMS

JUNE / JULY

Melina, daughter of Constantine & Brittany Danegelis
Sponsor: Aris Danegelis

Jim Adkins
Sponsor: Peter Dimas

Matthew Forch
Sponsor: Norm Pomrening

AUGUST

Spencer Allen
Sponsor: Nicole Papanton

Costandina Eleni, daughter of Dana and Chris Kritsas
Sponsor: Grammatoula Psarafti

Dina Kieu Thu, daughter of Trinh and Angeli Kritsas
Sponsor: Chris Kritsas

Ares Christopher, son of Michael Campos and
Matina Giannopoulos

CHRISMATION

Carolyn Adkins
Sponsor: Sandy Pihos