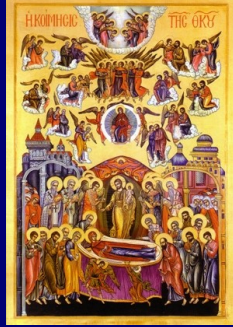


CHURCH STAFF

- Parish Priest: Very Reverend Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos
- Parish Council President: Jim (Demetrios) Katsihs
- Philoptochos President: Eleni Giakoumopoulos
- Sunday School Directors: Susu Saba & Peli Galiti
- Greek School: Ilektra Kolokouri
- Choir Director: George Tzougros

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The Message

DECEMBER 2020

TRUE CHRISTMAS

In the middle of the festivities and celebrations, along with the decorations and food, buried with the wrapping paper and presents, there lies a great feast of the Church. Carefully tucked away in a corner, this feast is (at least for the time being) somewhat visible but difficult to notice. We pay it lip service (if that) when we tell children, “Christmas is Jesus’ birthday.” However, even this shows our ignorance of the Feast of the Nativity.

Christmas is not about giving (as the songs will tell us), nor is it simply about the birth of a small child. Put simply, Christmas is about the co-eternal Word of God becoming flesh. The Feast of the Nativity celebrates God Himself taking on human form to be among us. Christmas is the fulfillment of the Prophets. December 25th is when we rejoice at the birth of our salvation and deliverance from sin, from death, and from hopelessness. And yet, there it lies off in the corner, barely visible for all the debris of wrapping paper and ribbon we have used to celebrate our own existence rather than that of the King of Glory. Once again, the Christ child lies alone and neglected by those He has come to save.

When we hear of the materialism that goes along with Christmas, the lack of focus on the true meaning of the feast, indeed, we are hearing nothing new. As Orthodox Christians, however, what are we to do about this—how are we to combat the forces that seek to draw our attention from this great feast of the Church? Certainly there are many things we can and must do.

Almost all of us will be placing a Christmas tree in our home, but how many of us will be displaying an icon of the Nativity? Certainly the money we spend on various forms of decorations (most of which are of non-Christian origins) would not prohibit us from spending \$15 – \$25 on an icon for us to venerate at the time of this great feast.

We have seen movies and read books that relate to Christmas in one way or another. Some, such as *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol* are truly enlightening and uplifting. But how many of us have even read the beautiful hymns of the Church, which call to us with such beauty and poetry as:

*Today He, who holds the whole creation in His hand,
is born of a virgin. He, whose essence none can touch,
is bound in swaddling clothes as a mortal man.
God who, in the beginning fashioned the heavens,
lies in a manger. He, who rained manna on His people
in the wilderness, is fed on milk from His mother’s breast.
The Bridegroom of the Church summons the wise men.
The Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.
We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!
We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!
We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!
Show us also Thy glorious Theophany!*

We will attend Christmas parties, but how many liturgies that the Church provides during this time of the year, for many of the most famous saints and martyrs, will we be present at? Saints like Catherine and Andrew, Barbara and Nicholas, Spyridon and Eleutherios are all celebrated during this time of year—and then there is the feast itself. How many people speak of how difficult it is to fit going to Church in with their Christmas activities!? If coming to Church to celebrate the birth of Christ and be in communion with Him is not “the” Christmas activity, then what is?

It is not wrong to have presents and parties, festivities and decorations as long as they celebrate The Feast. It is when these festivities replace The Feast and overtake it that our sense of balance has been lost and we begin to lose sight of exactly what it is we are celebrating in the first place. For we celebrate not simply the birth of a baby, but the birth of freedom, the birth of redemption, and the birth of our salvation. If we truly realize this, then on Christmas we can declare with one voice, “Christ is born! Glorify Him!”

+Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos



2020 Annual Community Christmas Card

**We are now accepting names to be submitted for the
2020 Community Christmas Card**

In order for our Christmas Card to be successful, we need your cooperation. Please approach your family and friends who may not be aware of this program, to see if they would like to be a part of our Family Christmas Card.

*****Deadline*****

Monday, December 7th, 2020

Please use this form and send it along with you donation
The suggested donation is \$25, but give what you can. Please send to:

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

11 N. Seventh Street

Madison, WI 53704

Please print your name below, clearly and EXACTLY as it should appear in the card.

Name: _____

**May the forthcoming Christmas Season bring to you and your family
the Lord's blessings of Joy and Good Health!**

Thank you for your support of our Assumption Church.

The Parish Council Update

December 2020

Officers: Jim Katsihtis, President; Maria Molzahn, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary; Niko Papadopoulos, Treasurer; Scott Storck, Assistant Treasurer

Members: John Bayouth, Christy Chappell-Belkin, Conn Choles, Maria Schirmer-Devitt, Dori Hosek, Carol Griskavich, Mike Smith

Our warmest greetings to you all, and our prayers that you are all well.

Safety Update

The Safety Committee continues to regularly meet and closely monitor the pandemic. Thank you for your continued support of the safety precautions and guidelines we've implemented for worshipping together, including wearing masks and physically distancing. You are demonstrating wonderful examples of loving your neighbor. And you are helping us be able to continue to worship together in limited capacity. With the ongoing surge in cases, let's continue to be extra diligent in following the safety guidelines.

General Assembly

The Fall General Assembly took place virtually on November 8th. Thank you to all who attended.

The 2021 Budget was passed.

There were four nominees for Parish Council to fill the four expiring seats: Conn Choles, Carol Griskavich, Bruce Hansen & Niko Papadopoulos, and as per the Metropolis, no vote is therefore necessary this year.

Audit Committee nominations were made and accepted, comprising Patrick Molzahn, Jenny Glatch and Kathy Fafalios.

2021 Stewardship

Stewardship cards will be sent out in the coming days. Please continue to pray for and generously support our parish. And please let us know how we can serve you better.

Year in Review

2020 was a year filled with many unexpected challenges, especially the falling asleep of our beloved Fr. Michael of blessed memory. That was quickly followed by the worst pandemic in most of our lifetimes. Many had family or friends affected by the pandemic, in matters of health or in their jobs or schooling. Fr. Christodoulos was able to celebrate just one Liturgy before we went into lockdown, making his transition much more difficult. We had to develop and adjust to new safety guidelines, including virtual and limited attendance services and virtual Sunday School and Greek School. Social hour and GreekFest+ were cancelled. Finances were strained.

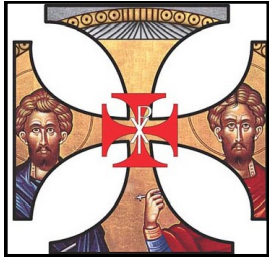
But by God's grace and mercy, through the leadership of Fr. Christodoulos, our parish came together as it always had, to comfort, help and support each other, continuing to help us all grow closer to our triune God. We enhanced our website and online services. We saw the tremendous outpouring of generosity in the Matching Funds drive. We were able to complete the renovation of the back wall and parking lot. Philoptochos held successful drive-through bake sales and continued its philanthropic efforts. We completed additional iconography and dedicated an icon to Fr. Michael. And much, much more.

We're all one in Christ, who is love, and we thank each and every one of you for your love, prayers and support.

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday January 5th.

On behalf of the Parish Council,

Jim
407-408-3096
jkatsihtis@gmail.com



FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

**President, Eleni Giakoumopoulos, 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. Corre-
sponding Secretary: Kathie Fafalios**

We continue to be #PhiloStrong because of the support of this amazing community!!

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES:

CHAPTER COMMITMENTS

PHILOPTOCHOS VIRTUAL BAKE SALE – NOVEMBER 21-22, 2020

Thank you to all in our parish and greater Madison community who supported our virtual fundraiser this year -- a tremendous collaborative effort with Philoptochos officers Maria H, Maria M and Sue S.

Thank you to Lainey S who set up the online store portal, Kathie F for working behind the scenes organizing our volunteer teams and Patti N for taking inquiries. To all the volunteers who worked and helped with receiving, counting, labels, packaging, quality control, delivery and cleanup: Nancy B, Athena D, Voula K, Nichole S, Korinna H, Faith M, Barbara K, Penny V, Demetra S, Nikki S, Maren K, Kristi P and Ilektra K. And to those who volunteered and we had to turn away in order to keep our numbers down in the church hall for safety reasons.

A large thank you to Mike S and John S who also assisted with traffic control and delivery to the cars along with Sue S, Patti C and Betty L. And, a very large thank you to Father Christodoulos for the tremendous support.

MONTHLY TRAY

Pre-Covid-19, the chapter would have a monthly collection basket as a way to collect donations for the various commitments (local, Metropolis and national). This was usually passed at the end of a church service.

As we are having to pivot our fundraising activities and try to maintain a flow of revenue to our accounts, we are sharing the monthly tray schedule with you. This is an excellent way to continue contributing to Philoptochos and all our efforts. We invite all parishioners who are interested in making a donation to:

- Place a donation in the tray located as you exit the church
- Send a check to our Treasurer, Maria Heide at 5751 Ballina Pkwy, Fitchburg, WI 53711 and place a note in the memo line for which monthly tray collection you wish your donation to be allocated

MASKS MATTER

Our chapter has become involved in the Metropolis humanitarian initiative Masks Matter. Our chapter has do-

nated over 300 masks so far. Congratulations to all who are involved with this activity.

The goal for the Metropolis is to sew and distribute 10,000 masks by December 31 to non- first responders (ie. caregivers, other hospital workers, grocery store clerks, and parishioners).

During the Metropolis President’s Meeting, it was announced that as of October 24, 2020, **18,377 masks have already been made!!!** If anyone is interested in becoming involved, you may contact Nancy Briamis (nbriamis@gmail.com).

METROPOLIS

UPCOMING DATES

December 5, 2020: Ordination of Bishop Elect Timothy of Hexamilion at Saints Constantine & Helen, Greek Orthodox Church, Merrillville, Indiana.

2021 PHILOPTOCHOS

MONTHLY TRAY SCHEDULE

JANUARY.....ST BASILS ACADEMY/VASILOPITA FUNDRAISER
FEBRUARY.....LOCAL SCHOOL CHILDREN FUND
MARCH.....RELIEF FOR GREECE/GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY
APRIL.....IOCC
MAY.....RIVER FOOD PANTRY
JUNE.....PHILANTHROPY FUND
JULY.....PHILANTROPY FUND
AUGUST.....MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SEPTEMBER.....HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY CROSS
OCTOBER.....CHOIR
NOVEMBER.....ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
DECEMBER.....ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MISSION

River Food Pantry - Nancy Briamis, nbriamis@gmail.com

The River’s COVID-19 Emergency Food Fund provides free curbside groceries and supplies, mobile lunches for children, and ready-to-go meals for families to enjoy at home. 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.aid.

The River plans to distribute holiday to-go meals and groceries through community support of The River’s H.O.P.E. (Help Other People Eat) Holiday Meal Campaign. Learn more and give to H.O.P.E. at www.riverfoodpantry.org/give-HOPE.

The River Food Pantry is implementing additional programs to improve access to food during this pandemic. The River needs volunteers to expand both of these programs.

1. Expansion of their MUNCH (bagged lunches for kids) program from once a day to twice a day Monday through Friday.
2. Dane County residents who cannot leave home to travel to The River may qualify for The River’s new free delivery service, called River Delivers, to receive both household groceries and pre-prepared meals.

Please contact The River Food Pantry at (608) 442-8815 or riverfoodpantry.org if you can help.

Sunday School

Co-Directors: Seham Akkawi, sususaba@yahoo.com,

Peli Galiti, Co-pegaliti@gmail.com,

Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Christodoulos, frchristos@gmail.com

Hello Sunday school families,

We hope that you all enjoyed Thanksgiving break with your families.

Starting December 1st we will start a Sunday school food drive. The church has partnered up with the River Food Pantry for many years now and we want to continue that tradition to help families who are in need of basic food items for Christmas, especially during these hard times. This food drive is open for everyone in the parish who would like to help out starting the month of December through January. There will be a barrel in the front entrance of the church to drop off food items. I have attached a poster of food items that the River Food Pantry needs for this year.

Sunday school families, please drop off the food items on Dec 13th any time from 9:30am-2pm. Because of Covid, we still wanted to keep the Gingerbread event, but with a twist! Families when you drop off food items on Dec 13th you will get a fun Christmas family craft bag an exchange for your donation. If you are not able to come to church to drop off the food items please email me and I can make an arrangement with you.

On December 20th at 5:30pm we will continue the tradition of the annual gingerbread night, but through a family zoom night event this year! Families will show off their gingerbread houses, play some virtual games together, learn about Saint Nicholas, and pray together as a family for the new year. We will be sending out a zoom link to the parents as the date gets closer. We hope that you can make it!

Lastly, December 20th will be the last Sunday of classes before Christmas break, then we will resume back on Jan 10, 2021.

In Christ,

Susu and Peli

Co-directors of Sunday school

sususaba@yahoo.com

pegaliti@gmail.com

GREEK SCHOOL

Elektra Kolokouri, ilektra.kol@gmail.com

Our Greek School will be having a Greek Celebration of Christmas via zoom. As we are unable to put a program together this year for our Greek School. We have decided to have an evening hangout with anyone who would like to join on Sunday, December 20 beginning at 7:30 p.m. More information and details will be emailed out.

This event is open to the entire community.

If you need information about Greek school please e-mail Ilektra.

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!

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL MEETING

Peli Galiti: pegaliti@gmail.com

The next spiritual meeting will be through zoom on Thursday, December 3rd, 7:00 pm.

Our discussion will continue to be about Fear and Worries. Why doesn't our Faith always help us? Some basic characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Religiousness will be discussed.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS

We are continuing our Adult Religious Education classes every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. The links are emailed out every Wednesday and everyone is welcome to join. We are going over the book of Genesis.

Please join us to learn more about our faith and history.

CHURCH WEBSITE

Lainey Skoumbouris, laney0220@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.

Assumption Cookbook Project

We are starting to collect recipes for our AGOC cookbook. Please submit your recipe using this online form: <https://forms.gle/jdEM9USt1nSXjGGR8>. We are excited to create a memorable book to preserve our stories through food! If you are interested in being part of the cookbook committee please email Maria Schirmer Devitt at schirmerdevitt@gmail.com.

Goodman Community Center



HOLIDAY GIFTS

Can you help make a child's holiday a little brighter?

The Holiday Gift Sponsorship Program helps families of the Goodman Community Center's youth programs provide

holiday gifts for their children. You, your family, organization or business can help provide gifts to over 500 children and youth in our preschool, 4K, elementary afterschool, middle and high school programs.

Here's how it works

Goodman Community Center families complete "wish lists" for their children under the age of 12. Children from 12-18 will receive gift certificates. You may choose to sponsor as many children as you wish. You can also choose to shop for a child of a certain age or gender if you have a preference. Children wish for popular new toys, old favorites – and often needed essential items.

To be assigned a child or a family, **contact Tanya Walker** starting Friday, Nov. 11. All gifts should be brought *unwrapped* to the Ironworks building front desk, 149 Waubesa Street, by Friday, Dec. 13.

Want to make a financial gift?

It's easy to **donate online**. Simply tell us it's for holiday gift cards in the notes section. You can also submit a check by mail (214 Waubesa Street, Madison, WI 53704) or at the front desk of the Center in the Ironworks building. We appreciate any amount you can give.

Holiday Gift Coordinator: Tanya Walker, tanyaw@goodmancenter.org or 204-8034.

For more information - (608) 241-1574, info@goodmancenter.org or goodmancenter.org.

December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		Fast Day	Strict Fast Day Saint Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia 9:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class	Fast Day	Strict Fast Saint Barbara the Great Martyr & Saint John of Damas- cus 9:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted)
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted) 10th Sunday of Luke Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker 8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School	Fast Day	Fast Day	Strict Fast 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class	Fast Day	Strict Fast	Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted) Saint Spyridon The Wonderworker 9:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted) 11th Sunday of Luke 8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Sunday School	Fast Day	Fast Day	Strict Fast 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class	Fast Day Daniel the Prophet & Ananias, Azarias, & Misail, the Three Holy Youths Saint Dionysius of Zakynthos 9:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	Strict Fast	Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted)
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Fast Day (Wine & Oil Permitted) Sunday before the Nativity Stewardship Sunday 8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Sunday School	Fast Day	Fast Day Saint Anastasia the Great Martyr 9:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	Strict Fast No Adult Religious Education Class	Strict Fast Day Eve of the Nativity 6:00 p.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy	Nativity of our Lord Christmas Day 8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy	
27	28	29	30	31		
Sunday after the Nativity 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy No Sunday School			Fast Free	New Year's Eve		



ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX

SUNDAY SCHOOL RIVER FOOD PANTRY DRIVE

*Help donate to the pantry for families who
are in need this year.*

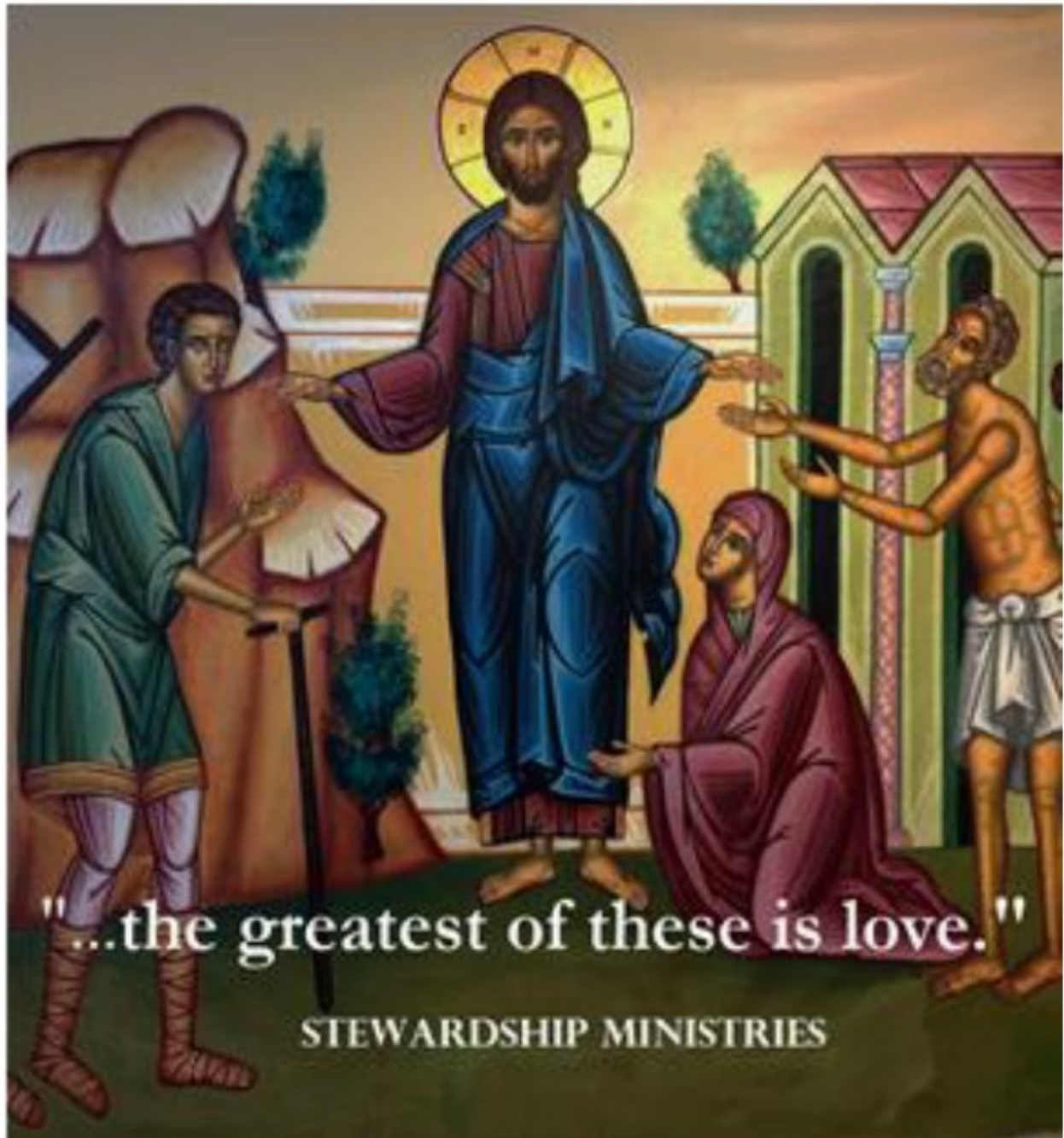
DROP OFF ITEMS ON
DECEMBER 13, 2020
TIME: 9:30AM-2PM
FRONT ENTRANCE OF CHURCH

THE GIFT OF GIVING

LIST OF FOOD ITEMS:

Box of cereal
Peanut butter
Bread
Stuffing Mix
Boxed mashed potatoes
Macaroni and Cheese
Canned Fruit
Canned tomatoes
Canned tuna
Dessert mix
Jar of apple sauce
Canned sweet potatoes
Canned Vegetables
Box of crackers
Package of rice
Package of oatmeal
Pasta and pasta sauce
Canned soups
Jello
Granola bars
Hand Soap/Shampoo&Conditioner
Paper towels
Diapers/ Wipes/Napkins
Please feel free to bring other items!

2021 Stewardship Commitment Form



ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH CONFIDENTIAL STEWARDSHIP & FAMILY INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the 2021 Stewardship & Commitment form and return this form to the Church Office

Family Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone: _____

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/We commit to Christ and His Church the following amount:

\$ \$1,560 (\$30/week) \$1,976 (\$38/week) \$2,600 (\$50/week) \$5,200 (\$100/week) Other

Highlighted amount of \$1,976 is what we need to average per steward to run the church on Stewardship alone.

	Member	Spouse	Children	/ Age
Name:	_____	_____	_____	/
Mobile Tel:	_____	_____	_____	/
E-mail:	_____	_____	_____	/
Occupation:	_____	_____	_____	/
Work Tel:	_____	_____	_____	/

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH FAMILY INFORMATION FORM

Please complete and return this form to the Church Office

Family Name: _____

Please check ✓ those items in which you or a member of your family has some expertise or interest.

Place name or initials of the specific family member after each item checked.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Language School | <input type="checkbox"/> Church Choir | <input type="checkbox"/> Church Camp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visitation of Elderly/Infirm | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking-Events or Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer - general | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ushering / Welcome | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer – Web Site Mgt | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical / Plumbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader (in liturgy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parish Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

The Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2021 Parish Budget Anticipates a commitment \$145,000 from Stewardship. This represents only 2/3 of our anticipated expenses. Every Stewardship Pledge should conscientiously contribute to the support of our Church for ONE FULL YEAR! To meet our expenses, Assumption needs an average of \$642 a day. We must

Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
\$ 200	\$ 16.67	\$ 3.85	\$ 0.55
\$ 400	\$ 33.33	\$ 7.69	\$ 1.10
\$ 600	\$ 50	\$ 11.53	\$ 1.64

ask ourselves prayerfully are we doing enough to continue our mission as a parish. **Please consider using the above table to see how simple it is to increase your stewardship.** With this simple increase we can bring our stewardship closer to fully covering our anticipated budget for 2021. We know not everyone can do this, just try your best and God will provide. You can set up auto pay by going to our website <http://www.agocwi.org/> and clicking on the giving button.

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

2021 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT: Assumption Greek Orthodox Church depends on the love and gratitude of its members in order to perform its sacred ministry. Each member is asked to support the church by annually setting his or her own level of giving, in proportion to his or her earnings. This year, we ask you to search your heart and conscience, and to seriously consider the many needs of our Church, as you determine your Stewardship Pledge of Commitment for 2021.

Your giving should be a profound spiritual action, coming as an expression of your love and gratitude to God and his church, which blesses you and your family, and preserves and cultivates our Orthodox Christian Faith. To be meaningful, your Stewardship Commitment should not be simply a token offering from your surplus resources, but should be a true sacrifice, giving a feeling that “I gave something valuable in order to help my Church,” a GOOD FEELING.

Our 2021 Parish Budget is counting on drawing \$145,000 from Stewardship. This represents about 2/3 of our anticipated expenses. Please realize that every Stewardship Pledge of Commitment should represent conscientious support of our Church for ONE FULL YEAR! To meet our expenses, Assumption needs an average of \$1,976 to be able to survive on stewardship alone. So you can see how important your contribution is! Some stewards can give more than this; some will give less. We are hoping that every steward of our parish can try to raise their stewardship for the year. Just like we get a cost of living increase through work, so do the expenses of the church go up each year. We need to be mindful to try and increase our giving by at least a bit every year. We know that giving certain amounts can seem daunting over time when you are only looking at the final number. Many people would like to give \$1,000, \$1,500 or even \$2,000 a year for stewardship. But that number can seem overwhelming. The best thing we can do is to try and break down those numbers to more manageable expectations. Do you know that setting aside \$20 a week for stewardship will mean at the end of the year you will have given \$1,040 in Stewardship. \$30 a week makes an offering of \$1,560 at the end of the year. And \$40 a week makes it \$2,080 for the year. We know not everyone can do this, and that is ok.

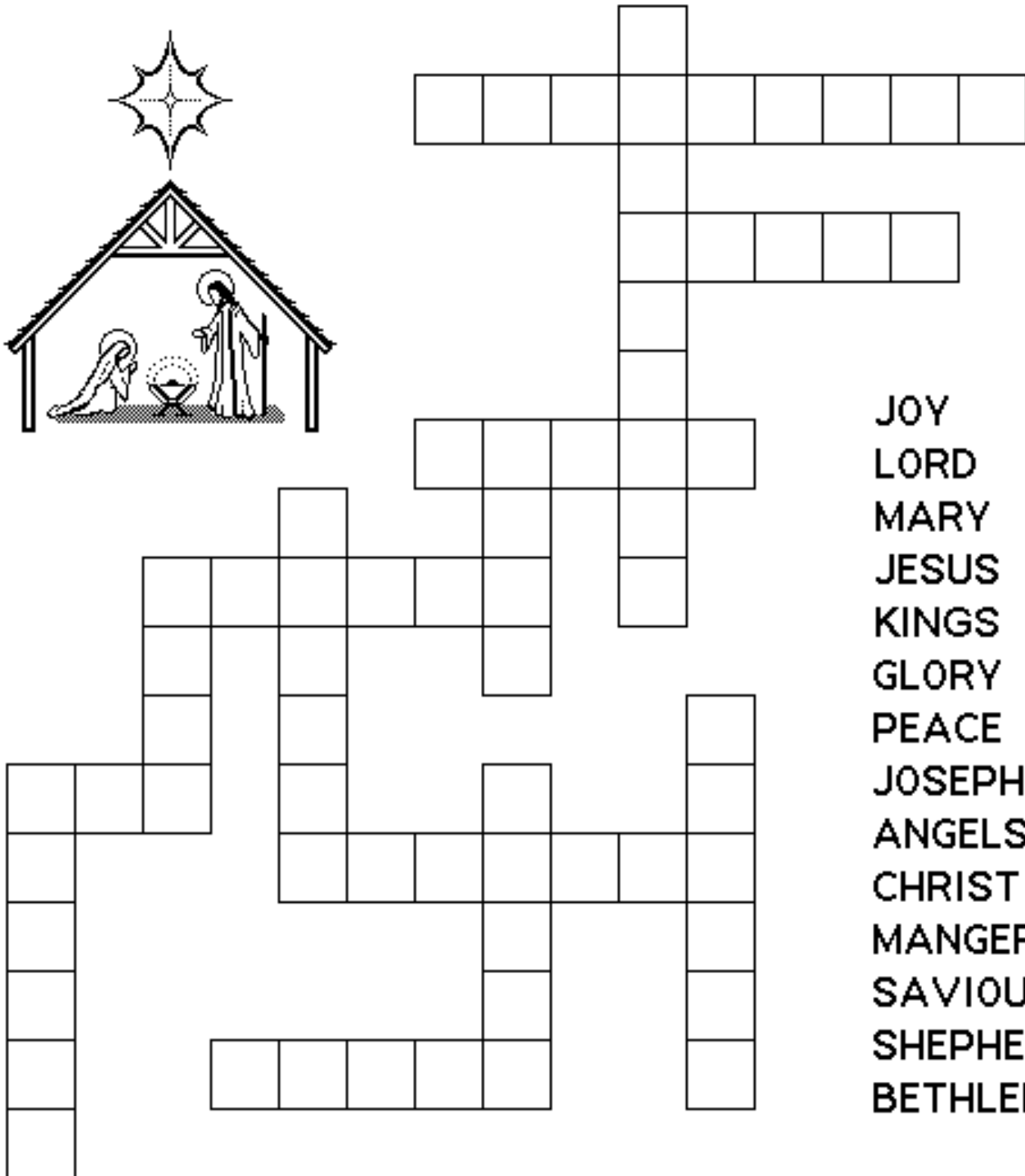
Try your best and God will provide.



KIDS CORNER

Christmas Crossword

Make all the words fit into this crossword.
Each word is only used once.



- JOY
- LORD
- MARY
- JESUS
- KINGS
- GLORY
- PEACE
- JOSEPH
- ANGELS
- CHRIST
- MANGER
- SAVIOUR
- SHEPHERDS
- BETHLEHEM

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

11 N 7th Street

Madison, WI 53704-4904

Phone: 608-244-1001 Fax: 608-244-1565

Email: office@agocwi.org

www.agocwi.org

What wondrous gifts our God has given us!

Feast of the Nativity Of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ December 25

Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, peace, goodwill toward men!

+ All generations are represented in the wise men who travel to bring their gifts to God: the young (beardless), the grown (black-bearded), and the elderly (white-bearded).



+ The Virgin Mother is seen reclining—she has just endured real childbirth.
+ The cave foreshadows the tomb wherein Christ will open eternal life to all.
+ His swaddling prefigures His graveclothes.
+ Even the animals offer Him gifts of awe and the simple warmth of their breath.



+ Midwives are shown bathing the Child, providing care that all newborns need, to emphasize His humanity.
+ Though not mentioned in the Gospels, according to the tradition of the time, two midwives would attend a childbirth.
+ St. Joseph the Betrothed would likely have arranged for this.



+ Countless angels are shown doing the many works that we are all called to do as God's creation.

+ These works include worshipping God, offering their service, singing hymns of praise, and announcing the Good News of His birth.



+ Humble shepherds respond to the angel's words and to the star showing the way.

+ They come through the barren wilderness...a reminder of the inhospitable world as it has been since man was expelled from Paradise.



+ St. Joseph the Betrothed is seen at a distance from the central image of the Panagia and her Child, reinforcing that he is not the father of the Newborn.

+ He faces out into the darkness, troubled with doubts about Christ's Virgin Birth.

+ In some icons, he is shown listening to an old, bent man representing the Evil One, who makes these troubling suggestions.

