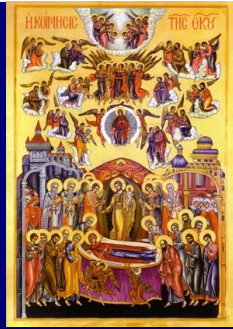


CHURCH STAFF

- 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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Wonderworker

DECEMBER 2022

DICTATING OUR OWN TERMS

The time has come, yet again, where the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is into full swing. We see people all around us getting excited that Christmas is upon us. We see homes decorated, we see stores all decked out in all the holiday glory. We also start to see the television programming start to change with all the holiday classics such as, “*Frosty the Snowman*”, “*Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*”, and “*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*”. But something is missing, and I begin to ask myself how society today has taken the Christ out of Christmas.

It seems that many are missing the point of Christmas. How many homes do we see decorated with Nativity scenes, not nearly as many as are decked out with Santa and his reindeer. When is the last time you went to a store such as Macy’s or Carson’s and seen any mention of Christ. In fact most stores have Happy Holiday’s now and nothing about Christmas. If a store does mention Christmas it is written X-mas.

Now lets look at another aspect, when I was young and growing up we would sit in school and sing Christmas songs, we would do the old classics such as *Jingle Bells*, *Frosty*, *Up on the Roof top*, but we would also sing *O come all ye faithful*, *Joy to the World*, and *The First Noel*. I even remember watching “*It’s a Charlie Brown Christmas*”, where at the end it is Linus who reminds all the kids why we celebrate Christmas. I also remember the joy I had at the school Christmas program as well as the party. The best part was I was at a public school, not a private school. No one was forced to attend these parties, but the best part was that everyone had fun together.

I find it ironic, in a recent poll taken 76% of Americans view themselves as Christians, yet we sit back and allow the minority to control what we believe. I remember 10 years ago seeing a group of Christians in Florida sue their city for taking out the Nativity scene they had for so many years. What was most shocking is they won, and got a court decision from a year earlier that found in favor of an Atheist group overturned. This truly showed me that it is not other religions we as Christians have to blame for all these changes, but ourselves. Atheists openly attack Christianity, while completely ignoring other faiths. Why many may ask. It is simple, because in today’s politically correct world, we Christians are too afraid to say anything to defend our own Faith, and the enemy knows this. Could you imagine the uproar from the Muslim or the Jewish community if this fight was brought to their doorstep? The response would be quick and powerful. Satan is picking his battles well. A wise man once said, “The Devil’s greatest feat was convincing the world that he does not exist.”

Why are we as Christians allowing non-believers to dictate what our children learn? Are we doing enough to teach them what Christmas really means to us as Orthodox? Our children are the true victims in this whole situation; they are the ones missing out on all that we enjoyed as children. Let us stand up and be proud in our Orthodox Christian Faith. Let us teach not only our children, but everyone that Salvation has entered the world, and let us not be afraid, but joyously cry out...CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Fast Day 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education class via Zoom	Strict Fast Day	Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 10th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Parish Council Election Saint Nicholas Luncheon	Fast Day 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class via Zoom	Fast Day Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy 8:30 p.m. Philoptochos Chapter Meeting in person	Strict Fast Day 11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	Fast Day	Strict Fast Day	Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 11th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School	Strict Fast Day Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	Strict Fast Day	Strict Fast Day No Religious Education Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	Strict Fast Day Senior's Group Outing 7:00 p.m. Women's Spiritual Meeting	Strict Fast Day 5:30 p.m. Youth Family Night Gingerbread House Making	Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted Saint Dionysius of Zakynthos 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Sunday before the Nativity Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Welcome Bishop Timothy of Hexamilion, Chancellor of our Metropolis Sunday School	Strict Fast Day	Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	Strict Fast Day 11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	Strict Fast Day 6:30 p.m. Adult Religious Education Class via Zoom	Strict Fast Day Royal hours of the Nativity 8:00 a.m.	Strict Fast Day Christmas Eve 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers for the Eve of the Nativity Choir Performance following Vespers
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Nativity of our Lord 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy No Sunday School			Fast Free		Fast Free	Russian Mission Service 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers

The Parish Council Update September 2022

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

Members: Christy Chappell-Belkin, Conn Choles, Carol Griskavich, Nick Helser, Mike Smith, John Soloninka

Greetings in the name of our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We pray that you are all having a blessed start to Advent and the preparation for our Lord's Nativity. In the Creed we say that the Lord Jesus Christ, "...who for us and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man..." How marvelous is God's love for us that He would condescend to become like one of His creatures to save us and to restore us into communion with Him! And what joy to know that even though the Nativity was over 2,000 years ago, Christ is always there and seeking us.

Fall General Assembly

The Fall General Assembly took place on Sunday November 6th. Important highlights included nominations for Parish Council, the passing of the 2023 budget and the passing of the roof replacement proposal (still subject to Metropolis BPA Committee approval). In addition, Peter Georgalan volunteered to Chair Greek-Fest+. Thank you Peter! And as we mentioned at the Assembly, thank you to Fr. Christodoulos and to all our volunteers - Parish Council, chanters, choir, Philoptochos, iconographer, gardeners, cooks, Sunday School directors and teachers, Greek School teachers, maintenance team, cleaning team, women's spiritual ministry, ushers/greeters - for all you do!

In the coming weeks, we will be sending you a survey to gather your thoughts and to help us shape our Strategic Plan and priorities for the coming years.

Special Clergy-Laity Assembly

A Metropolis Clergy-Laity Special Assembly will take place on December 29th from 6:00-9:00pm via Zoom. The primary topic will be a presentation on the search for a new Metropolis Center. We encourage anyone who is interested in attending on-line to register.

2022 Stewardship

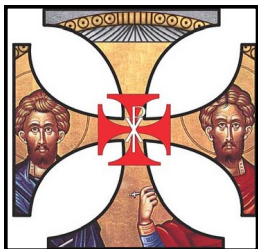
If you haven't already, please return your Stewardship form and continue to pray for, and generously support, our parish. Your stewardship helps support our worship, ministries, youth programs and facility expenses. Our goal is for stewardship to cover our operating expenses and for us not to have to rely on fundraisers for standard operating expenses. Please help us reach that goal. And please consider joining the Stewardship Committee to provide input and help us grow and engage our stewards more.

Next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, December 20th 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



FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

December 2022

Focus on PHILOPTOCHOS
#PhiloCares #ArmyofAgape

As we approach the holiday season, it is a time for reflection. For our Philoptochos sisters, it is a time we continue our work to make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families in need and the less fortunate among us.

We welcome you to join us today, tomorrow, and in the new year so we can continue to do our work across our community.

LOOKING AHEAD

Chapter Meeting: December 6th, 2022 at 6:00 pm CT via ZOOM

Learn more about what we do and who we serve at the next chapter meeting. We welcome new members to join us, get involved and be part of our sisterhood.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87814843149>

Meeting ID: 878 1484 3149

DECEMBER COLLECTION TRAY: This month the Philoptochos collection basket is for the Philanthropy Fund. This is the fund we use when a special requests for assistance are made from a parishioner(s) in need. We are supported by the Metropolis of Chicago and the National Philoptochos Department of Social Services when providing assistance through our Philanthropy Fund.

NOTES FROM NOVEMBER 2022 BAKLVA PLUS SALE

Our annual fundraiser was a great success once again due to the collective effort of our members, volunteers, church community and hundreds of online orders!

A very large congratulations to the entire chapter and everyone who helped make the 2022 Baklava Plus Sale a huge success!! An army of agape made this a successful fundraiser with more than 300 online orders filled! Congratulations and thank you to all who prepared 400 pans of spanakopites, prepared keftedes (120 lbs of fresh ground sirloin-a total of 3,288 meatballs, hand rolled, baked, packaged), made hundreds and hundreds of koulourakia and kourabiethes, made 50 large pans of baklava (2400 pieces) and many more additional homemade treats. Thank you to all who prepped for the sale pick up day and packaged additional items. Congratulations to the team who put together the gift baskets for the bazaar and sold items. Thank you to everyone who greeted our patrons, made coffee, cashiered, sold additional items at the kafeneion and helped package orders on pick up day. Thank you to all who tallied orders, cross checked packages and assisted with the online system.

We are pleased to share that after expenses, the annual fundraiser brought a net profit of nearly \$17,500 to our chapter!!! Thank you everyone for your support (hands on and financial) so we can continue to do our work across our community, at a national level and beyond!!

DATES TO REMEMBER

- *December 4* – Metropolis wide Christmas Open House, The Carlisle, Lombard, IL, 5-9 pm
- *December 7* – National Philoptochos Center for Philanthropy: A Night with Yvette Manassis Corporon, 7-9 pm EST (Facebook Livestream, registration required for in-person event)



The Ladies' Philoptochos Society Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2022-2023 Monthly Tray Schedule

1	January	St Basil Academy / Vasilopita Fundraiser
2	February	Local Schools / Local Families
3	March	Relief for Greece and Cyprus
4	April	International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
5	May	River Food Pantry
6	June	Orthodox Christian Prison Mission
7	July	Philanthropy Fund
8	August	Madison Public Schools / Operation Classroom
9	September	Hellenic College / Holy Cross
10	October	NO COLLECTION TRAY
11	November	Ecumenical Patriarchate
12	December	Philanthropy Fund

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER



Happy December Sunday school families,
As we enter the month of December there are many things happening for Sunday school.

1. Starting the month of December, we will be collecting food items for the River Food Pantry. The last day to donate will be on **Sunday December 18th**. You can leave your donated items by the front door of the church entrance. As a church community we can make a world of difference to those in need the most.
2. **Friday December 16th** from 5:30-8pm is our annual gingerbread family night! Please join us for some fun gingerbread house decorating! There will be food and yummy sweets with hot cocoa!
3. On **Friday December 23rd** we will host our first Christmas pajama movie night starting at 5:30-8pm. There will be popcorn, cookies and hot cocoa! Children are encouraged to wear their cozy christmas pajamas and comfy blankets as they all watch a fun Christmas movie together!
4. There will be no **Sunday school** on **December 25th** and **January 1st** for Christmas break. Classes will resume on **January 8th**.

We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year, may the new year bring love, joy, and good health to us all!

In Christ,
Susu Akkawi
Director of Sunday school

COMMUNITY NEWS

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Will be held on Tuesday, December 20th, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING: We be on Tuesday, December 6th, beginning at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be held via Zoom.

DONATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS ARTICLES: Throughout the year we all experience moments when we wish to express thanksgiving to God for all blessings

received or to offer intercessory prayer for a loved one or to honor someone dear to us. For most of us there is a special inner joy to be able to make these expressions in the form of gifts to the House of God in which we worship.

For moments like these, we have prepared a list of sacred items which are used in our worship and could be offered in thanksgiving and prayer by our beloved parishioners.

Many of the sacred items on this list are to be donated to replace others, which due to time and usage throughout the years can no longer be used in worship services. Still others are needed so that we may worship in the proper way /according to our Orthodox Faith.

If there is anyone wishing to donate:

15 Hanging Vigil Lamps	- \$100 - 6 Donated
Censor Stand with Procession candles	- \$1,050
Gospel Stand	- \$450 - Donated
Portable Icon Stand	- \$750
Artoclassia Stand	- \$350 - Donated
Holy Thursday Candle Stand	- \$400 - Donated
Elevation Tray with Cross	- \$1,200

If anyone has any questions concerning this list, please contact Fr. Christodoulos for more information and details.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS: A.R.E. are going strong. We are currently reading “The Orthodox Church” By Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of blessed memory. We will have in person classes on Wednesday’s at 11:00 a.m. here at the church. We also have a virtual zoom class on Thursday’s beginning at 6:30 p.m. The classes are the same and interchangeable.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION: Starting the month of December, we will be collecting food items for the River Food Pantry. The last day to donate will be on Sunday December 18th. You can leave your donated items by the front door of the church entrance. As a church community we can make a world of difference to those in need the most.

YOUTH EVENTS FOR DECEMBER: **Friday, December 16th from 5:30-8pm** is our annual gingerbread family night! Please join us for some fun gingerbread house decorating! There will be food and yummy sweets with hot cocoa!

On Friday, December 23rd we will host our first Christmas pajama movie night starting at 5:30-8pm. There will be popcorn, cookies and hot cocoa! Children are encouraged to wear their cozy christmas pajamas and comfy blankets as they all watch a fun Christmas movie together!

CHRISTMAS CARD: Each year, our Church carefully prepares a Christmas Card that is mailed to our entire congregation. Your participation through our Church Christmas Card will not only convey your warmest and personal regards, but also free you from mailing personal cards to many families. This is a savings to you and a benefit for our parish. To include your name on this year’s card, please complete the enclosed flyer and return it to the church office with your free will offering (Suggested Donation is \$25) by Monday, December 12th. Checks should be made payable to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church.

WOMEN’S SPIRITUAL MEETING: Women's spiritual zoom meetings will be on Thursday, December 15th 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 You will get the zoom link in your email.

Assumption Christmas To-Do List



River Food Drive Donations
Dec 1st - Dec 18th



Decorate Church Christmas Tree
Dec 4th during class



Family Gingerbread Night
Dec 16th 5:30pm-8pm



Christmas Movie Night
Dec 23rd 5:30pm-8pm



No Sunday School Dec 25th



No Sunday School Jan 1st



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Details

Please join us for this wonderful trip to help bring the Gospels to life in front of our very eyes.

Have the opportunity to see the places where the most important aspects of Christ's life took place.

Take advantage of the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of our Lord. Then join us in the City of Constantinople to the Be there to enjoy a once in a lifetime opportunity to reinvigorate our faith.

What we will be seeing:

- Visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and resurrected in Glory!
- Visit Bethlehem and see the spot where Christ was welcomed into the world at the beautiful Church of the Nativity!
- See the shepherds Field where the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ!
- Experience the sea of Galilee and the surrounding region where Christ called the apostles and spent much of His ministry!
- See the spot where the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to announce the birth of the Savior!
- Experience Church of Agia Sophia, the Grand Bazaar, the Church of Agia Irene, the Church of Chora and the Patriarchate of Constantinople!

Final cost to be determined.

Breakfast and dinner included

All that's missing is you!



November 6 - November 17

2023

GREEK HERITAGE NIGHT

MILWAUKEE BUCKS | MILWAUKEE, WI

Come out to our 5TH Annual Greek Heritage Night to watch the Milwaukee Bucks take on the Sacramento Kings!



**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 7TH, 2022 | 7PM**

GREEK NIGHT TICKET PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- GAME NIGHT TICKET TO BUCKS VS KINGS
- EXCLUSIVE GREEK NIGHT BOBBLEHEAD-
- **POST GAME TALK WITH GIANNIS & THANASIS**-

*- SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION

ORDER AT



FEVO.ME/GREEKNIGHT2022

USE PROMO CODE: GN34

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT PAUL GROWT AT PAUL.GROWT@BUCKS.COM OR 414-227-0584.

the availability and this is subject to change without notice. The Bucks reserve the right to change the details of this event without notice. The Bucks reserve the right to change the details of this event without notice. The Bucks reserve the right to change the details of this event without notice.





2022 Annual Community Christmas Card

**We are now accepting names to be submitted for the
2022 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 12th, 2022

**Please use this form and send it along with your donation
Free Will Offering but suggested donation is \$25. 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.

THIS WEEKEND!



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO

Metropolis of Chicago

*Christmas
Open House
at the Carlisle*

Sunday, December 4, 2022 | 5 pm - 9 pm

This year, the Metropolis will be asking guests to become a Friend of the Metropolis with a recurring donation, or to give a one-time gift to support the Metropolis' ministries.

Appetizers and refreshments will be served



435 E. Butterfield Rd.
Lombard, IL 60148

Family Synaxis

*Parenting U is
pleased to present*

Fr. Theofanis Rauch

Friday, December 9th

***St. Demetrios Greek
Orthodox Church
893 N. Church Rd.,
Elmhurst, IL. 60126***

***Paraklesis begins
6:30 pm
followed by
presentation***



**METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO**



2022 SAINT NICHOLAS LUNCHEON & PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**On Sunday December, 4th, 2022 following Divine Liturgy
our Parish council is hosting the Saint Nicholas Luncheon
They will be having a Spaghetti Lunch with Salad**

There is no set price only a free will offering

**We also will be holding our Parish Council Elections this
day.**

**So Set aside some time on Sunday December 4th and enjoy
a great dinner and fellowship with our Spiritual Family**



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.



Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

11 N 7th Street

Madison, WI 53704-4904

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

Email: office@agocwi.org



ALTAR SERVERS NEEDED: Dear members and parents. If you or your children would be interested in serving in the Altar please come see me. We are need on children and men of all ages to help bolster our Altar server ranks. Children should be 7 and up.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND & CONSTANTINOPLE: 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. We are currently planning on departing in November of 2023. The Itinerary is being finalized and we this trip will be all inclusive. The cost will include Airfare, hotel, breakfast, dinner and transportation. In the past this has run around \$3,200 and we will get a final price point when we get closer to November of this year. Consider joining us for this once in a lifetime opportunity to see where Jesus walked, lived, dies & resurrected. We normally meet with both the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople. We will give more information soon.

HELP NEEDED FOR CLEANING CHURCH WEEKLY: We are looking for a few people who would be willing to help Jenny with cleaning the church weekly. This is only for sanctusry. The hall and foyer are cleaned by a company. Jenny is willing to clean any day help is available. So if interested please see Fr. Christodoulos or contact Jenny at 608-434-8594.

HOLY CONFESSION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR LIVES: Each of us should go to the priest for Holy Confession preferably 3 times a year, but at the very least once a year. Our very salvation can be threatened when we ignore this most beautiful sacrament of our Church. This year make the effort to call your Father Confessor for an appointment.