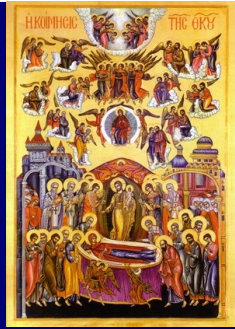


CHURCH STAFF

- **Parish Priest:** Very Reverend Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos
- **Parish Council President:** Christy Chappell Belkin
- **Philoptochos President:** Maria Molzahn
- **Sunday School Directors:** Susu Saba
- **Greek School:** Ilektra Kolokouri
- **Choir Director:** George Tzougros

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Wonder Worker

MAY 2024

THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION

Pascha, also known as Easter, stands as the most significant and joyous feast in the Orthodox Christian calendar. It commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an event that lies at the heart of the faith and holds profound theological and spiritual significance for believers.

Pascha: The Cornerstone of Faith

At its core, Pascha celebrates the triumph of life over death, the ultimate victory of good over evil. It is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation, as foretold in the Old Testament and realized through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is seen as the central event in human history, confirming his divinity and providing hope for eternal life to all who believe.

In the Orthodox Church, Pascha is not merely a historical event but a living reality experienced through the liturgy and communal celebrations. The Paschal services, particularly the Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy, are filled with joyful hymns, candle-light processions, and the resounding proclamation "Christ is Risen!" This joyous declaration resounds through churches, homes, and communities, uniting believers in a shared celebration of Christ's victory over death.

Pascha: A Journey of Transformation

Pascha is not just a single day of celebration but a period of spiritual preparation and renewal. The weeks leading up to Pascha, known as Great Lent, are marked by fasting, prayer, and reflection. This period of introspection allows believers to examine their lives, repent of their sins, and draw closer to God. Through this journey of spiritual preparation, they are ready to fully embrace the joy and meaning of the resurrection.

The Paschal season extends beyond Easter Sunday, lasting for 40 days until the Feast of the Ascension. During this time, known as Bright Week, the liturgical services are filled with Paschal hymns, and the faithful continue to celebrate the resurrection with festive meals, exchanging greetings of "Christ is Risen!" and "Truly He is Risen!"

Pascha: A Symbol of Hope and Renewal

Pascha's significance extends beyond the individual believer and resonates throughout the world. It is a message of hope and renewal, offering a vision of a world transformed by the power of love and forgiveness. In a world often marred by conflict and suffering, Pascha reminds us that even in the darkest of times, there is always the possibility of new life and a brighter future.

The symbolism of Pascha is rich and multifaceted. The Paschal candle, lit from the Holy Fire in Jerusalem, represents the light of Christ dispelling the darkness of death. The red eggs, often exchanged during Pascha, symbolize the new life emerging from the tomb. The festive foods, such as Tsoureki (sweet bread) and lamb, represent the abundance of God's blessings and the sacrificial nature of Christ's death.

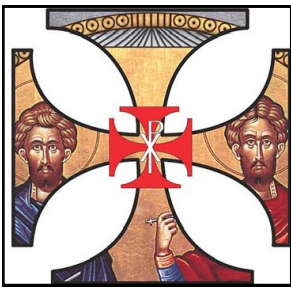
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May 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Holy Wednesday Strict Fast Day 3:00 p.m. Holy Unction 6:00 p.m. Matine for Holy Thursday	2 Holy Thursday Strict Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Vesper Liturgy for Establishment of the Eucharist 6:00 p.m. 12 Gospels Passion Service	3 Holy Friday Strict Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours 2:30 p.m. Unnailing Vespers 6:30 p.m. Lamentations Service	4 Holy Saturday Strict Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Vesper Liturgy of the First Resurrection 11:00 p.m. Pascha Vigil
5 Great & Holy Pascha 12:00 a.m. Resurrection Service followed by Orthros & Divine Liturgy Following Liturgy Anastasi Meal 10:00 a.m. Agape Vespers	6 Bright Monday Great Martyr George the Trophybearer 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	7 Bright Tuesday	8 Bright Wednesday Fast Free	9 Bright Thursday	10 Bright Friday Fast Free	11 Bright Saturday +Sacrament
12 Sunday of Thomas 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Greek School	13	14	15 Strict Fast Day 11:00 a.m. Religious Ed Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	16 7:00 p.m. Women's Spiritual Meeting via Zoom	17 Strict Fast Day	18 Russian Mission Ethiopian Mission
19 Sunday of The Myrrh-bearing Women 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School & Greek School Greek Fast Meeting following Liturgy	20	21 Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy Fr. Christodoulos will be at Metropolis Clergy Retreat 7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	22 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	23	24 Strict Fast Day	25
26 Sunday of the Paralytic 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	27 Memorial Day Cemetery Memorial Services See Fr. Christodoulos	28	29 Fast Day (Fah allowed) Mid-Pentecost 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy Following Liturgy Adult Religious Ed 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	30 8:30 p.m. Adult Religious Ed Via Zoom	31 Strict Fast Day	

PICTURES FROM LENT & PASCHA





FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

Philoptochos Forward

Philoptochos Forward -- May News

Writing this newsletter before our Lord's Resurrection I found myself in a more reflective mood. As a world, it often feels that we are living in very dark times. Individually, we all have our own challenges and sorrows. As an Orthodox community, we are in the midst of the greatest mystery of our faith.

And yet, as Philippians 4:4-7 instructs, we should:

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone, "The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philoptochos does this. Even at times when we are all struggling we find ways to bring each other and our community up. This past month, for instance, along with our commitments we were able to extend our support of the IOCC and its world wide philanthropic mission in Gaza. Bravo!

On a lighter note, we also had a wonderful visit by His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathanael. While I was not able to be at church that day, it sounded and looked like a wonderful service and enhance coffee-hour.



Thank you to everyone who has helped us prepare for Pascha:

Elene and Kathie for making, packing, and delivering Easter baskets to our shut-ins.

Sue and John for picking up and delivering the tsoureki breads.

Sue, Jenny, Kathie, and Draga for the Easter eggs.

Margo for the koulourakia for the Anastasi dinner.

If I forgot anyone, please accept my apologies, you all matter!

This month, we will be hosting our annual end of the year get together at the home of Elene Patenaude at 5:30. Elene's address is: 625 Segoe Rd. Apartment 405, due to the construction the best parking will be in the Target Parking Lot.

Our hostesses for the evening are Elene and Sue!

This gathering does not mean that we are "off" for the summer, indeed we have GreekFest Plus baking days planned. We had wonderful turnouts for these events last year and I, for one, am excited to help out again this summer. Thank you to Sue and Lena, Margo and Betty for taking the lead. The dates and start times are listed here:

Koulourakia (Wednesday, June 5, 9:30- a.m.)

Spanakopita (Saturday, June 22, 9 a.m.)

Kourambiethes and possibly Paximadia (Saturday, July 27, 9:30 a.m.)

Use the following link to sign up for one or all three days:

<https://forms.gle/ZrCEDkAr6HwpedKA9>

We will be making the baklava the week off the GreekFest (September 7 and 8). Information for this event will be coming in the future.

As always, I can be reached at mariaandpatrick@gmail.com . Much love to all!

Maria Molzahn



YOUTH CORNER



Christ is Risen, Truly He is Risen!

Blessed Pascha everyone! We hope you are enjoying the beautiful spring season of May. This month is very relaxed in not having any events happening for Sunday school, but please continue to encourage your children to come to church. Orthos start at 8:30am, liturgy starts at 9:45am, and Sunday school to follow after Holy Communion.

There are only two more Sunday school classes until the year finishes up before summer break.

- Sunday May 12th
- Sunday May 19th (last day of Sunday school)
- Sunday May 26th - Memorial Day weekend

On **Sunday June 2nd**, after liturgy we will have the Sunday school graduation celebration for our 8th graders graduating from Sunday school! We wish you the best of luck as you move on to high school. May the guidance and love of the Theotokos protect you always.

In Christ,
Susu Akkawi

COMMUNITY NEWS

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Will be held on Tuesday, May 21st, at 7:00 p.m.

PHILOPTOCHOS GATHERING: Will be held on Thursday, May 30th, 5:30 p.m.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS: A.R.E. are still going. We are currently reading the Gospel of John soon. Classes are on Wednesday's at 11:00 a.m. for in person classes and On Thursday's at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone is welcome to join us.

THE MEMORY OF A GLORIOUS WEEK: Holy Week and Pascha are now history for 2024. Warm words of appreciation are due to a myriad of volunteers who helped to make Pascha such a meaningful experience in our lives. The altar boys, choir, chanters, readers, Myrrhobes ushers, the people who decorated the Epitaphios, the dyers of the Easter eggs, flowers and many more shall occupy a special place in our hearts and prayers. Thank you all and God bless!

PLEASE REMEMBER THE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL OR ESTATE PLANNING: As we begin this new year, please consider making a Planned Gift to the Church. A Planned Gift is an opportunity to leave a legacy that strengthens the Church and supports its vital ministries and will leave an impact that will be felt for years to come. It may also give you substantial current tax benefits as well as estate tax benefits. If you are interested in finding out more about the many ways that the Church can be included in your will or estate planning, please contact a Parish Council Member.

NEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT DRIVE: As a community we have always tried and succeeded in taking care of and upgrading our Sanctuary and facilities. We the spirit of continuously improving our church. We are beginning a long term Capital Improvement Fund Drive. We are looking at 3 particular future projects. These are the Broken Sewer pipe in our back parking lot, Replacing and upgrading our current church sound system and remodeling our kitchen. The months ahead we will be formally setting up a Capital Improvement Fund Drive Committee who will spearhead the entire process. We ask everyone to consider this in future giving, funeral memorials and in planned giving. If you are interested in giving a donation for the Capital Fund please put "Capital Improvement Fund Drive" on the memo line of the check or mark it on the envelope. Together we can get these projects finished.

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 especially during Lent, Holy Week & Pascha. Children should be 8 and up.

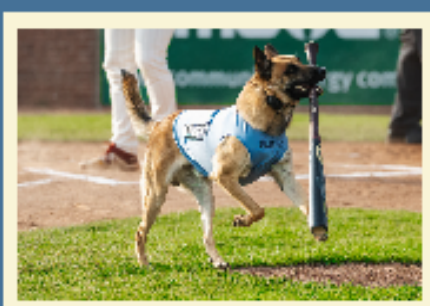
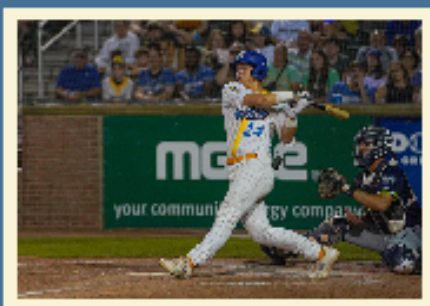
HOLY CONFESSION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES: Each of us should go to the priest for Holy Confession during the year. Our very salvation can be threatened when we ignore this most beautiful sacrament of our Church. Make time year to call your Father Confessor for an appointment.

SAVE THE DATE - TUESDAY JULY 30th PARISH OUTING TO MADISON MALLARDS: This year in July our parish will having an outing to the Madison Mallards game on Tuesday, July 30 with the game beginning at 6:05 p.m. More information will be available soon.

STEWARDSHIP NOTE: Supporting the Church is EACH Orthodox Christian's responsibility to the Lord. From the single young adult to the married couple to the young family to those who are senior citizens, it takes everyone's commitment to support OUR parish of Assumption and promote OUR Orthodox Christian Faith! Many thanks to all those who have pledged and we invite all those who haven't to please submit their pledge to the church office today.

GRADUATE SUNDAY: On Sunday, June 2nd the parish honors the academic accomplishments of our youth. A gift will be presented to our graduates from high school, college or university who have had their names submitted to Fr. Christodoulos by Monday, June 5th. (Please email or call to confirm.) Telling Father after church does not equal contacting him.) This is also the day we honor our 8th Grade Sunday School Graduates. The last day of Sunday School will be Sunday, May, 19th.

2024 GREEKFEST MEETING SUNDAY, MAY 19th FOLLOWING LITURGY: On Sunday, May 19th we will be having our first Greekfest meeting in the Conference Room following Liturgy.



SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday,
July 30th**

GATES OPEN: 5:05 PM

FIRST PITCH: 6:05 PM

**Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church
at the Duck Pond!**

More Details To Follow!



May 30th Philoptochos Gathering

Hosted by Elene Patenaude and Sue Soloninka

Located at 625 N. Segoe RD #405.

RSVP by Friday 5/24 (Elene at 608-347-2209)

Please plan to arrive by 5:30 p.m.

Due to construction the best place to park is in the **TARGET** parking ramp.

Call Elene to get buzzed in.

All women of our parish are invited!

BRIGHT TUESDAY: COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS RAPHAEL, NICHOLAS, IRENE & THE OTHER NEWLY REVEALED MARTYRS OF LESBOS:

The Newly-Appeared Martyrs of Lesbos, Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene These Saints were martyred by the Turks on Bright Tuesday (April 9, 1463) ten years after the Fall of Constantinople. For nearly 500 years, they were forgotten by the people of Lesbos, but “the righteous Judge... opened the things that were hid” (2 Maccabees 12:41). For centuries the people of Lesbos would go on Bright Tuesday to the ruins of a monastery near Thermé, a village northwest of the capital, Mytilene. As time passed, however, no one could remember the reason for the annual pilgrimage. There was a vague recollection that once there had been a monastery on that spot, and that the monks had been killed by the Turks.

In 1959, a pious man named Angelos Rallis decided to build a chapel near the ruins of the monastery. On July 3 of that year, workmen discovered the relics of Saint Raphael while clearing the ground. Soon, the Saints began appearing to various inhabitants of Lesbos and revealed the details of their lives and martyrdom. These accounts form the basis of Photios Kontoglou’s 1962 book *A Great Sign* (in Greek).

Saint Raphael was born on the island of Ithaka around 1410, and was raised by pious parents. His baptismal name was George, but he was named Raphael when he became a monk. He was ordained to the holy priesthood, and later attained the offices of Archimandrite and Chancellor.

In 1453, Saint Raphael was living in Macedonia with his fellow monastic, Deacon Nicholas, a native of Thessaloniki. In 1454, the Turks invaded Thrace, so the two monks fled to the island of Lesbos. They settled in the Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos near Thermi, where Saint Raphael became the Igoumen.

In the spring of 1463, the Turks raided the monastery and captured the monks. They were tortured from Holy Thursday until Bright Tuesday. Saint Raphael was tied to a tree, and the ferocious Turks sawed through his jaw, killing him. Saint Nicholas was also tortured, and he died while witnessing his Elder’s martyrdom. He appeared to people and indicated the spot where his relics were uncovered on June 13, 1960.

Saint Irene was the twelve-year-old daughter of the village mayor, Basil. She and her family had come to the monastery to warn the monks of the invasion. The cruel Hagarenes cut off one of her arms and threw it down in front of her parents. Then the pure virgin was placed in a large earthen cask and a fire was lit under it, suffocating her within. These torments took place before the eyes of her parents, who were also put to death. Her grave and the earthen cask were found on May 12, 1961 after Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene had appeared to people and told them where to look.

Others who received the crown of martyrdom on that day were Basil and Maria, the parents of Saint Irene; Theodore, the village teacher; and Eleni, the fifteen-year-old cousin of Saint Irene.

The Saints appeared separately and together, telling people that they wished to be remembered. They asked that their icon be painted, that a Church Service be composed for them, and they indicated the place where their holy relics could be found. Based on the descriptions of those who had seen the Saints, the master iconographer Photios Kontoglou painted their icon. The ever-memorable Father Gerasimos of Little Saint Anne Skete on Mount Athos composed their Church Service.

Many miracles have taken place on Lesbos, and throughout the world. These Saints hasten to help those who invoke them, healing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, granting relief from pain, and bringing many unbelievers and impious individuals back to the Church.

Saint Raphael is tall, middle-aged, and has a beard of moderate length. His hair is black with some grey in it. His face is majestic, expressive, and filled with heavenly grace. Saint Nicholas is short and thin, with a small blond beard. He stands before Saint Raphael with great respect. Saint Irene usually appears with a long yellow dress reaching to her feet. Her blonde hair is divided into two braids which rest on either side of her chest.

Saints Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene (and those with them) are also commemorated on Bright Tuesday. Dr. Constantine Cavernos has given a detailed account of their life, miracles, and spiritual counsels in Volume 10 of his inspirational series *Modern Orthodox Saints* (Belmont, MA, 1990).

The Appearance of the Ivéron (Portaitissa) Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos on Mount Athos

This Icon was the property of a pious widow who lived in the area of Nicaea in Asia Minor during the time of the iconoclastic Emperor Theophilus (829-842). When the Emperor's men arrived there to find and destroy every holy icon, this faithful widow threw the wonderworking Icon of the Theotokos into the sea. Then she beheld a strange wonder. The Icon stood upright on the water and traveled westward across the waves in this position.

After a time the Icon arrived in front of the Ivéron Monastery on Mount Athos. A certain ascetic named Gabriel took it from the water, and gave it to the monks. They built a small church for the Icon near the gate of the monastery, and placed the Icon there. From that time it was known as the Portaitissa, or Gate-Keeper.

Since then the Most Holy Theotokos has worked many miracles through her holy Icon. She has cured those who were possessed by demons, healed those who were lame, and given sight to the blind. At the same time, she has protected the monastery from every danger and saved it from invasions of foreigners. Among those who received benefit from the Portaitissa was a Russian princess, the daughter of Tsar Alexei Michailovitch (1651).

The Icon arrived at the Holy Mountain on Bright Tuesday in 1004. Therefore, the Ivéron Monastery celebrates this radiant festival even to the present day. The Divine Liturgy takes place in the church by the sea, where a spring gushed forth at the place where the Icon had rested.

The Ivéron (Portaitissa) Icon is also commemorated on February 12, March 31, and October 13.

Ktitorissa or Bematárisa Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Vatopaidi Monastery. (Παναγία Κτιτόρισσα ή Βηματάρισσα)

When certain Arabs invaded Vatopaidi Monastery, Hierodeacon Savva, the Bematáris (custodian of the sanctuary) was responsible for the sacred relics and other valuables kept there. He managed to hide the Icon and Constantine's Cross in a well of the Holy Altar, with an oil lamp burning before them. The monastery was looted and the monks were taken captive and brought to Crete. Seventy years later, Hierodeacon Savva was released and he returned to his monastery. There he found some young monks whom he didn't know, and they knew nothing about the hidden relics. Then they uncovered the well and discovered the Icon and the Cross standing upright upon the water, with the oil lamp still burning!

Today the Ktitorissa Icon is in the synthronon (stone seats behind the altar) of the Holy Sanctuary, and it is also called the Foundress, or Builder, because her discovery may be related to the rebuilding of the monastery by three brothers (the monks Athanasios, Nicholas and Anthony) who lived there around the end of the X century.

In memory of this event, the Paraklesis (Canon of Supplication) to the Theotokos is sung every Monday evening, and the Divine Liturgy is served every Tuesday morning in the katholikon. The Ktitorissa Icon is honored on Bright Tuesday, when it is taken around the Monastery in procession.

The Martyrs of Saint David of Garesja Monastery in Georgia in 1616 (also April 4)

Venerable Patápios, Nikon, and Hypomoné.

These Saints struggled in a cave where the Monastery of Saint Patápios was built (in the metropolis of Corinth). There the skulls of Saint Patápios the New and Saint Hypomoné are treasured, and also the jaw of Saint Nikon the New. These holy relics were placed in silver reliquaries by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Pan-teleimon (Karanikola).

Pascha: A Timeless Message

In the Orthodox Church, Pascha is a timeless message of hope, love, and redemption. It is a celebration of life's ultimate triumph over death, a reminder that the power of God's love can transform even the most difficult situations. As Orthodox Christians gather to celebrate Pascha, they are not merely commemorating an event from the past but experiencing the living presence of Christ in their midst, offering them hope, joy, and the promise of eternal life.

+Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos

