

Wonder Worker

AUGUST 2024

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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SILENCING OUR LIVES THROUGH PRAY

In a world filled with noise and distractions, we find solace and strength in silencing the secular world. Through prayer and focus on our faith, we cultivate a deeper connection with God. In this article, we delve into the importance of silencing the secular world for Orthodox Christians and how it helps us to prioritize prayer and faith in our daily lives.

The Importance of Silencing the Secular World

The world often bombards us with messages that can distract us from our faith and prayer. By silencing these external influences, we create space for God's voice to speak to us more clearly. We become more attuned to His presence in our lives and are better able to discern His will.

Silencing the world doesn't mean isolating ourselves from society or refusing to engage with others. Instead, it involves consciously choosing what we allow to influence our thoughts, beliefs, and actions. We prioritize time spent in prayer, reading scripture, attending church services, and participating in the life of the church community.

Focusing on Faith and Prayer

Prayer is at the heart of Orthodox Christian life. It is through prayer that we communicate with God, express our gratitude, seek guidance, and ask for forgiveness. Regular prayer nourishes our souls and strengthens our relationship with Christ. By focusing on our faith, we are reminded of the eternal truths that guide our lives. We are encouraged to live in accordance with God's commandments, to love our neighbors, and to strive for holiness. Our faith provides us with a sense of purpose and meaning in a world that can often feel chaotic and meaningless.

Practical Steps to Silence the Secular World

There are several practical steps we can take to silence the secular world and focus on our faith and prayer:

- **Limit exposure to media:** Reduce time spent watching television, browsing the internet, and scrolling through social media. Instead, use that time for prayer, reading, and reflection.
- **Create a peaceful environment:** Designate a specific space in your home for prayer and meditation. Make it a place where you can escape the distractions of the world and focus on God.
- **Set aside time for prayer:** Establish a regular prayer routine that includes both personal and communal prayer. This will help you to prioritize prayer in your daily life.

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August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Small Paraklesie	2 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Small Paraklesie	3 Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted
4 6th Sunday of Matthew Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Greek Fast meeting following Liturgy	5 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Great Vespers for the Transfiguration	6 Strict Fast Day Transfiguration of our Lord 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	7 Strict Fast Day +Sacrament	8 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Great Paraklesie	9 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Small Paraklesie	10 Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted Russian Mission Ethiopian Mission
11 7th Sunday of Matthew Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	12 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Small Paraklesie	13 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Great Paraklesie	14 Strict Fast Day 8:00 p.m. Great Vespers for the Dormition of the Theotokos Following Vespers Coffee Hour hosted by our Ladies Philoptochos	15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy Expanded Coffee Hour for the Feast Day of our Parish	16 Strict Fast Day	17 +Sacrament
18 8th Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Greek Fast meeting following Liturgy	19 7:00 p.m. Parish Ministries Calendar Meeting	20 7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	21 Strict Fast Day	22	23 Strict Fast Day	24 Ethiopian Mission
25 8th Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	26	27	28 Strict Fast Day	29 Strict Fast Day Beheading of John the Baptist 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	30 Strict Fast Day	31

The Parish Council Update March 2024

Officers: Christy Chappell Belkin; President, Bill Margetis, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary; Scott Storck, Treasurer; Niko Papadopoulos, Assistant Treasurer
Members: Conn Choles, Nick Helser, Bill Margetis, Maria Molzahn, Mike Smith, Jim Katsiitis, Telly Fatsis

Greek Fest+ 2024 Update - Mark your Calendars & Volunteer (September 7 & 8)

The plans for our church festival are coming together! Thank you to all of you who have already stepped up to lead and volunteer for our festival. I know many of you have invited neighbors and helped promote the festival among your networks. We are blessed that the Madison community continues to love coming out for Greek Fest, and that is due to both God's provision and protection over the event as well as because each one of you play a part in making it a welcoming, delicious, and joyful celebration.

Greek Fest Meetings - open to all 8/4, 8/18, and 9/1

We will host three in-person meetings at church after Liturgy between now and the festival for anyone interested in hearing the latest and helping us finish up plans. Greek Fest meetings will be Sundays, August 4, August 18, and September 1.

Thank you to all Volunteers

Thank you for the 50 people who have already signed up to serve! And thank you to Maria Molzahn for managing the volunteer sign-ups and job assignments.

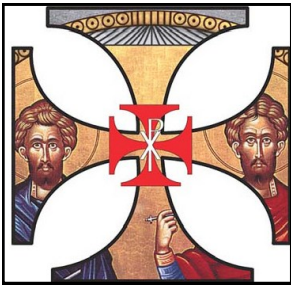
We Still Need More Help

As of August 1, about half of the Greek Fest+ volunteer shifts still need to be covered by volunteers. We welcome any time you are able to give. Here are examples of the kinds of jobs we're looking to fill:

- **Certified crowd managers** to control traffic flow, reduce congestion and direct guests where to go during the festival. A 2-hour online training is required to get certified and prepare you to help in the unlikely event of an emergency (\$20, reimbursable by the church). These roles can be mostly seated but do require mobility; some indoor spots.
- **Set up/Tear down** to help set up tables and chairs and remove them from the street, and pack up both days after the fest shuts down. We really need additional help on Sunday 9/8 night to tear down from 6 to 8 PM. Many hands make light work!
- **Serving food** in the big food tent in the back parking lot, as well as out front at the gyros and fries station.
- **Calling anyone skilled at operating an electric gyro knife!** This essential skill is key to providing a great experience for our guests (and we would love for the small, dedicated gyro crew to get much needed breaks during the festival). Please reach out to Maria M. or Christy B. if you can help slice gyros on Saturday or Sunday (or both days).

Sign up to Volunteer for Greek Fest using this form: <https://tinyurl.com/AGOCVol> And if the online form gives you trouble, contact Maria M. or Christy B. directly. Thanks!

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FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

Philoptochos Forward, Agapi Marches On

Love is manifested not only through the distribution of one's possessions, but even more so through the spreading of the word of God and helpful deeds.

(St. Maximus the Confessor, Chapters on Love, 1.26)

We are entering a very busy month with the celebration of our church's Feast Day with vespers on 8/14 and full services on 8/15. Both of these services are pivotal for our Faith and our church community. Philoptochos will host a Lenten vesperal coffee/hour after Vespers and a lite coffee hour after service on the 15th.

Twenty-three days after our Feast Day, we will be hosting our Annual Greek Fest Plus celebration! Thank you to everyone who has signed up already. It is critically important for all of us to step up and help out. This link does take you to the sign-up form: <https://forms.gle/YwALFTtfsTMPTY546>. Again, thank you to everyone that has already signed up!

Moving forward, Philoptochos continues to provide both support for our full community (local, national, and international), and a model for community. Recently, David Brooks, shared some staggering facts, including that philanthropic giving has dropped from $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ (<https://youtu.be/oDdssTQG6Vc?si=WgVF68UpvQpojg0U>). As he explained, one of the global challenges we are facing is alienation. We are meant to be in communion with each other.

Philoptochos works hard to foster community. Locally, we come together, muddle through our differences and challenges, to work for the better good of our church, our community, and our world. We need to be proud of this work, and to help others join us. Together we make the world better.

Please note our Fall schedule and join us:

September 5th: Baklava Baking

September 6th: Greek Fest Plus packaging and Set-up

September 7th and 8th: Greek Fest Plus

September 22nd: Philoptochos Meeting AFTER CHURCH with a zoom link option.

October 4th: Keftedes Prep

October 5th: Keftedes Assembly

October 22nd: Philoptochos ZOOM meeting

November 1st: Spanakopita Prep

November 2nd: Spanakopita Assembly

November 8th: Spanakopita Prep

November 9th: Spanakopita Assembly (*after the St. Nektarios Service*)

November 17th: Philoptochos Meeting AFTER church with a ZOOM link available

November 21st: Baklava Assembly (after Church Service for the Entrance of the Theotokos to the Temple)

November 22nd: Baklava Plus Packaging

November 23rd: Baklava Plus Pick-up

As always, feel free to reach out to me at philomadison@gmail.com.

In Sisterhood,
Maria

Feta Cheese for Sale!

***Dodoni brand
sheep's milk feta***



- ***One tub (7.3 lb) \$55.00 each***
7.3 lbs includes brine, drained weight = 4.4 lbs.
- ***Case of 4 tubs \$200.00 case***

(Parthenon Foods in Milwaukee sells the same item for \$58.99 per tub.)



This high quality feta was donated to our church by a parishioner. Proceeds will go to the church. Cheese good until Feb 2025.

Please see Christy Chappell-Belkin or Beth Fatsis at church if you are interested.

YOUTH CORNER



Happy August Sunday school families,

Hope you are all having a wonderful summer with your families and friends.

There is a short announcement about Sunday school, classes will resume on **Sunday September 15th** after Holy Communion. Sunday school classes are starting later this year because of Greek fest that is happening on the weekend of September 7th. What a fun and perfect way to start off the new school year celebrating our community and the beauty of our church and faith with others in Madison.

I am attaching a google form link that you can use to sign up your children for Sunday school:

<https://forms.gle/tEAKtgHPUniar9137>

Father is also looking for any boys interested to help out in the altar. Father is accepting any boys from the ages 8 years and older who would love to help!

This year we are also adding something new to our church. The Sunday school is having the first Narthex Children's corner where children are able to check out books weekly. This corner can be used by all grade levels during Liturgy. Children and parents can use this space to explore and read new books about the faith. There will be a notebook that I will keep track of where parents/children can write down the name of the book and date of check out. Once it is returned you will write down the "check in" date. Each child can check out only 2 books at a time. Just like any book, please take good care of the books that you check out and return them when your child finishes reading the book/s. There will also be church related toys in the Narthex that younger kids can use while they are in church. Please make sure to put back the toys in the basket and keep these toys in the Narthex.

I am looking forward to seeing you all soon at the beginning of the school year.

In Christ,
Susu Akkawi

COMMUNITY NEWS

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

PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING: The Next meeting will be in September.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS: have no ended for the Summer and will beginning again in September. We will be continuing the Gospel of John.

GREEK FEST VOLUNTEERING IS UP & RUNNING: We are excited to host Greek Fest again this September! We know our success depends on ALL of us working together to plan, volunteer, and spread the word to friends and family. Please mark your calendars and plan to help Assumption have another successful Greek Fest by taking time to volunteer!

Please use this link to help us fill out our volunteer spots:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYTqQR7Oqkhutrmf0cHka0b8CcO3t1nRqcTZ8J8ceta0h_4w/viewform

If you need help volunteering, please see Maria Molzahn or Christy Belkin. Thank you!

GREEK FEST MEETING: There will be Greek Fest Meetings on August 18th & September 1st following Divine Liturgy.

FETA CHEESE FOR SALE: Our parish has Dodoni brand sheep's milk feta Cheese Sold either by the tub (7.3 lb with brine, 4.4 lb drained weight) or by case of 4 tubs. The Feta is good until Feb. 20, 2025.

- One tub (7.3 lb) \$55.00 each
- Case of 4 tubs \$200.00 case

Parthenon Foods in Milwaukee sells the same item for \$58.99 per tub. This is high quality feta and was donated to our church by a parishioner. Proceeds will go to the church.

Please see Christy Chappell-Belkin or Beth Fatsis at church if you are interested in purchasing.

2024 PARISH OUTING TO FORWARD MADISON FC: On Saturday, October 12th, we will have a Parish Outing to the Forward Madison FC Soccer Game vs the Chattanooga Red Wolves with a 5:00 p.m. Kick-Off.

We have 50 tickets available for the game and they will include entrance to the game and an official Forward Madison FC Scarf. The cost is \$27. To purchase tickets please contact Fr. Christodoulos through email frchristos@gmail.com or contact the church office.

Initially we have 50 tickets. Information for buying tickets will be available soon! Join us for what is sure to be a great night of fun & fellowship.

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.



Greek Fest+ 2024

September 7 & 8

Sat. 12 PM - 7 PM

Sun. 11 AM - 6 PM

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
11 N. Seventh St., Madison, WI
at E. Washington Ave. & N. Seventh St.

Enjoy music, dancing, church tours and delicious Greek favorites including gyros, fries, spanakopita, Greek lemon chicken, baklava, loukoumades, beer and wine!

Don't miss our Bake Sale inside the church!



2024 Parish outing to the Forward Madison FC



On Saturday, October 12th, we will have a Parish Outing to the Forward Madison FC Soccer Game vs Chattanooga Red Wolves with a 5:00 p.m. Kick-Off.

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The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John:

Commemorated on August 29. The Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus).

The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. (The Uncovering of the Venerable Head is celebrated February 24). The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12).

The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck.

Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of Saint John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor Caius Caligula (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain.

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.

Today the Church makes remembrance of Orthodox soldiers killed on the field of battle, as established in 1769 at the time of Russia's war with the Turks and the Poles.



Repose of the New-Hieromartyr Cosmas of Aitolia, Equal of the Apostles:

Commemorated on August 24 The New Hieromartyr Cosmas, Equal of the Apostles, in the world Conostas, was a native of Aitolia. He studied at first under the guidance of the archdeacon Ananias Dervisanos, and afterwards continued his education on Mount Athos, at the Vatopedi school renowned for teachers such as Nicholas Tzartzoulis (from Metsovo) and Eugenius Voulgaris (afterwards in the years 1775-1779 the archbishop of Ekaterinoslav and the Chersonesus).

Remaining on Athos at the Philotheou monastery to devote himself to spiritual labors, he was tonsured a monk with the name Cosmas, and later was ordained hieromonk. The desire to benefit his fellow Christians, to guide them upon the way of salvation and strengthen their faith, impelled Saint Cosmas to seek the blessing of his spiritual fathers and go to Constantinople. There he mastered the art of rhetoric and, having received a written permit of Patriarch Seraphim II (and later from his successor Sophronius) to preach the Holy Gospel.

So the saint began to proclaim the Gospel at first in the churches of Constantinople and the surrounding villages, then in the Danube regions, in Thessalonica, in Verroia, in Macedonia, Chimaera, Akarnania, Aitolia, on the islands of Saint Maura, Kephallonia and other places.

His preaching, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, was simple, calm, and gentle. It brought Christians great spiritual benefit. The Lord Himself assisted him and confirmed his words with signs and miracles, just as He had confirmed the preaching of the Apostles.

Preaching in the remote areas of Albania, where Christian piety had almost disappeared among the rough and coarse people entrenched in sin, Saint Cosmas led them to sincere repentance and improvement with the Word of God.

Under his guidance, church schools were opened in the towns and villages. The rich offered their money for the betterment of the churches, for the purchase of Holy Books (which the saint distributed to the literate), veils (which he gave women, admonishing them to come to church with covered heads), for prayer ropes and crosses (which he distributed to the common folk), and for baptismal fonts so that children could be baptized in the proper manner.

Since the churches could not accommodate everyone wanting to hear the wise preacher, Saint Cosmas with forty or fifty priests served the Vigil in the fields, and in city squares, where thousands of people prayed for the living and for the dead, and were edified by his preaching. Everywhere that Saint Cosmas halted and preached, the grateful listeners set up a large wooden cross, which remained thereafter in memory of this.

The apostolic service of Saint Cosmas was brought to a close by his martyric death in the year 1779. At 65 years of age, he was seized by the Turks and strangled. His body was thrown into a river, and after three days, was found by the priest Mark and buried near the village of Kolikontasi at the monastery of the Entrance into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos. Afterwards, part of his relics were transferred to various places as a blessing.

He was glorified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1961.

- ***Fasting:*** Fasting, both from food and from worldly pleasures, can help to discipline the mind and body, making it easier to focus on prayer and spiritual matters.
- ***Seek out silence:*** Spend time in nature, away from the noise and distractions of the city. Allow yourself to be still and to listen for God's voice.
-

Conclusion

By silencing the secular world and focusing on our faith and prayer, we open ourselves up to the transformative power of God's grace. We become more attuned to His presence in our lives, more grounded in our beliefs, and more committed to living a life that is pleasing to Him. In a world that often pulls us in many directions, let us make a conscious effort to silence the noise and to focus on the one thing that truly matters: our relationship with God.

+Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos



Maintenance Updates

Sewer pipe has been repaired: We shared at previous church meetings that the sewer pipe connecting the church to the street needed to be repaired. We're happy to share that we were able to complete that repair in July (you may notice a patch on the parking lot marking the spot). Thank you to Mike Smith for managing this project. A potential problem has been averted!

Roof Repair: We've been reviewing bids and working with our insurance company, with the intention that we will replace the roof (which was damaged by hail last fall) after Greek Fest.

Next Parish Council Meeting August 20

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20th at 7:00PM. The Parish Council typically meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

**On behalf of the Parish Council,
Christy Chappell Belkin
President**