

“At the River Jordan, when John saw You coming to him, he said to You, O Christ our God, ‘Why have You come to a servant, for there is no dirt on You, O Lord? In whose name should I baptize You? In the name of the Father? But you have Him within You. In the name of the Son? But You are He incarnate. In the name of the Holy Spirit? But You know how to give It to the faithful by mouth.’ O God, who have appeared, have mercy on us. ‘ “

“The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You and were afraid. Neither the Cherubim nor the Seraphim can look directly at Your glory. But they stand by You with fear and awe. The former hold and the latter glorify Your power. We join them, O Compassionate Lord, and proclaim Your praise, saying, ‘O God, who have appeared, have mercy on us.’ “

“Today, the Creator of heaven and earth comes in the flesh to the Jordan, asking to be baptized, though He is without sin, in order to purge the world of the error of the foe. And so the Master of all is baptized by a servant, and He grants purification by water to the human race. Let us shout to Him, ‘O God, who have appeared, have mercy on us.’ “

— *Aposticha from the Great Vespers of Theophany*



Inside...

Parish Council Update

Philoptochos News

River Food Pantry

Grace Episcopal Homeless Shelter

Sunday School

Greek School

Spiritual Meetings

Church Website

Announcements

December 2019 Sacraments

Calendars

Updates from the Archdiocese on the St. Nicholas Shrine in NYC

REMINDER:

The main front doors at Church will be locked beginning with communion. Ushers are watching to unlock the doors for people who arrive late—so be patient. The door is covered and you'll never have to wait more than a few seconds (although it may feel longer).

Thank You!

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

Jim Katsihtis, Parish Council President, jkatsihtis@gmail.com

Parish Council Officers: Bruce Hansen, Secretary, Scott Storck & Niko Papadopoulos, Treasurers. **Members:** Petros Anagnostopoulos, Christy Chappell-Belkin, Conn Choles, Carol Griskavich, Dori Hosek, Maria Molzahn, Mike Smith, Nick Topitzes. **Alternate:** Maria Schirmer-Devitt

President's Message

General Assembly

We hope you enjoyed the Annual St. Nicholas Dinner hosted by the Parish Council. Thanks to the Hansens and everyone who donated food/drink and their time to prepare and clean up the meal.

Thank you to all who attended the General Assembly on December 8th. At the General Assembly, voting took place to fill four Parish Council member expiring terms. The Assembly unanimously elected Mike Smith, Dori Hosek, Maria Schirmer Devitt and John Bayouth. The election results are pending ratification by the Metropolis. Parish Council officers will be elected by the Parish Council following ratification.

The annual, three-person Financial Audit Committee was also elected at the Assembly comprising Patrick Molzahn, Jenny Glatch and Beth Fatsis. Thank you to the Audit Committee for this very important service.

Stewardship

As a reminder, 2020 Stewardship cards are available for pick up. Please prayerfully consider our needs and the many opportunities for you to share your time, talent and treasure in loving stewardship.

Parish Council Update

Topics from the December 3rd Parish Council meeting included, among others, a recent financial statement review, maintenance and back parking lot project updates, youth safety training update and website enhancement considerations.

Thanks to David Giffey who will continue the iconography on the Sunday School wall area and the exo-narthex in accordance with the previously approved iconography project.

The next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday, January 14th. Please continue to share your suggestions and any ways in which you can help.

Volunteer Spotlight

Thanks, as always, to all our volunteers.

A special thank you to this month's Volunteer Spotlight, Susu Akkawi! Susu has helped introduce several fun and educational events for our children, including the recent prosforo baking and gingerbread house making events. Thanks to Susu for bringing such a loving and fun approach, and for her commitment to our youth, their education and engagement.

Thanks also to all of our Sunday School and Greek School teachers who helped with those events, especially Michelle Bayouth for showing us how to make prosforo and to David Giffey for his enlightening talk on the icon of the Nativity.

Let's continue to glorify our incarnate Lord and prepare ourselves for the commemoration of our Lord's baptism and the manifestation of the Holy Trinity, such a central part of our faith, on Theophany (January 6th).

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Lena Giakoumopoulos, President, lenagiak@gmail.com, 608-556-8186

Vice President: Maria Molzahn, Secretary: Sue Soloninka, Treasurer: Maria Heide, Asst. Treasurer: Jenny Glatch, Corresponding Secretary: Nancy Briamis, Asst Corresponding Secretary: Kathie Fafalios

A new year, a new decade!! From everyone in our chapter to you and your families, we want to wish you a new year full of health and happiness! We look forward to continuing our work together and thank you again for your support to all our endeavors. If you are interested in joining us, please contact anyone of the officers:

NATIONAL OBLIGATIONS:

December: UNICEF (\$100) and General Medical Fund (\$100)

January: Social Services (\$350), Cancer Fund (\$250)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sunday, January 5, 2020

General Chapter Meeting

AGOC hall following the service

January 26, 2020

Vasilopita Dinner

AGOC hall, after the service

We need a volunteer chair(s) for the Vasilopita dinner (Sunday, January 26, 2020) in the AGOC hall which Philoptochos is hosting. Proceeds from this meal go to St. Basil's Academy, a "home away from home" for Orthodox young people who come from troubled homes or who are victims of poverty, abuse or abandonment.

We are in need of vasilopita bread bakers for the St. Basil's dinner. If you are interested in chairing the event or baking vasilopita, please contact Lena G (lenagiak@gmail.com).

OTHER:

February Luncheon

We are seeking volunteers to chair the February luncheon. Please contact Lena G (lenagiak@gmail.com) if you are interested.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY

Nancy Briamis, nbriamis@gmail.com

Connecting Community to Compassion

Serving Dane County since 2006, The River Food Pantry provides food, resources and faith to build a stronger community. Services include free groceries, meals and clothing, as well as free [mobile](#) lunches for children and teens on non-school days. As the area's busiest food pantry, The River serves over 1,000 households every week in pursuit of its [vision](#): *a fully nourished community*.

See their website - info@riverfoodpantry.org

GRACE EPISCOPAL HOMELESS SHELTER

David Giffey, barnowl1941@gmail.com

For the fifth time during 2019, volunteers from Assumption prepared and served a hot meal to more than 120 men at the drop-in shelter for the homeless on New Years' Eve, Tuesday, December 31. The shelter at Grace Episcopal Church on the square in Madison is organized by Porchlight Inc. Volunteers who helped prepare the meal at church,

deliver the food, and serve it included: Eleni Giakoumopoulos, Sue Soloninka, Jane Schirmer, Mike Smith, Nancy Smith, Scott Spevacek, Nancy Giffey, and David Giffey. Depending on the weather, the number of homeless men in need of a meal and lodging might increase. We thank all the volunteers who have worked for the homeless during 2019, and who will continue to help during 2020 and beyond.

Next year, 2020, Assumption volunteers are scheduled to prepare a meal and work at the shelter on four dates: March 31, June 30, September 29, and December 29.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Seham Akkawi, Co-Director, sususaba@yahoo.com, Peli Galiti, Co-Director, pegaliti@gmail.com, Fr. Michael, Spiritual Advisor, frmichael@agocwi.org

Please watch future Sunday bulletins and emails for any updates!

GREEK SCHOOL

Elektra Kolokouri, ilektra.kol@gmail.com

If people need info about Greek school they can contact me at ilektra.kol@gmail.com or talk to me at church.

SPIRITUAL MEETINGS

Peli Galiti, pegaliti@gmail.com

Please watch future Sunday bulletins and emails for any updates!

CHURCH WEBSITE

Lainey Skoumbouris, lainey0220@yahoo.com

The church website is set-up for private login to access the monthly newsletters and are meant for Church members only, not the public. Church members can read the newsletter on the website, but you must create an account before you can view it. Log onto the website and click on "Newsletter" on the side-bar <http://www.agocwi.org/registration-required/>, or "login" on the main menu <http://www.agocwi.org/login/>; it will direct you to sign up. If you need help, have questions or something isn't working in the registration contact me.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

J and M Home Helpers

AGOC's handymen, John and Mike, will do minor home repairs and maintenance for \$25/hour, with the money for their work being donated to the church.



Call Mike at (608) 516-9188 and John at (608) 575-1014 today!

SACRAMENTS DURING DECEMBER 2019

Weddings: 0 Chrismations: 0 Baptisms: 3 Funerals: 1

Baptisms:

Mikal Weldemichael was baptized on Saturday, December 21, 2019. Mikal's parents are Iyob T. Weldemichael and Rima H. Okbazghi. Mikal's godparent is Asmeret Yosef.

Theodoros Barrett Christos was baptized on Friday, December 27, 2019. Theodoros' godparent is Berthene Christos.

Mia Theo was baptized on Sunday, December 29, 2019. Mia's parents are Michael and Aimee Theo. Mia's godparent is Marie Helser.

Funerals:

Christopher A. Schmidt, age 39, passed away on Monday, December 16, 2019. His funeral was held on Friday, December 20, 2019 at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. He was buried at Sun Prairie City Cemetery.



January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 29 Sunday after the Nativity Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am No Sunday School Baptism 3:00 pm	December 30	December 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE <i>Grace Episcopal Men's Shelter</i> Cooking and Serving Great Vespers 6:00 pm	1 St. Basil the Great / Circumcision of Our Lord Divine Liturgy 9:00 am	2	3	4
5 Pre-Theophany Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am Great Blessing of the Waters Service Sunday School Resumes Philoptochos Meeting	6 Theophany No Church Services Today Fr. Michael is Away Until January 12, 2019	7 St. John the Baptist No Church Services Today Fr. Michael is Away Until January 12, 2019	8 Choir Practice 7:00 pm	9	10	11 <i>Russian Orthodox</i> Divine Liturgy 9:00 am
12 Sunday After Theophany Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	13	14 Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm	15 Choir Practice 7:00 pm	16	17 St. Anthony the Great Divine Liturgy 9:00 am	18 Athanasios and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria Divine Liturgy 9:00 am
19 12th Sunday of Luke Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	21	22 Choir Practice 7:00 pm	23	24	25 St. Gregory the Theologian <i>Russian Orthodox</i> Divine Liturgy 9:00 am
26 15th Sunday of Luke Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am St. Basil's Dinner	27	28	29 Choir Practice 7:00 pm 6	30 Three Hierarchs Divine Liturgy 9:00 am	31	February 1

January - March 2020 Liturgies and Services

January 1

Feast of St. Basil the Great

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12
Gospel: Luke 2:20-21,40-52

Prosforo: Jenny G

January 5

Sunday Before Theophany

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am -
Followed immediately by The Great Blessing of the Waters

Epistle: Timothy 4:5-8
Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Prosforo: Jenny G

Coffee Hour: (Group 4) Nancy B,
Jane S, Beth F

January 6

Theophany

NO DIVINE LITURGY OR SERVICES
Fr. Michael is away

January 7

St. John the Baptist

NO DIVINE LITURGY
Fr. Michael is away

January 12

Sunday After Theophany

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13
Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17

Prosforo: Korinna F

Coffee Hour: (Group 5) Kristi P,
Ilektra K, Theodoti L-K

January 17

St. Anthony the Great

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21
Gospel: Luke 6:17-23

Prosforo: Korinna F

January 18

Sts. Athanasios and Cyril,
Patriarch of Alexandria

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: Hebrews 13:7-16
Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19

Prosforo: Jane S

January 19

12th Sunday of Luke

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11
Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

Prosforo: Jane S

Coffee Hour: (Group 6) Maria M, Nia
C, Denise S

January 26

15th Sunday of Luke

****St. Basil's Dinner****

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: 1 Timothy 4:9-15
Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

Prosforo: Cathy G

**Coffee Hour: St. Basil's Dinner -
Special Group**

January 30

Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs:
Basil the Great, Gregory the
Theologian and John Chrysostom

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: Hebrews 13:7-16
Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19

Prosforo: Cathy G

February 2

Presentation of Our Lord

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Prosforo: Tom C

Coffee Hour: (Group 7) Georgia M,
Lena G, Angela K

February 9

Sunday of the Publican and
Pharisee / TRIODION BEGINS

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15
Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

Prosforo: Michelle B

Coffee Hour: (Group 8) Nikki S,
Aleksandra T, Peli G

February 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

Prosforo: Jenny G

Coffee Hour: (Group 9) Patti C,
Michelle B, Maren K

February 22

1st Saturday of the Souls

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
Gospel: Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36

Prosforo: Jenny G

February 23

Judgement Sunday
(Meatfare)

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Prosforo: Georgia M

Coffee Hour: (Group 10) Margo S,
Jenny J, Betty L

February 29

2nd Saturday of the Souls

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-13

Prosforo: Georgia M

March 1

Forgiveness Sunday
(Cheesefare)

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4
Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

Prosforo: Anna F

Coffee Hour: (Group 11) Kerry M,
Barb K, Dori H, Wendy M

March 1

Forgiveness Great Vespers 6:00 pm

March 2

CLEAN MONDAY

Great Lent Begins

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

8-10 East 79th St. New York, NY 10075-0106 * Tel: (212) 570-3530 Fax: (212) 774-0237

www.goarch.org - Email: communications@goarch.org

GOVERNOR CUOMO AND ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS ANNOUNCE CONSTRUCTION TO RESUME ON ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH AND NATIONAL SHRINE AT WORLD TRADE CENTER

January 2, 2020

Governor Officially Welcomes New Archbishop of America, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros to New York

Church Project Will Resume Under the Leadership of 13-Member 'Friends of St. Nicholas' Board Now in Place to Oversee Financing and Construction of Major Effort

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today officially welcomed Archbishop Elpidophoros of America to New York and announced plans to resume the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center. This was the Governor's first meeting with His Eminence since the Archbishop was elected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Archbishop of America to succeed Archbishop Demetrios in May. The project will be driven by a new non-profit organization with an independent, 13-member board - the Friends of St. Nicholas. The new entity has been formed to ensure that the sacred space is completed as expeditiously as possible and can begin welcoming visitors from around the world. The Friends of St. Nicholas will aim to resume construction with a two-year target to complete the church.

"The rebuilding of St. Nicholas Church that was destroyed on September 11 is a moment of coming together and healing not only for the Greek Orthodox community but for all New Yorkers who lived through that horrific day," **Governor Cuomo said.** "This house of worship will serve as a reminder that our collective faith is something we can always count on to move past our painful memories and build a better tomorrow."

Archbishop Elpidophoros said, "On behalf of the Greek Orthodox Faithful, we have made a commitment to open the doors of this National Shrine by September 11, 2021, the twentieth anniversary of that fateful day. I pledge to you, Governor Cuomo, and to all the people of New York, that we will be ready; we will be on time; and we will be open to all women and men of good will who wish to honor the memory of all who perished on September Eleventh."

Today, the Governor and the Archbishop were joined by Rick Cotton, Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; John Catsimatidis, Vice Chairman of the Archdiocese Council; Dennis Mehiel and Michael Psaros, Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Friends of St. Nicholas; and the Rev. Father Alexander Karloutsos, Vicar General of the Archdiocese to discuss and announce the resumption of work at the St. Nicholas Church site on the south side of Liberty Street.

The Friends of St. Nicholas will be responsible for the timely rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. The new organization will: raise money for the re-building of St. Nicholas; fund the re-building of St. Nicholas; oversee construction of St. Nicholas; and conduct appropriate audits. The 13-member board will be chaired by Dennis Mehiel, former Chairman of the Battery Park City Authority (2012-2018), and the Chairman of US Corrugated, which he founded in 1966. Richard Browne, Managing Partner of Sterling Project Development Group, will serve as COO of construction.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis) of America will serve as the Honorary Chairman on behalf of Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Other board members include: Board Vice Chairman Michael Psaros, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of KPS Capital Partners, LP; Maria Allwin, Co-founder Aetos Capital LLC and The Allwin Family Foundation; John Calamos, Founder,

Chairman and Global Chief Investment Officer of Calamos Investments; John Catsimatidis, Owner, president, chairman, and CEO of the Red Apple Group and Vice Chair of the Archdiocesan Council; Chrysa Demos, President & CEO of AKT Investments Inc.; John Georges, Founder and CEO of Georges Enterprises; George Marcus, Chairman and Founder of Marcus & Millichap Company; George Mihaltses, Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, NY Public Library; John Payiavlas, Founder and Owner of AVI Foodsystems, Inc.; Dean Spanos, Owner and Chairman of the Board for the National Football League's Los Angeles Chargers franchise; and George Stamboulidis, Partner at BakerHostetler LLP, and the Rev. Father Alexander Karloutsos, Spiritual Advisor of the Friends of St. Nicholas and Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

Rick Cotton, Executive Director of the Port Authority, said, "Governor Cuomo has been a passionate advocate for St. Nicholas Church and for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. The Port Authority welcomes the news that, following consultation with the Governor and the Port Authority, the Archdiocese has formed the Friends of St. Nicholas and that construction will soon resume at the south end of our campus. We look forward to the completion and opening of St. Nicholas Church at the World Trade Center where it will serve as a symbol of inspiration to the millions of visitors to our campus each year."

The Friends of St. Nicholas Chairman, Dennis Mehiel, said, "The Friends of St. Nicholas are one hundred percent committed to expediting the completion of the Shrine, and at the same time maintaining a public and transparent record of the finances surrounding this historic and sacred project. We thank the Governor and the Port Authority for their unfailing support."

The original St. Nicholas Church at 155 Cedar Street was the only place of worship that was completely destroyed in the September 11th attacks. Upon taking office, Governor Cuomo made the restoration of St. Nicholas Church a top priority, working with the Archdiocese and the Port Authority to reach agreement on a larger, more accessible site for the rebuilding of the Church and National Shrine and personally raising donations for the privately funded complex. When completed, the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at 130 Liberty Street just south of the 9/11 Memorial Plaza will serve as a place of prayer and silent reflection and also house a nondenominational bereavement center for anyone seeking solace and strength at a time of loss. The complex, designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and modeled after Byzantine churches of Hagia Sophia and the Church of the Holy Savior in Istanbul, was designed to glow in the evening hours, an ever-present beacon of hope on the World Trade Center campus.

This progress on St. Nicholas Church builds on the Port Authority's commitment to completing major projects at the World Trade Center campus. In June a request for proposals was released for Site 5, previously home to the Deutsche Bank Building. One year ago, Tower 3 opened and is over 50 percent leased. Shortly after Tower 3 opened, the Port Authority opened Dey Street and Cortlandt Way to pedestrian traffic to greatly improve access to the site - the first time these streets have been opened since the original World Trade Center was built in the 1970s. Meanwhile, Tower 4 is fully leased, and One World Trade Center is 83 percent leased. The Tower 2 site, which is controlled by Silverstein properties, is scheduled to become a future commercial office tower, with its construction to start as soon as for an anchor tenant commits to the building.

Construction of one of the last signature structures on the World Trade Center campus - the Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center - also is underway following an agreement strongly supported by Governor Cuomo in 2018. The Performing Arts Center is projected to open in 2021 and will be able to seat over 1,000 people in a flexible, state-of-the-art space.

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Additional news available at www.governor.ny.gov
New York State | Executive Chamber | press.office@exec.ny.gov | 518.474.8418

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8-10 East 79th St. New York, NY 10075-0106 * Tel: (212) 570-3530 Fax: (212) 774-0237

www.goarch.org - Email: communications@goarch.org

Dear Reverend Fathers,

On behalf of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, I am forwarding to you all the following message regarding the progress of Saint Nicholas Shrine. At the request of His Eminence, this message is to be read to your respective congregations on this Sunday, January 5.

This is a triumphant time and new chapter for our Archdiocese.

As we all know, the construction of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center was abruptly suspended in December, 2017. The good news is that after a rigorous investigation conducted by PWC, one of the world's largest accounting firms, and other outside experts we learned two important points: 1) There was no evidence of theft of any kind against Saint Nicholas, and, further, that the intent of all the donors who contributed funds to Saint Nicholas was met; and 2) Funds which had been transferred from St. Nicholas to Archdiocesan bank accounts to fund the Archdiocese operating deficit have now been completely repaid by the Archdiocese with interest. PWC's investigative reports were posted to the Archdiocese website for full review by the public. Further, as a result of the successful financial restructuring of the Archdiocese, all vendors that were owed funds at the time of the construction have been paid in full.

A new organization has been created called the Friends of St. Nicholas ("Friends"). Friends is a separate legal entity, with a separate Board Trustees that has independent fiduciary obligations. Friends is now the sole entity authorized by the Archdiocese and the St. Nicholas Parish to fundraise for the St. Nicholas project, act as custodian for its funds and oversee the completion of the construction.

Mr. Richard Browne, Managing Partner of Sterling Project Development, has volunteered to be the Chief Operating Officer of construction for St. Nicholas. He has worked with the general contractor and its subcontractors to determine the maximum price to complete the National Shrine. If the subcontractors are provided initial funds this month, then the maximum incremental cost to complete the National Shrine is expected to be \$45 million, including a contingency reserve.

Timing is critical. Friends must raise this capital from our Faithful and others in an ecumenical outreach.

The National Shrine will be the only religious institution on Ground Zero. The National Shrine will not only be a symbol of global Orthodoxy and perhaps the most visited Church in the United States, it will be a monument to the memory of the 3,000 people who were martyred on September 11, 2001. Its Justinian Cross will stand over the site in their memory.

As we begin a new year and embark on an exciting new era for our Archdiocese and Saint Nicholas, we as Orthodox Christians should all rejoice in this announcement. Archbishop Elpidophoros has called rebuilding Saint Nicholas "the single most important public affirmation of our Orthodox faith in our American nation" since the late Archbishop Iakovos marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

We must all support this vision of restoration, redemption and resurrection. Direct contributions can be sent to the Friends of St. Nicholas at the Archdiocese in New York.

Conveying to you the paternal blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, I remain,

Rev. Fr. Andreas Vithoukas

Chancellor

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

8 East 79th Street

New York, NY 10075