



Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church

Parish Newsletter December 2019



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Orthros: 9:00 a.m. - Ορθρος 9:00 π.μ. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m. – Θεια Λειτουργια 10:00 π.μ.

December 25 - The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

25 Δεκεμβριου – Η Γεννησης του Χριστου



The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner, and

the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1:3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).



Vasilopita Sale
(From Agia Skepi)
\$17.00 each (one size)
Last day to order: December 1, 2019
Pick up date: December 22, 2019
Please call Marietta Khalil at 732-925-9699



Christmas Pageant and PTO
Christmas Party
Sunday, December 22, 2019
We hope to see each and every one of you.





Message from Father George

Christmas and Easter are the two great poles of the liturgical year, and everything else in our Church life spins around them. The entire fall season leads up to Christmas, and the entire spring leads up to Easter. And like two separate poles of the globe, Christmas and Easter seem like opposites in many ways. One focuses on birth; the other focuses on rising from the dead. One is celebrated in the icy cold of winter, the other in the warm sunlight of early spring. The two feasts seem so very different. But they are actually very similar. The Church connects them in various ways. For instance, we have a 40-day fast period only two times per year: one before Christmas and one before Easter. Many other liturgical similarities exist, but need not be counted here. The Bible also connects the birth and death of Christ. Even when Jesus is born, for instance, his coming death is never far from view. Herod the Great kills all the children in Bethlehem looking for Jesus, while the son of Herod succeeds later in killing Jesus himself. His death is, thus, already signaled at his birth. Why, then, is this so? Why are Christmas and Easter so closely connected? The answer is simple. In both Christmas and Easter, we see God renewing and remaking his creation. St. Paul says that those who are in Christ are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and we see in the birth and death and resurrection of Christ, the renewing, not only of our humanity, but of the entire created world. The curse of Adam is reversed. Adam was created directly by God with no earthly Father, and the world is recreated in Christ, who also has no earthly Father. The disobedience of Eve is reversed by the obedience of the Theotokos. The whole world is made new in Christmas. In Pascha, this work of renewal is brought to completion. If Adam ate of the tree and fell away from God, Christ is suspended on a tree and returns us to the presence of God. All is made new, and the created world which fell into darkness has been recreated in glory. In these two great feasts of the Church – Christmas and Easter – we see the renewing of our humanity. Now, we need to live like people made new. When insulted, forgive. When tempted, resist. When filled with all good things, share with those in need. In this way, we proclaim the Lord's birth and resurrection until He comes. God be with you all!

Merry Christmas!



CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Sunday, December 8, 2019
(directly after the Divine Liturgy)

**Prayers, caroling, tree lighting,
and a light fare reception.**

Everyone is welcome to join us in “lighting up” the Holiday Season together as a Church Family.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dearest Parishioners,

The Christmas Holiday Season brings “Joy to the World”; the wonder, splendor and peace for which we anxiously await all year long; the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. May each of you enjoy a most wonderful holiday season replete with the love, happiness and warmth of your families and friends, plus, all the gifts included on your list for Santa Claus!

Christmas is, also, a time to remember our family members who have left our world. With the Blessing and Groundbreaking Event so recently taking place, memories of our forefathers are evoked and our rich, deep-rooted history at Saint Demetrios with many emotions stemming from those who chose Perth Amboy as their hometown. They understood and recognized the need to preserve our faith, to love each other, to help each other, to be good neighbors and create a dedicated, devoted Church family. We pray to fulfill their dreams with our plans for our new building. With much deep appreciation of the commitment, support and blessings from His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos, we are so very thankful & grateful. Through the assistance, the generosity and the compassion of all of you, who, also, understand the great need to preserve our legacy, together, we can assist our Senior Citizens by providing this much needed community where they can keep their Greek Orthodox faith, culture and traditions alive and live together as friends and neighbors right next door to our beautiful, newly-restored & renovated Church with our magnificent iconography, plus, the amazing river view to enjoy every single day. The amenities available will be tailored to meet their needs and their lifestyles. Just image the happy, loving and caring environment that will exist in this building!

Let's hope and pray that by next Christmas, this dream will have become a reality! What an extraordinarily joyful season that will be for all of us! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone!

In HIS Service,
Helen Coutros Horan, Parish Council President

SAINT DEMETRIOS LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

“...And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” ~ Acts 20:35

A great, big “thank you” goes out to all of you who contributed toward the Thanksgiving baskets that the Philoptochos distributes to those requiring assistance from our Church community. Your generous donations helped make the holiday a brighter occasion for those in need.

Please mark your calendars for several upcoming events:

Vasilopita Sales (\$17 each – one size) - **Last day to place your orders is Sunday, December 1, 2019. Pick up date will be Sunday, December 22nd.** Please contact Marietta Khalil at 732-925-9699 if you are interested in purchasing Vasilopeta from Agia Skepi.

Christmas Bake Sale - Delicious baked goodies will be on sale following the Sunday School's Christmas Pageant, which will be held directly after church services on **December 22, 2019.**

Vasilopita Luncheon - The Philoptochos will be hosting a brunch on **January 12, 2020** following the **Epiphany Services and the Blessing of the Waters.** (Flyers will be available for more details). Vasilopita will be cut and distributed amongst the organizations of our Church as well as to members of the community. All proceeds will go toward **Saint Basil's Academy.**

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



A Beautiful, Memorable Blessing and Groundbreaking Event

On a beautiful, sunny Saturday morning with butterflies encircling our grounds on November 2, 2019 we witnessed an historic, poignant moment in our Church History with His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos' deeply spiritual and emotional Blessing Service that will be forever etched into our memories as one of the most remarkable events in our lifetimes. The Blessing of the Property and the Groundbreaking Ceremony was held in the exact place, on the precise piece of land where our ancestors worked so diligently to purchase



it for us and leave it as their legacy. Amazingly, right on this precious land, our soon-to-be-built Tom and Sylvia Kress Community Center and the Saint Demetrios Housing for Active Adults will be erected. A long-awaited dream is coming to fruition!



With our most sincere appreciation, we thank His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos for his enthusiasm and endorsement of our endeavor to build our vision for a community where our Senior Citizens may live directly next door to their Church, become close as neighbors and friends who will enjoy their magnificent waterfront view and numerous amenities to serve their needs and their lifestyles.



Honored guest speakers commended our project and offered their full support and endorsement to see it to its completion. We thank them all for the participation in our ceremonies; Congressman

Frank Pallone, Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, Perth Amboy Mayor Wilda Diaz, City Council President, William Petrick and Perth Amboy Resident and Senior Advocate, Dorothy Daniel. Numerous other City Officers, City Officials, Members of the Perth Amboy Police Department and Perth Amboy Fire Department, Representatives from the Jewish Renaissance Foundation and YMCA were, also, in attendance to join us for our historic event.



Our prayers of gratefulness and those of our ancestors will forever echo in the walls of our blessed Church and our new Saint Demetrios Building.



*We pray:
Holy One,
Great Martyr
Demetrios,
invoke
Christ our
God for us,
that He may
grant us His
Great Mercy.*





Great Vespers to Saint Demetrios



We were honored and blessed to have His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos with us for his beautiful Great Vespers Service to Saint Demetrios on the evening of Friday, October 25, 2019. Afterwards, he posed with his father, Ioannis Kourounis, Judge Marina Corodemus, Father George and Presbytera Maureen.

Hon. Marina Corodemus graciously and gratefully accepts a Philanthropic Award in the amount of \$5,000 from Pan-Gregorian Enterprises, Inc. for our Saint Demetrios Housing for Active Adults at their 35th Annual Charity Gala on November 17, 2019. Pictured from left to right are the Pan Gregorian President, James Logothetis, Chairman of the Board, Agapios Kyritsis and President of our Philotimo Housing Development Corporation, Hon. Marina Corodemus.



HOPE & JOY MINISTRIES

Encouraging our children to celebrate our Orthodox Faith and Greek Heritage!!



On Sunday, October 27, 2019, we had our first Hope & Joy Ministries event for the school year. Our event took place right after church. We had 9 students in attendance –Kyra Kouretas, Nikolas Morales, Claire Veiga, Sofia Sousa, Anastasia Haring, Audree and Emalee Rizitis and Khloe and Kallista Tsoukas.

First, the Hope ministry students participated in a lesson

followed by an arts and crafts activity where they created posters for the Harvest season. While the Hope ministry students were creating their posters, the Joy ministries students were engaging in Greek dance lessons taught by Kali Simatos. Then the groups switched and the Hope students were learning Greek dance and our Joy students participated in the Harvest arts and crafts activity.

Our next Hope & Joy Ministries' event will take place on November 17, 2019, right after church. Hope to see all of our students there!



Greek School

Αγαπητοι Ενοριτες,

Τα παιδια του Ελληνικου Σχολειου, η δασκαλα Κυρια Αλεξανδρα και ο Προεδρος Δημητριος Τσιβελης, ευχονται σε ολους εσας

**Καλα Χριστουγεννα και
Ευτυχισμενο το Νεο Ετος
2020!**

Dear Parishioners,

The students of the Greek School, along with Mrs. Alexandra and the Greek School President, Dimitrios Tsivelis wish you all a

*Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year
2020!*



Sunday School/Greek School

Christmas Pageant & PTO Christmas Party

You are cordially invited to our Christmas Pageant followed by a PTO Christmas Party

Sunday, December 22, 2019

Our Sunday School & Greek School children will delight you with their beautiful portrayal of the Nativity scene which will include Joseph, Mary, Baby Jesus, Shepherds, Lambs, Stars, Angels, the Three Kings and our very own Little Drummer Boy along with poetry readings and prayers.

Please do not miss this wonderful event directed by Helen Catelanos.

Our Saint Demetrios PTO is providing a complimentary party for everyone to join together as one family during this very blessed holiday season rejoicing in the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.



Santa Claus will be joining us in this special celebration, as well.



Thank You To Our Sponsors!

**Thank you to our new sponsor:
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You can now make donations and honor your stewardship commitment by
making your payments on line at:

<http://www.stdemetriosperthamboy.org/donations/>



His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos began the Groundbreaking portion of the ceremonies by digging the first shovel into the ground to mark this historic event.