

**SAINT DEMETRIOS PARISH NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2026**

41-47 WISTERIA STREET, PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
(732) 826-4466
REV. PROTOPRESBYTER NICHOLAS P. PETROPOULAKOS

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON – APRIL 5, 2026
EASTER – SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026

Greek Independence Day Flag Raising – April 4, 2026

Spring General Assembly - Sunday, April 19, 2026

APRIL 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Saturday	April 4	Saturday of Lazarus Orthros / Divine Liturgy	8:45 a.m. / 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	April 5	Palm Sunday Orthros / Divine Liturgy Blessing of the Palms Service of the Nymphios	8:45 a.m. / 10:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.
Monday	April 6	Holy Monday Service of the Nymphios	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	April 7	Holy Tuesday Service of the Nymphios / Hymn of Kassiani	7:00 p.m.
Wednesday	April 8	Holy Wednesday Holy Unction Orthros of Holy Thursday	3:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	April 9	Holy Thursday Vesperal Liturgy The Twelve Gospels/Crucifixion	9:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.
Friday	April 10	Holy Friday The Great Hours Vespers of Removal from the Cross Lamentations and Procession	9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	April 11	Holy Saturday Divine Liturgy Orthros of the Resurrection Resurrection and Liturgy	10:00 a.m. 11:00 p.m. 12:00 a.m.
Sunday	April 12	HOLY PASCHA Vespers of Agapi	11:00 a.m.
Sunday	April 19	Sunday of St. Thomas Orthros / Divine Liturgy	8:45 a.m. / 10:00 a.m.
Thursday	April 23	St. George the Great Martyr Orthros / Divine Liturgy	8:45 a.m. / 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	April 26	Sunday of the Myrrhbearers Orthros / Divine Liturgy	8:45 a.m. / 10:00 a.m.

FROM FATHER NICK'S DESK

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS – THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

On each Sunday of Great Lent there are specified commemorations besides that of the Resurrection. Therefore, on the fourth Sunday, the Church glorifies the righteous John of the Ladder, one of the greatest ascetics of our Orthodox Church.

These great ascetics were extraordinary people. They commanded the elements; wild beasts willingly and readily obeyed them. For them, there were no diseases they could not cure. They walked on the waters as on dry land; all the elements of the world were subject to them, because they lived in God and had the power of grace to overcome the laws of earthly nature.

One such ascetic was St. John of the Ladder. He was surnamed "of the Ladder" (Climacus) because he wrote an enduring work, the "Ladder of Divine Ascent". In this work, we see how, by means of thirty steps, the Christian can gradually ascend from below to the heights of supreme spiritual perfection. We see how one virtue leads to another, as a man rises higher and higher and finally attains to that height where the crown of the virtues abides; the crown of "Christian love".

Saint John wrote his immortal work especially for the monastics, but it can also be used by anyone who strives to live piously, even though he is a layman. Therein the Saint clearly demonstrates how a man passes from one step to the next.

Remember that this ascent on high is essential for anyone who wishes to save his soul for eternity. When we throw a stone up, it ascends until the moment when the propelling force ceases to be effectual. So long as this force acts, the stone travels higher and higher in its ascent, overcoming the force of the earth's gravity. But when this force is spent and ceases to act, then, as you know, the stone does not remain suspended in the air. Immediately, it begins to fall, and the further it falls the greater the speed of its fall.

The same thing happens in the spiritual life. As a Christian gradually ascends, the force of spiritual and ascetical labors lifts him on high. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Strive to enter in through the narrow gate." That is, the Christian ought to be like an ascetic. Not only the monastic, but every Christian. He must take pains for his soul and his life. He must direct his life on the Christian path and purge his soul of all filth and impurity.

Now, if the Christian, who is ascending upon this ladder of spiritual perfection by his struggles and ascetic labors, ceases from this work and ascetic toil, his soul will not remain in its former condition; but, like the stone, it will fall to the earth. It will drop, more and more quickly until, finally, if the man does not come to his senses, it will cast him down into the very abyss of Hell.

It is necessary to remember this. Forget that the path of Christianity is indeed an ascetical labor. On Holy Cross Sunday, we heard how the Lord said: "He that would come after Me, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow Me." The Lord emphasized this to the greatest degree.

Therefore, the Christian must be one who takes up his cross and his life, dedicating himself to bearing his personal cross. Whatever the outward circumstance of his life, whether he is a monk or layman, is of no consequence. In either case, if he does not force himself to climb upwards, then, it is a certainty, he will fall lower and lower.

Let us remember this. Saint John Climacus has provided us with the ladder of spiritual ascent. We then should not forget that each Christian must ascend this ladder. The great ascetics ascended like swiftly-flying eagles; we ascend with great effort. Let us, therefore, make every effort to muster up the strength to keep climbing. And, even when we fall back, let us pick ourselves up and begin to climb again with the 'prize' ever in our sight. Our effort, connected to God's blessing, will bring us to the top of the thirty steps on this Divine Ladder.

Let us pray the Apolytikion of St. John of the Ladder:

"With the rivers of your tears, you have made the barren desert fertile. Through sighs of sorrow from deep within you, your labors have borne fruit a hundred-fold. By your miracles you have become a light, shining upon the world. O John, our Holy Father, pray to Christ our God, to save our souls."

Rev. Protospesbyter Nicholas P. Petropoulakos



APRIL 2026 ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Sign-in: 88085372002

Password: Padre

There will be no Bible Study on April 1 or 8. Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, April 15th.

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.

PALM SUNDAY

Blessing of the Palms

It is the liturgical practice of the Orthodox Church to bless the palms during the Orthros of the day. We will follow this practice here as St. Demetrios.

The blessing of the palms will take place at approximately 9:30 a.m. and then everyone who is in the church at that time will receive a palm cross. This allows the congregation to hold their palms at the time of the Gospel lesson, which commemorates the people of Jesus' time taking palm branches and going out to meet Him (John 12:1-18).

Anyone coming into Liturgy after this time will receive a palm cross at the end of Liturgy.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Memorial Services/Trisagia are **not** allowed from Saturday of Lazarus (April 4th) through the Sunday of St. Thomas (April 19th).

The first Sunday for Memorial Services and Trisagia is April 26th.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Each year I publish the Paschal greeting "Χριστός Ανέστη/Christ is Risen" in the language of eight (8) different Orthodox Churches.

Greek	Χριστός Ανέστη	Αληθώς Ανέστη
English	Christ is Risen	Truly He is Risen
Slavonic	Christos Voskrese	Voitsinou Voskrese
Arabic	Al Massieh Kam	Hakan Kam
Albanian	Christoun Ghia	Vertetoun Ghia
Romanian	Christos A Inviat	Adeverat Inviat
Armenian	Christos Hariave I Merelotze	Ortniale I Haroutoun Christosi
African	Christo Amefufuka	Amefufuka Kweli

NEW MINISTRY

Right after Pascha we will be offering a new ministry to the members of our Parish family. This will be the opportunity to put the first names of those who are ill and need our prayers on a prayer list. This is how it will work.

There will be a list on the Pangari counter in the Narthex. When you want prayers for anyone, you write their first name on this form. We will then list these names on a prayer list which will be included with the Sunday bulletin. We ask that you take this list home and pray for the people listed, asking God and the healing Saints to help them in their illness.

A name will not be removed from the list unless you ask us to remove it.

Prayer is a most important part of our Orthodox life and a gift which we are encouraged to give to others in Jesus' name.

I thank you in advance for your gift of prayers for those who are ill.

Father Nick



President's Message ~

Hello Everyone –

Thankfully, winter is over and spring is in the air. I want to take this opportunity to update you on Church matters.

Regarding Church Maintenance, we have a cleaning service in place to maintain the cleanliness and beauty of our sanctuary. We also ask groups using the church during the week to do their best to clean up after events.

We are currently working on updating, cleaning up, and finding a permanent location for the PA system in the basement. George Kane and Andrew Pakis have been very instrumental in this project and their help is appreciated.

The church festival will be here before you know it. Committees are forming, and we will need everyone's help to make this year's festival a success. Please check your emails for updates on upcoming festival committee meetings.

The Greek School is organizing a bus trip to the Greek Independence Day parade in New York City on Sunday, April 26. Please call the church office to reserve seats on the bus as space is limited. Let's show our Greek pride and represent Saint Demetrios by turning out for this event.

We are about to enter the most sacred time of the year - Holy Week - as we will remember the days of Jesus life and the trials He endured leading to His glorious resurrection. Please check the church website for the timing of services. I look forward to seeing all of you and your families during these upcoming days.

As always, I appreciate everyone's help and support in keeping our church thriving.

Nick Giannakopoulos
Parish Council President



SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS

A BIG THANK YOU to all who donated their TIME, TREASURE, AND TALENT decorating our beautiful icon for the services of Salutations to our Most Holy Theotokos. This is a wonderful tradition kept by our Philoptochos ladies, and we look forward to its continuation next Lent!



VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Father Nick Petropoulakos delivered a beautiful service to commemorate and venerate our Holy Cross through a solemn procession with our Cross on a silver tray enveloped and glorified with a colorful array of fresh flowers donated and decorated by the Philoptochos of our church.

The Veneration of the Holy Cross is the commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that Great Lent is a time when we are crucified with Christ. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord and teaches us that through pain and suffering, we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: salvation and eternal glory.



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

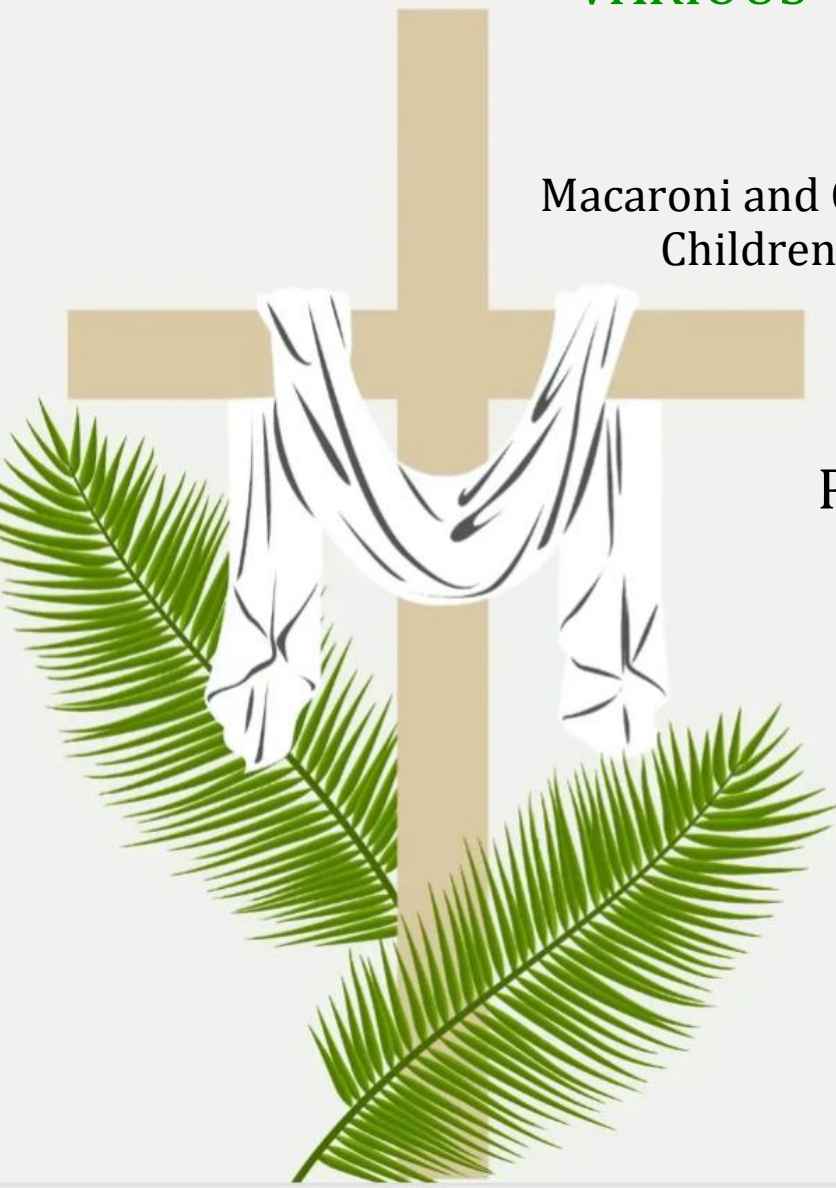
Please make checks payable to:
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox
Church

RSVP

Sunday, March 29th

Afroula (732) 423-7256

Litsa (908) 227-0822





STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

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.stdemetriosperthamboy.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)



St. Demetrios Perth Amboy Greek Festival By the Bay!

May 29, 30 and 31, 2026

Our Festival Is 2 Months Away — And We Need You!

If you know the days and times you are available to volunteer, please sign up here:

[Click here to volunteer for the festival](#)

When signing up:

- Select your preferred area and shift
- Be flexible if adjustments are needed to ensure full coverage

If you know you want to volunteer but are unsure of your schedule, please email Helen Horan @ helehoran@yahoo.com.

Festival Dates & Times

May 29, 2026, Friday: 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM

May 30, 2026, Saturday: 12:00 PM – 10:00 PM

May 31, 2026, Sunday: 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM

In addition, we are looking for individuals who can help with:

- **Marketing & promotion help** (starting now)
- **Social media volunteers** (starting now)
- **Photographers/videographers**

If you're interested or know someone who can help, please contact Olga Mantsis at omantsis@gmail.com.

Where We Need Help

There are many ways to contribute, including:

- Food preparation and serving
- Loukoumades & pastry stations
- Kitchen and grill support
- Cashiers / POS system
- Set-up and breakdown crews
- Hospitality and guest experience
- Kids activities and vendor support
- Setup and Breakdown

[Click here to volunteer for the festival](#)

New Sponsorship Program – Letter Attached

We now have a new Sponsorship Program! Let's spread the word! Please see the sponsorship packet attached and ask any local businesses if they would like to sponsor our festival.

All This Works ...When We All Work Together

The festival is one weekend—but its impact lasts all year. It supports our church, brings people together, and allows us to share something meaningful with the wider community.

Every hour volunteered matters. Every role matters.

Let's show up for each other and have a great festival this year!

Festival Committee 2026



PTO NEWS

Thank you everyone who came to Godparent's Day on Sunday March 15th and listened to our wonderful speakers who delivered their oratorical speeches. Thank you also everyone who donated in various ways to the PTO sponsored coffee Hour that day!

OUR NEXT EVENT!!!

PTO-sponsored Easter Egg Hunt!

Easter Sunday April 12th following morning Easter service!



Bring your children to Easter morning service
Sunday, April 12th!

Following the Easter morning Agapi service,
we will have the children hunting outside for eggs and treats!

Contact Diana Regan if any questions
732-861-9575



GOYA NEWS

Sights & Sounds was another wonderful day. Our small group once again did fantastic. They have made us proud. We were able to show our talents at our annual Spaghetti Luncheon. Thank you to everyone who attended and offered their support.



On Saturday, March 28th, Madeline Katsilis and Angelo Tsivelis represented Perth Amboy in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival in Saint Andrew Church in Randolph. Each competed against 15 other GOYAns. Madeline placed 4th in the senior division. A big thank you to Olga Mantis for her guidance and support.



On Saturday, May 9 we will host Indoor Olympics, a friendly competition among the churches, including backgammon, table tennis, checkers, chess, Just Dance, and Fifa soccer. We are looking for volunteers and judges to help run the event.

Any and all help is welcome and needed.

After Easter, we will start preparing for our festival. Anyone interested in dancing is welcome to join. Practices are Monday night 7:30-9pm. Please let Jennifer Simatos, Despina Markos, or any Goyan know if you are interested in joining.



GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parishioners

On March 29, the fifth Sunday of Lent, our Greek School celebrated the double national holiday of March 25. It was a beautiful day filled with wonderful celebrations that moved us all. Many thanks to our students and teachers! You made us all proud!!!

Also, we would like to inform you that our school will be closed for Catholic and Orthodox Easter, and we will be returning back to school on Thursday, April 16th.

Happy Easter to all!!!



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR GREEK HERITAGE!

We invite all parishioners, families, and friends to come together as we proudly celebrate Greek Independence Day. All are welcome to participate in these meaningful and festive events honoring our faith, history, and heritage.

GREEK FLAG RAISING – INTERNATIONAL PARK, PERTH AMBOY
Saturday, April 4, 2026 12:30 PM

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE – FIFTH AVE, NEW YORK
Sunday, April 26, 2026 1:30 PM

Thank You!



**JOIN US FOR THE
GREEK
INDEPENDENCE
DAY PARADE!**

Sunday, April 26, 2026
New York City • Fifth Avenue

March with your St. Demetrios family as we celebrate our rich heritage and faith together!

BUS TICKETS

- Adults: \$30
- Children: Free
(must be accompanied by a parent)

Departs 12:00 PM

RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY!

Space is limited – RSVP required
Contact the Church Office:
☎ **732-826-4666**
stdgoa@gmail.com

Let's celebrate together as one community!

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
— Perth Amboy, NJ —



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Our Sunday School students led the Icon Procession on the Sunday of Orthodoxy by bringing their own precious Icons from home. They proudly held their Icons as we walked the perimeter of the Church chanting prayers and beautiful hymns along with Father Nick.

They learned that this is one of our very unique celebrations of commemorating and venerating our Icons after years of defiance against this tradition by ancient iconoclasts under Emperor Theophilos. After his death, Empress Theodora and her son summoned the Synod of Constantinople to bring peace to our Churches.

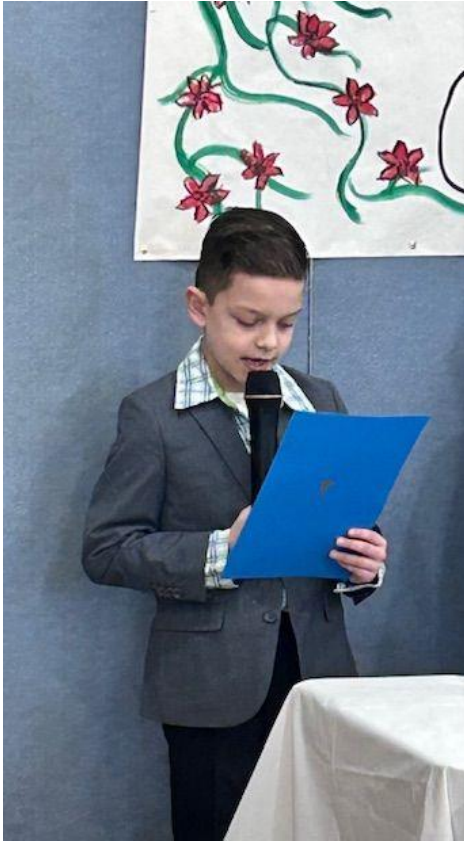


Godparents' Sunday

The role of a Godparent is of tremendous importance in guiding their Godchildren in their religious beliefs, traditions and customs of being faithful Orthodox Christians. On Godparents' Sunday, we welcomed and honored them for the vital part they play in the lives of our Sunday School children.

Godparents joined their Godchildren by participating in the Divine Liturgy and receiving Holy Communion together. Afterwards, a reception was held in our Church hall where students read poems that expressed their admiration, love and appreciation for them, and enjoyed the appetizing refreshments provided by our PTO and the delicious cake in celebration of their Godparents.

GODPARENTS SUNDAY



Alphonse Sarafoglu



Vasileios Dimitropoulos



Emalee and Audree Rizitis





Father Nick and readers cut the cake in honor of their Godparents.



The Tsivelis family and their Godchildren

Making of Palm Crosses

Sunday School students studied the events of Palm Sunday when Our Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem and was welcomed by people waving palms and cheering joyfully. Palm Crosses were created and decorated in memory of this important day in the life of our Savior.

Teachers, parents and children joined together to create our precious Palm Crosses, keeping this wonderful religious and cultural Greek Orthodox tradition alive. It is hoped that our children will practice this treasured tradition now and into the future for generations to come.



PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

With the Easter Season upon us, the Philoptochos has events where volunteers can help:

- **Thursday, April 2 – Making the Palm Crosses** (11:00 AM)

Volunteers are needed (no experience is necessary!) to help make the palm crosses (“Vagia”) for Palm Sunday. Join us for this long-standing tradition at St. Demetrios. We have several hundred palm crosses to make so the more volunteers, the merrier! (Bring scissors!)

- **Thursday, April 9 – Holy Thursday**

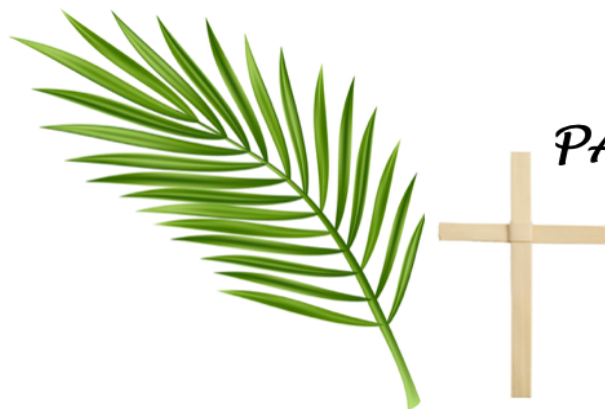
Volunteers are needed to provide COOKED dyed red eggs. If you can provide the eggs, please drop them off in the church hall before Services start (7:00 PM). We also need volunteers to help wrap these eggs with tulle and ribbons.

Also, on **Palm Sunday, April 5th**, remember to pick up your **Tsoureki orders** and some delicious homemade desserts during our **Bake Sale!**

The next Philoptochos General Meeting will be held in May. When the final date is selected, notifications will be sent out. Please join us to find out what events are upcoming and where you can participate. Together we can do great things!

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.)



Please join us for

PALM CROSS FOLDING

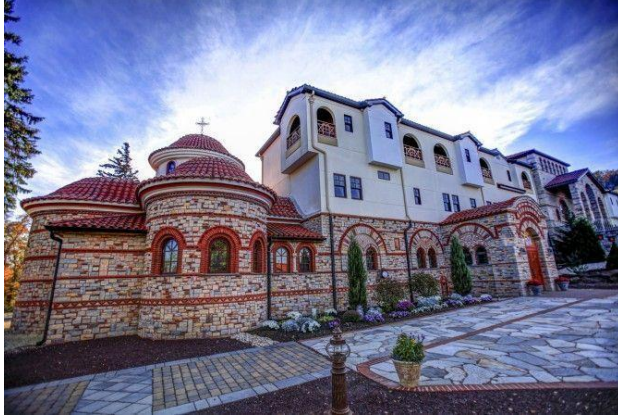
Thursday, April 2nd

11:00 a.m.

No experience necessary,
we are happy to teach you!

A VISIT TO AGIA SKEPI

HOLY PROTECTION MONASTERY OF THE THEOTOKOS



On Saturday, April 18, 2026, the Philotochos of St. Demetrios will be sponsoring a 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)

If you reserved a seat(s) on the bus, please note that we will be departing from St. Demetrios church at **10:00 AM** that morning, and returning approximately by 6:30/7:00 PM, depending upon traffic. A tour of Agia Skepi as well as a light luncheon will be provide by the nuns. The Philotochos will have water and snacks available for the drive. You are welcome to bring your own snacks.

Currently, only a very few seats on the bus are still available. However, if you'd like to drive/carpool, please contact the chairwomen for details.

Irene Dimitratos/732-585-3585

Marietta Khalil/732-925-9699





Philoptochos Easter Bake Sale

Sunday, April 5, 2026



Kourabiedes, Koulourakia
Melomakarona (Finikia)
Baklava, and more!

Just in time for Easter!



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 Easter

Easter Riddles:

- Why shouldn't you tickle an Easter Egg? (*Because it might crack up!*)
- Where does the Easter Bunny eat breakfast? (*IHOP!*)
- What kind of bunny can't hop? (*A chocolate one!*)
- Why was the Easter egg hiding? (*Because it was a little chicken!*)
- What kind of egg should you not expect to see at Easter church services? (*A deviled egg!*)

