

## 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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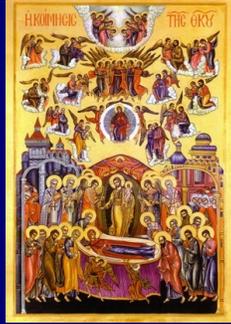
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# The Message

JANUARY 2022

## HOLIDAY EXPECTATIONS

I am sure that by the time you read this message the holidays will be something of a memory. The trees will have been taken down and placed out with the trash or perhaps placed back in their boxes to lie dormant until next year. Gifts will have been opened and wrong sizes or unwanted gifts returned for cold hard cash. I guess it's time to ask: Was it all worth it? Did all the hours of preparation pay off? Did you enjoy the holidays? Did you greet our Lord Jesus Christ? Are you a better person or just a poorer one? Is your stomach just now beginning to recover? Was it a big letdown? Would you do it all over again if you had the chance?

If any of these questions ring true, just know you were not alone at Christmas time. Many people were unhappy at Christmas time for perhaps two reasons. First, they set their expectations too high. They expected that everything would happen as planned. They thought they could please everyone and make everyone happy. By creating an unreal world of tinsel, glitter and colored lights, they thought they could run away from their problems and difficulties. They attempted to fabricate artificial solutions instead of contracting real ones.

Secondly, they think that everyone else is happy, and they are the only ones with problems. The illusion is substantiated because during the holidays people seem to be happier, friendlier, more open, more everything. However, it is just an illusion. If you scratch the surface a bit, underneath the mask you will find the real person. You may find the true face of happiness or sadness, contentment or despair. The few days of the holiday season cannot change what has been built into a person over the years.

If we can learn not to set our expectations too high, but rather to make realistic demands on ourselves and set our goals accordingly, and if we can admit that others share problems and weak moments just as we do, then we can dismiss the illusions that keep us from real happiness.

Children have the knack of doing this. They have expectations. Until the final moment when the gift wrapping comes off, they still hope that the box in their hands might contain the real pony they asked for. But when they discover that the pony is more like ice skates, they modify their expectations. Children are flexible and resilient. Their fantasy gives way to reality. Children also avoid the second cause of unhappiness. They do not think that they are alone in being sad or disappointed with what they got for Christmas. Just the opposite! They think that everyone is happy. They're not sulking. They want to share their joy. Remember how they ran around the house showing everyone what they got for Christmas? They want to spread their joy.

With the perspective of the Orthodox faith, we can cut through to the real cause of joy and peace in life. Using Orthodoxy in our reflection, we can re-examine the two causes of happiness and see if they are present in our lives. The two causes are realistic expectations and sharing our joy with others while admitting our own weakness. Were our expectations realistic? Did we search for our happiness in the peace and joy that only Christ can give rather than the superficial things of the season?

Secondly, did we share our troubles as well as our happiness with others? Did we share our weaknesses by lifting them up to Christ in confession? To share our troubles and express our anxieties is to lighten them. A reordering of our lives along these lines could lead to a happier Christmas next year. It's not too early to start now! May our Lord help us all to see a bit of joy and happiness in each moment of each day of the New Year!

+Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos

## January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30  Three Hierarchs, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian & Saint John Chrysostom  8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Sunday School/Greek School	31					1  Circumcision of our Lord & Saint Basil the Great  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy
2  Sunday before Theophany  8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	3	4  6:00 p.m. Philoctochos Meeting	5  Strict Fast  8:00 a.m. Royal Hours of Theophany 10:00 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of the Waters  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	6  Theophany of our Lord  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of the Water  6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class	7  Strict Fast	8  5:00 p.m. Great Vespers
9  Sunday after Theophany 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School/Greek School begin	10	11	12  Strict Fast  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	13  7:00 p.m. Women's Spiritual Meeting	14  Strict Fast	15  5:00 p.m. Great Vespers
16  12th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Parish Vasilopita More Details soon  Sunday School/Greek School	17  Saint Anthony the Great  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	18  Saints Athanasios & Cyril Patriarchs of Alexandria  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy  7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	19  Strict Fast  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	20  6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class	21  Strict Fast	22  5:00 p.m. Great Vespers
23  14th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Sunday School/Greek School  1:00 p.m. Parish Outing at Tyrol Basin	24	25	26  Strict Fast	27	28  Strict Fast	29  5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

# **The Parish Council Update September 2021**

**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, Carol Griskavich, Mike Smith, John Soloninka, Nichols Helser**

Christ is Born! And blessed calendar New Year to all!

As we continue to celebrate our Lord's Nativity during the 12 days of Christmas and prepare for Holy Theophany, let's remember that Christ did not come into the world and then leave us. He is always there for us and desires to be in communion with and dwell in us. As I once read one priest put it, the greater miracle is not that God has the ability to become incarnate (He is God and can do anything), but that he loves us in our fallen condition and goes to that level to seek us and restore us to communion with Him.

As we enter this new calendar year, we ask you to prayerfully consider the level of engagement and help you can offer this year in worship, ministry and fellowship. We are slowly building momentum after losing so much during the pandemic. We need your help in sharing and growing our Orthodox faith, developing our youth and ministering to the community. We especially need GreekFest+ Chair/Co-Chairs. Without a Chair/Co-Chairs in place by the end of January, our beloved and historical festival, and key fundraising event, may not take place or be significantly modified. Please contact Father, Jim or a member of the Parish Council if you are able to lead or help on the GreekFest+ Committee. Thank you.

## **Safety Update**

Public Health Madison and Dane County issued an emergency face covering order that extends the wearing of face coverings until at least February 1. Thanks again for following our safety guidelines and for showing love for your neighbor throughout the pandemic.

## **2022 Stewardship**

If you haven't already, please return your 2022 Stewardship form and continue to pray for, and generously support, our parish. Your stewardship helps support our worship, ministries, youth programs and facility expenses. Our goal should be to have our operating expenses covered by stewardship and to not have to rely on fundraisers for operating expenses. Please help us reach that goal.

## **Fall General Assembly**

We held our Fall General Assembly on November 28th. Highlights include:

the 2022 Budget was passed

the Election and Audit Committees were appointed

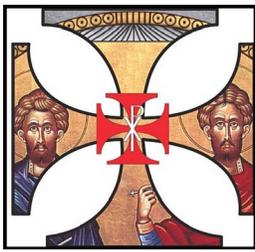
The Parish Council nominations were made

The Iconography proposal for the two transepts in the Nave was passed

The Carpet replacement proposal was passed, with the agreement to continue to try to fundraise for it regardless (see fundraiser below)

## **Carpet Fundraiser**

Our new carpet will be comprised of carpet tiles that are 2 feet by 2 feet squares. Would you please consider



# FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

January 2022

## Focus on PHILOPTOCHOS

#PhiloCares

At this time each year, we often find it as a time of gratitude, reflection and hope. Let us give thanks for being able to be together this challenging year. Let us give thanks for our good health and the good health of our families. Let us give thanks for our friendships and our Philoptochos Sisters who are always there for us. Let us give thanks for how our community comes together to support our work.

“Away in the Manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head”

As Philoptochos women, we find beds for those who have none, we give food for those who are hungry, we give solace and comfort to those who need it.

During this season of hope, let us not forget the power of the sisterhood. Let us continue our mission with Peace and Good Will to all mankind!

*From The Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Board*

## LOOKING AHEAD

- **January 2022:** Philoptochos will host the St Basils Academy / Vasilopita Fundraiser on January 16. Look for information on how you can support our annual fundraiser for Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, NY – the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese special school for children in need. It provides a nurturing environment and safe haven where resident Orthodox children receive developmental, educational, spiritual and material needs to adulthood.
- **Membership 2022:** Come meet amazing women whom you can call your sisters in our army of agape. We welcome all ladies 18 years of age and up to please join us. Get yourself in the spirit of giving and show your love by doing the good work of Philoptochos. If you are interested in joining us as a member, please contact me at [lenaqiak@gmail.com](mailto:lenaqiak@gmail.com) or [philoptochos@agocwi.org](mailto:philoptochos@agocwi.org). Inviting all women of AGOC to come join us at our next Philoptochos meeting (virtually) on **January 4, 2022 at 6 pm via zoom**.
- We continue to be #PhiloStrong because of the support of this amazing community!! The tray collection per month is included in the newsletter. For January we will be collecting for St Basil Academy.

## A FEW NOTES FROM DECEMBER

- AGOC Philoptochos Caring Ministry – if you know of others in our community who are homebound and could benefit from a call from the Caring Ministry, contact Patti Cameron / [pccameron10@gmail.com](mailto:pccameron10@gmail.com) or Kathie Fafalios / [lennykathie@gmail.com](mailto:lennykathie@gmail.com).
- The National Philoptochos Executive Board has authorized the implementation of new financial programs and processes. Our chapter president and treasurer participated in the training of using the new system.

## Metropolis dates to note:

- January 2: Metropolis Wide Vasilopita, Holy Taxiarchai & St. Haralambos, Niles, IL, 6pm
- January 29: St Nicholas Church Oaklawn, IL, Philoptochos Cooking Class & Luncheon, 11 am

# Parish Outing to Tyrol Basin



On Sunday, January 30th we will have a parish outing to Tyrol Basin for a day of Tubing or skiing. We will meet at Tyrol Basin at 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Cost is \$25 per person for the tubing. If you would like to ski instead you will need to consult the website for pricing and details.

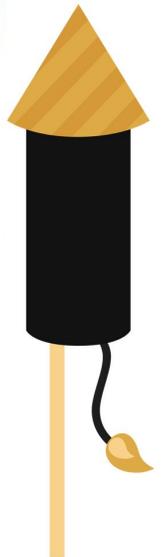
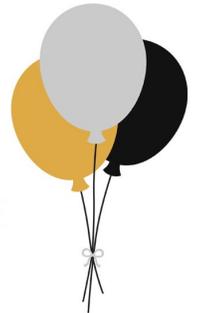
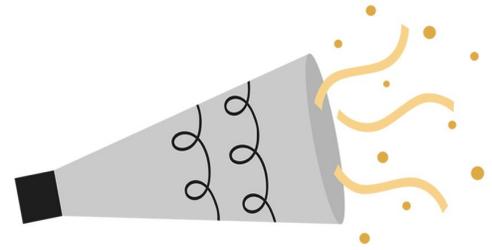
<https://tyrolbasin.com/>

We are asking everyone to purchase the tickets on your own as there is no discount for groups and there are liability forms to fill out. The Tickets go on sale a week in advance so they will not be available for purchase until the 23rd of January. If you need the church to purchase the tickets for you arrangements can be made.

If you are interested please email or contact Fr. Christodoulos so he can keep a list of those who plan on attending.

Join us for a fun afternoon on the slopes.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!



W I H V V A X R N R Z G O A L S A Z Y F  
 G R B K G Z T Y Z I Z Z J Q C O M P X B  
 M D M B T B K T P X N S L T K C X X W T  
 M I Q C R A E Y W E N O Z J K S K R N H  
 L P D M V X P N Z J L O V Z V Y D Z Q G  
 G P E X A X K O Q N C O U N T D O W N I  
 F V Z N D S S M B P C Y W V F T W F B N  
 T R S P S P A R K L E R S H Q T O J A D  
 P J O L B Y V M S Y L N N N R C A F L I  
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 W I S C F S F L D B R G P A J E X A O K  
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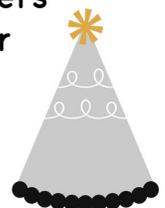
Countdown  
 Confetti  
 Midnight  
 Balloons

Celebration  
 Fireworks  
 January  
 Happy



New Year  
 Clock  
 Cheers  
 Goals

Party Poppers  
 Noisemaker  
 Resolution  
 Sparklers



## COMMUNITY NEWS

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:** Will be held on Tuesday, January 18th at 7:00 p.m.

**CARPET FUNDRAISER:** To help offset the cost of the new carpet for the church we have put together an option to help pay for it. The new carpet comes in tiles and each of those tiles will cost \$20. So we are interested in seeing if people would consider donating tiles as many as you like, but we are hoping to get everyone to donate the tiles they are using each service. You can also donate an entire row which is 10 tiles for \$200. Please consider giving if you are able. Thank you for being a part of our community.

**VASILOPITA CELEBRATION:** On Sunday, January 16th, we will have our annual Vasilopita cutting. We invite all the families of our Church to join us in the "cutting of the New Year's Vasilopita." We are currently working out the details for our Parish Vasilopita so please save the date and more information will be available soon.

**ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS:** A.R.E. classes are in full swing. We are currently continuing the Book of Acts. We will have in person classes on Wednesday's at 11:00 a.m. here at the church. We will also have a virtual zoom class on Thursday's beginning at 6:30 p.m. The classes are the same and interchangeable. We look forward to continuing our journey together.

**FROM THE GREEK SCHOOL:** The Greek school teachers would like to thank all the children, the parents, the parish members and Father Chris for their participation in our Christmas pageant that took place on December 12th of 2020. Your support and encouragement makes our church's youth creative and active in the community. They are the future of this community and will keep our church alive for many years to come.

We wish all of you a happy, creative, full of good health, love, peace, compassion, happiness and kindness, New Year!

We will resume our classes on January 9th. See you soon! Best regards, Ilektra Kolokouri Anagnostopoulos and George Kostas, Assumption Greek school teachers.

**WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL MEETING:** Women's spiritual zoom meetings will be on Thursday, December 16th at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating and you haven't signed in yet please contact Peli Galiti at [pegaliti@gmail.com](mailto:pegaliti@gmail.com) You will get the zoom link in your email.

All women from Assumption parish, St. Ignatius Parish and other parishes are welcome.

**PARISH OUTING TO TYROL BASIN:** On Sunday, January 30th we will have a parish outing to Tyrol Basin for a day of Tubing or skiing. We will meet at Tyrol Basin at 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Cost is \$25 per person for the tubing. If you would like to ski instead you will need to consult the website for pricing and details. <https://tyrolbasin.com/>

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If you are interested please email or contact Fr. Christodoulos so he can keep a list of those who plan on attending. Join us for a fun afternoon on the slopes.

**SAVE THE DATE: PARISH OUTING TO THE MADISON CAPITALS GAME:** On Saturday, February 19th we will be heading to the Madison Capitals Hockey game. We are in the process of purchasing the tickets now and will have a cost very soon. It is Mike Eruzione Bobblehead night. Save the date and plan on joining us Saturday, February 19th.

**J & 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!

**FUTURE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND:** I have been blessed to lead a few trips to the Holy Land as a priest and I plan to lead another one for our parish here at Assumption. This will be in the fall of 2022. But if you are interested keep it in mind and more information will come when available.

**RIVER FOOD PANTRY:** In 2021 The River Food Pantry has served over 3,710,749 pounds of food distributed, over 43,229 meals served, over 52,117 lunches served to children with 97.5% of donations going to those they serve. Please consider a donation to The River Food Pantry or volunteer your time.

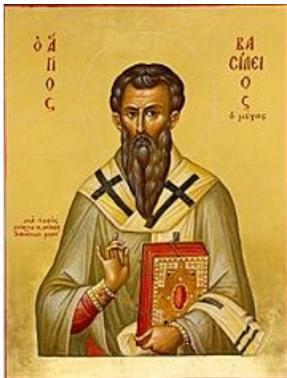


**The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:** On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God’s Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants [Genesis 17:10-14, Leviticus 12:3].

After this ritual, the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos [Luke 1:31-33, 2:21]. The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics had taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured [Colossians 2:11-12]. Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon of the Feast was written by Saint Stephen of the Saint Sava Monastery.

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God’s Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus [Savior] on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world [Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:38-39, 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Philippians 2:9-10]. These two events -- the Lord’s Circumcision and Naming -- remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and “are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” [Colossians 2:11]. The very name “Christian” is a sign of mankind’s entrance into a New Covenant with God.



**St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia:** Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, “belongs not to the Church of Caesarea alone, nor merely to his own time, nor was he of benefit only to his own kinsmen, but rather to all lands and cities worldwide, and to all people he brought and still brings benefit, and for Christians he always was and will be a most salvific teacher.” Thus spoke Saint Basil’s contemporary, Saint Amphilochios, Bishop of Iconium.

Saint Basil was born in the year 330 at Caesarea, the administrative center of Cappadocia. He was of illustrious lineage, famed for its eminence and wealth, and zealous for the Christian Faith. The saint’s grandfather and grandmother on his father’s side had to hide in the forests of Pontus for seven years during the persecution under Diocletian.

Saint Basil’s mother Saint Emilia was the daughter of a martyr. On the Greek calendar, she is commemorated on May 30. Saint Basil’s father was also named Basil. He was a lawyer and renowned rhetorician, and lived at Caesarea.

Ten children were born to the elder Basil and Emilia: five sons and five daughters. Five of them were later numbered among the saints: Basil the Great; Macrina (July 19) was an exemplar of ascetic life, and exerted strong influence on the life and character of Saint Basil the Great; Gregory, afterwards Bishop of Nyssa (January 10); Peter, Bishop of Sebaste (January 9); and Theosebia, a deaconess (January 10).

Saint Basil spent the first years of his life on an estate belonging to his parents at the River Iris, where he was raised under the supervision of his mother Emilia and grandmother Macrina. They were women of great refinement, who remembered an earlier bishop of Cappadocia, Saint Gregory the Wonderworker (November 17). Basil received his initial education under the supervision of his father, and then he studied under the finest

teachers in Caesarea of Cappadocia, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of Saint Gregory the Theologian (January 25 and January 30). Later, Basil transferred to a school at Constantinople, where he listened to eminent orators and philosophers. To complete his education Saint Basil went to Athens, the center of classical enlightenment.

After a four or five year stay at Athens, Basil had mastered all the available disciplines. “He studied everything thoroughly, more than others are wont to study a single subject. He studied each science in its very totality, as though he would study nothing else.” Philosopher, philologist, orator, jurist, naturalist, possessing profound knowledge in astronomy, mathematics and medicine, “he was a ship fully laden with learning, to the extent permitted by human nature.”

At Athens a close friendship developed between Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), which continued throughout their life. In fact, they regarded themselves as one soul in two bodies. Later on, in his eulogy for Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian speaks with delight about this period: “Various hopes guided us, and indeed inevitably, in learning... Two paths opened up before us: the one to our sacred temples and the teachers therein; the other towards preceptors of disciplines beyond.”

About the year 357, Saint Basil returned to Caesarea, where for a while he devoted himself to rhetoric. But soon, refusing offers from Caesarea’s citizens who wanted to entrust him with the education of their offspring, Saint Basil entered upon the path of ascetic life.

After the death of her husband, Basil’s mother, her eldest daughter Macrina, and several female servants withdrew to the family estate at Iris and there began to lead an ascetic life. Basil was baptized by Dianios, the Bishop of Caesarea, and was tonsured a Reader (On the Holy Spirit, 29). He first read the Holy Scriptures to the people, then explained them.

Later on, “wishing to acquire a guide to the knowledge of truth”, the saint undertook a journey into Egypt, Syria and Palestine, to meet the great Christian ascetics dwelling there. On returning to Cappadocia, he decided to do as they did. He distributed his wealth to the needy, then settled on the opposite side of the river not far from his mother Emilia and sister Macrina, gathering around him monks living a cenobitic life.

By his letters, Basil drew his good friend Gregory the Theologian to the monastery. Saints Basil and Gregory labored in strict abstinence in their dwelling place, which had no roof or fireplace, and the food was very humble. They themselves cleared away the stones, planted and watered the trees, and carried heavy loads. Their hands were constantly calloused from the hard work. For clothing Basil had only a tunic and monastic mantle. He wore a hairshirt, but only at night, so that it would not be obvious.

In their solitude, Saints Basil and Gregory occupied themselves in an intense study of Holy Scripture. They were guided by the writings of the Fathers and commentators of the past, especially the good writings of Origen. From all these works they compiled an anthology called *Philokalia*. Also at this time, at the request of the monks, Saint Basil wrote down a collection of rules for virtuous life. By his preaching and by his example Saint Basil assisted in the spiritual perfection of Christians in Cappadocia and Pontus; and many indeed turned to him. Monasteries were organized for men and for women, in which places Basil sought to combine the cenobitic (*koine bios*, or common) lifestyle with that of the solitary hermit.

During the reign of Constantius (337-361) the heretical teachings of Arius were spreading, and the Church summoned both its saints into service. Saint Basil returned to Caesarea. In the year 362 he was ordained deacon by Bishop Meletius of Antioch. In 364 he was ordained to the holy priesthood by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea. “But seeing,” as Gregory the Theologian relates, “that everyone exceedingly praised and honored Basil for his wisdom and reverence, Eusebius, through human weakness, succumbed to jealousy of him, and began to show dislike for him.” The monks rose up in defense of Saint Basil. To avoid causing Church dis-

cord, Basil withdrew to his own monastery and concerned himself with the organization of monasteries.

With the coming to power of the emperor Valens (364-378), who was a resolute adherent of Arianism, a time of troubles began for Orthodoxy, the onset of a great struggle. Saint Basil hastily returned to Caesarea at the request of Bishop Eusebius. In the words of Gregory the Theologian, he was for Bishop Eusebius “a good advisor, a righteous representative, an expounder of the Word of God, a staff for the aged, a faithful support in internal matters, and an activist in external matters.”

From this time church governance passed over to Basil, though he was subordinate to the hierarch. He preached daily, and often twice, in the morning and in the evening. During this time Saint Basil composed his Liturgy. He wrote a work “On the Six Days of Creation” (Hexaemeron) and another on the Prophet Isaiah in sixteen chapters, yet another on the Psalms, and also a second compilation of monastic rules. Saint Basil wrote also three books “Against Eunomius,” an Arian teacher who, with the help of Aristotelian concepts, had presented the Arian dogma in philosophic form, converting Christian teaching into a logical scheme of rational concepts.

Saint Gregory the Theologian, speaking about the activity of Basil the Great during this period, points to “the caring for the destitute and the taking in of strangers, the supervision of virgins, written and unwritten monastic rules for monks, the arrangement of prayers [Liturgy], the felicitous arrangement of altars and other things.” Upon the death of Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea, Saint Basil was chosen to succeed him in the year 370. As Bishop of Caesarea, Saint Basil the Great was the newest of fifty bishops in eleven provinces. Saint Athanasius the Great (May 2), with joy and with thanks to God welcomed the appointment to Cappadocia of such a bishop as Basil, famed for his reverence, deep knowledge of Holy Scripture, great learning, and his efforts for the welfare of Church peace and unity.

Under Valens, the external government belonged to the Arians, who held various opinions regarding the divinity of the Son of God, and were divided into several factions. These dogmatic disputes were concerned with questions about the Holy Spirit. In his books Against Eunomios, Saint Basil the Great taught the divinity of the Holy Spirit and His equality with the Father and the Son. Subsequently, in order to provide a full explanation of Orthodox teaching on this question, Saint Basil wrote his book On the Holy Spirit at the request of Saint Amphilochius, the Bishop of Iconium.

Saint Basil’s difficulties were made worse by various circumstances: Cappadocia was divided in two under the rearrangement of provincial districts. Then at Antioch a schism occurred, occasioned by the consecration of a second bishop. There was the negative and haughty attitude of Western bishops to the attempts to draw them into the struggle with the Arians. And there was also the departure of Eustathius of Sebaste over to the Arian side. Basil had been connected to him by ties of close friendship. Amidst the constant perils Saint Basil gave encouragement to the Orthodox, confirmed them in the Faith, summoning them to bravery and endurance. The holy bishop wrote numerous letters to the churches, to bishops, to clergy and to individuals. Overcoming the heretics “by the weapon of his mouth, and by the arrows of his letters,” as an untiring champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Basil challenged the hostility and intrigues of the Arian heretics all his life. He has been compared to a bee, stinging the Church’s enemies, yet nourishing his flock with the sweet honey of his teaching.

The emperor Valens, mercilessly sending into exile any bishop who displeased him, and having implanted Arianism into other Asia Minor provinces, suddenly appeared in Cappadocia for this same purpose. He sent the prefect Modestus to Saint Basil. He began to threaten the saint with the confiscation of his property, banishment, beatings, and even death.

Saint Basil said, “If you take away my possessions, you will not enrich yourself, nor will you make me a pauper. You have no need of my old worn-out clothing, nor of my few books, of which the entirety of my wealth is comprised. Exile means nothing to me, since I am bound to no particular place. This place in which I now

dwelling is not mine, and any place you send me shall be mine. Better to say: every place is God's. Where would I be neither a stranger and sojourner (Ps. 38/39:13)? Who can torture me? I am so weak, that the very first blow would render me insensible. Death would be a kindness to me, for it will bring me all the sooner to God, for Whom I live and labor, and to Whom I hasten."

The official was stunned by his answer. "No one has ever spoken so audaciously to me," he said.

"Perhaps," the saint remarked, "that is because you've never spoken to a bishop before. In all else we are meek, the most humble of all. But when it concerns God, and people rise up against Him, then we, counting everything else as naught, look to Him alone. Then fire, sword, wild beasts and iron rods that rend the body, serve to fill us with joy, rather than fear."

Reporting to Valens that Saint Basil was not to be intimidated, Modestus said, "Emperor, we stand defeated by a leader of the Church." Basil the Great again showed firmness before the emperor and his retinue and made such a strong impression on Valens that the emperor dared not give in to the Arians demanding Basil's exile. "On the day of Theophany, amidst an innumerable multitude of the people, Valens entered the church and mixed in with the throng, in order to give the appearance of being in unity with the Church. When the singing of Psalms began in the church, it was like thunder to his hearing. The emperor beheld a sea of people, and in the altar and all around was splendor; in front of all was Basil, who acknowledged neither by gesture nor by glance, that anything else was going on in church." Everything was focused only on God and the altar-table, and the clergy serving there in awe and reverence.

Saint Basil celebrated the church services almost every day. He was particularly concerned about the strict fulfilling of the Canons of the Church, and took care that only worthy individuals should enter into the clergy. He incessantly made the rounds of his own church, lest anywhere there be an infraction of Church discipline, and setting aright any unseemliness. At Caesarea, Saint Basil built two monasteries, a men's and a women's, with a church in honor of the Forty Martyrs (March 9) whose relics were buried there. Following the example of monks, the saint's clergy, even deacons and priests, lived in remarkable poverty, to toil and lead chaste and virtuous lives. For his clergy Saint Basil obtained an exemption from taxation. He used all his personal wealth and the income from his church for the benefit of the destitute; in every center of his diocese he built a poor-house; and at Caesarea, a home for wanderers and the homeless.

Sickly since youth, the toil of teaching, his life of abstinence, and the concerns and sorrows of pastoral service took their toll on him. Saint Basil died on January 1, 379 at age 49. Shortly before his death, the saint blessed Saint Gregory the Theologian to accept the See of Constantinople.

Upon the repose of Saint Basil, the Church immediately began to celebrate his memory. Saint Amphilochios, Bishop of Iconium (November 23), in his eulogy to Saint Basil the Great, said: "It is neither without a reason nor by chance that holy Basil has taken leave from the body and had repose from the world unto God on the day of the Circumcision of Jesus, celebrated between the day of the Nativity and the day of the Baptism of Christ. Therefore, this most blessed one, preaching and praising the Nativity and Baptism of Christ, extolling spiritual circumcision, himself forsaking the flesh, now ascends to Christ on the sacred day of remembrance of the Circumcision of Christ. Therefore, let it also be established on this present day annually to honor the memory of Basil the Great festively and with solemnity."

Saint Basil is also called "the revealer of heavenly mysteries" (Ouranophantor), a "renowned and bright star," and "the glory and beauty of the Church." His honorable head is in the Great Lavra on Mount Athos.

In some countries it is customary to sing special carols today in honor of Saint Basil. He is believed to visit the homes of the faithful, and a place is set for him at the table. People visit the homes of friends and relatives, and the mistress of the house gives a small gift to the children. A special bread (Vasilopita) is blessed and distributed after the Liturgy. A silver coin is baked into the bread, and whoever receives the slice with the coin is said to receive the blessing of Saint Basil for the coming<sup>11</sup> year.

# 2022 Stewardship Commitment Form

## Our Church: Our Spiritual Home

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How do I become a member of the parish?

Membership in the Orthodox Church begins at baptism (Chrismation for some) and continues throughout our life. We are united with Christ through the sacraments, or mysteries, of the Church and through our faithful offering of our entire selves to Jesus Christ. Our Archdiocese requires each parish to distinguish between voting members and non-voting members. A voting member is over 18 years of age and turns in a signed stewardship commitment card, committing a portion of time, talent and treasure to the Church. The Archdiocese also requires the voting member to remain current through the year on their commitments. Keep in mind that true membership in the Body of Christ involves living according to His word and within His Church.

#### Why must I commit to give a specific amount?

Please keep in mind that your stewardship of money is kept in the strictest of confidence. However, we do compile the amounts anticipated to better plan our budget.

#### What if I cannot fulfill my stewardship commitment?

During the course of a year, circumstances change. Your stewardship is valued because it is made out of your love for God and His Church. Please do not be concerned if you are unable to meet your stewardship commitment – we are glad you are a part of this parish.

#### Eternal Life begins Now

“The Church is the unity of all worlds, earthly and heavenly, of angels and men, of the living and the dead. We obtain real communion with God and we participate in God’s uncreated energy. God does not stay in heaven, directing history from there. He directs the world with His uncreated governing energies. We do not aim at appeasing God, but to heal ourselves, so that the vision of God becomes light for us and not fire. Furthermore, in the Church we live eternal life starting from now. We do not simply await the life to come, but we experience and enjoy it from the present. The Kingdom of God, according to the Fathers, is not life beyond the grave, but communion with God, above all, the vision of the uncreated Light.”

*Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos*

*The Illness and Cure of the Soul in the Orthodox Tradition*

**ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH CONFIDENTIAL STEWARDSHIP & FAMILY INFORMATION FORM**  
*Please complete the 2022 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) \_\_\_ \$1,960 (\$38/week) \_\_\_ \$2,600 (\$50/week) \_\_\_ \$5,200 (\$100/week) \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Highlighted amount of \$1,960 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 2022 Parish Budget Anticipates a commitment \$160,000 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 \$670 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 2022. 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.

# Our Church Our Spiritual Home



## STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

**2022 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 2022.

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 2022 Parish Budget is counting on drawing \$160,000 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 \$1,9606 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.

# PICTURES FROM THE PAST FEW MONTHS



**Assumption Greek Orthodox Church**

11 N 7th Street

Madison, WI 53704-4904

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

**Email:** office@agocwi.org



donating:

A single tile for \$20 (or as many as you may be inclined)

10 tiles for \$200 to cover the area for a single pew (maybe the one you/your family stand on each Sunday).

**Parish Council Elections**

The Parish Councils elections were held on December 19. The following were elected, pending certification from the Metropolis:

Christy Chappell-Belkin

Jim Katsihtis

Maria Molzahn

Scott Storck

**Next Parish Council Meeting**

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18 at 7:00PM. Parish Council meetings will typically be scheduled on the third Tuesday of the month.

On behalf of the Parish Council,

Jim

407-408-3096

jkatsihtis@gmail.com