# Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church Ελληνικη Ορθοδοξος Εκκλησια Αγιου Δημητριου Parish Newsletter December 2021 - Δελτιο Ενοριας Δεκεμβριου 2021

Editors: Helen Horan Coutros and Maria Kakadelis



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

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#### 25 Δεκεμβοιου – Η Γεννησις του Σωτηρος ημων Ιησου Χριστου

Μετά τον Ευαγγελισμό της Παφθένου Μαφίας από τον αφχάγγελο Γαβφιήλ, ο Καίσαφ Αύγουστος διέταξε απογφαφή του πληθυσμού του φωμαϊκού κφάτους. Τότε ο Ιωσήφ μαζί με τη Θεοτόκο, ξεκίνησαν για τη Βηθλεέμ. Ξεκίνησαν από την Ναζαφέτ και ύστεφα από κοπιαστικό ταξίδι έφτασαν στην Βηθλεέμ, όπου επειδή είχε συγκεντφωθεί πλήθος κόσμου δεν κατάφεφαν να βφουν κατάλυμα, παφά μόνο ένα φτωχικό σπήλαιο. Εκεί η Θεοτόκος γέννησε τον Κύφιο Ιησού Χφιστό. Έπειτα Τον έβαλε επάνω στη φάτνη των αλόγων ζώων, διότι «ἔμελλε νὰ ἐλευθέφωση ήμᾶς ἀπὸ τὴν ἀλογίαν», όπως χαφακτηφιστικά γφάφει ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιοφείτης. Από τότε, όλοι οι πιστοί χφιστιανοί με χαφά ψάλλουν τον ύμνο των αγγέλων εκείνης της νύκτας: «Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰφήνη, ἐν ἀνθφώποις εὐδοκία» (βλ. Ευαγγέλιο Λουκά, Β' 1-20). Δόξα δηλαδή, ας είναι στο Θεό, που βφίσκεται στα ύψιστα μέφη του ουφανού και στη γη ολόκληφη, που είναι ταφαγμένη από την αμαφτία ας βασιλεύσει η θεία ειφήνη, διότι ο Θεός έδειξε την αγάπη Του στους ανθρώπους με την ενανθρώπηση του Υιού Του.

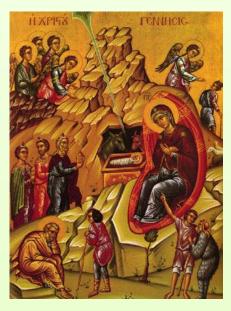
#### Ο ερχομος του Χριστου στον κοσμο, εφερε την αγαπη και τη δυναμη του Θεου στη γη.

#### **Ἀπολυτίκιον**

Ή γέννησίς σου Χοιστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἀνέτειλε τῶ κόσμω, τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως, ἐν αὐτῆ γὰο οἱ τοὶς ἄστροις λατρεύοντες, ὑπὸ ἀστέρος ἐδιδάσκοντο, σὲ προσκυνεῖν, τὸν Ἅλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ σὲ γινώσκειν ἐξ ὕψους ἀνατολήν, Κύριε δόξα σοί.

#### Κοντάκιον

Ή Παρθένος σήμερον, τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει, καὶ ἡ γῆ τὸ Σπήλαιον, τῶ ἀπροσίτω προσάγει. Ἄγγελοι μετὰ Ποιμένων δοξολογοῦσι. Μάγοι δὲ μετὰ ἀστέρος ὁδοιποροῦσι. δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη, Παιδίον νέον, ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων Θεός. December 25 - The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ



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).

Message from Father Gregory



Many people want to hear the truth if it is good news. Not so many want to hear the truth if it is bad news. Some would rather hear something good, even if it isn't true. Although pop culture speaks a distorted message about Christmas, it is, at least, marginally a pleasant message. Modern "Christmas" songs don't have much to do with Christ or the church service for Him (said another way, Christ's Mass) and that is intentional. It is nice to hear songs about finding love or feeling warm when on a sleigh ride; not everyone wants to hear about Jesus or hear a song about his birth. But the truth is still good news, that Christ was born (and later would die) in order to save us.

As we drive by lawns with air-inflated, motorcycle riding Santas in sunglasses, snowmen, Snoopy or elves on our way to a pre-Christmas Christmas party, we should think of more than the pleasant message being conveyed, we should remember the truth, that Christ's birth is a fulfillment of prophecy pronounced over several thousand years. The truth also includes great mystery: why God wants to unite us to Him, why a star could be seen by the Magi but not others, how a virgin could give birth, how Christ could be born and yet have forever existed and how Jesus could be both God and human and arrive humble and meek as a newborn in a cave. We wonder because we cannot comprehend. However, while we cannot comprehend the "why" or the "how," we can still comprehend that it is true.

Pop culture's message of everyone giving and receiving gifts, being well-dressed, attractive, young and surrounded by loved ones and attending perfect social activities sounds and looks good but is not true. That pleasant but false message is recognized as the reason why societal levels of depression, anger and suicide are highest during the season of Christmas. The false message seeks to hide the truth of Christmas. Sadly, many believe that the fiction is true and that the truth is fiction.

A person can be unaware of the truth or ignore the truth but the truth remains. We cannot comprehend it but we have to accept it - God loves us even when we are sad or alone, God loves us even though we are ignorant, poor, uncaring or uncouth, God loves us even when we live fiction more than we live truth and God loves us even when we don't love Him. God wants more for us than we want for ourselves but while we consider that and wonder how we should live and how we can properly honor or glorify Him as the Church teaches, we still have the truth, that Christ was born in order to save each of us. God sends His Son to abide with us and in us. As people have been repeating in church for more than 1600 years, Xριστòς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε! - Christ is Born! Glorify Him! May each of us remember and help others to learn the truth of Christ's birth.

# $\Delta$ εκεμβριος – December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Greek School PreSchool/Primary Levels 6:00 p.m. Elementary/Middle Levels 7:00 p.m.			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sunday School	Orthos 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.		Greek School PreSchool/Primary Levels 6:00 p.m. Elementary/Middle Levels 7:00 p.m.			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sunday School			Greek School PreSchool/Primary Levels 6:00 p.m. Elementary/Middle Levels 7:00 p.m.			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sunday School			Greek School PreSchool/Primary Levels 6:00 p.m. Elementary/Middle Levels 7:00 p.m.		Vesperal Liturgy 5:00 p.m.	Christmas
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sunday School						

## President's Message

Dearest Parishioners,



"When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceeding with great joy. Matthew 2:10

This beautiful quote from the Bible elicits the most wonderful, warm, overwhelming feeling of extreme happiness beyond imagination. Just the sight of that star was enough to draw people from afar to see Jesus Christ Our Savior and to adorn Him with an abundance of adoring love.

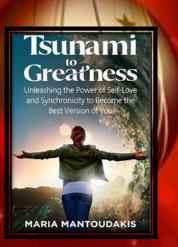
It is my hope that all our parishioners and their families experience the exceptional joy and happiness described in this verse on Christmas Day. Perhaps, it will be the star on the top of your Christmas tree or the star twinkling in the eyes of your children and grandchildren that will remind you of this beautiful sensation evoked by the birth of Jesus Christ and the reason for the elaborate celebration for which we prepare so intentionally and intensely. May the love generated through the miracle of His Birth remain everlasting in your hearts.

Let us prepare to welcome the star into our lives this joyous season and know that the love it emits is sent directly from our Lord God, our Savior. Look for the star! It awaits each of us to find it!

May the meaning, the joy and the love emitted through the Christmas star, envelop and embrace each and everyone of you.

Merry Christmas!

In HIS Service, Helen Coutros Horan Parish Council President



"Tsunami to Greatness" will propel you into a journey of self-love, understanding of universal laws, and peace of knowing that the synchronicity of the Universe results in self-evolution, and greatness.

To purchase the book, please use the link below: <u>Tsunami to Greatness: Unleashing the Power of Self-Love</u> and Synchronicity to Become the Best Version of You

## Greek School

Αγαπητοι ενοριτες,

Την Κυριακη 31 Οκτωβριου 2021, οι μαθητες του Ελληνικου Σχολειου μας παρουσιασαν μια συντομη παρασταση τραγουδωντας τους Εθνικους Υμνους της Αμερικης και της Ελλαδας οπως επισης ποιηματα και ζητωκραυγες για τον εορτασμο της Ημερας «ΟΧΙ». Αυτη ειναι μια μερα στην ιστορια που θυμαται ο κοσμος οταν ο λαος της Ελλαδας ειπε «ΟΧΙ» στις δυναμεις του Αξονα της Ιταλιας που προσπαθησαν να καταλαβουν την Ελλαδα. Ο ελληνικος λαος απωθησε επιθετικα τις δυναμεις του Αξονα πισω στην Ιταλια καθως πολεμησαν με γενναιοτητα και επιτυχια για την πατριδα, την ελευθερια και τη δημοκρατια! ΖΗΤΩ Η ΕΛΛΑΔΑ!!

Δημητριος Τσιβελης, Προεδρος Ελληνικου Σχολειου

Dearest Parishioners,

On Sunday, October 31, 2021, our Greek School students presented a brief performance of singing the National Anthems of America and Greece plus poems and cheers to celebrate "OXI" Day. This is a day in history that the world remembers when the People of Greece said "OXI" (No!) to the Axis forces of Italy that tried to occupy Greece. The Greek people aggressively pushed the Axis forces back into Italy as they fought bravely and successfully for their homeland, freedom and democracy!

Dimitrios Tsivelis, Greek School President

> Σας ευχόμαστε Υγεία, Ευτυχία, Ελπίδα! Καλές γιορτές!





Very happily, our Sunday School students have returned to in-person classes at Church. They are involved in the learning of our Greek Orthodox faith, traditions and customs through the reading of their lessons, meaningful discussions and hands-on arts & craft projects.

Our Sunday school students described all the blessings for which they are thankful through the completion of their Thanksgiving wheel project demonstrated in the precious photos below.

They were, also, able to discuss and explain that this Sunday was the Feast Day of the Theotokos who is the Mother of God.

May God bless our sweet children!



### G.O.Y.A.

The holidays are upon us and our G.O.Y.A. is very busy with many activities and celebrations. Everyone is looking forward to our Christmas dance and gift exchange. The Goyans are, also, busy making sights for "Sights and Sounds" such as jewelry and collages and continuing Greek Dance practice.

Our first outing together in almost 2 years was attending a Jets game pictured below and we look forward to attending events together more frequently.

We would like to wish all of you a very blessed Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2022!





Sunday School/Greek School Christmas Pageant and PTO Christmas Party

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

# Sunday, December 19, 2021

Our Sunday School and 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.

We hope to see each and every one of you on Sunday, December 19, 2021

Saint Demetrios Sunday School/Greek School Staff and Children and Saint Demetrios' PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)

# Parish Council

As we are quickly approaching the end of 2021, the Parish Council is finalizing plans for the New Year with creative, inventive ideas to accelerate our fundraising efforts and to increase profitability. Due to the implementation of Greek Grills, Platter Sales, a stream-lined Festival and the generosity of our parishioners, our expenses are covered through the end of the year.

Very thankfully, our ministries are back in full operation with in-person Sunday School and Greek School Classes, HOPE & JOY and G.O.Y.A. Our Philoptochos and PTO have held meetings, activities and events. Coffee hours have started up, again, where we are joining together in faith and fellowship after Church Services. A sense of normalcy is evident and very welcome although we continue to be cautious with limited seating at each table, continued sanitizing and cleaning, the use of hand sanitizers placed visibly and strategically and the option of wearing masks. Although we are not back to our full normal capacity, we are pleased with our progress.

Unfortunately, maintenance problems have surfaced due to recent flash flooding storms, Ida, etc. We are exploring insurance coverage or FEMA assistance. The HVAC system must be replaced since it is 20 years old and will not last another season. More than generous donations received from parishioners will cover the cost. Also, the Check Valve was found to be malfunctioning and the probable cause of several flooding episodes in the basement. The Parish Council has committed donations that will cover the cost of the new check valve. Additionally, the roof of the boiler room is in disrepair and the cause of kitchen flooding. Currently, estimates are being sought to determine the best offer. Below are photos of the installation of the new check valve. The next heavy rainstorm will be the test of its effectiveness.









### General Assembly Meeting, November 21, 2021

After two years, our General Assembly Meeting was held on Sunday, November 21, 2021 which was well attended by surpassing our quorum and productive with relative reports, discussion, and nominations. Reports of the State of our Church were presented by our President, Helen Coutros Horan, through written documents and a power point presentation. Nominations for a new Parish Council were held. Official voting ballots will be mailed to stewards who have met their commitments to be completed confidentially and returned to Church for collection, counting, and reporting. Nominations were, also, held for the Board of Elections and the Board of Auditors. Affirmation and induction of the new Parish Council will be held in January.

### **Philotimo** Report

The Philotimo Building Development Corporation was represented by Kenneth Doukas, Marina Corodemus, Dennis Krousos, and Ted Kaidas. Father Nektariois Cottros was, also, present as the officially-appointed Liaison to Philotimo by the Archdiocese and Metropolis. Ken Doukas presided and presented a detailed, comprehensive history timeline and overview of the progress made to the current date. A lengthy discussion ensued as numerous questions were answered specifically, concerns were aired and clarified and misconceptions were dispelled. A full complete package of all documents, contracts, approvals, etc. was offered to the President to be stored in the Church Office confirming 8 years of volunteer work the committee and, in particular, volunteer work done by Marina Corodemus and Ken Doukas thereby confirming full transparency. Parishioners are welcome to make an appointment to review the material on Church premises.

Gratitude and appreciation are extended to Ken Doukas, Marina Corodemus and the entire Philotimo team for their numerous years of unconditional commitment to negotiating, coordinating, conferencing with the City of Perth Amboy, attorneys, contractors, architects, etc. in compiling the voluminous bound file of contracts and agreements that resulted in the final package presentation.

Unfortunately, the onset of COVID deterred the entire process, detrimentally, which required the team to reconvene and renegotiate every agreement previously made. As of March 2019, Philotimo accomplished the construction goal unanimously voted on by the General Assembly 8 years prior. This new building will provide for: A 300 person sit down multipurpose community center overlooking the water with a commercial kitchen, meeting rooms, and a chapel dedicated to Panagia Gorgoepikoos. On the upper three floors, 27 condominium units will be sold providing for the potential of increasing our church membership by 53 people, if all are sold to Orthodox Christians, thereby, paying for the construction costs.

Real estate agent, Robert Durso, reported he had deposits on 12 units even with the COVID interruption. The potential for rental of the community center to other non-profits and the larger areas for our annual festival will far exceed any capacity that existed with our previous community center. Again, but for COVID, when there was a commitment from 1st Constitution Bank, construction was ready to begin with completion projected for the spring of 2021.

However, costs skyrocketed and escalated prices to 3 or 4 times original costs. There was a moratorium on commercial building, the modular building company closed. Despite this devastating dilemma, the team re-charged and restored all aspects of their plans. Remarkably, at this time, bank commitments are on the verge of being offered very shortly which will be the final stage of the process.

Much love, respect and gratefulness must be conveyed to the memory of Tom and Sylvia Kress for their magnanimous bequest to our Church and Philotimo which made this building project possible.

# Saint Demetrios Ladies Philoptochos Society

"*She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.*" ~ Proverbs 31:20

THANK YOU to all who donated foods and canned goods, as well as to those who made very generous monetary donations toward our Thanksgiving Food Collection. Your contributions went a long way and are much appreciated! Please keep bringing in your non-perishable food items because the Philoptochos will continue working with local food pantries to help feed the hungry.

Also, thank you to everyone who supported the Philoptochos' Thanksgiving Bake Sale! Special thanks go out to all the ladies who baked: Efstathia Belitsis, Zeffie Filandras, Evvy Frakiudakis, Diana Kostopoulos, Anna Kyriakatos, Evelyn Mariolis, Irene Pakis, and our chairpersons, Marietta Khalil and Aphrodite Kanellidis. As usual, everyone did such a wonderful job for this event.

With New Year's Day around the corner, we are happy to announce that Vasilopita from Agia Skepi will be available for sale this year!

Please keep your eye out for information regarding the Vasilopita Luncheon in January, which will be posted soon!

Have a Very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!

In Christ, The Philoptochos of Saint Demetrios

# Phíloptochos - Vasílopíta Sale



(From Agia Skepi)

\$17.00 each (one size)
Last day to order: Wednesday, December 8th
Pick up date: Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> (after church services)
To place your order:
Please contact Mary Lou Rivera at 732-742-0722 or
email Mary Lou at MLKR@comcast.net







### His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

Cordially Invites you to the

# ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING & OPEN HOUSE

*on* Thursday, December 16, 2021 6:00 – 9:00pm

> At the Metropolis Headquarters 215 E. Grove Street Westfield, NJ 07090





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#### Καλα Χριστουγεννα και ευτυχισμενο το νεο ετος 2022!



We hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!



NAME
NAME OF SPOUSE (IF MARRIED)
STREET ADDRESS
CITY / STATE / ZIP CODE
HOME PHONE
MOBILE PHONE
EMAIL ADDRESS
EMAIL ADDRESS OF SPOUSE (IF MARRIED)
Dependent Children's names and birthdates:
May we include your contact information in the parish directory?
$\Box$ yes $\Box$ no If yes, please indicate any information you would like excluded:

May we add you to our parish email list?  $\Box$  yes  $\Box$  no

### Christian Stewardship is...

...learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

...our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.

... caring for the needs of others.

... offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.

... what a person does after saying "I believe...", as proof of that belief.

... devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as diocese/metropolis, as national Church and as Church universal.

# Thank You To Our Sponsors!





A big THANK YOU to all our Frontliners and Essential Workers. Thank you for your hard work, tireless hours and

your commitment in keeping us safe!

