



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS of NEW JERSEY



Rev. Protopresbyter Nicholas P.
Petropoulakos

Saint Demetrios Parish Newsletter

December 2025

41-47 WISTERIA STREET, PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
(732) 826-4466

REV. PROTOPRESBYTER NICHOLAS P. PETROPOULAKOS

ELECTION DAY

Sunday, December 14, 2025
for New Parish Council Board

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERS CHRISTMAS LUNCH – 12/6/25
GREEK SCHOOL BAZAAR – 12/7/25
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT &
PTO CHRISTMAS PARTY – 12/14/25
PHILOPTOCHOS BAKE SALE – 12/14/25
VASILOPTIA PICK UP/TOY DRIVE – 12/21/24

DECEMBER 2025 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Saturday	December 6	St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Today we will also celebrate St. Barbara and St. Savvas
Sunday	December 7	Tenth Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 14	11th Sunday of Luke Sunday of the Holy Forefathers Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Today we will also celebrate St. Spyridon
Sunday	December 21	Sunday before the Nativity Genealogy Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	December 24	*Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Vesperal Liturgy 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	December 25	The Nativity of Our Lord Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 28	Sunday after the Nativity Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

***Eve of the Nativity of our Lord Vesperal Liturgy**

In preparation for the Nativity of our Lord, we will celebrate a Vesperal Liturgy on Christmas Eve. This is a Liturgy so there will be Holy Communion. It is suggested that those wishing to receive refrain from eating anything from their lunch until their reception of Holy Communion.

President's Message ~

Almost four years have passed since the elected Parish council members of that time honored me by selecting me to be the Parish Council president of our beloved community of Saint Demetrios.

I accepted the nomination with enthusiasm and a long list of things to do. Having said that, four years later and multiple check marks on my to-do wish list, thanks to the abundant help of the Parish Council members along with a couple parishioners, we have accomplished all our budgetary goals and many other important issues. Here are some of our accomplishments:

1. Balancing the budget and changing it from negative to positive.
2. Retrieve a large sum of money (Thanks to the efforts of Spero Kalambakas) from PSE&G. These funds are invested and earn dividends yearly.
3. Installed permanent underground electrical conduits, wiring and receptacles to support our annual festival needs.
4. Installed new underground drains and new concrete slabs to eliminate the community center and kitchen flooding (A frequent problem since the church was built).
5. Updated the main office cabinetry, CCTV security and electrical outlets.
6. A total renovation of the community center including lighting and sound system.
7. Repair the exterior copping and gutter of the West bell tower since rainwater was infiltrating into the interior walls of the church. All damaged interior walls were also repaired and painted.
8. Painted all the exterior woodwork including the fascia boards around the entire perimeter of the church including the doors and window frames.
9. Built a large festival storage shed, installed lighting and receptacles in all three sheds.
10. Installed a commercial refrigerator, freezer and warmer within the festival shed (all the equipment was donated by an anonymous parishioner).

All the above items are the major tasks that were accomplished through these past four years along with multiple important tasks that are too many to list. Our to-do list has not been completed yet and many items remain to be done with a certain priority. Two of these critical items are:

- Repair or replace the deteriorated attic HVAC ductwork
- Boiler room renovation and updates.

Both items are costly but necessary since they haven't been updated since the church was built.

In closing, I'd like to thank you all for your monetary and/or physical support to maintain and beautify our church and friendly community.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Respectfully,

George Kane
Parish Council President

From Father Nick's Desk

The Purpose of Christmas

What are you celebrating this Christmas?

Christmas is a party. Specifically, it's a birthday party – for Jesus – and birthdays are meant to be celebrated. It's why we say "Merry Christmas!"

Ironically, at most Christmas parties the person whose birthday we're supposed to be celebrating is completely ignored. He's never even mentioned. Although Jesus is the 'reason for the season', He's often overlooked or merely mentioned along with Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, Santa Claus, the Grinch, elves, and a long list of celebrated fictional characters.

As Rick Warren was writing the little book, *The Purpose of Christmas*, he decided to take a survey of Christmas shoppers. He asked, "What are you celebrating this Christmas?" Most answers had nothing to do with Jesus:

"I'm celebrating that I made it through another year."

"I'm celebrating being home with my family."

"I got a Christmas bonus."

"The candidate I voted for got elected."

"I'm celebrating that I've finished all my shopping."

"I'm not celebrating anything. I'm just trying to survive."

Preparing for Christmas can be a lot of work, especially for moms. With the pressure of buying gifts, sending greeting cards, decorating our homes, putting up lights, cooking, attending parties, and cleaning up afterward, they have little time to actually enjoy the meaning of Christmas.

The first purpose of Christmas is celebration! We learn this from the angel's opening statement to the shepherds of Bethlehem. God had wonderful news for us that would cause us all to rejoice, celebrate, and throw a party: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." (Luke 2:10)

The good news of Christmas is worth celebrating for three reasons. It is personal: "I bring YOU." It is positive: "GOOD news of great joy." And it is universal: "for ALL the people." It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, where you've been, or where you're headed – this news is for you.

The angel brought us news we can use. It's the best news in the world.

God loves you! God is with you! God is for you! Christmas is a time to celebrate that God loves you!

The most famous statement in the Bible is Jesus' explanation of why God sent him to earth: "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

The entire reason for Christmas is the love of God. God loves us so much that He came to earth as a human so we could get to know Him and learn to trust Him and love Him back.

Theologians call this the Incarnation. God became one of us, a human being, so we could understand what He is really like.

God has given us, as human beings, the capacity to know Him in ways animals can't. He created us in His image, which includes the ability to enjoy a personal relationship with Him. Then He took the initiative to send Jesus so we could understand His love and our need for Him. God wanted to communicate to us, so He became one of us. He didn't send an angel or a prophet or a politician or an ambassador. He came Himself. If you really want people to know how much you love them, you can't send a representative to communicate it. You have to say it personally. That's what God did at Christmas.

The Bible tells us that God is love. It doesn't say God has love, but God is love. Love is the essence of God's character. It is His very nature. The reason that everything in the universe exists is because God wanted to love it. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.

Think about this. If God didn't want to love something, He would not have created it. Everything you see, and the trillions of things you can't see, was made by God for His enjoyment. He loves it all, even when we mess it up with our sin. He still has a purpose for it. Every star, every planet, every plant, every animal, every cell, and, most of all, every human being was created out of God's compassion.

We were created as an object of God's love. He made us in order to love us! His love is the reason we are alive and breathing and reading this article. Every time our hearts beat and every time we take a breath, God is saying, "I love you." We would not exist if God had not wanted us to.

God's love for us is unconditional, He loves us on our bad days as much as on our good days. He loves us when we don't feel His love as much as when we do. He loves us regardless of our performance, our moods, our actions, or our thoughts. His love for us is unchanging. Everything else will change during our lifetime, but God's love for us is constant, steady, and continuous.

There is nothing we can do that will make God stop loving us. We could try, but we would fail — because God's love for us is based on His character, not our conduct. It's based on who He is, not what we have done. The Bible says, "Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love."

We are constantly taught that God sent His Son, that Jesus came to the earth to save us all from sin; to take on all of our spiritual faults (sins) and sacrifice His life for them. This is why He was born in a manger in that small town of Bethlehem.

That is well and good, but I feel that this is not enough. I truly believe that this understanding is too broad and that it diminishes why Baby Jesus came.

Narrow the purpose! Make it more personal! Don't diminish His love! Understand and believe that Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem for us!

He loves us! Cares for us! Redeems us! Sacrifices Himself for us!

This is the purpose of Christmas and what we must celebrate this and every year.

A blessed and Christmas to all.

Father Nick



Archiepiscopal Encyclical for Archon Sunday

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Presvyteres and Diakonisses, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, one of the two who had heard what John said, followed Jesus. First, he went and found his brother, the aforementioned Simon.

(John 1:41-42)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Last year, the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Sacred Archdiocese of America inaugurated “Archon Sunday,” in order to recognize the esteemed Order of Saint Andrew the First Called Disciple, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and to honor the Feast of their Heavenly Patron.

In the days preceding the Feast of Saint Andrew on Sunday, November 30th, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV will visit Nicaea (modern Iznik), the site of the First Ecumenical Council, together with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Their Beatitudes of the Elder Patriarchates – the full complement of the ancient Pentarchy – in order to commemorate the 1700th Anniversary of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers gathered in Nicaea and the Creed, and their declaration of the Faith of the Apostles, which we recite at every Divine Service.

Following the Nicaean event, the Pope will be present for the Feastday Liturgy of

Saint Andrew in the Patriarchal Cathedral of Holy Great-Martyr George the Trophy- Bearer, bearing witness to the enduring ecumenical progress that has been made over the last fifty years. There will be a special pilgrimage with many Archons for these most significant events, which signal real progress in the goal of a unified Christendom. Throughout, we shall manifest the love of Andrew for his brother Simon, who went first out of love to share with his brother (renamed Peter by the Lord), the good news of finding the Messiah.

Therefore, all parishes are urged to take time on this Sunday, November 23rd, to Great Church of Christ, and to take full advantage of the many initiatives of the Order of Saint Andrew, which can be found on their website, <https://archons.org>. As children of the Mother Church of Constantinople, we all – Archon or no – have a responsibility to Her and Her spiritual mission, to share the Gospel of the Messiah, Who was found first by Saint Andrew, with all our brothers and sisters acknowledge the Archons of the throughout the world.

With Blessings in our Lord Jesus Christ,

†ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America



Weekly ZOOM Bible Study

Father Nick offers a weekly ZOOM Bible Study each Wednesday night at 7:30. He encourages anyone who would like to participate to use the following information to sign in:

Sign in number **88085372002**

Password **Padre**

We are now studying the Book of Acts.



Daily Messages on FACEBOOK

Father Nick publishes messages, religious and practical, every day on FACEBOOK. He began this ministry at the beginning of the Covid Pandemic and continues it to the present time.

To read the daily messages, send Father a friend request at **Nicholas P. Petropoulakos**.



Be Part of the 2026 Greek Festival!

Our St. Demetrios Greek Festival is set for May 29–31, 2026—and we need YOU to help make it a success!

Next Festival Meeting

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 • 7:30 PM
Downstairs Hall, St. Demetrios

Areas We're Focusing On

If you can help—or know someone who can—please let us know! Here are some of our first planning needs:

- **Kitchen Help** – chefs, cooks, grill/taverna staff, prep teams, and food runners
- **Advertising** – spreading the word through local papers, bulletins, and announcements
- **Marketing** – social media, flyers, outreach, and promotions
- **Donations & Sponsorships** – connecting with businesses and community supporters
- **Volunteer Outreach** – bring in and welcome volunteers

2025–2026 Festival Meeting Schedule

(Third Tuesday of each month)

- December 16, 2025
- January 20, 2026
- February 17, 2026
- March 17, 2026
- April 21, 2026
- May 19, 2026
- June 2026 – TBA (Recap meeting is held 1–2 weeks after the festival)

Interested or have questions?

Email us the festival team at pagreekfestival@gmail.com and we will be in contact!



PTO NEWS



Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas from the PTO!

Please join us for the annual
**Children's Christmas Pageant and
Christmas Party**
Sunday, December 14th

Directly following Church Service.

**Accepting offerings of a (hot or cold) food/appetizer item, baked item or monetary donation
to make this very much enjoyed event special!**

Hoping Santa makes a special visit!

If you can support in any way, please reach out to Diana Regan, PTO President at 732-861-9575



GOYA News



**With Love,
From the St. Demetrios GOYA**

Dance practice is on Monday nights, from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm downstairs in the church hall. Any youth 12 years of age (7th grade) or older who is interested in joining dance or the GOYA, it's not too late! Please contact Jennifer Simatos at 732-343-2266.

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parishioners:

On Sunday, December 7th right after Divine Liturgy, our Greek school will be sponsoring an arts and crafts bazaar during coffee hour.

Some of the items for purchase include: beautifully handmade tree ornaments, bracelets, miniature decorated wreaths, Christmas angels and other elegant Christmas decorations. We will also have some Greek products for sale that everyone loves, like chocolates, olive oil, juices etc.

We would also accept any donations towards the bazaar. Please join us!!

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your families!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



***Invitation to our Sunday School Christmas Pageant, Greek School
Caroling and our PTO Christmas Party***

December 14, 2025

Everyone is cordially invited to our Sunday School Christmas Pageant followed by a PTO Christmas Luncheon Party on Sunday, December 14, 2025. Our Sunday 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, "The Littlest Angel" and our very own Little Drummer Boy along with poetry readings and prayers.

Our Greek School children will entertain us with Christmas Caroling.

Please do not miss this wonderful event!

Our St. Demetrios PTO will be 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 14, 2025.

Christmas Blessings



Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 14, 2025
(directly after the Divine Liturgy)
PTO Reception to follow

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Presented by our Sunday School & Greek School

Peace Joy Love

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, designated Sunday, November 2, as Ladies Philoptochos Sunday for 2025. On this special Sunday, we celebrated with an Artoklasia for the health of all Parish Philoptochos members and a Mnimosinon for the memory of all deceased members. All Philoptochos members in the congregation were invited to the Soleas for a blessing at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

The Philoptochos will be hosting a **Christmas Luncheon** for its members and their families on **Saturday, December 6th** in our newly renovated church hall! Members interested in attending the luncheon, please contact Irene Dimitratos or Marietta Khalil. Food will be provided by one of our favorite restaurants, The Barge.

The Philoptochos' goal is to help those in need, and with support from our St. Demetrios community, we were able to have two successful events that exceeded our expectations in wonderful ways!

Thank you to all who brought in coats during our Winter Coat Drive! Thanks to you, three donation boxes as well as six large bags (donated by Ted and Litsa Kaidas) were filled with coats which were given to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Perth Amboy. This amount of coats way surpassed our collection from last year! Thanks to you, this winter will be warmer for so many individuals in need of assistance.

Also, the Philoptochos held a Food Drive, which was chaired by Peggy Kantor and Mary Lou Rivera. Thanks to your donations, as well as donations from friends of the St. Demetrios community, we were able to pack up 14 boxes and 8 shopping bags of food this year! This was way more than what we collected last year! How awesome is that?! These donations were distributed to the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul. Thank you to everyone who participated in the food drive to feed those in need. Your donations are always appreciated!

(Please note...our food collection does not stop with Thanksgiving. We will continue to collect non-perishable food items and distribute them to local food pantries throughout the year. You can drop off your donations in the Philoptochos Box in the Narthex.)

In addition to these collections, the Philoptochos will be initiating a Toy Drive in early December. Please look for the large Toy Drive box located at the top of the stairs of our church hall. Toys will be collected up to December 21, 2025. Let's try to make Christmas a joyous occasion for as many children as we can this year.

Please mark your calendars ... Here are some important dates:

Saturday, December 6th – Philoptochos Christmas Lunch for Members & their Families

Sunday, December 7th – Last day to place your order for Vasilopita bread (see flyer)

Sunday, December 14th – Philoptochos Bake Sale!

Sunday, December 21st – Pick up your Vasilopita bread orders after church services.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthy New Year!

In Christ,

The Philoptochos of St. Demetrios

GENTLE REMINDER: The bank with whom we have accounts has become more strict about how checks are made payable to the Philoptochos. Therefore, to ensure that future checks for memberships/events/donations, etc. are accepted by the bank, please note that checks should be payable as follows:

PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY 3 HIERARCHS OF ST. DEMETRIOS

Philoptochos Sunday - November 2, 2025



Food Drive 2025



Anniversary Blessings



Happy Anniversary to
Father Nick & Presvytera Patricia!

They celebrated 54 Years of Marriage
on November 21st.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Do you have any announcements you'd like to share with the community...Milestone birthdays or anniversaries? Weddings? Births? Graduations? Special Awards?

If yes, please contact the church office (by phone, email, or drop by the office with the information), and it can be included in the next distributed Newsletter.

