



GREEK ORTHODOX  
METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY



Rev. Protopresbyter Nicholas P.  
Petropoulakos

## SAINT DEMETRIOS PARISH NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2026

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(732) 826-4466  
REV. PROTOPRESBYTER NICHOLAS P. PETROPOULAKOS

**Blessing of the Waters – Diving of the Cross**  
**Pastoral Visit of His Eminence, Metropolitan Apostolos**  
**Sunday, January 11, 2026**

**Philoptochos Vasilopita Luncheon**  
**Sunday, January 25, 2026**

**Greek School 3 Hierarchs & Greek Letters Day Celebration**  
**Saturday, January 31, 2026**

### JANUARY 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Thursday	January 1	Circumcision of Our Lord St. Basil the Great Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	January 4	Sunday before Epiphany Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	January 6	Holy Epiphany – Greater Blessing of Waters Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>January 11</b>	<b>Sunday after Epiphany</b> <b>Pastoral Visit of His Eminence, Metropolitan Apostolos</b> <b>Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b> <b>Service of Diving for the Cross 12:30 p.m. (approx.)</b>
Sunday	January 18	12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	January 25	15 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Friday	January 30	Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs Orthros 8:45      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

## FROM FATHER NICK'S DESK

### WHAT SORT OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION SHOULD A CHRISTIAN MAKE?

The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over 3,000 years to the ancient Babylonians. There is just something about the start of a new year that gives us the feeling of a fresh start and a new beginning. In reality, there is no difference between December 31 and January 1. Nothing mystical occurs at midnight on December 31. The Bible does not speak for or against the concept of New Year's resolutions. However, if a Christian determines to make a New Year's resolution, what kind of resolution should he or she make?

Common New Year's resolutions are commitments to quit smoking, to stop drinking, to manage money more wisely, and to spend more time with family. By far, the most common New Year's resolution is to lose weight, in conjunction with exercising more and eating more healthily. These are all good goals to set. However, I Timothy 4:8 states, "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" thus instructing us to keep exercise in perspective. The vast majority of New Year's resolutions, even among Christians, are in relation to physical things. This should not be.

Many Christians make New Year's resolutions to pray more, to read the Bible every day, and to attend church more regularly. These are fantastic goals. However, these New Year's resolutions fail just as often as the non-spiritual resolutions, because there is no power in a New Year's resolution. Resolving to start, or stop, doing a certain activity has no value unless you have the proper motivation for stopping or starting that activity. For example, why do you want to read the Bible every day? Is it to honor God and grow spiritually, or is it because you have just heard that it is a good thing to do? Why do you want to lose weight? Is it to honor God with your body, or is it for vanity, to honor yourself?

Phillipians 4:13 says, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." John 15:5 declares, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." If God is the center of your New Year's resolution, it has chance for success, depending on your commitment to it. If it is God's will for something to be fulfilled, He will enable you to fulfill it. If a resolution is not God honoring, and is not in agreement in God's Word, we will not receive God's help in fulfilling the resolution.

So, what sort of New Year's resolution should a Christian make?

Here are some suggestions:

- pray to the Lord for wisdom in regards to what resolutions, if any, He would have you make;
- pray for wisdom as to how to fulfill the goals God gives you;
- rely on God's strength to help you;
- find someone who will help you and encourage you;
- don't become discouraged with occasional failures; instead, allow them to motivate you further;
- don't become proud or vain, but give God the glory.

Psalm 37:5-6 says, "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

What sort of a New Year's resolution should a Christian make? Very simply, a Godly, Christian one!

May God grant us all a blessed, Spirit-filled 2026.

Father Protopresbyter Nicholas P. Petropoulakos



## JANUARY 2026 ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

**Sign-in:** 88085372002

**Password:** Padre

**January 7**

The Book of Jabez – discussion of this book by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson.

You can purchase it online at Amazon. I highly recommend it.

**January 14, 21 & 28**

The Book of Genesis

Hope to see you there for study and fellowship.

## FATHER NICK'S DAILY MESSAGES ON FACEBOOK

If you would like to read these messages, please ask Father to friend you on FACEBOOK.

Father publishes a spiritual message early every morning.



# ANNUAL EPIPHANY CELEBRATION



SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026



## ORTHROS & HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY

9:00 AM

Celebrated by  
His Eminence  
Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey



## BLESSING OF THE WATERS & CROSS DIVE

Following Divine Liturgy  
on the sands of  
the Raritan Bay

Stay for a celebratory luncheon with  
His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey

Our parish warmly invites you to join us for the **Annual Epiphany Celebration** on **Sunday, January 11, 2026**, a beloved and spiritually meaningful tradition.

The day will begin with Orthros and a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM, celebrated by **His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey**. Following the Divine Liturgy, we will gather on the sands of the Raritan Bay for the **Blessing of the Waters** and **Cross Dive**.

All are invited to stay for a festive **luncheon** with His Eminence. Seating is limited, please contact Aphrodite (732-423-7256) or Litsa (908-227-0822) to reserve your seat. The cost is \$30 for adults and \$20 for youth. Reservations and payment can also be made by email and Zelle to [saintdemetriospertnamboyNJ@gmail.com](mailto:saintdemetriospertnamboyNJ@gmail.com).

If you would like to get involved in supporting this special celebration, please contact Kateina Ganiaris (908-757-3057).

We look forward to celebrating together as a parish family.

**St. Demetrios Parish Council**



Dear Parishioners,

This year, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America invites us to reflect on the stewardship theme **“Rise Up and Build: Building Up the Body of Christ.”** In the Book of Nehemiah, the people come together to rebuild not only physical walls, but also their shared faith and trust in God. Working side by side, they were united in purpose, answering God’s call with commitment and love.

So, it is with stewardship in our parish. Stewardship is not simply about finances; it is a **spiritual response** to God’s many blessings. Through our **time, talents, and treasures**, each of us helps build and sustain our spiritual home at **St. Demetrios**. Our collective stewardship supports worship, ministries, education, outreach, and the ongoing life of our parish.

When we “rise up and build” together, we strengthen the Body of Christ, ensure the vitality of our parish, and prepare a strong foundation for future generations.

#### Ways to Give:

- Check payable to **St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church**
- Zelle: **saintdemetriosperthamboynj@gmail.com**

Thank you for your prayerful consideration and for faithfully supporting the life and mission of **St. Demetrios**. Every gift is a blessing and helps our parish grow.

#### Stewardship Committee

##### My Commitment to St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church Our Spiritual Home

Giving to His Church is a way to thank God for His grace and generosity. The question is not, “How much do I give to stay in the club?” or “What are the dues?” but “How can I thank God for my many blessings?”

In gratitude for God’s blessings, I/We commit to Christ and His Church the following amount:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ per ☐ year ☐ month ☐ week

Give online with Zelle to **saintdemetriosperthamboynj@gmail.com**

## INFORMATION

NAME

NAME OF SPOUSE (IF MARRIED)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP CODE

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

EMAIL

EMAIL OF SPOUSE (IF MARRIED)

# 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, January 20, 2026 • 7:30 PM

### 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

### 2026 Festival Meeting Schedule

(Third Tuesday of each month)

- 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](mailto:pagreekfestival@gmail.com) and we will be in contact!





## Church Ministries News ~

### PTO News

We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and send heartfelt wishes for a **Happy and Healthy 2026** to all!

On Sunday, December 21st, our congregation gathered for a delayed—but incredibly special and beautiful—Christmas pageant, followed by our Christmas party where Santa surprised and delighted both children and adults!

Originally planned for December 14th, the pageant and party were postponed due to snow. That day, we had two memorials, and we are deeply grateful to the families who joined us downstairs and for your thoughtful contributions and support.

When the festivities finally took place on the 21st, partnering with GOYA's coffee hour, we were able to finally enjoy the Christmas pageant and party. Thank you everyone who attended and to those who generously contributed both the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21st, helped with set up, serving, and clean up! Thank you Santa for making our day extra special!

Anyone who took photos during the party, especially your children with Santa, please share to [dianapregan@gmail.com](mailto:dianapregan@gmail.com)! Below are just a few...



## GOYA News

Happy New Year! Hope you all had a blessed Christmas and are looking forward to 2026.

The GOYA enjoyed their annual Christmas present exchange. There were lots of laughs and sweet treats. We even had a visit from some former GOYAns. Playing musical chairs has become a new tradition.



We also enjoyed celebrating Christmas with our fellow GOYAns at the annual Christmas Dance. This year it was held at St. Nicholas, Constantine, and Helen Church in Roseland.

We started preparing for Sights and Sounds with an open craft night. Can't wait to share our wonderful projects with you. Mark your calendars. Our annual Spaghetti Luncheon will be Sunday, March 8th.

The freezing waters await our entrance during the Annual Epiphany Celebration on January 11<sup>th</sup>, where His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos will guide us in the retrieval of the cross. GOYAns from various churches have been invited to join us again. A luncheon will follow in our church hall. If you'd like to make reservations, call the church office 732-826-4466 to reserve your seats or a table.



## GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parishioners,

We wish you and your families a Happy New Year with health, love and all of God's blessings!

As we reflect on 2025, we are grateful to our students, teachers and community for a wonderful year that concluded with our favorite Christmas festivities - our annual Christmas Bazaar and Christmas Pageant.

Special thanks to our teacher Zoi Papakosta and her mother Mrs. Kalliopi Papakosta for all the beautiful handmade arts and crafts, Mr. Evangelo Kartsakalis from Evan's Restaurant for all the many generous food donations, and of course our Greek School children, parents and families for their contributions to make our December 7 Christmas Bazaar a success.

Coordinated through Father Nicholas, the National Herald published our St. Demetrios Perth Amboy 2025 Christmas pageant on December 21, which showcased our Greek School children singing the "kalanta". We are so proud of our talented children, and thank our teachers, Zoi Papakosta and Despina Markos, pageant director, Helen Horan, and parents for their hard work and dedication to our Greek School!

In the New Year, our Greek School is excited to resume classes starting Thursday, January 8, as our students prepare for our special January festivities, starting with our annual Epiphany celebration with His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos on Sunday, January 11 where our children will sing traditional carols of the Epiphany.

Then, on Saturday, January 31, starting at 5:30pm, our Greek school is hosting its first Three Hierarchs and Greek Letters celebration with dinner, music and an entertaining program. Our students will recite poems and sing traditional songs to honor the day and our GOYA will perform traditional Greek dances. In an effort to encourage our community and full families to attend, admission is free for all children/minors and \$40 for all adults. All proceeds from the event will go towards our Greek school, so we thank you in advance for your support and look forward to celebrating with you! Reservations for this event will be taken by Dimitrios Tsivelis 908-458-3598.



**St. Demetrios Perth Amboy Greek School**  
invites you to join our



**Three Hierarchs and Greek Letters Day Celebration**

**Saturday, January 31 at 5:30 pm**  
**Church Hall**

**Donation of \$40 per Adult (Children free)**  
**Enjoy Dinner, Music and GOYA Greek Dancing / BYOB**

**RSVP: Dimitrios Tsivelis 908.458.3598**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

### *JOY TO THE WORLD!*



In celebration of the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Sunday School and Greek School students prepared a wonderful program. Our Greek School students began the program by singing Greek Christmas Carols.

Sunday School Students recited and narrated spiritual and joyful poems significant to the magnificent events that led to the birth of Jesus Christ and all those who came to witness our Savior in the tiny town of Bethlehem.

Next, the students dressed in lovely costumes performed our Annual Christmas Pageant from Angel Gabriel, Joseph and Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus, Angels, Shepherds, baby animals, the Three Kings, The Littlest Angel, The Brilliant Star of Bethlehem, The Little Donkey and The Little Drummer Boy.

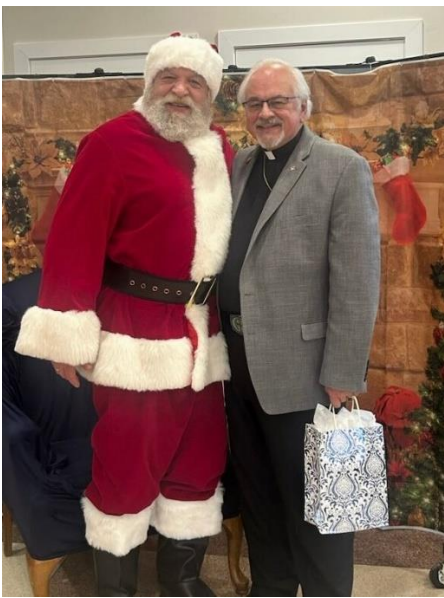
The children all performed so beautifully and made us all so very proud!

It was a joyful, memorable event that is bound to be remembered by everyone for many years to come.

Then, everyone celebrated together at the wonderful PTO Christmas party, especially when Santa Claus arrived.

It is hoped that all our St. Demetrios families enjoyed a beautiful Christmas Holiday Season and New Year Celebrations!





## PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Happy New Year! We hope your holiday season was filled with much joy and that the new year brings you good health and happiness.

The Philoptochos would like to send out a big Thank You to all the parishioners who donated toys for our Toy Drive. We'd especially like to thank Mrs. Joy Villa, a friend of a Philoptochos member, who donated so many toys, our donation boxes were overflowing! It's good to know that we could help spread the Christmas gift of giving to families in need of our help.

In addition, thank you to all who supported our Vasilopita Sale (Chairperson was Cindy Giannakopoulos) and Bake Sale (Chairwomen were Irene Pakis and Mary Simatos), as well as all the other events and fundraisers we've had over the past year. Your contributions go a long way toward helping the Philoptochos meet our missions, which include helping the poor, the hungry, as well as those who may have fallen on hard times. Your generosity is always appreciated.

And on that note, as a reminder, the Philoptochos will continue working with local food pantries to help feed the hungry, so please keep bringing in your non-perishable food items and leave them in the collection box located in the Narthex.

On Saturday, December 6, 2025, Philoptochos members and their families celebrated Christmas with a delicious luncheon in our church hall (Chairperson Marietta Khalil and her team). The food - catered by The Barge Restaurant - was delicious, of course. We also had yummy homemade desserts, so thank you to all the ladies who baked for us. Music and laughter filled the air, (especially when Cindy told her jokes!), and a fun time was had by all.

The Philoptochos continues its celebrations into 2026 with our **Vasilopita Luncheon, which will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026**, after church services. Proceeds from the luncheon will go to St. Basil's Academy as well as to other youth ministries. Reservations are being accepted, so if you haven't already done so, please see the attached flyer for more information to reserve your seat(s).

The next Philoptochos General Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, January 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM** down in the church hall. Please join us to find out what events are upcoming. We're always grateful when our members participate in these activities. Together we can do great things to help those in need.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Saturday, February 21, 2026

**Philoptochos Apokreatiko Glendi**

~ Details to Follow Soon ~

**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**  
(You may abbreviate.)



# Philoptochos Toy Drive



## *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.



*Happy New Year!*  
*2026*

You are cordially invited to attend the  
St. Demetrios Philoptochos'  
**Vasilopita Luncheon**

\*

Date: Sunday, January 25, 2026

Time: After Church Services

\$25.00 (Adults) / \$15.00 (Children)  
(Children under 10 years are free!)

\*

Spending time with family and friends is a wonderful way to  
start the year.

Come join us for a delicious luncheon and a chance to “win”  
the coin in the Vasilopita bread.

*(Proceeds from this luncheon will go toward  
St. Basil's Academy and other youth ministries.)*

\*

RSVP by Sunday, January 18, 2026

Irene Dimitratos  
732-585-3585

Helen (Coutros) Horan  
908-794-3065

If paying by check, please make it out to:  
**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY 3 HIERARCHS OF ST. DEMETRIOS**  
(Otherwise, it may be returned!)