



**SAINT DEMETRIOS PARISH NEWSLETTER
MAY 2026**

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

Spring General Assembly - Sunday, May 3, 2026

**SUNDAY, MAY 10 - MOTHER'S DAY
PHILOTOCHOS MOTHER OF THE YEAR!**

**SUNDAY, MAY 17
GRADUATION & APPRECIATION DAY**

**GOYA
INDOOR OLYMPICS – MAY 9
OUTDOOR OLYMPICS – MAY 23-24**

FESTIVAL BY THE BAY – MAY 29, 30, & 31

MAY 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

| | | | |
|----------|--------|---|--|
| Sunday | May 3 | Sunday of the Paralytic | Orthros 8:45 a.m. / Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday | May 10 | Sunday of the Samaritan Woman/ Mother's Day | Orthros 8:45 a.m./ Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday | May 17 | Sunday of the Blind Man | Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Thursday | May 21 | Holy Ascension/SS. Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the-Apostles | Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday | May 24 | Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 1 st Ecumenical Synod | Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Saturday | May 30 | Saturday of Souls | Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday | May 31 | HOLY PENTECOST Sunday of the Paralytic | Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. |

FROM FATHER NICK'S DESK

Stop sinning! "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk"

In his Gospel, 5:1-15, John describes how a paralyzed man, who had been lying beside the pool of Bethesda was eventually healed by Jesus. The paralytic was waiting for the stirring of the waters by an angel, which was sign that the first person into the water would be healed. He had waited there, not for an hour, or a few days, or even a few years, but thirty-eight years! As amazing as this man's patience and perseverance may have been, perhaps what stands out even more is the fact that no one, not a single person during the course of all these years, had compassion on him and helped him into the pool.

This aspect of the story is often forgotten, but it is very important for us. We must never ignore the fact that situations of great suffering exist in the world today. Countless people suffer every day from different afflictions, and many have no one to care for them. So for us, this Gospel message must be a call to action. We are all made in God's image and, as such, are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. All of us, therefore, are responsible for one another. This is part of our mission as followers of Christ.

But in caring for each other we must also be aware that a person's suffering may not be as outwardly obvious to us as the affliction of the paralytic. If we imagine ourselves out and about during a regular day, and we look at the people around us, we have no way of knowing how broken they are; how much pain and agony there is in their lives; or how many broken hopes, how much fear and rejection and contempt bring them down. But even if we can't see it, there is an illness inside them, a spiritual struggle, from which we also suffer from time to time. The same disease from which we all suffer is sin!

So we understand that suffering is not only the outward physical, but the inner, spiritual pain and suffering. Spiritual sickness is especially terrible because it harms our relationship with others and ultimately our right relationship with God.

If we are to answer this call to help others, we must do some housekeeping of our own. Before we are able to help others, we must first examine ourselves and see what sins are plaguing us. It takes great courage to look inside, because when we do, we find things that we don't like or don't want to accept. When we examine the causes of our own sufferings, we frequently try to find causes outside of ourselves. In short, we might try to place blame on someone or something other than ourselves instead of taking responsibility for our sins. The truth is that the cause is inside us and cannot be avoided. Therefore, we must find the strength to face it, with God's help. We must also realize that in fighting our spiritual battles, our sinful problems will not change overnight. Change takes a number of things - one is patience!

Consider the Paralytic, who after 38 years of suffering, could have complained when Christ arrived asking him "What took you so long?" but he didn't. Instead of an angry, bitter response to the Lord's question: "Do you want to be healed?" The paralytic responded, calmly and patiently. He was struggling but never gave up hope. And we cannot give up hope either. In our darkest moments, when things may seem hopeless, we must never forget that God is with us and that he loves us. The paralytic suffered in loneliness because he had no one to help him. He could not bring about healing through his own efforts. So what did he do? He waited patiently for Christ. And we too, must follow this example, in dealing with our afflictions.

The second thing change requires is a little work. When the Lord commanded the paralytic to “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk”, He was giving the paralytic a command. Taking up a bed and walking involves obedience and work. Taking up the bed is like taking up our cross; it is our mission, to follow Christ’s example and how He lived. A mission that we must continue to say “yes” to throughout our lives in spite of our times of spiritual struggle.

Third, it is necessary to trust in God, by taking our free-will and submitting it to God by placing our hope in Him. Only then can we begin to see our sufferings turn into healing and help others who suffer. This is Christ working through us. It is only then, that we can look at one another with a true understanding and with proper attention, so that we can reach out to each other and truly love our neighbor as ourselves.

Finally, this Gospel account closes with a warning, which Jesus expressed to the paralytic after his healing – He also says it to all of us:

“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

In other words, now that you have been healed, be careful not to continue living a sinful life, so that nothing worse happens to you.

This is a warning to us. Let this be our lesson from this pericope.

If we show no sign that we want to be healed; if we try to hide from our sins instead of facing them and taking responsibility for them; if we don’t place our trust and hope in God and don’t obey the command to rise and carry our cross; then we too will continue to lie in sickness, or fall into a worse spiritual sickness, which may make the paralytic’s 38 years seem like a very short time.

So what is the effective solution?

As a wise priest once wrote: “The answer is given in today's Gospel. The way out is Christ, He who healed the paralytic. And we must be ready to receive Him as did the paralytic. To trust God and let him work through us. For Christ can heal physical illness and spiritual illness not only because He overcomes sin, but also because He loves us and cares for us at all times.

Christ Is Risen!

Father Protopresbyter Nicholas P. Petropoulakos





ZOOM BIBLE STUDY CHANGE

Since switching the ZOOM Bible Study to Thursdays during Great Lent, I have had requests to keep the study on Thursday evenings. For this reason, beginning last month, I announced this change to Thursdays. This month's meetings are the 7th, 14th and 21st.

We are still studying the Book of Genesis. If you want to join, please request that I friend you on my FACEBOOK page (**NICHOLAS P. PETROPOULAKOS**)

Sign in: 88085372002

Password: Padre

All are welcome!

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.

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

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

SATURDAY OF SOULS - MAY 30th

On Saturday, May 30th, we will celebrate a Divine Liturgy for the Saturday of the Souls before Pentecost Sunday. Orthros will be at 9:00 a.m. and Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

If you would like to submit the names of your departed family members or friends, please send their names to the Altar any time before this Saturday of the Souls.

May their memory be eternal!



President's Message ~

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Christ is risen!

As we leave April 2026 behind, we can once again be thankful for the opportunities we had to share in the communal services of our beloved St. Demetrios of Perth Amboy.

Beginning with the inherently spiritual preparation of Lent, leading to the solemn church services throughout Holy Week, culminating in the celebration of Holy Pascha itself, and then continued to the visit at Holy Protection Monastery of the Theotokos, and only ending on New York City's 5th Ave and the annual Greek Independence Day Parade, it has indeed been a whirlwind of blessedness, all of which presided over by our most tirelessly dedicated Rev. Protopresbyter Nicholas P. Petropoulakos (Πάντοτε ἄξιος! Always Worthy!).

Once again, despite our community's relatively small size or, perhaps, *because* of it, the impact of this community's spiritual presence in all our lives is second to none, and for this I, as your Parish Council President, am most grateful, as it guarantees that our upcoming annual "Great Greek Festival by the Bay" will also be the resounding clarion call that our sister Orthodox Church communities will hear and be heartened by.

May God bless each and all of you and your families, and our community of St. Demetrios.

Thank you.

Nick Giannakopoulos
Parish Council President



Honoring Our Faithful Stewards

On Monday, May 11, 2026, the Metropolis of New Jersey will host the 2026 Northern New Jersey Region Honoree Grand Banquet – an evening celebrating faithful stewards whose dedication strengthens our Church and community.

We are proud to recognize our St. Demetrios Honorees:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Parish Council: | Spero Alexander Kalambakas |
| Philoptochos: | Mary Lou K. Rivera |
| Senior Steward: | Angelos Kostopoulos |
| Community: | Kenneth Doukas |
| Religious Education: | Dimitrios Michael Koudis |
| Greek Education: | Dimitrios Tsivelis |
| Youth Worker: | Diana Regan |
| GOYA: | Luca Regan |

Congratulations to all our 2026 Honorees and thank you for your faithful dedication to St. Demetrios!



Moments from Holy Week

(For more pictures, go to our Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/stdemetriosperthamboy>)

HOLY MONDAY

The Service of the Bridegroom



HOLY TUESDAY

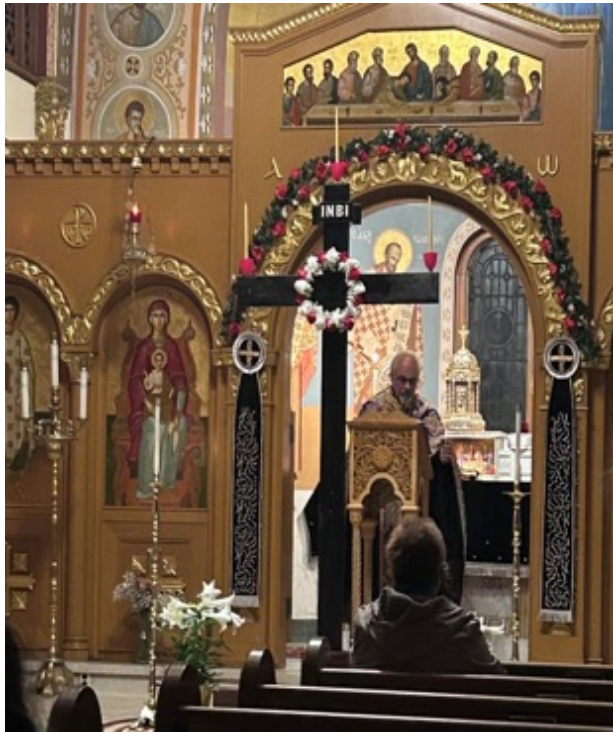
The Service of the Bridegroom

Hymn of Kassiani

HOLY WEDNESDAY



HOLY THURSDAY



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE



Our Lovely Myrophores

Our lovely Myrophores guarded the Epitaphios/Kouvouklion during Good Friday night services by standing guard, circulating the tomb while tossing red rose petals. They follow the tomb in the Holy Procession around the block of our Church along with our entire congregation. This is truly a blessing and an honor for our young girls who faithfully participated in this Orthodox tradition.

Pictured from the front to the back are Kristianna Gerazounis, Sophia Efthimiopoulos, Zoey Kanellidis, Audree Rizitis and Gerilena Pinto.



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ANASTASI

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!



Traditional Egg Competition

(Parish Priest vs. Parish Council President)



AGAPI SERVICE



Celebrating Greek Independence

Thank you to all who joined St. Demetrios in celebrating Greek Independence – 205 years of Hellenic freedom and heritage, and for taking part in the cherished traditions of our community in Perth Amboy and New York.



April 4, 2026, Greek Flag Raising Ceremony, International Park, Perth Amboy, NJ



April 26, 2026, NY Greek Independence Day Parade, Fifth Avenue, New York

JOIN US AT THE BEAUTIFUL PERTH AMBOY
WATERFRONT!



2026 GREEK FESTIVAL BY THE BAY

Food! • Music! • Dancing! • Opa!

Friday, May 29 | 5-10PM
Saturday, May 30 | 12-10PM
Sunday, May 31 | 12-6 PM

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
41-47 Wisteria Street in Perth Amboy, NJ
WWW.AMBOYGREEKFEST.COM



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PTO NEWS

Kristos Anesti! Our Easter morning Easter Egg Hunt was egg-citing! After a beautiful Easter morning Agapi service, children found all the Easter eggs filled with treats!
Once again, our favorite Easter Bunny came to say hello!
A few pictures from the day...



The Sunday School & Greek School year is coming to a close!
Our next PTO Sponsored event is **Sunday May 17th Graduation Sunday celebration coffee hour!**

GOYA News

The GOYA has taken a little rest during the month of April during the Lenten season for a time of renewal and grace.

Some of our GOYANS enjoyed the GOYA prom held on Friday April 17, hosted by St. George, Trenton.



On Saturday May 9 beginning at 9am, we will host our annual Indoor Olympics at Wilentz School. Thirteen churches are scheduled to compete in chess, backgammon, checkers, table tennis, badminton, FIFA soccer, and Just Dance. We could use help judging some of the events or monitoring the hallways. If you can lend a helping hand, please contact Jen Simatos at 732-343-2266.



We will honor Goya member Luca Regan for our youth and Diana Regan for our youth worker at the NJ Honoree Grand Banquet in the Venetian. We are so proud of them and appreciate all they have done for our group. It is a well-deserved honor.

Towards the end of the month, over Memorial Day weekend, we will compete in Outdoor Olympics. It is held at Monmouth University. We will stay overnight in the dorms for our first "college" experience. We will lead the opening ceremonies parade at 9am. Some events are long jump, shot put throw, track events and swimming. Luca Regan is trying to beat the softball throw record. Once again our youth are stepping up and competing in areas they are not used to, all in the spirit of trying new things, making new friends, and representing our church community.

Dance practice has resumed and we are excited to have some new and upcoming GOYANS join us. Practices are on Mondays 7:30-9 pm.

Anyone interested in participating in dancing for the festival is welcome.

New GOYA members are welcome too!

Contact Despina Markos 908-692-5567 or Jennifer Simatos 732-343-2266

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Dear Parishioners,

Χριστός Ανέστη! With the grace of God, we reached at the end of the school year again. After a tiring but enjoyable year, our young students are ready to start their summer vacation!

The last class for this year will be on Thursday, May 14th and graduation day will be on Sunday, May 17th. After the Divine Liturgy we will have a special celebration where our students will receive their certificate, and then we will all enjoy our coffee hour sponsored by PTO!

On behalf of the Greek school, we wish you a wonderful summer full of health and happiness!!! See you in September!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

55 Years of Service to Sunday School

We honored a very special woman and celebrated her 55 years of devotion and dedication as a Sunday school teacher. This teacher was Helen Catelanos whose commitment to children has been phenomenal with the unconditional love she displays for each and every one of them to which they return to her, wholeheartedly.

In addition to her 55 years as a beloved teacher in our Sunday School Program, plus 30 years as the Christmas Pageant Director, Helen has been an important part of almost every ministry in some way, shape or form to include our Philoptochos Society of the Three Hierarchs, our GOYA, Sights & Sounds, the Mr. & Mrs. Club, the Choir, writer of our Church History, the Elevator Committee, the Endowment Fund, Festivals, Raffles, Bake Sales, Church Dances and Fashion Shows, just to name a few!

Helen's influence can be found in most aspects in the life of our Church, which began in our very first Church on High Street, the same Church in which she worshipped as a child herself. Her commitment, contributions and involvement are of great significance and dearly acknowledged and cherished by all of us, especially our precious children.

Former students return looking for Helen to thank her for a particular situation that she helped them with, or just to say hello. It is quite amazing to observe their reciprocal love. Helen truly loves being among the children.

Helen Catelanos' achievements and accomplishments over the years are remarkable, admired, appreciated, valued and treasured.

A special presentation was offered to Helen, one that honors her 55 years as a Sunday School Teacher. It was an Icon of Jesus Blessing the Children according to the Bible quote, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these," as found in **Matthew 19:14**.

Congratulations, Helen Catelanos!



Honoring Helen Catelanos



GRADUATION SUNDAY

May 17, 2026

Dear Parishioners -

Please see below for information regarding Graduation Sunday at St. Demetrios.



~ SEE GRADUATION FORM, NEXT PAGE ~

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
PERTH AMBOY, NJ

GRADUATION SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UPCOMING GRADUATES OF HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, ADVANCED DEGREES
AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

IF YOU WISH FOR YOUR GRADUATE TO APPEAR IN OUR ST. DEMETRIOS NEWSLETTER, PLEASE SUBMIT
A PHOTO AND BRIEF BIOGRAPHY TO HELEN COUTROS HORAN AT HER EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW:

helehoran@yahoo.com

PHOTOS AND BIOGRAPHY MUST BE SUBMITTED BY **MAY 6TH** AT THE LATEST. ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE
CONTACT HELEN (COUTROS) HORAN AT **908-794-3065**.

PHILOPTOCHOS AWARDS

AS IN MANY YEARS PASSED, THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS WISHES TO HONOR **ALL GRADUATES
BELONGING TO OUR ST. DEMETRIOS COMMUNITY**. THE PRESENTATIONS OF GIFTS WILL TAKE PLACE
ON SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026. KINDLY RETURN THIS FORM **BY MAY 6TH**.

PLEASE MAIL TO OR TELEPHONE: Helen Catelanos
37 Wiley Ave.
Edison, New Jersey 08837
732-549-0508

SCHOLARSHIP/MEMORIAL AWARDS

KENNETH ARIANAS AWARD: PRESENTED TO ALL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES in our Community.
BYRON AND ELENI STOIMENIDES AWARD: PRESENTED TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES who attended
Sunday School through Grade 12.
GEORGE AND ROSE MARIE PROTONENTIS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD: PRESENTED TO HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATES who attended Sunday School through Grade 12 and will continue their education.

KINDLY COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW AND RETURN BY **MAY 6TH AT THE LATEST**.

FULL NAME OF GRADUATE _____ TEL. # _____

- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE:** COLLEGE TO ATTEND _____
MAJOR _____
- COLLEGE GRADUATE:** COLLEGE ATTENDED _____
DEGREE _____
- GRADUTE SCHOOL GRADUATE:** COLLEGE ATTENDED _____
MASTERS _____ DOCTORATE _____
- TECHNICAL SCHOOL GRADUATE:** _____

PLEASE CHECK THE BOX WHICH INDICATES THE DIPLOMA THE GRADUATE IS RECEIVING AND THE
COLLEGE, SCHOOL, DEGREE AND/OR CERTIFICATION BEING RECEIVED. PLEASE RETURN BY MAIL TO
HELEN CATELANOS, 37 Wiley Ave., Edison, NJ 08837 OR CALL HELEN C. AT 732-549-0508.

****** PLEASE RETURN BY MAY 6TH ******

THE DATE FOR GRADUATION SUNDAY IS PLANNED FOR MAY 17, 2026



PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Xristos Anesti! Christ is Risen!

The Easter Season was a busy one for the Philoptochos, and we'd like to thank the many people who helped and/or showed their support – whether it was contributing time, talent, or donations, all that you do is appreciated.

- **Stavroproskiniseos** – The Philoptochos donated the tray of flowers used for this beautiful occasion. Irene Pakis, Argiro Ahladianakis, and Marietta Khalil decorated the tray.



- **Making the Palm Crosses** - Over 300 Palm Crosses were made! Thank you Mary Lou Rivera, Litsa Karanikas, Irene Dimitratos, Sheri Rousos, and Irene Pakis.



- **Thursday, April 17th – Holy Thursday**

Thanks to everyone who donated the red eggs and to the volunteers (Helen Suravlas, Helen Horan, Cindy Giannakopoulos, Litsa Karanikas, Mary Lou Rivera, and Callie Vosinas) who stayed after the service to wrap them.



Also, thank you to Irene Dimitratos and Cindy Giannakopoulos for chairing the **Tsoureki Sale** and to Irene Pakis for chairing our **Easter Bake Sale**. Both events were a success, thanks to the support of our wonderful parishioners.

On Saturday, **April 18th** the Philoptochos sponsored a bus ride for over 40 parishioners to visit Agia Skepi, a beautiful monastery located on a mountain overlooking the Lehigh River Valley in the Poconos Mountains. It was a wonderful experience thanks to the warm hospitality of the sisters of Agia Skepi, who provided a tour of the monastery as well as a delicious lunch. The peaceful surroundings of the area were both spiritual and peaceful, and we look forward to another visit in the future.



Our next big event is Mother's Day. Who will be this year's Mother of the Year? On May 11th we will sponsor a special coffee hour after church services. Please join us on this auspicious occasion as we celebrate mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, and those who are just like moms...that includes pet moms as well!

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



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS!

On Friday, April 3, 2026, several of our long-time St. Demetrios choir members ~ Argiro Ahladianakis, Zeffie Tzitzis and Maria Mantoudakis ~ participated the 33rd Annual "Spirit of Lent" Concert held by the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians - District of New Jersey and hosted this year by St. Anna Greek Orthodox Church in Flemington, NJ. We wish to honor and recognize them for their participation in the Concert on behalf of our St. Demetrios Community!



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.



~ AND ~

