



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY



SAINT DEMETRIOS PARISH NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

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

REV. PROTOPRESBYTER NICHOLAS P. PETROPOULAKOS

GOYA Events:

Saturday, March 7 – Sights & Sounds
Sunday, March 8 – Spaghetti Luncheon
Sunday, March 15 – Parish Oratorical Festival
Saturday, March 28 – Oratorical Festival (Flemington, NJ)

Raising of the Greek Flag - Sunday, March 29, 2026

Spring General Assembly - Sunday, April 19, 2026

Rev. Protopresbyter Nicholas P.
Petropoulakos

MARCH 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Sunday	March 1	1 st Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	March 4	Presanctified Liturgy	6:00 p.m.
Friday	March 6	2 nd Salutations to the Virgin Mary	7:00 p.m.
Sunday	March 8	2 nd Sunday of Great Lent St. Gregory Palamas Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	March 11	Presanctified Liturgy	6:00 p.m.
Friday	March 13	3 rd Salutations to the Virgin Mary	7:00 p.m.
Sunday	March 15	3 rd Sunday of Great Lent Veneration of the Holy Cross Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	March 18	Presanctified Liturgy	6:00 p.m.
Friday	March 20	4 th Salutations to the Virgin Mary	7:00 p.m.
Sunday	March 22	4 th Sunday of Great Lent St. John Climacus Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	March 25	Annunciation of the Virgin Mary Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Friday	March 27	Akathist Hymn	7:00 p.m.
Sunday	March 29	5 th Sunday of Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt Orthros 8:45 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

FROM FATHER NICK'S DESK

The Tone For Great Lent Begins With Forgiveness

In our Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent is called Forgiveness Sunday. During the Divine Liturgy of that Sunday, February 22nd this year, the tone for the whole Lenten period is set in the words we hear from Jesus:

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:14-15

The question arises. Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? This question is very appropriate because for too many people believe that Great Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with rules concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a "good deed" required by God. The Church, however, spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal. That goal is the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. These are all requirements for us as we walk on the road our personal theosis.

The Church even warns us against a hypocritical and Pharisaic fasting. The caution is that we do not reduce following our religion to just outward obligations to gain a particular reward, or worse, try to put God in our debt.

One of the Lenten hymns says: "In vain do you rejoice in eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast!"

Forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life. Why? Because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son. He sends His Son to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other substance but love. It is primarily the renewal of that love and growth in it that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, in truth, forgiveness is both the beginning of and the primary requirement for the Great Lenten season.

For some these questions come up: Why should I seek out people that I do not get along with since they are not really my 'enemies'? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know?

When we ask these questions, we misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life. But if we do experience them, we must deal with them! The act of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize we do have a relationship with every brother and sister in Christ and that we should keep that relationship in accordance with the teachings in Christ we have been taught.

Through the beautiful teaching hymns of Great Lent, we can re-discover that Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, to help us transform anything that we hold against others into a loving and forgiving brotherhood. Remember, as we closer to others and as the others come closer to us, we come to realize that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for all of us.

Forgiveness Sunday, the day on which we secure the power to make our fasting, true fasting; our effort, true effort; our forgiveness in Christ, true forgiveness.

A Blessed and Spirit-filled Great Lent to All!



MARCH 2026 ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Each Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Sign-in: 88085372002

Password: Padre

Zoom meetings will take place on THURSDAYS for the duration of Great Lent.

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.

Please join us this Great Lent for

Χαιρετισμοί

Salutations To The Theotokos

7:00 p.m.

February 27th (1st Salutations)

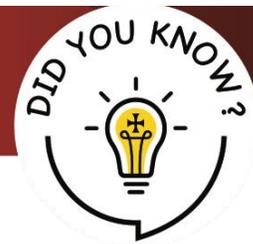
March 6th (2nd Salutations)

March 13th (3rd Salutations)

March 20th (4th Salutations)

March 27th (Akathist Hymn)

Light refreshments will be served after each service



SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS



Did you know the Service of the Salutations to the Theotokos is celebrated in honor of her role as intercessor?

The Service of the Salutations to the Theotokos is celebrated to give us strength and joy during this time of prayer, fasting, repentance, and spiritual transformation. The Mother of our God and Savior Jesus Christ is our mother too. And there is no better person to lead us to Christ than the one who gave us Christ — the one who birthed, nurtured, and raised Him, and who stood by Him when He was crucified. In fact, it was from the Cross that Christ said to the Apostle John (representing the Church): "Behold your mother," (John 19:27) and to the Theotokos: "Behold your son" (John 19:26) — representing the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

The Service is celebrated in honor of the Theotokos's role as "mediatress" — the mother who mediates on behalf of her Son to us and on our behalf to her Son. She is the greatest intercessor among the Saints in Heaven — the "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) — praying to God to save those in great danger and need. We say "Rejoice!" because this is how the Archangel Gabriel greeted the Theotokos (Luke 1:28) to announce the Incarnation, which is the beginning of our salvation. This is called the "Angelic Salutation".

This Service is celebrated during the first five Friday evenings of Great Lent. The Akathist Hymn comprises 24 stanzas and is divided into four parts. One part is sung on each of the first four Fridays, and on the fifth Friday the entire set is sung.

Send us your questions at: religioused@goarch.org

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GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

President's Message ~

Hello Everyone –

This is my first newsletter article as Parish Council President, so bear with me.

I would like to start off by saying thank you to all of our Parish Council members for attending our first two meetings and everyone being very helpful in setting up an administration that I think will serve St. Demetrios well.

Our Festival is coming up quickly. We have been having festival meetings coordinated by Olga Mantsis, and I'd like to give her and everyone in attendance at those meetings a big thank you. In addition to posting the schedule in the Newsletter (see attached Festival article), we send out emails in advance to let you know about the meetings. Anyone who would like to attend is more than welcome.

This winter has been tough on us with the snow and getting our parking lot cleaned out. I'd like to give a big thanks to Spero Kalambakas for plowing out our parking lot, which saved us a lot of money.

Our Greek School held a Three Hierarchs dinner for the first time. It was very well attended. Everyone had a great time, and it was nice to see the community get together for fellowship. Thank you to Dimitri Tsivelis, the teachers, parents, and businesses who donated all the food, as well as everyone involved in the project to make it a great success.

The Philoptochos had their annual Apokreatiko Glendi on Saturday, February 21st, which was also a great success. Everyone had fun and celebrated before getting ready to start our Great Lent.

Father Nick will be conducting many services during this Lenten season. Keep an eye out on the calendar for all the dates as we prepare ourselves for Pasca.

As time goes on, I hope to keep you well informed.

Thank you.

Nick Giannakopoulos
Parish Council President



The St. Demetrios Fundraising Committee would like to express its heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all those who supported and donated to the

SUPER BOWL PASTITSIO & SPANAKOPITA FUNDRAISER

Thanks to your support and our generous donors, this years fundraiser was a huge success, and we look forward to doing it again.

Please support this years donors:



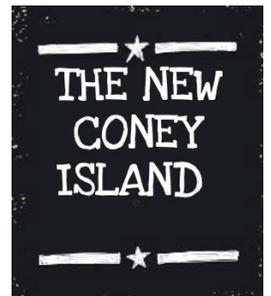
EDISON DINER
101 Route 1 South
Edison, New Jersey 08817
(732) 985-3335



**RINGOES GOLDEN
STAR DINER**
80 US 202
Ringo, New Jersey 08551
(908) 284-2240



EVANS DINER
8 Cliffwood Avenue
Matawan, NJ 07747
(732) 566-9122



**THE NEW
CONEY ISLAND**
192 Smith St.
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
(732) 442-1147

Σας Ευχαριστούμε!



Dear Parishioners,

Thank you to those who have already submitted their pledges for the 2026 Rise Up and Build Stewardship Campaign.

If you have not yet pledged, we invite you to prayerfully consider how you can support St. Demetrios with your time, talent, and treasures. Please complete your 2026 Stewardship Pledge online or bring a completed pledge form to church.

Please note: Stewardship does not renew automatically each year. We kindly ask all parishioners to recommit annually by submitting a new pledge for 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact the parish office. Let us continue to grow together as a parish family in gratitude and faithful service to God.

Ways to Give:

- PayPal: <https://www.stdemetriosperthamboynj.org/donate/>
- Check payable to *St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church*
- Zelle: saintdemetriosperthamboynj@gmail.com

Thank you for your prayerful consideration and faithful support of St. Demetrios.

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, March 17, 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)

- 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

Just a brief notice this month on upcoming events:

PTO sponsored coffee hour will be on Sunday 3/15

Also, save the date:

PTO Easter Egg Hunt!

Easter Sunday April 12th following morning Easter service!



GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parishioners ~

What an unforgettable evening for our Perth Amboy community!

On Saturday, January 31, our Greek School proudly hosted its first-ever Three Hierarchs and Greek Letters celebration. It was a night filled with faith, tradition, and the incredible talents of our youth. The evening was emceed by our Greek School Director, Dimitrios Tsivelis, and Father Nikolaos opened with a beautiful blessing, setting the tone for our celebration. Our students shined as they recited poems, shared wise sayings, and sang traditional songs, filling the room with smiles, pride, and hope for the future.

Our GOYA kept the celebration going with vibrant Greek dances that delighted everyone. We are deeply grateful to all who supported this special event: Father Nikolaos and the Parish Council, our incredible students, teachers and parents; our generous sponsors for the delicious dinner – Evan’s Restaurant (Matawan), Agapi (Rahway), and Sherban’s Diner (South Plainfield), Fancy Cakes (Freehold) for the stunning Three Hierarchs cake – the many wonderful women who baked traditional Greek pastries with so much love, and last but not least, a special shoutout to our dear friend Georgios Papagrigrakis, who volunteered as DJ and kept everyone dancing all night long.

We wish to give a heartfelt thank you to our entire community for making this first celebration so meaningful and memorable!







Join us on Sunday March 29th for a special joint celebration at Saint Demetrios Perth Amboy! Orthros 9.00am Divine Liturgy 10.00am Memorial of the fallen heroes and Greek School celebration to follow

Σας προσκαλούμε να γιορτάσουμε μαζί την δικιά εορτή της 25ης Μαρτίου εδώ στον Άγιο Δημήτριο Perth Amboy! Ορθρος 09.00πμ Θεία Λειτουργία 10.00 πμ Θα ακολουθήσει μνημόσυνο για τους Έλληνες ήρωες του 21 και μεγάλη γιορτή απ' τους μαθητές του Ελληνικού σχολείου. Μην λείπει κανείς!

As we embrace the Lenten season and look forward to our events in the month ahead, we encourage you all to save-the-date of Sunday, March 29 to support our Greek School children and attend our Greek Independence Day program after the Divine Liturgy.

Thank You!

SAVE THE DATE – NYC GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE – SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026

Join us as we march with pride in the annual **Greek Independence Day Parade** on Fifth Avenue!

Bus from St. Demetrios Church
Departs after services at **12:00 PM**
Returns approx. **5:00 PM**

Bus Tickets:
Adults: **\$30** | Children: **Free**
(Children must be accompanied by a parent)

RSVP to reserve your seat – space is limited! Contact the Church Office **732-826-4466** or **stdgoa@gmail.com**

Let's celebrate together as one community!



GREEK PARADE
SUNDAY
APRIL 26, 2026
1:30 PM

*Celebrating
205/250th Anniversary*

*1821 Greek Struggle for Independence
1776 Declaration of American Independence*

FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK CITY • 64TH TO 79TH STREET

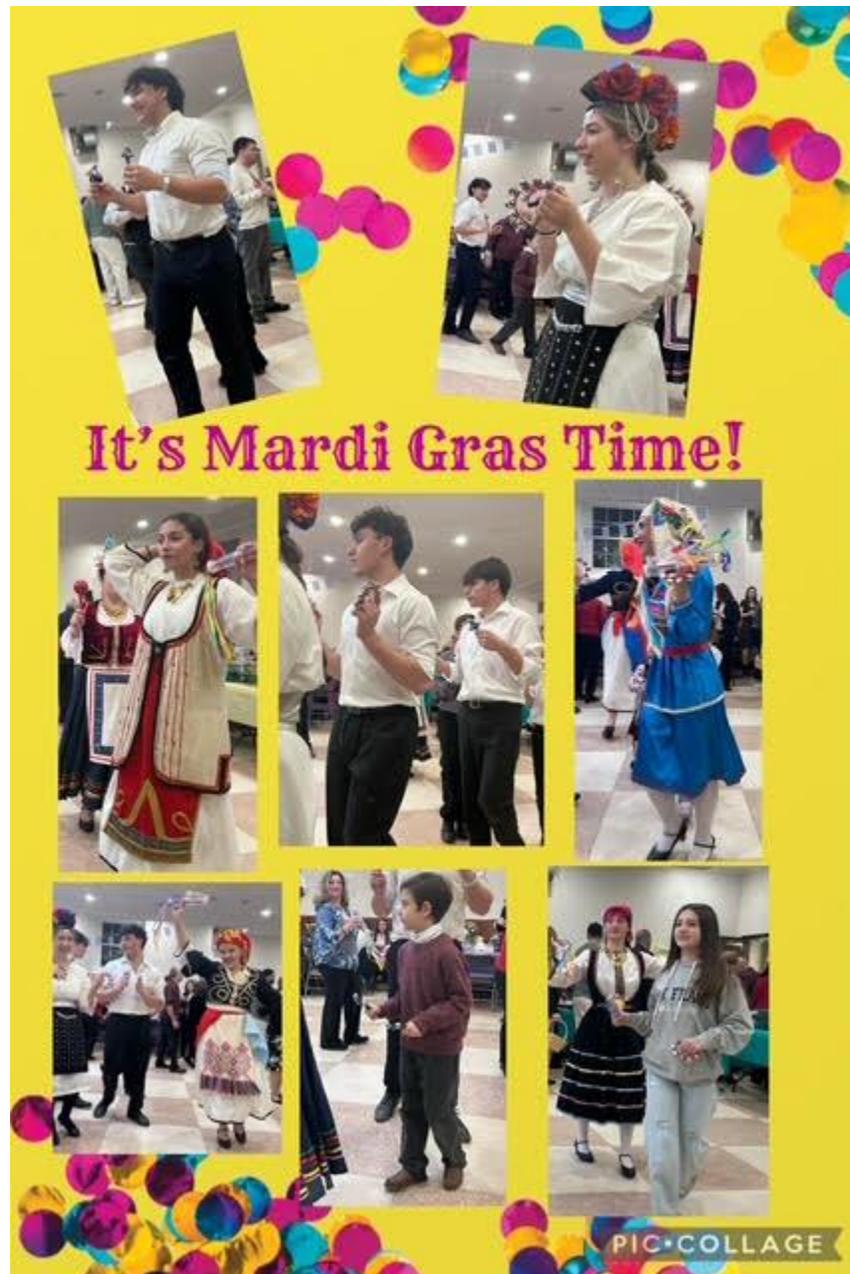
FEDERATION OF HELLENIC SOCIETIES OF GREATER NEW YORK
22-51 29th Street, Astoria, NY 11105 • 718.204.6500
✉ nyhellenicsocieties@gmail.com

www.nycgreekparade.org
✉ @FederationNY 📷 @NYGreekParade

REGISTER ONLINE



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



Sunday School Celebrates with a Mardi Gras Parade!

After reviewing our commitments during the next 40 days of Great Holy Lent with fasting, praying and almsgiving, our children led a celebratory Mardi Gras Parade joined by numerous parishioners, relatives and friends at our wonderful Philoptochos Apokreatiko Glendi! We are now ready to fulfill the restraints of Holy Lent to prepare ourselves for the Most High Holy Feast Day of the Miraculous Resurrection (Anastasi) of our Lord Jesus Christ on Pascha.

Kali Sarakosti to our entire Church Community and all Orthodox Christians worldwide.

Helen (Coutros) Horan
Sunday School Superintendant

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

On Saturday, February 21, the Philoptochos hosted an Apokreatiko Glendi. Many thanks to our chairpersons: Cindy Giannakopoulos, Peggy Kantor, and Marietta Khalil, along with their wonderful committee members. We had over 120 attendees who gathered together for this pre-Lenten celebration. There was much dancing and laughter, the food from The Barge was delicious, and the music provided by Mr. Georgios Papagrigorakis kept the dance floor filled. Also, our very own GOYA dancers provided a great performance that had the audience clapping and cheering. What a fun-filled evening! Thank you to everyone who supported this event, as well as those who donated their time and efforts to make this dance a success.

The next Philoptochos General Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, March 21, 2026, at 1:00 PM** down in the church hall. Please join us to find out what events are upcoming, especially with Easter approaching (e.g. making palm crosses {Thursday, April 2}, dying and wrapping red Easter eggs {Holy Thursday}, baking for the Bake Sale, etc.). We're always grateful when our members participate in these activities. Together we can do great things!

Save The Date: The Philoptochos is planning a bus trip to Agia Skepi on **Saturday, April 18th**. We would need 45 people (maximum) to reserve a bus. More details will follow, however, if you are interested in joining us on this trip, please contact either Irene Dimitratos or Marietta Khalil (see attached flyer).

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.

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
APOKREATIKO GLEND 2026!!

















Have a Blessed Lenten Season!
Καλή Σαρακοστή!

A VISIT TO AGIA SKEPI HOLY PROTECTION MONASTERY OF THE THEOTOKOS



The Philotochos of St. Demetrios invites you to join them on Saturday, **April 18, 2026**, to visit this beautiful monastery located on a mountain overlooking the Lehigh River Valley in the Poconos Mountains. (For more information on the Monastery, go to: www.holyprotectionmonastery.org)

Bus transportation will be provided if we can reserve 45 seats (maximum). Each ticket will cost *approximately* \$40, which covers the bus rides (2 hours each way). *Final price will be determined by the headcount.* The Philotochos will provide water and snacks for the drive. You are welcome to bring your own snacks.

In order to finalize transportation details, we will need to get a headcount. If you are interested in going on this trip to Agia Skepi, please contact:

Irene Dimitratos/732-585-3585
Marietta Khalil/732-925-9699

As details are finalized, we will provide updated information.



Please join us for
PALM CROSS FOLDING
Thursday, April 2nd
11:00 a.m.

No experience necessary,
we are happy to teach you!

Please join us on April 5th for our annual

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON

- * FRIED FISH
- * LEMON POTATOES
- * MIXED VEGGIES
- * SKORDALIA
- * SALAD
- * VARIOUS DESSERTS

Macaroni and Cheese available for
Children upon request

ADULTS: \$30.00

CHILDREN (5-18) \$15.00

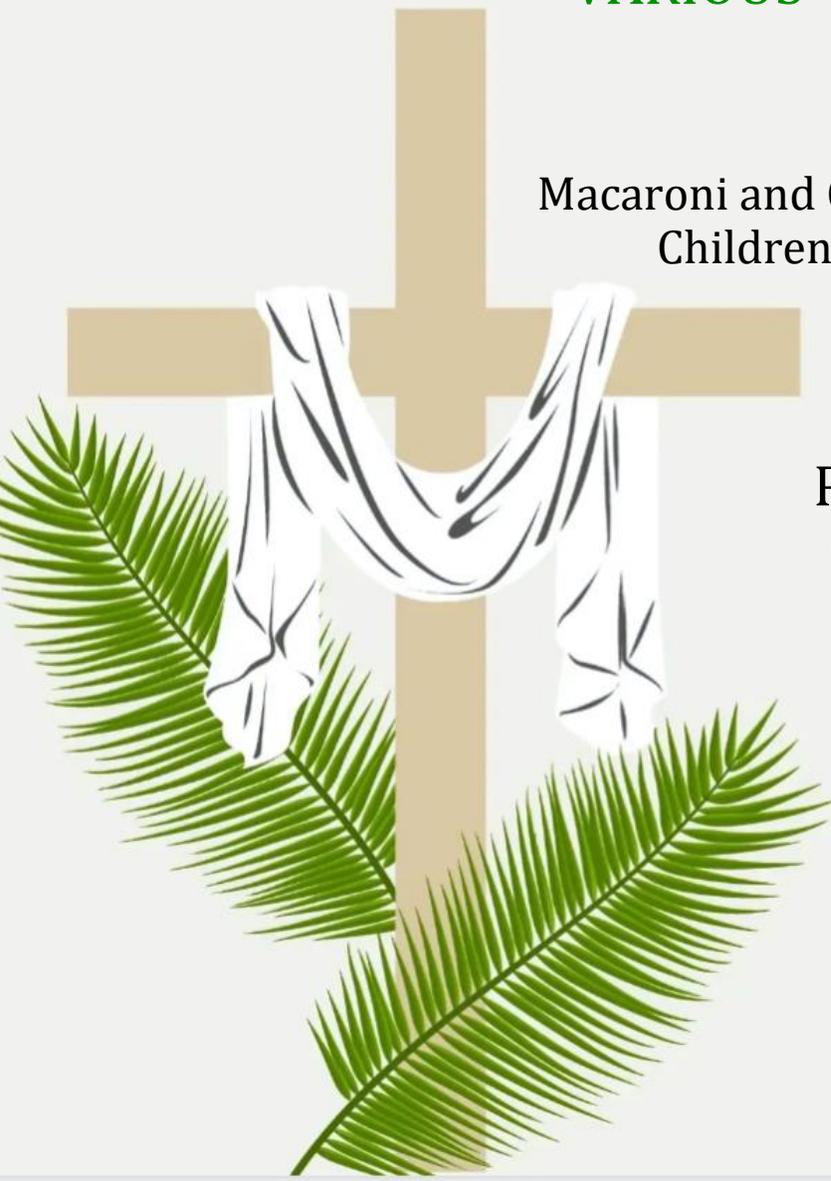
Please make checks payable to:
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox
Church

RSVP

Sunday, March 29th

Afroula (732) 423-7256

Litsa (908) 227-0822



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.

