Christ is Born
Glorify Him!
The Assumption Epistle // December 2022

Gift Shop

Did you know…

That our gift shop is stocked with all your wedding and baptismal needs. We offer embroidered towel and sheet sets, St. John the Baptist decorative oil bottles and witness pins in white, blue or pink.

We also offer beautiful stefana, stefana boxes and decorated candles for your wedding.

Assumption Endowment Fund

Remember our Endowment Fund when planning wills and bequests. Established in 1993, to insure the future care and repair welfare of its property and facilities, the fund is designed to allow interest only to be used for repairs up to $500,000.

Sacraments

FUNERALS
October 29, 2022
Magdalene Stathis

BAPTISMS
Theodore, son of James and Kelley Saros
Godparent: Angela Keersmaekers

WEDDINGS
November 12, 2022
Polixenis Mendrinos and Dimitrios Kosmidis
Witnesses: Philip and Lambrene Tangalos

December at a Glance

Saturday, December 3 ..............................................GOYA Christmas Party
Sunday, December 4 ................................................ GOYA Pancake Breakfast
Monday, December 6 ..............................................Divine Liturgy St. Nicholas
Wednesday, December 7 ...................................... Philoptochos Christmas Party
Saturday, December 10 .........................................Christmas deliveries to Shut ins
Sunday, December 11 .........................................Sunday School Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

Monday, December 19 ........................................... Greek School Christmas Program
Tuesday, December 20 .............................................. Travel Night – 2023 Trips Introduced

Church Office Holiday Hours

Monday, December 26 ........................................................................................................ Closed
tues-thurs. December 27-29 ....................................................................................... 9:00am-1:00pm

The Assumption Epistle; Vol 61, Issue #12, December 2022
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...from Father Michael

Christ is Born! Let us Glorify Him!

Dear Parishioners,

As Orthodox Christians, that is our joyful proclamation during the Christmas season: “Christ is born!” And the response, “Glorify Him!” God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is born into the world, and our world will never be the same! The birth of Jesus Christ does more than bridge heaven and earth; His birth brings heaven to earth. The eternal intermingles and dwells within the temporal. Historically, Christ is born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago, but spiritually, He continues to be born into the hearts of those who believe, follow, and love Him. The Creator becomes the created. The miracle of His birth, the gift of His birth to us, is more than a historical event. It is for those who follow Him through life a present reality. Let's review what the joy of Christmas is all about.

In the initial pages of the Book of Genesis, we learn of the creation and fall of humanity in the story of Adam and Eve. God created them to live with Him and one another in paradise forever, in perfect harmony with Him and all that was created for them. Paradise was a place where there was no pain, sorrow, suffering, or death but life everlasting. As we all know, Adam and Eve, beguiled by the devil, broke God's single commandment not to eat from the tree of knowledge (i.e., the tree of good and evil). Before eating from that tree, Adam and Eve knew only what was good, but when they partook in its fruit, they not only disobeyed God, but they also learned about evil. By partaking in the tree of knowledge, Adam and Eve became capable of doing good or evil, and in so doing, they became something different than what God created them to be.

Immediately after partaking in the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve heard the Lord walking in the garden. God could not see them; He could not find Adam and Eve! In fact, He called out, “Adam, where are you?” Imagine, God Himself didn't know where they were! He didn't recognize them because their disobedience changed them into something else. That disobedience was the first sin. Sin is anything that makes us different than what God created us to be, good, like Him. The tragic result of sin, then and now, is to separate us from God. And when human beings are separated from God, Who Is the Creator and Sustainer of life, we experience the opposite of life, death. So, if there is one thing that we contributed to God's creation, it is sin (i.e., disobedience) and death—the opposite of life. And since human beings are the pinnacle of God's creation, not only were they now mortal but all creation as well.

But God did not create human beings to be born, live, and then die. He created us to live with Him forever in paradise—heaven, or, if you will, heaven on earth. So, God sent the Law and the prophets to bring humanity back to goodness and righteousness, to deliver them from sin and death, and to restore them to paradise. If human beings followed the Law and listened to the prophets, they could once again become as God created them. God chose the people of Israel to be His Chosen People. He promised them that if they followed the Law and listened to the prophets, not only would they return to paradise, but through them, all humanity would return as well. But from the pages of the Old Testament, we know how that story went: the Law was often broken or neglected, and the prophets went unheard, even murdered by the people God had sent them to save.

So, the Father in heaven initiates a new plan, a new agreement, a New Testament. He will send His Son into the world, the Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, to establish this new covenant not only with the people of Israel but with all who believe, follow, and love His Son. God sends the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, upon a young virgin, the Virgin Mary, to conceive His Son and Word in her womb, which we celebrate on March 25 (i.e., the feast of the Annunciation). Nine months later, on December 25, the Son and Word of God was born from her. The Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin. He joins divinity and humanity, immortality and mortality into one divine-human, sinless person Jesus Christ.

Thus, the God-man Jesus Christ is born into our world to forgive our sins, save us from death, and bring us back to the presence of God in heaven. Unlike the first Adam, who disobeyed and sinned, whom the Lord cast out of paradise, Jesus Christ is the New Adam, Who Is obedient to the Father—even unto death by crucifixion—and Who in time will destroy death by His own death and will return us to paradise. With His birth, death, and resurrection, Jesus establishes a new agreement not only with the first Chosen People and their descendants but with all people of the earth who enter the Church that He established (i.e., through baptism and chrismation) and who subsequently believe and follow His teachings summarized in the two great commandments of the New Testament, to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

The parallels between the Old and New Testaments are quite fascinating. In the Old Testament, God creates the old Adam, who brings sin and death into the world. In the New, God sends His one and only Son, the New Adam, Jesus Christ, to forgive sins, destroy death, and restore us to paradise. In the Old Testament, God makes His covenant with the people of Israel. In the New, God makes a New Testament through Jesus Christ with the New Israel, the new Chosen People, which is His Church, who believe, follow, and love Him and all humanity. In the Old Testament, obedience to the Law is what mattered. In the New, faith in and love for Jesus Christ and for one another is preeminent.

Thus, we proclaim, “Christ is Born!” and respond, “Glorify Him!” For He has replaced the old with the new, and the new is infinitely better than what was. Celebrate this great and joyful feast of our Church. Celebrate Jesus's birth in Bethlehem, and let us make our hearts and minds a proper place for Jesus Christ to be born there as well. That is the greatest gift we can receive and give to others on Christmas, throughout the approaching New Year, and for the rest of our lives.

On behalf of the Parish Council and all the ministries of our Assumption Church, I wish you all a blessed, joyful, and Merry Christmas.

With love for you all in our Newborn Savior,
Fr. Michael N. Varlamos
Assumption Sunday School
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The Christmas Story

Sunday, December 18, 2022
Immediately Following Liturgy
ASSUMPTION BASKETBALL – BIDDY TEAMS

We are working to finalize Biddy division teams for the upcoming Orthodox Youth Athletic Association (OYAA) season. It has been a few years since we’ve entered any Biddy division teams from Assumption in the OYAA. As one of the founding parishes of the OYAA, with one of the historically largest programs in the league, and one of only 2 Orthodox churches in metro-Detroit with a gym, it’s really important that we get Biddy teams entered back into the OYAA this season.

We have players registered for each division so far, but we need 8-9 players per team to be scheduled in the OYAA. The Biddy divisions are as follows:

- Biddy A (boys & girls, ages 11-12, cannot turn 13 before 3/20/23)
- Biddy B (boys & girls, ages 9-10, cannot turn 11 before 3/20/23)
- Biddy C (boys & girls, ages 6-8, cannot turn 9 before 3/20/23)

Register to Play: If you have children in these age groups, we strongly encourage you to register them through the OYAA website: www.detroit-oyaa.org. Go to the Registration page and click on the 2022-2023 Basketball Season Registration link. An account will need to be set up (at the bottom of the registration link) and then children can be added. The system tells you the division they will play in based on their birthdate. We ask that interested players register by December 1st.

Coaches Needed: If anyone is interested in coaching, please contact Dean Niforos or register through the 2022-2023 Coach/Volunteer Registration link on the OYAA website.

Practices: We will be scheduling practices starting right after Thanksgiving. More information will be provided.

Games: Biddy division games are scheduled to start on January 7, 2023 and continue through mid-March. Games are held on Saturday mornings/afternoons, mostly at the St. John Armenian Gym (in Southfield). Biddy C and B teams usually play in the mornings on smaller courts there, and Biddy A teams play on a full court in the afternoons.

Please contact Dean Niforos at dean.niforos@gmail.com if you have any questions.
ASSUMPTION GOYA
CHRISTMAS PARTY
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022

Time: 6:00PM
Assumption Cultural Center – Hellenic Room
Dinner by Marchiori Catering

- Orthodox Life Session – The Season of the gift – bring questions for Q&A
- $15 White Elephant Gift Exchange
- Gingerbread House Competition
- Games in the Gym

Please RSVP Elena Mitropetros – 586-610-4347

Sponsored by Assumption GOYA
December is always a favorite time of the year in our Greek Afternoon School. The students read wonderful Christmas stories, improve their vocabulary and writing ability, and create projects for the Holidays.

In December, we present our first show with traditional songs and poems for the Holidays and Christmas skits. The students are going to present the show “Christmas Night” and they are practicing every day.

Our Greek School is going to celebrate the Holidays with this beautiful Christmas show on Monday, December 19, at 5:00 p.m. Everybody is invited to hear our students sing the joyful “Kalanda” for Christmas, New Year and Theophany.

The Christmas vacation will begin right after our show. Our school will start again on Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

Happy Holidays!
Καλές Γιορτές!
His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas, along with the Metropolis Council and Metropolis Philoptochos, invite you to join us for the Feast of Saint Spyridon - patron saint of the chapel at the Metropolis Offices.

FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Reception to Follow
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2022
10:00AM

Hierarchical Great Vespers and Reception to Follow
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022
6:00PM

METROPOLIS OFFICES
2560 Crooks Road - Troy, MI 48084
248.823.2400

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022
12:30PM - 4:30PM
www.detroit.goarch.org
Metropolis Offices
2560 Crooks Road
Troy, MI 48084
248-823-2400

OPEN HOUSE AND FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

The Metropolis Offices invite you to join us for the Feast of Saint Spyridon - patron saint of the chapel at the Metropolis Offices.

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas, along with the Metropolis Council and Metropolis Philoptochos, invite you to join us for the Feast of Saint Spyridon - patron saint of the chapel at the Metropolis Offices.
President’s Report to The General Assembly

In March 2020, we had an empty church, people we love were suffering, our school was down hundreds of students, and our center activities and catering were closed to all but carry outs. This year we have emerged as a community reenergized.

The strong leadership of Father Michael, the Executive Board, Parish Council, Committees, Church ministries and dedicated staff carried us through the unknown effects of an unprecedented pandemic that continues. Our stewards and benefactors were as generous as they could be. And we were blessed to apply for and receive grants to carry us through those trying and endless months.

This year brought back many events: The Reverse Raffle, Golf Outing, Garage Sale, MIniFest and of course, GreekFest. The community was ready to support us for the programs we provide. This wonderful effort by our parish only happened because our parishioners offer an abundant share of their time, talents, and treasures. The chairpersons and volunteers of all these fundraisers did an outstanding job in representing our Assumption Greek Orthodox Church.

Senior Expo returned for its 27th year in October. The committee works all year to plan and produce a comprehensive Resource Guide as well. Charlie Langton was very pleased to be the guest of the day and Henry Ford Health through Dr. Steven Kalkanis has become our Expo Sponsor providing lunch for the over 500 seniors who attended! The Resource Guide is available in our Center. The information covers every aspect of life and opportunities for seniors and their families. They are available in all city offices, libraires and facilities throughout the community. Again, our Faith serving as a beacon.

Our Assumption Nursery School is back to full enrollment of 350 students and the waiting list is endless. We continue with our Directors, Kate Haynes, and Joni Gerardi to maintain our high standards. To insure we maintain our growth and development, we have engaged a good friend of Assumption, Dr. Suzann Klein former Superintendent of Grosse Pointe Schools, to lead our strategic planning. The staff is dedicated and demonstrates why our school is a leader in the community and State. We thank our Nursery School Committee for taking time from their busy schedules to advise and support the needs of the school. Dr. Kalkanis, Madelyn Torakis and Monica Hoffman, Health Department, continue their oversight and direction for best health practices. The St. Clair Shores Department of Public Safety visits regularly to ensure the security and safe environment for our students.

Today, George Gazepis will provide the Auditor’s Report with the oversight he has provided each year. Our 2023 budget will be presented by Treasurer, Dr. Chris Raphtis. This comprehensive review was accomplished by Joan DeRonne, Teresa Poleis (our school and church accountant), Alissa McMann (our CPA), and Kate Haynes our school Co-Director. Thank you for all the hard work on the budget and throughout the year. They were assisted by Joni Gerardi, School Co-director, Olga Cardasis, Office Manager, and our Committee Chairpersons. I would like to recognize the efforts of Joan, Teresa and Kate in researching and applying for the $2,000,000 in grants I mentioned.

I would also like to thank the following church organizations for supporting all of our endeavors no matter the need and they are: Philoptochos, Choir, Sunday School, Senior Citizens, GOYA, Hope and Joy, Welcoming and Greeting committee, Greek School, Bookstore committee, Dance program, Athletic Committee and coaches, our Council Committees as well as the office and custodial staffs, and Alex Malian. These organizations and staff really are the life of our church!

I want to emphasize how very fortunate we are to have a priest of Father Michael’s stature to lead us. I am not sure how many are aware there are not many priests in this country right now. Parishes are existing without a priest. We tried to bring an assistant priest for Father and were informed of the dire circumstance in this country for Orthodox priests. So please know how very, very blessed we are to have Father Michael. Please take care of him!

As we close, I want all the Assumption parish to know how awesome it has been as President working with Father Michael, the Executive Board, the Parish Council, Joan De Ronne, the office staff, and the custodial staff for the past seven years. It has truly been an honor and I have learned so much from this experience.

Respectfully,
Tom Thomas

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas visits General Assembly
Harvest Party Fun! 2022
Philoptochos Feather Party Enjoyed By All!
Senior Citizen’s Enjoy Thanksgiving Fellowship!
Christmas Gathering

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022
6:30PM

You are cordially invited to a delicious Lenten Buffet Dinner by Marchiori Catering, "White Elephant" gift exchange, and entertainment provided by the Grosse Pointe North Pointe Chorale Singers.

$35.00 PER PERSON

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church Cultural Center

Kindly RSVP and submit payment by December 3, 2022 to Madelyn Torakis (313.410.2420) or the Church Office (586.779.6111)
**Stewardship 2022**

We have reached the season of giving. This is one of the most beautiful times of the year, when we spend more time with our family and friends, anticipating the joy of the Nativity of our Lord; the greatest gift of all.

As we celebrate this season, let us also remember our church. Our church is our spiritual home, the place where we go for comfort, peace, and strength. It is the place where heaven meets earth, where we find ourselves in the presence of Christ at the Divine Liturgy. Our church’s mission is to proclaim the Gospel and provide outreach to its parishioners. This is a sacred mission that requires our support by giving of our time, talent, and treasure.

If you have not completed your 2022 Stewardship commitment, we kindly ask that you do so before the end of the year. Likewise, if you have not completed a 2022 Stewardship card, it is not too late. Please stop by the office or call to make your offering and/or complete a Stewardship commitment.

With appreciation in God’s service,

Chris Manos, Dr. Chris Raphtis, Lydia Villeneuve

Stewardship Co-Chairpersons

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**BENEFACTORS as of November, 2022**

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In Loving Memory

Magdaline Stathis

Magdaline Stathis was born October 8, 1938 in Kalamata, Greece. Beloved wife of the late Peter C. Stathis, mother of Dino Stathis (Olga) and Kim Tsilimingras (Dennis). Beloved proud grandmother of Demetrios Stathis, Olga Stathis, Yanni Tsilimingras, Peter Stathis, and Peter Tsilimingras. Beloved daughter of late Demetrios and Vasiliki Maniatis.

She immigrated to the United States in 1957 and attended Wayne State University. She met and married her husband Peter Stathis in 1959 and was married at the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. Because of her love of the Assumption Church, she insisted her children shall be married and grandchildren christened in the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. She was a life time member of the Assumption Church Philoptochos and Daughters of Penelope Thamyris #272 where she was awarded the Penelope of the Year. She was a supporter and benefactor of the District #10 AHEPA Education Foundation. She was passionate about her Family, Church and philanthropy which included the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, AHEPA – Daughters of Penelope and the Educational Foundation.

In 1964, along with her husband they were solely instrumental in bringing their 4 year old nephew from Greece who required life-saving heart surgery. They utilized all necessary resources such as the Greek Ambassador and government official to facilitate and expedite his entry to the United States for this specialized experimental surgery in Boston which saved his life. Also, along with her husband Peter, they sponsored and facilitated citizenship for over 40 relatives, friends and students. They worked and supported their family as restauranteurs for over 40 years.

She and husband Peter were one of the founding members of the American Hellenic Congress, which supported the crisis in Cyprus in 1974. Throughout her life, she enjoyed attending National AHEPA Conventions, AHEPA Congressional banquets in Washington, D.C. and travelling to Greece. In her later years, she was devoted her time to her grandchildren as well as a Greek School teacher both at Assumption and Annunciation Church.

During the last phase of her life, she insisted her family perpetuate her devotion to our church. Even on the last few days of her life, she reminded us that her grandson was soon to celebrate his name day, the feast day of St. Demetrios on October 26. At her request. In lieu of flowers she requested that donations be made to the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in St Clair Shores, MI 48080 or The District #10 Educational Foundation Educational Foundation, 1628 Crimson Dr. Troy MI 48083.

The Assumption Epistle // December 2022

COLLECTION MEN’S COLD WEATHER ITEMS

December through February

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen supports the community in many ways, including providing showers and a change of clothing for about 40 people each day to give those in need a fresh focus and an increased sense of dignity and self-worth. In the winter months they may only have that time to warm-up.

The organization needs the items below to be able to continue this effort. Please consider dropping off items to the white bins in the Assumption Church office as soon as possible. We will distribute items to The Capuchins on a regular basis so we can help throughout the cold weather.

If you cannot shop but would like to donate, please make a monetary contribution to the Assumption Philoptochos (marked for Cold Weather Collection). We will be happy to shop for you. Thank you for your consideration of support for this collection drive!

DONATION ITEMS (NEW)

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• Men’s Gloves & Winter Hats
• Men’s Underwear (all sizes)

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Home is safe and familiar. It is where we belong. Our Orthodox Christian Church is our spiritual home. It is a place of prayer, comfort, spiritual healing, and celebration. We are at home in the fragrance of incense, the sound of hymns and prayers, the physical touch of kneeling, bowing and making the sign of the cross, and the taste of Holy Communion and antidoron (the blessed bread). You may have been brought to the Orthodox Church on your 40th day, or the Orthodox Church may have been the destination of your spiritual journey. For both, the Church is a spiritual home to which we may always return. We are brothers and sisters in Christ—a family.

Our Church is so much more than a building. It is where we turn for comfort, support and healing. It is where we make true Christian friends that last a lifetime. No matter where we go in the world, we can come home to the Orthodox Church to be surrounded by the same familiar elements: altar, iconostasion (icon screen), pulpit, altar table, tabernacle, iconography, baptismal font, candles and more.

Church is not so much a place as it is what we are together. We are called to be the Body of Christ to witness to God in the world. When we truly become members of the Church, transfigured by our faith and worship, we become what the Church was intended to be. As Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).